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TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

Want of a Historian who shall do full Justice to the Irish Branch of the Human Family—Making History—Some Great Reputations—Seeking a Great Poet—"Omar Khayyam"—The Translation of an Irishman—Death of Col. Henry Meagher, Brother of Francis Meagher—The Man (William Kelly) who Discovered the Bessemer Process of Making Steel and Created a Thousand Millionaires.

In the article on "The Irish in America," published in the *Munsey Magazine* for April, and which was reviewed by me in your last issue, the author, Mr. Herbert N. Carson, remarked:

"The historian who shall do full justice to the Irish branch of the human family has not yet appeared, either in the United States or elsewhere. Consequently there are few races, if any, which have been so persistently misunderstood and undervalued. Even in this country (United States) where such a mistake is least excusable, there has been a tendency in some quarters to regard the Irish as merely an element of the rank and file. The truth is that they have contributed their share of leaders and pioneers in almost every line of progress."

The writer in the magazine quoted from makes no reference to Canada, which is not possessing an Irish population in the lead certainly has a Celtic one, for the Highland Scotch and the Irish are brothers in blood. And let me say that nowhere in literature has the race been done so well for as in Nicholas Flood Davin's "Irishman in Canada," published here nearly thirty years ago, and which contains a good deal of what Mr. Carson has gathered with regard to the United States, in the earlier stages of that country.

I have known several writers who have essayed the task of doing justice to the memory of our Irish people in America. I do not know who had been before the late lamented T. D. McGee in this work, and who published his "History of the Irish Settlers in America" in 1852, when he harried me personally a copy of it on its appearance, in Buffalo, N. Y., and urged me to do the same thing for Canada. But that job fell into much abler hands. Mr. Davin introduced the general history and the general fortunes of the Irish race in his Canadian work. The Hon. John Francis Maguire, member of the British Parliament for Cork, visited America in the late sixties and published a volume relating to "The Irish in America," including Canada, which furnished a great deal of valuable information. The late William B. Robinson who was an able representative of Irish interests in the United States and founder of the Buffalo Express newspaper, as well as being a representative of a New York district in Congress for many years, gathered a great deal of material for such a publication, but I don't think he ever used it; but why he did not do so I never ascertained. Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, of New York, too, I learn, had a similar work in contemplation years ago, but it never appeared to my knowledge. T. D. McGee before his unhappy death, had in contemplation an epic poem on Irish Immigration, which would have been a valuable contribution to the literature of the race. Mrs. Green, the widow of the author of a "History of the English People," who is an Irish woman, some few years ago had in contemplation a "History of the Irish People,"

on which she may now with anxious and hopeful mind be bending her energies upon. At any rate, as Mr. Carson asserts, "the historian who shall do full justice to the Irish branch of the human family, has not yet appeared either in the United States or elsewhere. This is an incentive to those who can do anything to do it, for the reputation of our race. When living in Illinois and but a very few years ago, I did my share in this regard, by collecting or helping Mr. P. T. Barry to collect, the "History of the First Irish in Illinois," and Illinois proved to me an interesting and even an exhilarating field to work in.

Making history and creating reputation is something the Irish are ever at. Let us look around us. At this very time there is published a volume of poems from the pen and brain of Isabella Valancy Crawford, an Irish girl who, from out the depths of Canadian woods, sent up her soul and her sighs, singing of the sights and the scenes around her in verses that display not only art and talent, but absolute genius. Why should we not take her to heart, and if we did not help her in the day of distress, at least cherish her memory as one of our own after death has closed her career.

And there is Miss Margaret Anglin, who is not only one of our own race, but one of our own people in our own city, who is being crowned with the laurels of admiration and her path strewn with the roses of adulation wherever she goes over this continent, showing that we have the blood that makes genius and inspires the souls that are great, beautiful and lovable. And let me say this to stir our pride, that the greatest emotional actress in America before Miss Anglin, was another Irish woman born in Toronto, and yet alive—Clara Morris. And for the Irish women let me tell this: An English writer who predominated in the British Isles, declared there was more of it in the women of Ireland than anywhere else. Our plain duty is this, in order to encourage our own, to buy their books and hance their art wherever we can. In showing our appreciation now we are altogether too passive and indifferent. Money spent this way is well spent; it comes back to us all with interest. I may as well explain that while I write this way I have no race selfishness, at race co-operation. I recognize the superior merits of Scotchmen as a race of literature creators and am proud of them, but at the same time I want Irishmen to be equal to Scotchmen in producing works of literary merit, and in giving grace, beauty and light to the people of our day. When I look back to my own cradle land it stirs my blood to learn that the circumscribed boundary of the little Irish county in which I first saw the light of heaven, has done her share for civilization by producing great men and women in the various walks of life—soldiers, statesmen, orators and poets, if you like, but at any rate friends of freedom and lovers of humanity. The three great orators of Irish rights and human freedom were born within a few miles of each other—Shiel, Meagher and Sexton—in the County of Waterford, and all of the old creed too. It is a great thing for the human mind to have something soul-inspiring to dwell upon, as it helps to uphold and strengthen, and drives away melancholy and thoughts of self-destruction. To enlarge one's field of vision and behold as many beautiful, brave and unselfish objects as possible, is more satisfying to the imagination than beholding worlds that are large, expansive and wonderful with their different hues and atmospheres, through an astronomer's lenses and discs.

"A nation's boast is a nation's bone, As well as its might of mind; And the culture of either of these alone Is the doom of a nation signed."

I have noticed for some time many references in the newspapers to the poem of "Omar Khayyam," translated from the Persian by a Mr. Fitzgerald, but I did not see the book itself until the other day. It is usually supposed to be the work of an Englishman, but I found by the introduction that it is the work of an Irishman. I had been long looking with-

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out success for a poet for my native county and needed him very badly, when presto, "Omar Khayyam" appeared to view as the desired production, for this Fitzgerald was a Waterford man. I feel so good over the discovery that it is apt to add at least a week to my life. It is a literary star of the first magnitude, with a brilliant atmosphere and great reflective powers. But there is something I notice to deaden my delight, for I further discover that a grand nephew of this great poet translator is now before the English divorce court to determine whether George Purcell Fitzgerald of the Island, Waterford, is English or Irish. The point is that as an Irishman Mr. Fitzgerald declares he is outside the jurisdiction of the English divorce court. At the age of fourteen this grand nephew inherited the Island, in Waterford, and a fortune of £600,000. He asserted that his ancestors came over to Ireland with Strongbow, and that for centuries Ireland had been the domicile of his family. His personal history is rather interesting. He was born in London, his father being a journalist. He had lived a great deal abroad, and had been married twice, each time in America. He, however, has always regarded Waterford as his home, and has spent over £70,000 in improvements on his estate. In further cross-examination Mr. Fitzgerald said when he was in a foreign country and spoke to his wife of England, it was in the broad sense as meaning the British Isles. He went over to Ireland and lived there and incidentally hunted while he was there, but he also came to England for the "Grand National" races. Witness explained that he had made his children wards of the English Court of Chancery, purely on a question of expediency. His wife was attempting to kidnap them, so after some delay in endeavoring to make them wards of the Irish Court, he had given instruction to make them wards of the English Court. He said he had filed a petition for divorce in this court, but it was dismissed on his own application. Mrs. Fitzgerald in her evidence said she was the daughter of Mr. John Nicholls, coal mine proprietor, of Uniontown, Pa. Her husband had always said that he was an Englishman. Once, when there was a dispute between them, and she spoke about "his Irish blood," he said, "I am not Irish, I was born in England, and the only thing Irish about me is my name." Mrs. Fitzgerald next explained that she first met her husband on a train-journey from Chicago to Los Angeles. That was in December, 1898, and they married in the early part of 1899.

The Waterford News of a recent date conveys the intelligence that Col. Henry Meagher, late of the Waterford Artillery, and younger brother of the illustrious Irish and American hero, General Thomas Francis Meagher, died at his residence, St. Germain's, Killiney, Dublin, of general debility. He had reached an advanced age and had not been in vigorous health for some time. Col Meagher did not share the political views of his renowned brother, but a warm attachment always existed between them until a tragic event called the elder from earthly scenes and associations. His closing hours were soled by the presence of his devoted son, Mr. Henry Meagher, who hastened from England to his bedside the moment the news reached him that his father's end was imminent. After High Mass and office at the Church of St. Alphonsus, Ballinacra, the honored remains were laid to rest in historic Glasnevin.

The first article in the April "Munsey" Magazine is of surpassing interest on account of its great industrial importance and in which an Irishman plays a leading part. It is entitled "The Romance of Steel and Iron in America—The Story of a Thousand Millionaires, and a Graphic History

of the Billion-Dollar Steel Trust." It tells of the tremendous modern expansion of the iron and steel industry which began with the invention of the Bessemer process, and tells how William Kelly in America and Bessemer in England, evolved their epoch-making discovery, and sketches the big men who took the lead in developing it. In Louisville still lives a white-haired old lady, wife of William Kelly, the original inventor of what is called the Bessemer steel. In Johnstown may be seen the first tilting converter that Kelly used in making Bessemer steel; and the boy who helped the inventor with his experiments is still employed in the Cambrian mills. In 1846 William Kelly and his brother bought the Suwanee Iron Works near Eddyville, Kentucky. Kelly's father was a well-to-do landowner in Pittsburgh, where it is said that he erected the first two brick houses in that city. At the time when William Kelly began to make iron, he was thirty-six years old, a tall, well-set-up, muscular, energetic man with blue eyes and close-cropped beard. In inventiveness his brain ranked high; in business ability low. He had left a commission business and became an iron-maker mainly to carry out a process which he had invented, by which large sugar kettles were to be made. The "Kelly Kettles" became well known among the Southern farmers. He had married Miss Mildred A. Gracy of Eddyville, and secured the financial backing of his father-in-law. His iron plant was a fairly good one, close to high-grade ore, and needing the work of about three hundred slaves. Kelly was strongly opposed to slavery and tried to escape being a slave-holder by importing Chinese. He was the first employer in the United States to make the experiment and found it successful. Kelly's first aim was to make good wrought iron for his kettles, and for his customers in Cincinnati. One day he was sitting in front of the "finery fire" when he suddenly sprang to his feet with a shout and rushed to the furnace. At one edge he saw a white hot spot in the yellow mass of molten metal. The iron at this point was incandescent. It was almost gaseous. Yet there was no charcoal—nothing but the steady blast of air—and the Bessemer process was discovered. Hence the Billion-Dollar Steel Trust of to-day.

WILLIAM HALLEY.

Death of Irish Dominican at Rome

The Irish Dominicans at San Clemente are in mourning over the death on March 5 of their Venerable Father Michael Costello, their Sub-Prior, who, at the age of 82, was one of their most active members—mentally, if not physically. The grand old priest was one of the landmarks, so to speak, of Rome, having lived there without intermission since 1868. All the community was around his death-bed, and his funeral Mass brought together all the saintly scholars and heads of religious orders in Rome. The Mass was sung by the Prior, Rev. J. T. Crotty, with Father John Lytleton, O.P., as deacon, Father Reginald Walsh, O.P., as sub-deacon, and Rev. Vincent Rowan, O.P., as master of ceremonies. Cardinal Logue and a large delegation of students from the Irish College were present. His remains were laid to rest in the Dominican vault in Campo Verano.

Congregational Singing at St. Peter's, London

For the first time in the history of the Catholic churches, London, Ont., congregational singing has been heard. The children of the schools, numbering something like 700, sang at the Bishop's Mass shortly after the return of his Lordship from Rome. It is expected that congregational singing will now become general in the city.

PRESENTED WITH PURSE OF GOLD

Rev. Father Holden, Superintendent of Hamilton Schools, Transferred to St. Joseph's—Appreciation of Past Services Expressed on all Sides.

A pleasant event took place Monday evening, April 2nd, at the meeting of the Separate School Board, when Rev. Father Holden, rector of St. Joseph's Church, for several years secretary of the Board and Superintendent of the Catholic schools in Hamilton, was presented with a purse of gold. The presentation was made by Mr. Chas. J. Bird, on behalf of the trustees, ex-members of the Board and other well known citizens. The address, a beautiful work of art, expressing the Board's sincere appreciation of the faithful services of the rector of St. Joseph's, was read by the Chairman of the Board, Mr. P. S. Bateman, and was as follows:

We, the Chairman and members of the Board of Roman Catholic Separate School Trustees of the city of Hamilton, have learned with deep and heartfelt sorrow and regret that it has pleased His Lordship our Bishop to remove you from the sphere that you have so long adorned and so admirably filled as our superintendent, and to promote you to the more responsible charge of St. Joseph's parish, in this city. To us our loss is inconceivable.

Amid the great and manifold blessings enjoyed by the Roman Catholics of this Dominion, and which we especially prize, is the system of Separate School education, which, if matured and maintained to the high standard brought about by your exertions as our Superintendent, has made a good, perfect education the birthright of the Catholic children of this city.

In our schools, and in their appropriate lessons, the great principles of religion and patriotism, loyalty, and charity, are kindly but firmly inculcated. Under your ministering hand our schools have been brought up to a standard reached by few schools in this Dominion. We ever found you ready and willing to give the advantages of your master mind to us in our struggles to promote Catholic education in this city. While we rejoice at your promotion to the responsible position of pastor of St. Joseph's Church, we cannot help but feel sorrow for the almost irreparable loss suffered by the trustees of the Separate School Board, its teachers and pupils, in the severing of the connections of the past ten years, during which period you have been instrumental in sending out so many of our well educated pupils, who are a credit to themselves and to the Catholics of this city. However, as you have not been removed from the city, we feel that in the future we will be able to ask your assistance and advice in our many difficulties. In conclusion, on behalf of the Roman Catholic School Board, ex-members and representatives thereof, we ask you to accept as a small memento of the love, admiration, affection and good will of us all the accompanying purse.

(Signed)

P. S. Bateman, Chairman of the Board; J. P. Dougherty, Chairman Internal Management Committee; C. J. Bird, Chairman of Finance; P. Roman, Treasurer; P. Arland, T. J. Coughlin, A. O'Brien, J. M. White, W. Kavanagh, W. J. Foster, H. N. Thomas, W. T. Griffin, J. P. Hennessy, James Blake, George Case, J. M. Brown, J. Keating, J. Wall, P. J. Galvin, W. H. Lovering, M. J. O'Reilly, M. T. Fitzpatrick, H. J. McIntyre, J. Flahaven.

Father Holden, taken by surprise, was much pleased and visibly affected by the kindness of the school board. He said he could not thank the Board sufficiently for their beautiful address and valuable purse of gold. If he had met with success in his labors for the schools, it was due to the co-operation and good will always received from the trustees. Friendship of so long standing was not easy to part with, but he was glad that as secretary of the board, he could in the future meet his old friends the trustees in the work of education. During the past ten years the school board has paid \$17,000 of the debt besides materially increasing the requirements of the schools. We had, he believed, as zealous a body of teachers as could be found anywhere

in Canada, so that with the hearty support of the trustees, and the good work of the teachers, his labors had been light and pleasant.

Mr. C. J. Bird said the trustees were pleased at the promotion of Rev. Father Holden to the important charge of St. Joseph's Church in this city, still it was with much regret the members of the Board were called upon to accept his resignation.

The years that Father Holden has filled the office of Secretary of this Board and Superintendent of Separate Schools in this city, have been years of pleasure to the trustees of this Board, not anything having arisen to mar that pleasure and unity which has always existed.

Our schools under our retiring superintendent's able supervision, have advanced and made rapid progress, being brought up to a high standard of efficiency, and are now doing work equal to any schools in this province, based on the high percentage of pupils that annually pass their high school entrance examinations, which is due in a great measure to the excellent qualifications and untiring energy of Rev. Father Holden; also the unity and good will that existed between the superintendent, teachers and pupils.

It is the wish of all the members of this Board that the success that followed Rev. Father Holden's labors as superintendent of schools, will still continue to follow him in his new duties as pastor of St. Joseph's parish, and that he will long be spared to carry on good works for which he seems to be so particularly qualified.

Expressions of good will and best wishes were also indulged in by Trustees H. N. Thomas, Thomas Coughlin, Andrew O'Brien, M. D. Sullivan, J. P. Dougherty and others.

Death of Mr. John O'Reilly,

Almonte, April 4.—The funeral of the late Mr. John O'Reilly took place yesterday from his residence, Ottawa street, to St. Mary's church, and thence to the cemetery in Huntley township. The attendance was unusually large, deceased having been well and favorably known for years, and at the time of his death was one of the oldest merchants in the town. He was a member of both the F.M. T.A. and the Hibernian Societies, and both were in the cortege. The members of the town council and the town officials also attended in a body. He was 70 years of age and leaves a grown-up family of sons and daughters. His death came as a great shock to the citizens generally. He went to Ottawa the end of the week for surgical treatment for one of his ears, but he did not survive the operation, and died on Sunday afternoon. R.I.P.

Pope Pius X. to Lenten Preachers

"Prædicate Evangelium—preach the Gospel. Preach solid, simple sermons. Preach on the fundamental truths of our holy religion, on prayer, on the sacraments, and above all on hell. Yes, preach on hell as our Lord preached upon it. Let the people understand every word you say. Don't have sermons to tickle the ear—have sermons that will enlighten the ignorant, for this is truly an age of ignorance; have sermons that will move the will. Preach on Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell. Don't talk of atheists or irreligious people—what good would be in it! Address yourselves to the congregation before you, and mind them alone."

Recent Beatification

Irish canonization is making steady progress at Rome. First upon the list of Irish martyrs whose claims to recognition as amongst the greatest of God's elect, are being put forward, is Oliver Plunkett.

This venerable man was Primate of Ireland, direct successor of St. Patrick in the See of Armagh, when in July, 1861, he was hanged, disembowled and quartered at Tyburn, London, on a charge of aiding and abetting conspiracy against the King of England's Government in Ireland. Cardinal Moran has written a splendid life of Oliver Plunkett; and Archbishop Walsh of Dublin has aided very materially the cause of his beatification which is expected soon. Cardinal Logue is working for it and Cardinal Vannutelli is preparing a report of the case for the Congregation of Rites.



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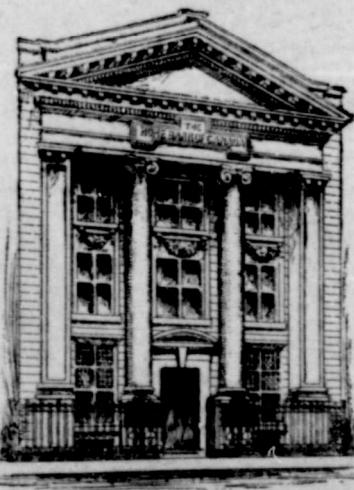
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