

above all and beyond all, it is the greatest religious festival of the Irish people.

It is, gentlemen, on this day that the heart of every true Irishman wherever he may be, swells with a just pride; it is on this day that he feels the warmth of that Irish blood as it flows with increased speed through his veins; it is on this day that every fibre of his being tingles with inexpressible feeling. Yes, on this festive occasion his very soul is lifted to the Almighty in an outpouring of gratitude.

Why? Because the Irish race holds and ever has held that the most glorious fact in its history is the possession of and perseverance in the Catholic faith. This fact has been demonstrated by centuries of persecution, which have drawn forth from them, a manifestation of heroism and adhesion to faith that stands unsurpassed in the world's history.

To-day, the feast day of that glorious patron, who first planted the true religion on Erin's fruitful soil, it is fitting that we gather round this festive board, to honor that great champion of our faith, to commemorate a life so generously devoted to the cause of christianity and to attest our love and loyalty to those who with martyr blood have guarded and preserved that faith tho' it cost them their all.

What shall I say in this brief discourse of Patrick and the Irish people? I will pass by in silence, the controversy concerning the actual place of the Saint's birth, his early life, his captivity and the long years of preparation. I will not speak of his journey into the Emerald Isle, of his apostolic labors, or of the peaceful conversion of the Island, without the shedding of one drop of blood; with these, as with many other striking events of his life, each and all are entirely familiar. However, it seems but natural, that on this day, we the sons of Irish parents should gladly wander back through the lapses of ages and make at least a hurried review of Ireland's history, of every page of which we may be justly proud.

Ireland has a glorious history, one that commands the admiration of the world! But, what a mingling of joy and of sorrow, do we not find enrolled on its pages!

Where do records exhibit, a fairer picture than that of Erin in her golden age? Her fame had reached the remotest parts of the earth. She stood pre-eminent among the nations of the globe, wearing the proudest of titles that of "Isle of Saints and Scholars." But to this most glorious epoch, succeeded most bitter trials,