

LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS THE POPE ON IRELAND

Following is a translation of the Holy Father's letter on Irish conditions:—

Letter of Holy Father.

To Our Beloved Son, Michael, Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Roman Church, under the title of Santa Maria della Pace, and Archbishop of Armagh.

Benedict XV., Pope. Dearly Beloved Son, Health and Apostolic Benediction.

"When, in the mysterious designs of God, We were raised to the Chair of Peter, Europe was ablaze with war. You are aware that, with a full consciousness of Our Apostolic office, We endeavored to the utmost of Our power to remedy the numerous and terrible evils begotten of this dreadful conflict, and to reconcile men to peace. We are grieved to say that, though We left nothing undone to restore peace, Our efforts more than once proved ineffectual.

"But, indeed, as We have already frequently said, nations will never enjoy either at home or abroad, lasting tranquillity unless they return to those Christian principles which they have abandoned and which the Church hands down by her institution.

Oppressed Nations.

"Meanwhile We are filled with anguish when We consider that nations not a few are still oppressed by the weight of woes produced by the war. For although the clash of arms has almost everywhere ceased, yet on account of the extreme scarcity of the necessities of life many of every age and sex, and those the innocent, are being cut off; whilst everywhere, even amongst nations that have emerged victorious from the conflict, there are apparent signs of solicitude and anxiety which compel all good men to dread disaster yet to come. It is, however, a matter of some consolation to Us that from contributions so liberally sent Us from all countries We have been enabled more than once to bring some measure of relief to impoverished peoples.

The Reign of Terror.

"But while We are filled with anxiety in regard to all nations We are most especially concerned about the condition of Ireland.

"Unflinching even unto the shedding of blood in her devotion to the ancient Faith and in her reverence to the Holy See, she is subjected to-day to the indignity of devastation and slaughter.

"There is assuredly no doubt that harsh and cruel occurrences of this kind are in great part attributes to the recent war, for neither has sufficient consideration been given to the desires of nations nor have the fruits of peace which peoples promised to themselves been reaped.

Holy See's Attitude.

"But in the public strife which is taking place in your country, it is the deliberate counsel of the Holy See, a counsel consistently acted upon up to the present in similar circumstances, to take sides with neither of the contending parties.

"Such neutrality, however, by no means prevents Us from wishing and desiring, nor even from praying and beseeching, the contending parties, that the frenzy of strife may as soon as possible subside and that a lasting peace and a sincere union of hearts may take the place of this terrible enmity, for indeed We do not perceive how this bitter strife can profit either of the parties when property and homes are being ruthlessly and disgracefully laid waste, when villages and farmsteads are being set aflame, when neither sacred places nor sacred persons are spared, when on both sides a war resulting in the death of unarmed people, even of the women and children, is carried on.

An Effort for Peace.

"Mindful, therefore, of the Apostolic office, and moved by that charity which embraces all men, We exhort English as well as Irish to calmly consider

whether the time has not arrived to abandon violence and treat of some means of mutual agreement.

"For this end We think it would be opportune if effect were given to the plan recently suggested by distinguished men as well as skilled politicians, that is to say, that the question at issue should be referred for discussion to some body of men selected by the whole Irish nation. And when this conference has published its findings let the more influential among both parties meet together and, having put forward and discussed the views and conclusions arrived at on both sides, let them determine by common consent on some means of settling the question in a sincere spirit of peace and reconciliation.

Relief of Sufferings.

"Meanwhile We have heard with heartfelt pleasure that you, Our beloved son, impelled by the charity which suffers no delay and commands Us to lay aside all difference of parties and opinions and bring aid to the afflicted and the needy, have been at pains to establish and zealous to foster an association known as the White Cross, the object of which is to collect alms for the relief of those reduced to straits by the devastation of property or other acts of violence. It is no less a source of joy to Us that many others differing in religion and nationality have joined with you in this union of love, and that to your combined appeal great numbers of generous men, not merely from Ireland, but from other nations, have given an enthusiastic response.

A Generous Contribution.

"While praying for these and for all who contribute of their own or collect money for this most charitable work the most precious blessings from the Lord, We forward, as a token of Our paternal affection for your people so hard pressed, 200,000 Italian lire and We trust that this sum will do something to relieve the distress.

"And with Our eyes upraised to heaven, with sighs and groans We implore Almighty God, who permits not the tears of His suffering children to flow without consolation, that perfect peace may now at last abide with you, and as an augury of this and in testimony of Our paternal charity, We lovingly impart to you, Our beloved son, and to the whole flock entrusted to your care, the Apostolic Blessing."

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING.

(For the Soul of an Eccentric Man)

Lord of the understanding heart,
Who gave him ways that made him queer
To all his kind, save me, who lived quite near;
Who for some hidden reason set apart
This man for whom I pray,
Draw near to-day,
As he lies lingering by the Styx' lone bank;
Draw near, and let my glad tears thank
You for the soul of an eccentric man
Who opened gates to me; who, stronger than
Myself, drew me, despite myself, to his own plane—
A plane too high for hurts from those to whom
He seemed so queer, a plane so wide!
Lord, these are thankful tears that I have stood beside
This man who led my soul from room to room
Of wonder-living in Love's realm, who made
My woman's fearful soul so unafraid
That, see! I smile through tears, Lord, even as he waits
At Death's now opening gates!

—FLORA SEUFELT RIVOLA, in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

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