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DOCTOR IN SCIENTIIS

JOHANNES ANTONIUS FEEHAN

Geologicam quam dicimus scientiam si quispiam negaverit esse ortam a fossilibus herbis animalibusque attento animo observatis, legat, quaeso, hoc testimonium illustre: ‘ὁ δὲ Ξενοφάνης μῖξιν τῆς γῆς πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν γίνεσθαι δοκεῖ καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὕγροῦ λύεσθαι, φάσκων τοιαύτας ἔχειν ἀποδείξεις, ὅτι ἐν μέσῃ γῆ καὶ ὄρεσιν εὐρίσκονται κόγχαι· καὶ ἐν Συρακούσαις δὲ ἐν ταῖς λατομίαις λέγει εὐρηθῆναι τύπον ἰχθύος καὶ φύκων, ἐν δὲ Πάρῳ τύπον δάφνης ἐν τῷ βάθει τοῦ λίθου, ἐν δὲ Μελίτῃ πλάκας συμπάντων τῶν θαλασσίων.’ Ut philosophus ille Ionicus, sic hic noster, Ophelan natus, vetustissima vitae vestigia excussa in lucem protulit. Laeta libenter ad vos duco JOHANNEM ANTONIUM FEEHAN, sodalem Academiae Regiae Hibernicae, ex omnibus iis piissimum qui Terram Hiberniam eiusque sororem Floram multicolore excoluerunt, nam fideliter interpretatus est pulcherrimum librum creaturarum. Discipulus huius Collegii studiosissimus, nondum Magister in Scientiis, nondum Doctor, locum observationibus suis aptissimum elegit in collibus eius iugi, quod hinc montem Bladinam, hinc Morsum Diaboli incolae appellavere. Ibi asperum solum intente lustrabat—adhuc memoriam tenet fausti diei, ante diem VII Idus Maias anno MCMLXXVI—cum repente stirpis cuiusdam filicis folium invenit in saxo luteo impressum; repperit deinde fossiles herbas quasdam vasculares, fixas in saxis antiquissimis aevi Siluriani. Tanta indicia interpretatus vir sapiens pro certo habuit genera quaedam vitae terrestres iam floruisse quadragies centenis milibus abhinc annis. De miris huiusmodi repertis diu docebat discipulos suos apud sororem Universitatem Dubliniensem; omnibus quoque nostrum diutius miracula naturae solitus est illustrare scriptis innumeris et nitidis simulacris moventibus, quibus nos ducebat per locos amoenos naturae Hibernicae: eo pervenit pietas eius, ut, coniuge liberisque adiuvantibus, spectacula naturae solacio nobis adduceret, dum saeviret taetra pestilentia. Doctrinam quoque viri admirati sumus disserentis nunc de scientia geologica vel botanica, nunc de antiquitatibus vel de agri cultura. Perlucide descripsit flores herbas arbores omnes; vestigia peretustae aetatis monstravit, hinc saxa fungiformia a plagis lacustribus relicta, illinc turbas ac petas a glacie. Remotas autem origines rerum cum animo inspexerit, prorsus tamen firme adspicit, ut servari possint vigor atque varietas mundi eiusque relationum contextus, nam terra est domus communis; precatur vero ne homines stultissima caecitate omnino extinguant fulgidum lumen naturae creatae. Fidem denique faciamus, sodales, dum gratulamur viro sapienti ac sollerti, quod et operis et laudibus insigniter coluit rerum Naturam, Dei creaturam:

Laudatus sis, mi Domine,
propter sororem nostram matrem terram
quae nos sustentat et gubernat,
et producit diversos fructus
cum coloratis floribus et herba.

(Canticum fratris solis Sancti Francisci)

DOCTOR IN SCIENCE

JOHN ANTHONY FEEHAN

Earth science began with the observation of fossils. Listen to this story from ancient Greece: ‘Xenophanes thinks that the land is mixed with the sea and that with time it is dissolved by moisture, saying that he has the following proofs: that shells are found inland and on mountains, and in the quarries of Syracuse the outlines of fishes and seaweeds, in Paros the outline of coral in the depths of the stone, and in Malta marble impressions of all kinds of sea creatures’ (fr. A33). No less historic are the discoveries of JOHN ANTHONY FEEHAN, MRIA, geologist, botanist, ecologist, environmental author and communicator, inspiring interpreter of the Irish landscape and of ‘the other book of Revelation’, *Life on Earth*. The magnificent Slieve Bloom and Devil’s Bit Mountains in central Ireland were his first research laboratory, when our brilliant Bachelor in Science was pursuing his Master’s and PhD in Geology. He still recalls the day, 9 May 1976, when he came upon the perfect impression of a seed-fern inside a grey mudstone; his amazement at the discovery of plant fossils in mid-Silurian rocks, the oldest in the world, proving that multicellular life on land has existed 425 million years ago. For half a century he has communicated his knowledge, far beyond the walls of his memorable lectures in UCD. He has published over 30 books, 70 academic papers, and countless conference proceedings, pamphlets, booklets and articles. The success of his documentaries, *Exploring the Landscape* and *Exploring the Celtic Lands*, continues today in the *Wildflowers* series, which he, together his wonderful family, initiated in the dark days of 2020. He has written about geology and botany, archaeology, farming and local heritage. He has described for us flowers and trees, mushroom stones, ‘relics of a vanished lakeland’, and bogs, ‘wild and wonderful places’ from the ice of twelve thousand years ago. He has taken us on a dazzling journey back in time to an unimaginably far distance. But his heart and his voice are firmly fixed on the future, crying for the conservation of natural heritage and the restoration of biodiversity. In his spiritual writings he reminds us that our ‘Common Home’ is ‘a web of relationships’ and a ‘rainbow of living diversity’, expressed on Earth in various wondrous ways in every geological age, beyond what human eyes can see and the human mind can imagine. That rainbow is dimming. Let us pledge our commitment to restore its brilliance, as we welcome into our highest ranks an amazing advocate of Nature as Creation.

Praised be to You, my Lord,
through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit
with coloured flowers and herbs.

(St Francis, *The Canticle of Creatures*, 1224)

DOCTOR IN MEDICINA & DOCTOR IN SCIENTIIS

IAN HAMILTON ROBERTSON

*Increscunt animi, virescit vulnere virtus.
(Furius Antias, fr. 3)*

Sunt libri qui mentes doceant, qui autem corda delectent, qui animos flectant vel imos commoveant; sed quisnam a libro salutem ipsam corpori afferri posse putaret? Putavit tamen Lucretius et probavit in libro de rerum natura, his verbis saepissime iteratis: ‘hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessesit / non radii solis neque lucida tela diei / discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque’. Saeculo nostro a tenebris tantis perturbato lumen rationis accensuit vir doctus Caledoniensis IAN HAMILTON ROBERTSON, Academiae Regiae Hibernicae sodalis, cuius virtus eximia, doctrina comprobata ac scriptis perlucidis explicata, tantum potuit ut securitatem ac valetudinem redderet quampluribus per orbem terrarum. Quo modo id fecerit, dicere liceat, quaeso, nonnullis verbis oratoris maioris usurpatis. Latebras mentis humanae a iuventute impavide perscrutabatur, cum cerebri quoque proprietates coepit indagare, si forte pars corporis materialis et mens quae cogitat inter se communicare possent, haud aliter quam solent regulae praescriptae dirigere machinam computatoriam. In cerebri quodam loco coeruleo (mirabile visu) detexit magnificam, ut ita dicam, armorum officinam: materia enim minutissima, nomine noradrenalina, ibi incessanter producta emittere videbatur ad mentem, quo aptius dirigerentur facultates animadvertendi et memorandi, agendi, pugnandi, denique intrepide resistendi hostibus advenientibus. Rationes vero quibus mens cum cerebro implicari possit acerrime quaesitas cum exposuisset sescentis libellis academicis, magis magisque reficiebantur vires ac spes laborantium mente aliquomodo vacillanti—laborantium quidem, sed nihilominus se sibi vindicantium. At quid nos? Num mentem nostram negare audebimus aliquando commotam esse aliquo metu vehementi? Nobis quoque hic sapiens, sicut medicus optimus, salutaria praecepta impertit. Nam in eius libris clarissimis dum legimus qua mirabili ratione mentem humanam, mixtam cerebri particulis unicuique propriis, vis quaedam universalis perpetuo fingat et formet, tandem intellegimus nos esse praecipuos et dignos laudibus benevolaque misericordia; intellegimus vero nos in malis versantes fortificari, quia cerebrum voce incitatum, spiritu vivificatum, necesse est omnem metum a mente fugare. Nullus angor nobis ingravescet nec res incertae terrorem nobis incutient, nam fortissimis telis confidimus. Tanta promissa sunt a viro non vaniloquenti, sed diu versato in scientia cognitiva cum arte medendi sapienter coniuncta. Collegium nostrum ingressus viginti quinque abhinc annos professor psychologiae illustrissimus, libenter nos duxit ad indagaciones, liberalissime acies doctas undique delectas instruxit ad mentis cerebrique salutem defendendam. Virum optimum spectamus, sodales, pectore admodum puro proboque, qui ingenio magnanimo subvenit communi saluti. Nonne id Celso auctore habemus, primo medendi scientiam sapientiae partem habuisse? Huiusmodi virum igitur non cunctabimur, sodales, quin sonorissime salutemus doctorem in scientiis atque in medicina.

DOCTOR IN MEDICINE & DOCTOR IN SCIENCE

IAN HAMILTON ROBERTSON

Spirits grow, vigour is renewed through a wound.

(Furius Antias, fr. 3)

Books are often written in the hope of changing lives; but saving lives, that is a rare ambition. One such book was the ancient poem of Lucretius, who never tired of stating his enlightening philosophical mission: ‘This terror and darkness of the mind must be dispelled / not by the sun’s rays or the bright shafts of daylight, / but by the appearance and the law of nature’ (*On Nature* 1.146–8, 2.59–61, 3.91–3, 6.39–41). In our times, the saving light of science has touched countless lives across the world through the insights of the Scottish neuroscientist IAN HAMILTON ROBERTSON, MRIA, the man who taught us how to ‘tune’ our mind and brain so as to attain a healthier, happier life. His achievements stem from the pursuit of both clinical psychology and brain research, which revealed to him the interaction between ‘the software of our minds and the hardware of our brain.’ He investigated the brain’s ‘blue spot’ that produces noradrenaline, the substance vital for cognitive functions such as attention and memory, motivation and action against adversities, response to stress, anxiety and panic. His work, detailed in over six hundred scientific papers, has enhanced the well-being and autonomy of individuals facing cognitive challenges—not ‘patients’, he insists, but true agents of their own improved quality of life. His books are accessible and beneficial to everyone. He has shown us *The Mind’s Eye* and explained that each of us is a unique connection of brain cells, a unique *Mind Sculpture* constantly transformed by the energy of the world. Knowing who we are, he says, means to celebrate our values and to have compassion for our failures, which can make us stronger. If we learn to tell the right words to ourselves, if we train our breath to change our brain’s chemistry, we can begin to experience *The Winner Effect*, we can acquire the power to turn anxiety into excitement and spring into action, thus passing *The Stress Test*. This is *How Confidence Works*, deeply linked as it is to our brain’s action system and able to switch on a positive mindset in the face of challenge and adversity. These are not an optimist motivator’s empty words; they are facts proved by a lifetime’s research on the human brain. Twenty-five years ago we were honoured to welcome this extraordinary scientist as Professor of Psychology, to be guided by his advice as Dean of Research, and to admire him as the founding father of our Institute of Neuroscience and Global Brain Health Institute. Today we celebrate his character and integrity, generosity of spirit and breadth of vision, effective clinical approaches and immense impact on our community. His expert combination of cognitive neuroscience theory and clinical practice reminds us that ‘the science of healing was originally held to be part of natural philosophy’ (Celsus, *On Medicine*, Proem. 7) and, as such, is most deserving of an exceptionally dual distinction in Science and in Medicine.

DOCTOR IN UTROQUE JURE

CATHERINA DAY

Officium Universitatis praecipuum Johannes Henricus ille beatus in praeclaro sermone hoc dixit, cives instruere atque erudire ut omnibus muneribus suis perfungantur quam maxima honestate pietate ac iucunditate. Equidem non dubito quin conditor et rector sororis Universitatis e celso loco beatitudinis caelestis gratuletur huic alumnae optimae et optime meritae de patria cunctaque re publica Europa confoederata. Qua par est observantia praesento vobis CATHERINAM DAY, civem Dubliniensem, sodalem Academiae Regiae Hibernicae, quondam fortissimam scribam generalem senatus Europaei. Tunc puella assidue colebat Europam, patronam concordiae, in templo apud Universitatis Collegium Dubliniense, sed ipsas numinis aedes, Brosellae Belgicae aedificatas, mox adivit, studiis oeconomicis feliciter excultis. Ibi honoribus petitis a senatu nationum Europearum, triginta sex annos tanta virtute, tanta constantia muneribus suis fungebatur ut ‘sedula insomnis’ festiviter appellaretur, nam nulla intermissione vigilare videbatur. Eam vidimus indefessam operam dare ad utilitates communes, peritissimam primo in rebus externis administrandis, deinde in natura defendenda; postremo adeptam esse amplissimum gradum dignitatis quem scriba consequi posset—maximo nobis gaudio, non solum quod viro Hibernico Hibernica mulier successerit, sed etiam quod nulla mulier antea creata esset praesidio principi senatus. ‘Decet scribam, ut ministram fidelem, principi senatus adsidere, ut planius res discernere possit an magni momenti et ponderis sint, an parvi, an vero nullius, ac consilio operaque exsequi petita.’ Nimis modeste loquitur candidata nostra, ministerio quidem diligenter dedita, sed etiam praedita egregio ingenii acumine, sincera comitate ad consuetudines inter homines fovendas, animo firmo in discrimine difficultatum. De eius magnanimitate ac iustitia testantur illa decreta de civitate extendenda, undeviginti nationibus additis familiae Europae, nam ‘negaverim eam esse libertatem vel iustitiam,’ inquit, ‘qua pauci usi sint’. Nec ei autem animo deficiebat post secessionem Britannicam, quae quamquam aedes familiae nostrae percuterit, tamen eius fundamenta minime infirmavit. Talia diserte orabat in ecclesia Dubliniensi Johanni Henrico dicata, multis nostrum praesentibus; pulchriore etiam similitudine dixit familiam Europaeam vigescere in itinere ad pacem concordiam prosperitatem, velut viatores gradus nunc proferre nunc remorare solent accommodantes viae asperitatibus, mutua spe se sustinentes (sed elegantius dixit candidata, auctore Caledoniensi illustri). Cum in patriam redisset, cultu Europae minime relicto vel scientia administrandi neglecta, libenter patrocinator liberae salutis publicae, educationi liberali, aequalitati nullo sexus discrimine defendendae. Certo scio hanc mulierem praevalidam officiis omnibus esse perfunctam insigni honestate ac pietate; scio eam iustissimam esse civem et Hiberniae et Europae, quae communem spem concordiae semper renovandam strenue defenderit. Placeat igitur senatui huius Universitatis eam summa laurea ornare iucunda acclamatione.

DOCTOR IN LAWS

CATHERINE DAY

‘**A** University,’ wrote John Henry Newman in 1852, ‘has the object of training its children to fill their respective posts in life better, and of making them more intelligent, capable, active members of society’ (*The Idea of a University, Preface*, xii). The remarkable Dubliner who stands before us today has made the founding Rector of our sister University proud. I am honoured to present you CATHERINE DAY, MRIA, champion, leader and guardian of the European Union. It was in the Library of University College Dublin that, when studying for her BA in Economics and Politics and MA in International Trade and Integration, she fell in love with what she calls ‘the European project’. It made perfect sense for the young woman to move to Brussels. She joined the European Commission in 1979, which she served for thirty-six years so passionately and tirelessly as to earn her colleagues’ affectionate nickname ‘Catherine Day and Night.’ Her remarkable abilities recommended her for important positions, from Deputy Director General for External Relations to Director General for the Environment, until she was appointed Secretary General of the European Commission in 2005, the first woman ever to hold the highest Civil Servant post at the Commission. The role required her to assist the President in setting priorities and, in her typically direct words, ‘getting the machinery of the Commission to deliver them.’ Her initiative and influence, her ability to bring political vision to administrative oversight, her skills in dealing with people and problems (including the direst crisis of our generation) have made history. There were nine countries when she joined the EU and twenty-eight when she retired in 2015, an extraordinary achievement that bears witness to her belief that ‘the core values of the EU about individual rights and freedoms come with the responsibility of helping developing countries.’ The member states are now twenty-seven. Many of us still recall the magisterial lecture which she delivered at the Newman Centre for Faith and Reason on Stephen’s Green, following Britain’s departure from the EU. She then urged us never to lose faith in the future of the European Union, because *we* are that future, a dream of peace and prosperity that we make our own in a constant journey, shaping it suit new needs and aspirations: ‘to travel hopefully’, she quoted, ‘is a better thing than to arrive’ (R. L. Stevenson, *El Dorado*). While remaining to this day involved in European policies as a member of the Strategic Council of the European Policy Committee, since her return home she has taken up a wide variety of leadership roles for the advancement of health, education, and gender equality in Ireland, such as the Chair of the Citizen’s Assembly on Gender Equality. What brighter example can be found of an ‘intelligent, capable, active member of society’? Please give your grateful sign of approval to a woman who has inspired us, Irish and European, with her superb sense of responsibility, justice, and renewal.