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GESTA DEI PER IBERNOS.

(From the Tablet.)

In the Royal Irish Academy a very interesting paper has been recently read concerning the Evangelical labors and monastic foundations of the ancient Irish abroad. According to this paper—written by Charles P. McDonnell, M.R.I.A.—the Irish had thirteen monasteries in Scotland, twelve in England, seven in France, twelve in Armorica Gaul, seven in Lotharingia, eleven in Burgundy, nine in Belgium, ten in Alsatia, sixteen in Bavaria, six in Italy, and fifteen in Rhetia, Helvetia, and Suevia, besides many in Thuringia and on the left margin of the Rhine, between Gueldres and Alsatia—monasteries, in many instances, tenanted exclusively by Irishmen.

Illustrations of this interesting paper lie thick in the Bollandists. "The holy Irishmen," observes a Bollandist, "who during ten hundred years flocked into France and Germany to spread the light of the Faith, and dispel the darkness of idolatry, or to widen the circumference and animate the practices of piety by their exhortations and example, established monasteries for the most part on the scene of their Missionary successes." Their object was to secure loopholes of retreat, breathing places in which they might recruit their shattered frames, and be reinvigorated for toil, and in which their hearts might inhale a new spirit by meditating on Divine truths.—These monasteries were also intended for universities for training their successors in the mission. "Purity of morals and sincerity of faith must fade away among the laity when Ecclesiastical discipline ceases to send forth doctors to inculcate faith and morals, and where schools do not flourish learned Missionaries cannot be educated. In such calm retreats also those defilements, which commerce with the world communicates to the purest minds, are washed off." But Irish monasteries were established for another reason, according to Franciscus Guiliamus—an author quoted by the Bollandists—i.e., that Irish and other pilgrims on their way to Rome or Palestine might receive within such walls gratuitous hospitality, and recruit their strength to continue their pilgrimages.

In the succeeding centuries these establishments were not founded to enable the Irish, as of old, to plant the Faith, but to facilitate their labors in confirming the faith already planted. Recommended as they were to the love and gratitude of the people, whose ancestors their countrymen had Christianised, the Irish were eminently calculated to succeed in their pious expeditions in the succeeding centuries.—Many of the Irish, "casting off the old man, abandoned their beloved country and all that was dear to their hearts to follow their Lord through pathless wilds, and over dismal seas, and, like the children of Abraham, throw themselves into the land which had been foreshown to them by the Lord. The pleasing scenes of their nativity, lands flowing with glassy streams and calm majestic rivers, spreading into verdant plains, or rising into lofty hills and mountains, or sinking into woody vales, aptly suited to the chase, and exempt from poisonous serpents and noxious reptiles of all kinds, were all abandoned by these heroic Monks, nudum Christum nudi sequentes." In a document, dated Feb., 1809, the Emperor, Henry IV., bears witness to their merits, saying, "The Irish, for the mortification of their bodies, and the salvation of their souls, leave their native land to visit the places of prayer and shrines of the Apostles," &c. In many instances the exile of the Irish was the penance of their sins; as in the case of St. Annichadus, who, in the impulse of his generous feelings, gave drink to the guests without the permission of his superiors. The Saint was exiled from Ireland for this transgression, and died in a foreign land. A divine impulse urged some of these men to leave their native land. Thus, a vision exhorted St. Altus to quit his kinsmen and bury himself in a remote province of distant Germany. The decree of an Irish Synod enlightens and edifies us on this point. According to this decree the Missioners were to imitate, in the first instance, Jesus Christ, whose mission was limited to His native country, but if they proved unprofitable servants in Ireland, then the mission of the Apostles—extended to strange nations—was to be copied by Irish Priests.

"Various parts of Germany," says a Jesuit, named James Greiser, "were studded with Irish monasteries owing to the gratitude of Germans to the services of Irish Missioners." A writer quoted by the Bollandists, named Aventinus, says—"Ireland is an island situated in the Northern Ocean beyond Britain, prolific above all other countries in Prophets, Saints, and scholars. Columbanus, Chilianus, and many besides, emigrated from Ireland into Germany. Marianus, amongst others, with six disciples, came to Ratisbon, and resided in a church outside the walls of the city, where swarms of his countrymen flocked and fixed their abode, attracted thither by the benevolence of the Bavarians."

An Irish Jesuit, quoted by the Bollandists, asks why Ireland should be more prolific of Missionaries than any other land; why they were to be seen in every country on earth—freezing in the keen winds of winter, or melting in the scorching rays of summer—but ever ardent and earnest in preaching the Gospel to the poor; and the Irish Jesuit answers his own question by the following statement:—

"When the truths of the Gospel first resounded within the walls of Rome, the Imperial City was illustrated within and without by celestial grace, and every country in the known world was pervaded by the fame of Roman miracles, and the west above all."

In the times of the first Roman Emperors tributes from every country in the world were borne annually to Rome. When they returned to their native town, city, or hamlet, all that the tribute-bearers heard or saw was sure to be narrated to their friends. A young Irishman, whose aspect was comely, and whose disposition originated his name—Mansuetus (Coajmh)—resided at that time in Rome, and became, by God's providence, a great favorite of St. Peter's. Imbued with the true faith by the preaching of the Apostle, he himself became a Missioner, and proceeding to Germany converted many of its inhabitants. He extended his toils to the Rhone, and even the Illyrian Gulf, and finally expired in a town on the Moselle. Mansuetus ordered his disciples to bear the light of the Faith into the land of his nativity, and accordingly the doctrines of the Church were spread through all the provinces of Ireland by the disciples of Mansuetus, and long before the rise of St. Patrick a way was cleared for his ministry by the preaching and virtues of these men. When the greatest Apostle of the West, St. Patrick, appeared in Ireland, crowds came swarming out to hail him with shouts of transport, or listen to his discourses with silent respect. The missionary labors of Patrick had not lasted many years when the king and the bondsman, rich and poor, submitted by a common impulse to the mild yoke of Christ.

St. Patrick spent his life—sometimes in the south, sometimes in the north of Ireland—in building churches, founding bishoprics, and ordaining Priests. Many of these Priests, for the sake of Christ, forsook their native country, abandoned their beloved kinsmen, and plunged among barbarians, preached the fall of man and the redemption of sinners to external nations, while to render themselves worthy of the society of Angels they chastised their bodies with thirst, hunger, and cold. A foremost place in these illustrious ranks is assigned to Columbanus—the son of a monarch—who, filled with the Holy Spirit, converted Britain, Scotland, and the Orkney Islands.

Another man of venerable character, whom Bede describes as gifted with miraculous powers, glowing with virtues, talents, and illustrious by birth, issued from Ireland to Christianise the south of England and the north of France. Furseus, for such was his name, died in the latter country. How shall we describe that Columbanus, who, skirting the Appennines, and preaching Christ and Him crucified, instructed Italy in the true faith? Or that illustrious hermit, St. Gallus, whose miracles astonished, while his eloquence enlightened, Switzerland? We may venture, however, to state that the number of places in Italy whose patron Saints are Irishmen is thirteen; the number of places in Belgium whose patron Saints are Irishmen is thirty; the number of places in England whose patron Saints are Irishmen is forty-four; the number of places in France whose patron Saints are Irishmen is forty-five; the number of places in Germany whose patron Saints are Irishmen is one hundred and fifty, thirty-six of whom were martyred, and amongst whom St. Colman, the patron of Austria, holds a high place.

We are indebted almost exclusively to foreign sources for our knowledge of those Irish Missionary Saints—we could not learn from our native writers even their names. But it is full time to permit Mr. McDonnell to speak for himself:—

The following notice of a last work of Colgan, author of the 'Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ,' on the early evangelical labors and monastic foundations of the Irish abroad, by Chas. P. McDonnell, M.R.I.A., was read:—

"Harris says, in his edition of Sir James Ware's works, which was published in 1745, 'There are several volumes of his (Colgan's) writing yet remaining at Louvain, in M.S., of which I have obtained the following titles, by the favor of the late Guardian of that house,' viz.:—

"Tom. I. De Apostolatu Hibernorum inter exteras gentes, cum indice alphabetico de exteris Sanctis. Folio consisting of 852 pages.

"Tom. II. De Sanctis in Anglia, in Britannia Armorica, in reliqua Gallia, in Belgio. Consisting of 1,068 pages, but a small part is wanting at the end.

"Tom. III. De Sanctis in Lotharingia et Burgundi, in Germania, ad sinistram et dextram Rheni, in Italia. Pages 920. Also some pages are wanting at the end of this tome.

"It is much to be feared that this work is irrecoverably lost. Some of Colgan's MSS. were transferred from Louvain to the Burgundian Library in Brussels, and part to the Irish Franciscan Convent of St. Isidore, in Rome. The precise date of the transfers I have not been able to ascertain; but I apprehend that much of what was deposited in the archives of St. Isidore's was scattered or destroyed during the French occupation of Rome under Napoleon I., when the convent was used as barracks.

"Beyond the fragment of the Index which I have copied, and subjoin, and a few detached leaves which I believe to have formed part of the work, I have been unable, by a careful search and inquiries, to find at St. Isidore's any portion of that great monument of the learning and research not only of Colgan, but of the many who contributed towards this compilation; for Fleming, Ward, Rooth, the learned Jesuit, Stephen White, and others, had made previous collections, of which Colgan had knowledge, and of which, undoubtedly, he availed himself largely.

"Nor does my recollection of a sojourn of several days among the Irish MSS. in the Burgundian Library supply any trace of anything there which could be part of the work itself; though I remember to have seen there, bound up with other documents, a few leaves of Collectanea, which in all probability formed part of Colgan's materials for it.

"If the work be definitely lost, the loss is in many respects irreparable. When Colgan compiled it, and others collected for it over the Continent, above two hundred years ago, how many an historical tradition was living in the great old monastic institutions, of which our pious countrymen were the venerated founders in France, in Belgium, in Switzerland, in Germany, and even in Italy itself! Those reverend memories have long since perished with the institutions themselves; and many a rich store of charity treasured there has been hopelessly scattered or destroyed by the profane and savage hand of ungodly revolution and war. No future compiler can ever fill up the blank left in Irish Ecclesiastical history by the loss of this noble record. The 'Gesta Dei per Iberos'—the action of our Missionary countrymen upon the civilisation of modern Europe, can never be so gloriously proven.

"Some chances still appear to remain of its existence. A learned French Ecclesiastic, conversant with such matters, whose studies frequently lead him to the MSS. department of the Imperial Library in Paris, suggests to me the possibility of this work having been taken thither during the former French occupation of Rome, as containing matter touching upon the history of France. He has offered me his services to make search for it there on his return to Paris; I fear, however, there are but slight grounds to hope it may be found there.

"But another circumstance gives me a brighter ray of hope. A complete autograph exemplar of the Four Masters formerly belonged to St. Isidore; the first volume is still preserved there; the second is in the rich library of Prince Barberini; how or when it made its way there nobody can tell me. The MSS. in the Barberini Library are undigested, and the catalogue is only now being made out. May not this missing work of Colgan's have found its way, like the volume of the Four Masters, into that or some other Roman library?

"Lastly, it would be desirable to search for it in the archive chests of the Franciscan Convent in Wexford. Some years after the creation of the kingdom of Belgium, an Irish Franciscan Friar obtained in that country as much as then remained of the printed books of the library of the suppressed convent of his Order in Louvain, in which Colgan had lived and died; and whence, as we have seen, the Irish MSS. in the Burgundian Library, and much of those at Saint Isidore's, were brought. The Priest in question deposited these printed books in the convent of his Order in Wexford, where I examined them hurriedly about the year 1846. I did not find any MSS. in the library, but it is possible that there may be some in their archive chests, which I had not an opportunity of examining."

SEBASTOPOL.

(From the Nation.)

If there were any doubt still entertained whether Sebastopol, Anapa, or some other port, were the destination of the allied forces, it was put an end to by the advices in the London papers of Monday. Though there had been several postponements, and though the plan of attack is said to have been altered at the last moment, there can be no question that the expedition has set sail for Sebastopol. Immense preparations had been made for a long time, and the

noise of preparation exceeded anything known in that part of the world since the days of Xerxes. So that it is probable the transit will have been brief, and the landing effected with speed and safety. It seems very unlikely that the Russians will muster at the point selected, in sufficient force to prevent it.

The troops composing the expedition are probably less numerous than they would have been, if the Allied forces had not suffered so frightfully from cholera. Still they are very considerable. Large expeditions have been threatened, but history must be searched for many centuries back, to find an example of so large an invading force being despatched by sea at a single effort. There is great discrepancy in the accounts of the numbers. They are variously stated at from 20,000 to 25,000 English; 26,000 to 35,000 French; and 8,000 to 20,000 Turks. But what is deficient in one force will probably be made up in another. The total may be estimated at 70,000 men, to whom must be added some 10,000 marines belonging to the Allied fleets. These troops have all more or less suffered from cholera, and are by no means in the health and heart they were two or three months ago. Nevertheless, it seems on the whole unlikely that the Russians will be able to collect in the Crimea an army fit to cope with them. Perhaps the first check the Allied forces may have to encounter, is finding the cholera in the Crimea, after running away from it at Varna. We are told, indeed, that the southern part of the Crimea is a very healthy country. But we have the experience of the greater part of Europe and America to show how little protection that is against the terrible epidemic.

The Czar and his people, careless of their own countrymen, and knowing how fearfully the cholera has crippled the strength and interfered with the plans of the Allies, are said to be in the highest good humor with that scourge of the human race, and disposed to deify it. We question whether they have such cause to be obliged to it as they suppose. It is our opinion that the Allies would not have attacked Sebastopol at all this year, if it were not for the necessity of effacing by some grand achievement the frightful calamity which has befallen the armies, and which was, doubtless, much aggravated in its intensity by the disgraceful inaction in which they were kept. The English Government dare not meet Parliament without something more brilliant to boast of than the capture of Bomarsund. While it might cost Louis Napoleon his throne to let a winter elapse before some great and glorious victory came, partially to counterbalance in the public mind the melancholy impression produced by the wholesale sacrifice of the élite of their armies to the saddest and least heroic of all destroyers. The losses of the French army must have been fearful, indeed, if they are not able to muster any larger proportion of the force destined for the invasion of the Crimea, than some 25,000 or 30,000 men. Any one who is acquainted with the French, knows that they resent losses where there is no honor gained, more keenly than any other people. And it looks like a fatality, that the worst blows of this kind should fall on them when they are contending against Russia. Nothing short of an overwhelming triumph will satisfy them, when so large an item as this has to be added to the fearful reckoning of 1812. Louis Napoleon dares not coquet with peace now, even were he inclined. He knows, too, that public opinion in England is heartily on his side, whether the Queen and her Ministers are or not. And he is probably not sorry more effectually to embroil England with Russia, by forcing her to share the responsibility of so serious and unmistakable a piece of damage as the capture of Sebastopol and the destruction of the Russian fleet. If that be effected, not only will England, and Austria too, be less disposed to come to a compromise, but it will be impossible for the Czar to make peace, before a victory over some one or other of the present or future allies, has in some degree restored his prestige with his own subjects. If indeed, the Allies fail in their attack on Sebastopol, why, that will answer very well as salvo for Russian pride. But if they succeed, he will have to try elsewhere, and it is most probable in one way or another, from Austria that he will try to get compensation for his chastisement by the Allies. Altogether, we don't think the Russians will find that in the end they will have much reason to canonize the cholera.

One great risk the Allies run, by their most unaccountable delay in this the only great movement of the year. The Black Sea is subject to fearful storms at the time of the Autumnal equinox; generally, it is said, between the 15th and the 25th of September. The expedition was to have been landed on the 8th ult. But if there should have occurred any accident to occasion further delay, or if the gales should come on some days earlier than usual, or should the invaders be repulsed in their first attempt to land, and forced to seek another locality, they may encounter