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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF IRISH CHARACTER.

SPLENDID LECTURE BY FATHER BURKE.

(The Philadelphia Catholic Standard.) (Concluded.)

the next amongst the many lights of the Irish character. I am proud to say it is no historian that has ever introduced the Irish people as ever written upon the blackest page of history the word coward. It is the cause of Irish nationality has been a cause; but, thanks to God in this is not a cause. It is true that it was wasted upon many a field; but it is also true, though the Irish race or to the Irish honor of cowardice. The valleys of Ireland for three centuries resounded to the battle cry of the hillsides of Ireland were strewn with their dead bodies, "thick as the snow the vale of Valambrosa." The fiercest onslaught of the never did the Irishman flinch, three hundred years of war he glorious victory of Clontarf. It was on many a field at home and abroad has been broken in the hand, but never has it been the sword of a coward. Attest the Dunkirk to Belgrade, lay the chiefs of the Irish Brigade. Austria who had ten thousand men for thirty years fighting for it, France, who, with thirty Irish soldiers fighting for her, victory after victory for many a year, at blood-stained England. The men that rose most promptly and most furiously upon that terrible day of Waterloo? It was the soldiers that swept the field, and struck the brave heart of the Gaul. O ye blood-stained slopes of Freedom in America. There, there indeed, Greek met Greek, then came the war. There was the terrible and the sight witnessed of Irish blood in Irish hands, and Irishman looked in the embrace of the deadly and the conflict. But still the one on one side or the other never it was the courage of the old Galois of the Celt.

to name this bravery? I say it came from the Catholic faith, for this simple Catholic religion teaches that the justified in drawing his sword in this cause. But the Catholic religion teaches its children that when the just, for God, for hearth and home, for altar, and for fatherland, that man is bound to hold his life cheap, his sword and go forth and shed blood at the foot of the altar of liberty. At the annual search the records of Europe—I am going to make an assertion. I assert that the history of the world, that the history of America will not when I say that no Irish people, man, no Irish soldier of distinction, mass of Irishmen were ever yet to draw their swords willingly in the injustice, in the cause of oppression. The sword was always ready to the hand; it never sprang nervously from the sheath; it never required much persuasion to draw forth the gleaming blade; but to God, in the many wars in which Irish blood has been shed, the Irish people always endeavored to pour out their blood in some holy, solemn cause, in the defense of God, in the defense of fatherland, in the glorious cause of liberty and of

the next light of this character of our race is admitted as well as our bravery, is our wonderful cheerfulness and good temper under calamities and misfortunes. It is enough for a man or a people to have their temper and good humor when things are going well with them. When a man is progressing in his business, every thing is going swimmingly, as they say; he is always able to sit down to a polished table, when he has all the cares of life around him, when no man is pressing or oppressing him, it is easy for him to be cheerful, and I would think him for it. But the Irish people know how to keep their good humor under their temper under the most dreadful calamities, and even to turn their very misfortunes into subjects of mirth. A poor Irishman, reduced to sad poverty, sat in his cabin, which had scarcely a window, and his children were around him. The pig came along the street and went into the house, and an Englishman said that way saw the pig in the house of the children. Says he to the man at the door, "Now, tell me—I came over to examine into the condition of the people—tell me, why do you allow your pig in your house?" The poor Irishman took off his cap, and looked at the man for a moment. "Your honor," he said, "and why not? Sure, glory be to God, the house has every accommodation for any reasonable pig would require." "Now, a big beggar-man once in Galway, the fellow was six feet four inches high, and he was in the habit of begging from the passengers when the mail coach was starting for Dublin. He was so tall that he was able to hold out his hand to the passengers who were outside and on top of the coach, and came up one day to the coach, and said, "You give a poor crater something out of the meantime, while one hand was out for the other hand was engaged—well was scratching himself. So the Englishman said, "You dirty man, why are you scratching yourself in that way?" "Well, your honor," says the beggar-man, "it is that it takes the keen edge off the razor, your honor, and there is nothing in the world more natural for a poor man to do when he feels hungry than to scratch himself; and if your honor goes to hell after death, you will find that one of the punishments there is the pleasure of itching without the pleasure of scratching." It was the good humor, the spirit that was in the man, that took the keen edge off the razor.

What taught our people this great lesson? Certain it is, that if there be a people on the face of God's earth that ought to be melancholy and sad, it is the Irish people. If there be a people on earth that ought to be through the world with long faces, and with their heads hanging down, it is the Irish people. For no people have been made under foot as the Irish people

have been. How is it that the Irish heart is so light, and eye so bright and head so erect? How is it that, to this day, when you get an Irish fiddler or an Irish piper to strike up a tune, if there is an Irishman within hearing he will get up a dance? It was because they have a religion that taught them that, though a man may have crosses and tribulations here, that by exercising his patience and resignation to God's will, he might look for a bright eternity hereafter. It was because our Irish people had the secret of looking beyond the grave into that country which their Father in heaven had prepared for them. Ah, my friends, it was because we became familiar with the cross until we learned not only to cease our complaining, but in a certain sense, as Christians, to rejoice at our conformity with the suffering of the Son of God. Well do I remember, in that terrible year when the angel of death spread his wings over Ireland; when the little ones cried for bread, and there was no one to break it to them—well do I remember an old woman telling me the tale of her sorrows. She came into Galway from the country; she lay down at my mother's door exhausted by hunger and fatigue. My mother, like a true woman, carried her in, and restored her to her senses, and kept her in the house. Her tale was this: Away up in the mountain side of Connemara her cabin was built. Her eldest children had emigrated, when they heard of the misery coming on the country, to better themselves. The only child that remained with her died upon her bosom crying out, "Mother, mother, bread for the sake of God," and her heart broke after he died of hunger. She came into the town, and, boy as I was, touched with sorrow and pity, I said to her, "And how did you live?" How is it you bear the burden of life, after having dug one through such a crucible of pain?" And she answered and said, "Ah, child, I thought of Mary at the foot of the cross, my Mother in heaven, and I knew that if my child died before my eyes, as her child died, that I might look up to her crown and her place in heaven." And so it was that the heart of the nation broke not, because of its faith; and not only broke not, but the light and faith of the Christian heart became one of the signs and one of the lights of the Irish people.

I am afraid that I have lingered too long upon these lights; that I shall have scarce time to go into the question of the shadows. I have always looked with a lover's eyes upon Ireland's people, and now, when I come to the shady side of her character, I have little or nothing to tell you of my own. All that I can say is what is said by our enemies. For instance, Englishmen and the press of England tell us we have such and such faults. Let us consider the faults they have laid at our door, and let us see what is the cause of these shadows in the Irish character.

Well, the first thing that the press of England asserts is, that we Irish are a reckless, imprudent and improvident people; we take not sufficient thought for tomorrow; we don't lay up for a bad day to come; we spend with the right hand what we get with the left. "The imprudence of these people the reckless improvidence of the English press, and we are told that the English laws are quite good enough for us, and if we are down, fault if we are poor, and if we are down, because it is our own imprudence that keeps us there. Well, I suppose that there must be some truth in this; no doubt there is. But who is the cause of it? If you plunder a man; if you take from him all that he has in this world; if you beggar him, how can you tax him with improvidence? You tell me that I am reckless, that I am extravagant—why, God help us. What is it that makes a man reckless? Ruined fortune! Ruin a man's fortune, put him out of his house and home, take his property from him, shut him out from all hope he becomes better himself, and of course he becomes reckless and imprudent. Now I ask, what hope is there to-day for the Irish peasant in Ireland? What hope did they leave us? Our manufacturers, when we had them, were taxed in England until they ruined our trade. Ireland arose in order to protest against the infamous system pursued by England. The woolen trade and the silk trade had been flourishing in Dublin, but the English passed laws which taxed those trades until they were broken up, and the laborers of Dublin once so rich, were reduced to misery and poverty. When one of the Irish people took up any manufacture the English Parliament came in and said: "Now, there must be so much tax on this, and that." If they had put the same tax on their own people, they put so heavy a tax on manufacturers in Ireland that the wealthy Irish people were compelled to go to England to carry on their business. They left our people without a hold upon the soil, so that the laborer had no security. His landlord might come in to-day and put him out, and pull down the house, and send him out a beggar upon the world. What right, therefore, have they to charge us with recklessness and imprudence when they brought us to that point where man abandons all hope, and gives himself up absolutely to the degradation into which he sinks?

They tell us that the Irish people are drunkards. I begin by denying it. I say it is false. I say that as long as England has her Scotland by her side, and the Scotch people—for whom I have a very great regard, for they are the very same stock with ourselves—she has no business to reproach Ireland. The Scotch have a great many splendid qualities, and amongst them is the quality of a tremendous capacity for whiskey. I speak from the testimony of their own poet. He tells us:

O Willie brew'd a peck o' maist, And Rob and Allan cam to see; Three blither hearts that e'er lang sight, Ye wad na find in Christendoe.

So they drink raw whiskey from evening until morning, and in the morning the poet says that the song of these three men was:

We are na fou, we're na that fou; But just a drap in our o'e; The cock may crow, the hen may daw, And aye we'll taste the barley brea.

Now the word "fou" means drunk. Whilst I admire the physique and strength of my countrymen I am proud to say they are strong and hearty. I don't think I ever saw an Irishman who was able to set down to raw whiskey, say at nine o'clock in the evening and drink until drunk. But it is morning without getting drunk. But it is a sad truth that the love for conviviality, deepening into the sin of drunkenness, is one of the shadows of our

the Irish character. Ah, how deep was the shadow that that vice, that terrible sin, cast upon Ireland in the day when the gallant men fought for honor and glory, the men of Wexford and Wicklow, the men of '98, when these gallant men stood upon the side of the hill which is called and not without reason, Vinegar Hill. Goaded into rebellion, driven into revolution they arose, only two counties, and these two the very smallest in Ireland. Wexford and Wicklow, they arose in '98, and it took 36,000 English soldiers to subdue them. If Ireland had arisen as Wexford and Wicklow arose, the power of England would have been crushed and broken in '98. When these men arose, unarmed as they were, only with scythes and picks, they swept the English before them as hay before the breeze, and elated with their success as long as they kept their heads clear from drink, so long their arms were victorious. The night before the battle of Vinegar Hill, what does the historian tell us there happened? The English soldiers came, surrounded them, the artillery took its positions, the infantry was properly posted, a terrible force was around the hill yet all was silent as the grave. The poor fellows on the hill talked, spent the whole night in jovial conviviality and in drinking. We know what the next day's tale was. The English attacked them. Severed and distracted they were unequal to the work, and the river flowed down to Wexford town red with the blood of Irishmen. How deep was the shadow in that day which the vice of drunkenness cast upon our blood! They speak truly when they say it is a great sin. It is a sin at our door. But, again, who caused it? Surely the best way to drive a man to drunkenness is to drive him to despair. Keep the screw on him, rob him, plunder him, give him nothing to live for, nothing to hope for, and it is one man out of a hundred that will escape the temptation of drowning his sorrows in drink.

They say again, that the Irish people are revengeful; and the English newspapers are constantly crying out: "Oh, a nation of murderers! You can't walk the roads of the country, but some fellow will come out from behind a hedge and shoot you. There is no safety for life." It was but the other day that an Irish Judge, blundering, the Tipperary man and his blundering, my friends, God forbid that I should justify sin in any form. Heaven forbid that I should attempt to justify the terrible crime of revenge or murder. But I will lay down two facts—first that there is more murder committed in England in seven years. Secondly, that there never was a people so driven and so exasperated to take the wild law of revenge as the people of Ireland. Who are the men who have been murdered?—to our bitter regret, indeed, that they have been murdered. They were the men who were exterminating poor man's door and say: "I am your landlord, you owe me no rent, you have paid me every farthing of your debts, your father and grandfather who lived here before you paid me all they owed me, and have worked for me faithfully and I have grown rich upon your labor—get out of this house, out with the wife, out with the children, out in the cold bleak road on this winter's day, out in the storm, beg, go to the poor-house, or lay down and die." These were the men that were murdered. Just make the case your own. I remember an elderly English gentleman whom I met traveling in a railway car, and he said to me: "You Irish are a desperate lot. You are slaughtering every man of property in the country. I just said to him: "A few days ago a man came to me and I was careful to go to his house and to make out the truth of what he told me. He told me that he held a piece of bog land, he held it from a bankrupt landlord at a rack-rent—and it was a rack-rent. He drained that bog and he made a garden and a little farm out of it by putting into it every penny that he could earn. He made it a small English garden, and it was now worth two pounds an acre. Whilst he was at that his landlord would occasionally visit him and say 'you are working well, go on with that drainage, I will never disturb you.' As soon as ever he got his farm in order and got his house built upon it, the landlord came and said: 'I want that land, I want that house!' The farmer said: 'Haven't I paid you the rent?' 'Yes,' said the landlord, 'but I want it!' When I had finished the old gentleman asked, 'And did your friend go out?' 'Oh, yes,' I replied, 'he went out; he took his wife and children and went out, and he went out a beggar.' 'And didn't your friend shoot that landlord?' the old gentleman asked. 'Oh, no,' I said, 'he didn't shoot him.' 'My good heavens, I would have shot him,' replied the Englishman.

The press of England accuses the Irish people of being a deceitful and a lying people. They say that it is hard to trust our word. I deny it. But even if it were so; even if we were liars, who made liars of us? When the law of England was that if a Catholic Irishman sheltered a Catholic priest he was liable to transportation, and then when the police and soldiers came, and put that man on oath, and asked him, "Did you have the priest in your house?" it was a question of telling a lie or giving up the priest. The law made liars of them. I deny that we are a lying people; but if we are it is the laws of England that oppressed us, and obliged us to take every resource of the oppressed in order to save ourselves, and one of the resources of an oppressed people is to save themselves by lying and by cunning. No; were it not for the faith that tells us that a lie can never be told under any circumstances; were it not for the faith which, being true itself, creates truth in others, the Irish people ought to be the greatest liars on the face of the earth, because there was always a penalty for hundreds of years attached to the unfortunate Irishman that told the truth.

And now, my friends, these are the principal shadows of our character. Now what have I to say? I have endeavored to show you that whatever charge is brought against the Irishman at home, that he can find in the iniquitous laws of England the reason for that charge which is brought against him. But take the Irishman away from the unjust laws that grind him to the earth, give him the rights of an independent freeman upon a free soil, give him the breath of the air of freedom, give him the high hopes in common with all his fellow-men, and I see a glorious career before him. Give him something worth living for, strike the chains from off his hand, take the badge of servitude—the collar—from his neck, let him go forth a free man, and I say that not

the greatest enemy of the Irish race will be able to substantiate a serious charge against him. That privilege is yours, my friends. Ah, how proud I am to-night as an Irishman and a priest, a preacher of truth and a lover of my motherland—how proud I am to-night to be able to tell you that not a vestige of ancient slavery or of unjust laws is now around you; that you are a free man in a free land; that the shadow that clouded the happiness of the Irish race has cleared away from your sky and you are now in the glorious sunshine of America. Here the way is free; the road to fortune, to fame, to honor, to power, is open, and all that America asks of her sons is brightness of intellect, purity of heart, honesty of purpose, and brave energy of arm. And where is the man in America to-day, where is the race in America to-day that has brought from any foreign or ancient shore unto the shores of Columbia a brighter intellect, a purer heart, a more honest and straightforward purpose, a stronger and a braver arm than the sons that have come forth to this glorious land from the time of the old Ireland.

Rouse up, O ye sons of Ireland! O ye men of Irish blood, I ask you not merely as a priest, but I ask you as a brother Irishman, to give fair play to the brains that God Almighty gave you and don't snuff them out of your heads with liquor. Be spirited. A spirited Irishman is a noble Irishman. The Almighty God has given more than your share of intellect. The "gnuppon" of which I spoke a few moments ago belongs to the race. We were never such fools as to be blind upon any question of religion, and we were never such fools as to take up a lie and believe it to be the truth. Be loyal to your intellect which God has given you. No penal laws in your path; no legalized and enforced curse of ignorance is upon you in this land of law, of knowledge, of intelligence, perfect, magnificent, glorious Columbia. The road to fame, to honor and to power is open, and all that America demands of her adopted children is that, in addition to brightness of intellect, that they have honesty of purpose and straightforward manliness, with that energy and determination of mind and of hand that God has lavished upon the Irishman, and he is only wanting in them when he forgets his duty to the religion that creates all these, and has created them in Ireland for ages; when he forgets his duty to the altar, second only in its sacredness to the altar of God's Holy Church, namely, the altar of his domestic hearth in its purity and unalloyed love America leads the way to fame, fortune and power. The nations of Europe are striving in that way; the schools of Germany, the schools of France, the children of England, the children of Ireland, are all in the race, and for the first time in the history of our nation for a thousand years, the Irishman has a fair chance to prove what God and man have done for him. Ah, my friends, in the day when the cycle of ages and the issues of history shall develop in this mighty land the greatness, the intelligence, the worth of every nation that has sent its people to America, in that day, if you are only faithful to yourselves, the Irish element in this great country will be the brightest gem in the imperial crown that will rest for ages to come, highest among the nations, upon the brow of great Columbia, the mother of freedom, the refuge of the stricken and the oppressed, the fair parent, fair and just, of every nation that she adopts; in that day, I say, the brightest gem in her crown will be the faith, the purity, the intelligence and the strength of dear old Ireland, as it grows transplanted upon her soil.

St. Theresa of Jesus—October 15.

THE ANGELICAL VIRTUE—THE VIRGIN IN THE CLOISTER, AND THE MATRON IN THE WORLD.

The more we reflect on the innate beauty of the angelical virtue, the more shall we be charmed by the contemplation of its dignity and merit. For what is virginity? It is an undefiled integrity of mind and body; it is a flower of such delicate tint and exquisite odor, that the least breath will discolor its beauty, and destroy its fragrance; it is a precious and inestimable treasure, which is carried about in frail vessels; it is a sparkling gem which is preserved by unwearying vigilance, defended by mortification and penance, secured by holy tears and prayers. It is a virtue which seems to include all other virtues; for the true virgin must possess humility, meekness, poverty of spirit, an enlivening faith, an unshaken confidence, an ardent love for God.

Let us briefly compare her life with that of the Married Woman. The state of marriage is indeed holy, but it is not without its danger. If it possesses its sweets but they are not unmingled with bitterness. If the virgin has married, indeed, "she has not sinned," says the apostle; but, alas! she shall suffer "the tribulations of the flesh." She cannot be "as holy in mind and body;" she is not free from "an impediment in serving the Lord." She is divided between her husband and her God, and in her anxiety to please both she will often fail to please either. She is "bound by the law of her husband," she is wedded to his fortunes, she is subject to obedience to his commands. It is too often unpleasant duty to honor or to soothe his sorrows, to bemoan his infidelity, or to weep for his ingratitude.

Has she the joys of a mother? Alas! she brings forth her children in pain and tribulation. Their days are exceeded in number by the cares they bring upon her. And what is too often the consequence? At the end of her life, if the wretched matron were permitted to commence it again, she would, from sad experience of the past, renounce alike the comforts and the cares of marriage, and embrace that state where her peace might be more secure, and her happiness more certain. We will now place in glorious contrast the life of a Virgin. The virgin is pure, she is chaste; she is holy in body and in spirit; she is free from an impediment in serving the Lord. She lives in the world as though she knew it not, she walks over red-hot coals and is not touched by fire. She wages war against an eternal enemy, and is always victorious, and, what is still more noble, she triumphs over herself. Her life is that of an angel—her merit is superior to his. What the angel has by nature, she obtains by courage. To be an angel is happiness; it is virtuous and honorable to be a Virgin. Her courage is that of the hero, and she triumphs in a succession of the noblest con-

quests. Her wisdom is that of the sage. She despises the world—she rejects its pomps—she renounces its charms. She sheds around her the sweet odor of her example, and most eloquently proclaims to the wicked the folly of their impiety. She pours the light of instruction upon the children of ignorance, and teaches the infant heart to beat with the love of its Creator. Her prayers ascend like continual incense before the throne of grace in behalf of that guilty world which she has abandoned, and she arrests the arm of Divine vengeance by her sighs and tears. Night and day she is in the company of heaven, in the society of angels; her songs of praise and jubilation are blended and commingled with those of the eternal choirs;—in a word, she is the delight of heaven, the pride of earth, the honor of human nature, the ornament of her sex, the glory of the Church, the living tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ!

SUNDAY NIGHT.—A solemn silence fills the air; the last gentle twitter of the song-birds is hushed, and darkness is all over. "Peace is o'er the world abroad, In the holy place of God."

Heaven's benediction seems falling on the sleeping earth, so sweet, so low, that no ripple disturbs the calm of life's silent sea. But hark! some chord gives tone as to an angel's touch. Has the unconscious hand of some hovering cherubim fallen upon his harp? or has some strain from the heavenly choir found a rift in the firmament, and gently moved a wave of sound? We cannot tell. We listen earnestly, perchance it may come again. Hark! It is repeated louder, clearer, sweeter than before, and listen; still another tone is heard, as sweet, but not the same. Has echo thrown wide her doors to this sweet voice, and in her thousand caverns given it welcome? No, no; this voice of heavenly sweetness is of earth; it is the call to prayer. With one accord the avenues that mark the way to temples consecrated to holy use are thronged with eager worshippers hastening to the house of God. Their pitying Saviour meets with smiles of unvarying sweetness, the guileless Nicodemus and the repentant Magdalene. "Who-soever cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." What more gracious promise could suffering, wretched mortal ask? The promise of light for darkness, joy for sorrow, strength for weakness, hope for disappointment, and peace for turmoil. No wonder, then, that ministering angels, harp in hand, bear the sound of these sweet bells to mortal ears. Their harps catch the sound and it becomes music not of earth, but of heaven.

The bells have ceased; and from many a sacred temple ascends the voice of prayer and praise. Rejoicing angels bear its harmony toward heaven, and intermingling with its earthborn chords the matchless harmony of the new song. We cannot follow further: none but the Redeemer can know that song. How many Sunday nights ere we shall listen to that song in the temple not made with hands.

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