

THE LAST IRISH BARD.

WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS

Sir Walter Scott first attracted the attention of the literary world when he published his poem, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." Little did he dream at that time of the fame that awaited him in after years. While Scott produced more perfected compositions, never did he, either in verse or in prose, strike a truer note than when he gave the world a picture of the last of that long line of Scottish bards, whose mission it was to enshrine in song the hopes, pleasures, aspirations and sentiments of the people, to preserve the traditions of the race and to hand them down from generation to generation, to embellish the history of the land and rescue from oblivion many of its most sacred pages. It is remarkable how fond the reading public always has been of the last of every race, or country, or species, or category. And authors have not failed to seize upon this peculiar tendency of the human mind to build up reputations and popularity for themselves. Cooper made his master-stroke when he entitled one of his works "The Last of the Mohicans." Bulwer Lytton was so encouraged by the success of his "Last Days of Pompeii," that we find him writing "The Last of the Barons"; "The Last of the Roman Tribunes." In a word we feel a curious and half melancholy pleasure in reading the "last words," either spoken or written, of some great person, the last book of some author, the story of the last of some race, some class of men, some line of once famous or conspicuous personages. We seem to be present at the passing of something that has interested the world, but can never again awaken its interest.

Like the Scotch, the Irish had a special class of bards whose place in the history of the country is of the greatest importance. For long generations they were the historians of the people. As a rule they were both musicians and poets. As we trace them down the ages, from the early Druid Bards to the modern poets, we find the race, or caste, undergoing remarkable changes. The times changed, and they changed with them—to paraphrase Horace. They might be divided into distinctive categories, each succeeding one reigning supreme for a certain period. But the study of their various peculiarities, characteristics, and methods of expression would be both absorbingly interesting and indefinitely long. From Ossian to Keegan's "Tributes" ("Cough the Piper," and from that wandering minstrel to the poets of the middle of this century, we have kaleidoscopic changes sufficient to satisfy the mind of the most interested student of Irish music and song.

Of one category of Irish Bards, the famous Carolan was certainly the last of renown. A writer from Cork, in an Irish exchange, recently gave the following short sketch of the blind minstrel of Innisfail:

"The last and greatest of the Irish bards was Carolan the Blind, who flourished in the middle of the seventeenth century. He was at once a poet, a musician, a composer, and sung his own verses to his harp. His songs in general may be compared to those of Pindar, as they have frequently the same flights of imagination, and are composed to flatter some man of fortune upon some excellence of the same kind. In these one man is praised for the excellence of his hospitality, a third for the beauty of his wife and children, and a fourth for the antiquity of his family. Whenever any of the original natives of distinction were assembled at feasting or revelling Carolan was generally there, where he was always ready to celebrate their praises. He seemed by nature formed for his profession; for as he was born blind, so also he was possessed of an astonishing memory, and a facetious turn of

thinking, which gave his entertainers infinite satisfaction. Being once at the house of an Irish nobleman, where there was a musician present, Carolan immediately challenged him to a trial of skill. The nobleman persuaded the musician to accept the challenge, and he accordingly played over on his fiddle the fifth concerto of Vivaldi. Carolan, immediately taking up his harp, played over the whole piece after him without missing a note, though he had never heard it before, which produced some surprise; but their astonishment was increased when he assured them he could make a concerto in the same taste himself, which he instantly composed, and that with such spirit and elegance that it may compare with the finest compositions of Italy. His death was not less remarkable than his life. He was never more fond of a glass than he. He would drink whole pints of usquebaugh, and as he used to think, without any ill consequence. His intemperance, however, in this respect at length brought on an incurable disorder, and when just at the point of death he called for a cup of his beloved liquor. Those who were standing round him, surprised at the demand endeavored to persuade him to the contrary, but he persisted, and when the bowl was brought to him he attempted to drink, but could not—wherefore, giving away the bowl, he observed with a smile that it would be hard if two such friends as he and the cup, should part, at least without kissing, and then expired."

While all that this writer says about Carolan may be true, still we turn from his sketch with anything but a pleasant feeling. He seems to attribute greater importance to petty details that serve to perpetuate the memory of the bard's feelings, than to that portion of him which must survive. With his individual shortcomings we of this generation have little concern; they have long since been dealt with and disposed of by his immediate surroundings and those whom they affected—if they ever affected any person. But what he has left to his country as a precious gift and to his fellow-countrymen, for all future time, as a legacy, are his compositions, be they in words or in music. What interests us in Carolan is the record of what he had done to preserve Irish traditions, and to keep alive the literature which was perishing under the baneful influence of persecution. It is of no consequence to us whether or not he was fond of usquebaugh, but it is of the first importance for us to know that in musical composition this Irish minstrel equaled the first and greatest musicians of Italy and France, that in lyric poetry this Irish bard ranked with the foremost poets of medieval ages and of antiquity.

Possibly not five in every hundred of our people know anything about Carolan; not five in every thousand of strangers to our race have ever heard of him. Of that five per cent, at least, know him through his magnificent productions and the influence he exercised on his generation; the other one may have an idea that personally he was given to enjoyments that merely serve to show him in accord with the customs of his day. Yet if we have occasion to dwell upon the subject of his life, works and influence, the vast majority of us will be inclined to dwell more fully upon his private habits than upon his national achievements. This is an evil somewhat characteristic of every race, but evidently very pronounced among our people. All that was mortal of the bard has been buried and forgotten two centuries and more ago; all that was immortal in the poet survives—and it is that which we enjoy and that alone which we should seek to preserve and perpetuate for the glory of the Old Land.

the appointment of an official shorthand writer to report the proceedings of the Council. Our contemporary is curious to learn can a shorthand man report his Lordship's "eloquent flashes of silence?"

A passing train killed John Spillane, an old man of 70 years, on the Waterford and Limerick line, about a mile from Thurles. The coroner's jury declared Spillane was killed in the execution of his duty, and recommended his widow to the favorable consideration of the railway company.

A sworn inquiry was held at Bandon, into a demand for the closing of the Rathelarin graveyard. Popular feeling was strongly opposed to the application, and Canon Powell, the Protestant rector, who warmly favored the closing of the grounds, was the recipient of several hostile demonstrations from a large crowd who kept shouting and hooting outside the rooms in which the inquiry was being conducted.

His many friends will hear with regret that Mr. James Long, J.P., and Vice-Chairman of the Cork County Council, was taken seriously ill while attending the St. Michael's Quarter Sessions. He is now well on the road to mending, and all Nationalists will join in wishing that the recovery will be speedy and complete.

A pauper resident of the Denis Workhouse is John Higgins. But he can scarcely be termed a pauper, inasmuch as he holds the property for which an offer of over £100 has been made. Higgins is of unsound mind, and the guardians, acting much as *in loco parentis*, have decided to institute proceedings whereby the £100 which is likely to be accepted, will go towards his maintenance in the workhouse.

The escapades of the rebel nudes at Ladysmith have apparently been forgotten at the War Office, which is still sending emissaries in all directions snuffing up all such specimens of the male as they can discover. At Thurles fair, Mr. Wicker, the well-known Waterford dealer, acting on the part of the authorities, took over a large number of nudes for immediate shipment to the Transvaal.

The Irish champion long-distance runner, O'Neill, of Adare, has again given proof of his ability to meet and defeat all comers by the manner in which he showed his heels to the great English runner, Len Hurst, at Ashton-under-Lyne, on Saturday. In a five miles race the Irishman had the issue always in hand, and won with consummate ease by 50 yards.

Every man's house is his castle; and looking upon his homestead in this light, Mr. John Lyren, of Ballydu, County Waterford, taking example by the Mullingar fight, has the Green Flag now flying from his chimney. It is to be hoped that the High Sheriff of the county will not feel himself called on, to interfere.

Mr. John D. Cusick, of Limerick, whose father is an ex-Mayor of that city, was mulcted in £150 damages in a breach of promise suit brought against him by Miss Mary Anne Lambert, daughter of a small County Wexford farmer. The defendant's letters read in court caused the greatest laughter, the plaintiff being addressed by him as "My Dear Little Kid."

After the meeting of the Galway Board of Guardians, Mr. Patrick Ryan, P.L.G., accompanied by Mr. Costello, P.L.G., were driving home, when they were fired at on a lonely part of the road. Three shots were fired, but the occupants of the car were unharmed. No motive can be traced for the occurrence, which is

the second of the kind reported in the district within the past month.

After spending 16 years in Australia, John McAroe, of Donagh, near Newtonbutler, thought it would be well to come back to his native place. Last Thursday he landed in Ireland, and proceeded at once homewards. And tragic to tell—when within half a mile of his home he fell down on the roadside and expired.

Addressing the boys of the Balmoral Industrial School, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, dwelt on the importance of cultivating good handwriting, and instanced the case of a gentleman, whom, out of a thousand applicants he had many years ago selected as his secretary by reason of his handwriting, and who now occupied a position of the greatest interest and importance.

Another step towards the realization of "The Land for the People." The tenants on the Hope-Scott estate, Ballyheane, County Mayo, have concluded the purchase of their holdings—and at fairly satisfactory terms too.

A similar piece of good news comes from Killawalla, where the tenantry, by agreement with Lord Avonmore, can boast of possession of their lands.

It is said that the tenants on the estate of Mr. James J. Alcorn, J.P., at Balroobuckberg, near Headford, Co. Galway, have availed themselves of the Purchase Acts, and at figures totalling out, on an average, seven to eighteen years' purchase, have bought out their little holdings. The figures are significant as showing that the value of land must have appreciably increased in these districts.

Another report says that the Congested Districts' Board is busy purchasing grazing farms, and dividing them among the people. In Mayo the Ballymacragh and Runcomb farms have been stripped and report has it that Aughadrinagh will be similarly dealt with. Houses are also being built to relieve the congestion on a number of estates.

The Castlobar Guardians and District Council have joined in the universal expression of regret evoked by the premature demise of Dr. William D'Exeter Jordan, a highly respected gentleman, and a thorough Nationalist.

Dublin Castle thinks the state of Mayo so alarming that it is really necessary with all possible haste to divide the county into two ridings, in charge of two county inspectors.

The Tuam Gaelic League is one of the most industrious and successful of the bodies formed in Ireland for the revival of the old tongue. The committee hope to give a further impetus to its good work, if, as they expect, Dr. Hickey, professor of Irish at Maynooth, can be induced to lecture in Tuam.

The doctors of the Loughrea Workhouse presented an alarming report concerning the condition of the workhouse fever hospital, in consequence of which, nothing like the requisite care could be devoted to the unfortunate patients. He asked for immediate and extensive repairs, which the guardians granted on the spot.

Miss H. Nolan, a Tralee lady, has left that town to join the Order of Dominican Nuns in South Africa, when the purpose of helping that brave community in bringing relief and help to the wounded in the war at present devastating Austral Africa.

SOME QUESTIONS OFTEN ASKED.

FROM THE NEW YORK FREEMAN'S JOURNAL.

A correspondent asks these questions. We do not know that we can answer them all to his satisfaction, but we can, at least, talk at them a little.

They are: First—"Is there any chance for the average American workman to advance from the work bench to a higher and religious life? Second—Is there a God? Considering all the sin committed nowadays there seems to be none. Third—Is life worth living?"

To answer these questions thoroughly it would be necessary to write a book on each one of them. As to the first, we believe there is no place in the world where the average workman has a better chance to improve his worldly condition than in the United States. He has not the fixed idea of social cast—so prevalent in Europe—to contend against. There is no social or political barrier to paralyze his efforts or check his reasonable ambition. With health, industry, sobriety, economy and perseverance, there is no position in life that he may not aspire to if he have the talent to justify such aspiration. Honest and continued effort will command attention and respect, and these will tend to open ways for his advancement.

But here comes a difficulty. If the workman shows that he possesses a special talent in this or that direction above the work-bench before him, you will say that he is not an average workman; that he is above the average. We might point to Lincoln, the rail splitter; to Garfield, the mule-driver on the toe-path; to Johnson, the tailor; to General and Governor Banks, the cotton spinner; to Clay, the mill boy of the Hashes; to Franklin, the journeyman printer; to Jackson, the poor widow's son of Waxham; to Vanderbilt, the ferryman; to Astor, the peddler; to Lou-

bet, the French peasant, now President of France, and to others, you will immediately say that their talents in their various directions proved that they were above the average workman. So, when a workman works himself beyond the bench he is not an average workman. Now, if every one who gets beyond the bench does not, from that fact, belong to the class of average workmen, it follows that the average workman can never get above the bench.

Then by average workman, we presume you mean one who has the ability to do well the work he is at, and no talent for anything beyond it. He who is ambitious to do what he has not the ability to do always must reconcile himself to the failure that is sure to follow. He is like the pint measure that attempts to hold the quart, or the frog that bursts himself trying to be as big as an ox. As a consequence of this fact, the wise man will make the limit of his ability the limit of his ambition. In course, it takes a wise man to do this, for most men who are otherwise put no limit to their capacity, and therefore none to their ambition. The result is discontent, the sense of failure. The old saw, "No such ultra creptian"—let the cobler stick to his last—has a good deal of sound philosophy in it that the average man can use with benefit to himself and pleasure to others.

The best philosophy is to try to be content with our environments as long as they are not sinful. Meeting is the most unprofitable employment a man can spend his time at. It induces fever and consequent irritation of the nerves. It does not fill the larder or pay the rent. He who feels his discontent by thinking what a wonderfully great man is successfully hidden under his jacket, and what a great man the world would discover if he had some other calling in life, is, as a rule, an uneducated

donkey. To put it more mildly, he is a fool.

The great mass of mankind are by nature carriers of wood and drawers of water. Their capacity, fits them for that, and they wisely look no farther. This looks hard, if this short transitory phase of existence called "life" were the beginning and the end of all. But it is not; it is but the initiatory scene in the great drama of human, endless existence. The time will come when inequalities will be levelled down. He who judges the Providence of God by what he sees in this world, its wickedness and inequalities, is like the impatient critic who judges the merits of a drama after the curtains fall on the first scene, where the victim and the villain have been introduced and the villain has the best of it. To both critics we say, wait; let the play be played out, and let the curtain fall on the last act. Then you will be competent to judge of the plan of the author, and only then.

In the meantime men should tolerate with equanimity the inconveniences of this life as the traveller accepts the annoyances of travel on his way home.

Can the man of the bench or with the hoe advance to greater religious perfection?

Yes, with the grace of God, he can—that is, if he be not already perfect, a saint—which is not likely. There are fewer stumbling blocks in the way of his progress to perfection, and salvation than there are in the way of the rich and idle class. His labor affords an outlet to energies which in idleness would exhaust themselves in the sinful gratification of the passions. Watt sang: "There always is some mischief for idle hands to do." Labor gives the exercise necessary to good health; it gives a good appetite, good digestion and refreshing sleep. By this example, the prudent, industrious, temperate workman's children learn to be self-supporting, and in his old age they are his consolation. How rarely is that the case with those who are rich enough to lead idle and purposeless lives?

Labor is honorable. One of the most pernicious results of our system of secular education is that it

impresses the young with the false and foolish idea, that there is something degrading in labor that soils the hands and brings the sweat to the face. It inspires ambitions that are beyond the reach of the great mass of pupils, and unfits them for the plain, prosaic, everyday duties of the average man's life—and most of us are average. A genius is an exception, and the rule and law of life are for the average, and not for the exception. The schools, as they go, unfit the playboy for the plow, and do not fit him for a profession to which it inspires him. It destroys a good and useful plowman to make a poor and useless lawyer or doctor; it disjoins him from the environment to which he is by nature adapted, and makes his future haphazard. It takes the girl from her honest, though humble home and makes her dream that she is to dwell in marble halls. The dream is blasted by the stern realities of life, and by her inadequacy for higher things than domestic labor. There are, of course, exceptions in the case of both boys and girls, but the average is as we have depicted it.

Second—Is there a God? Yes. And it is the highest wisdom to shape our life's conduct with that fact always in view. As to the evils that exist, we have said above about all we can say within the limits of a newspaper article. Do not judge the drama by the first scene.

Third—Is life worth living? Most assuredly, if it is rightly lived. Our life is not our own; we did not earn it or deserve it in any way. God created it, and it is His, and being His, we should use it toward the end for which He brought it into being. That end is worth living and suffering for. We are here like soldiers placed on guard duty. We must do that for which we are placed here, and not desert our beat until recalled. The soldier, who deserts his post of duty is a coward, a traitor, or insane.

If your mind keeps puzzling itself over the question, Is life worth living? It is a sign that your liver is in bad going order, and you should take some anti-bilious remedy. Or, perhaps, it is dyspepsia, and then you should consult a physician.

THE CONDITION OF THE POPE.

The astonishing improvement, both in physical health and personal appearance, verified in the Holy Father within the last eight months, says the Roman correspondent of the Brooklyn Eagle, is a constant source of wonder to all who have the happiness to approach him. This truly marvellous amelioration is even more apparent to these foreign prelates, now on the visit, ad limina, who have been several years without seeing the sovereign Pontiff. The Bishop of Saint-Brevin openly declares that all those who assured him that the Pope had never been in better health than at present, were perfectly in the right. One would say he was rejuvenized by at least twenty years; his face is far less emaciated; his bright and penetrating eyes sparkle even more vividly than of yore. Leo XIII. in his present conditions of mind and body may very probably reach his hundredth year of mortal life. The Bishop of Indianapolis, Mgr. Chatard, who was admitted to pontifical audience Friday, October 27, pronounced much the same appreciation of the wonderfully robust appearance, due allowances being made for his advanced age, of the Vicar of Christ; another foreign prelate received in audience could not refrain from expressing to the Pope his pleasing surprise to see him in so florid a state of health, to which His Holiness made answer:

"It is quite true. I have never been in such good health. I cannot but be inclined to believe that Providence really wishes it to be so, since every year that has been added to those gone before, instead of weighing upon my shoulders, seem to relieve of a burden. Certainly," added the Holy Father, "at the time of my election I did not indeed think I should occupy the chair of Peter for so long a space of years."

His physical improvement is especially manifest in his walk and bearing; prior to the surgical operation of last Spring the Pope walked somewhat bent, slightly inclined to the left side; since the removal of that troublesome cyst, he walks upright, with firm and rapid step, and it is a rare thing for him to lean either on the arm of an attendant or on his favorite cane. The very persons who constantly surround the Holy Father and see him daily are amazed at this return of juvenile vigor to His Holiness, who is now the last survivor of the older generation of the long-lived Pœci family, his sister-in-law, widow of his brother, Count John Baptist Pecci, dying in Carpineto, October 6, ult. During the fierce heat of last summer, when even the most robust wilted under the trying influence of the dog star, the Pope worked away cheerfully and made his secretaries work likewise far into the night. It is no uncommon occurrence for His Holiness, when sleepless, to give vent to his poetical vein, which invariably results in issuing of summons either to his private secretary, Mgr. Angeli, or to the vice-secretary of state and hymnographer to the Holy See, Mgr. Tripodi, to attend upon their august master and make note of his improvised verses.

According to the patient and erudite researches of a distinguished Italian ecclesiastic, the reigning sovereign Pontiff stands sixth in the rank of Papal longevity, the oldest Pope on record being St. Agatho, who died in 682, aged 107 years; next in order comes Pope Gregory IX., elected to the pontificate when over 80 years of age, who died in 1241, aged 99 years. No other of the 233 successors of St. Peter has ever passed the age of 83. Pope Leo XIII. further stands No 8 in the list of prolonged pontificates. It is likewise noted as a curious phenomenon that, contrary to ordinary probabilities, those Popes elected in comparative youth had all relatively short ponti-

fecates; whereas those Popes more advanced in years, called to still fiercer combats, such as Pius VI., Pius VII., Alexander III., Pius IX. and Leo XIII. have all held a longer term of office. Pope Leo XIII., consecrated Archbishop of Damietta in 1843, at the age of 33 years, is the senior bishop of all Christianity, and the last of the promotion of Pope Gregory XVI., while having been created Cardinal by Pope Pius IX., December 10th, 1852, he is also the doyen of all cardinals throughout the world. The bishop next in rank by seniority of promotion is Mgr. Joseph Strossmayer, pre-consecrated Bishop of Sirmium, May 10 1830.

SUCCESSFUL EDITORS.

A good editor, or competent newspaper conductor, is like a general poet, born not made. Exercise and experience give facility, but the qualification is innate, or it is never manifested. On the London daily papers all the great historians, novelists, poets, essayists, and writers of travels, have been tried, and nearly every one has failed. "I can," said the former editor of the London Times, "find any number of men of genius to write for me, but very seldom one man of common sense. Nearly all successful editors are of this description. A good editor seldom writes much for his paper; he reads, judges, selects, dictates, alters and combines, and to do all this well he has but little time for composition. To write for a paper is one thing—to edit a paper is another." Weekly Boquet.



The divorce evil seems to grow with every year. 7,500 divorces were granted in the State of Ohio last year. We agree that there are faults on both sides, but the great problem is: Are those faults remediable? To a great extent there is no doubt the conditions which result in divorce may be remedied. Given a dyspeptic husband and a wife suffering from female trouble and we have the ready made elements of a divorce case. In view of the facts there look forward to divorce only because they seek relief from obligation. They do not feel fitted to fulfill. Women are not to blame. They have looked forward to their home life as a dream of paradise. Then disease comes like a serpent and destroys all happiness.

Women who suffer with debilitating draughts, inflammation, ulceration, female trouble and bearing down pains, will find certain relief and cure in Doctor Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It so invigorates the organs peculiarly feminine and regulates their functions that they are established in a perfectly healthy condition. The old lightness of heart comes back, there's light in the eyes and a smile on the lips. The old irritation and nervousness are gone, and the husband comes to his home as a haven of rest and comfort.

"I was troubled with female weakness, and after taking three bottles of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription I am free from pain," writes Mrs. May E. Jones, 520 Madison Ave., Yonkers, Mich. "I had suffered for two years when I began taking your medicine. I could not walk across my room without suffering dreadful pains. Now I do all my housework and walk where I please—thanks to Dr. Pierce's medicine."

MENEELY BELL COMPANY
TROY, N. Y., and
177 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY.
Manufacture Superior Church Bells.

Notes of Irish News.

FROM OUR EXCHANGES.

It is always gratifying to record Irishmen's successes abroad. The "Kalgooie Mail," to hand contains an appreciative notice of the recent election to the Legislative Assembly of Mr. Frederick Wm. Moorhead, a native of King's County, where he was born thirty-eight years ago.

Milk adulteration is a contemptible species of fraud, but when practised to the extent indulged in by one of the residents of Redmond's-hill, Dublin, it becomes criminal in the highest degree. This lady adulterated milk to the extent of 51 per cent. The fine of £10 inflicted at the Southern Court erred rather on the side of leniency.

An Athy man named Kealy has so little respect for a Coroner's Court of inquiry that quite recently he flouted an order calling for his attendance as juror. The coroner fined him £20, which, on being appealed to, he reduced to £2. Kealy will be a zealous and conscientious juror at the next inquest.

The parishioners of the late Rev. J. Byrne, C.C. Bagnalstown are about to perpetuate by a splendid monument the memory of that devoted priest, and the great services which he rendered the district during a lengthened and glorious ministry.

It may not be generally known that the death of Mr. Bryan MacSheehy, Head Inspector under the National Board of Education, marked the extinction of one of the finest

and bravest of the old Kerry families. Another old clan of the "Kingdom" was that of the MacSweeney's, who with their neighbors the MacSheehys, made local history as far back as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Very deep and widespread regret is felt in Tipperary at the decease of Father Crowe, the esteemed and venerable pastor of Cappawhite. He was a kindly adviser to the poor and an ideal priest.

Mrs. Daniel Daly, Dromedolgaer was found dead in her bed, death resulting from disease of the heart. It is worthy of note that her daughter, Miss Maggie Daly, was one of the lady leaguers arrested in 1882, and confined in Limerick gaol.

A fire broke out in the extensive premises of Hodgins and Company, Nenagh, extending to neighboring buildings, with the result that an entire block of business premises were destroyed. The fire appliances were utterly incapable of coping with the conflagration, which caused damage to the extent of about £20,000.

The dead body of Thomas Moylan was found near his residence, Kilmeeby, Falias, County Limerick. It bore marks of violence, and suspicions as to foul play were immediately aroused. The police are investigating.

According to the "Kilbranney Echo" Lord Castlereagh has given notice of motion to the County Council for