

sides had its full force, all this seems not only a pity, but a sin. It is a pity, for one reason, because too often the old people who move at the instance of the young are never more happy, and, for another, because people who never strike root, who are *deracinés*, as Maurice Barrès would say, are seldom the stuff out of which much good comes to a country. And it is a sin to cut off old associations and old memories of home from children, who lose more thereby than anyone who does not know what home means and how powerful in after-life its appeal can understand.

In the old world, how different it was. The solid people, the heart of the nations, were those who clung to home. The home was a sanctuary for them; it was consecrated and blessed by a thousand unspeakable and tender memories. We have led wanderers from America to pray beside a stone on which the names of our grandfather's grandfathers were almost obliterated by time: we have walked with them in fields which came down from father to son for centuries; and we could feel how, because of all they had heard from their parents of this old home, before they ever saw the waves whitening on the Irish coasts, every field and tree and hill was sacred to them. Home thus becomes a spiritual thing, a centre of gravity for all time to which nameless, superhuman forces draw across the world. A sign of it is the familiarity of the sons and daughters of exiles with the places they never saw, places that mean more to them than the palaces and the cities of which the old world is rightly proud. They have that tradition because their fathers and mothers had homes in the real sense, shrines of peace, refuges from the cares and the sorrows of life, sacred centres of faith and patriotism more powerful in their influence than any schools. In Italy pilgrims go in thousands to visit the model of all homes at Loreto, in France to the home of Joan of Arc. In the Holy House of Loreto the Divine Lord of us all lived in subjection to Mary and Joseph, to teach us the value of home-life and its importance for Christianity. In her home Joan was bred and reared on the principles which her parents learned from Nazareth, and so became France's saviour and her noblest type of patriotism and purity. The humble homes of green Erin have sent forth across the world the priests and nuns and the pious men and women to whose faith is due whatever of true religion is in the new world to-day. And if in the past there had been no home traditions and no home training of the old kind who can tell what the Church and the world would have lost? No doubt there is home-life wherever good parents are found, but stability and tradition help in untold ways and a lasting place of abode on this earth is in some way a help towards attaining the spiritual home for which we are all destined hereafter in Heaven.

The wise Irish Prelate who founded the *Tablet* used to exhort his flock to settle on the land and to stay on it. Time has shown how sound was his advice. Were he alive to-day his great heart would bleed at the sight of so many Catholics who after hard toil and years of industry have given up their farms in order to live in towns where they die of dry rot and where their children in all likelihood help to swell the frivolous throngs that support the debasing picture-shows. Back to the land would be his call did he live to-day, and whosoever shall succeed in persuading our people that to have and to hold the land is the best contribution they can make towards our future here will accomplish a great work. But whether on the land or in the cities it should be the aim of heads of families to found a home that will be to their children what the homes of the old world were to the children that were brought up in them. A home means a house to live in, and the first thing secured for that house ought to be the blessing of God without whose aid all labor is vain. The home of Nazareth is the model of all homes; and a fixed dwelling that would prove a focus of spiritual associations to every member of the family is something worth while striving for. We are a long way off

yet from the spirit that built the old homes; but with God's help parents can do much to revive the spirit of their forefathers and to establish here in this new land homes that shall be like the tree Isdragil in the course of years, with their roots deep down among the graves of the dear dead and their flowering branches spreading towards Heaven.

NOTES

The Coming of Patrick

This week we select a few fine word-pictures of the Celtic past from Shane Leslie's *St. Patrick's Purgatory*. The first is from a sketch which tells us how to an old warrior-king on his death bed there came a Druid, and how they foresaw the end of paganism and the birth of Christianity in Ireland:—

On a sudden a white figure rose at the lowest of the earth-walls and came slowly up the height. He was a tall man with the crooked neck of age upon him and angry eyes in his wise face. . . . As he passed the fighting men turned to watch him, but shivered as they let him by. "It is Torna, the Druid," they whispered. He had reached the palace door by now. Under the heavy log lintels he passed, with his white robe gathered in his fingers.

The King lay in a restless slumber, and saw not his visitor entering. In his hard agony he turned this way and that. Gouts of blood crawled down his stiffening limbs and dyed the badger skins and fox skins of the bed. Torna waited beside him as an old crane that stands near the ebbing tide. At last the King woke.

"Torna, I am very glad of thy coming: Torna, I have cried for thee since I was borne from the battle."

"I am not glad: little glad am I to see the hand that was once full of gifts bitten by the sword." There was a pause, and the King spoke.

"Torna, there are strange clouds gathering over my eyes, not the joyous mist that rises in the wine-cup, but the blackness of rain in the night time. . . . Torna, Torna of the Druids, Torna, wiser than wisdom, is it death that is come upon me?"

"A smaller wisdom than mine can see that thy cloud is one that cometh but once over a man."

With a cry the King turned back to his troubled slumbers. He seemed to mutter, and after a while . . .

"Strange dreams come over me and lie before me and behind me, Torna, for already I think I see my own spirit sitting at the cold hearth of the dead: and it is not well with them. Again, I see strangers sitting among the High Kings of Erin. . . . Torna, I see grief for you and for all the white magic of the Druids."

"Long have I known that grief is coming upon us, O King! . . . There cometh an adze-head, with a crook-head staff in his hand, and he will chant a song unholy from his table, and his household will be answering. Amen."

"I see a Druid that is no Druid sitting with the wise men of Ireland and his robe is as brown as the peat."

"That is he, O King! That is Patrick, the fisher of men."

"Who is Patrick, and what is the way of his fishing?"

"He is the love-friend of Jesus, whom men call the King of the Wounds, but I can tell thee little of his fishing save that he hath nets laid over the high hills of Ireland."

"Torna, would my sword be easy cutting the nets of Jesus?" and the King folded his cold bed-fellow, for in those days the Kings of Ireland honored their swords by night as well as by day.

"No, O King! your sword cannot avail you, for the Queen of Heaven has woven the nets out of the floating treasures of the sea, and the spirits of men will be lying in them like the silver herrings in the folds of a rope-net."