

THE BRITON'S HERITAGE.

A PULPET ADDRESS FOR S. O. E. MEMBERS TO PONDER.

Sermon on the Occasion of the Anniversary Celebration of Islington Lodge—Fredericton, N. B.

Herewith we present the impressive sermon delivered by Rev. A. B. Murray, of Stanley, at the cathedral, Fredericton, N.B., on the occasion of the first anniversary celebration of Islington lodge:

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."—Ps. xxxiii, 12.

I feel deeply sensible of the responsibility devolving upon me in complying with the request to give the sermon at the 1st anniversary service of the pioneer lodge of the S. O. E. B. S. in New Brunswick, and can only do so with the feeling of regret that this honorable duty has not been assigned to more brilliant talent. Still I will try to hope, that the few words which I shall say, may prove conducive to the aims, and objects of a patriotic society.

It is with a feeling of satisfaction that we look upon the hearty support given Islington Lodge, the success achieved by it and the extension of its influence, within one short year of its inception, at the capital and cathedral city of our native province. And with the objects of the S. O. E. in view—"the meeting of Englishmen together for their moral, mental and social advancement,"—and "for other good, noble and patriotic purposes,"—this feeling of present satisfaction is deepened, and our hopes of its future success enlivened by our engaging here, in the cathedral of our national branch of the catholic church, in the worship of our Common Father, Almighty God. We must consider all our undertakings whether as individuals, collective bodies or as nations with reference to God, for he tells us, "without me ye can do nothing," and according to our acknowledgement of Him, as shown in our prayers and in our works, He showers upon us His blessings, or metes out to us His just and sure punishments and thwarts our plans. True it is that, "blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will still be praising Thee"—that "blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them." Yet it is equally true that, "blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." The history of Israel is a history of

DIVINE PROVIDENCE. Jehovah is represented as their Creator and Father, as their Guide, Protector and Deliverer. They praised and celebrated Him in their national poetry, and he never failed them. Without a proper sense of religion, and a due acknowledgment of that Supreme power which rules among the kingdoms, no nation was ever found to prosper long. During the most flourishing periods of their republic, the Romans were really a religious nation. Religious services, with prayers and sacrifices always preceded the assembling of the Senate or the undertaking of great public measures. After every victory they offered solemn thanksgivings to the gods, and upon any defeat that was sustained, public humiliations and processions were decreed, in order to deprecate the displeasure of Heaven. In spite of the gross folly and superstition which permeated their religion, we must admit that in it was found a sincere reverence to a supreme power in Him, "an unknown God," which ruled all the affairs of men, and was entitled to their homage. Hence that sacred respect for an oath which so long distinguished the Romans. And if we go to history we will find that when the reverence for an oath began to diminish, and the loose Epicurean system, which discarded the belief in a providence was introduced, the Roman prosperity begun to decline. A view of the present condition of modern European countries, and a glance at their history would give further "admonition to us upon whom the ends of the world are come. Of all modern nations, our own

ANGLO-SAXON has greatest reason to look up to God with reverence and gratitude for a fulfilment of the psalmist's words, "blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," and in addressing these united lodges of her patriotic sons, it would seem the fitting natural course to take a view of the history of our ancestors as thus illustrative of this wisdom and goodness of Providence, thus deepening our thankfulness for past deliverances and blessings, and encouraging us to the adoption of a high line of conduct as becomes such an ancestry and heritage as ours.

Our knowledge of the history of Britain before the Roman invasion is very

imperfect, but long before this time the inhabitants were noted for their religion, a religion which in spite of its faults possessed a sublime and ennobling character. Under the oaks the Druid priests taught the people to aspire after immortal honors. But their system needed the correcting aids of civilizations, therefore, we believe that it was in the wisdom of His providence that the Romans were allowed to invade and subjugate them and continue to dominate until the Britains had derived all the benefits which such a relationship could confer. The Roman invasion may be looked upon as God's Providential preparation for the reception of the Christian religion. Much obscurity surrounds the origin of the church in Britain, yet it is certain that the inhabitants accepted Christianity in or very shortly after the Apostle's time. This early church comes into the broad light of day in A.D. 314 at the Synod of Ailes, when three of her bishops sat as representatives. Driven by

THE SAXON INVASION to Wales and Cornwall, away from their homes, the Britons held to their religion, and the church continued to exist with its three fold order of bishops, priests and deacons. In 576 St. Augustine converted the Saxon inhabitants of a part of England, (Kent) who had themselves invaded that region and dispossessed the ancient British inhabitants. St. Aidan and his fellow missionaries from Iona planted the church in the northern and central parts of England. Thus the Church of England was established firmly in Anglo-Saxon times on the mouldering ruins of its British predecessor. Too much stress is usually placed upon the influence of St. Augustine's mission to England. It was really but one episode in a record of missionary enterprise which extends over about a hundred years. Those whom he converted in Kent relapsed into heathenism within a quarter of a century. A peculiar interest attaches to his mission however, in that it laid the ground work of our still surviving church organization. Trifling differences of race kept apart these different branches of the church in England. A hundred years after St. Augustine's mission however, the famous Theodore resuscitated and blended into one, the churches of the Italian and Celtic missions and organized the Anglican Church. During this 1,200 years which bridges Theodore's time with our own, this church of England sharing the fortunes of the nation of England, has gone through many vicissitudes. But the changes of 1,200 years have not impaired her identity nor destroyed her organic life.

My purpose in thus tracing the history of the early church of our ancestors is to show independence in origin and organic unity of this noble heritage from its earliest inception. For the first 600 years after St. Augustine no foreign ecclesiastical power was exercised in Britain. But smarting under foreign aggression for four and a half centuries our independent forefathers, clergy, barons and people, asserted their independent liberty, and in 1,215 forced the king to sign

MAGNA CHARTA, the great bulwark of English liberty, the last clause of which was the same as the first, "The Church of England shall be free." For this social and political freedom, as well as freedom of religion did our ancestors endure persecution and torture and shed their blood. The "wise men" of our ancestors met in early conferences called Witenagets, which were the source of our English parliament. In 1,235 representatives from cities and boroughs were summoned for the first time along with prelates, barons and knights of the kingdom, thus forming the first outline of our present constitution.

Learning also has always had its zealous patrons. To early Anglo-Saxon kings England owes her first schools for liberal education. Siebert founded THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, the learned and pious Alfred the Great, founded the university of Oxford, both of which continue as great centres of learning and scholarships to the present day. Is it not right and natural then, and agreeable to the mind and will of God, that as Sons of England we should cherish a special regard in things for which our country has been remarkable? those things which make our nation the most healthy and prosperous among the nations of the world? It was in the fear of God that our ancestors were nurtured, with their manners, institutions and laws founded on Christian principles. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." Has God ever failed us?

Our ancestors grew and multiplied and prospered exceedingly, until the islands were two small for them, and

they went forth north, south, east and west, to occupy the wide places of the world, by strange and unexpected ways—by emigration, by colonies, by commerce and by war. Not always by mercy, not always by justice, perhaps it may seem, but in the main with a legitimate object. Thus the peaceful

EMPIRE OF GREAT BRITAIN has grown until it has become the august, stately and magnificent structure, at which outsiders gaze with awe, and we ourselves seem scarcely to understand. In extent and importance it far exceeds any other empire, ancient or modern. Every man's property is protected, and his person like his property cannot be touched except by legal process. Although continually susceptible of much improvement—the British Empire under Queen Victoria presents the nearest approach to a true commonwealth that the world has ever seen. The two extremes—that of despotism where all are slaves—and that of anarchy (where all would rule and none obey) are guarded against. To this point it has aimed in the progress of ages, in consequence of trials undergone, and of experiences made. Experience, that great parent of political wisdom, has taught a brave, generous, tolerant, high-spirited and religious people, how to reform existing evils and form the wisest plans for future liberty and security. This is the noble heritage as we find and enjoy it, without sharing in the brunt of the battle which it cost. Foreigners look at us with wonder and envy, as possessing the happiest system that was ever desired for uniting the dignity and

LIBERTY OF THE SUBJECT, with protection and security to all. Blessed indeed, especially, now with a Sovereign at our head to whom even faction cannot impute, throughout her long and prosperous reign, any act of tyranny, cruelty or oppression—whose personal virtues and domestic conduct, set forth to the nation such a high example of piety, forgiveness and good order. Education in literature, science, art and religion is encouraged. Talent in every rank has the fullest scope, and we ourselves are witnesses of the examples which abound of persons reaching by their own merits, from ordinary rank and humble birth, to the highest gifts of distinction in church and state. Thus England is continually prospering at home, and building up new Englands for her children abroad, and we from the midst of our ease and prosperity owe to

THE MOTHER-LAND the deepest debt of gratitude. Let us not as the serpent, then, turn to bite the hand which fed us. Let us shun as heresy any element of disloyalty which might interfere with that principle and sentiment that most truly unites Great Britain and her daughters. Much might be done by prudent legislation, and by various unions in trade and defence, but the greatest binding force will be found, in cherishing our common traditions, common hopes, common affections, common fear of God shown in a united religion.

The wisdom of our Creator has linked us all together by ties of natural affection—first to our families and relations, then to our friends and acquaintances, and then to the communities and countries to which we belong. He has constituted us capable of entering rapidly into their interests, and has directed our benevolence to act first within that nearest sphere where exertions can be most powerful and useful. The same principle which teaches us to consult the interests of our own families, makes us feel a deeper concern for the interests of Great Britain than those of any other country. Should our lot be cast for a time with

FOREIGNERS this concern should never be relaxed, but we should return to our native land with that grand irrepressible feeling which welcomes the youth when he revisits the haunts of his childhood. At home or abroad we should love our country, and in every way show our attachment to it. We should see that patriotism has its proper recognition in the education of our children. We should love our country as the seat of liberty and laws—for its firm, mild, and happy government. The ends for which we unite in society and submit to government are, to enjoy security of property, to place our persons beyond the reach of injustice and to secure our lives from violence. Compared with other nations, our condition in these respects (though not perfect on account of the human element in legislation) stands forth admired and envied. Justly may we challenge those who attempt to criticise our position, to produce from the annals of history, the example of such a number of people as the

BRITISH SUBJECTS united in the bonds of civil society,

with such ready means of redress for grievances or violence, so free from harsh restraints, and with such full enjoyment of freedom, as is ours.

We have no country for the heritage of a pure, scriptural, ancient and venerable religion, cheering us all through the stormy paths of life here, and giving us such a bright and comforting hope in the life hereafter. It spreads to all corners of the earth where the Anglo-Saxon colonies are blossoming forth into nations. It is unencumbered by foreign usurpation and free from papal superstitions since the blessed reformation. Yet it retains all such forms as are conducive to order, solemnity and spirituality. How zealous ought we to be for its welfare? how much on our guard against any danger which threatens to disturb its peace? We should

LOVE OUR COUNTRY as the seat of all our best enjoyment in private life, that admired offspring of our learning, our laws and our religion. We love it for those happy Christian homes which approach nearest to the ideal than those in any land, those homes where our helpless infancy was tenderly watched and guarded, when we sported in innocent childhood; where our careless youth grew up surrounded by trusted companions and friends in happy school days. When "wandering on a foreign strand" these are the hallowed memories of our early days which make motherland dear to us—which touch the heart with greater force, with closer attraction than foreign wealth and opulence. Possessed with such pleasant memories of a country which has been the mother, nurse and guardian of us all, we cannot look with indifference on any cloud of danger which we may see arising to threaten its welfare. I need not continue further, upon the grounds for living and respecting our country. It remains to point out some of the

DUTIES to which love of country hails us. We acknowledge the Bible as the power of England's greatness. Let us hope and pray that her future may always be moulded by its precepts. The nation is made up of individuals, and the conduct of the individuals will ever determine the character of the nation. Then let each one strive to do his duty in that state of life to which God has called him. In all the walks of life let us practice industry and temperance, and not become debilitated by slothfulness and luxury. Let us practice justice, honor, manliness, and not become depraved by cruelty and injustice. Let us be obedient to authority, cultivate peaceful, charitable, forgiving dispositions, and not be lacerated by civil discord. Let us read and study, and be improving in learning with the progress of the national mind. Let us bear in mind that every immoral act, no matter how fashionable, is so much poison to weaken public health and strength, while all virtues adorn and bless a people.

It is unlikely that many of us, will ever, in a political capacity, take a prominent part in the counsels which are to sway the destiny of our country, but if so our influence should be in support of those assurances which aim at the nation's welfare, and defense, and the sustaining of her future pre-eminence. If not in the higher sphere the influence of us all will be felt in placing others in legislative positions. Freedom of discussion on all political questions both in discourse and writing afford us opportunity of acting intelligently. Then let us not abuse our privilege and liberty, and thus allow ourselves to become degraded by political corruption. Great is our responsibility to that

DIVINE PROVIDENCE which has placed us in our present position, and well does it deserve our serious consideration, what account we shall be prepared to give, not only in the trials which individuals and nations undergo in this life, but at the bar of "the Judge of all the earth," where Britons, Saxons, Danes, who once perhaps perished for their sins, shall "rise up and condemn" the unfaithful and unprofitable of a far more enlightened and highly favoured generation.

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