

MEN WHO DIED FOR IRELAND

ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL'S TRIBUTE

Most Rev. Dr. Harty, Archbishop of Cashel, unveiled, at Murroe, on Sunday, in the presence of a huge crowd, a memorial in the shape of a Celtic Cross to the memory of the men of East, Mid and West Limerick Brigades, killed in action against the British in 1820-1921.

The cross, erected at a place where Patk. Ryan and John Frahill fell, is a beautiful work of art by Mr. Wm. Gaffney, Waterford, who died recently. The names set out on the memorial are:—

Brigadier Sean Finn,
Brigadier Sean Wall,
Adjutant Patk. Ryan, and
Lieut. John Frahill.

Bands were present from Limerick City and other centres. Rev. Wm. Purcell, P.P., who presided, said the boys whom they honoured gave them liberty, and it was for the people to see that freedom was used rightly. There was nothing so horrible as misplaced liberty.

CHRISTIAN CULTURE

Most Rev. Dr. Harty said it was a worthy thing to remember their glorious deeds and to record them in lasting memorials. It was sweet to die for one's country, but the sacrifice deserved recognition from those for whom the sacrifice was made.

Over 700 years ago Ireland lost her freedom. Her ancient civilisation, which helped to bring Christian culture to the nations of Europe, was gradually suppressed by alien rule; her ancient laws and customs, which had been Christianised by St. Patrick, were supplanted by foreign traditions. Her language, which stood the test of centuries, was finally almost banished from her shores. Her lands were taken from her rightful owners and handed over to British settlers.

Her faith was ruthlessly attacked, her churches were stolen and her altars were laid low. Almost every branch of national life was dominated by the stranger. Ireland was in truth a land of sorrow. They ceased to have their rightful place amongst the nations of the earth.

CENTURIES OF OPPRESSION

To the credit of Irishmen and Irish women be it said that during the long centuries of oppression there were always to be found those who were ready to give their all that Ireland might be free.

Men and women were found who fought against the oppression, ever looking forward to the day when the Irish flag would proudly float over a free Ireland. There were always O'Donnells and O'Neills, and Sarsfields, Wolfe Tones, O'Connells and Davises, "true men like you men," whose love of Ireland was supreme. In modern times, as of old, the fierce struggle for freedom went on. Those of them who were advancing in years remembered well the stormy days of the Land League.

EFFORTS FOR FREEDOM

One of his earliest recollections of Irish life was of a meeting held on that very site to forward the advanced movement in the days that immediately preceded and prepared for the Parnellite days. Of all the efforts for freedom few were so fierce as the fight in which the men whose memory they celebrated that day gave their lives for Ireland. The atrocities of the Black and Tans were fresh in their memories.

Not since the days of Cromwell were their people driven to desperation in such barbarous ways.

Men like those of Mid and East Limerick freely gave their lives in defence of their hearths and homes. To these men they paid a nation's tribute of respect. To their memory they raised that glorious monument. Their names would never be forgotten, and that memorial would help to hand on to future days the memory of men who did not fear the common foe.

FITTING MEMORIAL

No more fitting memorial than that magnificent Celtic Cross could be found. While it commemorated the past, it bade them look to the future. It commemorated the past because it was the symbol of sacrifice. So long as that cross stood in Murroe, so long would men remember that there were brave men who died for Ireland.

Their children and their children's children for all time would look lovingly on that cross, and would pray for the men who gave their lives in a noble cause. That cross also bade them to look to the future. It was not only a symbol of sacrifice, but a symbol, too, of their common brotherhood. Let them learn its lesson.

DID NOT DIE FOR PARTY

Let them have peace in Ireland. Let them all unite in common love of their Motherland. Let them forget the immediate past, and work together for the glory of their race and nation. Let no bitterness possess their souls. Let them remember that these brave men who died for Ireland died, not for a Party, but for the nation as a whole.

Let them honour them and keep their names for ever free from mere party strife. The cross was also a promise of resurrection. It was in their power to fulfil that promise for Ireland. They could take up again their ancient civilisation, foster their national industries, promote their ancient games, and study their native language. They could by their united efforts make their country once again one of the most glorious nations in the world.

They had erected that day a splendid monument to the men who gave their lives for Ireland. They could erect a still more glorious monument to their memory by uniting together heart and soul for the regeneration of their native land.

FAITH OF THE NATION

Rev. T. Wall, Ph.D., C.O., Dromcollogher, brother of the late Brigadier Sean Wall, said the cross erected was one of the high crosses of Erin erected in their time. It was a symbol of the faith of the country—the faith that was always united to the struggle of the nation.

Ald. Casey, Chairman of Committees of Limerick Corporation, said he had one regret and that was that the Mayor of Limerick, who was the victim of circumstances and the times, was not present. He felt sure that the record of those men to whom the monument was raised would be an inspiration to them all.

THE HEROIC DEAD

Commemoration Parade At Murroe

STIRRING ORATION BY MR.
LIAM FORDE

PLEA FOR RESTRAINT AND CHARITY

A commemoration parade, in which many members of the old I.R.A. participated, took place at Murroe, on Sunday in honour of the late Adjutant Patrick Ryan, Annagh, and the late Lieutenant John Frahill, Rath, both of whom gave their lives for Ireland in an engagement with British Forces at Lackelly, near Mitchelstown, on May 1st, 1921.

In May, 1923, the people of the Murroe parish, generously supported by East Limerick and City residents, subscribed to the erection of a monument in memory of the Limerick soldiers of the Irish Republican Army who gave their lives in the years 1920-'21. At this monument on Sunday Mr. Liam Forde, an old I.R.A. officer, delivered a most impressive oration.

At 11.30 a.m. a special Mass was offered up in Murroe Church for the repose of the souls of the deceased volunteers whose names are inscribed on the memorial cross. Subsequently a parade of old I.R.A. took place from the old church to the monument cross. Mr. Sean Carroll, Castleconnell, had charge of the parade, which was headed by Ahane Fife and Drum Band. Herbertstown Fife and Drum Band arrived late for the parade.

The relatives of the late Mr. Patrick Ryan present were:—Michael and John (brothers); Miss A. Ryan and Mrs. J. Blackwell (sisters); Mrs. Michael Ryan (sister-in-law); Mr. J. Blackwell (brother-in-law). Messrs. William and James Frahill, brothers of the late Mr. John Frahill, were also present.

The Last Post was sounded by Master Christie Thompson, 2 Barry's Place, Boherbee, Limerick.

The following members of the Old I.R.A. were present:—Messrs. Michael Hartney, Denis Maher, Tomas Dargan, Patrick Byrnes, Patrick Whelan, Michael Harrington, Tim Buckley, John McKernan, Patrick McMahon, William Mechan, Patrick Barry, Peter Quin, Patrick Mannix, James Benson (Limerick); Dominic Forde (Askeaton); N. Madden, C. Kirby, W. Gleeson, P. Cooke, T. O'Connell, J. Hanley, J. Barry, M. Fogarty, J. Mooney (Cappamore); Brian Berkery, W. Duggan, J. Fitzpatrick (Doon); Martin Dwyer, Michael Conway, W. Corbett, P. Lonergan (Herbertstown); Joseph Ryan, Thomas Kemp, Michael Daly, Joseph Dunlea, Timothy Fahy, Thomas O'Grady, Michael Ryan, Wm. Dwyer, James Bourke, Tom Barry, Dan Barry (Murroe); Sean Carroll, T. Herbert, Ned Carroll (Castleconnell); Sean Vaughan (Ahane); Mr. Robert Ryan, T.D., Kilmallock.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

Mr. Michael Hayes, Moher, brother of Rev. John Hayes, C.C., Castleiney, presided, and before introducing Mr. Liam Forde, said:—

On behalf of the committee I welcome here to-day our visitors and comrades who will speak to you. We are meeting to commemorate the memory of the men who died for Ireland, and to whom this cross is a memorial.

In this month, eleven years ago, our Archbishop, a son of our parish, unveiled this cross. Church and State were united in unveiling a monument that stood for Faith and Fatherland. To-day, in the Mass offered this morning for our noble dead, and in this meeting we have still the same unbroken ideal.

This cross is one of Ireland's great public monuments, and one of the most beautiful. It tells of Ireland's love for Christian art, but it tells above all, of the love of Irishmen for the ideals of religion and country. You can read carved on the stone these words—"They sought not honour, fame, renown. They loved and died. 'Tis the martyr's crown." Yes, it is not glory or success that martyrs seek. Love and death seal their greatness. They died that Ireland's soul may live, and to-day, in the conflict of various interests, we forget the reason why they died. Our dead belong to us all, no matter what our views are, and the reason why they died is still our inspiration. This cross stands here to-day overlooking the plains of Limerick, overlooking the battle-fields of their glory, and it is the monument of their victory. We must be true to this cross, true to the boys whose names are inscribed on it, true to God and Ireland. Please God, it will stand here when, in a short time, we shall all be united and the ideals of the cross and the hopes of our heroes will be realized.

STIRRING ORATION.

Mr. Liam Forde in his stirring oration said:—

We have come to commemorate the memory of our dead comrades, our noble dead, who gave their rich, red blood for the Ireland that they loved; we honour them in union with all the other heroes and martyrs, who so valiantly gave their lives for the freedom of Mother Ireland. You ask me, in your name, to pay them a passing tribute. I am unworthy of so great an honour, but what can I say of the martyred dead, what can I say that might do justice to their immortal memory. What greater sacrifice could God demand of those young heroes than the shedding of their life's blood for the national redemption of their fellow man. Their's was a great faith, a faith born of the Cross, a faith that must finally triumph. Pearse once said of the patriot dead, and proved by his own glorious death the sincerity of his words: "There are," he said, "in every generation those who shrink from the ultimate sacrifice, but there are in every generation those who make it with joy and laughter, and these are the salt of the generations, the heroes who stand mid-way between God and man.

The martyrs we have come to honour to-day stand between God and Ireland, and intercede at the High Throne for the Ireland of to-day, torn and bleeding from internal strife. We have gone a long way on the road to national regeneration. The stranglehold of the tyrant is badly shattered, but not yet definitely broken. We have not yet reached the golden goal, the great ideal for which our dead comrades and all the other patriot martyrs throughout the generations so gallantly strove and nobly died.

Most of us remember the circumstances under which these brave soldiers met their death, standing bravely, their rifles spitting defiance at the relentless oppressor; standing firmly in defence of the God-given right of Irish nationhood, standing against overwhelming numbers, until they fell wounded and dying. You will remember wrapping some of their bullet-riddled bodies in sheets, the only shrouds available, and placing them in a grave in a field by the lonely wayside, lest their dead bodies should fall into the bloody hands of the vigilant enemy. Most of us remember when the shattered remains of two of that gallant band were first laid to rest in Murroe churchyard, and the funeral cortege that stretched for miles along the countryside, all coming to pay respect to the valiant dead. That was a sad but glorious period for Ireland; sad for the loving mothers and the lonely widows and orphans, whose hearts were made

sorrowful by the bloody sacrifices their sons and husbands were called upon to make; glorious when we think of the unity of Irishmen, standing shoulder to shoulder for the old ideal of nationhood, glorious for the great national faith that was in us, and the unconquerable spirit, living, praying, working, fighting, dying, in the name of justice and in the name of the Irish Nation.

I do not wish to contrast the glorious Ireland I have referred to with the Ireland of to-day, torn and bleeding, as I have said, from internal dissension, when one set of Irishmen views the other with suspicion and contempt. There are in Ireland, and always have been, national degenerates, but, thank God, there are still in Ireland an overwhelming majority who would have her free. Unfortunately, sincere Irishmen have taken different roads for the great objective, but having done so, can we not agree to differ? Has one party or the other lost the national faith to-day, in defence of which they were ready to give their lives yesterday? I do not think so.

TORN AND BLEEDING.

I do not wish to labour this matter my friends, lest I may disquiet the dead by saying something that may be interpreted as being contentious, but let us invoke the spirits of the martyred dead to intercede with the Almighty Ruler of Nations to heal the wounds impaired by passion, to bring Irishmen together to complete the work so nobly begun, the work that has cost so much tears and sacrifice and blood throughout the generations down to our own. The price of freedom is surely paid in patient suffering and blood, and for the final forward march for that glorious goal, I feel sure all that is needed is unity. Unity and brotherly love, these beautiful virtues that spring from the wells of heaven.

CONCORD AND UNITY.

Here, at the foot of this beautiful memorial cross, raised to the honour of our brave, dead comrades, whose spirits must be hovering near us to-day, let each of us pledge ourselves to do a man's part, with restraint and charity, for the Ireland that we love, and with this resolution firmly implanted in our hearts, let us go forward, scattering the seeds of concord and unity, and with the high hope that we shall live to see the realisation of the long-cherished dream of Irishmen, living and dead, Ireland a Nation.

Mr. Sean Carroll said that he felt honoured to be present at the first national commemoration in Murroe in honour of those who gave their lives for Ireland. "The monument," he said, "should act as a guiding light and inspire Irishmen to follow in the footsteps of those whom it represented, to strive unflinchingly for a free Republican Ireland." ©INA