

ORANGE AND GREEN.

By Fr. Michael O'Flanagan.

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By way of preface, I am bound to acknowledge that there is a great deal in the Ulster question of which I am entirely ignorant, and therefore I feel it is a great presumption on my part to talk to an audience of men who when you were in your teens, and who before you came into your teens, discussed the Ulster question not merely with the tongue, but perhaps with the knuckles.

Proceeding, he referred to the many efforts that had been made to solve the Irish difficulty.

One of these was the Balfour method, but it failed. The Asquith method was the Home Rule Bill on the Statute Book, plus 'wait and see,' but this was killed by the rebellion of 1916. If this Home Rule Bill for all Ireland is but a sorry attempt to settle the Irish question, how much worse is a similar Home Rule Bill for part of Ireland? And so a new attempt was made which I may call the Redmond-Carson method. It is pretty evident that the Redmond-Carson method has been the sorry method of all. There is one other method which has also been attempted, and that I might call the conciliation method—the William O'Brien method. 'Put a good coat of sugar on a pill, give it to an Orangeman and he will swallow it. Give him soft talk, clap him on the back, and he'll be all right.' This method has been tried for the last 20 years, but the Orangemen is too wary an old bird to be caught by chaff.

Now, is there any other method we could try on the Orangeman? I confess I don't like the word coercion, whether it be applied in Ireland or in Belgium or in any other part of the world. Forty millions of people have tried to solve the Irish question by coercion for the last 100 years; forty millions of people have tried to coerce four millions and they have failed. The relative proportion of the forces was ten to one—and the ten failed to coerce the one—so, also, I believe that if three millions tried to coerce one million they would fail, too.

Therefore I can see no hope of solution in coercion. You might try to get along for a time, as England under the Union struggled to get along, but in the end, if the basis was coercion, it would fail; and I for one hope to God that it would.

It seems to me pretty clear that there is one other method that is bound to succeed, and that is the method that is typified in the flag Orange and Green, with the White for peace between. The men who devised the Sinn Féin flag at once thought of putting the Orange colour into the flag because they believed the Orange colour stood for something which made it worthy of being put into the flag. It was not put into the Irish flag as a sop to the Orangeman; it was not the sugar-coat of the Home Rule pill—but it was a recognition that hidden beneath the ugly husk of Orangeism there is a kernel, a precious kernel, that Ireland needs in her future development; and when we put the Orange and Green side by side, and when we salute the Irish flag, we honour the Orange and Green both equally.

Let us try and find out what there is in the Orange colour that makes for a democratic National movement. I take it that the Orange colour is mainly a protest against the domination of the Church in civil affairs. In other words, it is a protest against the system that was in vogue all down through the Middle Ages, and which was probably the best system in those times, but which I think, is not the best system at present. In those days Church and State were united. It was a common thing in the old times to have the Cardinal a Prime Minister, so that he was head of the Church and State and worked both as one. Isn't it a rather strange thing that at the Battle of the Boyne, which was the birthplace of the Orange colour, and where the Catholics of Ireland fought on the side of King James—isn't it a strange thing that the Pope was on the side of King William? Isn't it a rather strange thing that, although there may be some little respect all over Ireland for King William, there is no respect at all for King James, and there never was.

I may go a step further and say that the Pope and King William were on the right side and the Irish Catholics on the wrong side. At that time the King of France was a great rival of the Pope. The King of France was trying to get hold of the Church organisation in France,

and have it under his own power. The Pope resisted him, and one of the instruments that he used in lessening the power of the King of France was William of Orange. Now, if the Orange people curse the Pope they also add his ally at the Battle of the Boyne—King William. The present position of the Anglican Church in England is interesting. Before the time of Henry VIII, the union between the Church and State was so close in England that the Bishops in England were appointed by agreement between the Pope and the King.

At present the Protestant Bishops of England are appointed by the King, and the Government looks upon each of these bishops as much an official of the State as it does upon a judge. The English Government would like to have the Catholic Church in Ireland in the same position, and therefore it seems a somewhat natural thing for them to have officers of the Government to write to the Bishops of the Catholic Church directing them how to use their position. The Government doesn't like to arrest priests; it is an awkward thing to run a priest into jail if they have a finer system for dealing with him; but one bishop in Ireland rose and rebelled against that system. The Irish people have always been the saviours of Irish Nationality, and time and again the rank and file of the people were the saviours of God's Church in Ireland; and the Irish people will never allow it to become possible for the Catholic Church in Ireland to become the instrument of the English Government.

If ever the day came that the Bishops of Ireland should so far forget their position, the priests of Ireland would rebel against such a system, as they rebelled against the Veto seventy years ago. And if ever the priests of Ireland allowed themselves to be moulded into a fine machine for the carrying out of the work of Dublin Castle in Ireland the Catholic people of Ireland would rebel against such a system. If I thought that the day would ever come in Ireland that the people of Ireland would allow their priests to be dictated, or that the priests of Ireland would attempt to become a political machine to dictate politics; if I thought that the Irish people would accept such dictation; if I thought that the Irish Bishops would try to dictate their politics to the priests, and that the Irish people were going to accept such dictation; if I thought that the Bishops were going to take their

politics from the Pope, and that they would will to impose such dictation on the Irish people; if I thought that the secular life of the Irish people was to be held in the grip of an ecclesiastical organisation imposing its will on the people—I would go to Belfast and sign the Covenant.

I will never submit to see the liberties of the people placed in the hands and at the mercy of a Government that would be run in such a manner—never, never, never! But things are not going to be that way. Irish politics are going to be run under an Irish Republic, or under whatever Government is decided on under a free and independent Ireland, by the vote of the Irish people. We have examples of how Ireland is going to run its affairs in the last few elections. In North Roscommon the priests went into politics not as a machine, but as independent citizens. They have got no mandate to teach the people politics; they have just one man's right to Irish citizenship; none of them claimed to be more than one man in Irish civil life—but they shall never submit to be any less. Some people are afraid that the people would be scandalised if they saw the priests on different platforms in politics; but if the priests were all on the same side they ought to be scandalised because it would be an extraordinary thing if each individual priest came to the same conclusion on a political question. During the North Roscommon election perfect order and good humour prevailed; the proceedings did not disturb the friendship and harmony of any of the priests. They went out on opposite sides and met each other and were as friendly as ever afterwards. A high standard of political campaign would, in my opinion, be promoted if the priests went into these elections as ordinary citizens. In the first place the priest would lose undue influence on Irish politics, and the people would soon see that it was the man that counted, not the collar.

Privileged men in politics wreak much damage. There has been more or less of this in the past of Ireland, as there has been in the past of every other country. They have it on every side of Irish political life. I am not defending the Orange Order in this matter, as I do not think any more about it than I do of the Hibernian Order. I think that no society should mix up religion and politics. I know that the Ancient Order of Hibernians often did good work; societies of that kind often

do good work; and possibly there are circumstances under which such a society might be necessary as an answer to another society, but the principle is wrong. The Sinn Féin movement is a tolerant movement, and when people are brought under its inspiration they respect everybody else's politics, and a movement built on these lines is bound to succeed. I am confident there are men outside the ranks of the Catholics of Ireland who, when they feel the inspiration of that movement, will be led into it as they have been repeatedly led into similar movements in the past—as they were led into the Volunteer movement in 1782 and as they were led into the Tenant Right movement immediately after the Famine, the movement which swept the country, Orange and Green, in a few days, and which was killed by the operation of influences which I would advise my hearers to look up and study. If you do so, you will probably learn more about the main subject of my lecture.

Rev. J. K. McKenna, C.C., Cappagh, in seconding a vote of thanks to Father O'Flanagan, said he was at the moment not very hopeful that it would be as easy as Father O'Flanagan imagined to bring the Orangemen into the new movement.

Father McKenna has found the weak spot in my lecture, and I am thankful to him, because it gives me a chance of strengthening it. I urge my hearers not to worry about the Orangemen, but counsel you to go on with your work and prove yourselves men, and be led by men. While we have creatures like John Redmond leading us, our movement will not appeal to the Orangemen. Let you not worry about converting the Orangeman; let you forget his existence and go on and do a man's part. I believe that the manliness that is in our movement will find a responsive chord in the hearts of the non-Catholics of Ireland that will bring them into our ranks, or bring into our ranks the men of any race in Europe, because, after all, the Orangemen are white men like ourselves. I believe that if we have the right kind of a movement to show the Orangemen, the same as we had when the Tenant Right was in existence, these men will come into it. The Orangemen remained in the Tenant Right movement in spite of the

fact that self-interests were introduced, and left it as soon as it ceased to be a manly movement.

It was when on the dictation of the ecclesiastical authority Sadlier was returned for Sligo, and Keogh for Athlone, that the Protestant men left the Tenant Right movement. Let us go on the principle that we are as good as the Orangemen, and no better, and we would have converts from the Orange ranks before long. Referring to the Orangemen's hostility to the Pope, unfortunately things were done in the past in the name of the Pope which were not right. At present the Holy Father is showing an example to the world of the proper attitude of the Church towards political questions. His Holiness is acting as adviser to the Christian world and does not try to coerce anyone, and if all ecclesiastics would copy that attitude in politics they would soon have an Irish democracy, broad, tolerant, and reasonably democratic—a democracy that would make no distinction between Protestant and Catholic—and as soon as we show the Orangemen that that is the Ireland we desire to have, I do not think we will have any difficulty in getting all that is best in the Orange ranks to join our movement.