

ILLUSTRIOUS IRISHMEN.

Luke Wadding, Saint and Scholar.

Rev. Luke Wadding, who was one of the most eminent of European scholars of the seventeenth century, was born in Waterford city in 1588. His father, Walter Wadding, was a prosperous and enterprising corn merchant, who had many ships on the high seas and traded with Venice, Genoa and other southern ports. His mother was a near relative of Peter Lombard, who was also a native of Waterford, and who became afterwards distinguished as a scholar and theologian, and was eventually raised to the see of Armagh. On the occasion of his appointment, however, to the Primacy of All Ireland, Archbishop Lombard, most of whose life was spent on the continent could not return to take possession of his see, owing to the persecution and proscription of Catholic bishops and priests by bigoted and heretical officials. Luke Wadding's father was anxious that his son should become a sailor, and help him to extend his trade; but the young man had no desire for the life of either a "tar" or a merchant. He had a higher and a holier ambition—that of devoting whatever talents and energy he possessed to the service of God's Church. He was encouraged in his vocation by his mother, who was a sincerely pious lady. His father, once convinced that Luke really desired to become a priest, offered him every facility for attaining to that high dignity.

Unable to obtain an ecclesiastical training in Ireland, he went abroad at the age of 14. The Irish College of Lisbon, Portugal, opened its doors to the young Levite. Here he commenced his philosophical studies and surroundings which awoke all the poetry of his mystic and enthusiastic soul. A blue southern sky was reflected, as in a mirror, in the waters of the azure bay on the slopes leading down to which the college itself was situated, flanked by golden vineyards in the autumn, and in summer by parterres of roses, and guarded in the rear by orange and olive groves, the aroma of which, mingling with that of the flowers and the ozone of a southern sea, stole in fragrantly through the half-open window of the student's cell, and gave him, as he afterwards said, "his first foretaste of heaven." His vocation inclining towards a membership of one of the great religious orders, he subsequently entered the Franciscan convent of Matozinos, near Oporto, where, after he had passed through the usual curriculum, he was ordained priest. After his ordination he was sent to the College of Coimbra, where the famous "J. K. L." of Kildare and Leighlin, Dr. Doyle, studied a few generations afterwards. Here he was professor of ecclesiastical history. While holding this position he perfected himself in the knowledge of canon law and theology, and had already won at an early age a European reputation for scholarship—thanks to the learned pamphlets that used to emanate periodically from his gifted pen. He also acquired a mastery of Spanish, Portuguese and Hebrew, and for several years occupied the pulpit of the cathedral of Coimbra, from which he addressed his congregations in the choicest and most eloquent Portuguese.

With the consent of his ecclesiastical superiors, and at the request of the bishop of Carthage, he left Coimbra for Rome in 1618, accompanied by the latter prelate, who had nominated him his chaplain. The bishop's mission to the Eternal City was for the purpose of investigating at the fountain head in the Vatican library the vexed problem of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, a question which was then, and was always, a matter of debate between churchmen until it was solved by the late Pio

Nono, who declared it *ex cathedra* a dogma of the church on Dec. 8, 1854. The bishop of Carthage was assisted by Father Wadding in his researches among the archives of the Vatican. After a long and laborious investigation both ecclesiastics came to the conclusion that the majority of the fathers and other theological scholars were fervent believers in the stainless conception of the Mother of God.

After this work of piety was concluded Father Wadding became an inmate of the Franciscan convent of St. Peter in Monterio, in the church attached to which were interred the ashes of O'Neill and O'Donnell, the gallant chieftains of Ulster. This edifice stands on the summit of the Janiculum, and commands a fine view of the city and the Alban hills in the distance. It is also adjacent to the Doric temple planned by the famous architect Bramante, and erected over the exact spot—so tradition says—where St. Peter was crucified head downwards, as a penalty for his championship of Christ.

The next important event in Father Wadding's life was the founding of the Irish Franciscan Convent of St. Isidore in Rome. In 1621 three Spanish friars made application to the then reigning Pontiff, Gregory XV., for authorization to erect an hospice for their brethren on the Pincian Hill. The permission having been granted they attempted to raise funds for the erection of a cruciform church, portions of the walls of which were already built, but failed. In this crisis the superior general of the Franciscan order had recourse to Luke Wadding, who was then one of the most influential personages in the city of Rome. Father Wadding consented to undertake the work himself on the understanding that a college would be attached to the hospice for the exclusive education of Levites for the Irish mission. He secured the warm approbation of Urban VIII. for the project. The Pope and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, including several cardinals, helped him financially in the undertaking, with the result that a stately edifice, comprising a church, a Franciscan convent and a college, was built on the summit of the Pincian Hill, not quite a thousand yards away from the present Piazza di Spagna. Luke Wadding made a present of 5000 volumes to the library of the new establishment. Authorized by the bull of institution given him by Pope Urban, he gathered into one fold in the building on the Pincian Hill many of the Franciscan monks of Irish birth who were then scattered all over Europe.

It was in his humble cell in St. Isidore, whither he removed his household goods from the monastery of St. Pietro, that Father Wadding wrote the great literary work of his life, assisted by three brother monks, Fathers Ponce, Hickey and Harold. This work, which was written in Latin, and was entitled "Annals of the Franciscan Order," was undertaken by him in obedience to the command of the superior general. Having, through his intimate friendship with the then reigning Pope, his entree into the Vatican library, as he had with a previous Pontiff that helped him in his researches on the Immaculate Conception, he spent hours daily transcribing documents bearing on the history which he was commissioned to write. He subsequently travelled over Europe in search of further material, visiting the libraries of Brussels, Perugia, Padua, Naples and Assisi, where he gleaned information about the order from old musty parchments, some of which had lain covered with dust and wreathed with cobwebs on the shelves for years. Several of the more ancient of Franciscan monasteries loaned him MS. memoirs of their superiors as well as records of their past. When he had gathered all these documents together they

weighed several tons, and had to be transported to Rome in a wagon. This initial or preparatory stage being over—it had occupied ten years of his life—ten more years were spent in writing the "Annals," with the assistance of the monks already referred to. At last when the series of volumes appeared from the printing press they were bought up by thousands of ecclesiastics, by scores of universities and hundreds of colleges. He was congratulated by the Pope and other prominent church dignitaries on the marvellous success of his contribution to Franciscan lore. He was now regarded as the most brilliant intellectual star of the order to which he belonged. Yet with the modesty of a sincere Christian he attributed any merits which the "Annals" possessed to the three monks who assisted him in his labors.

Another proof of Father Wadding's retiring disposition and self-depreciation is instanced in the fact that when he heard that a number of highly influential friends were putting their signature to a petition to the Pope, praying the latter to create him a cardinal, he induced one of the parties connected with the affair to intercept the document before it could reach the hands of his Holiness. And yet, though Father Wadding considered himself unworthy of the honor, there were few ecclesiastics of that day who merited as much as he the red cap.

"All this time," writes the historian Ware, "he grew into such authority, and the world had such an opinion of his wisdom, dexterity, industry and his good fortune in transacting business, that every person was fond of consulting his advice on different matters."

Throughout all these years he was not forgetful of the interests of the land of his birth. Like St. Columba in Iona, his eyes were never weary of striving to catch a glimpse in dreams of the beautiful isle of the west. During the period in which he was engaged on his "Annals" there was no hope for the political and religious freedom of his country. Now, however, in 1642, when English parties were figuratively cutting each others' throats, the opportunity for an armed insurrection came for Ireland, and with it the man, in the person of Owen Roe O'Neill, who was the friend and fellow-exile of Father Wadding. The latter threw himself with all the ardor of his patriotic nature into the movement that was inaugurated under the shadow of the spire of St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, where the confederation was established. He was appointed by the council of that body, which was Ireland's real Parliament just then, Irish agent in Rome, and its accredited representative at the Vatican and other Catholic European courts. This period of his life was the most active. He travelled all over Europe once more—interviewing Catholic kings and statesmen, and inducing several of them to lend a friendly hand to the Irish cause. Hundreds of Irish officers and thousands of Irish soldiers were dispatched by him to Ireland. He collected funds from the various Catholic governments for that object, and he was, moreover, the medium through which the arms and ammunition were supplied to Owen Roe, the victor of Benburb, and his gallant troops. Owen's death by poison, however, crushed the high hopes of Father Wadding; and the subsequent Cromwellian burnings and massacres of innocent Irish women and children filled his soul with anguish. Yet up to the moment of his death, which occurred some years afterwards, he never ceased to work and toil for the liberty of his native land. Like many other Irishmen he tried loyally to cut the gordian knot that bound her to her ruthless anti-Catholic oppressor, but tried in vain. The sorrow he felt over this disappointment is said to have hastened his demise.

His remains were interred under a marble slab before the high altar of St. Isidore's Church. His last resting place under the frescoed ceiling of the handsome edifice which he was the means of erecting in honor of St. Isidore and Patrick is visited by Irish Pilgrims almost every day in the year. When I visited the sacred spot some years ago, I was accompanied by several Irish exiles hailing from California and the Rocky Mountains, one of the objects of whom in touring through Europe was to see and kneel at the graves of illustrious Irishmen who are sleeping their last sleep under the green sward of that continent. On the same occasion my companions and myself were escorted into the spacious theological hall of the college by a courteous lay brother. The walls were literally a net work of the most artistic frescoes. The great artist who wrought these exquisite masterpieces was a lay brother of the monastery, named Emmanuel of Como, who lived and labored here some 200 years ago. The most strikingly beautiful of all the frescoes was a group comprising Luke Wadding and his three assistants in the act of compiling the "Annals of the Franciscan Order." It was probably the devotion of Emmanuel to the great Irish scholar that induced him to contribute the best of his services to this work of art. The frescoes are interspersed with pictures of Duns Scotus and Wadding. That of the latter was drawn from a photograph of a wax mask taken of his face immediately after his death. A thoughtful, intellectual face it decidedly is, with its high forehead scarred by the wrinkles of age, its aquiline nose and its firm mouth that indicated a man of iron will and virile power.—*Eugene Davis in the Republic.*

A Legend of King Edward.

In the course of his sermon in Westminster Abbey on Holy Innocents' Day Dean Bradley said that was the day on which, eight centuries ago, the great church of the Abbey of Westminster was solemnly consecrated to the service of God. He wanted to tell them a curious legend which had come down from far-off early times, and which formed part of a story told on a stained-glass window recently unveiled in the chapter house.

The story was that of King Edward the Confessor, who had passed most of his time in poverty and misery before he ascended his throne. His courtiers thought to show him, who had known poverty so well, the wealth to which he had become entitled. He was taken into his treasury and shown casks full of gold and silver, which had been raised by heavy and oppressive taxation. The courtiers thought the king would be delighted with the sight, but they were mistaken. He saw on the top of this money a black and hideous demon fattening on the misery of the people, and the sight made him feel sorrow and pity, for it brought to his mind the sufferings of his poor subjects.

The king's heart was softened so he ordered the money to be returned, and so won the blessing of his people. From this story the Dean deduced the lesson of charity in the midst of prosperity.

Signor Salvini is in Florence. He never acts now, but he takes the keenest interest in all the theatrical affairs of London and elsewhere. He is in excellent health, and is reputed to be very rich.

FOR NINE YEARS—Mr. Samuel Bryon, Thedford, writes: "For nine years I suffered with ulcerated sores on my leg; I expended over \$100 to physicians, and tried every preparation I heard of or saw recommended for such disease but could get no relief. I at last was recommended to give Dr. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL a trial, which has resulted, after using eight bottles (using it internally and externally), in a complete cure. I believe it is the best medicine in the world, and I write this to let others know what it has done for me."