

IRELAND AND THE ALLIES

MR. W. REDMOND ON THE SITUATION.

Let me, as one who is here in Ireland and meeting people every day, say what I am sure is the true feeling of Ireland and of all classes regarding the war (writes Mr. W. Redmond in the *Daily Chronicle*). By every consideration of honor, sentiment, and interest, Ireland is beyond all doubt heart and soul with the Allies in their struggle against German brute force.

Let no one be deceived for a moment by statements as to Sir Roger Casement, or anyone else, begging for mercy or terms for Ireland in Berlin. Ireland has authorised no one to beg for her at the Court of the Kaiser, and all statements to that end are mere weak inventions of the enemy. As if Ireland would beg for terms from the men who have outraged every rule of civilisation and religion and honor in Belgium! Let no one believe such a thing, for it is a slander upon Irishmen.

There have been some vile attempts made to have it appear that Ireland is not in full sympathy with England and the Allies in this war. I do not know what the real object of these attempts may be, but I do know that they are false and malicious, and no one who has any real knowledge of Ireland will treat them with anything but the contempt which they deserve. Again, I say Ireland is by every consideration of honor and sentiment and interest in full sympathy with the Allies.

The Interests of Ireland.

Let me take the consideration of interest first. Ireland knows her interest in every direction is that Germany should not conquer. Ireland is not the despairing land it was thirty years ago. To-day our people, broadly speaking, own the soil. The conditions of the country in every direction have most enormously improved. The people are commencing to enjoy, in their newly-acquired security, some measure of comfort and prosperity. They feel that they have Home Rule within their grasp. Ireland has something to lose now. She knows she markets her goods in Great Britain largely, and she wants to know who would buy her produce, her cattle, and where her markets would be if Germany won. The Irish people are no fools, and when they are told by one or two utterly unrepresentative men that Germany, if she occupied Ireland, would do no harm, they are, to say the least, sceptical. They know how Germany kept her solemn word to Belgium, and they know that if the Germans set foot on the fair fields of Ireland they would not be likely to have their journey for nothing. They know the Germans would not visit us to see the Giant's Causeway or to see Killarney.

The Sea-Divided Gael.

Besides all that, no Irishman worth his salt would desire to be beholden to the men who have ruined Belgium for any favor, even if it were in their power or their will to grant it. There are not many people in Ireland who have not friends and relatives in every one of the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere. If Germany wins, these Irish people—our own flesh and blood, and mostly of our faith—will have their homes and their property, and their very lives, in peril. Is that nothing to us in Ireland? These people all through the Empire have for more than thirty years helped us by their unfailing generosity to win all the reforms we now enjoy. Are we to sit still and see their homes and countries endangered and satisfy ourselves by saying, 'Oh, it is all right, Germany won't hurt us in Ireland?' 'One in name and one in fame is the sea-divided Gael,' and we in Ireland can never be indifferent or neutral when we see our friends in the free lands over the sea menaced and in danger.

Apart from our own kith and kin, what about these great new lands? One and all they are our friends. Five times the Parliament of Canada and twice the Parliament of Australia have passed resolutions in favor of Home Rule. Nearly all their leading statesmen have expressed their sympathy with Ireland's struggle for Home Rule. Are we to say to them all,

including Botha, 'Oh, it is true you helped us in our time of need in Ireland, and we were very glad of your help, but now, when your interests are at stake, we will not lift a finger to help you, because we believe that whatever may happen to you, Germany will not injure Ireland at all'?

ST. GENEVIEVE'S PROTECTION

Under date January 14, Lord Ashbourne writes as follows from Paris to the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*: Yesterday I went into a church near here. Mass was going on and a simple funeral of some poor man. Over the coffin was a large tricolor. By the side of the altar the flags of the Allies. Under the alb of the priest one could see the red trousers of an infantry uniform, and, in the congregation, the men, about a third of whom had their heads in bandages, seemed to be mostly wounded. Near the door, waiting to be put on the coffin, were some simple bundles of palm leaves, tied with tricolor tape.

A short time ago, Maurice Barres, the well-known writer, went to the front to see some friends. He was entertained at luncheon by the staff of the army he was visiting. They told him he would have to respond to a toast. When the moment came the general got up and said:—'Monsieur Barres, my dear comrades, there is not one of us, I think, who imagines he is a Napoleon. But there is not one of us who expects to see the end of this war. Each of us has already made the sacrifice of his life for France.' And then raising his glass, he gave the toast: 'La France.' What could I add? asked Monsieur Barres afterwards. At the end of August, the Germans were marching on Paris. Nearer and nearer they came, burning and destroying all before them. The inhabitants had no thought of a strategic retreat. All they knew was that every day brought the danger nearer to them. The Government withdrew to Bordeaux, and the chief organs of the press removed their offices to different parts of France. Over a million of the population fled the city, and my wife, who was staying in a hotel in the Avenue d'Jena, tells me that for a week, every night was made hideous by the rumbling of heavy military motor lorries rushing to the front.

In that hour of darkness many a weary soul turned longingly to the memory of St. Genevieve, the patron of Paris and of France. People recalled how, in the year 451 A.D. Attila and his Huns, burning and destroying, were marching on Paris. The Saint prayed and fasted and comforted the inhabitants, telling them that the enemy would never reach Paris. Nearer and nearer they came, and then, suddenly, for no apparent reason, the Huns turned away and were attacked and beaten on the Marne. In the early days of September, last Autumn, a Triduum was ordered in honor of St. Genevieve.

About this time, a man I know, a 'veteran,' was helping to guard the railway at La Ferte sous Jouarre. All at once the Germans appeared, advancing, and there were no other troops in sight. 'Nous sommes foutus,' said my friend in the soldiers' language. Presently, for no apparent reason, the Boches turned aside and began to run, 'comme des voleurs.' Then some British soldiers came by, also running, and, some time afterwards there was the sound of guns in the distance.

To-day, if you go up the Mont Ste. Genevieve to the quaint little old church of St. Etienne du Mont, which contains the shrine of St. Genevieve, you will find candles burning and crowds praying round the shrine.

Your readers will now have some idea of what the atmosphere of Paris is like. There is something at once terrible and grand about it. Imagine my feelings when I saw in the English papers, about that futile discussion on Ireland in the House of Lords. I hasten to assure my fellow-countrymen that, in France at least, the situation is understood, and that, everywhere, I have met with the warmest appreciation of the attitude of our people.