

(GAELIC SOCIETY: cont'd.).

without irony. Towards the middle and end of the last century certain students and scholars of Ireland reflected on their own lost culture. The desire was awakened in them to engender a re-birth of that culture for the benefit of Ireland and of the world. This effort is often referred to by historians as the Gaelic Revival, the Celtic Twilight, or the Gaelic Movement; although it would be more clearly expressed as the Gaelic Renaissance or Gaelic Renaissance.

"Our own Gaelic Society played a significant part in this re-birth. This society was founded here in New York in 1878, fifteen years before a similar organization was founded in Ireland by Douglas Hyde, calling itself the Gaelic League. The Gaelic Society is not meant to be this re-birth, but to give expression to it. As a beginning and source, great attention has been given to the study of the Irish language. The greater idea, however, is to move through the language to the full understanding and appreciation of the culture of Ireland. It is for this reason that we enter into the Arts. We currently support and encourage drama in the English language and to a much greater extent in the Irish language. We also have a choir and choral group which sings in Irish, and we instruct our members in Irish dancing which of course keeps us in close contact with the dance music of Ireland and we are presently establishing a group devoted to the graphic Irish arts. We do not neglect the Sciences. We maintain a library, are publishing a small periodical, and present frequent lectures for our members by persons acquainted with Irish culture or history. Another aspect of our activity, little known because of our policy not to advertise it, is our periodic visits to the hospitals and homes for the aged in

the New York area, where we demonstrate our dances and singing for the entertainment of the patients and residents of those institutions.

"A word must be said also as to the nature of the culture of Ireland. We do not wish to be considered mere historians, or perhaps compared to a society of Egyptologists, who for the purpose of learning the culture of Egypt would adopt Egyptian dress, practise Egyptian dancing, relearn Egyptian astronomy and perhaps construct the pyramids of old. We have grasped the living and Christian culture of Ireland and see in it a meaning for the present day. To use a metaphor of life again, as above, we are not trying to re-vivify a long dead corpse of the past but rather to give birth and a fuller understanding to the present and to the future. We believe that Irish culture is deserving of a place in our modern world and, in fact, is as needed there as Roman and Greek culture was needed in the development of medieval Europe.

"Though large in the above description, Father, we are small in numbers. But we continue in the hope that our efforts will have their effects on the world. We have great concern for the transmitting of our ideals to the many Irish who are arriving in this country. We wish also to bring our ideas before as many Americans as possible. Our constant reassurance in our work is the true enjoyment we derive from participating in the very culture we wish to transmit."

The above statement was written from the point of view of a single Gaelic Society but it has application to all.