

But to abandon generalities and to come down a little more closely to the personal aspect of the case, I often ask myself, was ever a more beautiful, more fascinating, more pathetic, more wonderful and, at the same time, more generally accepted story than that of Him whom our mothers were accustomed to describe to us as being the Son of God who came down from heaven to live on earth a suffering life and die a shameful death in order to save sinners.

The story was to us in those days a wonderful one, but our mothers vouched for it, and therefore with us it was gospel. And did its acceptance ever do any of us any harm, or make of us men and women in any respect less worthy of our humanity? I think not. On the contrary, the life story of this Jesus of Nazareth has been one by which the world has been much advantaged, and even were its recital only a fiction, was the most powerful and thrilling story ever written, for its leading character spoke and acted as did none other man, his character being an example in whose steps one could not do wrong to follow.

During the week, as peculiarly appropriate to the anniversary which is being celebrated, "the story of the Cross" has been recited in many of the churches, to put one in mind of the sad, sad story of Him, who were He a malefactor, did not comport Himself as such before his judges and tormentors; who died a shameful and an agonizing death without so much as a murmur. His last words being in remembrance of His mother and of forgiveness for those who had caused Him to be put to death. And the story, which we read in scripture history, is corroborated by profane writers of the period, thus demonstrating that it is no cunningly devised fable; hence were this all it is not for the non-believer and sceptic to attempt to berate and ridicule those who are so deeply impressed with these verities.

Wonderful as is the story thus far, its interest is intensified when we remember that the death of the leading character in it is signalized by a phenomenal outbreak of the forces of nature, which, no longer controllable, produce darkness and an earthquake which causes the graves to be opened and the sleep of the dead to be so disturbed that they rose and went about Jerusalem. Was there ever another death like this recorded? Well might the pagan Roman official declare that "truly this was the Son of God." But, further, on the third day, still celebrated as Easter-Sunday, the grave of this "imposter," this "false teacher" was discovered to have been opened and he was afterwards seen alive, and later went up in the presence of witnesses back to the same heaven from which He had come. Was there ever a story like this? Was there ever anything naturally improbable that is so generally believed, for it is not to the record of Jesus that so much objection is taken by unbelievers as to some of the contents of the older scriptures.

And this same life of Christ is still being lived if we are to believe what is authoritatively stated, and there is no reason why

we should not, judging from the analogy of the past. Every one of us is concerned in that life both in the present and in the future, and therefore all that we hear of Lenten observances and Easter festivities practically concerns us all. For once then I, as an interested party, have, on this occasion, gone outside of my ordinary course in order to say a word about Him whose deity and humanity combined have formed a theme upon which the greatest minds have pondered and written, of which the grandest orators have spoken and to which the sublimest of poetry and the most noble of music has, during the ages, been attuned.

Pat, the world over, has been dubbed an originally comical genius and no fool, the absurdly droll stories that are told about him, to the contrary notwithstanding, so that the people who constituted the vast audience in the Victoria last Saturday evening, on the occasion of the Sons of Erin concert, knew beforehand that they would get full value for their money when they purchased their tickets. From a musical point of view there was no fault to find with the bill of fare provided; it may be said that the province had been explored for its best voices and they had been captured for the occasion, for it is not often that such a collection of resident vocal talent is seen on the stage of the Victoria at one time. Then, too, the spirit which characterised the performers extended itself to the audience; all were Irish for the time being, and all joined in forming a thoroughly happy family.

To the strains of the orchestra, at the opening, one's recollections travelled back to familiar spots in the Emerald Isle, which once seen are never forgotten, and here was perhaps the only hitch in the evening, for the public in its insane haste to get out at what they thought the end of the programme, not only was rude to Mr. Evan-Thomas for his second song, but utterly ran away from the last selection of the orchestra. This sin is so old and common with all audiences that it is scarcely noticed, but it is nevertheless to be deplored. Mr. Clement Rowlands, with his splendid baritone, would make a capital Irishman, so fully enunciated, clear and resonant are his tones. He was just recovering from an attack of bronchitis, and was not acting in his own interests in singing then, but having promised, he performed. What he did do under the circumstances was remarkable, as was evidenced by the thunderous demand for an encore. In his second selection, however, he was something of his own self, the well known voice coming out in most of its accustomed richness and musical power. In fact, his rendering of "The Heart Bowed Down," and the encore "Queen of the Earth" were among some of his best. Mrs. Macleod was heard for the first time at a public concert in this city and made a good impression in her rendition of "Kathleen Mavourneen. Mr. Richardson, one of the boys, was productive of the fun of the evening; his rollicking songs were just what the boys take to, and at which even the sober public felt constrained to loosen the severity of its countenance to laugh heartily for

a moment. His "Patsy Brannigan" and "Enniscorthy" were unroariously funny. Madame Laird, as usual, was very pleasing, and was in her element in singing those sweet old ballads, to which her voice is admirably adapted. Her best piece was "Killarney's Lakes," for which she received a well merited recall. In Mr. Aspland there is a singer of some promise if he continues to conscientiously cultivate a naturally good voice, correct method and appreciation of what he is singing. His rendering of the "Minstrel Boy" showed that he has improved a great deal and there is no reason why he should not accomplish a great deal more with the material he has. Mrs. Clement Rowlands' sweet sympathetic voice was heard to much advantage in "Thady O'Flynn," a song of peculiar pathos, and peculiarly well suited to Mrs. Rowlands' voice. Of her execution, nothing can be said with a view to improving it; she makes no pretenses at great things, although capable of interpreting some of the most difficult music with a truthfulness and spirit that wins the hearer at once; but she is natural, which adds considerable charm to her mode of singing. Mr. J. G. Brown chose a typical Irish song, which being good natured and funny, told a story that can be heard in actual life every day in the poor parts of Ireland. There are hundreds of such characters as Father O'Flynn in Ireland, ruling his flock with varied power, coaxing the weak, keeping the good in line, and the fractious are treated with a combination of kindly despotism and good natured leniency; but on the whole, under that sometimes apparently strict demeanor, there is a great big heart that prompts the hand to go to the pocket when any of the sheep are in bad pasture, and bring forth practical relief. The Irish peasant without his priest would often be in a bad state, for the priest is his father, his friend, his lawyer, his protector, everything in fact. I must be excused for this little digression, but it is a phase of Irish life that is only too often lost sight of when ill informed writers speak of the power of the priest over the people in Ireland. Mr. Brown's second song, "Eilleen Allanna" was a gem, and was rendered in that singer's finished style, showing his well known versatility and ability to pass from the grave to the gay, giving equally complete treatment to both. As to Mr. Philo, you can say what you like; he has a good voice, but he labored under the disadvantage of not knowing his song thoroughly. It is sheer folly for a singer to come before an audience with a song he has only looked over a few times. This was Mr. Philo's case exactly. However, his rendition of "the Star of Bethlehem" was better than his first selection, and won for him hearty applause. Mr. Evan-Thomas was an attraction whom Victorians wanted to hear, and they were satisfied with him, his rich musical tones giving much feeling to such songs as "The Harp That Once Through Tara's Hall" and "Cruiskeen Lawn," which won for him the warmest of encores. As to the ladies' orchestra, there was nothing but praise for them; they not only looked charming on the stage, but they played into the