

HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

THE SAINT OF THE EMERALD ISLE.

On the seventeenth day of this month thousands of the sons of Erin and hundreds more who can claim no connection with the green isle will be remembering the good St. Patrick and wearing the shamrock,—

"The dear little Shamrock, the sweet little Shamrock
The dear little, sweet little Shamrock of Ireland."

To the unthinking, St. Patrick's claim to the world's remembrance lies in that he banished snakes from Ireland, proven say they, by the fact that Ireland has no snakes. But history assigns to him a higher place on the role of fame than the ridding of his country of obnoxious reptiles would merit.

The authentic history of Ireland begins with St. Patrick, who, strange to say was not an Irishman, having first seen the light of day in sunny France. From his father's farm he was carried as a captive by a band of roving pirates into Ireland, being then in his sixteenth year. They sold him as a slave to a petty chief, in whose service he remained for about six years. At the end of that time fortune favored him in an attempt to escape, and he returned to France.

He became a monk and rose high in the Christian church. But in the seclusion and quiet of the priestly life his thoughts often turned back to those six years of enforced habitation in a strange land. He remembered the barbarism, the cruelties and distresses of the people whose country had been made so beautiful by nature, and there came to him the high resolve to carry to these darkened minds the light and liberty of Christianity.

The pope sanctioned the proposal and in 432 A. D. the gentle priest returned to the scene of his captivity. The sincerity of his purpose added to the power of his message, and wherever he went throughout the island conviction and conversion followed, kings and chieftains as well as the common people hearing him gladly. St. Patrick had found Ireland pagan, but when he died the power of the old gods had vanished forever. The movement spread far beyond the confines of the island. St. Patrick's disciples carried the message to Scotland and England. Anglo Saxons were indebted to the Irish mainly for Christianity and entirely for letters. Ireland became famous throughout Europe for her excellent schools, and students flocked thither from all parts of the continent.

Appropriately with the national saint originated the national emblem. With the green grass for a floor and the blue sky as a roof he was preaching one day to the usual throng of eager listeners on the doctrine of the Trinity. He read in their perplexed faces the difficulty they had in understanding the union of the Three in One, so, stooping down he plucked the delicate green leaf of the shamrock, held it up to their view and showed them the three leaflets, each distinct in form and yet joined to its brothers to make a perfect leaf. So the modest little trefoil used by the Saint to explain the great mystery became the national emblem of the country. Less attractive than the rose, less vigorous than the thistle, yet it is, perhaps, the best loved of all.

SEVEN OAKS.

The credit of having made the first settlement in the North West is due to the Earl of Selkirk and dates back nearly a century. Lord Selkirk had visited Montreal and had learned there enough of the West to persuade him that it was a "good land and large" and he conceived the idea of obtaining a portion of it for the purpose of settling thereon certain families from his Scottish estates.

In pursuance of this plan he obtained in 1811, a large grant of land in the Red River Valley from the Hudson Bay Company, on condition that he should establish a colony upon it. The North West Company of traders, whose headquarters were at Fort William, objected



MONUMENT AT SEVEN OAKS, MAN.

strenuously to this arrangement on the ground that the settlement was a plan of the Hudson Bay Co. to monopolize the trade of the country, and further that neither Lord Selkirk nor the Hudson Bay Co. had any right to the territory in question.

Notwithstanding the hostile attitude of this company the first settlers were brought out in 1812, coming by way of Hudson Bay and York Factory to the Red River which they reached in May. More came later, until by 1814 the settlement had reached some strength and had been trained by Miles Macdonell in the use of arms. Then a notice was sent to the North West Company warning them to quit within six months the posts held by them at the forks of the Red River. This was the first act of the Hudson Bay Co. to claim exclusive rights and it exasperated their rivals whose bitter feelings were directed against the settlers.

Discouraged by this constant strife, and finding the culture of the soil and the raising of a crop much more difficult than they had expected, many of the settlers became scattered. Some made their way back to Hudson Bay, and many even went east into "Canada."

To the aid of the weakened colony came Governor Semple in 1815 with a large contingent. His coming was the signal for trouble of a more serious kind. Each trading company now directed attacks against the forts of the other. Fort Gibraltar and the fort at Pembina were lost to the North West Company, and Fort Qu'Appelle, which held their provisions, with difficulty remained firm. It was thought safer to send some of these supplies to Lake Winnipeg and an escort of over fifty Indians and Half-breeds was chosen to protect it in transportation. This guard received orders to make a detour on the route in order to avoid Fort Douglas where Governor Semple was stationed. They did so, but he managed to receive information of their approach, and on June 19th, 1816, he with twenty-seven men, marched out to intercept them. As they drew near the other party spread out in a semi-circle and partially surrounded them. A French-Canadian named Bouchier rode up to Governor Semple and they exchanged a few words in low tones. The governor seized

in the affairs of the settlement founded by a member of her family is not surprising.

THE WEARIN' O' THE GREEN.

Oh Paddy, dear, an' did ye hear
The news that's goin' round?
The shamrock is by law forbid
To grow on Irish ground.
No more St. Patrick's day we'll keep,
His color can't be seen!
For there's a cruel law agin
The wearin' o' the green!

I met wid Napper Tandy, an'
He took me by the hand,
And he said, "How's poor ould Ire-
land,
And how does she stand?"
She's the most distressful country
That iver yet was seen,
For they're hangin' men and women
there
For wearin' o' the green.

An' if the color we must wear
Is England's cruel red,
Let it remind us of the blood
That Ireland has shed.
Then pull the shamrock from your hat
And throw it on the sod—
And never fear, 'twill take root there
Tho' under foot 'tis trod.

When law can stop the blades of grass
From growin' as they grow,
And when the leaves in summer-time
Their color dare not show,
Then I will change the color too
I wear in my caubeen;
But till that day, plaze God, I'll stick
To wearin' o' the green.
(Old Irish Ballad. Author unknown.)

LITERARY SOCIETY PRIZE-WINNERS.

The second competition in connection with the F. A. & H. J. Literary Society has closed, and after considerable difficulty the awards have been made as follows: Mrs. Grabham, Wapella, carries off the first prize, and Molly Greybank obtains second place.

Several whose essays did credit to their writers went beyond the 200-word limit, and these manuscripts were reluctantly put by. One of the writers recognizing the fact that he could not do justice to the subject in such circumscribed space, stopped abruptly before he had got beyond the preliminaries to the actual proposal. Considering the promising beginning he made the Literary Society would do well to accept his offer to tell them the rest on receipt of an addressed envelope and a stamp, and even to accept his suggestion to send the stamp loose. The sex of the one writer who advocated enlisting the services of pen and ink in popping the momentous question is not a difficult conundrum to guess.

THE THIRD COMPETITION.

Since by reason of the eccentricities of new machinery, our issues are at present somewhat delayed in delivery, essays on the March topic will be received up to March 22nd instead of the 15th. The question for discussion: "Resolved that a High School Education Qualifying for a Teacher's Certificate is of More Advantage to a Farmer than Education Qualifying him for a Diploma from a Business College."

Essays must contain more than 500 words. Either side of the subject may be chosen for discussion and the awards will be made to the persons on each side who best support their chosen position with arguments. Many of our readers will be some thing of this nature.