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AN EXTRAORDINARY CURE IN THE COUNTY KILKENNY.

BY THE REV. JOHN ROSSITER, M.S.S.

Liverpool Catholic Times.

Whilst giving a mission in the diocese of Ossory quite lately, I was told that a young boy had been miraculously cured in the parish some time before.

I asked one of the local clergy was it true. "There is no doubt whatever about it," he replied. I was not a little interested; but, acting on the principle, "Omnia autem probate," I desired to examine the evidence, and asked him to come with me on the morning after the mission to see the family, so that I might have from their own lips a full and authentic account of the matter. I will relate what I heard, and I am sure it will interest many others as much as it interested me.

The young boy's name is Thomas Brennan, and he is now in his sixteenth year. His father, a well-to-do farmer, was brother to a much-esteemed parish priest of the diocese, who is now dead. He is a man that is much respected in the locality. Kilkasey, where he lives, lies in that hilly tract in South Kilkenny known as the Walsh mountains.

The people there are very religious, and are blessed with a strong Irish faith. James Brennan and his wife are as intelligent as they are sincerely pious. Their whole conversation is redolent of religion, and the atmosphere of their home is the atmosphere of faith. Sitting in their little parlour, they related with evident sincerity the full facts we had come to investigate, the one supplying what the other omitted.

It was last All Hallows Night their boy was cured. Eleven months before, one night in bed he felt a sudden pain in his left foot just at the instep. Every day it got worse. He became very ill, had a violent headache, and was practically confined to bed for three months. His health now got better, but the leg grew worse and worse, not that it pained him any longer, for it had lost all sensibility, and now seemed perfectly lifeless. The blood had ceased to circulate in it, apparently, for it was always cold as a stone from the knee down. They noticed it getting gradually small and shrunken, until it became much smaller than the right leg. The sinews at the back of the leg contracted so much that the foot became quite distorted, the heel was drawn upward out of its natural place, and the toes were drawn inward under the foot, and remained rigidly fixed in that position, pointing to the ground. The leg was now several inches shorter than the other—four inches. I was assured. The poor little fellow hobbled about on a crutch and a stick; and at every movement, said his mother, the lifeless limb dangled at his side like a

broken reed. Everyone who saw him said the poor lad was a cripple for life.

The parents now put their whole confidence in God, believing that He alone could restore him. They prayed much themselves; they asked the priest's prayers. On the day of the episcopal visitation in June the father took the little cripple to the Bishop to get his Lordship's blessing. The Bishop's kindly words, and the paternal interest he took in the lad, gave the father new confidence. More prayers were offered. Novenas were made in more than one convent. But so far no answer to their prayers had come. One day a sailor who is frequently in England called to see the family and spoke of the wonders wrought at St. Winefride's Well. They were very eager to obtain some of the water, and he promised to procure it for them. Whilst awaiting the water they decided on making a novena before the Feast of All Saints. The little boy began the novena with confession and Communion. He received Holy Communion again on the Festival itself, the last day of the novena. Every day during it he was taken in a car by his father a distance of three miles to assist at Mass; and the parish priest, at the father's request, offered Masses for his recovery at the same time. By the Feast of All Hallows the water from St. Winefride's Well had come. That night the whole family knelt down together to besiege Heaven with united prayer in behalf of their poor invalid, the little fellow himself devoutly joining in the prayer from his chair by the fireside. They first recited the Rosary and then St. Winefride's Litany and other prayers to her. The mother now uncovered the ailing limb. It was as cold, and lifeless, and misshapen as ever, as they all saw. She carefully bathed it all over with the water, and then the little fellow, with the aid of his crutch and stick, limped away to bed.

When he was gone to sleep, and all others had followed, the mother alone kept vigil. It was already far into the night, and all had been long asleep, but she was still on her knees, pleading for her dear little invalid. I asked what prayer she said. "I prayed to the holy martyr St. Winefride," she said. "and to Our Blessed Mother in Heaven, to intercede for us with the good God and ask Him to cure my poor child if it was His holy will."

Early next morning the mother was downstairs attending to the morning duties. A voice behind her called out "Mother!" She turned around, and there was the little fellow himself, without crutch or support, standing erect on his two feet on the floor. "Mother, I'm cured!" he said. Cured! She saw it with

her own eyes. "Oh how I felt when I looked at him," she said to me. "I almost fainted. I went straight and threw myself on my knees to thank the good God, but I cried so much I could scarcely say a word." Immediately the father came and eagerly examined the foot. "Was it quite well?" I asked him. "It was just like the other," he answered. I inquired was there any trace of the thing remaining. "Just this much," he said: "for some days he felt the leg a little weak or tender, and he continued to use a stick. But then he threw it aside completely."

I asked to see the young fellow himself. At the time he was out in the fields at work. But he soon returned, and was at once brought in for inspection. We did inspect him; and if this time last year, this youth was a little cripple that moved about on a crutch and a stick, I bear witness that he is now as robust and burly a lad as there is in the whole Walsh Mountains. He possesses to-day as sturdy a pair of legs as ever carried a gay "gorsoon" to fair or pattern. I questioned him, asking if he ever felt any tenderness now in the leg. Not the least, he said. "What did you feel the night you were cured?" "I felt nothing at all. When I went to bed I fell asleep, and slept till morning. When I awoke I noticed the leg warm like the other. I found I could stir it, and I got up and walked down."

Here, then, is the whole case as I heard it from the lips of the family in their own house.

In a recently reported case of the cure of a man at Holywell, I observe the doctor who had previously attended him disputed with good St. Winefride the merit of the cure, and said it was only the finishing touch, the "coup-de-grâce," he got at the Well.

In this instance there is no doctor in question. The Walsh Mountain folk evidently have more faith in God than they have in doctors. The boy's father, although even the Bishop advised it, would not see a doctor. The testimony, however, as to the nature and gravity of the boy's ailment will satisfy any ordinary mind as being quite ample and convincing.

Returning from the mission I met a gentleman who knows the locality, and I related the occurrence. "Who gave you these facts?" he inquired. "James Brennan," I said. "Well," he said, "believe it if James Brennan said it. I know him well. He is a man who would not tell an untruth to save his life." It will be noted that it was not the Brennan family alone that were witness of the little boy's previous pitiful state; but their friends and neighbours, several priests and even the Bishop, had seen him. The parish priest had seen him and spoken with him every day for the nine days of the novena. He saw him again immediately after the cure, and

can vouch for the truth of the father's statement.

It is not to lead others to expect such miracles that I relate this one. But if God is pleased in exceptional cases to depart from the ordinary ways of His Providence to reward the trust of those who confide in Him so much, and to stimulate the faith of others, it cannot be His Will that it be kept a secret. This very striking case has had an invigorating influence on the faith of the good Walsh Mountain folks. Not unlikely, it will have a similar effect on the faith of others when it reaches a wider area.

THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

The Speech of the Hon. C. Sifton in Toronto Caused Considerable Comment.

Morning Telegram.

The address made by Hon. Clifford Sifton on Tuesday night in Toronto at the Hardy banquet is causing considerable comment in reference to what he said on the settlement of the school question.

In that address Mr. Sifton said, in regard to the school question: "It is a question which is not in politics now. It was a question which tested the statesmanship of the leaders more than any other question. It hung over the last year of Sir John Macdonald. It baffled four successive Conservative prime ministers that followed Sir John, before it was settled in six months by our leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It was settled and this is the important point, upon terms which Manitoba could not honestly refuse."

In regard to the "settlement" which Mr. Sifton speaks of a prominent clergyman of the Roman Catholic church was seen yesterday and upon being asked if it were his opinion that the settlement of the school question was a final one, he replied: "What settlement? There has been no settlement of the school question, and I know of no change in the situation. There has been absolutely nothing done in concurrence of our just demands and the arrangement fixed up by the present government is of no importance whatever. What we demanded was simply the opportunity to educate our children according to the dictates of our conscience, and this we have not received. The Protestants have obtained this privilege in Quebec and the system is working without friction and Roman Catholics who are in the majority have not tried to coerce their fellow citizens in the minority. They were given separate schools and therefore why should we not have the same privilege?"

Upon being asked if he thought Mr. Sifton was correct in saying that it was a dead issue, he answered:

"Mr. Sifton is speaking for himself only. There can be no final settlement unless the heads of the Catholic church in Manitoba acquiesce. It takes two to make a bargain."

A representative of the Telegram interviewed His Grace Archbishop Langevin in his palace in St. Boniface yesterday regarding the matter. After reading the report of Mr. Sifton's speech His Grace said that he would not at present like to

express any opinion on the subject. The question was too momentous and the opportune moment for speaking publicly had not arrived. The clergy of his denomination were not partisans. As private citizens they had their own political party but as clergymen they would support which ever party granted them their just rights.

The Telegram representative ventured the remark that Mr. Sifton seemed to regard the question as dead. At this the Archbishop laughed significantly, but declined to commit himself in words.

IMPERIALISM ELOQUENT.

Hon. George E. Foster, at the citizens' farewell Ottawa banquet to Lord and Lady Aberdeen on the 1st inst., thus brilliantly sketched the present status of the British Empire:—

"It has been often said, not so often now as some years ago, that Britain was growing decrepit and infirm, that her power was waning, and that the time was rapidly approaching when Macaulay's New Zealander should take his seat on London bridge and survey the ruins of an Empire greater than Rome had ever been. I deny the assumption and I protest with all my heart against the inference. The expansive, the assimilative, the cohesive power of Britain is neither dead nor stagnant. The plastic crust from which in centuries past has burst forth that splendid energy that has ever and anon vivified the world has not stiffened to adamant. (Applause.) The typical vigour, the eruptive enterprise, the steady overflow of the higher life and potency are there still, and the march of Empire is ever forward. (Applause.)

To-day her drum-beat sounds on the far distant Pamirs, we hear the boom of her guns and see the flash of her steel in the rock passes of the Afridis. Her banners gleam at Hong Kong and Wei-Hai-Wei, and her flag floats over the vast insular continents of the Southern Pacific. In the whilom Dark Continent bugle calls to bugle from Bala-wayo in the south to Omdurman in the north, and imperial outposts sentinel the Nile and the Niger, while her cannon at Halifax and cannon at Esquimault, backed by 5,000,000 loyal subjects, stand guard and sponsor for the foremost and best of her possessions. (Tremendous applause.) Who dares to say that the Imperial eye is dimmed, the Imperial heart numbed, or that the irresistible might of her strong right arm is shattered? Rather do we affirm that the insular has become world-wide, that the merely national has broadened into the truly Imperial, and that the sphere of Britain's influence and the grandeur of her power are immeasurably advanced. (Applause.) Mr. Chairman, the proud citizens of Ottawa, the metropolis of so important a part of so imperial a realm, thank His Excellency for his kind sentiments and cordially unite in bidding him 'Farewell and bon voyage.' (Great applause.)