

THE IRISH MISSION IN FRANCE

A REMARKABLE AND IMPORTANT EVENT.

The mission of the Irish delegation to Paris in 1915 was one of the most successful on record, and it will live in history as one of the most remarkable and important events of our time (writes the special correspondent of the *Dublin Freeman's Journal*). It exhibited the union of all France, the head of the great Celtic race in welcoming the representatives of Ireland a nation, and of the Irish race throughout the world, and the union of France and Ireland in the renewal of the historic friendship which has always existed between them, and in their mutual pledges of affection and goodwill towards each other, and of sympathy and support for the cause of nationality and liberty which they in common with Great Britain, Russia, and Serbia are at present in arms to defend and to vindicate. The objects of the delegation were to present an address to the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris, as head of the Catholic Church in France, from the A.O.H., the largest Irish Catholic benefit organisation which has ever existed, and to present an address to the President of France assuring him in the name of the Irish Parliamentary Party and of the Irish people of Ireland's sympathy and support in the present war.

Entertained at Luncheon.

On Friday morning, in acceptance of the kind invitation of M. Leygues, the delegates drove to the magnificent residence of that gentleman where they were entertained at luncheon. Among those present were the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, M. Franklin-Bouillon, Deputy Jean Longue, the leader of the Socialist Party in the Chamber of Deputies: M. Moutet, Socialist Deputy for Lyons; the Marquis de Chambrom, one of the leading Catholic Deputies: M. Honnorat, and M. Outrey, Deputies. M. Leygues occupies a palatial mansion on the right bank of the Seine, and the delegates were charmed with the beauty of the place which contains many treasures of art. Nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality of Mme. Leygues and her daughter and niece. The flag of Ireland was hung on the wall at the head of the table, and the miniature flags representing Ireland and the Allies were used as table decorations. Afterwards the company were entertained by the singing of a couple of beautiful Irish songs by Mr. O'Dowda Wade, and Mr. Tom Condon, M.P., gave a magnificent rendering of 'Garryowen,' which thrilled and delighted all present. In response to the request of some of the delegates Mlle. Leygues presented them with miniature flags of the Allied nations as souvenirs. It was the delegate's first experience of what a French home was like, and they were pleased and touched beyond measure. Before leaving Paris they sent a beautiful bouquet to Mme. Leygues as a token of their appreciation.

After leaving M. Leygues, the delegates drove to the Chamber of Deputies, where they were received with every mark of honor by the officials and all concerned. They were shown over the building by MM. Franklin-Bouillon and Leygues, who explained the manner in which the proceedings were conducted, the grouping of parties, and the architectural artistic features of the place. Following this the delegates waited on the Prime Minister, M. Viviani, who received them with every mark of honor and respect, and bade them heartily welcome to France. He inquired kindly about Mr. John Redmond, M.P., and prayed that his very kind regards might be conveyed to the Irish leader. Then followed a visit to the President of the Republic, M. Poincaré.

Visit to the Cardinal.

The delegates then drove to the Palace of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris, where they met with a particularly cordial reception. Amongst those present with the delegation were the veteran M. Denys Cochin, the Catholic leader, and the Marquis de Chambrom, both of whom have personal associations with Ireland and her people. The address to the Cardinal-Arch-

bishop from the A.O.H. was read by Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., the distinguished president of the A.O.H., and was presented by him and Mr. J. D. Nugent, general secretary, on behalf of the members. The address was beautifully illuminated and mounted and enclosed in a handsome casket. The Cardinal-Archbishop made a long and eloquent, even passionate, speech in reply. His references to the bonds uniting Ireland and France were touching and beautiful, but when he came to denounce German aggression and savagery, and the outrages on religion and humanity committed by Germans in Belgium and in France, his emotion was evident, and his words thrilled his audience. Nothing was more remarkable than his emphasising the union of all Frenchmen against the common enemy of their Fatherland, except the touching reference to his friend, M. Denys Cochin, whose son has recently been killed at the front. Afterwards the members of the delegation were introduced in turn to his Eminence, and were photographed with him in a group. Before leaving they all knelt down to receive his Eminence's blessing, and the scene was certainly an unforgettable one for all present. Mr. J. D. Nugent, was specially honored by his Eminence, who presented him with an autographed photograph as a memento of the occasion.

An Unqualified Success.

The day had been full of incident for the delegation, but Mr. T. P. O'Connor apparently knows not fatigue, and after dinner at his hotel he held a reception, at which all the leading Paris journalists were present. It was their unanimous testimony that the honors paid to the delegation were unprecedented, and that it was beyond all question an unqualified success in every way. This was borne out by one of the most eminent of the French deputies, who told the writer, with the assent of all his colleagues present, 'If you were the representatives of emperors or of kings we could not receive you with greater honor or respect, and certainly we could not treat you with the same unanimity on the part of all Frenchmen.'

On Saturday the delegates were entertained at luncheon in the Palais D'Orsay, their hosts being the French nation through all its highest and most representative delegates. There was no precedent for such an event. It was unique. Church and State were represented, all uniting in doing honor to Ireland a nation. The building is one of the largest and most beautiful in Paris, and the spacious banqueting hall was taxed to its utmost capacity to accommodate those present. The room was decorated with the Irish, French, British, and Allied flags, and the tables with miniature flags and flowers. The menu was specially prepared, and the menu card was a work of art. The company was very remarkable. Beside M. Bourgeois, who presided, sat to the right the British Ambassador, Sir Francis Bertie; Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P.; M. Delcasse, Foreign Minister; M. Denys Cochin, Catholic Leader, and others. To the left of the President was Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P.; then M. Viviani, the Prime Minister; Mr. J. D. Nugent, and others. The Marquis de Chambrom, Catholic Conservative, was beside Mr. Longue, the Socialist leader, and Father McMullen had on his left the Mayor of Paris, and on his right M. Poisson.

The Speakers and Their Speeches.

The speeches of M. Bourgeois, M. Viviani, and M. Denys Cochin evoked great enthusiasm. But interest was not less centred on the speeches of Messrs. T. P. O'Connor and Joseph Devlin, M.P. 'T.P.' spoke in French, with, if possible, even greater eloquence, ease, and charm than he speaks in English. He was listened to with breathless interest, and when he concluded his audience burst into loud and long applause. Mr. Devlin's speech was brief, and was delivered in English, but the greatest interest was manifested in it, as Mr. Devlin's reputation as an orator and a democratic leader stands very high amongst French politicians. Delivered with all the elocution and earnestness so characteristic of him, Mr. Devlin's speech thrilled the

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