

A Protestant Minister on Catholic Ireland.

(N. Y. Irish World.)

We have been requested to publish the following article. It appeared in the N. Y. Irish World a year or two ago, and is a personal appreciation of the Irish people, from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Collison, a clergyman, of the Episcopal church, but who is by no means a bigot.

Dr. Collison tells in the preface of his book that after five years of hard work in London as a minister, he woke up to the consciousness that "his nerves had been shattered, and his memory all but gone." His medical man counseled complete change, and this led to his tour as a public entertainer through the principal towns of Ireland. The first portion of the volume he has published is taken up with his diary and his adventures in the various towns he visited.

HIS THANKS TO THE CATHOLICS.

Dr. Collison's diary shows that there were occasions when exception was taken to some of the items on his programme as being anti-Irish. He disputes this at length and devotes several pages of his book to an appreciation of the Irish-Ireland movement. His note or recital given at Ballinasloe concludes with the following paragraph: "I cannot speak sufficiently gratefully of all the courtesy shown to me all through my tour by the Catholic clergy." Perhaps the most valuable portions of his book to the Irish reader are his impressions on the religion of Ireland, Home Rule, and the Gaelic League. In view of the anti-Catholic writings of apostate members of that Church, we give the views of Dr. Collison—a man eminently fitted by education and opportunity to form correct opinions—fuller scope than they might have otherwise received. Here is what he says:

"There is a society known as 'The Irish Church Missions.' The mere fact of its existence is a blot on the fair face of the Emerald Isle. Its very name—a misnomer, I believe—is a standing insult to the majority of the Irish people. Possibly the reason that its mistaken, though no doubt, well meant labors, are not more vigorously resented than they are, is that the very people for whose benefit the work of the society is intended, in their heart of hearts, pity its members for their ignorance. I use the word 'ignorance' in no contemptuous manner, for, after all, we cannot all know everything, and some of the best educated people in the land are often ignorant with regard to some one question or another. Ignorance of what? Ignorance of the fact that the vast majority of the Catholics of Ireland are infinitely better taught and far more intimate with the fundamentals of 'The Faith,' than the very people who are trying to 'convert' them.

SEVEN CENTURIES OF OPPRESSION HAS LEFT THE FAITH STRONGER THAN EVER.

"The Faith of the Irish nation is beautiful, something for the world to admire, something, yes, for the very angels of heaven to marvel at. Seven centuries of English misgovernment have rolled away and left the Faith of the Irish nation stronger than ever. I do not write as one who is ignorant of Ireland, but as one who was born in Ireland, and whose parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, etc., were born in Ireland, too; as one who lived there for thirty-three years; one whose mother's name was O'Callaghan; one whose grandfather, because he was a Catholic, could not keep in his possession a horse, the value of which was more than thirty pounds; and this, too, under a government that was professedly Protestant and tolerant.

"I can hardly be called a West Leaver, can I? Upon returning to Britain by the most sturdy Gaelic Ireland after an absence of eight years, I saw the old love of religion burning as bright if not brighter than ever. Wherever I chanced to be on Sunday or holiday, whenever the bells rang out for early Mass, the street of the village or country town resounded with the footsteps of an earnest and devout throng pressing eagerly forward to worship their Lord and Saviour, present in His Holy Sacrament. How can any man seek to take away from the Irish people that which in all their poverty makes them rich? Yet there are such people. There are people who abuse their clergy. Do these people ever calmly consider what a power for good in the land the Catholic clergy of Ireland have been and are still?

IRELAND'S PURITY THE BRIGHTEST JEWEL IN HER CROWN.

"The purity of Ireland—to whom may we turn in deepest gratitude for this, the brightest jewel in Ireland's crown? To the clergy, who, by the gentle sway of Sacramental confession—a power for good in every community, though sometimes, but very seldom, abused—have influenced Ireland's sons and daughters to such an extent that they stand conspicuous amongst the nations of the world, as the very purest of all in thought, word and deed. "Why shouldn't they? Were cruelty, injustice and wrong rampant who, I ask, should be foremost in the fray?

against them? Who of all men but the clergy? Did not the clergy of King John's time meddle in politics when they helped to wrest Magna Charta from that contemptible tyrant? Did not the clergy of the Church of England meddle in politics when they helped to kill the Education Bill of 1906? Were the landlords of Ireland conspicuous for their kindness and justice to their tenants? No living man could truthfully say that they were.

"When a large number of the landlords of days not so long since gone by, sought by every means in their power to grind the unfortunate long-suffering people of Ireland underfoot, to squeeze every available farthing out of them and then to spend their ill-gotten gains in England and on the continent, taking little or no interest in the magnificent men and women who were living and dying for their support, to whom I ask were foremost in their battle for liberty and right? Who were the best friends of the Irish tenant? Who but the priests? Can anyone deny this? I think not. Had they anything to gain by their endeavors? Nothing whatever, but trouble, abuse, misrepresentation and in many cases incarceration and other kinds of punishment.

THE "YOKE" OF THE IRISH PRIESTS.

"In the face of all this, there are people to-day who would ask the people of Ireland to throw off what they call 'the yoke of the priests.' To go no further, I would call this inciting a nation to be guilty of the basest ingratitude, but I will add something more and say, that as not only have the priests been the people's leaders against the tyrannies of landlordism, but also against every form of injustice and oppression which England has heaped upon Ireland during more than seven long centuries, it would be a folly of which I cannot believe the Irish people to be possessors, to throw off that sweet and gentle 'yoke' which has been so instrumental in bringing to them whatever they possess of liberty, honor, prosperity and independence.

"Writing of 'the Church of Ireland,' of which he is a member, Dr. Collison strongly censures those responsible for the bigotry shown towards their Catholic brethren. 'A Catholic under the Roman obedience,' he says, 'believes in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Three persons in one God. So do I. Should I dislike this doctrine because my Roman brothers believe it? A Catholic believes in the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist. So do I. Should I fly from this doctrine merely because my Roman brother holds it dear, or defines it more explicitly than we do? A Catholic under the Roman obedience believes in the Communion of Saints and the Forgiveness of Sins. Are these profound mysteries to be abhorred merely because they are held by Catholics? No! Until this bigoted opposition to everything distinctly Catholic dies down, the Irish Church must suffer from the result of warped, cramped and narrow teaching but the harm that is being done meanwhile to the clergy, as a body, by the laity, is being reflected upon the laity of all time by the clergy.

IRELAND'S RELIGION MORE PRODUCTIVE OF FRUIT.

Dealing with the question of Home Rule, Dr. Collison believes that come it surely will. 'Ireland,' he says, 'was taken from the Irish. England did all in her power to trample underfoot the pride of the Irish. The pedigrees of the old Irish families were destroyed to break the spirit of the conquered race. Religious persecution was allowed to run riot for centuries, yet with all these indignities the Irish are as proud, nay, prouder and more independent than ever. The religion of Ireland—though everything was done by England to make it impossible—is more alive now than ever and more productive of fruit perhaps, than the religion of any other country in Christendom.

"The Gaelic League he considers one of the most important movements that has ever sprung up in Ireland. 'Never,' he says, 'so far as Ireland is concerned, has there been a stronger political force called into existence than the Gaelic League. I rejoice to say, it is proving itself to be. Home Rule is coming and nothing is calculated to assure and accelerate its arrival so undoubtedly as this wonderful organization, which is at once firm, determined, attractively romantic, but subtle beyond description.'

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Secular Education in France.

An Anglican View.

Strenuous fighters for religious education in England (says The Church Times, in its leading columns) are sometimes warned that if they cannot come to an agreement among themselves, the country will fall back in disgust upon secular education, and so find peace. The assumption is that only the rival advocates of different kinds of religious instruction are combative; they are told to find some common Christian platform, and so to make peace with one another; otherwise peace will be imposed upon them from without. This notion, that peace can be secured by a purely secular system of schools, has an interesting light thrown upon it by recent events in France.

In France there is that single and uniform system of State schools which appeals so strongly to the doctrinaire mind, and the schools are rigidly secularized. It is true that the law tolerates other schools, écoles libres, and there are passionate advocates of State supremacy who deplore this weakness; but it has not been found possible to drag all parents into conformity, or to drive all children, at the point of the bayonet, into the public schools. The free schools exist, the Church works vigorously to found and maintain them, and many parents prefer them. There are communes where a public school is maintained only as a mere form, the children all frequenting an école libre. At present, the law completely ignores these schools; they receive no support from the public funds, they are not inspected by public officials, they have no privileges, and are subject to no disabilities.

Here, then, would seem to be the elements of peace. In point of fact, there is acute conflict. And why? Disturbances arise from two sides. On the one hand, the fanatical enemies of religion are in arms against the free schools, proposing either forcible suppression or a more subtle attack by means of privileges for those who attend the State schools. On the other hand, the parents of the children attending the State schools have in many places opened a regular campaign against the teachers on religious grounds. These schools are declared by law to be "neutral," neither religious nor irreligious, neither Christian nor anti-Christian. This rule is said to be violated by certain teachers who speak more or less openly against the beliefs and practices of the Church, and by the use of certain manuals of history or of moral instruction which offend in the same sense. The attack has been delivered in two ways. Individual parents have sued teachers at law for undermining the faith of their children, and have in some cases secured verdicts. The Bishops collectively have denounced the objectionable manuals, and have exhorted parents to withdraw their children from classes where they are used.

The former attack has been met by a characteristic move on the part of the Government. The teachers have been relieved, by an amendment of the law, from all responsibility to the parents. They have been endowed with the inviolability of the functionary—so great a thing in French administrative law—and put under the protection of the Prefect. Henceforth it is only against that stupendous personage that an aggrieved parent can proceed, and he is perfectly well aware that he may as well save his time and his money. The other attack is causing more difficulty. To most Frenchmen it seems a terrible thing, a cataclysmic event, when Bishops assail any part of the public administration. They have been brought up under the system of the concordat, which made the Bishops themselves a part of the administrative machine, and kept them in the strictest subordination. Consequently, the Bishops are being assailed as if their circular about the school manuals were definitely illegal, an offense against the droit administratif. But the Premier knows better. He was himself the author of the law abrogating the Concordat, and he knows perfectly well that in stripping the Church of all the privileges secured to it by the previous law, he was also giving to the Bishops a freedom which they had never before enjoyed. He has pressed this fact upon the angry chamber. He has shown that the Bishops have all the ordinary liberties of an unofficial citizen, and complete freedom to criticize the administration. He objects to their procedure. Being a man who studies fairness, he admits that the manuals may in some cases offend against the law of neutrality; but the Bishops ought to have approached the Minister of Education with friendly remonstrances, and their complaints would have been investigated. He shows how, in the Department of the Nord, the teachers themselves had met parents in amicable discussion, settling the difficulty. An excellent example! But M. Briand omits the obvious remark that in the Nord the Church is socially and politically far stronger than in most parts of France. In those other parts, conciliation does not seem to be the order of the day, and the contest will be fought out, probably not without influence on the elections.

On the whole, the establishment of a purely secular system does not seem to secure complete and abiding peace in the schools.

OBITUARY.

MISS MARY WOODS.

Miss Woods, for many years a devoted member of St. Mary's Star of the Sea Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., died at her home, 173 Luqueer st., on Monday, Feb. 7, after a few hours' illness, the suddenness of which was a great shock to her many friends.

The funeral took place Thursday, Feb. 10, from St. Mary's Church, and was largely attended. Interment took place at deceased's plot, Holy Cross, Flat Bush. Rev. T. O'Brien accompanied the funeral procession and read the final prayers at the grave.

Deceased is survived by one sister, Mrs. A. McNally, of Stanstead, Que., who was unable to attend on account of illness. One nephew, Mr. James W. McNally, Stanstead, two nieces, Miss Annie McNally, Stanstead, Mrs. Logan and Mr. Logan, Newport, Vt., were present at the funeral. May her soul rest in peace.

MISS KATHLEEN E. O'FLAHERTY.

A very sad bereavement took place recently when Miss Kathleen Eleanor, younger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. T. O'Flaherty, 56 Ontario street west, was called away at the early age of eighteen years. Deceased was as bright and winning in disposition as in appearance, and during a painful illness she showed great strength and resignation.

Kathleen had been educated at St. Patrick's Academy, from which she graduated in June, 1908, with highest honors. A clever and diligent pupil, she was rightly ambitious, and always had high standing in her classes. During the last years at school she took a prominent part in all entertainments. With teachers and companions her amiable manner made her a favorite and her earnest piety won their respect and admiration. The bereaved parents and other members of her family have the sincere sympathy of their many friends in their loss.

Irish Peasants Resent Charges Made Against Priest.

The well-known Irish novelist, Stephen Gwynn, who in addition to being a literary light is also a member of parliament for Galway, has stirred up considerable acrimonious discussion in Ireland by stating in his new historical novel "Robert Emmet," that Emmet's failure was due to the action of a priest who "revealed to Dublin Castle the plans of the patriot leaders which the priest obtained from one of Emmet's followers in the confessional." Mr. Gwynn, (who, by the way, is the son of a Protestant minister, Rev. John Gwynn of Trinity College), gives no data to corroborate his surprising statement, and he is the first Irish writer who has dealt with the tragic story of Emmet to make such a statement. The Irish people know better than any other people on earth how sacred and inviolate the priesthood hold the confessional, and it is only natural that they should call on Mr. Gwynn for a speedy "show down" as to where he got his facts.

The great biographer of the United Irishmen, Dr. R. R. Madden, in his "Life of Robert Emmet," makes it quite clear by documentary evidence that the first information the government received of Emmet's plans was when the private papers of his cousin, St. John Henry Mason, were seized in a hotel in Dublin. A week before the intended insurrection St. John Henry Mason, a Kerry man of prominent family, whose aunt was Emmet's mother, arrived in Dublin with a string of fine horses which were to be used by Emmet and his officers. Mason stayed at a hotel which had become conspicuous in '98 as a resort of the patriot leaders. During Mason's absence from the hotel, the agents of Dublin Castle seized his baggage and found private papers which gave the castle authorities the first intimation that a dangerous revolt was planned.

Mason's indiscretion in taking with him to a place under suspicion such important papers caused him to be severely censured, though there is no doubt whatever he did so innocently.

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Hymns to St. Joseph.

The two following hymns are translated from the office for the feast of St. Joseph, March 19, in the Roman Breviary. The hymns were probably written by Pope Urban VIII., who reigned from 1623 to 1644. Translated by Daniel J. Donahoe.

VESPER HYMN.

Te, Joseph, Celebrent Agmina Coeli-tum.

The hosts of heaven, Joseph, honor thee,

And in thy praise all Christian choirs resound.

Chaste spouse of the All-chaste, thy name shall be

In holiness renowned.

When thou in doubt didst look upon thy bride,

Great with the Holy One of God, behold!

A blessed angel standing at thy side The heavenly wonder told.

Thou as a tender sire didst rule thy Lord.

Saving by flight his life in early years.

Found'st in the temple Him whom all adored,

Mingling thy joy with tears.

Others are raised by happy death, but thou

Wert born to wear on earth a crown of grace;

Comrade of God in life, thou dwellest now

In marvelous blessedness.

Most holy Trinity, to us who kneel

Before Thy throne, through Joseph's merits raise

Our souls unto the stars, that we may feel

And fitly sing Thy praise.

FOR MATINS.

Coelitum Joseph Decus.

O Joseph, joy among the saints and light.

To guide us through the world, thou pillar bright

Upholding earth, we lift glad songs to thee.

Let them ascend unto thy sacred height.

The Shaper of the skies selected thee His stainless Virgin's holy spouse to be,

The foster Sire of Christ, and minister

Of that salvation that hath made us free.

Thou sawest in the manger born thy Lord,

Of whom the prophets sang, the sacred Word;

The vision gave thee joy; thy prostrate soul

The tender Babe, as living God, adored.

The Lord of Heaven and earth, the King of Kings,

Whose will is law that prone before thee brings,

Whose light the demons fear; whose word they fly,

Made himself subject to thy questionings.

All praise unto the heavenly Trinity, Bringing bright Saint, thine honors unto thee;

Grant, through thy merits and thy pitying prayers,

That we the joys of blessed life may see.

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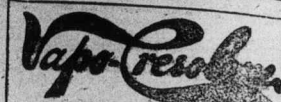
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