

THE GLORIOUS DESTINY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE.

The tree of Ireland's faith, whose fruitful branches had extended a salutary shade to so many lands, remained unmoved amid the tempests of persecution that beat against it. But it was shorn of the comeliness which adorned it of old, and many of its fairest branches were torn from the parent stem. Shall it be clothed anew with comeliness, shall it put forth once more its leaves and branches, its blossoms and its fruit? We have only to look around us through the Christian world to-day to have an answer to these queries. A faith which never allowed itself to be tarnished by heresy or schism, a faith which proved itself ever strong and enduring alike in storm as in sunshine, could not but be blessed by God. St. Patrick's years of bondage were a preparation in the way of Providence for a heavenly mission and for a sacred apostolate the grandest that could be allotted to a Christian missionary. Even so, the seven centuries of Erin's hardships and sufferings appear to have been permitted in the mysterious ways of heaven to prepare her for a glorious and privileged mission and for a destiny the most exalted that could be conferred upon a privileged people.

Look to Ireland herself. No sooner has the period of persecution closed than we see her cities and towns, her hills and her plains clothed once more with religious splendour. It has been calculated that during the past 50 years ten millions of money have been spent in Ireland in the erection of cathedrals and parochial churches, of colleges and schools, of convents, hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions of religion and charity, and all this has been accomplished through the generous contributions of the sons and daughters of St. Patrick at home and abroad. And this marvellous material splendour of the Irish Church, what is it but the reflex of the spiritual blessings of heaven which abound among her people? We see on every side piety and virtue in the family circles, the fervent exercise of mercy and charity in the religious communities, a heroism of sacrifice and devotedness in the ranks of the clergy. It is not to the columns of the public press that we are to look for the records of the people's piety, but to their daily routine of a virtuous life. On one occasion, many years ago, when conversing with the venerable pastor of a large parochial district in my former See of Ossory, he remarked to me that his parishioners were most fervent, and that not one of them was known to die without the Sacraments, and he added, "I am confident that every one of them goes to heaven." Many a devoted priest throughout the length and breadth of Ireland could give the same consoling assurance regarding his faithful flock. But this grand renewal of the ancient splendour of the Irish Church must not be restricted to the hills and valleys of Ireland. The missionary apostolate of winning nations to Christ, bequeathed by St. Patrick to his people, has been revived in a singular manner among his spiritual children in our own day. Their piety, as in the days of yore, shining brightly from the rising to the setting sun has brought the light of the Catholic faith to many lands. This mission of Catholic Ireland, so pregnant with the blessings and consolations of heaven, stands out prominently amid all the vicissitudes and harrowing scenes of the 19th century. And whether men will it or not, the faith of Ireland's sons, like a golden chain, binds the whole English-speaking world to God. It was remarked of Greece of old that though subdued by Rome, yet by her literature she led captive her conquerors. In some like way it may in truth be said that Ireland, by her religion and her faith, has vanquished her persecutors and led many of them captive to Divine Truth. In Scotland, within the present century, the missionary triumphs of St. Columba have been repeated, and where a hundred years ago the Church reckoned only a few scattered congregations, we see to-day, through the apostolate of Ireland's sons, a fully-organised episcopate, and more than half a million of faithful souls. A second spring has clothed England with gladness in our own times, and has ushered in the fairest prospects and brightest hopes for the future. In the joys and hopes of that springtime the fervent congregations of devoted worshippers of Irish birth or Irish descent have had no little part. In Canada a fruitful branch from Erin has been engrafted on the old Celtic stem from France, and has already yielded abundant fruit. In the United States the Church has grown with giant growth, and it is mainly due to Irish fervour that religion has put forth an energy and vigour worthy of the early ages of Ireland's faith, and worthy, too, of the spirit of freedom and of the glorious destiny of that great people. In the Argentine Republic, in Chili, and in most other lands many a Catholic family will be found that looks towards Erin with filial love, and salutes St. Patrick as the father of its faith.

THE CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA.

What shall I say of our own Australian Church, young in years, but vigorous in its growth, and already diffusing around it through the length and breadth of this fair land the blessings and consolations of Catholic charity and Catholic truth? Has not the tree of faith, transplanted from Erin to these shores, found here a genial soil, and has it not cast deep its roots and put forth its branches in gladness, and is it not already clothed with comeliness and yielding joyous fruit? At the Royal Jubilee celebrations a few months ago, the marvellous expansion of the Anglo-Celtic empire in our own day was the theme of general admiration and eulogy. But far beyond the limits of the Empire the English language has won a widespread domain, and those who study the peaceful triumphs of Great Britain and the United States in the paths of commercial enterprise, foresee for it an ever-widening and unique position among the languages of the world. If the English language, thus chartered for the future, be not exclusively the language of hers, to whom does the merit belong? Is it not the merit of the sons of St. Patrick that wherever that language is lisped you will find fervent congregations offering to the Most High their pious anthems of thanksgiving and praise? Wheresoever the English language holds sway, thither, through the Celtic Soldiers of the Cross, the Catholic Church extends her conquests. If the domain of that language encircles the globe, we may also in truth affirm that the sun never sets on the spiritual empire which exalts in St. Patrick's apostolate.

late. Here in Australia we welcome the joyous rays of the rising sun, and with what fervour do Australia's children intone the canticles of benediction to the Most High for the glory conferred upon St. Patrick and on his chosen Church? South Africa takes up the anthem of praise; Ireland and Great Britain re-echo the joyous tributes of thanksgiving. And ere the sun set in the far-distant West, how eagerly and earnestly the millions of faithful souls in Newfoundland and the United States and Canada pour forth rejoicing their songs of gladness, their hymns of gratitude, to God. We are told that in the Vatican Council, a quarter of a century ago, no saint, after the first great apostles of our Lord, reckoned so many mitred representatives among his sons as St. Patrick, and it is calculated that at the present day more than 200 bishops, 16,000 priests, and 20,000,000 of Catholics look to him as the Father of their faith. Thus has heaven begun to show forth the grand and privileged destiny for which the Irish Church was prepared and disciplined amid the storms and persecution that for centuries rendered desolate her fair shores. And now if you ask me what was the distinctive feature of the singular piety of Ireland's apostle, what the characteristic devotion of Ireland's saints and martyrs, what, in fine, the source of the fruitful apostolate that has extended its heavenly blessings to so many lands, I should at once reply it was the love of our Redeemer; it was the realisation in the heart of hearts of Ireland's sons of the great mystery of the incarnation of our blessed Lord. From that as from a source proceeded their boundless love of the altar and of the holy sacrifice which perpetuates the presence of our Saviour amongst us. From that was derived their unconquerable devotion to the Blessed Virgin, who, amid the trials and sorrows which beset their course, was ever to them an anchor of hope, a star of joy. From that came their heroism of martyrdom, the sanctity of life, the fruitfulness of their missionary zeal. From that also came their unflinching devotion to the See of St. Peter, the divinely-strengthened rock on which Christ built His Church. No storms of persecution, no arts of Satan, could separate them from that source of their invincible strength. On the banners of their victory to-day are inscribed St. Patrick's words, as vigorous, as far-reaching, as life-giving as when they were first addressed by him to his loving disciples: "As you are children of Christ, so be ye children of Rome."

THE LESSONS OF THE DAY'S FESTIVAL.

This love of the Divine Redeemer is a lesson that, I trust, the ceremony which we celebrate this day shall ineffaceably impress on the heart of each one of us. This shall be the crown of its triumph, the diadem of its joy. The consecration of your grand cathedral is indeed a joyous festival. It is a feast of special joy to your beloved Archbishop, privileged as he is, to see the toil of many years attain its crowning blessing. It is a day of joy to the clergy and faithful people of the archdiocese, who have so strenuously and so perseveringly co-operated with him to attain this grand result. It is a day of joy to the whole Australian Church, for every Catholic amongst us must exult when he looks with legitimate pride to the beauty of this sacred edifice and to the magnificent and enduring monument which your piety and generosity have raised to the glory of the Most High. And, united with us in spirit, the pioneers of the faith who have gone before us, bishops, priests, and people to-day rejoice. In sorrow and sadness, yet zealously and perseveringly, they sowed the seed of which we reap the abundant harvest to-day. Exultingly they lift up their hands in blessing before the throne of the Most High, and joyously they intone their canticles of thanksgiving and of praise for the manifold mercies which God has vouchsafed His people. And now, dearly beloved in Christ, one word of exhortation to you before I conclude. Let this cathedral, to-day consecrated to God, be henceforth the centre of your affections. Around it and its altar be inseparably entwined your faith and piety, your devotion and love. And with that love of your cathedral hand on to your children the spiritual loyalty and devotedness which you have ever shown to Holy Church. The bonds of affection which linked the sons of St. Patrick and the "Saggarth Aroon" were such as no power of earth or hell has ever been able to sever. To it in no small measure is due the never-failing vitality and energy of Erin's piety. Cherish this spiritual loyalty as a precious and priceless heirloom. Give proof of it by promoting, within your respective circles, family piety, and the exercise of every Christian virtue, by guarding the religious education of youth, by encouraging Catholic literature, and by repelling from your homes those immoral and irreligious publications with which, alas! as with a pestilential deluge, the world is flooded at the present day. The Catholic Church is on the battlefield in this fair land and fearlessly does she bear the brunt of the combined assault of all God's enemies. She expects all her sons to rally around her. In every combat, in every trial, such loyalty of her children has been to her a prestige of victory, her greatest consolation, her strength, her pride.

CONCLUDING WORDS.

Thus at no very distant time shall be fulfilled the yearning of every faithful heart amongst us, that Australia may become a land of saints. Oh! may heaven hasten the gladsome day when, through the virtues of her children, Australia may be saluted by the Catholic world as the joy of Christendom, the diadem of Holy Church. This is the one ambition, the one great aim to which are directed the efforts, the aspirations of bishops and priests, and so many faithful souls. This is the great purpose of the religious splendour with which the grand ceremony, at which we have just assisted, has been crowned. When that joyous day shall have come, then, indeed, enduring in its radiance, perfect in its brightness, and peerless in its glory shall be the aureola which the voice of heaven and of earth decrees to the Apostolate of St. Patrick and his people.

ADDRESSES AND PRESENTATIONS TO THE ARCHBISHOP.

MESSAGE AND PRESENT FROM THE SOVEREIGN
PONTIFF.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, having concluded his sermon, assumed his gorgeous outer robe, and accompanied by the