OUR PROVINCE REJOICES IN HER SUCCESSFUL SONS

(Continued from page 2.)

waters of the Gulf, you may be sure that he cries out in the fulness of his heart "This is My Own, My Native Land." Only those who, after years of exile turn their footsteps homeward "from wandering on a foreign stand" know the rapturous thrill that quivers in the depth of the soul as he experiences the contact of mother earth and receives the warm greetings of those he loves.

The love of Islanders for the land of their birth is almost proverbial and why should it not be so? Even those who cannot lay claim to the Island as their fatherland admit that this is the garden of the western world. Here the hills are greener and the skies a deeper blue than in any other spot on earth; here the heart of affection beats with deeper pulsations than among any other people; here the milk of human kindness and the honey of lavish hospitality flow with a purer, richer current than in any other land; here are found more noble, generous, self-sacrificing souls, more pure and affectionate hearts than in any other country of its size; here the people lead happier and more contented lives than on the neighboring continent where, too oft, the stream of human existence is choked with the sedges of an insatiable quest for the things of earth—for the gold that robs its possessor of peace, for the fame that is frequently purchased at the price of honor and self respect, for the social prominence that seldom crowns its pursuer with the wreath of virtue.

But above all, our people are a God-fearing people. One has but to travel through any part of the Island and note the spires that point the way to heaven and the sacrifices made for the cause of religion to realize the depth and intensity of their reverence "for the things that are above,"—a reverence that manifests itself not merely when the sonorous tones of the church bell summons them to prayer on Sunday morning, but in every word and deed of the toil-blessed week. Our forefathers of early days learned to rely on the staff of religion for the strength and courage to do battle against the hardships of pioneer life. Their love of home and country was purified and consecrated by the higher and holier love of God; and, the noblest heritage we have received from them is a childlike reliance upon divine Providence in all the affairs of life.

We all realize the obligation that rests upon us of striving to follow in their footsteps to make our lives a rosary of fruitful years—each moment a prayer, each hour a good thought, each day a duty well done.

But from whom should those tributes of praise and gratitude to "the Giver of every good and perfect gift" flow with fuller meaning and deeper reverence than from us the descendants of those noble souled Irish men and women, who sought and found in this garden of the Gulf that peace and religious freedom denied them in the land of their birth? During the 19th century many a ship-load of emigrants from Ireland braved the terrors of the Atlantic waves and found on our hospitable shores a refuge and a home from which the stress of poverty and the lash of persecution were never more to force them in search of the comfort and sustenance denied them on Irish soil. Though they rejoiced in their new-found happiness and prosperity do not for a moment think that they left the green fields and sunny sky of Ireland without a pang. It was their home, the land of their birth, and every fibre of their generous natures was entwined round the humble roof-trees of their mud cabins, every throb of their souls was a prayer for the loved Isle that held all that was near and dear to them. When the moment of parting came they steeled their souls to the inevitable and bade their home an eternal adieu. When they reached this Island they took possession of the land; they cleared the trackless forest and built log cabins; they tilled the soil and sowed the seed and with the fruitful yield they reared a generation of men and women like unto themselves—strong, noble, sympathetic, cherishing their country next to their God, hating tyranny and oppression, living as God's noblemen should live with the sweat of honest toil upon their brows, finding peace and content for soul and body before their rude altars and stone hearths and in the limited circle of their relatives and friends. These early Irish pioneers gave to the land of their adoption a love as true and tender and soulful as that which they bestowed on the land of their birth.

This patriotic fire they transmitted in all its purity to their children and never has our Island had truer sons and abler defenders than the descendants of those exiles of Erin. Whenever there was question of righting a wrong, of defending the weak, of championing the oppressed, men of Irish blood and Celtic prowess were always found in the van of the army of patriots whose watchword was, "For God, for country and for truth."

To this generation we point with pride because it gave us our fathers and mothers and we trust, nay rather, we know that we do not yield to them in the least in our loyal devotion to our native land. The events of recent years which put our patriotism to the test show that "its ancient spirit is not dead," that the destiny of our Island and of our broad Dominion is safe in our hands.

"And doubt not, should a foeman's hand
be armed to strike at thee,
Thy trumpet-call throughout the land
need scarce repeated be,
For bravely as on Queenston's Heights or
as in Lundy's Lane,
Thy sons will battle for thy rights and
freedom's cause maintain."

The story of the devotion of Irishmen to their chosen land is the same the world over. Wherever they find a foothold and a home they give to the land of their adoption the best service a devoted patriot can bestow. Their strong right arms are ever ready to prove the worth of their undivided loyalty. The sound of martial music ever thrill their souls and makes tense their muscles to do and die for their country's weal. It matters not whether the Irish heart throbs beneath the stars and stripes of America, or on the fair fields of France beneath the ample folds of the fleur-de-lis; whether it finds a home "where equinoctial fervors glow or winter wraps the polar world in snow;" whether it beats on Russian steppes, beneath the Southern Cross or on the torrid sands of Africa, it is ever the same loyal Irish heart, as true to the interests of its country as the needle is to the pole.

But 'tis not alone on the field of martial deeds that Irishmen have won undying fame. The head roll of immortality in every walk of life—in art, in science, in literature, in statesmanship, in the church—is adorned with the names of men of Irish birth and Irish descent who have secured for themselves imperishable riches in the temple of the world's great ones. The humbler walks of life have their heroes as well—men who, in the hum rum of every day existence win victories for the cause of righteousness on the silent battlefields of their own hearts. In such heroic moulds are the truly great of every nation cast and woe to the country that cannot count among its rank and file multitudes of such heroes.

Our Island is blessed in this regard and would that she were in a position to offer ample opportunities to her children! But, unfortunately her resources are limited and many of her stalwart sons and fair daughters must imitate the action of their Irish ancestors, and seek in other lands opportunities which cannot be enjoyed within the narrow confines of the Island. There is this difference however, between us and our forefathers of Irish birth. They were the victims of a cruel fate, unwilling exiles, driven by stress of adverse circumstances to seek in alien lands the bare necessaries of life, while we are, for the most part, willing exiles, who leave home and kindred not indeed to seek the means of livelihood—for that, thank God, can be obtained here—but, as it is said, for the purpose of bettering our condition. The United States looms up before us as a land flowing with milk and honey, offering ampler opportunities and richer prospects for preferment, a broader and more varied field for the exercise of whatever ability we may possess. And there is no denying the fact that among the American people there is a large percentage of successful Islanders, of men and women, too, who have attained positions of prominence and honor in their communities.

What is the secret of their success? How account for their ability to do honor to themselves in every sphere of activity? 'Tis well to let the rising generation know that the secret of their success must be sought in their early training on the Island. They have been educated in the school of hard work—the only school perhaps, from which it is almost impossible to obtain a graduating diploma. They have been taught the lesson of self-reliance; they have been trained to depend upon themselves, to ask no favors, to shirk no duty however disagreeable, to seek no preferment save that which is the reward of honest, persevering endeavor. They have passed their early days in the busy hive of industry where drones are an encumbrance. Our young men know what it is to guide the plowshare through the stubborn lea, to swing the woodman's axe, to rise with the sun and toil through noonday heat to the close of day. Our young women have acquired that practical knowledge of the mysteries of cooking and the secrets of housekeeping that can only be obtained over the glowing kitchen fire and in the midst of the dust-cloud raised by the broom. Thus inured to labor at home, they do not falter when it confronts them abroad. They have learned the lesson of the strenuous life and like the old Roman general they "find a way or make it" to the goal of their ambition.

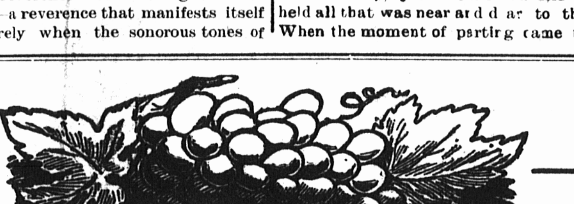
The Eastern States of America have long been the Mecca of those who hope one day to be classed as successful Islanders abroad. In recent years, however, our young people have hearkened to the advice of the late Horace Greely and have gone west to grow up with the country. Since the day when we learned that "westward the course of empire holds its way," the great north western States of America have become so well known to our people that they need but a passing reference. Within their borders vast fertile fields and mines of untold wealth await the developing hand of the teeming millions they are capable of supporting. During the past score of years a large part of the tide of our Island emigration has been turned westward and in "the golden stream of the broad and swift Mississippi" has mingled with that from other lands, and in the struggle for success the standard of proficiency set by our brethren in the east has never been lowered. In that land of the western sun Islanders are found in every walk of life—tilling the soil, engaging in commercial pursuits, occupying honorable positions in the professional world, in the state and in the church.

As elsewhere, we are very clannish in the west. Being so far from home—we call the Island home—we are always pleased to meet a fellow countryman and at our social gatherings the latest news from the Island is eagerly discussed. Gladly do we welcome to the family circle a new arrival from the dear old Isle. Like the Acadians of old whose story is told in Evangeline,

"Friend clasps friend in his arms
And they who before were as strangers,
Meeting in exile become straightway as
friends to each other
Drawn by the gentle bonds of a common
country together."

From these, your countrymen in the great Northwestern States of America, I bring you greetings today and assurances of their love for, and loyalty to the land of their birth. How often amid the hum and bustle of everyday life do we not sigh for the bracing sea breeze which, in evening's calm, casts its cooling mantle o'er your heated brows and drops refreshing dew upon the sun parched earth! How often do we not wish for a message from home and friends to cheer us in our sojourn far from those among whom the days of our youth were passed! The assurance that this celebration was planned for us, among others, bids us hope that, though we are far from you, we are not forgotten; and in behalf of those absent ones—Islanders like yourselves—I thank you for your kind remembrance—

Oh Motherland! There is no cause to
doubt thee;
Try mark it oft on every shore today.
Though grief and wrong may cling like
robes about thee,
Thy motherhood will keep thee queen
alway.
In faith and patience, working and
believing
Not power alone can make a noble state:
What 'er the land, though all things else
conceiving,
Unless it breed great men, it is not great.
Go on, dear land, and midst the generations
Send out strong men to cry the word
aloud;
Thy niche is empty still amidst the
nations—
Go on in faith, and God must raise the
cloud.



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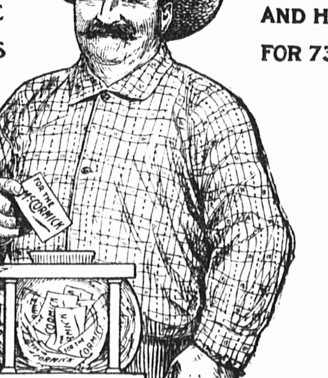

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