

## ILLUSTRIOUS IRISHMEN.

Sons of the Gael who Won Fame on the Continent

From the *Revue*. Boston

There is nothing so pathetically picturesque in the history of Irish exiles on the continent of Europe as the pilgrimage of Hugh O'Neill, the venerable chieftain of Tyrone and Dungannon, O'Donnell of Tyrconnell and their families and camp followers to the Eternal City. Driven from their native land by the persecution and treachery of their English enemies, they had to seek refuge in a French bark riding on the waters of Lough Swilly, which bore them safely to the friendly shores of France. They left Ireland in the fall of 1607. They landed at the port of Quillebeuf on the Seine twenty-one days after they had caught the last glimpse of the headlands of Donegal. O'Neill received an enthusiastic reception from the inhabitants of that town. The fame of his military glory had preceded him all over Europe; and when Henry IV., King of France and Navarre, one of the bravest warriors of Europe, heard of the visit paid to his country by the Dungannon chief, for whom he had always conceived a profound admiration, he is reported to have said with a certain excusable dash of egotism:

"There is not another soldier in the world outside the skins of Tyrone and myself."

The Irish exiles proceeded to Rouen, where O'Neill paid his respects to the Governor of Normandy, who received him very courteously. The English ambassador at Paris resented this conduct on the part of the Governor and requested Henry IV. to hand over to him as England's representative these "traitors to the English Crown." The King indignantly refused to accede to such an impudent request. "From Rouen," writes Rev. Father C. P. Meehan, the historian of the "Flight of the Earls," "they travelled as rapidly as they could to Amiens, and visited the splendid cathedral in that city, where they were shown the head of St. John the Baptist. All who had heard of their flight and arrival gave them a cordial welcome, especially when they learned that the English ambassador had done his utmost to get possession of their persons." From France they proceeded to Belgium, where they were greeted with the friendliest of welcomes. A deputation of Irish and Spanish officers was the first to hail their arrival. At Antwerp the burgomeister and ecclesiastical dignitaries received O'Neill with open arms. In Brussels a public banquet was tendered him at the expense of Spinola, the generalissimo of the Spanish army in Flanders. Among the distinguished invited guests who were present on that memorable occasion were the Duke d'Ossuna, vicoroy of Sicily, Cardinal Bentivoglio, the nuncio of Pope Paul V. in the Lowlands, and the Spanish ambassador. The entertainment must have been carried out on quite a Lucullan style, for O'Keenan, the Gaelic historian, states that "it was a banquet of which a king might well feel proud, and ere was gold and silver plate of which any crowned head in Christendom might not have been ashamed."

From Brussels the exiled group proceeded to Louvain, where by orders of the Archduke Albert, representative of the King and Queen of Spain in Flanders, the Castle of Caesar, as it was called, situated on the summit of a gentle slope overlooking the town, was placed at O'Neill's disposal, while his followers were hospitably entertained by the inhabitants. Tradition has it that this historic pile was built by Julius Cæsar after he had conquered the Belgæ, whom he designated as "bravest of the Gauls." Here O'Neill received a deputation of Irish students of the university. "When the Christ-

mas of 1607 came around," writes Father Meehan, "the burgomeister and the leading citizens of Louvain waited on O'Neill, and paid him and O'Donnell all the usual compliments, making them presents and sending them minstrels to perform in their residences." Another Irish writer, Rev. Father Treacy, adds that "the heart of O'Neill must have gladdened, as he sat in the palace of Charles V. and listened to Irish martial airs played in his honor by the countrymen of Godfrey the Great, 'the shining western star.'" Before leaving Louvain O'Neill addressed the burghers as follows: "I leave you hostages of my affections in my son Henry, who commands the Irish regiment, and my two younger sons, who, I pray God, may grow up worthy of your esteem and admiration." Some years after his father's departure one of these sons, Bernard O'Neill, met a tragic fate. When he reached his 9th year he was appointed one of the pages of the Archduke of Spain in Brussels. Bernard was, it seems, a very bright and handsome boy, and, according to Brother Mooney, a Franciscan, who was his tutor at the time, "a young rosebud redolent of the choicest virtues." He was found in a chamber of the archduke's palace one morning with his hands tied behind his back, strangled on his bed. Brother Mooney attributed the brutal murder to some secret enemy of the O'Neill family, who was jealous of the talented juvenile. "Alas!" he adds, "it is the fate of genius to be looked on with a jaundiced eye; while no one envies the dunce that crawls its slimy way along." The boy's remains were conveyed to Louvain, where they were interred in the Irish Franciscan convent in that city.

O'Neill and his companions passed through Bastogne and other towns in Spanish Flanders, and reached Pont-a-Mousson, where they were received by the Duke of Lorraine at Nancy. Joustings and tournaments, in which the exiles took part, were given by the Duke in their honor. Their next destination was Lucerne, Switzerland, where they were entertained by the Papal nuncio, who was dispatched from Rome by Pope Paul V. for that purpose. The nuncio provided the "good lie compagne," as they are called in the quaint old annals of the period, with guides for the passage of the Mount St. Gothard into Italy. The mountain road at that time was much more jagged and dangerous than it is to day, and several members of O'Neill's little contingents met with serious accidents high up among the eternal glaciers. When they reached the summit of the mountain the good monks of the monastery of St. Bernard gave them food and shelter for several days, at the expiration of which period they descended into the sunny plains of Lombardy. They were received with much enthusiasm in Bellinzona, the first Italian town on the southern side of the Alps. Milan illumined itself in honor of the exiles, and the governor of that city, the Conde de Fuentes, and his staff met them at the gates. Milan being at that time in the possession of the Spaniards, the English ambassador, Cornwallis by name, remonstrated with the Spanish King at Madrid, but that monarch, who was a devoted friend of O'Neill and O'Donnell, treated the remonstrance with silent contempt, whereupon Cornwallis wrote a complaint to the lords of the privy council, London, in which he used the following outrageous and lying language in reference to the exiles: "Having remonstrated with the King over the welcome accorded in Milan to these Irish fugitives, people condemned and contemned by those of their own nation (!) and such as could not but daily expect the heavy hands of God's justice for their so many and detestable crimes. . . . For my own particular, I made no mere account of

them than of 30 many fleas; neither did the King, my master, otherwise esteem them but as men reprobated both of God and the world for their facinorous (sic) actions towards others, and inexcusable ingratitude to himself." Cornwallis was an adopt in cant, as well as in the use of language that reached perilously near the confines of indocency. He was a bitter enemy of everyone and everything Irish.

The only state in Europe that barred its gates to the exiles was the republic of Venice. This interdiction of Venetian territory was due to English influence with Donato Leonardo, the leading Doge of that day, who was anxious to keep on friendly terms with England. This scurvy treatment of O'Neill and his companions is the blackest spot on the escutcheon of the Queen City of the Adriatic.

When they reached Rome in the early summer of 1608, they were met at the gates by Dr. Lombard, Archbishop of Armagh, who was accompanied by several cardinals. A palace was placed at the disposal of O'Neill and O'Donnell, and accommodation was also provided for the others. Cardinal Borghese, the brother of the then reigning Pontiff, Paul V., visited the chieftains and welcomed them to Rome in the name of His Holiness. "The day after their arrival," writes Father Meehan, "they proceeded to the Papal Palace on the Quirinal, and were cordially received by the Holy Father, who questioned them minutely about all the incidents of their flight and journey, and then gave to each his apostolic blessing. His Holiness was deeply affected by the story of their adventures, and congratulated them on their escape from the hands of those who were determined on sacrificing their lives." The Pope and King of Spain settled pensions for life on the Irish exiles, which were paid monthly. On Trinity Sunday, 1608, Paul V. received O'Neill's wife and other Irish ladies in the gardens of the Quirinal, and addressed words of the most heartfelt kindness to each of them.

O'Donnell did not long survive his escape from the hands of the English Philistines. He contracted malarial fever, a deadly summer visitant from the swamps of the Roman *campagna*, and died on the 27th of July, 1608. His remains were laid out in state in the Salviati palace, and were finally deposited in the church of St. Peter's on Montorio. Other members of the exiled colony, including O'Neill's eldest son, succumbed shortly afterwards to the same deadly disease. O'Neill was left almost alone in the twilight of his career. His only companions were the genial Dr. Lombard and Right Rev. Florence Conry, Archbishop of Tuam. The old chieftain of Ulster was struck blind in the spring of 1616, and expired of intermittent fever on July 20th, 1616. Thus perished an exile far from the green isle which he loved so well and served so devotedly, one of the greatest of Irish military commanders and one of the most unselfish and chivalrous of patrons. He had the satisfaction at least of defeating the English battalions on several storied fields, and of compelling England to fear him; but he was not responsible for the defeat and disasters that subsequently overwhelmed him and his faithful companion-in-arms, O'Donnell.

I cannot help reproducing the eloquent description given by Father Meehan of the funeral of the great Irish chief. It runs as follows: "Clothed in the Franciscan habit, and laid on a bier, his corpse was borne by twelve stalwart Irishmen along the Longara, the Spanish ambassador and several members of the leading Roman nobility holding the pall. Religious of all orders with lighted torches preceded and followed the bier, chanting the psalms with

which the Church accompanies her departed faithful to the confines of eternity. As the long procession slowly ascended the acclivity of the Janiculum, the tolling of a hundred bells, the throb of muffled drums and the minute guns of Santa Angelo announced to the imperial city, to the shepherds on the campagna and the vine dressers among the Alban hills that an illustrious personage was then about to be laid in his last resting place. In obedience to the Pontiff's command, the Church of Montorio was draped in mourning, and nothing was omitted that could lend deepest solemnity to the funeral gloom. Cardinals, Roman patricians and ambassadors from foreign courts assisted at the Mass of requiem; and when the last absolution was pronounced the hands of his fellow exiles deposited the remains of their great chieftain beside those of his son, the Baron of Dungannon, and 'The O'Donnell of Tyrconnell.'"

The slabs of marble which cover these remains are on a level with the floor of the church, and are situated in front of the high altar, behind which hangs that remarkable painting, "The Crucifixion of St. Peter," by Guido. The edges of these slabs are pavements of green, black and white colors, within which are engraved the epitaphs in Latin to the memory of the deceased chieftains. The inscriptions on these tombs would have been effaced years ago, were it not for Mr. James Molyneux Caulfield, afterwards Lord Charlemont, who, in 1843, had the words on the slab reproduced, and the previous reliefs, which were much worn, replaced. All this he did at his own expense. Mr. Caulfield's mother was a member of the House of Tyrconnell. The slabs would have been removed some time afterward by workmen who were ordered to renew the entire floor of the church were it not that a Dominican priest, Father Russell, reminded the proper ecclesiastical authorities of the vandalism that was about to be perpetrated—with the result that the slabs were left untouched.

One of the direct descendants of Hugh O'Neill is the Viscount O'Neill de Tyrone, who is at present one of the leading members of the ancient Irish colony in Paris. He lives in a sumptuous residence on the Champs Elysees, and is constant attendant at the annual Patrick nights' banquets in the French capital. The Viscount has translated into good French verse many of the Irish melodies of Thomas Moore.

EUGENE DAVIS.

## Crabs That Dress Themselves.

It is not generally known that there are some crabs that actually dress themselves. Professor Weldon, in a recent lecture upon crabs and their habits, stated that some species array themselves elaborately by gathering bits of seaweed, chewing the ends, and sticking them on the shell, so as to look like a stone covered with weeds. They spend hours, with the utmost perseverance, in making these pieces adhere by trying the same piece over and over again till they succeed. They have a fine sense of symmetry, and always put a red piece on one limb to match the red piece they have put on the other, and a green piece to match a green piece, though how they know red from green in the dark pools where they live is hard to say, unless it is by taste or smell. When once their dress is completed, it improves the older it becomes, as the weed actually grows on them.

Benzler's Catholic Home Annual, 1894.

We have just received a supply of this very popular annual. It contains the usual good things in the shape of stories, poems, historical and biographical sketches, and plenty of pretty, interesting pictures. Price by mail 25c., in stamps or scrip. Address, CATHOLIC REGISTER Publishing Co., Ltd., Toronto, Ont.