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VOL. XIV., No. 11

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1906

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## TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

### Some Recollections of St. Patrick's Day Celebrations in Ireland, Canada and the United States.

Here we are again; once more face to face with the ever welcome anniversary of St. Patrick. It has been my fortune to celebrate the day in many places and I am not without my recollections of how it was kept. I recollect it in Ireland before I had reached my tenth year, when I made my Patrick's crosses at school, and when I was reading of and hearing tell of Daniel O'Connell, Father Matthew, Thomas Moore, Theig Gaelich and Donaghoe Roe. I remember it in Canada in the forties, when it was of general observation in our cities and larger towns, and was kept up with interest.

There was a St. Patrick's Society in Hamilton when I was yet a young boy, but I was never without my Irish enthusiasm and my bit of green favor of some kind. And I marched in the ranks from John Curran's hotel in the Court House Square, up Main street to James and along James north to St. Mary's church, and there heard Mass and listened to an eloquent sermon or panegyric from Very Rev. Father Gordon, the Vicar-General and second regular Catholic pastor of Hamilton. That was the time of those gallant pioneers, the Bricks, the Fitzpatricks, the McCurdys, the Nelligans and the Branigans. I don't remember the usual anniversary dinners in those days, but you may be sure they had them. Later came the Martins, the Stinsons, Magills, the Irwins, and the O'Reillys had been there before, and were remarkable only for their aloofness.

I spent a couple of years of my younger manhood in the city of Buffalo and it was there that this lad first asserted himself and unfolded his faith to his compatriots. There were two Irish societies in Buffalo when I first visited it in 1848. That was a time when Canada could not hold me. I sought expansion and wanted to join something. It was the year of the French revolution, the year of "Young Ireland," the close of the Mexican war, and of the discovery of gold in California, so that it was an exciting and a moving world that we had then. The Irish in Buffalo at that time had no aristocracy, no aristocracy of either birth, education or business; nothing but the delving and toiling masses; but they were brim full of patriotism. The Irish societies in Buffalo in 1848 were the "Friendly Sons of St. Patrick" and the "Sons of Erin." The latter were all young men and I enlisted with them. We marched from our hall on Main street to Ellicott street and along Ellicott street to St. Patrick's Church, where we heard Mass and Father O'Reilly, afterwards Bishop of Hartford, preached a beautiful and inspiring sermon or rather delivered a panegyric. Our leading members at that time are now all passed away: Michael Bailey, Peter Walsh, Thomas Malloy and James Ryan. Thomas Malloy was the most important man among the lot, because he was foreman of "Little Red Jacket Fire Co. No. 6," the most popular fire company in Buffalo at that date. They were all volunteer companies then. St. Patrick's Day, 1849, we had a grand dinner at the Mansion House. I think it was the best public dinner I ever sat down to. And there was a grand company too. The invited guests included Hon. Geo. W. Clinton, ex-Governor of the State of New York, one of whose ancestors, Dewitt C. Clinton, had been Vice-President of the United States and promoter of the Erie Canal—a tall, majestic-looking gentleman. Well,

you know the Clintons were a revolutionary Irish family and we were very proud to have this one at our dinner; and you may be sure he praised the Irish, especially the Irish soldiers. Another guest of some note was Gen. E. A. Theller, who took some part in the Canadian rebellion of 1837. He was a doctor by profession and was considered the Irish leader at that time. He made no great speech, however. Another guest was Col. A. M. Clapp, editor of the Buffalo "Ex-

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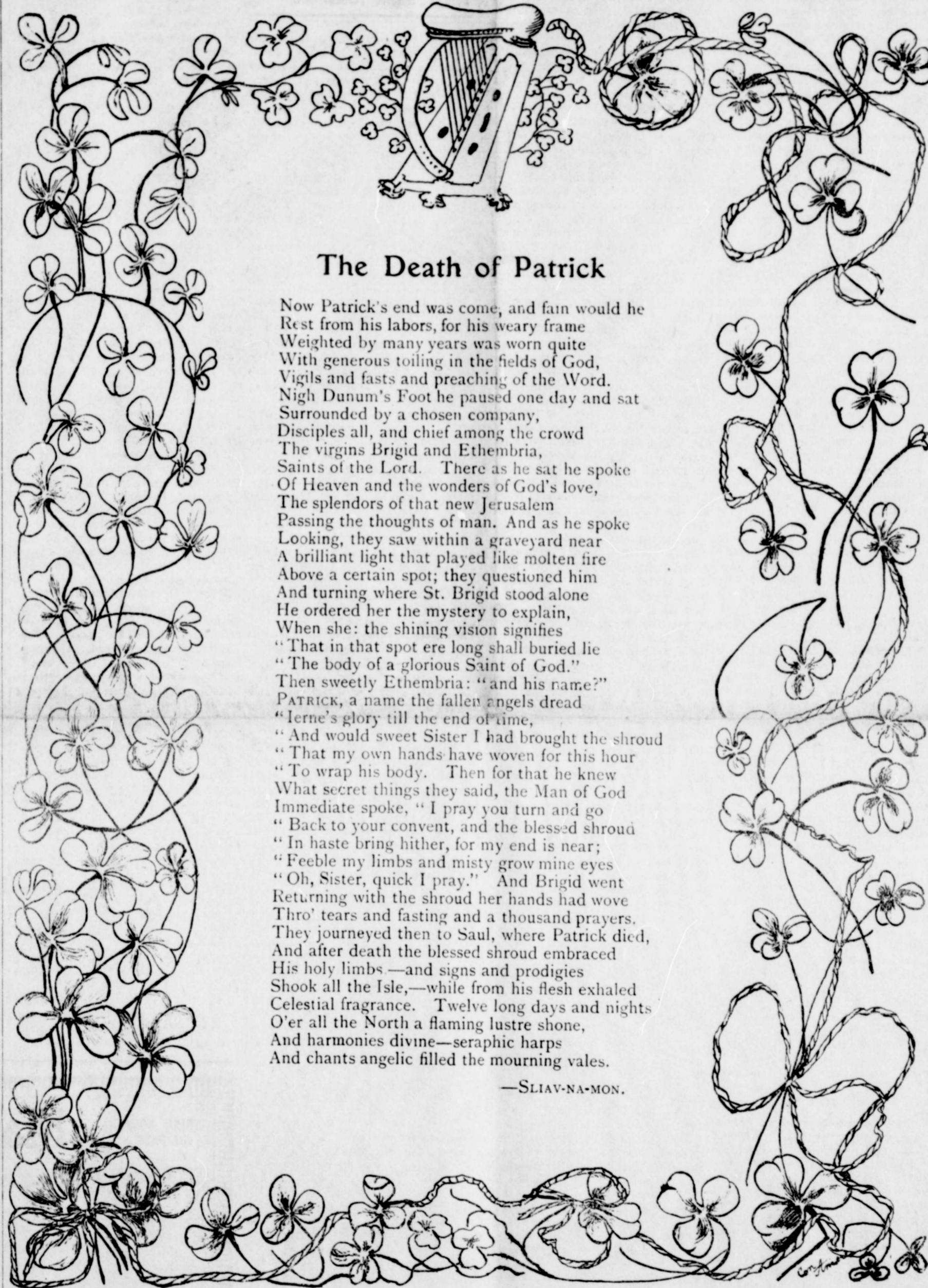
and the little Dorsheimers." Well, one of those little Dorsheimers has since filled the great and responsible position of Governor of the great State of New York. He, too, played his part and passed away. A recollection of those things is sometimes sad, but they are memory's compensation.

When I came to Toronto in 1849 there was little or no spirit pervading the Irish people here. They had

withstanding that this was the seat of the provincial government at the time. Let me mention just a few of the prominent Irishmen who resided in Toronto then. They were a bright galaxy of social and political stars. I recollect Robert Baldwin, Premier; R. B. Sullivan, afterwards Judge Sullivan; H. H. Killaly, Commissioner of Public Works; Francis Hincks, Inspector-General; Mathew Ryan, chief clerk of the Inspector-general's office; Doctor Connor, a prominent Queen's Counsel, and afterwards a cabinet minister; Judge Hagerty; Chancellor Blake, father of Edward Blake; Dr. King, medical professor in the University of Toronto; Dr. Gwynne, a medical professor in the University of Toronto. Mr. Gwynne, a Queen's Counsel, afterwards judge, Henry Eccles, Q.C., Toronto's leading criminal lawyer; Captain Eccles, a Waterloo officer and father of Henry Eccles; Mr. Boomer, a lawyer, and afterwards police magistrate; Rev. Dr. McCaul, President of the Toronto University; John Sheridan Hogan, lawyer and journalist; Moore Higgins, head of one of the government departments; Mr. Holmes, one of the editors of the "Colonist" newspaper; Charles Donley, proprietor of the "Mirror" newspaper; Dr. Workman, afterwards superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum; Dr. Ross, a prominent physician; Dr. Herrick, a prominent physician; William Kelly, first superintendent of the Penitentiary Reformatory. There were the big Duggan family of many professional members; the father, George Duggan, the county coroner. Those enumerated were mostly Protestant Irish, but not all. Then there were the O'Donohoes, three brothers, auctioneers and business men; the Hayes family, father and four sons; the O'Neills, Terence and Peter; John Shea, John Murphy and the elder O'Keefe, prominent men; and there was the Murphy family of the "Cooper's Arms"; the Cassidys and Mullins, all prominent and well known. Here I must cease my enumeration because I might go on and fill columns. Yet, notwithstanding the presence of all those good men and true, there was no St. Patrick's Day celebration in Toronto in 1850, beyond the religious services! That is something left to wonder at. There would not have been one either on the following St. Patrick's Day only for a young men's organization that was effected in the meantime, which got up a literary entertainment in the Lombard street (then Stanley street) school house. Perhaps Mr. Mathew O'Connor and myself are now the only survivors of that enterprise, and it is something to look back to with a little pride.

Shortly afterwards some of us got up a Young Men's St. Patrick's Society, of which the eloquent Jeremiah O'Neill, a young merchant from Hamilton, was made President. This society got up a parade in which the writer took part, having the late John McKeon, Q.C., for a comrade. Father Lynch, a very eloquent priest of those days of the fifties, preached us a very eloquent sermon in the Cathedral. The Young Men's St. Patrick's Society went out of existence for a while, but was reorganized. I think the new president was

(Continued on page 5.)



## The Death of Patrick

Now Patrick's end was come, and fain would he Rest from his labors, for his weary frame Weighted by many years was worn quite With generous toiling in the fields of God, Vigils and fasts and preaching of the Word. Nigh Dunum's Foot he paused one day and sat Surrounded by a chosen company, Disciples all, and chief among the crowd The virgins Brigid and Ethembria, Saints of the Lord. There as he sat he spoke Of Heaven and the wonders of God's love, The splendors of that new Jerusalem Passing the thoughts of man. And as he spoke Looking, they saw within a graveyard near A brilliant light that played like molten fire Above a certain spot; they questioned him And turning where St. Brigid stood alone He ordered her the mystery to explain, When she: the shining vision signifies "That in that spot ere long shall buried lie "The body of a glorious Saint of God." Then sweetly Ethembria: "and his name?" PATRICK, a name the fallen angels dread "Ierne's glory till the end of time, "And would sweet Sister I had brought the shroud "That my own hands have woven for this hour "To wrap his body. Then for that he knew What secret things they said, the Man of God Immediate spoke, "I pray you turn and go "Back to your convent, and the blessed shroud "In haste bring hither, for my end is near; "Feeble my limbs and misty grow mine eyes "Oh, Sister, quick I pray." And Brigid went Returning with the shroud her hands had wove Thro' tears and fasting and a thousand prayers. They journeyed then to Saul, where Patrick died, And after death the blessed shroud embraced His holy limbs—and signs and prodigies Shook all the Isle,—while from his flesh exhaled Celestial fragrance. Twelve long days and nights O'er all the North a flaming lustre shone, And harmonies divine—seraphic harps And chants angelic filled the mourning vales.

—SLIAY-NA-MON.

press" and a Whig politician, who was a very eloquent speaker, and dwelt on the wrongs of Ireland and her late misfortunes because so many of her brightest and best sons, such as Mitchel, Meagher, McManus and O'Brien, had recently been transported or imprisoned. There was a cler-

gyman there named Dillon, I think a relation of John Dillon, who made an eloquent and impassioned speech; and another priest, whose name I forget but whose face I have not forgotten. Altogether it was a great occasion and one never to be forgotten by me. Alas! Not one of those men, then so joyful, so brilliant, so inspiring, is among the living in any capacity today. A new set, a new race, has taken their place. But I doubt if the same patriotism, the same ardor, the

same grand desire, animates them. I do not know if the "Sons of Erin," the "Friendly Sons of St. Patrick," have an existence in Buffalo now. The Mansion House was the leading hotel for such functions in those days. When I saw it a year ago it was a tenantless ruin. But it has left some glories behind it. It was kept by an old German gentleman named Dorsheimer. On the dinner occasion to which I refer some one proposed "the health of Mr. Dorsheimer, Mrs. Dorsheimer,

not yet recovered from the sadness of heart produced by the great famine in Ireland, the emigrant fever here, the exile and imprisonment of so many noble spirits a year or two previously for a rash attempt at revolution, and there was no celebration. There used to be a strong and influential St. Patrick's Society in Toronto in previous years, officered by such men as Robert Baldwin, Robert Sullivan and other men of eminence, but at this time all seemed to be despondent and spiritless, not-

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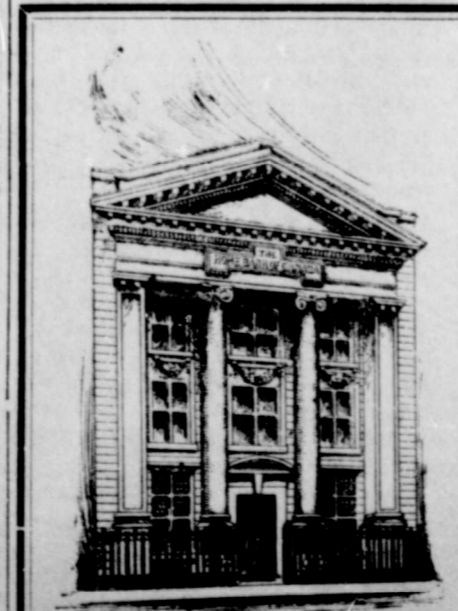
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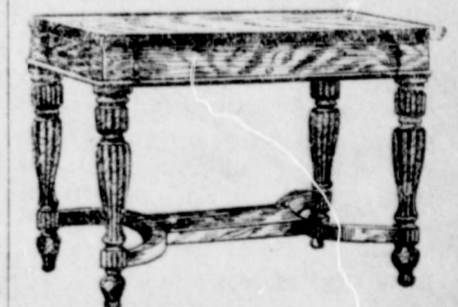
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