

The National Language.

BY "CRUX."

HERE we are, at last, after so many long months of peripatations in all directions, arrived at the subject which was first proposed for our study; the national language of Ireland. I will at once enter upon this subject and complete my quotations from Davis, by reproducing, as a preface, his essay on the "National Language." Once more, it will serve our present purpose, and at the same time help to revive some of those admirable gems of Irish literature, of which his were far from being the less significant. Read well what follows:—

Men are ever valued most for peculiar and original qualities. A man who can only talk common-place, and act according to routine, has little weight. To speak, to look, and do what your own soul from its depths orders you, are credentials of greatness which all men understand and acknowledge. Such a man's dictum has more influence than the reasoning of an imitative or common-place man. He fills his circle with confidence. He is self-possessed, firm, accurate, and daring. Such men are the pioneers of civilization, and the rulers of the human heart.

Why should not nations be judged thus? Is not a full indulgence of its natural tendencies essential to a "people's" greatness? Force the manners, dress, language, and constitution of Russia, or Italy, or Norway, or America, and you instantly stunt and distort the whole mind of either people.

The language which grows up with a people, is conformed to their organs, descriptive of their climate, constitution, and manners, mingled inseparably with their history and their soil, fitted beyond any other language to express their prevalent thoughts in the most natural and efficient way.

To impose another language on such a people is to send their history adrift among the accidents of translation—it is to tear their identity from all places—it is to substitute arbitrary signs for picturesque and suggestive names—it is to cut off the entail of feeling, and separate the people from their forefathers by a deep gulf—it is to corrupt their very organs, and abridge their power of expression. The language of a nation's youth is the only easy and full speech for its manhood and for its age. And when the language of its cradle goes, itself craves a tomb.

What business has a Russian for the rippling language of Italy or India? How could a Greek distort his organs and his soul to speak Dutch upon the sides of Hymetus, or the beach of Salamis, or on the waste where once was Sparta? And is it befitting the fiery, delicate-organed Celt to abandon his beautiful tongue docile and spirited as an Arab, "sweet as music, strong as the nave"—is it befitting him to abandon this wild liquid speech for the mongrel of a hundred breeds called English, which, powerful though it be, cracks and bangs about the Celt who tries to use it?

As already extracts of this essay have been quoted, away back in mid-winter, I will skip some passages that do not directly bear upon the points we are soon to study, and I will repeat others that are of great moment, and which may have been forgotten by the reader, but which I desire to bind closely to our coming arguments.

In another place Davis says:—How unnatural—how corrupting is it for us, three-fourths of whom are of Celtic blood, to speak a medley of Teutonic dialects. . . . For centuries upon centuries Irish principles; because each year, by the Church; because of co-operation of clergy; and of their members, single-mindedly in New Ireland

Nothing can make us believe that it is natural or honorable for the Irish to speak the speech of the

alien, the invader, and to abandon the language of our kings and heroes. What! give up the tongue of Ollamh Fodhla and Brian Boru, the tongue of McCarthy and the O'Neals, the tongue of Sarsfield's, Curran's, Mathew's, and O'Connell's boyhood, for that of Stratford and Poyning's, Sussex, Kirk, and Cromwell! . . .

The balance of this quotation will be found in one of the back numbers of the "True Witness," in this series, some need not continue it; but we must take up the following, as being of utmost importance in our present-day movement. He says: The want of scientific words in Irish is undeniable, and doubtless we should adopt the existing names into our language. The Germans have done the same thing, and no one calls German mongrel on that account. Most of these names are clumsy and extravagant; they are almost all derived from Greek or Latin, and cut as foreign a figure in French and English as they would in Irish. Once Irish was recognized as a language to be learned as such as French or Italian, our dictionaries would fill up, and our vocabularies ramify, to suit all the wants of life and conversation. These objections are ingenious refinements, however, rarely thought of till after the other and great objection has been answered.

The usual objection to attempting the revival of Irish is, that it could not succeed.

If an attempt were made to introduce Irish, either through the national schools, or the courts of law, into the eastern side of the island, it would certainly fail, and reaction might extinguish it altogether. But no one contemplates this sane as a dream of what may happen a hundred years hence. It is quite another thing, to say, as we do, that the Irish language should be cherished, taught, and esteemed, and that it can be preserved and gradually extended. What we seek is that the people of the upper classes should have their children taught the language which explains our names of persons or places, our older history, and our music, and which is spoken in the majority of our counties, rather than Italian, German, or French. It would be more useful in life, more serviceable to the taste and genius of young people, and a more flexible accomplishment for an Irish man or woman to speak, sing, or write Irish than French.

At present the middle classes think it a sign of vulgarity to speak Irish—the children are everywhere taught English and English alone in schools—and, what is worse, they are urged by rewards and punishments to speak it at home, for English is the language of their masters. Now, we think the example and exertions of the upper classes would be sufficient to set the opposite and better fashion of preferring Irish; and, even as a matter of taste, we think them bound to do so. And we ask it of the pride, the patriotism, and the hearts of our farmers and shopkeepers, will they try to drive out of their children's minds the native language of almost every great man we had, from Brian Boru to O'Connell—will they meanly sacrifice the language which names their hills, and towns, and music, to the tongue of the stranger?

The example of the upper classes would extend and develop a modern Irish literature, and the hearty support they have given to the Archaeological Society makes us hope that they will have sense and spirit to do so.

It must be remembered that the foregoing was written sixty years ago, before a movement such as we have to-day started. But it serves to show how like that of to-day was the spirit of that time.

A THEATRE FOR THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS.

The \$100,000 theatre just completed in New Rochelle by the Knights of Columbus contains the lodge rooms of the local council, and is said to be finest building which the Knights have put up anywhere in the United States. The seating capacity is about 2,000, and the stage is exceeded in size by only three New York theatres.

ARRIVED FROM FRANCE.

Among the passengers on the French liner Champagne, which arrived at New York, April 19, was a number of monks and nuns, who have been forced to leave France. The monks are on their way to Montreal. Three Sisters of the Sacred Heart will go to the convent of that order, New York city, and three others of the Order of St. Joseph will also remain in New York.

Irish Catholic Graduates in Medicine.

We print at the top of this column a likeness of a young Irish Catholic, Dr. W. W. Kelly, who graduated last week with first honors and won the Chancellor's prize, in the University of Bishop's College. He is also a graduate of Xavier College, Bruges, Belgium. Dr. Kelly is a son of Captain Patrick J. Kelly, and is justly proud of his nationality. He is popular with professors and students of the University from which he has graduated with first-class honors on all subjects. Dr. Kelly delivered the valedictory on the occasion of the convocation for conferring degrees in medicine, and his effort was warmly applauded by



MR. W. W. KELLY, M.D.C.M.

the large audience present on the occasion. We give the following extracts from the valedictory, as follows:—

For the 32nd time in the history of this Faculty a little band of workers meets you to take as the result of to-day's ceremonies a long farewell before plunging into the inscrutable darkness of the future.

As the mouthpiece of my fellow-graduates upon me devolves the task of giving utterance to the feelings—hopes and wishes which are uppermost in our hearts to-day—this day which is to mark a new epoch in our lives and which to us is fraught with mingled sentiments of joy, sadness and firm resolve—surely it is meet that we should so regard this parting of the ways to which four years of our best efforts have brought us, and which we have toiled for, hoped for, and now have won.

But, alas, this consummation of our aspirations, this attainment of our highest ambitions is softened and mellowed, nay saddened by the thought that it means to us the severance of old ties, the breaking of pleasant associations, the parting from old friends, which must ever make life sad and cast a cloud upon the otherwise bright horizon of this happy moment.

But this moment means to us a great deal more than the mere attainment of ambitions and the consummation of aspirations, for it means the assumption of new responsibilities, the commencement of a new life in a new role, it is the clarion note of the better struggle for existence, for to-day we take our places in the ranks of a great profession, to fill the gaps which the ravages of death have left in the ranks of physicians whose lives have stood for loyalty and integrity to the cause.

And may I express the hope that we are not entirely unmindful of those responsibilities, and that we have not failed to be stimulated by the noble example of the great masters of our craft, and that the life and work of such men as Hunter, Jeune, Verchow, and thousands of others have given us the stimulus to love lives worthy of a great trust, and whose example has stood for kindness and charity. . . .

As the valedictorian of my class may I be permitted for a moment to take a hasty glance at the four years which I have spent so peacefully under the sheltering roof of a kind mother. The class of to-day is but a small one, for death and other unfortunate circumstances have reduced our numbers to almost one-third of our original strength. We are, however, consoled by the knowledge that the years that follow gradually increase in numbers until that of the Freshman's year is nearly eight times as large as our little

band exceeding us not only in point of numbers, but in point of zeal and mental calibre. It has been with undisguised pride that we have seen the gradual, yet steadily onward trend of our school, and can bear witness to the excellence of the recent rearrangements, which place us in our theoretical departments what we have always been in our practical training—second to none in point of thoroughness and detail. Further improvements are yet necessary, but this is not the place nor the opportunity in which to discuss such questions.

We cannot fail to take this opportunity of bearing ungrudging testimony to the zeal and attention of the Faculty, as a whole, and of the many individual acts of kindness which we have received, which many acts have been rendered possible by that intimate relationship between professor and student which is only possible in a smaller institution.

We are happy to feel that our relations with few exceptions have been of the most pleasurable and profitable character to all.

And now, a word to those we leave behind us, of the friendships we have formed in the past four years, friendships not confined to any particular year, but embracing, we hope, Freshman and Sophomore and third year man, all of united as we have been. . . .

To the ladies, who by their presence, have graced this occasion, I would say that we would like to regard their large attendance as a good augury for the future, for we are not oblivious of the most important part which they must play in our future lives. We trust and pray that we may ever be worthy of that trust and confidence which it will be our privilege to receive, and that we may be always true to the principles which true womanhood ever demands, true womanhood, the spirit of whose example, the evidences of whose love and fostering care, have made the music of the world.

And now a last good-bye, one last pressure of the hand that has guided our footsteps along this perilous road of knowledge.

To our Alma Mater need we say how fully we appreciate the fact that to-day the bond of union between us far from being severed is but made complete, and that we leave her doors fully resolved to live up to the highest precepts which she has laid down. Her honor is now our care, and we pray that the collection of the motto of the old chivalry of France: "Noblesse Oblige" will ever be ours to keep us from bringing the blush of shame to her cheek.

We leave her with no extravagant hopes, for we are fully aware that many disappointments, many rude awakenings await us. Fully are we cognizant of our own short-comings. . . .

The "True Witness" wishes Dr. Kelly every success in his new career, as it does many others who have doubtless completed their university careers in Montreal during the closing days of the past month.

We would gladly publish a full list of all the Catholic graduates, but have no means of obtaining them. Our English-speaking Catholic students in the universities of McGill, Bishop's and Laval, and we may add in our colleges and schools, who are willing to use their pen in furnishing us with reports concerning examinations and closing exercises, will be welcomed by the "True Witness."

ST. BRIDGET'S NIGHT REFUGE.

Report for week ending Sunday, 26th April, 1903:—Males 144, females 0. Irish 106, French 33, English 16. Total 155.

FOR GOD'S HOUSE.

Thirty thousand dollars has been collected by the Catholics of Oxford, Cal., for the erection of a new church.

A RECENT CONVERT.

The conversion is announced of M. Lejz, a leading rabbi of Genoa. It is said that he desires to study for the priesthood and to enter a missionary order.

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GUARANTEED PURE.

OUR OTTAWA LETTER.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Ottawa, April 28.

The Budget debate drags its weary length along, and it is likely to crawl into next week. Now that the leaders and a principal financial critics on either side have spoken, it is merely a huge accommodation for the back-seat members to hold forth on whatever topics may suit their respective constituencies. We may, therefore, turn away, without fear of losing anything from the Parliament Hill—as far as, at least, the present week is concerned. And Ontario still keeps up the monotony of the Gagey trial, a hodgepodge of the worst kind that ever serious judges were called upon to stir up and analyze.

In connection with the visit of King Edward VII. to the Pope, the Ottawa "Citizen" has an editorial in its issue of last Tuesday, which is well deserving of attention. In opening the writer says: "To-day His Majesty will pay a visit to the venerable Head of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIII. It will be the first time such an event has occurred since the reformation, and it has been looked forward to with much interest, more especially by the millions of British Catholics throughout the Empire." Then comes the following:—

"According to the despatches recently the Protestant Alliance of Great Britain has telegraphed a protest against the visit, but the action will receive but little sympathy or endorsement except among extreme adherents of the Protestant faith. The spirit of courtesy and respect for the head of a great church which animates His Majesty in visiting the Pope cannot be distorted into anything more than it really is—one of those tactful and gracious acts for which the present Sovereign, no less than his illustrious and kindly mother, is distinguished. It will be appreciated both by the venerable prelate of the Vatican and by the millions of Roman Catholic subjects of the King. The occasion further marks the broadening view of Christian people of all creeds which is gradually but surely supplanting the narrow sectarianism of a less enlightened age. Religious intolerance is giving place to the saner view which recognizes what is good in other creeds while it clings with perhaps a firmer and more intelligent attachment to that which is deemed the best. Every force which is working for the spiritual and moral uplifting of mankind deserves the respect and sympathy of everyone whose heart is in the right place. The Roman Catholic Church, of which Pope Leo is the head, is one of the greatest of these forces in the world to-day, and it would indeed be an ungracious act if the Sovereign of the greatest and most enlightened nation in the world should visit the ancient city of Rome and neglect, through any spirit of sectarian narrowness, to call upon the venerable and venerated head of that Church. Every liberal-minded subject of King Edward, no matter what his religion may be, will applaud the unconventional disregard he has shown of red tape restrictions and the subdued murmur of sectarian criticism in carrying out his purpose. It was what was to be expected of His Majesty."

This editorial, coming from a Protestant organ in Ontario, will go a long way, and has already done something, in removing the bitterness of anti-Catholic bigotry amongst some classes here.

It has long been a circulating rumor that some of the French-Canadian members of Parliament are being urged to ask the Government to declare the 24th June a public holiday for the Dominion. It is not to my knowledge that any step has, as yet been taken, in that direction. But Mr. Hackett, M.P., has taken the initiative in this matter, having given notice of an inquiry of the ministry if it is the intention of the Government to recommend to the Governor-General the advisability of proclaiming the 17th March, St. Patrick's Day, a public holiday.

The Premier—Sir Wilfrid Laurier—answered the question just as I was penning these lines. He stated that there were already too many public holidays in this country, and his Government, in consequence, did not wish to add to the number.

At the first meeting of the Province of Ontario Ladies' Auxiliary of the Hibernian Society on Tuesday at Toronto the well known and talented Ottawa ladies received deserving honors for which they are now the recipients of many congratulations. Miss A. O'Meara secured the provincial presidency, while Miss M. O'Brien was elected as secretary. This organization has been formed only about a month, but already great interest has been manifested in the proceedings and the election of two local ladies will in all probability tend to stimulate great interest in Ottawa. The former is engaged as teacher upon the staff of St. Bridget's School. She is well fitted for the honorable office and can be relied upon to promote the interests of the auxiliary in the best possible manner.

The popularity of socials at which eucure is the feature, was evidenced a few days ago. The treasurer's statement handed in at a meeting held last week showed that \$246.53 clear of expenses, was made at the eucure party held on Thursday evening, last week, in St. Patrick's hall in aid of St. Jean Baptiste Church. The treasurer was Mr. T. A. Marier. The funds converted into gold were presented by Mrs. (Aid.) Plouffe, president of the Ladies' Committee, to the parish priest, Rev. Father Jacques. As a pretty acknowledgment of her worthy work in connection with the eucure party, Mrs. Plouffe was presented with a basket of cut flowers by her fellow-workers on the committee.

The first Friday of the month, being the first of May, the Catholic churches of Ottawa have made special preparations for the occasion, and have made announcements accordingly. In St. Joseph's parish it was announced that:—

Confessions will be heard Thursday in preparation for the first Friday of the month. Friday the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed all day, and the usual devotions will be held in the evening. The third Sunday after Easter St. Joseph's Church celebrates its patronal feast. Special music will be rendered by the choir.

The Archbishop will make his pastoral visit to the parish on the 10th. On last Sunday Archbishop Duhamel paid his pastoral visit to St. Bridget's Church. In the morning at 8 o'clock His Grace held a confirmation service at which 45 children received the Holy Sacrament. Rev. Canon McCarthy assisted His Grace, and Rev. Father Seguin was master of ceremonies. Principal Burke and Miss Slattery, of St. Bridget's School, acted for the individual sponsors of the children.

At solemn High Mass His Grace assisted at the throne and preached an eloquent and forcible sermon from the text "Be swift to hear, slow to speak," from the Epistle of St. James.

The sermon was replete with words of good advice. The choir rendered an excellent programme of music, repeating Berger's Mass, which was given at Easter.

On Sunday the pastor of the Sacred Heart Church announced that the Archbishop would make his pastoral visit to the parish next Sunday. The choir will render Mozart's 12th Mass, under the direction of Mr. C. Cramer.

The sacred concert last Sunday evening in aid of the Church was one of the greatest musical treats of the season. It was marked by excellent singing and a large attendance. Four choirs, the Sacred Heart, St. Anne's, St. Joseph's and the Basilica took part, and portions of four Masses were rendered. The solos were all of a high order, and the choral parts well sustained.

The dinner and presentation in honor of Hon. Mr. Costigan that had been fixed for the 25th May, has been postponed until the 30th May, in order to give an opportunity to several organizations, that could not be properly represented on the former date, to be there. Great interest is being taken in the event. It is a tribute to the Irishmen of the Capital to one who has lived so many years amongst them.

NOTES FOR WORLDLINGS.

The majority of men recognize nothing in human affairs as good unless it yields some return, and they love those friends from whom they hope to obtain the most profit. Thus they lack that loveliest and most natural form of friendship which is sought for its own sake only; or do they know from experience how beautiful and how lofty such friendship is.