

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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WEDNESDAY.....MARCH 22, 1893

ST. PATRICK.

Apart from the national significance of the day all Irishmen the world over celebrate, there is a deep and abiding religious glow flung about the occasion—for the patron of Ireland is also a saint of the Catholic Church. He is one of that mighty band of missionaries who at different times, went forth from Rome to carry the light of the Gospel into the lands where barbarism and paganism reigned supreme. St. Patrick's mission was crowned with a success that no other preacher of the Faith ever attained. Others commenced the work of converting foreign and infidel nations, and their companions aided in the giant task; but many of these peoples were centuries in being turned toward the Truths of Christianity, and not a few of them lost their Faith, wholly or in part, as the ages rolled past. But St. Patrick's work was effective from the outset; the people flocked around his standard of the Cross: and what is more wonderful still, they and their descendants, for over fourteen centuries, have preserved the doctrines taught by that great apostle, and have held to their Faith in the midst of persecutions and misfortunes such as no pen could describe and no finite mind could grasp in all their horrors of detail.

When our Isle was visited by the Apostle of Faith, the Druids held sway, and amidst their weird surroundings, and in their sacred groves they taught a creed that, as a pagan one, was perhaps the best calculated to prepare the race for the reception of higher revelations. "St. Patrick addressed the ruling classes, who could bring with them their followers, and he joined tact to zeal," says Henry Morley, "respecting ancient prejudices, opposing nothing that was not directly hostile to the spirit of Christianity, and handling skillfully the chiefs with whom he had to deal." An early convert—Dichu MacTrighim—was a chief with influential connections, who gave the ground for the religious house now known as Saul. He so satisfied all the inquiries of Laeghaire, son of Niall King of Erin, concerning the strange preacher's movements, that St. Patrick sailed for the mouth of the Boyne and went straight to the King. He eventually converted the monarch.

Laeghaire then ordered a revision of the Brehon laws, that they might be made to harmonize with the new teachings. St. Patrick assisted in revising those laws, and no ancient customs were changed or broken, except what could not harmonize with Christianity. Thus by prudence and judgment the apostle effected a transformation without offend-

ing the people. That collection of laws is called the "Senchus Mor." Thus does an old poem speak of it:—

"Laeghaire, Corc, Dairi, the brave;
Patrick, Beven, Cairnech, the just;
Rossa, Dublach, Fergus, the wise;
These are the nine pillars of the Senchus Mor."

St. Patrick worked principally in Ulster and Leinster. Amongst the churches and religious communities that he founded in Ulster is that of Armagh, the Archbishop of which was, the other day, raised by Leo XIII, to the dignity of a Cardinal. The great patron of Ireland was born about the year 405, and carried prisoner into Ireland at the age of sixteen. He escaped about the year 427 and found his way home to his parents. He spent one year with them and then four years with Germanus at Auxerre. It was in 432 that he commenced his apostleship of Ireland. According to almost all authorities, he labored during sixty years in his mission, and died in 493, at the ripe age of eighty-eight.

He was never famed as a writer; his fort was in speaking. He went about, like his Master, "doing good." Of his written works we have a "Letter to Coroticus," a petty King of Brittany, who persecuted the Christians; and a piece called his "Confession." This is a sublime composition in which the beauties and grandeurs of religion are pictured. Thousands are the legends told about St. Patrick, some of them founded on facts, others were children of the heated imagination. A poetical and religiously fervent people, like the Irish, very naturally seized upon every story or tradition, and moulded it according to fancy or circumstance. But leaving aside all that is legendary, we have sufficient of historical incidents in the life and labors of the mighty Apostle of Ireland to satisfy the most keen appetite for the marvellous and great. His miracles apart, there stands before us the incontestable miracle of the conversion of a whole race in the space of one lifetime, and the still greater miracle of the preservation of the Faith planted by St. Patrick during all those centuries of sorrow, persecution and barbaric sufferings. Let us then kneel to God, and begging of St. Patrick to bless the land and its people, ask that the Light of Catholicity, which he brought our forefathers, may never be extinguished while our race survives.

AN ANTI-HOMERULER.

Whatever the *Gazette* may be, as far as Irish politics are concerned, decidedly it has some strange correspondents. In an issue of last week we find a letter from the pen of "A. H. L." upon the very interesting subject of the "Home Rule Measure and its Author." This exceptional communication occupies nearly three columns of the *Gazette*. How to reduce this lengthy, rambling and illogical epistle to such a degree that an ordinary reader could grasp the meaning of the conglomeration of ideas without danger of cracking his brain, is a matter of no small difficulty. The flaming title and the exceptional length of the essay would lead one to think that the writer had some very powerful arguments to set forth or very important facts to state. Yet, when a reader has had the perseverance to wade through the three columns of attack upon Gladstone and censure of this Bill, he finds out that it would have been very difficult for "A. H. L." or any person else, to have gone over so much historical ground in fewer sentences.

This oracle from beyond the Atlantic not only has vague ideas upon the sub-

ject of Home Rule for Ireland, but he is evidently astray in the history of every other land, while some fellow must have been poking fun at him about Canada and its system of Government. He opens out by ridiculing Mr. Gladstone's seven years of labor in preparing his much talked of Home Rule Bill: he gives us the old fable of the mountain and the mouse; this he follows up by the sweeping assertion that Mr. Gladstone is not sincere. He then informs us that Parnell would not have accepted the proposed measure, except as a step to something better. We agree with him on that point and we can say that no more does any other Irishman accept it other than as an inch of the ultimate ell. This political genius and evidently embryonic statesman, ("A. H. L.") occupies quiet a space with a very negative argument which consists in telling the Irish people what the Home Rule measure will not give them. He enumerates in detail all the privileges that the country will not receive; the rights that the Bill does not secure them. But he most carefully avoids the affirmative side of the question, and neglects entirely to include in his list all the advantages that the Irish people must obtain through means of legislative autonomy—advantages which they cannot possibly enjoy under the present state of affairs. All this would lead a person to imagine that Mr. "A. H. L." were broken hearted over the small amount of advantage that the Irish are to receive from Gladstone's Bill, and that he were anxious to vent his spleen upon the Grand Old Man for having given so very little, when he could have given more. But the key to the whole puzzle—for the entire letter is a puzzle—may be found in the statement that he is neither an Irish patriot nor anxious for the welfare of that country.

If "A. H. L." or any other "H. L." imagines that the Irish people require advice from one who neither belongs to their nationality nor has any interest in its prosperity, he is greatly astray. Having gratuitously accused Gladstone of not meaning all he said in his now immortal plea in the Home Rule cause, he proceeds to assert, and to attempt proof of his assertion, that "any nation is safest, wisest, best, least corrupt, and most economical," when it is under central legislative control. He also states (this "A. H. L." Ancient Historical Logician) that the tendency of all the nations of the world has been towards the centralization of Power, and away from the decentralizing system—the Home Rule one. He, moreover, informs us that the latter system has proven a failure in all lands and in all times. These two columns he closes with the statement that a nation looks more attractive and grand when its power is centralized. We scarcely know whether this man is serious or not; if serious, he is evidently a reader of history who knows but little of its philosophy; if not serious, he must take us Canadians for backwoods illiterates whom he has a special mission to enlighten and deceive. Yet he has taken the trouble to rake up the ashes of Troy, to unearth the relics of ancient Greece, to ransack the story of France and to recall the events of thirty years ago, during the great American conflict; all to prove that, in the march of history, the nations have become yearly more and more inclined towards centralized government, and that their ruin was the system from which arises the idea of Home Rule. We have not space to run after "A. H. L." (or A. anything else) through all the winding labyrinths of history, ancient, modern and contemporaneous; but we appeal to any reader interested in the subject to examine the march of human progress and develop-

ment, during the length of the ages, and if he does not find that the trend of human movement has been away from centralized government, from one man power, from tyranny, and towards the confederate, the republican, the democratic forms, the elective representation, and the emancipation of serf from master, we are willing to admit to "A. H. L." that Home Rule would be a curse. Cast your eye upon the world to-day, and only in Russia, Turkey, and other despotic lands does barbarism still survive. Yet there is more splendor and jewelled grandeur about these powers than in the freest states of the earth. "A. H. L." likes kingly display, national grandeur; but he evidently has no care for popular comfort and the country's stability. But to cap the climax this learned "A. H. L." points to the Canadian Home Rule system as a complete failure. What evidence does he adduce? Simply that he read in some Canadian papers that there is talk about an annexation spirit. Shades of our sires! Troy is in ruins to-day, because of a Home Rule idea that arose amongst the Greeks; Athens is deserted, because her glory was snatched from her by a phantom of Home Rule; France has been on the verge of ruin, its republican instability has been apparent, the moment a Home Rule sentiment arose in the breasts of her rulers; the civil war between the Northern and Southern States was caused by the granting of Home Rule to each particular state; and Canada is in danger of an annexation cry, because a system of Home Rule here prevails. These are "A. H. L.'s" historical contentions. Per contra, he tells us that Russia and Turkey are the only free and solid governments, because no Home Rule system prevails with them.

We have tried to analyze this three column letter of distorted history and lame logic. In coming to the end of it, we are simply impressed with the idea that "A. H. L." is considerably astray as far as the march of history is concerned, and that his arguments against Home Rule are the very most powerful and logical evidences in its favor. Freedom not slavery, democracy not monarchy, federal not central form of government, emancipation not chains, constitutional representation not one man government, Home Rule not Foreign Rule, are what the world has been seeking and moving towards, and what have removed us, every year, a degree from barbarism, and in the direction of civilization. If anyone of our readers feels inclined to spend an hour amidst logical monstrosities and historical absurdities, let him read and ponder over "A. H. L.'s" letter on Home Rule in last week's *Gazette*.

New Queen's Counsel.

The following English speaking members of the Montreal Bar have been lately gazetted as "learned in the law." Gersham Joseph, James Kirby, David R. McLeard, Thomas J. Doherty, W. J. Cruikshank, C. H. Stephens, F. D. Monk, Selkirk Cross, Henry J. Kavanagh, C. B. Busteed, J. P. Cook and E. F. MacIntyre.

The Prince of Breifne.

O'Rourke, the Prince of Breifne, for saving from massacre and giving temporary shelter and food to the famishing remnant of the crew of one of the ships of the Spanish Armada, was treated as a rebel who had entertained the enemies of Queen Elizabeth, his lands confiscated, and he himself carried to London, and there imprisoned.

He was brought into the presence of Elizabeth, but refused to kneel before her, and when demanded scoffingly if he was not accustomed to kneel to a virgin queen, he replied, "To no queen will I kneel but the Queen of Heaven." His execution followed, and when asked had he any dying request to make, he said, "None; but that you turn my face to Ireland."