

Round Towers of Ireland.

(Continued)

By "CRUX"

LAST week we saw how some of the old-time theories concerning the Round Towers and the origin had been exploded; we also learned who General Vallancey was. We will now, without further preface, allow Davis to continue his criticism of that writer's productions and theories. He thus writes:—

Vallancey's first analogy is plausible. The Irish Druids honored the elements and kept up sacred fires, and at a particular day in the year all the fires in the kingdom were put out, and had to be re-lighted from the Arch-Druid's fire. A similar creed and custom existed among the Parsees or Guebres of Persia, and he takes the resemblance to prove connexion and identity of creed and civilization. From this he immediately concludes the Round Towers to be Fire Temples. Now there is no evidence that the Irish Pagans had sacred fires, except in open spaces (on the hill tops), and, therefore, none of course that they had them in towers round or square; but Vallancey falls back on the "alleged existence of Round Towers in the East similar to ours, and on etymology."

Here is a specimen of his etymologies. The Hebrew word "gadul" signifies "great," and thence a lower; the Irish name for a round tower, "clogh," is from this "gadul," or "gad" and "clogh," a "stone;" and the Druids called every place of worship "cloghed." To which it is answered—"gadul" is not "gad"—a "clogh," a "stone," is not "clogh"—a "bell"—the Irish word for a Round Tower is "cloch-thach," a bell-house, and there is no proof that the Druids called any place of worship cloghed.

We must here skip the long extracts from Mr. Petrie's work, which supply other specimens of Vallancey's guess-work and of the refutation of his ill-founded theories.

The next person disposed of is Mr. Beaufort, who derives the name of the Round Towers from "Tlacht," "earth"—asserts that the foundations of temples for Vestal fire exist in Rath-na-Emhain, and other places (poor devil!)—that the Persian Magi overran the world in the time of the great Constantine, introducing Round Towers in place of the Vestal grounds into Ireland, combining their fire-worship with our Druidism—and that the present Towers were built in imitation of their Magian Towers.

This is all, as Mr. Petrie says, pure fallacy, without a particle of authority. This Mr. Beaufort is not to be confounded with Miss Beaufort. She, too, paganizes the Towers, by aggravating some misstatements of Mason's "Parochial Survey;" but her errors are not worth notice, except the assertion that the Psalters of Tara and Cashel allege that the Towers were for keeping the sacred fire. These Psalters are believed to have perished, and any mention of sacred fires in the glossary of Cormac McCullenan, the supposed compiler of the Psalter of Cashel, is adverse to their being in Towers.

Mr. D'Alton relies much on a passage in Cambrensis, wherein he says that the fishermen on Lough Neagh (a lake certainly formed by an inundation in the first century—A. D. 62), point to such towers under the lake; but this only shows they were considered old in Cambrensis' time (King John's) for Cambrensis calls them "turres ecclesiasticas" (a Christian appellation); and the fishermen of every lake have such idle traditions from the tall objects they are familiar with; and the steeples of Antrim, etc., were handy to the Loch Neaghach men.

(It was on this legend that Moore constructed the second stanza of his song "Remember the Glories of Brian the Brave," in which he says: "On Lough Neagh's banks as the fisherman strays, In the clear, calm eve's declining,

He sees the Round Towers of former days In the waves beneath him shining.")

One of the authorities quoted by all the Paganists is from the "Ulster Annals" at the year 448; it is, "Ingenti terremoto per loca varia imminente plurime urbes augusta muri recenti adhuc re-edificacione constructi, cum LVII. turribus corruerant." This was made to mean that part of the wall of Armagh, with fifty-seven Round Towers, fell in an earthquake in 448, whereas the passage turns out to be a quotation from "Marcellinus" of the fall of the defences of Constantinople—"Urbis Augustae!" References to Towers in Irish annals are quoted by Mr. D'Alton; but they turn out to be written about the Cyclopean Forts, or low stone raths, such as we find in Aileach.

Dr. Charles O'Connor, of Stowe, is the chief supporter of the astronomical theory. One of his arguments is founded on the mistaken reading of the word "turaghu" (which he derives from "tur" a tower, and "aghan," or "adhan," the kindling of flame), instead of "truaghan," an ascetic. The only other authority of which we have not noticed is the passage in the "Ulster Annals," at the year 995, in which it is said that certain Fiddhneadh were burnt by lightning at Armagh. He translates the word Celestial indexes, and paraphrases it Round Towers, and all because "fidh" means witness, and "neimhedh" heavenly or sacred, the real meaning being holy wood, or wood of the sanctuary, from "fidh" a wood, and "neimhedh" holy, as is proved by a pile of exact authorities.

Assuredly, if there were a close likeness between the Irish Round Towers and oriental fire temples of proven antiquity, it would be an argument for identity of use; and though direct testimony from our annals would come in and show that the present Towers were built as Christian bellries from the sixth to the tenth centuries, the resemblance would at least indicate that the bellries had been built after the model of Pagan fire towers previously existing here. But "rotundos de above thirty feet in diameter" in Persia, Turkish minarets of the tenth and fourteenth centuries, and undated turrets in India, which Lord Valentia thought like our Round Towers, gave no such resemblance.

We have now done with the theories of these Towers, which Mr. Petrie has shown, past doubt, to be either positively false or quite unproven. His own opinion is that they were used—1, as bellries; 2, as keeps, or houses of shelter for the clergy and their treasures; and, 3, as watch towers and beacons; and into his evidence for this opinion we shall go at a future day, thanking him at present for having displaced a heap of incongruous, though agreeable fancies, and given us the most learned, the most exact, and the most important work ever published on the antiquities of the Ancient Irish Nation.

Davis does not yet close his arguments anent the Round Towers, which he proves to be structures of Christian origin; but we cannot follow him to the end as it would demand ten times the space at our disposal. But in connection with this subject, some very instructive passages are taken from the history of the cemeteries of Ireland. In the next issue we will take the liberty of reproducing all that has been written on the subject and of adding thereto the grand, and universally known poetic address to the Round Towers by the late Denis Florence McCarthy. It seems to have been accepted all over as an answer to the question of origin, still it does not, in every point, agree with Dr. Petrie. Next week we will reproduce the papers, if only as an evidence of Irish genius.

Truth.

Nearly all the bishops of the United States have inscribed in the Regulations for Lent, which they direct shall be read to all the people, a clause recommending the custom of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks during the penitential time. While the dispensations from the strict letter are granted on account of the exigencies of our modern life, still in order that Lent may not be swept away entirely it is necessary to insist with greater emphasis on the spirit of the holy season.

Total Abstinence In Lent.

What has now become an abiding institution in the Catholic Church is the custom of distributing the Sacred Thirst Cards during the Lenten season, says "Temperance

son. It is a spirit of penance and self-denial. These virtues are absolutely necessary for men in a fallen state, who have to contend against many degrading agencies in order that they may overcome in the Christian warfare. We must deny ourselves in those things that are lawful in order that we may be able to deny ourselves in the things that are unlawful. It is the discipline of the Christian life. It has for its purpose the strengthening of the fibre of our will that we may say no when the allurements to evil come. It is like the process of training for any strain on our physical system. In order that we may win in the contest it is necessary that we harden the tissues and temper the nerves, so that when the shock of the battle comes we may manfully resist and ultimately overcome. It is so with the true Christian. If his nature is so flabby and his will so pliable that when the seductions to evil come he cannot withstand them, he will be easily led away into vice. The Christian athlete must undergo a process of self-discipline. While the Church bids us do penance at all times, she sets aside the time of Lent as a special season in which we shall make this soul-discipline a personal thing. She urges us therefore to a spirit of self-denial, and she says that one of the best ways to deny ourselves is to abstain totally from all intoxicating drinks.

These are some of the reasons why the practice of abstaining from intoxicating drinks during Lent is becoming a mark of a good Catholic. There are many Christians who take a little drink during the rest of the year, but when Ash Wednesday comes they immediately shut down on the practice, and for the forty days touch nothing at all. It is stated on very good authority that nothing has contributed so much to the universality of the practice of total abstinence as this Lenten custom. Many people have found the good of total abstinence by a trial of it during Lent, and have become so enamored of it that when Lent was over they were very loath to give it up.

As an evidence of the popularity of this custom we may quote a few figures from the records of the Temperance Publication Bureau. A few years ago it was thought that if the demand for the Lenten cards ran up to 50,000 a great good would be done. But the custom has steadily grown until the 50,000 mark has been left away behind, and last year it ran to nearly 500,000. We hope for still greater results this coming Lent.

Chats With Our Subscribers.

Sometimes lessons come from afar. Such is the case in the following instance. It would be well for our friends in this city, and in other cities, towns and villages throughout this Dominion if they would emulate the example of an old subscriber, an extract from whose letter, written to a gentleman who has since become a subscriber, we give to our readers as follows:—

I mailed you an old copy of the Montreal "True Witness," and though it would please you. You may think it strange that a Scotchman who never saw the sky in Montreal should be a subscriber to this paper, but by chance when I was a boy in college I saw it occasionally, and always liked it. While I have much to do with the few dollars I earn, there is not a dollar in the whole year goes out with as good cheer as the one that goes for the "True Witness." I just feel each week's paper is worth a dollar, why that hardly pays for the white paper in it. It suggests good thoughts to us. It is clean and wholesome, and such a nicely assorted variety of reading you rarely get. Now such work as that is sad to say, rarely ever appreciated and usually poorly paid, so don't stop at sending them a dollar and your address, but get all you can to order a paper. You will be doing a man a favor to get him reading the "True Witness." My newspaper goes home, then to me, then to the children, and when they have done with it, send it where it is appreciated and to those who could not pay for newspapers. I am almost ashamed to look the dear old newspaper in the face.

Above all things take care lest you admit any suspicions into your mind, because they are the poison of friendship.

His Holiness Leo XIII.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

"Just think that it is twenty-five years since I was there"—said Leo XIII. at noon, on the 20th February last, after he had gone through the ceremonies in connection with the commemoration of his twenty-fifth year upon the throne of St. Peter. He was gazing out upon the grand Piazza of St. Peter's, in front of the Basilica. A quarter of a century last, after he had gone through the pavement of that piazza, we read of the great sacrifice of the religious, who on the day of his, or her perpetual vows, steps within the barrier of the cloister, and leaves the world without for all time. But the religious knows, at that moment, as the last step is taken, that never again will it be retraced; not so with Leo. A few days prior to the 20th February, 1878, in the company of other Cardinals, he crossed the Piazza of St. Peter's, and passed through the Basilica, on his way to the conclave. As he ascended those familiar steps he did not know, nor is it probable that he even suspected, that he would likely never again go down them. By a majority of the conclave he was elected to succeed the great and immortal Pius IX. On the third of March he was crowned and all the insignia of Christ's Vicar on earth were bestowed upon him. From that hour forward he became the hermit sovereign, imprisoned within the Vatican precincts, and destined to rule the entire Catholic world from the solitude of his retirement. Twenty-five years since, in his sixty-ninth year, the great Pontiff began his wonderful, his extraordinary reign; and, as he gazed out upon the square where the most humble individual, in the ranks of the faithful, was free to go and come, but from which he is cruelly debarred by the sad circumstances that surround the Papacy, there was not even the faintest indication of a longing, a regret, or a disappointment. He had accepted the mighty burden of his sublime station, with all its splendors and all its sacrifices, submissive to the will of God and the infallible councils of the Church which the Son of God had founded. This would be a timely occasion to go over the entire biography of Leo XIII.; but who would dare attempt such a task, and pretend to fulfil it within the limits of a single article? Moreover, the whole world is conversant with every important period in that great career, and the press—both religious and secular—has poured out all the facts of interest or of moment in connection with that life of ninety-three years. The most we can attempt is to take a rapid glance at the extensive period of time that has elapsed since the advent into this world of our glorious Pontiff.

In the annals of the world no century has ever approached the nineteenth in changes, improvements, inventions, and advancement along the broad highway of civilization. It was a century of wonders in every department, in every sphere, in every domain. Its history equals in its accumulated events of transcendent importance that of the combined centuries since the origin of Christianity. To have lived during a part of the nineteenth century was a privilege that is not always adequately estimated; what, then, must not be the advantage of having lived and acted throughout the nineteenth century? The nineteenth century was just one decade old when the bells of Carpignano announced the birth, to noble parents, of a child that was to be known as Vincent Joachim Pecci; the sun of that nineteenth century has gone down below the line where meet the sky and sea—Time and Eternity—and while all its splendors have vanished from human sight, one sublime ray still lingers upon the horizon and illumines the hill-tops of the twentieth century—that ray is Vincent Joachim Pecci! From his solitude and elevation, seated upon the Mons Vaticanus, and gazing back over the years that have gone, his keen vision takes in a wonderful panorama peopled with extraordinary men and studded with events that have shaped the mutable face of civilization without affecting, in the least, the immutable aspect of Catholicity. He lived through them all and he survives them all; and he reigns!

When Vincent Joachim Pecci was born Napoleon had seized the empire of glory that arose over the hills of France, and he sank to rest amidst the splendors of the Vatican, and the soul of the immortal Pius IX. winged its flight to heaven. It was then that Cardinal Pecci entered the conclave that was to select a successor to the departed Pontiff, and then it was that from out that conclave he stepped to ascend the throne of St. Peter. Only with his Pontificate can we truly say that his wonderful life began. A quarter of a century has since passed away, the nineteenth century has vanished, Napoleon the First and Napoleon the Third, O'Connell, Disraeli, Gladstone, Bismarck, Cavour, Mazzini, Queen Victoria, all the leading personages—no matter of what character—that helped to create the history of the past century, have all vanished, and are mostly all forgotten; every cardinal that was in the Sacred College when Cardinal Pecci first entered it, and all their contemporaneous Archbishops and Bishops have descended into the tomb; and Leo XIII. is yet alive, full of vitality, bearing easily his four score and thirteen years, and as versatile, as keen, as brilliant as he was upon the day of his coronation. He is the two hundred and fifty-seventh Pope since St. Peter, and, with the exceptions of the Prince of the Apostles, and of Pius IX., he is the only one who has occupied the Pontifical throne for over twenty-five years. And we do not think that we exaggerate, when we say that his reign has been the most important since that of Christ's first Vicar upon earth.

It is not our intention to give a list of his encyclical letters, his Apostolic pronouncements, his masterly diplomatic and administrative achievements, his contributions to every branch of literature, from lyric poetry to dogmatic theology; nor will we go over all the important social, political, international, economic, moral, and other questions that he has aided so potently in settling; these are all facts for the biographer, and for the future to read in the cold pages of history. At this hour, when the entire civilized world is concentrating its admiring gaze upon Rome, and the figure of the sublime Pontiff, when offerings are being sent from all quarters of the earth, and prayers are ascending from hundreds of millions of hearts, we cannot pause to calculate with mathematical exactness the details of such a life and such a reign; we are too much inclined to join in the universal psalm and to let the sentiments of the hour find expression in thanksgiving, confidence, hope, charity and faith. The archives of the world to-day present no more glorious picture than that of this great successor of all those Pontiffs that bind together the dawning twentieth century with the first year of the Christian era. Like the Church he has survived all the greatness and glories of the century that is dead, and he is as infallible a guide, at this hour, as he was on the day that the "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" were confided to his keeping. The world looks on, and beholds him—to use the language of a great Irishman—"towering sublimely aloft, like the last mountain of the deluge, immutable amidst change, magnificent amidst ruin, the last remnant of a dead century's greatness and the last resting place of its departed light." It is in a spirit of abiding faith, of filial devotion, of Catholic submission, that we join our humble voice in the grand chorus of praise and in the "Te Deum" of gratitude to God which arise on all sides and circle around the throne of the Fisherman from Galilee.

All this time an iron giant had been rising to power in Germany and the day of Bismarck's influence was gradually growing longer and brighter—but brighter with that fiery heat that scorches and deals death. Vincent Joachim Pecci was advanced in years, he was comparatively an old or rather an elderly man, when Napoleon III. followed in the footsteps of his great uncle, when Bismarck's policy of blood had triumphed, when the spirit of Mazzini was reborn in the heart of Garibaldi, and in the breast of Victor Emmanuel, when the exiled Pontiff of 1848 bent once more before the hostile wickedness that battered the Porta Pia. And yet Cardinal Pecci had not even reached within several years of the commencement of his own career of glory. He had participated in the dogmatic triumph of Catholicity when the Immaculate Conception was promulgated, and when the Infallibility was defined; he had sorrowed over the spoliation of the Church, when lawlessness wrenched from her the States that were her's by every law of Europe; he had sympathized most practically with the aged Pontiff whose noble figure was buffeted by the hand of Infidelity; but he naturally supposed that his own days were to be few and the scope of his usefulness limited—for he was rapidly approaching the allotted term—the scriptural three score and ten.

The orb of glory that arose over the hills of France, and he sank to rest amidst the splendors of the Vatican, and the soul of the immortal Pius IX. winged its flight to heaven. It was then that Cardinal Pecci entered the conclave that was to select a successor to the departed Pontiff, and then it was that from out that conclave he stepped to ascend the throne of St. Peter. Only with his Pontificate can we truly say that his wonderful life began. A quarter of a century has since passed away, the nineteenth century has vanished, Napoleon the First and Napoleon the Third, O'Connell, Disraeli, Gladstone, Bismarck, Cavour, Mazzini, Queen Victoria, all the leading personages—no matter of what character—that helped to create the history of the past century, have all vanished, and are mostly all forgotten; every cardinal that was in the Sacred College when Cardinal Pecci first entered it, and all their contemporaneous Archbishops and Bishops have descended into the tomb; and Leo XIII. is yet alive, full of vitality, bearing easily his four score and thirteen years, and as versatile, as keen, as brilliant as he was upon the day of his coronation. He is the two hundred and fifty-seventh Pope since St. Peter, and, with the exceptions of the Prince of the Apostles, and of Pius IX., he is the only one who has occupied the Pontifical throne for over twenty-five years. And we do not think that we exaggerate, when we say that his reign has been the most important since that of Christ's first Vicar upon earth.

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Readers of the "Montreal," during the decade to 1885, or thereabout, the splendid contributions in each Saturday issue of the "Ephemeris" signed "Laclede." These were so wonderfully interesting, so varied, so varied in their character, that they contained the almost best characterized copy. The author of these fragments was the late general John Talon-Lesle, a splendidly gifted man, Poet, essayist, journalist, he combined in himself qualities and brilliant writings attracted attention. The following brings back many a pleasant recollection of mutual enjoyment over these memories of a deep and never-to-forgotten source of the latter's sufficient that death has removed poor "Laclede" from the scene of his delightful labors, as well as from friends and admirers went out to him in the misfortune. It may be said that it is not entirely myself, but it is character, frank, honest-minded, and kind. That the reader grasp the purport of the must explain that like the "Notes and Queries," or in that special column "Old and New Gazette," "Laclede" response and gave manner of questions on connected with literature. On one occasion, away early eighties, he had a series of appreciations, poems, all of which he more or less classic in nature. He asked for the correspondents as to the demerits of certain poems really amusing to note were the tastes and ideas who ventured to send in. A few weeks later a question arose as to the fact poem, of a certain class. It was on that occasion I attempted to "put it" and I sent him a letter some original lines on a certain class of subject, and in favor of Keats's "Agnes." Neither my nor my note of criticism; the reason is given in which I now reproduce.

"Montreal, 10th April 1885."
"My Dear,—
"Your kind letter of the 1st has been duly received, and I am glad to understand that you are surprised, and possibly disappointed, on finding no allusion in last Saturday's issue to the truth is that I was surprised and disappointed to find the subject, a common-place subject, and consequently, very much surprised to discover how poor really are. When I say verses meet with my commendation, I have said nothing—I have said a horrid thing, I sometimes stowing even a full measure of praise.
"But, per contra, you concerning the "Eye of St. Agnes" and the reasons which you in support thereof, are unworthy of you, I would wish them for all the world to be an act of unkindness, for which, in years to come might be justified in bearing.

Paulist Fathers' Chapel For the "Stranger Dead."
In the Church of the Paulist Fathers at Columbia avenue and Fifty-ninth street, New York, there is being prepared a mortuary chapel which will be devoted to the strangers, will be held at the chapels or railway stations, on street cars, or those unfortunate who commit suicide. Many travelers, without a friend in that great city, die on the trains or steamships, or in the hotels each year. These bodies, ordinarily, lie in some undertaker's rooms. The Paulist Fathers propose to provide churchly accommodations for some at least, of such cases. Funerals, also, of strangers, will be held at the chapel. The chapel is a memorial to the dead of the Paulist Fathers who are buried underneath. Their names are chiseled into the marble arch surrounding the door, which has converted a space behind the confessionals into a mortuary chapel. The chapel is being decorated, and it should not be said definitely when it will be ready for use.

Father Ryan, the poet of the sunny Southland, once said: "There is a mystery in names as you please, we name things together, and strange?—our names will in themselves. When the man have gone to strew their bodies to the resting dead, their names at some a little while, some a while, some for ages and ever."

Some Curiosities Of Nomenclature.

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