

THE EPIPHANY.

Sunday next, the sixth of January, is the feast of the Epiphany, the commemoration of the adoration of the Infant Saviour, by the Magi, or Wise Men of the East. It is sometimes called Little Christmas, also it is known as *Le Jour des Rois*. After that of Christmas it is the most important link in that chain of wonderful events that marked the dawn of redemption. Let us reflect for a few moments upon the meaning of the Epiphany!

The blackness of night hangs over space: the gray of the breaking day intrudes upon the darkness, and in the East a solitary star, more glorious than all its twinkling companions, grows pale in the flush of the dawn that flings its crimson and gold along the horizon and fringes the robes of departing Night. Soon the herald rays of an approaching day shoot their glories high into the heavens, and as the great round sun wheels its red disk above the line between earth and sky, the morning star disappears in the vault above, its sheen is lost in the resplendent beams of the day-god. It is thus in the natural order, it is so in the spiritual sphere, and in the wonderful harmony of the religious domain the same phenomena are apparent.

The clouds of paganism had hung over the world, the dark night of infidelity, barbarism and ignorance had lasted four thousand years. Like planets upon the night sky of antiquity the prophets, the patriarchs, and the chosen leaders of God's people shed a faint and distant gleam. But the time was rapidly approaching when a new dispensation was to commence. The gray dawn of approaching Salvation was giving way to the first flash of Redemption's day, when the Star of the Morning of Truth appeared in the Orient and pointed with its beams toward the little villages of Judea over which the glorious Orb of Divinity was about to rise.

"We beheld His Star in the East and have come to adore Him," said the Kings, these wise men, from the different ends of the earth. They represented in their three different races all the human family. The one was the descendant of Chem, the second of Ham, and the third of Japeth. They were of the white, the yellow and black divisions of the family of man. They came from different lands, and they were the exponents of all that the old world had of great and of good. They were kings or leaders in their respective countries; they were wealthy beyond all their fellow-countrymen; they were virtuous to a most remarkable degree; they were humble as the lowliest. One came from the classic shores of Greece, where art and science had adorned the civilization of the world and left models for the imitation and examples for the practice of untold generations yet to be. A second hailed from the home of the Mongolian, where laws as old as the memory of man had taught of a Supreme Being and the duties of the creature to the Creator. And a third came forth from that dark and mysterious continent whose burning heart throbs still in its fevered breast, far away from the reach of human progress, but on whose confines stand the imperishable monuments, "from the summit of which forty centuries look down" upon the world and tell to the beings of our day that they were old when yet the race was in its infancy and the mists of fable surrounded its existence.

Thus were not only the different branches of the human family, but also the three known continents, represented in that most glorious of all pilgrimages

to the shrine of the Divine Infant. The wealth, the wisdom, the power, the goodness of this world travelled with them to pay homage to the Son of God made man for the universal redemption of His creatures.

On the confines of a burning desert they met and immediately the Star of the Saviour appeared above the horizon and glittered upon their path. Forward they moved into the wilderness of sand, and they dreaded not the trip, for their faith was unshaken and they knew that the light before them—like the fiery pillar of captive Israel—would infallibly conduct them to the land of promise, to the most sacred spot on earth's broad face; the place where the Expected of nations was to be born King of the Jews. It mattered not that miles of dreary, sky-bound wastes extended between one oasis and another, it mattered not that the dread simoon might at any moment sweep down upon them and bury them in the ocean of sand, it mattered not that the fitful and deceptive mirage might arise at any point to lead them astray; the Star shone before them and they followed. And great was their reward, for they crossed the desert in safety, they avoided all the perils of such a wonderful journey, and, at the proper time, they descended the road that leads to Jerusalem. Yonder, beyond the blue hills and jagged rocks that rise from out the valley of the Jordan, lay the city of David, and toward it moved the Star that they had seen in the East. Still inspired by an inextinguishable faith they followed the luminary: At last, over the cave where the Messiah lay, the orb of miraculous splendor paused, and drawing in all its diverging rays, it concentrated them upon the place where the King of Heaven reposed.

It was only then that the Magi knew that they had found the One for whom they sought. Going in they adored; and, after returning thanks to God, they presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold representing the wealth of earth, which all belongs to Him, and which men should ever lay at His feet as a token of their submission to His holy will; frankincense representing sacrifice, as a mark of their faith in His Divinity, which alone can claim such adoration from man; myrrh representing sufferings, such as He was about to undergo, and the sufferings of humanity that are ever sanctified by being placed at the feet of the Saviour. Thus was it that these three men, in their nationalities, their countries, their races, their journey, their adoration and their gifts stand forth upon the background of the past and serve as models whereby all future generations should act, in order that the Founder of Christianity may receive the meed that is His and which each of His creatures owes Him.

Over the face of the world is the human family scattered, and the Son of God became man for the redemption of all, without exception. The different races of men are all bound to turn their steps in the direction of Bethlehem. The wealthy and the gifted as well as the indigent and the lowly are upon an equal footing in presence of the Divine. Standing on the confines of the great desert of life we all are obliged to start out and to face the countless dangers that surround the path we must follow. There may be, here and there, a resting place along the way, but it is uncertain, and under its shade trees and beside its fountains we are not allowed to tarry. The simoons of passions and sin sweep in endless cyclones over the surface of the years before us; it is almost impossible to escape them. There is no map

upon the face of the desert, and no landmarks to guide our footsteps. But, as for the Magi of Old, the Star of Faith shines brightly upon the horizon before us. By following it through all the perils of that journey, it will most certainly conduct us to the land of our promise, to the gates of the "celestial Jerusalem," to the Bethlehem of our existence—the place where the loving Saviour awaits us all.

But there is another lesson to be drawn from the Wise Men. We must come with gifts, according to our Faith. We must lay at His feet all the prosperity, the joy, the health, the happiness, and the wealth that He has bestowed upon us—for all belongs to Him, and tomorrow He can take what to-day He gives; we must place before Him all our offerings in the way of a tribute to His Divinity, and constantly immolate ourselves at His shrine in a sacrifice that cannot be other than acceptable; we must deposit at His Crib the burden of our sorrows, our sufferings, our poverty, our privations, our crosses and our miseries, in order that He may direct the Recording Angel to mark them to our credit in the indelible Book of Life. Such is the way in which we should celebrate the Feast of Sunday, the 6th instant, the grand Festival of the Epiphany.

At the very dawning of the New Year we find the Infant God giving the first evidence of His mission—"not to destroy the law but to fulfil it"—as He submits to the customs and enactments of the State. He who is above all law was the first to preach obedience to legal authority, by performing, to the last letter, the code of the people. Taking this grand lesson to heart and properly reflecting upon the significance of the "Adoration of the Magi," it must necessarily follow that our future lives will be governed by their precepts and examples, and the consequence must be that the Star which we beheld, upon our path, at the beginning of our years, shall conduct us securely to the Adored of all ages.

ANCIENT IRISH POETRY.

The literary genius of the ancient Irish, and its influence on the modern world, receives the following tribute from the *Quarterly Review*, a periodical in which anything of the kind would hardly be looked for:

"The Celtic tree, the oak which bears within it a heart of fire, is not dead. Ossian himself, coming with ancient harp from the fairy mound, and playing the melodies which still breathe in the under-world, has held our moderns captive. Nothing now touches the finest chords in poetry unless it has some reminiscence of the days that are no more. It is not Virgilian but Celtic pathos which has stolen into our enchanted cup, brimming over with the wine of the gods. As the foreground of civilized life becomes a battle-ground, with squadrons of misery in their rags and tatters thronging to it, the high distant light grows, as by some law of compensation, more transparent and aerial; the fine colors of sunset, as delicate as any dream, mount up and take their station in the sky.

For the times are changing, and never was there an age when the poet, seeking inspiration among the "grassy barrows of the happier dead," might find it more easily. \* \* \* In this grass-grown Celtic literature, why should he not find the inspiring loneliness that will enable him to breathe and muse? The land of memories with the purple hills, its changing April sky, and the mists which have entangled in their folds a golden gleam, is surely Innisfall, overspread with magic forests from the beginning, and keeping still as a fringe for its enchanted lakes the arbutus and the rowan trees. Its ancient stones have carved upon them the Ogham writing; they whisper of gods and heroes in a speech hard to be understood, so long has it passed from the minds of men. As the poet looks around him in that solitude, he will catch a glimpse of forms that, like

the glorious clouds that forever haunt Niagara, rise up and turn to shapes of loveliness, melting in the sunlight while he watches them. Afar off, from the fairy hill, come in faintest breathings the music which has enthralled the bardic poets, from Ossian down to Carolan, and which Moore, though he could not speak their language, has married to verse as spiritual and light-moving as if Finvara himself had chanted it. And remote, as in sullen pride, from these trooping elves with their raiment of silk and their fantastic merriment, the lonely but more awful spirits of the waste have set their dwelling—the Leannan Sidhe, who has driven the poet insane with love of her, and the monsters of the brook or the glen lying in wait until mortals shall venture nigh to them. Yet more distant, in a glimmering dawn, appear but as clouds on the horizon those that ruled as gods in Erin, strange, doubtful lineaments, uncertain if of the sky or the nether deeps. Their names survive—the rest is conjecture and mere oblivion.

But, unlike the countries of to-day which are covered over with Hebrew, Hellenic and Roman institutions, so that the primitive life has been hidden away as in a palimpsest, this island neither banished nor ceased to believe in its Druids, magicians and elemental tribes. Its faith was large enough, or else so childlike, that it could accept in all its fullness the doctrine that life is everywhere, and that matter, how lowly soever we deem it, has the power to influence the spirit for good or evil—*plena omnia Jovis*. Strict science throws out many a shining thread in the direction of this old theology. But the poet? How can he sing at all, unless, in some fine sense, he gives to the universe a life that is more than allegory and symbol? It is for him in his brave solitude to confront our narrow-chested existence of the cities; to reveal the true son-god, who is man caught up to a glory not his own; and by the wisdom which has in its permitted degree learned the secret of eternal things, to take from the strength of the crowd its rudeness, and to set forth in his mystic song the beauty of a life at one with nature."

EUGENE KELLY.

DEATH OF ONE OF NEW YORK'S FOREMOST CATHOLIC CITIZENS.

Eugene Kelly, the well known banker, and one of the wealthiest and most prominent Catholic laymen in this country, died at his home in New York City on Wednesday. He was stricken with paralysis last week and his advanced-age made hopes of recovery doubtful from the first. Mr. Kelly was in his 87th year at the time of his death. He was born in Trellick, county Tyrone, Ireland, in 1807, and came to this country at the age of 20. His first position was that of a clerk in Donnelly Bros' dry goods store. He next tried gold mining in 1849, and later started the San Francisco banking house of Donohue, Kelly & Ralston. During the war he moved his business to New York, and lost considerable sums of money in Southern loans. In spite of this, however, he amassed money at a great rate, until, when he retired from active business a few years ago, he was reputed to be worth between \$12,000,000 and \$15,000,000.

Mr. Kelly also took a deep interest in Catholic affairs and the Irish movement. He was one of the oldest trustees of St. Patrick's Cathedral and of the Catholic Orphan Asylum, and Catholic Protector, and was active in nearly all the New York Catholic charities. He was one of the founders of the Catholic University, to which he gave \$50,000. In politics he was always a strong Democrat; but, although his name has often been suggested for a number of high offices the only one he would ever accept was that of Commissioner of Education—an unsalaried office in which he served several terms. He was one of the first to welcome Parnell to this country and his interest in the Irish cause is shown by his gift of \$50,000 to the Parliamentary fund when the party was in deep straits. Some years ago the Pope conferred on him the honorary appointment of "Comerier de Cape et d'Epee" in his household for his gifts to the Church.

The Boston Transcript kept a record of football accidents during the last season, of about seven weeks. Three players were killed, one was paralyzed, one became insane and nearly fifty others were injured, some seriously.