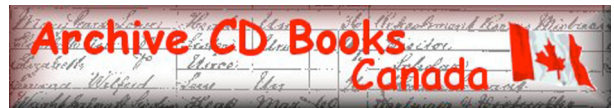


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- A “Gleanings” Product -

Our Pledge to Posterity.

by: John S. MacIntosh

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John S. MacIntosh, the author, identifies each individual's debt to his heritage and proposes 6 points of principal on which to live an honorable life which will continue to uphold the example set by their Scotch-Irish ancestry.

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OUR PLEDGE TO POSTERITY.

BY REV. JOHN S. MACINTOSH, D.D., PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Often when dwelling in Belfast, that most American, most truly Scotch-Irish, and rapidly progressive of all British towns, have I been asked by eager friends from all parts of this broad land to seek out their kindred and tell of their ancestry. Then I have marked that as the old homestead on the hills, or cross the downs, or midst the moor, was painted forth and the oft-times honorable names and deeds of true Ulster sires and forbears were told the faces of my visitors would flush, their eyes would flash, and out would leap the heart-born words: "Those were men of whom any heir might be proud, and for whose sakes it is worth while to live honestly and worthily."

In true souls of pure chivalry there ever rise mighty longings that the old ancestral shields shall never be sullied with spot, nor suffered to be eaten with the rust of idleness, and that the old banners that have waved over heroes' heads and graves shall never be trailed in the dirt of disgrace, nor furled in foul defeat, nor borne in shameful struggles for godless power. In past years it has been my aim before our National Congress to show how we grew and whence we came; and to make it plain to my fellow-members that of no mean strain had we our distinctive start, that the real Scotch-Irishman of actual history and bold achievements began with picked men, Scottish noblemen of high repute, honorable lairds of no small degree, great-brained pioneers, thoughtful and learned clergy, splendid yeomen, shrewd handicraftsmen, and daring soldiers of fortune. And in the face of all the sharp criticisms called forth by my utterance on these points, I boldly restate them as the facts of history and of my own sight and knowledge. Never did a fresh, aggressive race step across the line of the unhistoric into the historic fields with finer and more impulsive blood than our own Brito-Teutonic ancestry of the Lowlands and of Ulster.

But having made you tread with me the olden pathways of early struggles, and having carried you up the steep ways of our fathers, and having planted you on the broad hill-tops of our to-day's strength and assured power, I would now take a far outlook and bid you join me as we stretch eager eyes forward and think of what we must be for sake of sires and sons. To-day is the child of yesterday and the father

of to-morrow. It behooves us to see what faces, forms, and souls we send down and out into great coming battles for God and man. Freely we have received from our fathers for our strife, let us freely and fully give to those that follow after on the hot-breathed road of human contest.

In a bright and cultured home in Philadelphia this scene was enacted one sunny September afternoon: An old, worn-out, and brave Confederate officer called to see a somewhat distant relative, the sole representative of a house whose sons and brothers and cousins had all stood and nearly all died in the Federal blue. The old soldier waited for the coming of his never before seen relative. When that young man entered the room, forward with quick, firm step advanced the old leader; then, what none had ever seen in the death-sleet of the hot-fought field, he retreated, and trembled from head to foot. The tears rose and rolled down the old scarred cheeks; the hand that had gripped the saber in the fierce cavalry rush like a vise shook; and the lips that had lifted high and clear the wild yell of battle quivered as across them came the broken words that told the secret of this strange feeling: "O God! how like my John!" The living relative gave back the dead and lost. We are the living; the dead have done their noble deeds; but ours it must be to give them back and hand them down that the coming days may still see what manner of men they were in all holy conversation and all heroic deeds.

Of the physical and mental I have no fear. Seeing what of build and brawn these successive meetings show, and hearing the great organ tones of my race, and the strong-souled utterances, all worthy of the old brains, I know that in manly strength and in clean-cut thought we will hold our own as in the past. Looking over this assembly, and hearing the men and the women that gather here, I see the old in the new, the forms and faces that give again the men and matrons of the hoary tales, and recall to me my own oft-seen friends on Lowland moors and Ulster hills. Sweeping my eyes from bar to bench, from pulpit to pew, from press to platform, from busy floors to battling-fields, I can multiply the sons and the daughters that are worthy of the days of old in all intellectual activities. But what we have to make sure of is that the moral and the spiritual qualities lying behind our forefathers' brawn and brain and making them as soldiers and scholars, as editors and ecclesiastics, as traders and toilers all they were; that these uplifting and transfiguring moral and spiritual forces shall be handed down by us and made to tell on and form the generations to come. It is a heavy burden we bear: we carry the weighted

honors and deeds of a shining ancestry, and we are making the coming centuries for our kith and kin. We must never be like our dear, impulsive brother "Pat" who, when reminded of his dues to posterity, replied with his own matchless wit, but rather defective philosophy: "Posterity? shure, thin, an' what did posterity iver do fur me?" Our work for posterity is the only good coin with which we can pay our heavy debts to our ancestry. If there be one thing we set here before us, it is the love of our forefathers; and love is immortal—to use Bengel's words—and must be paid in perpetuity to the succeeding race. We stir up here our pure minds by way of remembrance that we may crown the dead with undying laurels by the garlands of hope and inspiration we bind around the brows of the fresh-born. Hence I have taken as my theme for this meeting

OUR PLEDGE TO POSTERITY.

And my only sorrow is that a season of such sad and almost killing work as I have seldom been called on to pass through in my own field of pastoral and public work has made it impossible for me to rise to the height of this great argument or the right claims of this great national occasion.

1. *Truth to our traditions.*

Such our first pledge. This tale has been told to me of one of England's noblest and most forceful statesmen: Morning after morning he would enter first the old family gallery and there stand almost as if in worship over against four ancestral portraits. Sometimes he would be heard to murmur, "I'll not forget;" sometimes, "I will be true." His eldest boy had watched often in awed wonder, and at last was taken by the hand into the gallery. Set by his father before the oldest of the pictures, its name well known, he heard his father say: "You too must hear them speak." "What, father, how can they speak?" "My boy, for fourteen years they have spoken to me every morning I have waked beneath this roof, and each has his own message. He says, 'Be true to me;' and he says, 'Be true to your race;' and he says, 'Be true to thyself;' and she, my mother, says, 'Be true to God.'" Splendid illustrations of the true "*Noblesse oblige*." Here is a scene from a humbler home, but the power is no less moving, perhaps still more divine: A widow stands in an old kirk-yard among the graves of her household, and, holding her only boy by the hand, says: "There was not much silver and gold to leave you, but they have left you clean blood, pure names, honorable memories, and a great wealth of prayers."

These are the moments and the spots where the souls of men rise into the strength of grand resolves, and the strong winds of healthy and happy inspirations blow life and hope and holy heroism into young hearts. And to multiply just such moments and recall just such spots is one of the chiefest aims and strongest bonds of this Society. For their own historic value and for their rare romantic interest we are seeking to find out and keep alive the memories and the traditions of the Scot, the Ulsterman, the Scotch-Irishman; but more eagerly do we call for them that we ourselves may by these tales of our grandfathers be spurred forward in the great race for the crown of well-doing. Reliance on ancestors yields only disgrace; responsibility to ancestry yields dignity. Reliance on ancestry breeds idleness; responsibility to ancestry breathes inspirations. Reliance on ancestry may make you but the waster of undeserved good; responsibility to ancestry may make you the wearer of an immortal crown. Reliance on ancestry will leave you with the demoniac among the tombs; but responsibility to ancestry will plant you among the impulsive monuments of those who now "through faith and patience are inheriting the promises."

Already to some small degree, though with us yet it is but "the days of small things," our Society's work is yielding just these precious fruits. As I have gone in the course of duty over this land, and touched men and women of all ranks and conditions, I have found that there is an awakening to a new and more thoughtful and better-balanced sense of the real worthiness and the true distinctions of our Scotch-Irish blood and lineage. But few intelligently understood what manner of men we were. From too many it had been steadily hidden what are our large deserts in the land we have done so much to make. And some have been made to believe that there is nothing we can fairly call our own; that the honor belongs to Puritan and Cavalier and Hollander. But "the darkness is passing and the true light is shining." With the new day has come a lifting of the head and a loftier carriage and higher aspirations. "I never knew," said a by no means unstudious lawyer to me, "that we had such an ancestry and such achievements on both sides the sea." And under the force of this new-found fact the man stood straighter and looked the world more squarely in the face than even his olden wont. On the bold brow of the Danube, not far from historic Ratisbon, the Bavarian has built his Walhalla; and in that hall of fame he has gathered the impulsive and formative monuments and statues of his noble dead, that the living sons and daughters of the land walking there may grow into worthy resemblances. Back to the massy Grampians, to the basalt rocks of Antrim,

to the breezy hills of Down, the maiden walls of Derry, to Valley Forge, the valleys of Virginia, the bends of the Ohio, and the gaps and passes of the Cumberland and the Tennessee we will go; and reminding ourselves of the men and women who held the sea-board East and won the great West, will say to ourselves: "Go and do likewise." Hold by the great traditions which the scholars of Knox and the colonists of Ulster and the sturdy pioneers of the Alleghanies and the Virginias loved and lived by, free schools, free churches, free altars and Bibles, free lands, free homes, free men and women, and withal a God feared and served, and therefore a free conscience. Ours has been a splendid patrimony, won by blood and tears at the mercy-seat and on the bloody field. Let it be our resolve and sacred pledge that this patrimony unincumbered and all-improved shall go to our children's hands.

2. *We pledge constant readiness for the better.*

Traditionalism may mean an old hulk rotting in a deserted harbor. Readiness for the better is the new cruiser fit for daring cruise and righteous battle. We are of the rovers' blood; we are the children of the outward-bound colonists, willing now to leave the old Scotch moor for the fresh hills of Down, and again the hampered homesteads of Ulster for the width and wildness of the Susquehanna and the Tennessee. The old foot-hold we value largely because from it we can make the safer and the longer leap ahead. The pioneer is the typical Scotch-Irishman. Hence we are ready—ay, ready—for the newer, if it be the better. But not otherwise. We therefore claim for ourselves a quality of most singular value, and in all truth supremely needful in this land; and daily growing more valuable and necessary as the inflow from foreign shores multiply our social, constitutional, and national questions. We have in the past and we do this day represent perhaps more largely than any other of the older component elements of our variously built State the people of fixed principle and yet forward progress. We hold aloft old and fight-tattered banners, but we take into the struggle the Gatling-gun and the torpedo-boat. While we are not given to reckless change as is the wild anarchist, we have never had our dwelling amid the decaying tombs like the insane conservative. We have a great and marvelous loyalty to the past, but we have a mightier love for the progressive. The Scotch-Irish have been the men of balance, of cool judgment, slow of speech, but swift of deed when the clear path opens. You know that there is immeasurable distance between dragging your anchor and swinging at anchor. We have never dragged, but we have always swung loose and escaped many a

storm and seized many a prize. The Scotch-Irish are a philosophic race, and they have done what no other school has succeeded in accomplishing: they have joined the most thorough positivism with the freest idealism and the most sturdy realism. We hold the fort, but ever push our scouts forward, and ever long for new conquests. We take no backward step. The most practical business-like common sense, revealing itself in painful thirst, tireless industry, and canniest sagacity, is joined to daring enterprise and quick inventiveness.

To-day there are no qualities needing more to be kept alive and cultivated than just this promising balance of the firm and the free, the conservative and the liberal. Already the men of outlook who with clear eyes and all-pure hearts stand on the watch-towers of our land behold the little clouds like a man's hand in size rising out of the great sea of human society. Questions regarding work and wage, regarding State and nation, regarding this many-peopled land and the old countries of life-supply, regarding the masses and the classes, regarding Churches and schools, regarding wealth and want are all beginning to shape themselves; and there is need in this land of just that race and with just its characteristics of firm loyalty to the past and free love for the truly progressive, that grand old seaman quality of swinging at anchor, which will help those who will follow and must fight out their own sore strifes to keep the dear land safe and make liberty sweeter and more comprehensive.

3. *We pledge union, not uniformity.*

This is another of our great racial traditions and faiths and achievements. Religiously we have always been Churchmen, but always Nonconformists. Politically we have held by the integrity of the civic community and yet the independence of our inviolate individuality. In this great nation of sovereign States and with many-blooded hosts of sovereign citizens, this union without uniformity is our twin secret of compacted strength and protective freedom. Unless these two principles can be kept in harmony and can be made to act and react on one another there must be a wild volcanic explosion. The imperial individualities of this young and heady nation must have ample room and marge to seethe and work and thus ripen and clarify; and at the same time one holy home of the co-equal children must be guarded from all internal division. But just this imperialism and individualism marked us in the past and mark us to-day. No feature came out more clearly in the Scotch-Irish as they stood fronting one another at Gettysburg or in the Wilderness than just this twin feature of imperialism and individuality. We would not bury that with our sword, but use it on the

sweeter fields of peace and for posterity. Because, as it seems to me, no other of the original and formative folks, coming to and building up this great nation, possess just what our race has hitherto been marked by. The Puritan has individuality, and but little community. The Cavalier has his love for the community, but none for a constitution; he is brave for the State, but is inclined to browbeat the subject. The Hollander has his eye fixed on constitutions and courts, and but little care for the free life of the community and the full liberty of the individual. The Celt has neither commonwealth nor constitution, but binds himself to his chief and his own clan. But the striking peculiarities we carried out from the school of Knox and had developed in the formative influences of Ulster, to which I turned your thoughts last year, are a sovereign State of represented citizens and a sovereign subject with his inviolate freedom and individuality and untrammelled conscience; a constitutional country, but an independent individuality; the body politic, but the body personal; a common capital for the common country where is visible the indivisible unit of national and impartial authority, and a clear conscience across whose defiant threshold only God may step. The Puritan and the Hollander would guard against the tyranny of the State, the Cavalier against the tantrums of the individual, and we against both.

To not a few thoughtful students of the trend of public affairs, it grows more clear that three great forces are working in the ever seething masses of this wonderful nation, where the hot and steamy blood of fiery youth is firmly held in the strong vessels of most admirable polity and constitution; and that these forces must be harmonized. These are socialism, State rights, and nationalism. Each force has a voice, and as it lifts itself up you may hear, amid much that is foolish and false, something of truth. Truth's least grain is precious, and must be kept. The guarding of these grains and the setting them in one common crown of glory, to be placed at some distant day on the brow of our land, is the coming task; and truth to itself, truth to its past, truth to its lessons and teachers will fit our race to be no mean workers unto happy achievement, for the solution lies right in the line of characteristic love of union and rejection of dead and deadening uniformity.

4. *We pledge a free Church and a free school.*

If there be any thing more truly fixed in the past of our race, it is a love of religion and a love of learning. No one need grow nervous as I come to this thin ice. Neither will I go in myself nor drag you after me. I have too much of that Scotch-Irish love of the common rights in me, and too strong a regard for my own individuality to

enter on sharply debatable grounds. But there is a wide field here that must be traversed, and that soon and steadily, by our country. There is heard sounding all through the air of the land a desire for closer approach among the holders of a common faith, and a clearer understanding of the conditions on which our country and the separate States will work and develop the great school system of the land. Toward this harmony of Christianity and this completion of our school system every true man and woman in the land must be hearty helpers. Our ancestors grew into convictions on these subjects, then handed down their hard-won gains to us, which are in my judgment of great value at this very point of national advance and movement, and they are capable of being stated in a wise and a generous way so that we shall be impelled the better to work the right work and hand down to our posterity with larger measure what we have ourselves received and augmented.

We still hold by, and will, the free Church *and* the free school. We write the Church *and* the school. Some write only the Church; some only the school; others the Church in, or rather under, the school. We believe in the Church and the school, and each free for its own work.

As we recognize God and Cæsar, so we recognize Paul and Plato. We have our theology; we have our philosophy. But we place them in distinct spots and relations. We would have a school free to all the children of the land and paid for by the land. We would have a Church free to all who choose to enter, and paid for by those who use it; a school granted to all for the impartation of knowledge fitting for citizenship; a sanctuary guarded by the nation from all intrusion for the education of the soul for man's help and for God's fellowship. No one shall force me to worship; but no one shall forbid me to worship nor interfere with my quiet and rest for that hallowed work. The common school, the free Church, and the sacred Sabbath.

5. *We pledge respect for, but no fear of, majorities.*

We claim to be and are generally and generously recognized as a race of great principles. We contend for principles. One great mark in us is loyalty. We are loyal to home, loyal to friends, loyal to our party, loyal to our country; but over all these has risen our loyalty to truth and God. That has been our mark; and woe worth the day when it shall ever change. Nothing seems to me of more value at this moment than that supreme regard to the right, irrespective of the multitude. Votes do not always show virtue;

they can never make it. In the past our fathers were forced to stand alone, sneers and shame and suffering their bitter lot. Ah how the old Lowland and Ulster tales tell the woe-fraught tales! They stood alone when they closed the gates of the Derry and fasted to the verge of death rather than go with the multitude. But they kept the pass for the world. And Washington at Valley Forge knew that they would be willing to stand alone with him, if all others should fail. The minority sometimes holds the salt of life. We like to be with the winning side, but we have never been afraid to stand alone and to wait till from Philip drunk we could appeal to Philip sober. Now in countries like Britain and America, where rule must and rightly is by the mass, it is of the utmost value to have a solid body of approved men, a sturdy phalanx known to be no cowards, a tested set of people with cool heads and firm-ruled spirits who can bear the sharp sting of most unwelcome and ill-deserved defeat and hold the battle-field for another fray. It is just at this point that the unequaled and historically proved staying power of our race comes out. We have held the fort just in this way times without number, and that has hitherto always meant the coming day of victory, This regard for the right, and this defiance of defeat we propose to carry onward and to hand down; and if we do, one largest and noblest measure of service will be rendered this land and struggling humanity. The famous utterance of the great French strategist in one of his peninsular wars regarding the English soldiery, "They don't know when they are beaten," is fully applicable to this folk we own. They don't know their defeat; or rather, they know that more than Phœnix life and energy are theirs, so that they can snatch life out of the grave, and grandest victories out of the jaws of crushing loss. And the present surrounding illustration of this fact is the "New South," throughout which and specially at the points of most marvelous and rapidly advancing success, you find the indomitable Scotch-Irish confronting you with all their thrift and energy and assurance of victory.

6. *We pledge a peace-making brotherhood.*

From our peculiar race affiliations we claim kinship both in blood and in historic sympathies with the great race powers of our land. To all we can stretch out our hands of real kinship and truest fellow-feeling. Ours is a truly peculiar position in this matter; and ours may be, if we use it but wisely, a potent factor in welding into still closer unity all sections of the country, all varieties of the great peoples who have here blended their blood and their labors. In

former years, when Austria held her rich possessions in Italy by tight grip of military despotism, she had what was called the "impregnable quadrilateral," the four famous and defiant fortresses of Peschiera, Verona, Mantua, and Legnago, and herein lay her so great strength that even Napoleon the Third after the critical battle of Solferino dared not attack them. In this land we have a quadrilateral of conquering and kingly races, soldier-like and sage, proud of great traditions and progressive on all paths of noble struggle. Let them be held in firm and steadfast brotherhood, and who will dare attack these unique lines of defense? And central in this square of the living stronghold we stand, having special links of communication with each part, and so bringing all into actual and active sympathy. This quadrilateral of racial forces are the Puritans and the Cavaliers, the Teuton and the Irish. Let there be no strife between us, for we be brethren. Yes, brethren! in all that is holiest and most affiliating and most impulsive. And we are closest cousins to all; akin in blood to English Puritan and Teuton, Hollander and German; akin to them still more in the old battles and successful struggles that have made their names famous and their work for humanity so glorious. Through our Brito-Saxo-Norman descent we stretch out kinship grasp to the Huguenot; and through our Ulster domicile we call the Irish Celts our fellow-countrymen. Is it not a marvelous circle of association? Is it to be wielded as it may, a weapon of tremendous power? Are we not hereby enabled to speak to each in his own tongue the marvelous message of our common country? May we not be a mighty harmonizing force? May this Society not be guided to glorious works of wide pacification, the allaying of jealousies, and the scattering of suspicions, and the spread of a sweeter and dearer brotherhood all across the land? What it is to be able to look at your neighbor's trouble from the inside of your neighbor's heart and hearth! God has given us the home word for each of these great race powers in this country. Let us use it wisely, bravely, tenderly. We are said to be exclusive. No Society can be possibly universal. But we include the largest number of sectional elements and race distinctions of any one homogeneous folk in all this broad American continent. We are found in all parts, we belong to all parties, we combine in our family all creeds, we stand in all Societies and trades and professions. Our ramifications are simply startling when you come to trace them out. By descent and intermarriage we have foot-hold at every hearth-stone nearly in the varied community.

The possible power of this interpenetration is incalculable. We count that we have some good reason to make ourselves decisively heard. The extent to which we have spread our achievements and our character justify the tones of kindly authority. It has been calculated that by birth, marriage, and intermarriage about one-fifth of our whole population has Scotch-Irish blood in their veins. If we add the associated and affiliated Hollander and Huguenot, you get more than a fourth; add in the North German and Welsh, our British cousins, and you widen the sweep of our race-kinships. What a magnificent arch it is—finest European stock! Bind them together in truest union and integrity, and what strength and splendor you have! In that arch we are the key-stone: we bind and hold all in unity of beauty and strength. In the war-days of terrible struggle it was the Scotch-Irish of Pennsylvania that made her the key-stone of the arch of liberty. Be it ours to become the key-stone of the arch of a new and closer and more fruitful union! Far, far back in the dark and storm-swept days of human advance from barbaric woes and wickedness it was the bridge-builders that did most for the advance of the conquering and transforming nations on the march to better things. Let us be bridge-builders and give the true linking of the North and South and East and West.

In that past battle-hour, of which to-day we would remember only the great heroes and noble deeds of bravery common to our common country, my family stood divided, as so many others; some stood in gray and some wore the blue; but I remember well how just before the first fell shot was fired one brave, blue-eyed boy who fell under Stonewall's eye and to his sorrow, said to me in my mother's home in Edinburgh: "Thank God there is one home where you and I can meet in peace and kinship!" We would make this Society of ours just such a home. Leaving Alexandria one bright, sunny morning I was shown the touching and peaceful acre of God where in long, simple grave lines sleep together the common heroes of our common hearths. We desire to see another acre of God where not in sleep but in great conquering strength and generous rivalries our common stock and all our national brotherhood shall work the richer harvests of peace and religion.

They have in New York the most useful and honorable Southern Society. We desire to rear another Society, neither Southern nor Northern nor New England, but to re-erect the "Continental Congress," knowing no South nor North nor East nor West, but brothers all and only, our country one and indivisible.

Brothers and sisters, it is the day of monument-making; and well it is so. And the faded "Blue" will stand in honoring silence before the granite that bears one word, "Lee," just as the tattered "Gray" stood beside the tomb of Grant. Let us rear them; let us guard them; let us crown them. But rarer monuments we may rear for our land and for the wide and hopeful future, if only immortal and influential we make our old ancestral principles, for then from mothers' knees and fathers' sides will go out the future generations of our great, old line to hear God's call in every fresh blast, and do God's work on each fresh field of duty.