

THE GREAT BATTLE OF CLONTARF.

Fought on Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Between the Danes and the Irish.

When Brian Boru became King of Ireland he proved himself a most able upright, and just ruler. Never had Ireland known a more glorious peaceful, and prosperous time than during the fifteen years he ruled as Ard-Righ, or High King of the Country. So justly were the laws administered in his name, and so loyally obeyed throughout the kingdom, that such a happy state of things found poetic expression in the beautiful allegory of the poet M'Lraig, who sang, that "a young lady of great beauty, adorned with jewels and costly dress, might perform unmolested a journey on foot through the island, carrying a straight wand, on the top of which might be a ring of great value."

He labored hard to restore the Christian civilization so much distinguished by two centuries of pagan warfare. To justice he added munificence, and of this the churches and schools of the entire island were the recipients. Many a desolate shrine he adorned, many a bleak chancel he hung with lamps, many a long-silent tower had its bells restored. Monasteries were built, and the praises of God were kept up by a devout brotherhood. Roads and bridges were repaired, and several strong fortresses were erected to command the passes to lakes and rivers. The vulnerable points along the Shannon and the Suir, and the lakes as far north as the Foyle, were secured by forts of clay and stone. The great event of the long war which had been waged for full two hundred years between the men of Erin and the men of Scandinavia was fast approaching. What may be called the last field day of Christianity and Paganism on Irish soil was close at hand.

Here were the unconquered Northmen, the scourge and terror of Europe, the conquerors of Britain, Normandy, Angleson, Orkney, and Man, now concentrating the might of their whole race to burst in an overwhelming torrent on Ireland. If England went down before a less formidable assault, how could Ireland hope to withstand this one? It was a time of trial for the men of Ireland; and right nobly did they meet it. Brian was fully equal to the emergency. He resolved to meet force by force, combination by combination. He was well prepared and resolved to defy the foe. His efforts were nobly seconded by the zeal of the tributary princes and most of all by the disposed King Malachy, who wore the collar of gold which he won from the proud invader. Throughout the autumn of 1013, and the spring of 1014 the two powers the Danish and the Irish, were working hard making preparations for the coming struggle.

By the second week in April there had rallied to the national standard a force which, though unequal in numbers to that of the invaders, was nevertheless, able to make up by superior valour for what it lacked in numbers. The chiefs of all the southern half of the kingdom hastened to Brian's standard—the Lords of Leinster, Leix, Fermanagh, Connaught, Kerry—and the Lords of Hy-Connah and Hy-Deconna in Connaught; O'More and O'Nolan, of Leinster, and Donald Stewart, of Mann, in Scotland, and lastly, his own kindred, that is, the forces proper of Thomond. Under the standard of Brian that day also fought the Marquess or Great Steward of Lennox, with a contingent of the brave Gaels from Alba. "The great Danish flotilla under Brodar, the admiral-in-chief, entered Dublin Bay, on Palm Sunday, 18th April, 7014. The galleys anchored, some of them at Sutton, near Howth, others were moored in the mouth of the river Liffey, and the rest were beached or anchored in a vast line stretching along the Clontarf shore, which sweeps between the two points indicated.

Brian immediately swung his army round upon Glasnevin, crossed the Tolka at the point where the Botanical gardens now stand, and faced his line of battle southward, towards where the enemy were encamped on the shore. Meantime, becoming aware that Maelmorra, Prince of Leinster, was so eager to help the invader, that he had entered the Danish camp with every man of his following, Brian secretly despatched a body of Dalcassians, under his son Donough, to dash into the traitor's territory, and waste it with fire and sword. The secret march south of the Dalcassians was communicated to Maelmorra by a spy in Brian's camp, and inasmuch as the Dalcassians were famed as the "invincible legion" of the Irish army the traitor urged vehemently upon his Danish allies that this was the moment to give battle—while Brian's best troops were away. Accordingly,

on Holy Thursday the Danes announced their resolution to give battle the next day.

Brian had the utmost reluctance to fight on that day, which would be good Friday, thinking it almost a profanation to engage in combat upon that day on which our Lord died for man's redemption. He begged the engagement be postponed even one day; but the Danes were all the more resolute to engage the next morning, for, according to an old legend of the battle, Brodar having consulted one of the Danish pagan oracles was told that if he gave battle on the Friday Brian would fall. With early dawn on the next day, Good Friday, 23rd of April, 1014, all was bustle in both camps. The Danish army, facing inland, northwards, or northeast, stretched along the shore of Dublin Bay; its left flank touching and protected by the city of Dublin, its centre being about the spot where Clontarf now stands, and its right wing resting on Dollymount. The Irish army, facing southwards, had its right on Drumcondra, its centre on Fairview, and its extreme left on Clontarf. The Danish forces were disposed of in three divisions, of which the first or left was composed of Danes of Dublin, under their King, Sitric, and the princes Dolat and Conmael, with the thousand Norwegians clothed in suits of ringed mail, under the youthful warriors Carlus and Anrud; the second, or central division, was composed chiefly of the Laginians, commanded by Maelmorra himself and the princes of Offaly and of the Liffey territory; and the third division or right wing was made up of the auxiliaries from the Baltic and the islands, under Brodar, Admiral of the Fleet, and the Earl of Orkney, together with some British auxiliaries from Wales and Cornwall. To oppose these the Irish monarch also marshalled his forces in three corps or divisions. The first or right wing, composed chiefly of the diminished legions of the brave Dalcassians, was under the command of his son Murrrough, who had also with him his four brothers, Tige, Donald, Conor, and Flann, and his own son (grandson of Brian), the youthful Turlough, who was but fifteen years of age. In this division also fought Malachy, with the Meath contingent. The Irish centre division comprised the troops of Desmond, or South Munster, under the command of Kian, son of Mulloy, and Donel, son of Duv Davoren (ancestor of The O'Donogue), both of the Eugenician line. The Irish left wing was composed mainly of the forces of Connaught under O'Kelly, Prince of Hy-Munio (the great central territory of Connaught); O'Heine, Prince of Hy-Fiachra Abna; and Echtigern, King of Dalradian. It is supposed that Brian's army numbered about 20,000 men.

All being ready for the signal of battle, Brian himself, mounted upon a richly-comparisone charger, rode through the Irish lines, as all records are careful to tell us, "with his sword in one hand and a crucifix in the other," exhorting the troops to remember the momentous issues that depended upon the fortunes of that day—religion and country, against paganism and bondage. It is said that on this occasion he delivered an address which moved his soldiers, now to tears, and anon the utmost pitch of enthusiasm and resolution. And we can well imagine the effect upon an army, drawn up as they were for the onset of battle in defence of "Faith and Fatherland," of such a sight and such an appeal—their aged and venerable monarch, "his white hair floating in the wind" riding through their lines, with the sacred symbol of Redemption borne aloft, and adjuring them, as the chronicles tell us, to remember that on this day Christ died for us on the Mount of Calvary! Moreover, Brian himself had given them an earnest, such, perhaps, as monarch had never given before, of his resolve, that with the fortunes of his country he and his sons and kinsmen all would stand or fall. He had brought his sons and nephews there, says the historian, who might have added, and even his grandchildren, "and showed that he

was prepared to let the existence of his race depend upon the issue of the day."

We may be sure a circumstance so affecting as this was not lost upon Brian's soldiers. It gave force to every word of his address. He recounted we are told, all the barbarities and sacrileges perpetrated by the invaders in their lawless ravages on Irish soil, the shrines they had plundered, the holy relics they had profaned, the brutal cruelties they had inflicted upon unarmed non-combatants—nay, on "the servants of the Altar." Then raising the crucifix aloft, he invoked the Omnipotent God, to look down upon them that day, and to strengthen their arms in a cause so just and holy.

The late Mr. William Kenealy, of Kilkenny, in the following noble poem gives us, with all the native vigor and force of the original, "The address of Brian to his army:— Stand ye now for Erin's glory! Stand ye now for Erin's cause! Long ye've groined beneath the ricour of the Northmen's savage laws. What! though brothers league against us? What! though myriads be the foe? Victory will be more honored in the myriads' overthrow.

Proud Connacius! oft we've wrangled in our petty feuds of yore; Now we fight against the robber Dane upon our native shore; May our hearts unite in friendship, as our blood in one red tide. While we crush the mar-shal legions and annihilate their pride.

Brave Eugenians! Erin triumphs in the sight she sees to-day— Desmond's homesteads all deserted for the muster and the fray! Cluan's vale and Galtee's summit send their bravest and their best— May such hearts be theirs forever, for the Freedom of the West!

Chiefs and Kernes of Dalassia! Brothers of my past career, Oft we've trodden on the pirate flag that flaunts before us here; You remember Inniscattery, how we bounded on the foe, As the torrent of the mountain bursts upon the plain below!

They have razed our proudest castles, spoiled the temples of the Lora; Burnt to dust the sacred relics, put the unuseful to the sword; Desecrated all things holy—as they soon may do again, If their power to-day we smite not—if to-day we be not men!

On this day the God-Man suffered; look upon the sacred sign— May we conquer 'neath its shadow, as of old did Constantine! May the heathen tribe of Odin fade before it like a dream, And the triumph of this glorious day in our future annals gleam!

God of Heaven bless our banner— nerve our sinews for the strife! Fight ye now for all that's holy—for our altars, land and life— For red vengeance on the spoiler, whom the blazing temples trace For the honor of our maidens and the glory of our race!

Should I fall before the foe-man, 'tis the death I seek to-day; Should ten thousand daggers pierce me, bear my body not away— Till this day of days be over— till the field is fought and won; Then the Holy Mass be chanted and the funeral rites be done.

Men of Erin, men of Erin! grasp the battle-axe and spear! Chase these Northern wolves before you like a herd of frightened deer! Burst their ranks, like bolts from heaven! Down on the heathen crew. For the glory of the Crucified, and Erin's glory too!

Who can be astonished that, as he ceased, a shout, wild, furious, and deafening burst from the Irish lines? A cry arose from the soldiers, we are told, demanding to be led instantly against the enemy. The aged monarch now placed himself at the head of his guards to lead the van of battle; but at this point his sons and all the attendant princes and commanders protested against his attempting at his advanced age to take part personally in the conflict; and eventually, after much effort, they succeeded in prevailing upon him to retire to his tent and to let the chief com-

mand devolve upon his eldest son Murrrough. (Story of Ireland, pp. 90-98).

The following description of the battle is given in Haverty's History of Ireland (p. 117):—"The battle then commenced, a spirited, fierce, violent, vengeful, a furious battle, the likeness of which was not to be found in that time, as the old annalists quaintly describe it. It was a conflict of heroes. The chieftains engaged at every point in single combat, and the greater part of them on both sides fell. The impetuosity of the Irish is irresistible, and their battle-axes did fearful execution every man of ten hundred mailed warriors of Norway having been cut down by the Dalcassians.

The heroic Murrrough performed prodigies of valour throughout the day. Ranks of men fell before him, and hewing his way to the Danish standard, he cut down two successive bearers of it with his battle-axe. Two Danish leaders, Carlus and Conmael, enraged at this success, rushed at him together, but both fell in rapid succession by his sword. Twice Murrrough and some of his chiefs retired to slake their thirst and cool their hands, swelled from the violent use of the sword and the battle-axe, and the Danes observing the vigor with which they returned to the conflict, succeeded by a desperate effort in filling up the brook which had refreshed them. Thus the battle raged from an early hour in the morning, innumerable deeds of valor being performed on both sides, and victory appearing still doubtful, until the third or fourth hour in the afternoon when a fresh and desperate effort was made by the Irish; and the Danes, now almost destitute of leaders, began to waver and give way at every point. Just at this moment the Norwegian prince Anrud, encountered Murrrough who was unable to raise his arms from fatigue, but, who with his left hand seized Anrud, and striking him out of his armor, hurled him to the earth, while with the other he placed the point of his sword on the breast of the prostrate Northman, and leaning on it, plunged it through his body. While Murrrough, however, was stooping for this purpose, Anrud contrived to inflict on him a mortal wound with a dagger, and the Irish warrior fell in the arms of victory. This disaster had not the effect of turning the fortune of the day, for the Danes and their allies were in a state of utter disorder, and along their whole line had commenced flying towards the city or to their ships. They plunged into the Tolka at a time when the river must have swollen with the tide, as great numbers were drowned. The body of young Turlough was found after the battle 'at the weir of Clontarf' with his hands entangled in the hair of a Dane with whom he grappled in his pursuit.

"But the chief tragedy of the day remains to be related. Brodar, the pirate admiral, seeing the route general was making his way through some thickets, with only a few attendants when he came upon the tent of Brian, left at that moment without his guards. The fierce viking rushed in and found the aged monarch at prayer before the crucifix. He had that morning held up before his troops, and attended only by a boy, Conaing, the son of his brother Duncuan, Brian, however, had time to seize his arms, and died sword in hand. The ferocious pirate was then hemmed in by Brian's returning guards, and captured alive. He was hanged upon a tree, and continued to rage like a beast of prey until his entrails were torn out, the Irish soldiers thus taking savage vengeance for the death of their king who but for their own neglect would have been slain."

Brian and Murrrough both lived to receive the last rites of the church, and their remains were conveyed by the Monks to Swords, thence through Duleek and Louth to Armagh; their obsequies were celebrated for twelve days and twelve nights by the clergy of Armagh, after which the body of Brian was deposited in a stone coffin on the north side of the high altar of the cathedral, whilst the body of his son was buried on the south side. The victory of Clontarf is one of the most glorious events in the annals of Ireland. By it were ended forever the Danish efforts and designs to effect the conquest of this country.

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A MARTYR TO DUTY.
Father J. A. Hartnett of Dallas, Texas, died Thursday of smallpox at the parochial home, Bryan and Masten streets. During the blizzard of 3 weeks ago he walked at midnight with thermometer at 11 degrees below zero, six miles to visit patients in Dallas post house. He was nearly frozen to death by the journey. He contracted smallpox which ended fatally. He was 42 years old and was born in Ireland.

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT.
Dame Emma Dufresne, of the City and District of Montreal, has this day instituted an action in separation as to property against Albert St. Martin, of the same place.

Montreal, 28th February, 1899.
BEAUDIN, CARDINAL, LORANGER & ST. GERMAIN, Attorneys for Plaintiff.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, DISTRICT OF MONTREAL, No. 2502.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT.
Dame Alphonsine Chouinard, of the City and District of Montreal, has this day instituted an action in separation as to property against Louis Honoré Dusyva dit Portuensis, of the same place.

Montreal, 28th February, 1899.
BEAUDIN, CARDINAL, LORANGER & ST. GERMAIN, Attorneys for Plaintiff.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, DISTRICT OF MONTREAL, No. 1233.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT.
Dame Aurora Bouhiller, of the city and district of Montreal, wife common as to property of Fernand Paradis, type-writer, of the same place, duly authorized a *procureur en justice* and *fiduciary* presentator, Plaintiff

vs.
The said Fernand Paradis, Defendant.
An action in separation as to property has been instituted this day against the defendant.

Montreal, 8 March, 1899.
CHARBONNEAU & PELLETIER, Attorneys for Plaintiff, New York Life Building.

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