

THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL.

DEMONSTRATION AT ARDPATRICK.

The National Festival was celebrated at Ardpatrick by a demonstration, which was attended by people from Charleville, Kilmallock, Kilsinane, and the surrounding districts. No place could be more appropriate for the purpose than the "Hill of Patrick," where the Patron Saint had been, and laid the foundation of a church on the summit of the hill. A procession was formed at the village, and went up the steep incline to where the Saint had chosen for his church at a quick pace. Amongst those who took part in it were Irish Volunteers from Hospital, Ballylanders, Kilsinane, Charleville, Ardpatrick, Kilmallock, Glenroe, Galbally, Dromin, etc. When the meeting was formed near the remains of the "round tower," from which the addresses were delivered, there was a large and representative assemblage.

On the motion of Mr W. O'Connell, seconded by Mr D. P. McCarthy, the Rev. T. Graham, P.P., presided, and the other clergy present were—Rev. Fr. Lee, P.P., Kilsinane; Rev. C. Mangan, C.C., do.; Rev. Dr Dineen, C.C., Charleville; Rev. Fr. Hart, C.C., Eflin; Rev. Fr. Connery, C.C., Ardpatrick; Rev. J. O'Shea.

Letters expressing regret at being unable to attend were received from Rev. G. O'Connor, P.P., Brucee; Rev. P. Higgins, C.C., Kilmallock; Rev. E. R. McCarthy, C.C., Pallaskey; and Rev. W. P. Hackett, S.J., Limerick.

The Rev. Chairman, who was received with cheers, said he had been invited by the Gaelic League to preside at that meeting, and he very readily consented to accept the offer, owing to the fact that this was a revival of an old celebration (cheers). The old people often told him that they remembered when there used be great gatherings of people at Ardpatrick on St Patrick's Day, when not alone people from the neighbouring parishes, but those from the neighbouring towns attended, and they had bands and other forms of celebration at their meeting (cheers). When emigration began, this custom fell through, but now the Gaelic League, who are reviving the old language, are also reviving the celebrations, and among them one in honour of St Patrick. So up and down through the country meetings are being organised on St Patrick's Day to do honour to the National Apostle, and there was no place more suited to one of those than Ardpatrick (hear, hear). The fact that St Patrick came there himself in person—it was one of the places in the country that was so honoured by his presence; he was received there in honour and respect, and by the Chiefs, whom he instructed and received many of them into the Church. When leaving Ardpatrick he laid the foundation of the Church, left his priests after him to continue his work, and from that day to this the parish of Ardpatrick had not been without a priest (cheers). The church was completed after he left, and a monastery, etc., were also raised. As the Gaelic League had reorganised one of those meetings they had reason to be grateful to them, and he hoped that all who had come there that day would carry the blessing of St Patrick with them to enable them to live and practice his teaching and be guided by it during their lives (applause).

Mr Pierce Beazley, Dublin, who was well received, said they had assembled, as many thousands of Irishmen and Irish women throughout Ireland and the world had assembled, to celebrate the National Festival. In a lengthened and eloquent address, he spoke of the special significance which the National Festival had for them, something to distinguish it from all other celebrations, and referred to the time when Ireland was the great centre of culture and learning. Their ancient glories had decayed, but still they met year after year to celebrate the Feast of St Patrick. They remembered they were all Irishmen of a great past, and recalled the days when their race was great and glorious. In those times it was no wonder that they who cared for Ireland, lived and intended to stay in Ireland, should celebrate the Festival with a sense high and holy, and swear allegiance to Mother Erin (hear, hear). They met with a common mind that they were Irishmen, proud to do what they could for Ireland, and that day they shared in the triumphs and sorrow of the whole nation, and their motto was Ireland for all (hear, hear). They did not want to speak a word of any difference of opinion.

"Start not, Irish-born man,

If you're to Ireland true

We heed not race, nor creed, nor clan,

We have hearts and hands for you."

It was something to say that in spite of all efforts to kill the language, it was not dead yet, and the Gaelic League were working to restore it and make it again the national language of Ireland. The history of the Irish nation, though sad, was also noble, and if they wanted to be Irishmen, they should be Irish in speech and everything, and on that St Patrick's Day let them again vow allegiance to Ireland, and if they did their duty and kept true to the cause, they may yet make it prosperous and free (applause).

Rev. Dr Dineen, C.C., who was received with cheers, said those who organised the demonstration were to be congratulated on the idea and the success that attended their efforts. As Father Graham had told them, it was the re-opening of an old chapter of the history of Ireland in Ardpatrick, and he hoped many chapters would follow. Mr Beazley, who had come all the ways from Dublin to give the magnificent address which they had just heard, had so well covered the ground that he (Dr Dineen) feared he would be only painting the lily if he were to speak at any length. There were, however, one or two points he would mention. He referred to the language in relation to prayer, and said there was no language in the world so easy to speak to God or keep in touch with God in the Church or in the field as the language of Patrick, Brigid, and Columcille. He mentioned its pleasing forms of salutation, and said to compare them with the language they had made their own. There was not a Bishop in Ireland in his last Lenten Pastoral that had not to warn the faithful against objectionable literature in the English language. Concluding, he said that wherever they encouraged the Irish language they were doing the work of the children of God, and as priests they were doing their part to win a place for that blessing which St Patrick called down on that holy hill (applause).

Mr Sean O Murthuille, Gaelic League Organizer, next addressed the meeting. He said he was proud to say a few words on behalf of his native land, and was glad to see assembled men and women who were making sacrifices so that the soul of Ireland may not expire (hear, hear). People there were who would look on that demonstration with an air of ridicule, and say what was the good of it all? They were there to show Ireland and the world that the cause of Ireland is going on in fertility and strength, and that the people were determined to carry it to victory. They would not turn back until the language of Ireland was placed in its proper position in the country, and he appealed to his hearers to do so in that district (hear, hear). They should be Irish in tongue and soul. He asked them to study the history of Ireland's past, in which they would find some dark pages, but records of glorious deeds which would instil in them a spirit of good. They were there to proclaim it to be the duty of every Irishman to stand for Irish Nationality and Ireland a Nation. With regard to the literature referred to by Dr Dineen, there was no better method of stemming this rubbish than by popularising the Irish language. He advocated the support of Irish manufactures.

A vote of thanks to the rev. Chairman brought the proceedings to a close.