



SOME OF FATHER FRASER'S YOUNG CONVERTS

GLORIOUS CLONTARF

A NOTABLE IRISH ANNIVERSARY

On the 23rd of April in this year of grace, 1914, Ireland celebrates the nine hundredth anniversary of what is, in some respects, the most glorious event in her history. Clontarf was not the first place where Christian Celt and pagan Dane met face to face. For more than a century and a half previously there had been many fierce struggles between the northern invaders and the native clansmen. Sometimes victory was with the one, sometimes with the other, but try as they might, the Danes never succeeded in bringing any considerable portion of Ireland under their sway. A few seaport towns were held by them, but even these, at the time of which we write, were permitted them only on their consenting to pay tribute to the high king Brian. Ireland, alone of all the nations upon which they had made war, called a halt to their onward march of conquest. But one year before Clontarf a Danish sovereign had been set upon the English throne. A Danish Duke of Normandy had been established in France. But they had never yet been able to subdue this coveted western isle, and never once had they given a monarch to its line of kings. They were a fighting race, these northern sea dogs, and knew not the meaning of defeat. Clontarf was their supreme effort. Much depended upon the outcome of the conflict. Old defeats to be avenged, new glory to be achieved, priceless booty to be reaped, and their hold upon western Europe to be made secure forever. Hence they put forth their utmost strength, until the news of their mighty preparations filled Europe, and a hundred harbors in Norway, Denmark, France, England, and the Channel Isles resounded day and night with the bustle preparatory for the coming war. Well might the aged Brian quail before this gathering of Northern hosts. Here were the unconquered Northmen, the scourge and terror of Europe, the conquerors of Britain, Normandy, Angles, Orkney, and Man, now concentrating the might of their whole race, from firth and haven, from the Orkneys to the Sicily Isles, to burst in an overwhelming billow upon Ireland. England went down before a less formidable assault, but yet the old warrior king was not daunted. He resolved to meet force by force, preparation by preparation, combination by combination, to defy the foe, and let them see what the Fighting Race could do. All Ireland answered to his call, and the die was cast.

We have said that the Danes had everything to gain at Clontarf. On the Irish side, too, there were not wanting motives to call forth all that was best in this supreme moment. Before them they saw the serried ranks of the pirate marauders who, in many a fray, had wrought ruin and destruction upon the fairest portions of their beloved country. Churches and monasteries razed to the ground, sanctuaries defiled, sacred treasures ruthlessly destroyed, women and children put to the sword. They had marked the passage of the barbarians in the clouds of smoke from burning homesteads, in the red trail of innocent blood shed wantonly, in the maddening evidences of a vandalism that laid furious hands on all that they held sacred. All this rose up before their eyes, filled their ears, and burned itself into their hearts, until with one voice they demanded in a frenzy of rage and indignation to be led against the authors of such barbarities. In their leader, Brian, they felt, moreover, that they had a certain presage of victory. They remembered how from being a mere ruler of a petty principality he had risen to the proud position of High King of Ireland. And such a king, brave, chivalrous, magnanimous, firm in friendship, strong in battle, holding by personal loyalty what he had won by the sword, and animated not by a desire for personal glory, but by a high and noble patriotism that would unite all Ireland under one supreme head the better to with-

stand the onslaught of external foes. Such, then, were the combatants, and such the motives that inspired them as they faced each other in the dawn of that fateful Good Friday morning, April 23rd, 1014, and foolhardy, indeed, would be the prophet who would hazard the outcome of the titanic conflict.

The city of Dublin was then altogether south of the Liffey, and on the sloping plain, north and east by the river Tolka and the sea, extending to Clontarf and beyond it, the Danish army encamped on Holy Thursday evening. On the rising ground, near the present Vincentian Church of Hibernborough, was a wood called Tomar's wood, and in front of this and facing the Danes, the Irish army encamped. It is commonly computed that there were about 20,000 men engaged on either side. Brian, we are told, was very reluctant to fight on Good Friday, thinking it almost profanation to engage in combat upon the day on which our Lord died for man's redemption, and begged that the engagement might be postponed for even one day. But the Danes were determined to fight on that day, for, says an old legend of the battle, the pagan oracles had foretold that if they gave battle upon the Friday Brian would fall, but if on any other day his foes would all fall, and so Good Friday was fixed upon.

All being ready for the signal of battle, Brian himself, mounted on a richly caparisoned charger, rode through the Irish lines, as all the 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 to 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 flowing in the wind, riding through their lines, with the sacred symbol of Redemption borne aloft, and abjuring 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." It was a brave and right king's act, but one that cost Ireland dearly. It proved an all-powerful incentive to the valor of the Irish forces. It gave force to every word of the old king's address. He recounted all the barbarities and the sacrilegious 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.

"They have razed our proudest castles—spoiled the Temples of the Lord—Burnt to dust the sacred relics—put the Peaceful to the sword—Desecrated all things holy—as they soon may do again, If their power to day we smight 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 banners—nerve our sinews for the strife—Fight we 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?"

Who can be astonished that, as he ceased, a cry wild, furious, and deafening burst from the Irish lines, and they demanded to be led at once against the enemy. The aged monarch would himself lead the van of battle in person had not his sons and all the attendant princes and commanders prevailed upon him, because of his advanced age, to let the chief command devolve upon his eldest son and heir, Morrogh. Brian then retired to his tent and there spent the day in prayer before the crucifix. From time to time he asked his attendants how the battle went. He was told that all was confusion, that there was a noise as if seven battalions were cutting down Tomar's Wood, but that Morrogh's standard still floated and that heads were falling wherever it was borne. "While Morrogh's standard floats at the head of his forces all goes well with the men of Erin," the valiant warrior king answered, and knelt again in prayer. Again, towards the close of the day, he inquired, and was informed that it looked as if Tomar's Wood was on fire, the brushwood destroyed, a few stately trees only remaining—the soldiers had fallen, a few only of the chiefs were left, and Morrogh's standard was down. It was a doleful news, for the old king had centered the hopes of his house in Morrogh, and when he was dead he protested he himself did not wish to survive.

His wish was soon granted. The conflict of heroes," as the historians call it, was over, and the Danish forces were in utter rout. Brian's bodyguard, anxious to have a personal share in the glorious victory, and thinking all danger to their illustrious charge was over, joined in the pursuit of the fleeing Danes. The Danish chief Brodir and a few followers, hiding in the wood, noted the unprotected tent, rushed in, and with a single stroke of his battle-axe clove in the king's skull. "Now," he said, "let man tell man that Brodir killed Brian." The guards returned in time to avenge his death, but too late to save a life upon which so much depended. Morrogh and his son Turlogh had both fallen in battle, and now with the death of Brian the entire reigning family was wiped out. Clontarf was for Irish arms a glorious victory, but for the hopes of Irish nationalism a most overwhelming calamity. Never again did the Danes attempt the conquest of the country, but the seeds of disruption had been sown in the extinction of the reigning house, and it only waited another such attempt at invasion from whatever source to pass under the yoke of the conqueror.

Eminently tragic as were its consequences to herself, Ireland sheds no tears over Clontarf. The defeat of the Danes ultimately cost her national independence, but it saved Christianity, and as she gave of her holiest and best to repair the ravages of Hun and Vandal, so she gladly sacrificed her bravest and noblest to stem the onrush of pagan savagery that threatened to engulf all Europe in its devastating course. Clontarf is a typically Irish anniversary. "The smile and the tear" that are inseparably blended in her history are no where more in evidence than in the story of this fateful day which was once a victory and a defeat. The dream of a Danish world-empire was dispelled for ever upon the plains of Clontarf, but at a terrible price. The cutting off at once of the old king Brian, his son Morrogh, and his grand son Turlogh added in one black day the patient work of years. Brian was undoubtedly the greatest high king that ever sat upon the Irish throne. He had drawn order out of chaos, had welded the warring clans into genuine unity, and had taught Irishmen to think nationally. The cursed provincialism that had ever been the bane of Irish nationhood was giving way to a broader concept of patriotism under the wise rule of the old Dalcassian warrior king. Had he survived, Clontarf the glory of his great achievement, would have still further endeared him to his subjects, and the continuance of a strong central government would have been secured. Had even his heir Morrogh been spared to take up the sceptre native unity and strength

might have been maintained. But with the ruling house wiped out at one fell blow the rival ambitions of numberless petty princes blighted the hopes of a united Ireland. Unity had gone for ever. The reign of discord and chaos had begun, and the way was prepared for the final conquest of the island. Ireland lost everything at Clontarf save the imperishable memory of a victory that dispelled the fear of a pagan conquest of Europe. She paid the price in centuries of blood and tears, but civilization reaped the fruits of her sacrifice. As the monks chanted the hero-king's requiem in the cathedral of Armagh, whither they carried his body for burial, the banshee's wailing woke the echoes of Craigiea above his palace of Kincora. It was a fitting ending to the life of the greatest of the Irish kings—the Church he loved and the country he ennobled united their tears above his ashes. Many long years have passed out into eternity since he died a hero's death at Clontarf, but the ideal to which he consecrated his life still moulds the career of Ireland's noblest sons. "Ireland a Nation" was the dream he sought to make a reality. Throughout all the centuries since then that dream has never been abandoned, and in this year of grace, 1914, other men are striving by other methods to bring it to a triumphant issue. And in the dawn of that brighter day we may well rejoice for Ireland, faithful Ireland, that sacrificed everything for her fidelity to truth and justice, will utilize the larger powers that shall be hers in the cause of that truth and justice that have ever been her inspiration and guiding star.

REV. D. A. CASEY (COLUMBA)

LETTER FROM FATHER FRASER

Tai-chowfu, China, Feb. 19, 1914.

Dear Mr. Coffey.—Our fears have only too truly come true with regard to Confucianism becoming the official religion of China. However the people and students are allowed full liberty to profess any religion they wish.

I never saw such a concourse of converts to the faith as during the last few months. In the school in this city I have over a hundred of their children under instruction. The same news is coming from all over. In the southern part of our vicariate a thousand adults were baptized during the last six months!

Yours faithfully,
J. M. FRASER.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING VINDICATED

With much satisfaction we note that prominent churchmen of our dissenting brethren are rallying to the support of religious training for the children and youths of the country's schools. They are sounding the tocsin because of the startling lack of real education that is found there, and with much alarm are they looking forward to the inevitable depravity of our future generation.

The New York Christian Advocate, one of the leading organs of Methodism, sounds this warning: "These Roman Catholic teachers are at large sacrifice doing precisely what they ought to do, if they propose to give the last ounce of their loyalty to the Church. The thing that makes us glad is the possibility that their action will stir up Protestants to realize how superlatively stupid they have been concerning religious instruction of children. The Roman Communion is always setting us an impressive example in this respect, which the blindest of us cannot fail to note, but which the majority of us treat with amazing disregard. Under the limitations of our Public school system religious instruction as a part of the curriculum is impossible. The consequence is that the majority of Protestant children, especially in the great cities, receive very inadequate religious training, and many of them do not have any which is worthy of respect. Religious teaching in home is by reason of our complex and rapid life reduced to a slender amount and thinned to the consistency of gruel. Our children spend an hour and a half at Sunday school once a week. Other agencies are employed by the Church to reach such children as are committed to its care by that very small proportion of our people who take any interest whatever in giving the Church a chance at childhood. Earnest pastors supplement the regular activities in behalf of children with such special attention as they are enabled to bestow upon this vastly important matter. But Protestant children as a whole, counting them, as the Catholics enumerate theirs on the basis of a traditional but usually loose association of their parents with the churches, are to a very considerable extent without efficient religious instruction."

Bishop Hamilton of the Methodist Church points to the dangers of a lack of religious training, and incidentally pays a high compliment to the children of Catholic schools. His words are: "It has been said that it would be well to disorganize the educational institutions conducted under religious auspices and founded upon religious principles. I want to speak of the secondary or religious school and its relation to the Public high school. There is absolutely no argument that warrants the substitution of the high school for the religious school. The Public school is not producing good morals or good manners. The respect that our

fathers used to have for womanhood is not apparent in the present output of our Public school. The religious school is a necessity. The Roman Catholic Church has done great good in teaching, through its schools. Its religious schools teach manners. I often meet small Roman Catholic boys on the street. These boys always tip their hats to me and are glad to assist me in any way, thinking that I am one of their fathers. The Catholic Church has better educated, in manners and morals, the children in the Latin countries than have the Public schools we have today. It is a very grievous thing to think our Public schools are producing no such results as to warrant the abandonment of religious or secondary schools. And this is the country where John Winthrop said that the cornerstones of the state was religion. The necessity of the hour is to know how to get ethical instruction in our schools without religious teachings. Religion is at the bottom of education. The fear of the Lord is the start of wisdom."

These are noble and strong sentiments from a Protestant Bishop, and they go to show that the Catholic Church is right in teaching and following out the truth that children who receive no religious training are but half-educated and that they are being poorly equipped for the battle of life and for civic righteousness, let alone the consideration of taking care of their souls for time and eternity.—Intermountain Catholic.

NOT TRUE CHURCH

Father Bernard Vaughan scored a good point in connection with the Kikuyu affair answering a person who wrote him that it was a cowardly thing to have preached on the controversy, as he recently did, in Manchester—cowardly to hit a man when he was down. In reply Father Vaughan told his correspondent that "if his Church (the English Protestant State Church) was down, it could not be the true Church, and he was only showing up a Church in which people could do what they chose in matters, appertaining to religion. Moreover, the Bishop of Zanzibar invited criticism by writing an open letter on the subject, and if people of all creeds and politics could discuss the question, he would not keep out of it."

This correspondent was very unlucky if not unhappy in his quotation of the old proverb. Clearly a Church "down" cannot be the true Church. The true Church, having the Divine promise, can never be down.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

THE CREED OF VIOLENCE

Unpremeditated violence is deplorable. Violence which is the direct result of a creed is hateful. New York is at present the victim of the latter. An insane philosophy, the heritage of desperate men, is working itself out in practice. The result is not reassuring. Churches are invaded. Services are interrupted. Food and shelter are demanded in an insolent way. God and religion are blasphemed, and men look on in amazement. Well they might. There is never any excuse for blasphemy. There was no excuse for this outbreak of violence. It was born of passion pure and simple. Envy, disrespect for authority, unreasonable hatred of our social order, these were its progenitors. Many of the starving men who took part in the disgraceful scenes were idlers who would not work. Others had homes. Still others were supplied with money. At the very time they were clamoring for places to sleep there were one thousand vacant beds in the municipal lodging houses. Where, then, is the excuse for the violence? There is none. There is,

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however, an explanation. This does not lie in lack of work nor in lack of bed or board. The explanation is found in the hearts of these men. Their hearts are godless. Their souls, not their bodies, are starved. They know not God to submit to Him. Not submitting to Him, they will not submit to human authority. They will not respect human law, nor the State, nor anything else which checks their wild individualism, their license. Here is the real difficulty. There is but one hope of escape from it. This hope may not be realized in this generation. It can be realized in the next. Put God in the hearts of the children. Seat Him strong there. Order will then flow from within, not be imposed from without. Then, and only then, will law, order and the State, instruments of God for man's welfare, be respected. Here is the only hope. Reject it and the future will be more ominous than the present.—America.

WHEN IRELAND'S DREAM COMES TRUE

When Ireland's age-long dream comes true, When, after all the years, She's worn the myrtle and the rue, God wipes away her tears,— The winged word of joy will speed O'er oceans broad and blue, And hearts around the world take heed, When Ireland's dream comes true. Yes, all around the word will run The sympathy and spark, The Frank the Teuton and the Hun The thrilling word will mark: For, whose hates unrighteous laws, Whate'er his race or hue, Must wish success to Ireland's cause, And hail her dream come true. And we, whose vital stream flows straight, From Ireland's tender heart, Will flout, that day, the frowning Fate That bids us walk apart; And feel for that dear mother-breast From which our lives we drew A richer joy than all the rest, When Ireland's dream comes true. When Ireland's dream comes true at last, God grant she still may hold In loving memory, firm and fast, Her exiled sons of old; Fond, faithful hearts who scorned to hide The old love in the new— Who toiled for Ireland, but who died Ere yet her dream came true.

FATHER FRASER'S CHINESE MISSION

The noble response which has been made to the CATHOLIC RECORD's appeal in behalf of Father Fraser's Chinese mission encourages us to keep the list open a little longer.

It is a source of gratification to Canadian Catholics that to one of themselves it should have fallen to inaugurate and successfully carry on so great a work. God has certainly blessed Father Fraser's efforts, and made him the instrument of salvation to innumerable souls. Why not, dear reader, have a share in that work by contributing of your means to its maintenance and extension? The opportunity awaits you: let it not pass you by.

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POOR SORT OF RELIGION

John Aycongh says of one of the characters in one of his short stories: "Any religion she had was a singular mixture, picked up out of all sorts of books, a kind of bric a brac, not at all useful and not worth very much. But she was ready for any superstition. She would not believe anything because God had revealed it, but she would believe any old story told on the authority of somebody's aunt or somebody's cousin's gamekeeper."

This is not a bad picture of the dabbler in religion, who is strong on superstition and weak on the essentials of religion. Even some pseudo-cultured Catholics are afflicted with this species of self-delusion. They are inclined to criticise and to sneer at Church stories at every opportunity, but ghost stories are "perfectly lovely." And they accept these superstitions as if they were a part of religion. Perhaps they are a part of the religion of such persons, but it is a mighty poor sort of religion. They need instruction; yes, and most of them need a little common sense.—True Voice.

A Catholic who tells you, "I don't read a Catholic paper," is apt to have a son who will say, "I don't go to church."

Only a truly virtuous person can be happy, for happiness is a virtue, and there is no virtue in long faces even when pulled by pious people.

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