

“THE TRIUMPH OF FAILURE.”

By REV. WILLIAM BARRY, D.D.

I remember, long ago, the title of a book of John Mitchel's which was called "The Last Conquest of Ireland—Perhaps." Without reading the volume, one could be pretty sure that it was dealing with conquests achieved by force of arms rather than force of ideas, and that it bore his name as a defiance, not to surrender. What Irishman, indeed, of ancient stock and St. Patrick's religion will ever admit that the Green Isle can be effectually conquered, or its people held down, so that they shall not rise "sobbing from the soil," as I heard it expressed with admirable vivacity? But alas, there is a conquest more subtle, more enduring, than comes after the foughten field—a conquest of poetry by prose, of romance by commercialism, or religion by worldliness, of the ideal by the vulgar. And what should we say who belong to the greater Ireland, if our sacred Island home, the Erin of saints and sages, with all its enchanting memories from of old, were at length to be subdued in this way and become a province of London, a smaller England—in a word, to speak it sadly and mockingly, a mere West Britain? Better far it should sink into the deep, with the fairy mists of the Tuatha De Danaan floating above it, an immortal sorrow unstained by touches of the base modern coal-smoke, unweaved by the cries and screaming of a multitude given over to Mammon. What is Ireland making of her destiny? What of her message to the nations?

The other day I opened Father Sheehan's volume, not suspecting its contents; and I read and read and was delighted, and somewhat amazed, on finding at last an Irishman at home, a Catholic and a priest, who saw the perils of this new and threatening conquest, shuddered at them, called his country to arms against them. He had written a story; but he was preaching a crusade. With learning in plenty, Greek, German, English, secular and sacred; with flashes and gleams, undoubtedly of genius; in a language always touching, often exquisite; and deeper than all these fine qualities which become an eloquent style was the austere, kindly, imaginative mood, Celtic and none other, that seemed to be falling out of a world not worthy of it. I will allow the severe critic to weaken my praise with as much water as he can draw from Castalian springs; but I do maintain that the spirit, the temper of this very remarkable tale is all that I have said—heroic, inspiring, Irish of the days that are no more; it is a trumpet call to our people. Father Sheehan's heart years over the youth of Ireland, witnessing in what deadly danger they stand at this moment—a youth such as the Almighty never created a second innocent, affectionate, clear-eyed, gentle, ardent as the morning; but how shall they keep their fair nature in this utilitarian age? The peasant, the child—in these we may still perceive what the Celtic soul can reach of purity and poetry, miracles unattainable by our debasing so-called education, which stifles where it should cherish, and runs all to competition, to prizes, to places, to the worship of money. Teach the Irish children on this beautiful system, and watch the result. A Pagan education at the crammer's means either indifference in religion or the of a National School education has too often meant the very thing that Dr. Whately aimed at, taking from the Celt every charm that was his own, to make him a vile caricature of the Saxon. This is the conquest of Ireland which is enough to break one's heart. Shall it succeed? It will, most assuredly, unless Father Sheehan's way is followed—the way which leads us back to our saints, and which is a pilgrimage of learning and love to Clonmacnoise, and Glendalough, and Bangor, and Lismore, seeking inspiration where alone an ancient folk like ours can find it, in our heroes and our history and our religion. We never can be English. If we degrade ourselves into West Britons, who will prefer the tawdry imitation before the original? We shall deserve our fate, and there will be none to pity us.

I am forgetting to tell you the story which is in these books. But the story, though full of interest and movement, is less to me than the moral. Two figures, Geoffrey Austin and Charlie Travers, furnish a contrast, imaginable certainly, and I suppose often realized, among Irish young men of the middle class! It is our Sphinx, our problem, and will devour us all, gentle and simple, if

we do not somehow transform it by faith in the beauty which God has made, and in the religion wherof our Lord Jesus Christ is the message and substance. But these lads, with their unsullied Irish hearts and their passion for learning, are sent to Mayfield—a house where the crammer reigns supreme—to prepare against some London examinations. The old story of Irishmen leaving their home in the West—the wild, poetic, sea-beaten West of Finnvarra, and the cliffs of Moher—betaking themselves to Dublin, and there, without warning or safeguard, plunged into the modern chaos. One could match it to a hair from the novels of Turgenieff, and the parables of Tolstoy. And, up to a given point, may be studied also in M. Paul Bourget, who discovered, by no means too soon, where this life of the secularized school, and discipleship to science and literature, divorced from religion, will lead its votaries. The Catholic who is successful as a lawyer, official, journalist, or what not, and who never goes to Mass—ought we to be proud of him? The learned youth, utterly ignorant of Church history, Christian philosophy, and even of his forefathers' sufferings in a Divine cause—it appears that he flourishes under competitive examination. The parasitic society people, who despise everything Irish, and are such barbarians as to have lost all judgment as regards the beautiful and the antique, reckoning that to be art which is only the fashion—one knows where to look for them whenever the Lord Lieutenant holds his Court, laughed at by the satirical Thackeray. And so these two youngmen are in danger of losing their souls. If the training succeeds they are ruined—the Celt will no longer be religious, the Catholic will have bartered his living faith for marks in an honors' list. Multiply the instances, and where is your Erin of the saints and sages?

Happily, they are saved by failure. Charlie Travers, a "beautiful soul," if ever there was one, breaks down in his exams, is taken in hand by Father Aidan—the strong man of the story—dedicates himself to be the only lay Apostle of his countrymen, and dies a martyr to calumny. He is the true picture of "The Christian," so badly drawn two years ago by Mr. Hall Caine, in a book concerning which I have said my say elsewhere. But I cannot fancy the middle-aged Irish layman reading of Charlie Travers without some dull twinges, or even poignant throbs of anguish, as at the remembrance of the dreams of his youth, unfulfilled and accusing. Why has no single Charlie Travers come forward in a Catholic nation, to take up this high redeeming task, and to be a spiritual O'Connell or a lay Father Mathew? Is there not a cause? Let me quote one passage—the sum of Father Sheehan's contention. It is severe; but suppose it is true, whom are we to blame, the preacher of an audience that requires such a lesson? Charlie Travers, then, a "young advocate" in Dublin, inveighed "against all modern vices of society, its love of ease, its mad passion for wealth and distinction, its Godless education, its dread of trial, its hatred of sickness or poverty, its want of charity towards the fallen and afflicted. He pointed out that between the well-to-do city merchant, who picks his teeth after his luncheon and poises his heavy seals in his hands, and goes to his Turkish bath in the afternoon, and sits down to a stately dinner, and stares at half-naked women from his opera-box—and the cultured Pagan, who wrapping his toga around him, strolled down to the baths of Vespasian, or had supped with Lucullus, and frequented the circus in the days of ancient Rome, there was not a hair's breadth of difference. It is true the latter laughed at his gods, and jested about the augurs; but the city man, too, would not spare a clover mot about a priest, and would send his women and children to church on Sunday. Where, exactly, does Christianity come in? Not in our personal habits—they are sensuous and voluptuous; not in the splendor of our churches—they are vile and contemptible compared to a Roman or Grecian temple; not in the well-being of the working-classes—they were never so poor, ill-educated, comfortless; not in the extirpation of vice, as our streets testify; not in the checking of drunkenness, as our distilleries testify. Surely that Divine Man of Judea had some message for the world besides the platitudes of philosophers or the divination of augurs. Yet where is it visible or audible in the world?"

It is impossible not to ask, on hearing this frightful description,

"What are Catholic laymen doing?" The author replies:

"Absolutely nothing, either defensive or aggressive. With the exception of a few Vincent de Paul societies, there is absolutely no organization in (Ireland) that would combine in one solid body all the zeal and talent of thousands of young men who would dare and do a great deal for Jesus Christ, but who are now kept back for want of an inspiring voice." Against the marshalled forces of evil there stand on the side of Christ, "a handful of priests, a few weak women, a literature that is saved from ridicule barely by its good intention, and a few saints, who lift their hands like Moses on the mountain, while the armies of Israel are hard pressed in the valleys of humiliation and defeat." In exchange for the lofty idealism which created missionaries and martyrs, Ireland is now offered culture—that is to say, the cheapening of "olographs and the buffo opera, broken French and ungrammatical German"; but the "liquor interest" must be respected, nor can "medieval ideas" be allowed to stop the way of "modern civilization."

Do not imagine that if religion is to hold its own, in Father Sheehan's opinion culture must be given up. Let things be called by their right names. This branch of money-making, with exams for its stock Exchange, is not, nor never was, culture in any tolerable sense. Yet the finest scholarship ought to receive baptism, and stands in need of grace, and will turn to poison without prayer. Geoffrey Austin is the scholar who nearly loses his faith, and loses the strength and comfort of it altogether, because he never has best shown the true relation of culture to Catholicism. He is saved indeed at last, yet so as by fire. And here I am reminded of an august memory which, though invisible, floats over this volume at its highest, and might have guided the writer's pen. By an extraordinary Providence, now more than forty years ago, there went from Oxford to Dublin a scholar of the pattern dear to the Irish heart; John Henry Newman became first rector of the Catholic University; his task was to draw out a rational scheme of studies and sciences, viewed in their place according to the Church's principles, to train the laity of Ireland, to prepare them against this very day, whose advent he prophesied, and to convert its perils into motives of learning and piety. By what series of mistakes did that enterprise issue in disaster? But his lectures may still be read; they ought surely to be read; if young Irishmen, students in seminaries of whatever kind, did read them and did lay them to heart in all sincerity, Geoffrey Austin would be a rare exception, and Charlie Travers would find by his side, no longer a pessimist and a Pagan, but the right hand of the priest.

I had much more to say. But the book will say it, and say it exceedingly well. For the many who want an exciting story, full of adventure, and the not so many who take delight in wisdom and epigram, "The Triumph of Failure" comes at a good season. It will naturally be taken with the introduction, "Geoffrey Austin, Student," which leads up to it. Nevertheless, I look on Father Sheehan's last writing as, in the language of his favorite Jean Paul Richter, "one of those books which are half battles"—a story indeed, and excellent literature, but something else beyond literature. It is a challenge, a rebuke, an onset against the enemy of us all; against the commonplace ambitions, and woeful victories, and vulgar triumphs, associated everywhere with "Liberalism" of which its former advocates are beginning to feel ashamed. I say "Liberalism," but I am not thinking of politics, I will say "Enlightenment," if I may be allowed to qualify it with the names of Voltaire and Bentham and Friedrich Strauss. Are these, or are their like, to be set up and worshipped as gods on the Hill of Tara? God forbid. Yet, in a lecture which I do not think most Irishmen even glanced at Cardinal Newman foresaw and described the rising cloud. His voice was not heeded. Pray heaven that this fresh warning from the lips of one of our own kindred scholar and a priest, may not prove likewise in vain!—Liverpool Catholic Times.

SWEATSHOP UNIFORMS.

The report comes from Washington that Brigadier General Ludington, Quartermaster-General has determined to prevent hereafter the manufacture of clothing for troops under the "sweat shop" system.

This matter has been under careful investigation by Lieutenant Colonel William S. Patten, one of General Ludington's assistants, who has been considering a plan for putting an end to the practice several New York contractors are known to have pursued of cutting out the clothing and then giving the pieces to tenement families to sew together. Lieut.-Col.

Patten has been assisted by the regular inspectors of the government, by the New York State authorities and by the contractors themselves, who have frequently made reports against each other. It is understood that the Quartermaster General will hereafter award contracts to firms calling only for such quantities of clothing as they shall be able to furnish with their own facilities.

MGR. CONATY AT BROOKLYN.

Mgr. Thomas J. Conaty, rector of the Catholic University, in a lecture on "The Church and the Modern Idea of Education" before the Knights of Columbus, in the Montauk Theatre in Brooklyn, recently cited "The Christian" and "Robert Elsemere" as examples of popular literature which tended to the promotion of a false and non-religious culture.

"The Catholic Church is talked of but little by those who talk most of education," he said. "Traditions of three centuries have blinded men to the fact that the Church is a most potent educational factor. In the modern theory, so called, of education there are certain shibboleths. Intellect is one of them. Men will say that religion is not the field for the highest intellect, because it treats of the highest intelligence.

"Science is another shibboleth. Great is the God of science, and intellect is his prophet. Science has for a long time had its day, but misery and evil are still in the world, and the great question of life is still as far away as ever from the student who seeks to solve it by the light of science alone. Science has its realm in discovering the forces of nature, but the supernatural belongs to God. Thank God, the pendulum that swung to agnosticism in science is swinging back again!

"Culture is another cry. We are all readers these days. We read everything, from the small newspaper with the 'patent inside' to the great metropolitan daily, with its engines of information at work in every corner of the world. Yet in the newspapers we find pictures of crime and details of scandal given to us with all the skill of the trained modern writer. It is the same in our novels. Why? Because the writer of to-day is writing for the market, not for the truth.

"The realism of the novel is what makes it popular. There is no objection to realism if it is realism of the right kind, the realism of honest manhood. That is the realism our novelists will not give us. It is the realism of mud, of filth, which pays. The novel of to-day aims to be philosophical, psychological, social. But it is without the Christian idea. The agnostic rules, and we rave over him and flock to the theatre where his dramatized novel is presented.

"When Mrs. Ward wrote 'Robert Elsemere,' she did not make Christianity strong in its contest with agnosticism. Her minister was only a straw minister, whom she constructed out of her mind in order that his agnostic antagonists might knock him down. He wasn't even a good Anglican minister.

"Then we have had 'The Christian,' which has been advertised and nauseum. Do you think John Storm is a representative of the Christian ministry, strong in faith? Is Glory Quayle a representative of true womanhood, with the modesty, purity and unselfish, gentle traits of the true woman? No. The novelists of to-day give the realism of the man without the soul of the man.

"Humanity is another cry. Humanity! We went to war for humanity, though not every one believes it now. (Laughter.) It was too thin all the way through. It was a good word to conjure with. There is plenty of work for humanity at our own door." Mgr. Conaty said that in education the Church takes all the elements he mentioned, imbues them with the spirit of Christ and unites them in the work of Christian education.

A GENEROUS BRIDE.

London, Jan. 28.—Patti has settled \$15,000 a year on Baron Cederstrom, her husband. The New York World's London correspondent says the Baron's own income is only \$750. The diva made this settlement entirely on her own notion, and presented the deeds as her wedding gift the day before the wedding. The Baron was taken by surprise.

AN IRISH CENTENARIAN DEAD.

James Kelly, aged 101 years, died Jan. 18 at his home, 51 Pleasant st., Waterbury, Conn.

Mr. Kelly was born in Queen's County, Ireland, in October, 1797, and came to America over fifty years ago. The deceased was in possession of all his faculties up to the time of his death, and could tell some thrilling anecdotes of his experiences in Ireland from the time of his youth up

to the famine of 1847, when he came to this country. He had a wonderful retentive memory, and could talk about things that took place in Ireland seventy-five or eighty years ago as though they were events of yesterday. He was a baby in arms during the awful scenes which occurred in that country during the rebellion of 1798, was 6 years old at the time of the execution of Robert Emmet, and was well able to take a hand in what was going on when O'Connell appeared on the scene. The meeting of the Repeal Association and the tithe war were events quite fresh in his mind.

GOLD IN IRELAND.

According to stories published with slight variation of fact in the Limerick, Belfast, and Dublin papers, a veritable Klondike is about to be developed in Ireland in the county of Wicklow. Years ago, before modern mining appliances were in use, copper, lead and silver were profitably worked in Wicklow; but owing to the slump in the price of these metals, most of the workings were long ago deserted. It seems that for the last year or two peasants have made there fairly good discoveries of alluvial, but have kept the matter a close secret, sending only enough gold to Dublin for their passing needs.

HEALTH OF HIS HOLINESS.

Dr. Laponi, the Pope's physician, according to a New York daily, said a few days ago, in answer to enquiries about the exact condition of His Holiness.

I am convinced that the Pope has a physique so happily constituted that he can yet live a number of years said Dr. Laponi.

Absolute repose had caused all the recently alarming symptoms to disappear.

But His Holiness sacrifices himself too much. He works beyond his strength. He does not obey the voice of his physicians.

Despite all this there is a most encouraging symptom. The Pope always preserves his appetite and sleeps well.

HIS NERVE SAVED HIS LIFE.

Dinner was just finished, says the Scottish American, and several English officers were sitting around the table. The conversation had not been animated, but there came a lull, as the night was too hot for small talk. The major of the regiment, a clean-cut man of fifty-five, turned toward his next neighbor at the table, a young subaltern, who was leaning back in his chair, with his hands clasped behind his head, staring through the cigar smoke at the ceiling. The Major was slowly looking the man over, from his handsome face down, when, with a sudden alertness and in a quiet, steady voice, he said:

"Don't move please, Mr. Carruthers; I want to try an experiment with you. Don't move a muscle."

"All right, Major," replied the subaltern, without turning his eyes. "Hain't the least idea of moving. I assure you what's the game?"

By this time all the others were listening in a lazily expectant way.

"Do you think," continued the Major, and his voice trembled just a little, "that you can keep absolutely still for, say, two minutes—to save your life?"

"Are you joking?"

"On the contrary, move a muscle and you are a dead man. Can you stand the strain?"

The subaltern barely whispered, "Yes," and his face paled slightly.

"Burke," said the Major, addressing an officer across the table, "pour some of that milk into a saucer and set it on the floor here just at the back of me. Gently, man. Quiet!"

Not a word was spoken as the officer carefully filled the saucer, walked with it carefully around the table and set it down where the Major had indicated on the floor. Like a marble statue sat the young subaltern in his white linen clothes, while a cobra di capello, which had been crawling up the leg of his trousers, slowly raised its head, then turned, descended to the floor and glided toward the milk. Suddenly the silence was broken by a report from the Major's revolver, and the snake lay dead on the floor.

"Thank you, Major," said the subaltern, as the two shook hands warmly, "you have saved my life."

"You're welcome, my boy," replied the senior, "but you did your share."

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A VICTIM OF NEURALGIA.

MRS. ROBERTS, OF MONTREAL, TELLS A WONDERFUL STORY.

She Was a Sufferer for Some Seven Years, and Medical Treatment Failed to Give Her More Than Temporary Relief—A Herald Reporter Investigates the Case.

From the Montreal Herald.

"I thought it something wonderful when I went three days without being sick," said Mrs. Annie Roberts to a representative of the Montreal Herald, referring to her remarkable recovery from an illness of over seven long years. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts reside at 34 Wolfe street, Montreal, and the reporter was cordially welcomed when he went to enquire as to the truth of the report that Mrs. Roberts had been restored to health through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts came to Canada from England a little more than five years ago, and Mrs. Roberts' illness began while still in the Old Country. "I was really the victim of a combination of troubles," says Mrs. Roberts. "For seven years, neuralgia, with all its excruciating pains, has been my almost constant attendant. Added to this I was attacked by rheumatism and palpitation of the heart, and for the last five years, was not able to get out of doors during the winter months. Sometimes I felt as though those terrible pains in the head would drive me mad; my nerves were all unstrung and a knock at the door would send me nearly crazy. I was treated at different times by four doctors since coming to Montreal, but without any lasting good, and I had given up hope of ever being better on this side of the grave. A friend of mine whose father had been helpless for two years, but was restored by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, urged me to try them. My husband asked the doctor who was attending me what he thought of them, and the doctor replied that he believed them to be a good medicine. This persuaded me to begin their use. No one who sees me now can form any idea of my condition when I began taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I had only taken three boxes when I began to recover. But seven years of pain had nearly shattered my constitution and I did not look for a speedy recovery, and I was more than gratified to find that after I had used I think about a dozen and a half boxes, I was fully restored to health. It seemed all the more wonderful because the doctors both in England and here never done more than give me temporary relief, and their treatment was much more expensive. The past summer was the first in years that I really enjoyed life, and I was able to go on a visit to Radnor Forges. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have also been of much benefit to my daughter Violet. She is just nine years old, but she suffered a great deal of pains in the back and sick headache, but the pills have made her feel all right again."

"I never fail to recommend Dr. Williams' Pink Pills when any of my friends are ill," said Mrs. Roberts. "While visiting at Radnor Forges, I urged a young lady friend who has been a sufferer from curvature of the spine, and obstinate constipation to try them, and they have done her a vast amount of good."

The reporter confesses that Mrs. Roberts' story is a wonderful one. That she is now thoroughly well is clear from her face, her manner and her happy spirit. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts are intelligent and reliable people. Mr. Roberts is head engineer in the biscuit works of Viou & Frece, the wealthiest firm in this line in the Dominion, and he fully endorses the good words his wife has to say in favor of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. In fact he says the speedy cure they wrought in his wife's case has saved him many dollars.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have no purgative action, and so do not weaken the body. They build up the blood by supplying it with the elements that enrich it, and strengthen the nerves. In this way they cure all diseases having their origin in poor and watery blood. Always refuse the pink colored imitations which some dealers offer. See that the full name, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People is on every package you buy. If in doubt, send direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., and they will be mailed post paid at 50c. a box or six boxes for \$2.50.

To set about acquiring the habits of meditation and study late in life is like getting into a go-cart with a grey beard, and learning to walk when we have lost the use of our legs. In general the foundations of a happy old age must be laid in youth; and, in particular, he who has not cultivated his reason young will be utterly unable to improve it old.

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