

THE RAMBLER'S LETTER.

A TRIP TO ORILLIA, MIDLAND AND PENETANGUISHENE.

A CATHOLIC CHURCH PICNIC—SHORTS OF THE GIBSONIAN ISLAND.

About three weeks ago, sound in wind, limb, and personal appearance, I could go down with the naked eye in the pleasant town of Orillia, sometimes called "Canada." A little more than one-third of a century has passed since my first visit to Orillia, then a struggling and "spacious hamlet" thrown on the surface of that strip of land called the "Narrows" which separated Lakes Couchiching and Simcoe, and what marvelous changes have taken place in that time!

Man made preparations for a colossal and mundane glory by feeding the hungry and the thirsty; to-day we skip to the left of the foot of winter's inclemency. Not far from where the "California Man" practices his philanthropic labors on the pedal extremities of Her Majesty's loyal Ontario subjects can be noticed an attractive site, a small, modern, and in the most artistic style, the words "Kano & Kano," Messrs. William and Charles Kano, the proprietors of the establishment over which the sign just alluded to hangs.

In religious circles the Catholic body holds its own fairly well in the parish of Orillia. Remaining over Sunday during a recent visit it was my good fortune to attend church during the celebration of High Mass, where I beheld a very large and highly decorous congregation, and where it was my pleasure to listen to a very eloquent and appropriate discourse delivered by the present pastor, Father McNamee, who not many years ago passed away at a comparatively early age amidst the sorrow of a whole people irrespective of country or creed, was, I believe, the first resident pastor of Orillia, and it is during his incumbency, not many years ago, that the present commodious church and costly presbytery were erected. The vacancy created by the death of Father Campbell was filled by the Rev. Father Duffy, who some years subsequently was transferred to St. Mary's, the opening thus made was supplied by the excellent man to whom reference has already been made.

Leaving Orillia, I pass Uthoff, Coldwater, Victoria Harbor, Wabushon and finally arrive at Midland, which place I regard as the most interesting place under my observation during my stay there, must form the subject of my next communication.

Archbishop Ireland in Paris

In the presence of the President of the Republic, M. Loubet; the United States Ambassador, General Horace Porter, and a brilliant assemblage of representative Frenchmen and the most prominent members of the American colony in Paris. For the purpose of the monument to Lafayette, the gift of American school children to France, was presented to the nation by Ferdinand W. Peck, president of the Lafayette Memorial Commission, and was accepted by President Loubet in the hall of France. The monument was unveiled by two boys representing the school children of France and America—Gustave Hennocque, great-grandson of the Marquis de Lafayette, and Paul Thompson, son of the projector of the monument. A list of donors by Richard Thompson, and then Mrs. Daniel Manning, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution, spoke.

A poem by Frank Putnam, dedicated to the occasion, was next read by Miss Tarquilla L. Vogt.

At the conclusion of the reading of the poem General Porter entered the tribune and introduced Archbishop Ireland. The Archbishop delivered an eloquent address in French, saying in part: "Gilbert de Motier, Marquis de Lafayette! Oh that words of mine could express the full burning love which our Revolutionary sires did bear to this illustrious son of old America! Oh that I could pronounce his name with the reverence with which my countrymen across the sea wish me to pronounce it before the people of France! In America two names are the idols of our national worship, the names of the great American soldier and the poet's song, the theme of the orator's discourse—the name of him who was the Father of his Country, George Washington, and the name of him who was the true and truest friend of Washington, Gilbert de Motier, Marquis de Lafayette. Oh that I could rank, the favor of court and king, high distinction in the service of his own country, the endearments of wife and child—all that ambition could covet or opportunity promise the youth of nineteen summers, but resolutely refused to accept with a far off people battling against fearful odds, and that at a moment when their fortunes were at their lowest ebb and hope had well-nigh abandoned their standards. When the agent of America in France, unable to consent to be even enabled to furnish ship to carry him and other volunteers, Lafayette said: 'I will buy a ship and bring your men with me.'

More than once when brilliant achievements were within reach he yielded for the sake of harmony his recognized right to precedence of command. And no episode of the whole war is so radiant with grandeur of soul, so redolent of sweetness of heart as that of Lafayette before Yorktown, awaiting the coming of Washington, that the honor of victory might belong to his beloved Commander-in-Chief.

"But much as Lafayette deserved and receives our love and honor in return for his personal services in the cause of America his chief title to the gratitude of our people is that his heroic spirit shines up before the entrance of France as the symbol of the magnanimity which Franco as a nation displayed toward our country in her laborious struggle for life and liberty. The value of this gift given to us by France in our war for independence is incalculable, the joy which the memory of it awakens in our souls is that which comes to us through the consciousness of our national life itself. France sent across the sea to shed their blood for us her brave soldiers and seamen, commanded by the very officer of her nobility. It was France's ships of war that protected our coasts and kept our ports open to commerce, reducing the British naval occupation of American waters to the harbor of New York. It was the cooperation of France's great navy that gave us the great victory of Yorktown. The victory of Yorktown was final and decisive. It won the independence of America."

Ancient Irish Art.

In the course of a lecture delivered in the Guild Hall, Sydney, New South Wales, Dr. O'Donnell said:—When a nation develops an original and distinct style of art, it is a sure sign that it has already attained a high degree of civilization; and if no other people had come down to us than the marvellous relics we possess of ancient Irish art, they alone would constitute overwhelming evidence that Ireland, once led the way of nations in the pursuit of humanizing studies. It is only within a comparatively recent period that early Irish art has received the attention it deserves; and this is strange when it is remembered that the Irish style of art, in its various branches, is of a degree of excellence, indeed, the best works that remain of this style are for inventive power, sound principle and masterly execution, the finest examples of ornament that ever were executed; and the style is in itself as distinctive as any of the styles of ancient Assyria, Egypt, or any other country that has ever been distinguished in art. The influence of ancient Irish art, Mr. W. J. Loftus, an English writer, says in his "The Arts of the Middle Ages," is that "There can be no doubt that the Irish missionaries brought with them to Iona and Lindisfarne the traditions and practice of art, and that they taught it to Christianity to the heathens of England." I might add, that the artistic skill of the Irish school of ornamentation extended through the British Isles, but throughout civilized Europe.

from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, and some of the most celebrated illuminated works in the various libraries of Europe are now known to have emanated from the ancient Irish school. I need only mention St. Dunstons, which still preserved as a relic at Fulda, in Germany; the Books of St. Kilians, still preserved at Wurzburg; those of St. Gall, in the public library of St. Gall in Switzerland; and those of St. Columbanus, which are in the hands of the principal portion of which is now to be seen in the Ambrosian library at Milan. The peculiarity of the style consists, speaking roughly, in the most artistic and ingenious disposition of interlacing threads, bars, or ribbons, varied by the introduction of extremely attenuated lizard-like reptiles, or sometimes birds, dogs, and other animals similarly interlaced. In the three main forms have specimens of the ancient Irish art been preserved to the present day. (1) The most elaborate form is that of the illuminated Gospels and Psalms. This is the oldest form, and dates back to the sixth century. (2) On stones, in the form of Celtic sculpture, as for example, baptismal fonts, church doorways, etc. (3) On metal, as in the case of brooches and "versniths" handwork. The specimens of the latter two forms date from about the beginning of the tenth to the middle of the twelfth century.

Taking first illuminated Irish art as exemplified on vellum, for it is not only the oldest form on which it has come down to us, but also the most elaborate, it is the most elaborate in elaboration and finish, the language of elegance falls every author who has attempted to do justice to those old manuscripts. Digby Wyatt says: "In delicacy of handling and minute and finished execution, nothing comparable to these early Irish manuscripts. When in Dublin some years ago I had the opportunity of studying very carefully the most marvellous of all—the Book of Kells. I attempted to copy some of the ornaments, but I was unable to utter a word. Westwood says: 'Ireland may justly be proud of the book of Kells. It is unquestionably the most elaborately illustrated manuscript of early art now in existence. I have examined the pages of the Book of Kells with a magnifying glass without detecting a false stroke or irregular interlacement, and when it is considered that many of these details consisted of spiral lines, and are so minute as to have been impossible to have been executed with the pen, it is really a marvellous problem not only with what eyes but also with what instruments they could have been executed. I have counted in the Book of Armagh, in a small space three-fourths of an inch in length, no less than 103 interlacements of a slender ribbon pattern, and each of these ribbons was edged on each side with a slender parallel white line.' Sir Edward Betham says: 'The Book of Kells, the Book of Durrow, and the Lindisfarne Gospels, are specimens of which all artists may be proud, and may be justly regarded as evidences of the civilization and high-art requirements

of their countrymen produced at a period when other nations of Europe were little removed from barbarism and barbarism. I have only time to deal with

A FEW OF THE MANUSCRIPTS which have come down to us, and I would ask you to bear in mind a few considerations which will enhance their interest and value by enabling you to understand the circumstances under which they were executed: (1) They were executed by the Irish monks from the 6th to the 9th centuries for the honor and glory of God, their aim being to render aid subservient to the enlightenment and beautification of the Gospels and books of the Bible, the titles were executed not on smooth, high-toned paper, but on an animal membrane—vellum—which is less smooth and less even in color. (2) They were done solely and entirely by hand. In those days the various mechanical instruments and appliances which a civilized age had discovered were unknown. (3) They were executed before the era of steel pens. The only instruments the monks had were quills. (4) They are all colored with various pigments which cannot reproduce on the modern printing press, and which are bright on the originals to-day as they were laid on by the monks 1,000 years ago. (5) The designs are all original and exclusively Irish; no previous similar designs existed in other countries; the plan each artist followed was copied from the Irish monks, and from them alone.

THE BOOK OF DURROW.

which is now in the Trinity College, Dublin, is believed to be the most ancient of all the Celtic manuscripts and to have been not only the property but the handiwork of St. Columba himself. Of its connection with the King's College, Argyll, where it has been the Protestant Bishop of Meath, 1621-1624, at a period when every emblem of the old faith was carefully sought out and ruthlessly destroyed, found this very ancient manuscript of the Gospels in the monastery of Durrow, which the monks said belonged to St. Columba. He decided that it should be preserved, and through his interest it was presented to Trinity College. It contains the usual request of the Irish scribe for a prayer expressed in Latin, of which this is the best example: "Thy blessedness, Oh, Holy Presbyter, Patrick, that whatsoever shall take this book into his hands may remember the writer, Columba, who have myself written this Gospel in the space of twelve days by the grace of God." The Book of Durrow consists of copies of the four Gospels, each being preceded by a symbolic representation of its respective evangelist, enclosed within an ornamental border, occupying the entire page. These symbols of the evangelists, like all early Irish drawings, are of a simple and grotesque character and contrast strongly from the standpoint of correct drawing with the ingenious ornamentation lavished on them and on the rest of the page.

THE BOOK OF KELLS.

This manuscript, for elaborateness of ornamentation and delicacy of design, is the most beautifully illuminated antiquity of any kind that remains in existence. It dates from the middle of the 9th century, and contained among the treasures of the Church of Kells, County Meath, down to 1621, when Archbishop Usher saved it from destruction. After his death, with his other inestimable treasures, it was presented to Trinity College, Dublin.

THE BOOK OF ARMAGH.

is the Book of Kells which is said to have been the copy that St. Columba stole from St. Finian's book, and which gave rise to the battle of Colindale and Columba's exile from Ireland. It has been handed down in the O'Donnell family for 1,000 years, and was in the hands of the late Lord of the land, a descendant of the clan free from mortal sin, as a mascot for victory—hence the name "cathach" or fighter.

Celtic Crosses.

The high crosses still remaining in Ireland are 45 in number, and of these 32 are richly ornamented, the ornaments being in the form of interlacing lines and animal figures. Many of the panels represent biblical subjects. The ornaments are never incised, but are carved in relief, and this shows that the ancient Irish must have used fine-edged metal chisels. Various theories have been advanced to explain the origin of the ring in the Celtic cross. The most plausible explanation is that the Celtic cross was a combination of the emblem of Christianity with the emblem of Druidism—the sun—a graceful conception of the Celtic cross, and of the Druid when Christianity was supplanting paganism. The dates of a few of the crosses have been determined with certainty. Dr. Petrie assigns the Tonn to 1125, and the North Cross at Clannacorney to 1130. There are many other ancient crosses at Monasterboice in County Louth, near the ruins of two ancient churches and a pillar tower.

A KAFFIR CONVERT.

From Basutoland, near the seat of the Government, we receive the following account of the conversion of the chief Massupha, a Kaffir of very unusual ability. Indeed, he was a sort of black Napoleon, and both Englishman and Boer found in him a worthy adversary of his genius. In his youth he was baptized by a Protestant missionary; but his new faith hardly penetrated deeper than did the baptismal water, and he soon returned to his old superstitions and paganism. He had great respect for the Church and its priests, and was often dismissed with scant courtesy those who attempted to inflame his mind against Catholics. In 1838 there was a grand reunion of the Kaffir nation, at which, among other things, religious questions were discussed, and the missionaries having attacked devotion to the Blessed Virgin, Massupha replied in a very effective speech, from which we quote: "A minister has said there is an impassable gulf between the heathen and the Christian, and that the heathen is a heathen, and that you give this explanation: Mary is the Mother of Jesus, and Jesus is the Son of God, and consequently a great chief, greater than Moses; hence Mary is the Mother of a great King. Now, the mother of a

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