

## A PRACTICAL IRISH PATRIOT

A hundred years ago this year, Charles Gavan Duffy, the Irish poet, patriot, and practical statesman, was born. In an article on his achievements, the *Dublin Leader* stresses the practical quality of his patriotism. It says:—

Duffy was a man in whose life, both private and public, practical wisdom and practical ability were conspicuous; and these are qualities that Irishmen who take part in public affairs will do well to cherish.

His first important undertaking was the founding and editing of the *Nation* newspaper, and surely no more useful or practical work could have been planned or executed at that period of our history. It was on October 15, 1842, that the first number appeared. The editor was only twenty-six. He was self-educated save for a few months spent in a Presbyterian academy at Monaghan. But he gathered round him a memorable company of men of genius and public spirit, including Thomas Davis, Clarence Mangan, Denis Florence McCarthy, John Cornelius O'Callaghan, John Mitchel, John O'Hagan, Lady Wilde. The *Nation* during the six years of its existence prior to its suppression in 1848, under Duffy's able editorship, conferred benefits on the Irish people the magnitude of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. It is sometimes said in disparagement of the paper that its writers were dreamers and poets, and men of impractical ideas. It is no doubt true that one, at least, of its most gifted contributors, poor Clarence Mangan, led an impractical life; but the paper itself in Duffy's able hands was as sane and practical an organ of opinion as any country could boast of. It fostered Irish talent, it afforded an outlet for Irish literary genius; it revived interest in Irish historical study; it encouraged Irish industries; it defended the Irish name and character from a host of unscrupulous assailants.

What can be more sane and practical than to give scope and liberal encouragement to the poet, the orator, the essayist, the historian, the reformer of abuses, the fosterer of native products. The writers of the *Nation*, under the guidance of their editor, focussed the light of their genius with a view to kindling the flame of Irish learning and exploring the dark places of Irish history. They pooled their energies in a supreme effort to rebuild the Irish nation on industrial and economic, no less than on political lines. And they succeeded to an extraordinary extent. Not even the famine and the plague of later years by which our unhappy country was scourged could wholly destroy the edifice they had set about erecting or obliterate the landmarks of national endeavor they had succeeded in tracing. Thus was the *Nation* a wise and practical organ of Irish opinion, the creation of the brain of a highly gifted and practical man.

After the famine of 1847 and the State prosecutions of 1848, Duffy, whom the Government had failed to convict, turned the stream of his energies into another practical channel. He was for five or six years one of the leading figures in the Tenant Right movement that united North and South for a season. The movement was conducted by sincere and able men of the stamp of George Henry Moore and Frederick Lucas, founder and editor of the *Tablet*. But the defection of William Keogh, who left the popular party 'just for a handful of silver' and for the 'ribbon' of the judgeship 'to stick in his coat,' and the wholesale forgeries and melancholy end of Sadlier, as well as other difficulties that can not be dwelt on here, broke up the party, and Duffy, declaring that there was no more hope for Ireland than for a corpse on the dissecting table, sold his interest in the *Nation* and sailed for Victoria in 1855.

In the colony of Victoria he was destined to spend a quarter of a century broken only by visits to Europe in 1865 and 1874. He rose to eminence in the legislature, becoming Prime Minister in 1871, and Speaker of the House of Assembly in 1877. His life in the

southern hemisphere was guided by the same practical spirit which directed his energies in Ireland.

## M.B.O.B. ASSOCIATION, WELLINGTON

A meeting of the executive of the Marist Brothers' Old Boys' Association was held in the Marist Brothers' School, Newtown, on Thursday, November 23, Rev. Brother Emilian presided, and members present were Messrs. L. and J. H. Turner, J. McKeown, P. J. Gallagher, J. Hayden, W. Brady, T. Columb, J. D. Pope, R. D. Hickey, and the secretary. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. Letters of sympathy were sent to Mr. and Mrs. Girling-Butcher and Mrs. Little, sympathising with them in their late sad bereavements. It was decided on the motion of the secretary to support the Altar Society's candidate in the Queen Carnival Competition in connection with St. Mary's Parish Festival. The rev. chairman reported that an old boy of the school, Mr. Healy, had won the Military Cross, and he moved that a letter be sent congratulating him on his achievement. Mr. Gallagher reported that a party went out to Mother Mary Aubert's Home for the purpose of assisting to clear away gorse, when a very enjoyable afternoon was spent. He invited members to assist in this good work. Mr. J. L. Leydon was elected to represent the Association on the Thorndon Parish Federation Committee. Mr. W. Lennon was elected to fill Mr. Burke's seat on the executive. A vote of thanks to the rev. chairman concluded the business.

## Wanganui

(From our own correspondent.)

The pupils of the Marist Brothers' School gave their annual concert in the Opera House last night to a crowded and appreciative audience. The boys gave a good display of their efficiency in singing, dancing, recitations, and acting. Familiar songs, such as 'The Maple Leaf,' 'The Admiral's Broom,' and 'A Bunch of Irish Shamrocks' were rendered by the boys as choruses, supported by a good orchestra, which contributed much to the evening's enjoyment. An Irish jig by C. Murphy was cleverly performed. An exhibition of statuary drill, touched off by limelight effects manipulated by Mr. S. Freeman, proved a successful item. In the solo, 'A Toast to Our Allies,' J. Rawson delighted his hearers, who demanded an encore. He was also heard to advantage with W. Phillips in the 'Boatman's Song.' A little scene in which M. Cullinane and J. Kennedy were the entertainers, gave much amusement. W. Sussmilche, an actor to the manner born, gave a spirited display in 'No Irish Need Apply,' and was recalled. The second part of the programme was an operetta entitled 'The Bogus School Inspector,' which the audience thoroughly enjoyed. Those taking part were:—M. Carroll, M. Crotty, R. Duigan, J. O'Meara, G. Sloan, W. Sussmilche, and all rendered their parts in a way which would do credit to older and more experienced actors. The Brothers, and especially Brother Hundieli (who had charge of the baton), are to be congratulated on the success of the performance. Miss Ruby Curran presided at the piano, Mr. McGonigle and his brother Hibernians (who managed all the work of the theatre), and Messrs. Melville and Lafferty (who fitted up 'the actors') were specially thanked by the Brothers for their kindness.

A pastoral letter has been issued by the Bishop of Meath calling for prayers for fine weather to save the crops, and for a good and plentiful harvest.

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