

THE BOOK OF KELLS.

Gleanings By "Cruz."

This particular time, when the question of the rival of the Gaelic tongue, and also of Irish music and literature has taken such a hold on the people, it cannot be but of great interest for us to have an idea of some of the monumental works left by great Irishmen of the past.

ILLUMINATION.—"It is chiefly a sort of beautiful interlaced work formed of bands, ribbons and cords, which are twisted and interwoven in the most intricate way, mixed up with waves and spirals, and sometimes you see the faces or forms of dragons, serpents, or other strange-looking animals, their tails or ears, or tongues lengthened out and wavy, till they become mixed up with the general design, and sometimes odd-looking human faces or full figures of men or of angels.

BOOK OF KELLS.—Dr. Westwood, a famous English archaeologist, speaking of the Book of Kells, which is now in the Dublin University, Ireland, pronounced it "the most beautiful book in the world."

ITS PROBABLE DATE.—In regard to the time when the Book of Kells was made we cannot give exact dates. The work must have taken many years, perhaps half a century.

ing the second half of the seventh. It cannot well be later; the saints in it are represented with a Celtic tansure, which consisted in shaving the front of the hair from ear to ear.

THE MANUSCRIPT.—The Irish Academy holds the real manuscript of St. Columba. They may never have heard of the law of "copyright" in those days, yet we learn that St. Columba requested permission of Bishop Molaise to copy the gospels of St. Finan, which had lately been placed in the Episcopal Cathedral.

The text of the Book of Kells is written in the noble semi-unic character adopted by all the Irish scribes of the period, but it is the illustrations, borders, initial letters, and other special ornamentations, that render it a perfect house of artistic wealth.

AUTHORITIES SPEAK.—In referring to the minuteness and almost miraculous correctness of the drawing Prof. Westwood mentions that:—"With the aid of a powerful lens, he counted within the space of one inch, one hundred and sixty interlacings of bands or ribbons, each ribbon composed of a strip of white, bordered on each side by a black strip!"

Dr. Middleton, professor of Fine Arts in Cambridge University, in his work on illuminated manuscripts, says:—"No words can describe the intricate delicacy of the ornamentation of this book, lavishly decorated as it is with all the different varieties of ingeniously intricate and knotted lines of color, plaited in and out with such complicated interlacement that one cannot look at the page without astonishment at the combined taste, patience, unflinching certainty of touch and imaginative ingenuity of the artists."

"With regard to the intricate interlaced ornaments in which, with the aid of a lens, each line can be followed out in its windings and never found to break off or lead to an impossible loop of knotting, it is evident that the artist must have enjoyed not only an aesthetic pleasure in the invention of his pattern, but must also have had a distinct intellectual enjoyment of his work such as a skillful mathematician feels in working out a complicated mathematical problem."

The same writer from whom the principal points of this article, or gleanings, have been taken, makes the following interesting statements:—"It may be as well to state that the scribes of the Irish manuscripts were evidently much indebted to the goldsmiths' art, which, judging by the museum of the Irish Academy, must have attained an unapproachable delicacy and beauty in Ireland during the first centuries of the Christian era. Dr. Keller considers the spirals the most difficult of the patterns. 'They are,' says he, 'real masterpieces which furnish magnificent evidence of the extraordinary firmness of the hand of the artist! The beautiful trumpet pattern of which so much has been written is the expansion of the spiral into something in the form of a trumpet. Some years ago an attempt was made to issue a series of photographic reproductions of the principal pages and most striking initials, but it was found impossible to reproduce, by any mechanical process, the colors, which are as fresh and as brilliant to-day as when the artist laid them on twelve centuries ago.'"

It may as well be here added in conclusion that the Book of Armagh, containing among many other pieces, a Life of St. Patrick, and a complete copy of the New Testament in Latin, is almost as beautifully written as the Book of Kells. It was finished in 807 by the skillful scribe,

Ferdonnach of Armagh, and is now in Trinity College, Dublin. Another book, scarcely inferior in beauty of execution to the Book of Kells, is preserved in the Archbishop's Library, at Lambeth. It is a copy of the Gospels, now known as the Book of MacDurnan, written in Ireland, some time from 800 to 850. To give a list of the books and manuscripts that have been discovered and the origins of which are traceable to the Irish monks and scribes would take the proportions of a catalogue; and this revival of Gaelic language and literature will bring forth others yet of priceless value.

The C.M.B.A. of America

The Supreme Council of the Catholic Mutual Benevolent Association of America held its convention in Pittsburg recently. President Hynes was in the chair. The chief topic for consideration was the preparation of a new assessment rate.

The committee appointed to prepare a schedule of new rates was as follows: W. C. Shields, Corry; J. F. Keena, Detroit; M. J. Keen, Buffalo; James L. Whalen, Cleveland; M. J. McMahon, Pittsburg; Robert Wigger, New York; Thomas L. McAvoy, New York; J. B. Fox, Bradford; H. Preusser, Cleveland; J. B. Schrems, Grand Rapids; L. H. Hannen, Burlington, Kan.; P. F. McCaffrey, Montreal; Edward Cadieux, Holyoke, Mass.

That committee advised the adoption of the following rates:—

Table with 3 columns: Age, Amt., Age, Amt. Rows show rates for ages 16 to 48, with amounts ranging from \$1.00 to \$3.09.

The age with the given amount is for new members and affects the present members to this extent, that if a member who is now 50 years of age and scheduled at \$3.09 per \$1,000 under the new rate, became a member at 25 years of age, he would now pay the rate as set forth in the new table of rates; and that would be based upon the age of entry, \$1.08 per \$1,000 per month; and, again, if that person was initiated at the age of 40 years, he would pay under this new rate \$1.35 per \$1,000 per month.

The report was adopted without a dissenting vote.

The report of the Supreme Recorder, Joseph Cameron, shows the funds for the triennial term to be as follows: Beneficiary, \$3,177,533.12; general, \$91,855.25; reserve, \$1,090,524.58. Of the latter fund \$650,128.72 was in reserve three years ago, and the amount accumulated during the term ending was \$440,395.86. During the triennial period \$3,171,656.14 was paid out in death benefits, and \$74,908.62 for expenses. Of the latter \$22,387.28 was for official papers and \$8,469.29 for organizing purposes.

Three years ago the membership was 51,616 and 17,667 new members were added during the term. The number of deaths was 1,969, and lapses 5,409, leaving a total membership on October 1 of 61,936.

At the closing session of the convention on October 15 Detroit was selected as the next meeting place.

A cablegram was read from Pope Pius X. authorizing Bishop Phelan to grant the Pontifical Benediction.

These officers were elected for the ensuing term: Supreme President, John J. Hynes, Buffalo, N.Y., re-elected by acclamation; Supreme first vice-president, William Muench, Syracuse, N.Y.; Supreme second vice-president, M. A. Carmody, Pittsburg; Supreme Recorder, Joseph Cameron, Hornellsville, N.Y., re-elected; Supreme treasurer, James M. Welsh, Hornellsville, N.Y.; Supreme marshal, Jeremiah Nehim, Buffalo, N.Y.; Supreme guard, Patrick Flannery, Quebec; Supreme trustees, for six years, Thomas P. Hoban, Scranton, Pa.; Frank Randel, Cleveland, Ohio; James L. Whalen, Rochester, N. Y. The other two members who remain in office till the next convention are Rev. M. J. Keen, Buffalo, N.Y., and John H. Breen, Detroit, Mich. Legal adviser, J. F. Keena, Detroit, Mich.; law committee, M. J. McMahon, Pittsburg; Herman Preusser, Cleveland, and Warren A. Carter, Ludington, Mich.; Supreme finance committee, J. B. Fox, Bradford, Pa.; F. R. Forster, Massillon, Ohio, and John B. Todanier, Detroit.

Our Curbstone Observer ON BRAINY MEN.

It is not exactly on the subject of the "men" that I suppose writing a few lines this week, but upon the qualifying word "Brainy." So frequently have I met with this expression during the past year or so, and so general is becoming the use of it, even in what are supposed to be reputable American publications, that I cannot help drawing attention to it.

That committee advised the adoption of the following rates:— Age. Amt. Age. Amt. 16 ... 93 17 ... 94 18 ... 95 19 ... 96 20 ... 97 21 ... 98 22 ... 1.00 23 ... 1.03 24 ... 1.06 25 ... 1.08 26 ... 1.10 27 ... 1.14 28 ... 1.20 29 ... 1.25 30 ... 1.30 31 ... 1.35 32 ... 1.40 33 ... 1.45 34 ... 1.51 35 ... 1.58 36 ... 1.65 37 ... 1.72 38 ... 1.79 39 ... 1.87 40 ... 1.95 41 ... 2.04 42 ... 2.14 43 ... 2.22 44 ... 2.33 45 ... 2.44 46 ... 2.56 47 ... 2.78 48 ... 2.93 49 and over... 3.09

MY OBSERVATIONS.—All this may seem a queer preface. The reader may wonder what has possessed the Curbstone Observer to take upon himself the duties of a language censor. It is just because I have such splendid and exceptional opportunities of observation that I deem it my privilege to dot down whatever I may think can benefit my fellow-citizens.

During the past twenty years, or so, and especially during the last illness of the late illustrious Pontiff, Leo XIII., few names were better known, and few men in public positions less known, than Cavalier Centra, who was valet to the Holy Father. Now that his days of office are over Centra will no longer have his name figuring in the press of the great world, and it is not probable that his person will be even thought of outside his own immediate circle of friends.

score; it may be that a man who has trod the curbstone as long as I have should not be so particular and should have become accustomed to the language of the street; but what can I do if I am so constituted? No amount of intimacy with vulgarity could ever make me sufficiently accustomed to it to allow it to pass without a feeling of repugnance. And it is the same with slang; I could never become accustomed to it. Even if the word "brainy" were to be accepted into the English language and to be placed in a dictionary, I would not use it, nor would the use of it by others ever sound agreeably in my ears.

CONCLUSION.—It may be that my observations, as I dot them down, at hap-hazard, and just as the subjects present themselves to me are somewhat disjointed. But, as a judge of our courts said, on a recent occasion of congratulations, "I have tried to do the work under the eye of God;" by this I mean that I have sought to draw from every evil that I have met with some warning for the young people especially, and from every good trait of character, every virtuous deed, and every worthy motive, another lesson of imitation for those who may happen to read my writings. The benefit that they may derive—small though it be—is about my only recompense, while the assurance that no wrong or injury has ever been done by aught that I glean on the curbstone is my chief consolation.

The Valet of Leo XIII.

During the past twenty years, or so, and especially during the last illness of the late illustrious Pontiff, Leo XIII., few names were better known, and few men in public positions less known, than Cavalier Centra, who was valet to the Holy Father. Now that his days of office are over Centra will no longer have his name figuring in the press of the great world, and it is not probable that his person will be even thought of outside his own immediate circle of friends.

An account of him says that he is with a large, clean-shaven face, and "a vigorous and fine-looking man, sparkling eyes. His task was a delicate and responsible one. He rose before the Pope, and only went to bed when everything had been set in order for the night. He helped the Pope to dress and undress, served his meals and many other important charges. He was never far from the Vatican, because he knew he was very useful to his venerable master. He is a cultivated man, with a kindly disposition and infinite tact. Endless people knock at his door and sometimes they are hard to dispose of; but he is a thorough diplomatist, polite and witty as a first secretary of legation. When he used to be asked, however, if the alarming news published by the papers was true he would stare in blank amazement and reassure you at once; to tell him that the Pope was ill was the same as charging him with a crime."

These few notes are of interests to Catholics, for we all hold in deep and lasting veneration the memory of the great and saintly Pope whom God called to Himself a few months ago; and all who were in his confidence, who served him well, and who were beloved by him also merit our recognition. And though not in the most elevated capacity—like a Secretary of State, or a Prefect of a Sacred College—still Centra was certainly the one nearest to Leo XIII. in the intimacy of the Pontiff's life.

Pen Pictures Of The Laity.

BUSINESS FIRST.—A correspondent of the "Catholic Union and Times," of Buffalo, in a timely note, which we give below, touches upon a matter which concerns professional and business men in other cities as well as Buffalo. He says:—

I went into a young Catholic professional man's place of business the other day, and while waiting for the y. c. p. m. to appear, glanced over his office table. I found the "Outlook," the "Christian Herald," one or two other distinctly Protestant publications, the "Ladies' Home Journal, Youth's Companion," and several of the current ten cent magazines. Did I find the "Messenger of the Sacred Heart," "Catholic World Magazine," "Donahoe's," or any other Catholic magazine or periodical? Not the faintest sign. I asked a reason for this absence of Catholic literature and my misguided young friend said he "didn't believe in mixing his business with his religion." I am certain he thought himself entitled to much credit for his supposed liberality in displaying the Protestant periodicals; this, to him, was a proof of broadmindedness, while to have a Catholic paper or magazine about would be mixing religion and business! This young fellow has a considerable Catholic patronage, and while I do not say that he should fill his office table with an obtrusive collection of Catholic literature, he might find room for at least one exhibit in the mass of heretical rubbish his poor taste and poorer business judgment impels him to place before his patrons. Why, for example, does he not have a copy of "My New Curate," "Luke Delmage," or some other good Catholic novel? The occasional reading of a chapter from these books by his non-Catholic customers would undoubtedly give them a knowledge of Catholic fiction whose beneficial results the true inheritor of the faith should ever keep in mind.

I was inclined to "have it out" with my friend then and there, but between pity and indignation I did not feel equal to a calm discussion, so let the matter drop with the remark that if the situation had none other than a business aspect to him, it might be well to banish the non-Catholic periodicals and feed his patrons on the intellectual pabulum to be found in the "Ladies' Home Journal" and stuff of that calibre. I have no doubt that he considers me a narrow-minded bigot for daring to impugn his judgment.

RIGHT KIND OF DEVOTION.—In a sermon on "Catholic Devotions" at St. John's Cathedral, Syracuse, recently, Bishop Ludden referred to the alleged apparition or vision at Oswego, which caused a great stir for a few days, and to pilgrimages taken to shrines in places far from home.

Referring to the Oswego incident, where the shadow of a cross was said to rest above the bier of a devout Catholic woman, and where the family is said to have charged admission to the room, the Bishop said such things were not to be credited by the people, and that Catholics needed no such evidences, even if true, to enliven their faith. He said that he was of the opinion that the whole affair smacked of commercialism that it was gotten up as a money-making scheme.

Regarding pilgrimages to far-away shrines involving much physical exertion, while the Bishop did not disapprove of the pious practices incident to such devotions, he was of the opinion that there are altogether too many of these pilgrimages, involving expense, trouble and danger, to be wholesome or conducive to the real worship of the Blessed Sacrament, the center of all Catholic devotion.

He called attention to the lack of reverence, shown by many Catholics in the church in the manner in which they bless themselves and when they genuflect. He compared their style of blessing to the performance gone through in brushing a fly or mosquito from the head or face, and their genuflections to the short and sudden movement caused by stepping on a match.

He said that he had visited many holy shrines made sacred by the traditions of our Saviour and that he had never seen an apparition or anything to suggest the supernatural. He advised his hearers to cultivate their piety to the greatest of all devotions—the sacrament of the altar—and to place little credence in alleged visions or making costly and tedious trips to distant shrines.

Bequests For Masses An Absolute Gift.

The most sweeping ruling made by an American court concerning a matter of Catholic faith was last week made by Surrogate Getton, of Rochester, N.Y. "Catholic Union and Times" holds that a bequest to Masses for the repose of the donor is an absolute gift, the case under consideration a claim against the estate of the priest after the donor's death.

The case is that of John J. Keenan, administrator of the estate of Richard J. Keenan. Through Murphy & Keenan, he put in a \$500 willed Father's Masses by Daniel Lane died July 3, 1897, and was buried May 13, 1900. No Masses were performed by either Mr. Keenan or the administrator, F. Kinney, representing the estate of the deceased.

Judge Benton says: "It is natural to suppose that a bequest for Masses would so distrust his legatee as to insist that the services be performed before the money is paid. Such a bequest, he holds, is on condition precedent. The decision is that the bequest is a duty laid on the conscience of the clergy, and that the legacy vests in the priest and passes to his representative who is in a position to claim its payment. The case is parallel in the United States courts."

Following is the full text of the decision:—

Daniel Lane died July 3, 1897. He was admitted to the probate court on Oct. 25, 1897. In his will he bequeathed "unto Reverend Father Richard J. Keenan, of the Cathedral, Rochester, N. Y., the sum of five hundred dollars (\$500) for Masses for the repose of my soul." This is one of the bequests to other priests. The bequest is challenged. Father Keenan died May 13, 1900. He was one of the executors of the will of Mr. Lane, but renounced the executorship. This bequest creates no trust. It does not attempt to do anything that is not within the power of the testator. It is one of those cases like Holland v. Ives (108 N. Y., 312), which do not create trusts, but are merely provisions invalid for some reason in not naming the beneficiary. It is an absolute gift to the named and is valid. A gift of a certain sum to a priest for Masses for the testator's soul is a valid gift to take effect at the death of the testator. Baker, 40 L. R. A. 717.

In McHugh v. McCall, 40 N. Y., 724, the court says: "We know of no legal reason why any person who is a member of the Catholic faith believing in the efficacy of Masses, cannot make a gift or bequest to any priest of any sum out of his property for Masses for the repose of his soul or the souls of others, or for any other purpose."

In Holland v. Alcock (supra), the court says: "If the testator had a sum of money to be incorporated in Roman Catholic churches, duly designated by the testator, and authorized by the church to receive such bequests for the purpose of solemnizing Masses, a question would arise."

A case very similar to the one at issue arose in Kansas. A bequest was made in the following language: "I give and bequeath unto Reverend James Collins for his grandmother's and her soul." The court held that the bequest was valid. The will does not create a trust. The gift is to the person named. The language in which it is made is persuasive, expressive of desire, but the vesting of the gift is not conditional, upon the performance of the Masses, and upon the completion of the Masses alone is laid the burden of the bequest. The testatrix might have made the gift in the usual terms, coupled with it an injunction to perform the solemn religious ceremony.