

Ireland's National Language

By "CRUX."

LAST week I closed that essay by Davis upon the revival of the Celtic tongue. I have given it principally that the reader may understand what that writer means when he tells of "what," in his time, "is already being done for the revival of our national language;" but, above all, did I wish that whosoever is interested enough to follow my humble contributions, may see what is meant by others, when they refer to the "periodical press," and to "essays by the writers in the Nation," in connection with this subject. It may be advanced that, for the past few months I have been dealing, either remotely or closely, with this subject, and that all I have given has been a series of quotations from other authors. That is perfectly true; and I purpose going ahead, for another month or more, on the same track. Why should I intrude my own language, when that which has been written by others is far more to the point, more positive in argument, more exact historically, and more classic and elegant as literature than aught that I could ever pen? Moreover, I am hunting with a double-barrelled gun: I not only wish to treat somewhat fully this question of a revival of the Irish tongue, but I also desire, while so doing, to revive for the readers some of the choice writings of Irish authors — works that they may not, otherwise, have the opportunity of reading, and which constitute too sacred an heirloom for us to reject. Thus you need not look for much originality in "Crux's" contributions, until such time as I drop quotation marks; and that will be when I shall have marshalled all my facts and evidence. Then I will have something to write about, and may possibly be able to add a few pages regarding the present-day movement that will not be untimely.

So we have seen that Davis claimed, in 1843, that a good deal was then being done for the revival of the Celtic tongue. We will now see that he was about the most important contributor, himself, to that good deal.

Writing in 1846, one year after the death of Davis, Mooney, the historian, says:

"Within the last four or five years, a vigorous spirit of nationality in respect to language, has grown up in Ireland; this spirit has been quickened by occasional essays on the ancient tongue, published in the periodical press. There is also established an Archaeological Society, to revive the literature and language of the country, at the head of which as secretary, presides a most erudite Irish scholar in the person of O'Donovan. That profoundly learned and purely patriotic divine, the Archbishop of Tuam, popularly called John of Tuam, and justly designated by O'Connell, the 'Lion of the Fold of Judah,' has not been idle in trying to revive the national language. Not only does he preach in the old language himself, but insists on the clergymen, under his episcopal authority, preaching to the people the tidings of the cross through the medium of their ancient tongue. His authority extends over the entire province of Connaught, and his example and influence have proved a wonderful stimulus to the revival of a taste for the Irish language in other parts of the island. His Grace has translated several of Moore's most national melodies from the English language into the Irish, for the purpose of diffusing the sentiments of the inspired bard amongst the oppressed people for whom he strung the lyre of his country with such irresistible power — and is, with the same laudable zeal, now translating the Iliad of Homer into Irish. In the clerical colleges of Maynooth, Carlow, and Kilkenny, which are devoted to the education of Catholic clergymen, the Irish language is taught as part of the educational course; and in the colleges where missionaries of opposite forms of creed are educated, it has lately been made a branch of study and acquirement."

That it may seem how earnest was the effort of half a century, and more, ago, to revive the Celtic tongue, I again quote from the same historical authority.

"The writers in the Dublin Nation have done their share in the good work, by the frequent publication of very eloquent and interesting essays on the nature of the language. The immortal songs, in the Nation, which are artfully and beautifully woven together, by happy allusions, the literary and military events, and

association, of Irish glory, or Irish sorrow, have stirred through the national heart the slumbering life-blood of Ireland, have awakened a new pulsation for freedom, a new fervor for nationality, a new appetite for Irish literature, language, art and music."

It is needless to quote the next lengthy passage, in this interesting chapter, for the good reason that in the last and second last issues of this paper, I have given in full the essay, by Davis, to which it refers, upon which its arguments and illustrations are based.

But we must not omit to carefully study what follows — as applicable in our day as it was in 1846.

"It ought to be made known to every parent, who has it in his power to give his sons a classical education, that the Irish language is the key of all the others. Almost all the distinguished Irishmen, who have kept entranced assemblies hanging on their accents, have been well versed in the Irish language. The great O'Connell is a remarkable instance in illustration; so is Curran; both of whom sacked in the Irish language with their mother's milk, both of these men were unequalled at the Irish bar, in getting at the hearts of a jury. It is an admitted fact that the Irish language is the most touching of any which can be used by the advocate in persuasion, or the lover in supplication; it is the most scathing in the expression of loathing, or scorn, the most animating in war, the most expressive in suffering, the most melting in woe, the most persuasive in debate. He who knows it best, other acquirements being given, will prove the most successful suitor, the most powerful debator."

Here comes the point to which I would specially draw attention:

"Would it not be wise, therefore, in parents in America, as in Ireland, who intend to prepare their sons for the learned walks of life, to have instilled into their youthful minds a knowledge of the Irish language? Our Irish colleges, in America, should have a professor of that language. A sort of scholastic foppery prevails in our Irish colleges here, which has kept out our old language from the studies of youth; because, forsooth, it has been proclaimed down in Oxford and Cambridge, it ought, therefore, to be prohibited in those colleges of America which are exclusively filled by the sons of Irish parents. This is false doctrine. With uplifted hands I repudiate it."

This may appear a very pronounced manner of expressing the situation, but it must not be forgotten the words flow from the pen of one who was not only a patriotic Irishman, but also a learned and observant member of the race. He was at Washington when he wrote the foregoing and also when he penned the following, which I quote in full, as one of the finest pleas for the preservation of a language that could be made.

"Many Irishmen there are in this country who have, by great labor and industry, realized a wealthy competence, and, stimulated by the undying devotion of their race for letters, spare no expense in giving their sons what is called a 'splendid education;' but not one word of the history and language of their fathers' country are they taught in the course of this 'splendid education.' With the beastly ferocity of pagan Rome, with the refined immorality of the Greeks, with the military and manufacturing prowess of Britain, with the dazzling frivolity of France, are they made familiar, and with the infidelity of all are they saturated; but with the military renown of the country of their fathers, with its morality and letters even before Christianity, with its Christian piety ever since, with its age of faith, of glory, of law, of government, of literature, of hospitality, of independence, they are left unacquainted. Of its ancient and erudite language they know nothing; its science and art they discredit; its ancient manuscripts, that enrich the shelves of European libraries, they disregard; its classic architectural piles that yet stand, stubbornly above the earth, proclaiming the science and piety of their founders, are unknown, unseen, unheeded. Ireland, whose entire surface, for several feet deep, is enriched with the dust of their sainted forefathers, is excluded from their studies, and forgotten in their hearts; and some of these half-taught men go to the extremity of denying their extraction, despising their fathers' and their fa-

thers' country, and at last abandon the sacred principles of their fathers' religion, taught them by Christ and Saint Patrick.

"Let me ask the Irish father, whose heart is proof against the fashionable cant, and duplicity, and villany, to be found in the atmosphere of our great cities, whether this mode of education shall be suffered to continue. Let me ask the clergyman, whose experience must attest the truth of my premises and my inferences, whether Ireland and her language, as a study, are to be excluded from the course of education administered to our youth. Let me suggest to the true-hearted Irishmen, who are able to pay their sons to insist on their being taught the language and history of their ancestors; the most interesting lay study of youth."

Mr. Mooney then mentions a vast number of very wealthy Irish families in the United States. This would not exactly suit our purpose at this day; but we may reproduce the appeal that he made to them.

"Who knows but these, or some others equally wealthy, whom I do not know, into whose hands these pages may fall, and who admiring the glorious history of their forefathers, may be induced to appropriate to its honor some five or ten thousand dollars, the interest of which would support forever a professor of the Irish language in some of those chief colleges where the sons of wealthy Irishmen congregate for instruction? What an enduring monument of a good, enlightened man would such a bequest create? It would perpetuate the name of the liberal donor to the remotest generations, and connect it with the classic associations of the Miesian race. The hint I thus cast upon the waves of time may yet be taken up, nursed, and matured into a vigorous realization, and the language of the sages and saints of Ireland may yet be steadily perpetuated along this continent, amongst the descendants of a once illustrious people."

Priests and People.

The age is out for laicizing everything. That means lock the priest in the sanctuary and the religious in the cloister, or, as they are doing in France, driving them from the cloister, as some suggested doing in the Philippines, secularizing them, whatever that means; and, as some good people occasionally advocate here, stripping them of their garb. Clericalism is denounced as the enemy of progress; religious life is reviled because it is said to suppress the inherent exercise of rights in human nature. Away with both, and instead let us have the laity only, especially in the schools, and not frequently, if not actually, in the pulpits, in the role of pulpiteer, by giving lay sermons and in the lodges, in post-prandial harangues, and now and then in State documents. It is surprising with what readiness the ministers of the various sects lend themselves to the movement, and how well prepared their laics are to assume the functions of the ministers accustomed as they have been to dictate to them from the beginning, and not seldom to usurp their office. There is necessarily more conservatism on the part of our own clergymen, who realize the sacredness of their calling, and, naturally, too, a reluctance on the part of the Catholic layman to infringe on the duties of the priesthood. By the very nature of things, the distinction between cleric and laic is an essential one, but differ though they do in office and character, there is every reason why they should mutually aid one another and co-operate together for the good of religion and humanity.

There seems to be a conviction on the part of our Catholic laity that the line between the clergy and themselves is drawn sharp at the sanctuary rail. The clergy are the active, they are the passive element in the Church. Everything religious or in any way connected with religion must be originated and terminated by the priests. They must not only baptize, preach, shrive and bury, but they must build and maintain the church and school and other parochial institutions. From the laity the most they expect is money and the co-operation of some of the devout sex. When a few months ago it was announced that Archbishop Keane, of Dubuque, had decided to constitute laymen trustees of the churches in this archdiocese, there was a cry of alarm in many of our Catholic newspapers, and His Grace had finally to declare that he had been misrepresented. What better arrangement could he have made than that which to-day obtains in our best organized dioceses? What more natural than to have men of

affairs co-operating with our pastors in transacting the business inseparable from the management of a parish? For want of such co-operation there is very poor management in many places, and altogether too little interest on the part of prominent laymen in the welfare of our parishes and other institutions. It is unfair to leave every burden and responsibility to the priest, and in not a few cases it has proved disastrous to all concerned. Instead, therefore, of admitting the conviction that the clergy and laity should stand apart, we should be convinced that it is absolutely necessary that they should work together, both doing all they can for the welfare of the Church.

Over and above the priestly duties of administering the spiritual affairs of a parish, there is a vast field of labor in which the laity is concerned and which they only can properly cultivate. Nowadays, especially, when the world about us astir with an endless variety of schemes for the social uplifting, as it is called, of those whose poverty or adverse conditions cut them off from the advantages of their better circumstanced fellows, the priest can at most direct such movements as his parishioners inaugurate, but they must do something to relieve the misery about them, and to help on those who are desirous of improvement. It will not do to plead that such movements are the vagaries of faddists, that charity begins at home, that the luxury of philanthropy is for those who have superfluous time and means, or that it is no use doing the very little we may feel capable of doing. It is no fad to feed the poor, or visit the sick, or help the idle to obtain employment; it is not true charity that remains at home, and too often the home in which charity is limited comes to be itself an object of pity, if not of charity; everyone can spare some time, and everyone can do something to help others, and usually it is those who can do the least who, for that very reason, do it with all the greater good-will and kindness. It was wise beyond reckoning on Frederic Ozanam's part when founding the great society of St. Vincent de Paul, to stipulate that its members should see limit to their material contributions, in order that they might be moved to make up for what they withheld by a boundless spirit of charity. — The Messenger.

CATHOLIC NOTES

POPE AND WORKINGMEN. — The Catholic Workingmen's societies and clubs in Rome solicit the support of Catholic workingmen all over the world for the erection of a monument in the vicinity of St. John Lateran's, in commemoration of the twenty-fifth year of the Pontificate of His Holiness Leo XIII., who is not inaptly called "the Social Pope." This monument will be a statue symbolizing labor as sanctified by Christ, with three bronze tablets on the base, commemorating the three great encyclicals of the Pontiff on labor and the rights and duties of workingmen. Offerings may be sent to Cav. Francesco Seganti at the Vatican or Mgr. Pezzani, Via Monteroni 79, Rome.

PRELATE'S JUBILEE. — Archbishop Christie, of Portland, Oregon, celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination last week.

AN EMPEROR'S GIFT. — Much interest is taken in the Jubilee present which the Emperor of Austria is preparing to send to the Holy Father. It is a statue in gold representing the Good Shepherd.

DEATH OF A CARDINAL. — Cardinal Parrochi, who was one of the best known members of the Sacred College, died after a brief illness in Rome last week. His Eminence belonged to the Order of Cardinal Bishops. He was Vice Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, Sub-Dean of the Sacred College, Secretary of the Congregation of the Inquisition, President of the Congregation of Apostolic Visits, and Prefect of the Congregation on Residences of Bishops.

A PAINTING STOLEN. — A Rome dispatch says that the famous bas-relief, "The Descent from the Cross" by Luca della Robbia, has been stolen from the Church of San Saverio, Florence. It is valued at \$110,000.

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Reminisce

Your appeal for conscience awakens some orise. Sixty years d three scenes of those arise vividly before O'Connell passing th fled Kilmallock; one the day of Judgment Father Darby Bud lately in Dublin at and the visit of Kil the old church in K O'Connell passed th Limerick to attend monster '43 repeal m think, Thurlis. A sp rising of surrounding by the priests, assem lock. Father Blake, priest, rode ahead of horseback, waving his cidedly exclaiming coming; he will pass English has no supe depict the scenes of w which ensued, a storm feeling having O'Conn ter. In fact, it is diff whether O'Connell's pe the people's patriotism or both. He made a speech at "hill of Kilmallock." His cap in his left hand hand he would thrust bosom, and at times w use it in sweeping gestic and voice were marvel was as eloquent as his in my memory, as a with curly hair. I do clearly about the speech think he spoke with a d accent, verifying "Bid ty's" hot broadcast in street enclosure. Well, he is gone. He wa a great personality, greatest Ireland ever n word would have hurled upon England's red coat eve of the horrible fami

Father Mathew visited Kilmalmane, in County L a fine Sunday in the 1845.

The Greek cross, old s with its spacious flags was crowded with people adjacent parishes. The pr old Father Sheehy, was noble and the duty of br great temperance apost church, devoted on the cthers Kennedy and Burke fine looking men as Mun boast of, and enthusiasts Mathew's cause.

Lessons and Ex

BISHOP AND ORPHAN bording to his annual ep Right Rev. Bishop Horst the "Catholic Universe," the orphans of the diocese Cathedral Hall on New Y This is the event of the ye little wards of the dioc passerby would have been the brightness of the faces sprightliness of the demean long lines of boys and g marched in orderly array Cathedral school build Thursday afternoon. The Bishop was very gra his small guests. There wa five hundred of them in a all had assembled in the h of the boys stepped forw made an address in which proceed the love and gratiti companions for their episcop and father. The girls pres similar heartfelt expression ful good wishes. The Bishop responded in dress marked by earnest feeling. Then he received e individually, leaving each li or the memory of a kindly clasp and a word of blisin ry through the year. It touching and beautiful spec leg of bonbons was another good things presented by t to his guests. JOINED THE CHURCH converts from Protestant number of seventy-five, wa ed by Cardinal Gibbons in rick's Church, Washington, Sunday last. SWISS NIEPHO AND The following passage th tive Letter on the Pa