

terror. If you believe that the proposed Irish Parliament would commence oppressing Protestants and destroying Ulster industries, then you naturally prepare for a rebellion. If the Irish Parliament were fool enough to give any genuine cause of complaint to Ulster, then civil war would really be within sight. My view is that these fears are imaginary, and that when Ulster finds herself jogging along under Home Rule as peaceably as she ever did under the Union (perhaps more so), then the rifles will be made into firewood and the swords into pea-stakes.

## PORTUGAL'S POLITICAL PRISONERS

### IMPORTANT PROTEST MEETING IN ENGLAND

In connection with the efforts of the Duchess of Bedford to arouse British public opinion on the Portuguese scandal, a meeting of protest was held in the Æolian Hall, New Bond street, London. The Earl of Lytton presided, and on the platform were Unionists, Liberals, Catholics, Anglicans, Nonconformists, and Freethinkers. Among the prominent Catholic laymen present were Col. Mark Sykes, M.P., Dr. Sarsfield Counsel, and Mr. Leonard C. Lindsay.

The chairman said that the meeting had not been summoned in any spirit hostile to Portugal. Had it been, there were family as well as national reasons which would have prevented his taking any part in the proceedings. The platform was non-political, and was not concerned with the form of government under which the Portuguese lived. They were there to protest against certain acts of injustice and persecution which could not fail to arouse indignation in the minds of all acquainted with them. If it were urged that the treatment of political prisoners in Portugal was a matter of internal administration, he would answer that there were certain principles of justice, there were certain duties and responsibilities of a civilised government which were not the monopoly of any one State, but were the common property of the whole civilised world, and could not be violated without raising feelings of indignation and protest in other parts of the world. There were three counts in their indictment. In the first place, individuals had been arrested in many cases merely for the views which they held, or were supposed to hold, and were cast into prison and detained there for months, and in some cases even years, without being brought to trial. The second count was that those who were brought to trial were tried by irregular tribunals, and that courts martial had been substituted without justification for the ordinary tribunals of justice; and the third that in some cases prisoners so arrested and condemned were subjected to barbarous and inhuman treatment. If anything was calculated to keep alive political discontent in Portugal, continued Earl Lytton, it was the violation of justice and the abuse of power and authority. Those things were always proofs of weakness and cowardice in government. If a government could not exist without resorting to tyranny and oppression and injustice, then that government was doomed; because it could not persist in those acts without forfeiting the goodwill and respect of other civilised nations. There were rules of the game in politics and government, just as there were in war, in society, and in sport; and when they saw those rules flagrantly violated they could not refrain from appealing to those responsible for the discontinuance of practices which were a disgrace to civilisation and an outrage to humanity.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple, moved the following resolution:—“That this meeting desires to express a strong and indignant protest on behalf of the British nation against the unjust and arbitrary detention of political prisoners in Portugal; and in consideration of the traditions of friendship and goodwill which have long existed between the British and the Portuguese peoples, earnestly appeals to the Portuguese Government to pass the Amnesty Bill now before the Portuguese Chamber.” Mr. Campbell said he did not hesitate to say that the treatment

of the political prisoners in Portugal was an outrage upon the instincts of liberty-loving humanity, and betrayed a state of things very considerably worse than that which the Republic superseded. It was not one sect or party alone that thus raised its voice against cruelty and injustice. The Government had made up its mind to stamp out not only the monarchical principle of Government, but also the Christian religion. Belief in God, the children were taught, was a foolish and improper thing. Such a policy must inevitably react upon its promoters, and prove a curse to a nation wherein it obtained. He strongly expressed the hope that the British Government might see its way to bring pressure to bear upon Portugal without delay. They were morally bound to make a protest. They could not put nationality above humanity. It was their duty to remonstrate with their neighbor when he broke the law of God.

The Dowager Duchess of Bedford was greeted with prolonged cheering upon rising. She related her personal experiences derived during a recent visit to the Portuguese prisons. She claimed to be fairly conversant with prison life, both at home and abroad, having been a prison visitor for nearly twenty years. Reports from private sources in Lisbon had supplemented her own evidence. Her Grace recounted the terrible sights she had witnessed in a prison over which she was conducted upon a letter of introduction from the diplomatic representative of the British Government at Lisbon. Leaving the prison and its horrible sights, the Duchess entered the Cathedral, which stands opposite, there to find, as she said, relief within its sacred walls. The canons were singing *Tenebræ*, as it was Wednesday in Holy Week. How vividly the narrative of the Passion came to her—the mocking and scourging of Christ! She had heard nothing but the shouting and insults of the mob all day.

The Duchess went on to pay a tribute to the heroism of the women-folk. When the men came to plunder the churches—much as they had done in France—the women rushed to the belfry to summon the men from the fields, with the result that the modern pirates carried off the splendid prize of six old peasant women, who were untried to this day, though months had elapsed since the glorious enterprise.

The speaker displayed to the audience a letter she had received from a prisoner, addressed simply ‘To the care of God.’ After thanking the English press, the Duchess of Bedford went on to refer to the Carbonarios, a secret society which numbered some 32,000 men. Each man was pledged, by poison, dagger, or pistol, to remove any person who at headquarters was considered an obstruction. ‘They patrol the country,’ she proceeded, ‘burst into private houses, rob banks, and combine the work of the spy and the traitor with that of the ordinary burglar.’

‘The Portuguese Minister, in an interview, asked: “What is a Carbonario?” and answered it himself by saying: “There is no such thing.” Ask the native of India whether there is such a thing as a tiger. He will tell you it is a thing which hides, springs, crushes, mauls, tears, and finally devours. Try to persuade him that there is no such thing. Would he believe it? Never, and no more will the Portuguese if you say there is no such thing as a Carbonario.’

‘You may ask what is a Carbonario. He may be a gentleman who sits next to you at dinner or the waiter who hands you a dish, or both. He may be the Prime Minister or the man who blacks his boots, or both. He is anything and everything, in all classes of life and in all ranks of society, who stabs you in the back either by word or by act, and who throttles the young Republic like a boa-constrictor till nothing is left of it but a jelly.’

There was, concluded the Duchess, a determination to exterminate the Christian religion. The little children in the schools had badges pinned upon them bearing the inscription, ‘No God, no Religion.’ ‘We have no need for God.’ The bodies of the nuns had been dragged out of their graves and cast into a lime-pit in order to open the churchyards for secular purposes. Was it not time for England to protest in the name of justice and mercy against that condition of things?

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