

cealed. Early in the present century it was discovered by the parish priest of Cong, whose successor handed it over to the Royal Irish Academy, where it is now an object of admiration.

#### SCULPTURE.

The genesis of all true art is to be found in man's consciousness of the supernatural, and in the impulse of his spiritual nature to give it external form and expression. The pre-historic ruins of Egypt, China, Babylon, Phœnicia, Peru, were temples or mausoleums. The buildings erected in honor of the gods are the only works of man which time has not been able to destroy. In Ireland sculpture was employed only to give expression to the religious faith of the people. The High Crosses of Monasterboice, of Kells, of Tuam, of Cong, of Clonmacnoise, and forty others, may be called so many religious epics in stone. The artists who executed these crosses possessed not alone a knowledge of the Roman and Byzantine schools, but they endeavored to picture forth, by historical and symbolical groups, the mystery of man's fall and the Divine plan of the Redemption. To such perfection had this style of artistic representation been brought in Ireland that in various fragments of Irish literature we find minute directions to the artist to be followed in representing Christ and His Apostles.

The relics of Irish sculpture which have escaped the ravage of the Cromwellian iconoclasts are 200 Ogham stones, 250 inscribed mausoleums, 7 pillar stones, 4 altar stones, 45 high crosses, 32 of which are highly ornamented, and 8 of which bear very interesting inscriptions.

#### THE DECORATIVE OR ILLUMINATING ART.

Before the invention of printing the preservation of all literature depended on the writers and transcribers of manuscripts. For their labors in this sphere the much-maligned monks of the Catholic Church have placed modern civilisation under a deep debt of gratitude. They kept alive the embers of ancient learning and handed them down to succeeding generations. The transcription of manuscripts formed so important a part of the monastic discipline that the great St. Columba is said to have written 300 works with his own saintly hands.

'The Book of Kells,' the wonder of the world, was written and illuminated by this great scholar and missionary. I have seen this wonderful book in the library of Trinity College, Dublin; but I leave others to describe it. One of the greatest authorities on art is Wyatt. Mr Wyatt says: 'It is to Ireland that the rich style of manuscript ornamentation is due. Irish art was original, and of marvellous perfection. . . . In delicacy of handling, the minute but faultless execution, the whole range of paleography offers nothing comparable to these early Irish manuscripts, and those produced in the same style in England. When in Dublin some years ago I had the opportunity there of studying carefully the most marvellous of all, 'The Book of Kells'; some of the ornaments I attempted to copy, but broke down in despair. No wonder that tradition should allege that these unerring lines had been traced by angels. We freely confess that in the practice of illumination at least they (the Irish) appear in advance, both in mechanical execution and originality of design, of all Europe, and of the Anglo-Saxon in particular.'

#### LITERATURE.

National traditions assign a high state of cultivation to the pagan Irish. But, without granting to these a greater degree of credibility than they strictly deserve, it must be admitted that the immense quantity of literary relics, relating to pre-Christian times, could only have been transmitted to us by some form of written record. It is beyond doubt that on his arrival in Ireland St. Patrick found a regularly defined system of law, and a fixed classification of the people under the sway of a single monarch, presiding over subordinate provincial kings.

Everyone has heard of the Brehon laws. They were a code of legislation by which the inhabitants of ancient Ireland were governed. The English Parliament attached such importance to this venerable legal institute of antiquity that in the year 1852 a Royal Commission was issued to 12 distinguished jurists, noblemen, and Celtic scholars for the transcription and translation of the Brehon Laws. Four volumes have been already issued from the press, and a sum of over £10,000 has been granted by the British Government towards the expenses of the publication of the work.

The names of John M'Hale, Archbishop of Tuam, Eugene O'Curry, and John O'Donovan are the three who are inseparably connected with the resuscitation of the language and literature of the Irish nation. The venerated Archbishop's genius was synthetic, while that of the other two was analytical. Dr. M'Hale translated portions of the Bible, of Homer, and nearly all of Moore's Melodies into the old language of the Gael. He was also the author of many works both in English and in Irish, one of the most beautiful of which is a poem in the two languages composed in 1861, on the occasion of the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Eugene O'Curry and Dr. O'Donovan were the great key-holders who unlocked the doors of the treasury of Irish literature. Many of the books of ancient Ireland have been lost in the wreck in which the country was involved, but enough of their glory remains to prove the country's claim to a high degree of literary culture.

Where are books of Irish literature to be found? They are to be found in the libraries of Trinity College and the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin; in the libraries of Oxford and the British Museum; in the libraries of Louvain, Brussels, Bâle, Turin, Bobbio, Schaffhausen, Vienna, Copenhagen. What do they consist of? They comprise general and national history, civil and ecclesiastical records, lives of saints, genealogical materials, poetry, romance, tracts on medicine, mathematics, grammar, geography, and astronomy.

To enter into a minute analysis of these works would require considerable time. Here I will only say that many of them are productions of real literary merit.

#### MUSIC AND POETRY.

Poetry and song have been called the autobiography of a race—the essence of a nation's history. The themes to which they attach themselves are either those critical periods on which the fortunes of a people turn, or such incidents of a lighter vein as illustrate the national characteristics. The records of no other country in the world afford a truer illustration of this interpretation of the vocation of the poetical muse than those of Ireland.

According to the ancient Irish records, Ossian was the Homer of Erin. What the latter did for the scattered remains of Grecian poetry, the former did for the bardic songs of Ireland. Some of his productions have been pronounced worthy of the 'blind bard of Ohio.' Born in the third century before the Christian era, popular tradition represents him as uniting in himself the threefold prerogatives of poet, hero, and warrior. Several of the Ossianic poems have been translated into English verse by Irish poets. The following are the best known:—'Congal,' 'Tain Bo Cuailgne,' 'Conary,' 'Mesgedra,' 'Naming of Cuchulin,' by Sir Samuel Ferguson; 'The Foray of Queen Maeve,' by Aubrey de Vere; and 'The Lay of Ossian on the Land of Perpetual Youth,' by T. D. Sullivan.

If it be urged that, after all, Irish history cannot boast of any great work of genius like those of the age of Pericles in Greece, and of Augustus in Rome, it must be remembered that the records of the world contain only comparatively few of such epochs—that inspiration is a grace, and that labor is a law. Moreover, it must be remembered that the Irish nation was arrested in its development. During the 300 years which succeeded the introduction of Christianity into the country, its people advanced so rapidly in the arts of civilised life that they gave promise of a future as brilliant as the great ages of Grecian or Augustan literature. Then came the nation's struggle, not for her literature and art, but for her very existence.

The German philosopher, Goerres, thus refers to Ireland: 'The affrighted spirit of truth had flown during the Gothic irruptions into Europe, and there (in Ireland) made its abode in safety, until Europe returned to repose, when these hospitable philosophers who had given it an asylum were called by Europe to restore its effulgent light over her bedarkened forests.' But this golden age of Irish history was soon brought to a disastrous termination. Attracted by the treasures of her churches, monasteries, and schools, the Danes, who were a nation of pirates and plunderers, landed on the Irish shores in the year 790. For nearly 300 years they kept up a system of guerilla warfare, which was as provoking to a soldier race, accustomed to meet their enemy in the field, as it was ruinous to religion and education. At length, driven to desperation, the Irish, under King Brian Boru, rose as one man, and on the field of Clontarf broke the Danish power for ever. The intensity of the struggle may be estimated from the fact that England, two centuries before the battle of Clontarf, had submitted to the fierce pirates whom the Irish conquered and expelled from their shores. The country made giant efforts to rebuild her ruined temples, monasteries, and schools. But another visitation was near at hand. The Anglo-Normans came, says Froide, with unconscious irony, to complete the civilisation which the Danes had commenced. From that hour to the present the history of Ireland is written in blood and tears.

## Death of Archbishop Corrigan.

THE death is reported by cable of the Most Rev. Dr. Corrigan, Archbishop of New York, at the age of 63. The deceased prelate was born at Newark on August 13, 1839; educated at St. Mary's College, Wilmington, Delaware, and Mount St. Mary's, Emmetsburg, Maryland. He was ordained priest at Rome in 1863, was afterwards Professor of Dogmatic Theology and Sacred Scripture at Seton Hall College, Orange, N.J., and President in 1868. He was consecrated Bishop of Newark, N.J., in 1873, and made Coadjutor to his Eminence Cardinal McCloskey, Archbishop of New York, with right of succession, October 1, 1880. He succeeded to the See October 10, 1885, and was made Assistant at the Pontifical Throne April 19, 1887.

New York was created a See in 1808, and an Archdiocese in 1850. The Archdiocese of New York is the most populous in the United States. The Catholic population is set down at 1,200,000, but this is an approximation, and a careful census would probably add considerably to this estimate. From this it will be seen that the Catholic population of the Archdiocese is nearly equal to double the European population of New Zealand, and close on one and a half times the Catholic population of the Australasian Colonies. In the City of New York alone there are more Catholic churches than in the whole of New Zealand, whilst in the whole of the Archdiocese the churches, chapels, and stations make a grand total of 740, equal to one-half the number of Catholic churches, etc., in the Australasian Colonies. The priests number 716, and the children in Catholic schools and charitable institutions make a total of close on 72,000.

True merit may be distinguished from false by the fact that it bears reflection; we can think of it with pleasure next day and next week.

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