

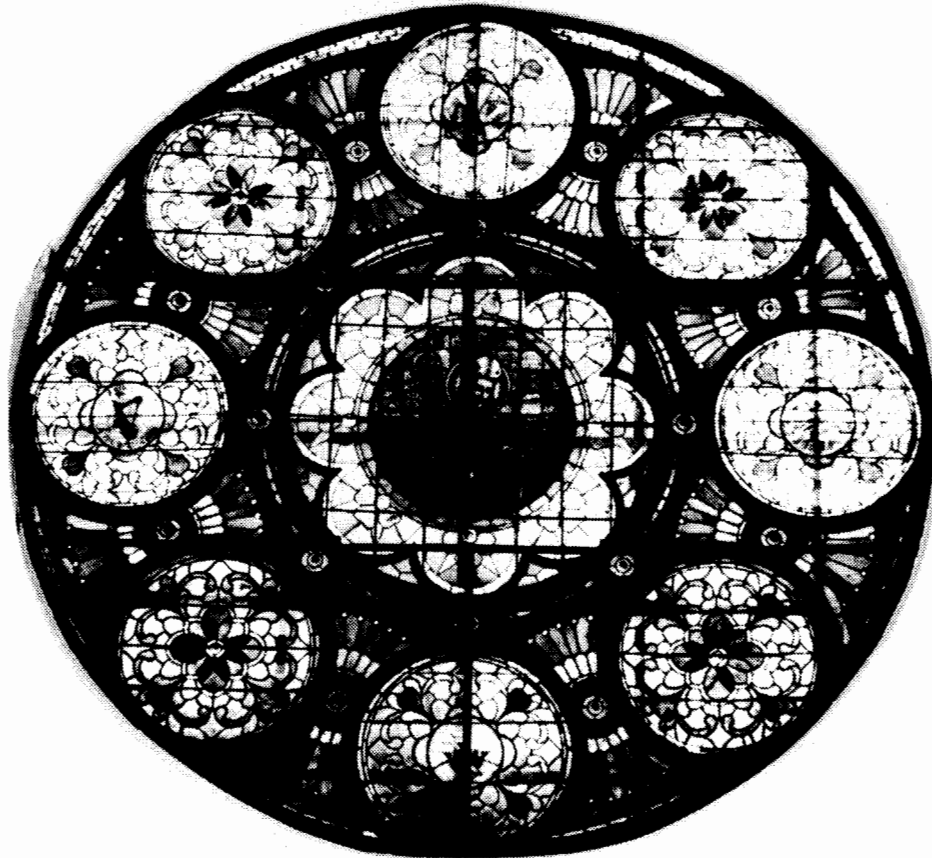
Barquilla del Santa Maria

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Despite the lances hurled at it by socialists, modernists, and infidels, wrote Monsignor James H. Cotter of Ironton, Ohio, "The Sun of Truth graciously shines on in undiminished force, kindling with its splendors the waters of all time, and will never set beyond earth's mountains, for it will blaze throughout eternity in the Divinity from whose mind it came, and in the Church, whose perpetual triumph it will adorn." It shines upon us through lives of love and devotion, as the sun shines in splendor through the St. Patrick window of St. Lawrence O'Toole Church, Ironton, depicted above. It shone on Ironton and the Diocese of Columbus for many years through the lives of two children of St. Patrick, Monsignor James H. Cotter and his sister Sara Cecilia Cotter King, whose works in literature and art are briefly mentioned in this issue.

REV. MSGR. JAMES H. COTTER, LL.D., D.Litt.
MAN OF ELOQUENCE

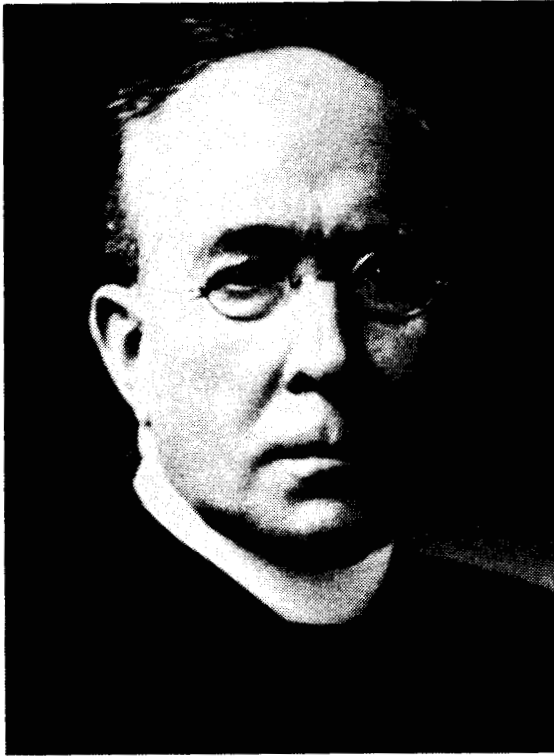
Throughout his book Tipperary we are given glimpses of James Cotter's childhood years -- doing ordinary, boyish things such as trout fishing, rabbit trapping, mushroom picking -- barefoot times, when souls were bare of sin and bare of care -- hours nestled in a haystack to read poetry -- times "when larks rose to chant their matins aroused by the songs of children making merry at their labors -- when Heaven was just beyond Benduff Mountain, and God Himself sat enthroned on the star that gleamed above its summit." Such times speak in their own eloquence to a child and to the man who was the child. Seeing young Cotter, did anyone anticipate what eloquence the man would produce, far from his native Lisduff? James H. Cotter was born in Lisduff, County Tipperary, Ireland on August 9, 1857. He was the fourth child born to Sarah (Delhanty) and George Cotter; he would be followed by five others. (1)

The one sorrow of his youth was that, while he was already a Catholic, his mother was still a Protestant; she sang in the choir of that church. He always remembered the irritation he felt one day when, still a little fellow, he had trudged to the parish town with his mother and, leaving her at the Protestant church to continue on to the chapel, he asked her, "Mother, do you believe in two Gods?" But this led to the moment later in life which he treasured above all else, when his dear mother received Holy Communion for the first time from his priestly hands.

Young Cotter absorbed the education offered in the one-room school at Lisduff and then, in 1872, came to America. He was graduated from Manhattan College in New York in 1877 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. He later received the degree of Master of Arts from the same institution. Later still, he was honored by the same college and by Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, with the degrees of Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Literature. He studied theology at Mt. St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, where he earned his way by teaching rhetoric to the college classes. (2) Several points can be inferred from a letter written by him to Bishop Watterson of Columbus in 1881: he had been working toward the priesthood since coming to this country in 1872; he was an ordinary young man with regard to personal problems and relationships with his teachers; Bishop Watterson, who had been a professor and president of the seminary from 1868 until 1880, did not then know him. (3) Nevertheless, Cotter was highly recommended to Bishop Watterson by several of the clergy and he was ordained at Mt. St. Mary's for the Diocese of Columbus on December 18, 1881 by Bishop Becker of Wilmington.

His first assignment was as assistant at St. Mary's, Lancaster, where he served for two years. This was followed by a difficult assignment at St. Sylvester's, Zaleski, where he remained for about five years.

On August 12, 1889, Father Cotter was assigned to St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish in Ironton, where he would serve for fifty-eight years, three months, and twenty-six days, until his death at the age of ninety years on December 9, 1947. During these years, he married, baptized, and buried hundreds of parishioners, lightening many lives by these and the other sacramental sources of grace. He participated in the education of the parish children and in the life of the city. The parish physical plant was improved, with the erection of the present church in 1892, a rectory in 1904, a school in 1910, and a



Rev. Msgr. James H. Cotter
(1857-1947)



Sara Cecilia Cotter King
(1874-1912)
(as Shakespeare's Portia)

convent in 1926. The church underwent two renovations, the second one coinciding with the golden anniversary of Father Cotter's priesthood.

Although his priestly ministrations were more important, it is for his literary achievements that Father Cotter is well remembered outside of Ironton. Having been raised reading and committing to memory the literature of Ireland, and having been educated in and having taught rhetoric or "sacred eloquence," it is no wonder that Father Cotter earned a reputation as a prominent speaker, specializing in Ireland, Shakespeare, and all subjects related to the Church. Examples abound. Locally, he lectured on "Columbus and His Knights," considering the possible canonization of the great discoverer, what the knights should be, and what they had done. His lectures on "Liberty," "Julius Caesar," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Macbeth" were said to have been among the classics of platform eloquence. He was one of the orators at the meeting of the Federation of Catholic Societies of the United States, held in Milwaukee in 1913. He also delivered an address at the second Missionary Congress in Boston in 1913.

In the early 1900's Father Cotter began writing editorials for the Catholic press, first for the Catholic Union and Times of Buffalo, New York and later for the Catholic Columbian of Columbus. His work was also carried in the Columbiad of the Knights of Columbus. Many of the editorials were gathered together and published as a book, Lances Hurlled at the Sun, in 1912. Another collection, of those dealing with the papacy, was bound in gold by the Catholic Publication Society of Buffalo and was presented to the Holy Father,

Pius X, in his jubilee year of 1908. The editorials, trenchant, argumentative, and eloquent, opposed the false teachings of the day. (An example will be presented next month.)

Similar in style was a piece he wrote at the beginning of the World War for the Columbiad which recorded his indignation at the words of the popular song 'Its a long way to Tipperary.' That "false and impious thing," he wrote, "belittles the most heroic nation that ever drew the sword of chivalry and faith. It tells of the stupidity of the Irishman and it flaunts the inconstancy of the Irish woman. Could anything be more diabolical in its falsehood?" As time went on, however, his style went through a purposeful change. Earlier, he had published works in a lighter vein. Shakespeare's Art came out in 1902 and Straws from the Manger or Thoughts on Christmastide in 1917. He seems to have concluded that the proper reply to the song must be in such a lighter style, full of eloquence and love, not thundering rhetoric. He once wrote that he loved "to read the sacred record of Ireland's constancy to Faith and freedom in the ruins of the dear land. In the ruin, Truth is housed and no wordy quibbling or guesses or distortions of historians have a place. The calmness and cold sincerity of a ruin's story is more eloquent than the thunderings of oratory in voicing the immortality of principle. The jagged walls around me point to eternity: They recall men who believed the grave is not the goal but that loyalty to God and Right outlives stone. They speak to the heart and mind of the living, clearing from the one fear and giving fortitude -- handing to the other the proud consciousness that nothing is ruined if honor is conserved."

He visited Ireland several times and eventually completed the book, Tipperary, published in 1929. He could not write with stones, so instead in this book he wrote the "record of Ireland's constancy" in glimpses of her literature, not in rhetoric or historical reconstruction but in the moving words of those who lived the story. Throughout, the book demonstrates his love and knowledge of literature and of the human spirit enkindled with the Christian, Catholic Faith. And yet, enough of his old style is present to delight, with its swift strokes, such as his insistence that what Ireland suffered in the Sixteenth Century under Edward Tudor and Elizabeth was the Protestant "Deformation."

Father Cotter received many honors during his life. In October of 1919 the parish and city held a dinner in honor of his thirty years there at which his many achievements were noted, none then expecting that he would remain with them another twenty-eight years! (4) He was named a Domestic Prelate by Pope Pius XII in May of 1945. Late that month he had the honor of greeting Most Rev. John King Mussio, first Bishop of the new Diocese of Steubenville, as dean of the priests of the new diocese and wearing for the first time his robes as Domestic Prelate. His formal investiture with the robes of a Monsignor took place in June in St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in a grand ceremony at which Bishop Ready of Columbus officiated. At the dinner which followed, Bishop Ready indicated that even though Ironton had become part of the new diocese, Monsignor Cotter would still be thought of as of the Diocese of Columbus, for which he had spent sixty-three years as a priest. (5)

Given his love of literature, especially Irish literature, it seems appropriate to honor Monsignor Cotter once more, this time by paraphrasing a speech of Thomas Francis Meagher which Cotter had memorized as a youth: he did

what he felt to be his duty, he spoke what he felt to be the truth, on every occasion of his career.

SARA CECILIA COTTER KING, SCULPTRESS

The Diocese of Columbus has some small historical claim to sculptress Sara Cecilia Cotter King, for she received part of her education here and her first art studio was located in Ironton while that city was part of this diocese. The best summary of her life was written by a dear friend for publication in the Irontonian at the time of her death in 1912.(6) That sketch will be quoted here, with a few extra details gleaned from other sources.

Sara Cotter was born on October 30, 1874 in Ireland, the third daughter and eighth child of George and Sarah (Delhanty) Cotter. "Sarah Cecilia Cotter King was a girl of fourteen or fifteen when she came from a convent school near Bantry, Ireland, the place of her birth, to live with her beloved brother, the Reverend James H. Cotter, of St. Lawrence Church, Ironton, O. The companionship of this brother and sister was of an ideal kind, their devotion to each other being founded in similarity of taste, mental ability and aspiration. Both were poets and dreamers born to turn their thoughts and dreams into noble account in the workshop of the world." Their parents joined them in this country and spent the closing years of their lives in Ironton. They arrived in 1893; both died in 1896 and are buried in Sacred Heart Cemetery. (7)

"Sarah went to the convent of St. Mary's of the Springs, Columbus, from which she emerged loaded with honors in literature, drawing, painting, and music. She showed early in all she undertook that universality of power and sympathetic understanding that goes with genius and for a time it was a question which of the creative arts she would choose as a life work. A deeply devout, religious nature, inspired by the history that made the Roman Catholic Church the conserver of the art of centuries, perhaps inclined her to sculpture, and her notable successes at the Cincinnati Art School from which she graduated with distinction, proved the correctness of her decision." At the Cincinnati Art Academy she studied under painters L. H. Meakin and Vincent Nowotny and later under sculptor Signor Louis T. Rebisso.(8) "Her brother then took her to Europe, determined that the flame of her genius should feel the fire of Rome, Florence, Italy, Paris, London, and the wistful loveliness of her own Killarney, before she settled to work in 'Sunny Spots' her Ironton studio, where she conceived the first sculptural works that brought her fame.

"Of these, a statue of St. John and one of The Sacred Heart in St. Lawrence Church, testify the magnitude of her ideal and ability; but it was a head of Christ, exhibited at the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo that brought her into the front ranks of American sculptors, winning instant recognition of critics. She afterwards exhibited work in the St. Louis Exposition.

"In 1902, she was married to William A. King of Buffalo, New York, Manager of the Catholic Union and Times, scholar, art-critic, connoisseur and collector. Her life in the beautiful Buffalo home, built to meet her own exquisite idea, was brightened by three lovely children, Billy, Neddy and

Shiela"... The American Art Annual continued to list Sarah King as residing at "Irontown" through its 1907-08 edition and in 1909-1910 first listed her as residing in Buffalo. "The gradual failure of her health, the necessity for constant change and treatment, kept her from her work with chisel and marble; balked there, her genius burned in other ways; poems, stories and an unfinished novel mark the triumph of her creative spirit over constant physical suffering, until her noble soul left the prison house that had become uninhabitable."

In October of 1912 she went to Cleveland, Ohio to undergo an operation for goiter. There she died on Monday, October 21. The news of her death, first generally disseminated to Ironton by the tolling of the bells at St. Lawrence O'Toole Church, came as a grievous blow to her hundreds of friends in that community. Her remains lie now with those of her husband, her brother, and her parents, in peaceful Sacred Heart Cemetery near Ironton.

NOTES

1. Willard, Eugene B., ed., A Standard History of the Hanging Rock Iron Region of Ohio; The Lewis Publishing Co., 1916; Vol. II, pp. 712-716.
2. The Columbus Register, Dec. 19, 1947.
3. Cotter to Watterson, Sept. 14, 1881; Archives, Diocese of Columbus.
4. Catholic Columbian, Oct. 24 and 31, 1919.
5. Columbus Register, June 1, and June 29, 1945.
6. The sketch was written on the evening of Mrs. King's death by Mrs. Mary White Slater and was published in the Irontonian of Oct. 22, 1912. Part of it was reprinted by the Columbian on Oct. 25, 1912.
7. The inscriptions are as follows:

King: Sara	1874-1912	Cotter: Mother	1833-1896
William	1857-1914	Father	1828-1896

Monsignor James H. Cotter, LL D., LITT.D., born Aug. 19, 1857 in Lisduff Co. Tipperary Ireland. Ordained at M. St. Mary's, Emmettsburg, Dec. 18, 1881. Pastor of St. Lawrence O'Toole 58 years. Died Dec. 9, 1947.

8. Hall, G. K., Dictionary of Women Artists; Boston: 1985; p. 396.

QUERY

Monsignor Cotter's obituary states that he wrote five books, the last one being published in 1940. The Society has copies of the first four:

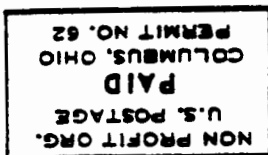
Shakespeare's Art, Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Co., 1902;
Lances Hurlled at the Sun, Buffalo: The Union and Times Press, 1912;
Straws from the Manger or Thoughts at Christmastide, Milwaukee: Diederich-Schaefer Co., 1917; and
Tipperary, New York: The Devin-Adair Co., 1929.

Does anyone have any information regarding the fifth book ?

184	Louis Bruino (?)	Aug. 21, 1880	adult
186	Joseph Carpur (?)	Sept. 16, 1880	child
186	Maggie Roan, Worthington	Sept. 27, 1880	child
187	Moses Lavallo	Oct. 19, 1880	child
191	Mrs. Young	Jan. 10, 1881	
192	City account	Feb. 10, 1881	for Mrs. Houck
	" "	Mar. 18, 1881	for Julia Sullivan
192	Ferdinand Garth	Feb. 12, 1881	child
193	George H. Jones	Feb. 18, 1881	child
195	John Fitzpatrick	Mar. 19, 1881	adult
196	John Sweeney	Mar. 28, 1881	adult
197	Timothy Fitzpatrick	--- 2, 1881	child
197	Thomas Doyle	Dec. 4, 1880	child
198	Patrick Hickey	Jan. 30, 1881	child
200	Marcellus Brothers	June 13, 1881	child
	" "	Sept. 29, 1882	child
203	Millie Clause	July 12, 1881	child
204	John Philips	July 27, 1881	child
204	Josiah Hessinger	Aug. 12, 1881	adult
206	Edward Fleming	Sept. 25, 1881	adult, for Patrick Foley
207	Edward Walsh	Sept. 13, 1881	child
207	William McKernan	Sept. 26, 1881	child
208	George Harpin	Oct. 12, 1881	child
210	John McFarland	Jan. 9, 1882	child
387	John Marsh, Rich & Front	July 20, 1893	adult
387	Kate Dumont	July 25, 1893	adult
387	John Dandon (?)	July 26, 1893	
387	(Above paid by Mr. Filler, County Infirmary.)		
387	Timothy Quinn	July 27, 1893	child
387	David Ross, 39 E. Goodale	Aug. 2, 1893	child
387	James O'Donnell	Aug. 10, 1893	child
387	Tim. M'Aliffe	Aug. 18, 1893	adult
387	Ed. Dundon	Aug. 19, 1893	adult
388	Thom. K----	Aug. 22, 1893	child
	William Moriarty	Aug. 23, 1893	adult
	Michael Hartigan	Sept. 1, 1893	child
390	Michael Carroll	Nov. 28, 1893	child (Elizabeth St., Milo)
	Daniel Gernan (?)	Dec.? 20, 1893	adult (178 N. Grant Ave.)
391	John L. Meaney	Dec. 13, 1893	child
	William Hinderer, 106 Price St., three graves purchased June 27, 1893; used on: June 27, 1893, Apr. 12, 1899, and Apr. 12, 1902 (?).		
395	Mrs. Morrissey	Nov.? 15, 1894	adult (109 S. Starling St.)
408	Fleming & Ward, 574 George St., two graves purchased Aug. 25, 1898; used on: Aug. 25, 1898 and Mar. 1, 1900.		

[End of records of single graves before 1898.]

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 197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor



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