

ST. PATRICK'S DAY AT BUCKINGHAM.

The feast of Ireland's patron saint was celebrated with unusual grandeur in Buckingham. The beautiful church was draped in green, and the harp of Erin was prominent on the altars and pulpits, while a large statue of St. Patrick, enshrined in flowers and lights, closed the entrance to the sanctuary. No one in the church was without his share of green, whether their language was French or English. The pastor, Rev. Father Croteau, assisted by deacon and sub-deacon, sung the solemn Mass at ten o'clock, and the sermon was preached by Rev. Father Holland, C.S.S.R., of Montreal, as follows:

"He that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. v. 19.)

Far back, almost in the dawn of our era, a Christian youth of Roman parentage was seized by a band of Irish raiders, who had swept down on the coasts of Gaul, and sold by them as a slave to a chieftain in Ulster, Milcho by name. The heaven of the Gospel had not yet purged Europe even of slavery, much less of war. For six weary years he suffered and toiled, but his trust and love and deep reverence for God never flinched. He became a saint, and it is in his honor that we meet here to-day. The very existence of America was unknown in his day, yet on its soil from Alaska to Cape Horn, wherever a band of Irishmen can be brought together, the name of St. Patrick is revered and blessed in song and speech and prayer to-day. For no saint has left a deeper trace in the memory of the race he influenced than the Apostle of Ireland. David in Wales, Andrew in Scotland, Augustin in England are now mere shadows; whereas the name and fame of St. Patrick live, on Irish lips and in Irish hearts, all the world over. The shamrock we wear in his honor to-day is an emblem of our love and fidelity to the faith he planted, and the fatherland he thereby founded and united. A race, like an individual, is judged by its creed. The Irish are said to be moody and fickle as their ever-changing skies; yet for more than fourteen centuries they have clung with unshaken tenacity to the standard of belief and duty preached by St. Patrick. And what nobler or higher was ever put before a people?

His name (which means a nobleman) and fidelity to his teaching are often flung in contempt at his children. But it is their glory, not their shame. To the Jew and the Greek the world owes its highest form of religion and civilization; yet on account of the oppression to which they were subjected, these great names often mean usurer and thief; whereas the worst reproach that can be made against Ireland as a nation is a lack of worldly goods and worldly wisdom, to both of which for centuries she was denied access.

Whence, it may be asked, the influence of St. Patrick? How is it that a Roman stranger is so lovingly enshrined in the hearts of the people of a land where he once lived as a slave? It was partly due to his own character and partly to that of the people that he turned to Christ. The laborer and the soil were matched. The reaper was strong and the harvest was ripe. Saints are God's agents in doing God's work, but the message they carry must be freely received. On both sides we see the "finger of God and it is wonderful in our eyes." No philosophy, no form of human wisdom, ever produced a saint or converted a race, in the true sense of the word. Saints grow on one soil only, and nations are gathered by their influence into one fold only, that of the true Church. God equips the saints. His messengers, with gifts and graces; and fits the people to receive them. But both must respond to God's call. Both may fall away, Lucifer and Adam were holy, but they fell from grace. Now, the duty of a saint, as of all, is to cultivate personal holiness first before attempting to raise others to their own height. This is what St. Patrick did. He first, and indeed all through life, perfected himself, and next, he tried to lift up the Irish race to his own moral level; and succeeded in doing so; in other words, we have to see God's work in His own soul, and next God's work through him in the souls of others.

I do not mean to give a list of his virtues, but rather to touch briefly on the spirit of St. Patrick that

made these virtues grow and expand. Two leading characteristics marked this spirit, viz., love of prayer and the love and practice of penance. They are more needed to-day than ever. For want of them holiness is everywhere shrinking in the heart of man. Grace abounds, it is true; opportunities for piety lie in abundance at every door; yet few approach God in fervent prayer, and many try to forget, doubt, or disbelieve in Him. The craving for bodily comfort and gross material pleasures is extinguishing the spirit. Selfishness in its worst forms often rules us. Hence the lesson of St. Patrick's life.

He comes first into view in the year 387, when with thousands of others, he was taken captive and sold as a slave. Raiding bands by sea and land had it their own way in these days. Human life, property, honor, lay at their mercy. Patrick's parents were both probably slain, his two sisters made prisoners, and himself a helpless victim in the hands of pirates. Nowadays anyone may lead a holy and virtuous life, if he chooses; then it seemed impossible, humanly speaking. It was a time to try one's faith in God. He seemed to have forsaken the world and given it over to the demons. God appeared to be far away in the heavens. The devil was free. But Patrick's piety was neither selfish nor seeming. It was deep and solid. He had lost his father on earth, poor boy, but he clung all the more earnestly to his Father in Heaven. Earnestly and heartily his soul rose to God in prayer. Day and night the pious youth sought and found help, light and comfort in this holy practice. Prayer was all he had. There was no church, no sacraments, no priest, no fervent crowd of fellow-worshippers, or even fellow believers. He was alone among scoffers and idolaters. But he felt that God was near, and in mind and heart and voice he rose up and went to his Father. On the cheerless slopes of Slernish, or the dismal swamps and my bogs around, in foul weather and in fair, by day or by night, his spirit communed with God. In those cruel days labor had no rights, masters no duties. His work was hard and steady, his fare the coarsest, his garb torn, thin and scanty. His sad cruel lot would have driven most souls to despair, or brutalized them. But it only urged St. Patrick to pray and to have recourse to God all the more fervently. "To whom who has care of all." Hear how he else could be so good? On whom else could he cast his care, save on Him who describes his daily life on the barren hills of Slernish. "On coming to Ireland I was daily tending sheep, and many times in the day I prayed, and more and more the love of God and His faith and fear grew in me, and the spirit was strengthened, so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers and in the night nearly the same. And I dwelt in the woods and on the mountains, and before the dawn I was summoned to prayer by the snow and the ice and the rain, and I did not suffer from them. Nor was there any sloth in me as I see now, because then the spirit was burning within me."

Prayer ever is and must be a marked feature in all souls that "walk with God," but it was especially characteristic of St. Patrick. Nay, it is a gift that he seems to have handed down to his children, as any one can testify who has seen them pour forth their souls to God in country chapel or moorland cabin, or when sickness or sorrow fall in their families. Prayer made our saint a giant in spirit. It was the source of his strength, the secret of his success as a saint and an Apostle. Quite as much as he, we need to "put on this armor of light." The darkness that shrouds the spirit world is as dense as in his day. Light must come from above, and in prayer we seek and get it. Apart from this, a soul without prayer is a soul without God. St. Patrick was a man of God because he was a man of prayer. When sorely tried or puzzled at God's strange ways, he did not rush, as so many nowadays, into unbelief or despair, but cast himself on God, and in prayer "cried all the more." Prayer was to him, in life and in death, as it should be to all an opening of the heavens and drawing down into the troubled soul the peaceful dove of the Holy Spirit.

The next great feature in his character was the spirit of penance. Self-denial is the very basis of piety, but

in St. Patrick it rose to the highest pitch of asceticism. Man is composed of body and soul. Both are from God, and one would think they should act in harmony, each with its rights and claims duly ordered. But we live in a wicked world. Pleasure and virtue do not agree. Ease, indulgence, comfort, mostly go with sin and luxury, whereas virtue is often left out in the cold. Nay, pain and sorrow and self-restraint are usually the conditions of its practice. We know, it is true, that virtue will one day bring its own reward, but meanwhile the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent only bear it away. "Unless ye do penance," says our Lord, "you shall all likewise perish." This world is out of joint with its Maker. Man revolted from God, and our own bodies revolted from their guide in reason. We can only make our way back to God by penance, i.e., by repenting in our hearts and by keeping the revolting flesh in subjection to the spirit. We have all in some manner to nourish a spirit of compunction and so create a new and clean heart within us. In the case of St. Patrick, as I said, the practice of penance inward and outward, rose to a heroic degree. His cheeks were furrowed by tears shed for what we should call the indiscretions of youth. He was reckless in his asceticism. Night, that usually brings to the toiler rest and refreshment, was for him harder than the day. Part of it he spent in prayer, immersed in water to the chin, he slept on a bare rock, with a stone under his head for a pillow, often exposed to the weather. A rough haircloth, worn next his skin, added to his bodily discomfort. We cannot imitate this example, but shame on us if it does not urge us to practice at least the self-denial involved in a virtuous life and in keeping the commandments of God and of Holy Church.

Slemish in the North was his hill of prayer during slavery. Croaghpatrick in the West his favorite resort when free. There, following his Master's example, he fasted rigidly for forty days and nights wrestling in prayer with God. It was on this occasion that he obtained from God the grace that the lamp of faith should never burn low in the land he loved.

And now I ask, did his work for others suffer in consequence of his lifelong practice of prayer and penance? Were the long hours thus spent, taken away from any useful service to his fellow man? On the contrary, it was his personal holiness thus acquired that made his life so fruitful. Where is the life with such a record of unselfish devotion to his kind? The service of man is the service of God, and the service of God is the service also of man. If we do not first serve God, everything else is useless. It was in this that lay the secret of the saints—personal holiness and unselfish service.

Even bodily St. Patrick was no loiterer by his austere and prayerful life, for he lived to the age of a hundred and twenty years. Old age was his only disease. He was hale in body and sound in mind to the end. "He who loses his life for God will find it," in spite of worldly wisdom. His spirit still haunts the land. For nearly fifteen centuries pilgrims' feet have trodden the rugged sides of Croaghpatrick and the rocky shores of Lough Derg, showing that prayer and mortification are not a dead letter in the land that St. Patrick converted.

So much for the character of the labor. A word next on his work and the field in which it was carried on. Remarks that the ground in which he was called to labor was neither stony nor thorny nor rocky, but good soil for the seed of God's word. In nature, all grounds are not fit for all growths, no more is every race fitted for Gospel teaching. A certain degree of culture is necessary. Rough human virtues prevailed in the island, and blazed the way for St. Patrick's message. There can be no doubt that fidelity, modesty, respect for woman, and a fairly ordered social life were the rule and not the exception. The Brehon laws lately found and published, showed that justice prevailed between man and man, and had already taken shape in a code. The ornaments and weapons so numerous in Irish and other museums, show a good knowledge of the arts. War, and slavery, and piracy, no doubt existed as in the rest of Europe, but less common and not so ruthless. The existence of bards—a class devoted to poetry and music, softened the warlike manners of the race. The country, too, under the Scotts, was rapidly advancing to political unity. Hence the glad acceptance of the word of God and St. Patrick's triumphant march through the land as the herald of Christ. He could have

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said with Caesar, Veni Vidi Vici. The best proof that the field was ready for the sower, is the number of holy priests, monks and nuns that he consecrated to God even after the first year of his mission showing that the soul of the country was naturally Christian. The difficulty of training native clergy is well known in newly converted lands. Still, in Ireland in a very short time after St. Patrick's death we find his missionaries and scholars—the teachers not only of Ireland but of all Europe.

The crowning glory of St. Patrick is to have been God's instrument in raising the ideals of Celtic Ireland up to the standard of the Gospel; and the spirit that he infused still broods over the land. His deep faith in the living God, his keen sense of justice, his love of prayer, his utter carelessness of wealth and bodily comfort are still marked features of the race. He prayed that gold and silver might never fail in Ireland, and it was in this shape that God heard his prayer. What wealth can be compared to a sunny mind and a contented heart? Man is never so rich as when he is like Jesus Christ, or, as the poet says:

If thou art rich, thou art poor
For, like an ass whose back with
ingots bows
Thou bearest thy heavy riches but a
journey
And death unloads thee.

Though St. Patrick's work was rapid, it was thorough. After the lapse of fifteen centuries of storm and flood, and with a hostile garrison entrenched in her midst, and enriched from her spoils, the Church in Ireland, the building reared by St. Patrick, shows no signs of decay. The light of the faith he planted burns as brightly as ever. There has been no national apostasy. He still holds his people in the hollow of his hand.

Few apostles live to see the full results of their labors. They plow and sow while others reap the harvest. In faith and love they tread the furrows, trusting to God to give the increase in His own time. Not so with St. Patrick. Under his magic hand Ireland grew up in his own lifetime into an island of saints. The sons of the Scots and the daughters of princes are seen as monks and virgins of Christ. Before long, says Jocelyn, there was no desert, no spot or hiding place in this island which was not peopled with monks or nuns, so that throughout the world, Ireland was justly called the Isle of Saints.

Such was the influence of this pious, gentle holy man, that he became an uncrowned king as well as chief prelate of the Irish people. A very Moses in Israel. His word was law, and he spoke fearlessly to princes and people alike. Since St. Patrick breathed his last, few countries were subject to so many vicissitudes as Ireland; but his work remains. All else has gone, yet the Church of Christ is there as fresh and as young as ever. Wave after wave of invaders, Danes and Normans and Saxons, have swept over the land, destroying or changing all, but the fabric reared by St. Patrick abides. Let us hope that his influence and prayer will keep Ireland one in nationhood as it made her one in religion. In life he welded her warring clans into one united spiritual commonwealth, that grew into one of the fairest provinces of God's kingdom on earth. Peacefully and untriedly it has managed its ecclesiastical affairs. Is there any reason to suppose it should act less wisely in civil? Let us pray God that all this may come about peacefully, harmoniously, speedily. And while praying that the nation may be restored to its God-born rights, let us not fail to take to heart the

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Lessons taught by St. Patrick's holy life.

He died a saint because he lived a saint.

He was personally good, pure and holy; his work for others was blessed.

He sanctified his own soul. God sanctified others through him.

Whether we wish it or no, we profoundly influence others for good or evil. We all sow seed. Virtue or vice goes forth from us. Let us, then, do St. Patrick's work, and not the devil's. Let us build up the Church in our own souls, sanctify ourselves by the means at our disposal.

By prayer and self-denial St. Patrick kept the grace of God alive in his soul even in a pagan land. Let us do so in a Christian, and thus live and die worthy children of St. Patrick. God save Ireland.

In the evening the Ancient Order of Hibernians played "Kathleen Mavourneen" to a crowded house. St. Patrick's Day was never so well celebrated in Buckingham. Rev. Fathers Flynn and Holland, C.S.S.R., are preaching a mission to the English-speaking population, and the exercises are being splendidly attended.

SOCIETY DIRECTORY.

ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY—Established March 6th, 1866; incorporated 1868, revised 1860. Meets in St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander Street, first Monday of the month. Committees meet last Wednesday. Officers: Rev. Director, Rev. M. Callaghan, P.P.; President, Hon. Mr. Justice C. J. Doherty 1st Vice, J. B. Devlin, M.D.; 2nd Vice, J. J. Curran, B.O.L.; Treasurer, Frank J. Green; Corresponding Secretary, J. Kahala; Recording Secretary, T. P. Tansey.

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HOPE'S N

By E

It was all over in a "Hope!" Reproof, love, hope were in the cry, and the little who but for a strong hand have been lying lifeless on a firm, stood unhurt at the baggage-master's feet.

The trunk, so violently aside, had burst its fastenings now from a gap along its top displayed an array of pink finery.

But it was not toward the man who had wrought such chief directed his attention. moment he held the little on and then putting her gently harm's way, went on with his loading the luggage.

"Glad I'm not in your Bob!" commented his fellow man, as together they hurried to repair some of the damaged trunk. "Don't blame it. That was a mighty cl for the kid. All the same, catch it. S'pose you know w trunk belongs to?"

A quick, inquiring glance only answer.

"Some of the Wentworth trunks, I guess. I saw him w up at the other end of the tr "Uncle Bob."

It was a small voice to be through the din of the station the assistant baggage-master seen ears.

"Yes, Hope," he said, and the child tenderly in his arm boarded a car and found her "Now, remember, you must stir from this place! The car will come for you when you g Altona. Promise me that y stay right here!" His voice intense from the recent peril. promise Uncle Bob!"

"I won't move the least truly I won't! I didn't mean roughly that time. I only v to kiss you—and I guess I fo The little face was sober, and tance clouded the bright eyes.

Those same eyes were laughi next minute, as Hope's hand he uncle a joyous farewell fro car window.

Meanwhile President Wentwo the I. & O. road, had learned accident to his niece's trunk was looking for the assistant gage-master.

"You're the man that sm that trunk, I believe?"

"It was through me that it poned, sir, and I'm very sorry; if you'll let me explain—"

"I don't want any explanatio excuses. I've heard all I can know about it. You've no bus to have your young ones around—it's no place for them!"

"But the child—"

"I can't stop to hear any stories. Report at the office your pay. We've got to have a here who will handle baggage fully," and the President swung ref on a passing car.

"Got your walking-ticket?" the baggage-master, anxiously.

Robert McElroy nodded. His was white, and his lips were l et.

"It's too bad! I was afraid it I tried to get hold of him b he tackled you. I thought pe I could explain matters, and him off a little; but I coul leave."

"It would have done no good wouldn't hear a word. Thank all the same. I shouldn't care myself, you know; but Grace and the Hope—"

The baggage-master shook his sympathetically. "I'm mighty ry!" he said, as his assistant tu abruptly away.

"He's been a good man for me went on to a bystander, let his eyes follow the athletic yo figure down the platform. "or I might say. He isn't much mo that. Fine stuff in him, thou There, he's supported his sister her child ever since her scawwa a husband died. She ain't str the sister ain't sick about half time. What disease? Pinch, goes. They ain't the kind th need to that sort of livin' W their father, old man McElroy, m his money and lost it down—"

Duty claimed the baggage-ma attention, and the story went tish.

President Wentworth found north-bound train crowded when boarded it at Shirley. At last secured a seat in the rear car be a little girl.

The child looked her big seat-m and down; but the man "b the newspaper took no heed. I nated a few moments, and th tly pulled his coat-sleeve.