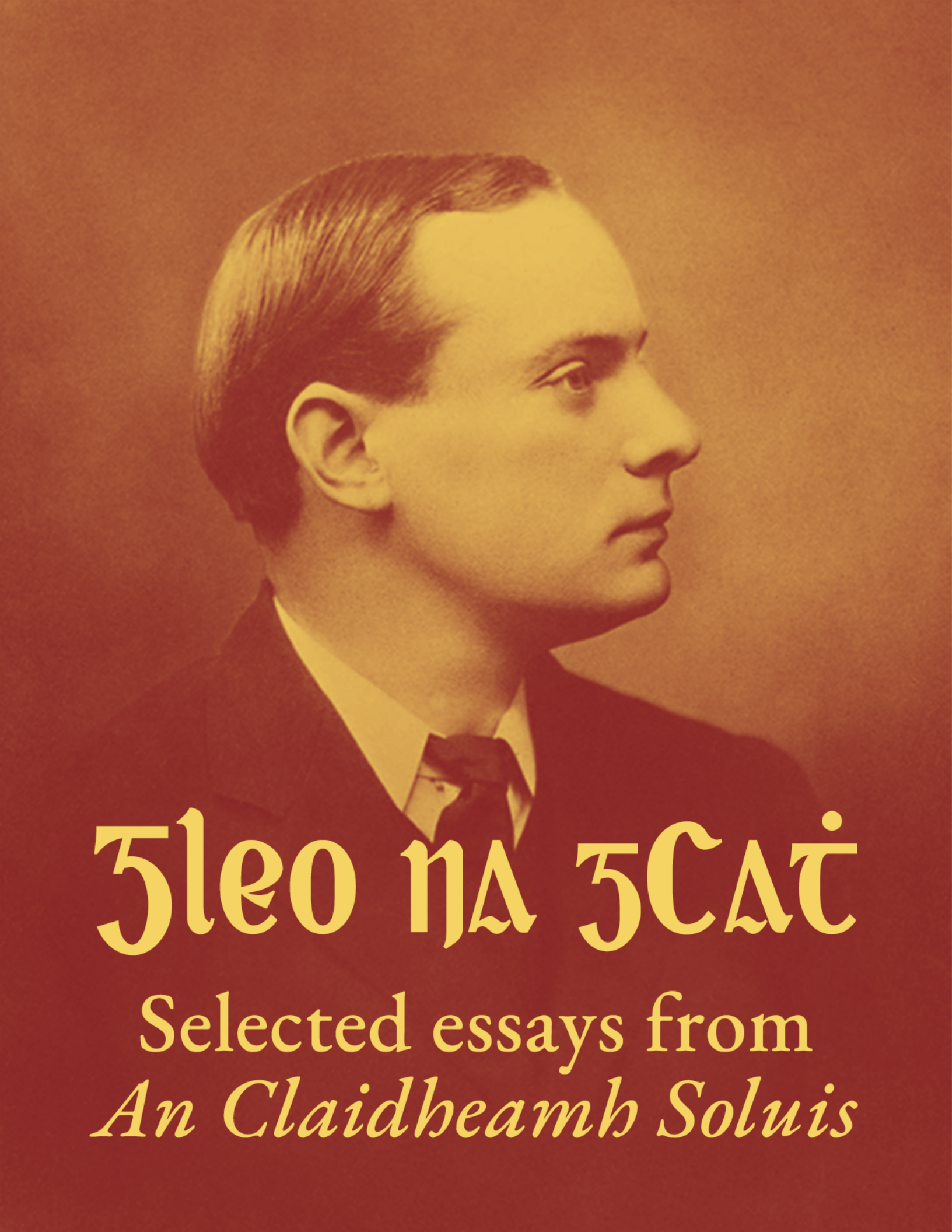

Sleo na Scal

Selected essays from *An Claidheamh Soluis*

‘Is Gaeðeal mise,
agus mise ’mo Ġeaðeal,
ní fearr ð’fear cáċ ’ná mé.

Is Gaeðeal mise,
agus mise ’mo Ġaeðeal,
ní casfainn mo ċúl le fearaiḃ an ðomain.

Is Gaeðeal mise,
is ní ċuigim gur náir ðam é.’

Risteard De Hindeberg

Gleo na gCath

Selected Writings from *An Claidheamh Soluis*

Pádraig Pearse

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Preface

The following are a selection of essays and editorials written by Pádraig Pearse during his tenure as editor of *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the official newspaper of Conradh na Gaeilge, published in Dublin, from 1903 to 1909.

Included also are two lectures and a short story in the appendix.

The title of this anthology, 'Gleo na gCath', which translates into English as 'Clamour of Battle', or 'The Tumult of the Battles,'[1] was the name of the paper's 'Notes' section. Editorials from the period of March 1903 to March 1904 are unfortunately not available, with the exception of an essay on Colum Wallace from August 8th, 1903, republished in *Amhráin Chuilm de Bhailís* (1904) by Conradh na Gaeilge.

The primary source for this collection was the archive of *An Claidheamh Soluis* digitised by Conradh na Gaeilge. Secondary sources consulted include *Eagarthóireacht Phádraig Mhic Phiarais ar an gClaidheamh Soluis* (1998) by Regina Uí Chollatáin and *A Significant Irish Educationalist: The Educational Writings of P. H. Pearse* (1980), edited by Séamas Ó Buachalla.

1 Source of the latter translation: O'Leary, P. (1985). Unwise and Unlovable: Translation in the Early Years of the Gaelic Revival. *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, VOL. 5, pp.147–171.

Contents

Appendix

The 'Irish' Literary Theatre

TO THE EDITOR OF '*AN CLAIDHEAMH SOLUIS*'
27 GREAT BRUNSWICK STREET, Dublin, *May* 13th, 1899.

Dear Sir,

Ireland is notoriously a land of contradictions and of shams, and of Irish contradictions and shams Dublin is assuredly the hot-bed. We have in the capital of Ireland 'Irish' national newspapers whose only claim to nationality is that they run down—whilst they imitate—everything English; we have 'Irish' nationalist politicians who in heart and soul are as un-Irish as Professor Mahaffy; we have a 'national' literary society, which is as anti-national, without being so outspoken, as Trinity College. Apparently, the only thing necessary to make a man or an institution Irish is a little dab of green displayed now and again to relieve the monotony, a little eloquent twaddle about the 'children of the Gael,' or a little meaningless vapouring about some unknown quantity termed 'Celtic glamour.' Take away the dab of green, strip off the 'leafy luxury' of words, and what have you? The man or the institution is as English as Lord Salisbury. Newspapers, politicians, literary societies, all are but forms of one gigantic heresy, a heresy of the deadliest and most insidious kind, a heresy that, like a poison, has eaten its way into the vitals of Irish nationality, that has paralysed the nation's energy and its intellect. That heresy is the idea that there can be an Ireland, that there can be an Irish literature, an Irish social life, whilst the language of Ireland is English.

And lo! Just as the country is beginning to see through the newspapers and the literary societies, here we have the Anglo-Irish heresy springing up in a new form, the 'Irish' Literary Theatre. Save the mark! Much ink has been spilled in our newspaper offices over this same 'Irish' Literary Theatre, but I note that not a single 'national' daily impeaches it on the only ground on which, details apart, it is impeachable—namely, that literature written in English cannot be Irish. Why waste time in criticising stray expressions when the whole thing is an imposture, a fraud, a heresy? Had Mr. Yeats and his friends called their venture the 'English literary Theatre,' or simply 'The Literary Theatre,' I should have been the last in the world to object to it. But, in the name of common sense, why dub it 'Irish?'

Why not select Hindoo, Chinese, Hottentot, or Eskimo? None of these, of course, would be true, for a play in English, if it is literature at all, must be English literature; but any one of them would be quite as appropriate as 'Irish.' What claim have these two English plays to be called Irish literature? None in the world, save that the scene of each is laid in Ireland. Is, then, 'Timon of Athens' Greek literature? Is 'Romeo and Juliet' Italian literature? Is 'Quentin Durward' French literature? Is the 'Vision of Don Roderick' Spanish literature? When Greece, Italy, France and Spain claim these works as their respective properties, then may Ireland claim 'The Countess Cathleen' and 'The Heather Field' as her own.

The 'Irish' Literary Theatre is, in my opinion, more dangerous, because less glaringly anti-national than Trinity College. If we once admit the Irish literature in English idea, then the language movement is a mistake. Mr Yeats' precious 'Irish' Literary Theatre may, if it develops, give the Gaelic League more trouble than the Atkinson-Mahaffy combination. Let us strangle it at its birth. Against Mr.

Yeats personally we have nothing to object. He is a mere English poet of the third or fourth rank, and as such he is harmless. But when he attempts to run an ‘Irish’ Literary Theatre it is time for him to be crushed.

Very sincerely yours,
P. H. PEARSE.

Here and There in Cork

4th *October*, 1902.

HERE are some notes on a flying tour, in which I managed to cover a large part of Irish-speaking Cork. Some of the ground was already familiar to me, much of it was altogether new. I shall dwell only on the more important points and places.

In Cork City, the most stimulating thing noticeable just at present is the incipient conversion of the North Parish into an Irish-speaking district. This is due partly to the fine local Branch of the League, partly to the work of the Eason's Hill Schools. Anyone who doubts the feasibility of making even our cities Irish-speaking in time, should drop into these schools and have a chat in Irish with some of the boys—preferably with young Domhnall Ó Ceallachain. The visit will convince him, that given favourable management and efficient teachers, any Irish-born schoolboy can be made an Irish speaker in twelve months.

From Cork I trained to Macroom, and, making no stay there, pushed on on my bicycle for Ballyvourney. I made good progress, and reached the capital sooner than I expected. I had just enquired the distance from an old woman, whose reply was 'Tá an villaʒe leʊ' aıs.' A moment later a chorus of welcomes in Irish admonished me that I had reached my destination. As I was being directed to the Doctor's house, the Doctor himself bore down on us, and carried me off. The evening passed rapidly, what with a dance in the new Hall,

and a ceilidh afterwards in which Tadhg Ó Cruadhlaoich was the sole artist, ⁊ is é ba mhaith chuige. The dance was one of the quaintest and most refreshing things in its way I have seen for a long time. It was delightful to see the grey-haired kindly Doctor dancing with a winsome cailin of sixteen, and a stout lump of a boy, who should be looking out for a wife, facing a diminutive maiden of five or six.

As regards actual speaking of the language, Ballyvourney is about on all fours with the Galway Claddagh. That is to say, the grown-up people habitually speak Irish, whilst the children, though understanding Irish and able to speak more or less of it, commonly use English amongst themselves. Where Ballyvourney excels is in its literary activity. Prose, poetry and folklore are assiduously cultivated by the young men, as are recitation and story-telling. There is a sturdy spirit abroad, and the parents are once more speaking Irish to the children. Of course, all this is due to the Doctor. The Doctor has rekindled and nurtured the literary instincts of the people. The Doctor has brought the young men and children up to the Munster Feis and the Oireachtas. The Doctor has built the fine Hall, which would do honour to a town of 2,000 inhabitants. The Doctor gathers in the young folk for dance and song and study every evening. In fact, Ballyvourney would not be Ballyvourney is the most striking example in the history of the language movement of the influence of a personality over a community.

From Ballyvourney a switchback road threads the hills to Ballingeary. I followed this, the Doctor accompanying me halfway. As I neared the village, the children going to school greeted me lustily in Irish without waiting for me to address them. The Ballingeary Schools, presided over by Mr. and Mrs. Scannell, are, as everyone knows, the premier schools in Ireland as far as the teaching of Irish is concerned. (In Ballyvourney, on the contrary, I understand that

practically no Irish is taught in the schools.) I spent a pleasant hour in the Ballingeary Schools. The children sang charmingly in Irish, some tiny infants recited the prayers in a way that would do credit to their grandfathers, and the girls displayed the greatest proficiency in the Irish Catechism. I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a very juvenile Scannell in the person of a little girl of fourteen months, who lisps Irish delightfully.

From Ballingeary I went on to Gougane Barra, through what is probably the most Irish-speaking district in Cork. There the people salute the wayfarer in Irish as a matter of course, and the very children shout Irish to him from the roadsides. At Gougane, the green island and lone lake were astir with country folk from miles around, for it was St. Finbarr's Day, and a Station was in progress. After a short halt—in which I renewed my acquintaince with Farther Hurley, the kindly P.P—I pushed on through Ceim an Fheidh for Glengarriffe. In traversing the glorious pass, one instinctively recalls Maire Bhuidhe's grand war-song, and imagines he hears:

'Na gárta-ġoil do bí aca is na mílte olagón.'

By the way, from Gougane on to Glengarriffe and Bantry, the sign-posts are bilingual. In due time I reached Glengarriffe—'Gleann Garbh Gaedhealach,' as a man in the Dunmanway crowd called it the preceding Sunday. Gaedhealach the Glen certainly is, but on the village, which consists almost entirely of hotels, the tourist blight lies heavy. From Glengarriffe, Pádraig Ó Scaghdha 'shortened the road,' as far as Ballylicky Bridge. Thence I rode on alone to Bantry. Bantry is infested by tourists, who seem addicted to wearing tennis costume in all sorts of weather, and to carrying tennis bats instead of walking sticks.

In Youghal I stayed only long enough to observe the National Anthem of the place is 'Dolly Grey.' I had not time to call on the able local Leaguers who, I fancy, have a stiff fight before them.

Curiously, the most heartening place, in many respects, which I visited was Fermoy, where Irish has long ceased to be spoken. Like many other English-speaking towns, it is throwing itself into the language movement with an energy which one looks for in vain in most of the Irish-speaking districts. In the latter districts, people cannot realize the danger that threatens the language. In the former, the best of the younger men and women are making frantic efforts to recover what their fathers let slip from them. Fermoy has a strong Irish citadel in St. Colman's College. The young priests there—the whole professional staff, from President down, seems to be composed of young men—are enthusiasts to a man.

Irish is taught, cricket has been banished (the bats and balls are for sale), and the caman rules on the playground. The boys wear jerseys with the legend, 'Ar gColáiste Fein.' A piper is to be introduced to teach the boys, and to march at the head of the hurling team. Irish dancing classes are also about to be formed. St. Colman's undoubtedly deserves to rank with Newbridge as a real Irish College.

PÁDRAIG MAC PIARAIS.

Colum Wallace

8th *August*, 1903.

One must beware of approaching a singer like Colm Wallace in a severely critical spirit, primed with all the stock epithets of the newspaper reviewer. This is no professional poet; indeed, scarcely a formal poet at all. Here is a naïve, sprightly, good-humouredly satirical personality, a peasant living among peasants, who sings, like the lark, from very joyousness and tunefulness of soul; sings because to sing is a necessity of his gladsome nature. He has no 'philosophy of life'—not he; he warbles to while away a summer's day, to 'shorten the road' on a tramp across the bogland, to repay the hospitality of a *bean tighe* who has given him a night's cheer. The ordinary, prosaic events of his daily life, the sights and experiences he encounters on his way to a fair,—such are the inspirations of his verse: he makes a *bráicín* to shelter under during a shower; he overhears a conversation as he passes along the road; he meets with a churlish reception in a house where he had expected hospitality; and, as he goes faring on his way, more as *caitheamh aimsire* than anything else, he weaves the experience into verse, and embellishes it with a hundred odd fancies, which, in the case of a more formal poet, one would rightly set down as grotesque extravagance.

In poetry thus, so to speak, incidentally produced, it would be absurd to expect deep thoughts on life and death and destiny; passion, fire, majesty; great technical skill, or even uniform melody

of verse. Much of Colum's poetry lacks real inspiration, much of it, from the technical standpoint, limps hopelessly. Yet good qualities it does possess—indeed, must possess to have achieved its undoubted popularity throughout a whole county—a certain energy and vivacity, a tuneful swing, a whimsical playfulness of fancy.

The odd thing is that the poet's own personality has, to so large an extent, dropped out of history. Less productive than Raftery, he has, here and there, reached a height which Raftery never reached; yet, Raftery's figure stands out largely in the folk-history of 19th-century Connacht, whilst, though Colum's name is still widely remembered, and some of his sayings repeated round firesides within miles of which he has never set foot, people seemed to have forgotten that the old man was still alive. How lonely would have been his death, but for the accidents—were they accidents?—which led to his discovery by 'An Claidheamh Soluis'!

Of Colum the man, let us give our readers a glimpse. Everyone knows that the south-western extremity of the most Irish-speaking tract in Ireland is the group of islands of which Gorumna and Lettermullen are the chief. In Lettermullen Colum Wallace was born on May 2nd, 1796. His childhood and boyhood were passed in the stirring times when men's eyes were strained across the sea to watch the coming of Napoleon. Colum vividly recalls the suppressed excitement of the days when—

'Cuirfimid an choróin ar Bónapáirt'

was the watchword throughout the Gaedhealtacht. He distinctly remembers hearing the news of the Battle of Waterloo, whilst the election of O'Connell for Clare is in his reminiscences a comparatively recent event. Colum was a child of two when the French landed at

Killala in ’98; a bare-footed *gasúr* of seven when Robert Emmet sallied from the depot in Marshalsea-lane; a man of 31 when Catholic Emancipation was achieved; already past the prime of life in the Famine Year; well past the three-score and ten limit in the Fenian days; an aged man, on the verge of a century, when the Gaelic League was founded. Of all these movements ripples found their way into his placid life, and more than one of them finds an echo in his poetry. What an autobiography he could write!

A mason and sawyer by trade, Colum left Gorumna at a comparatively early age. He wandered much, chiefly in the West. One of his most treasured recollections is his having seen Raftery playing the fiddle on the Bóthar Mór in Galway. He spent a year in Westport, from which he went to Tullamore. We next find him in Kilrush, where he spent eleven years. From Kilrush he returned home, and, for practical purposes, did not again quit his native district until about two years ago, when he found it necessary to claim the shelter of the Workhouse, which—thanks to the readers of ‘An Claidheamh Soluis’—ceased to be his home on Saturday last.[1] Colum was twice married, his second wife dying, a very old woman, a few years ago. He had one son, who died at 21.

It has been written somewhere that the ‘Cúirt an tSrutháin Bhuidhe’ celebrated in Colum’s most famous song was the house which he built for himself and his wife when he first married. The ‘Cúirt,’ however, was a much humbler structure even than this. One day—about forty years ago, he thinks—Colum was overtaken by a shower somewhere in Lettercallow, near Gorumna, and, in order to shelter himself, he threw a few sticks across some big boulders, and across these again, a few scraws. This poorheen or *bráicín* he amused

1 August 1st, 1903.

himself by calling 'Cúirt an tSrutháin Bhuidhe'—it happened to be close to a stream. Here is how he sings of the 'Cúirt':—

'Tá an ċúirt seo déanta i lár na tíre, 's moltar léi an bárr,
Ó ṫeaċ an ríoġ, ó ḃaile an draoi, ⁊ ó 'ċ uile ċaisleán árd;—
Ní le draoiḋeaċt a rinneaḋ í, aċt le obair stuamḋa láṁ—
Craoiḃín ġrinn dé'n Ġobán Saor,—tá Colum i n-a ceann.'[2]

There are both energy and imagination here, and the poet's description of himself as 'a pleasant little branch from the Gobán Saor' is delightful. In an earlier part of the poem, Colum represents the potentates of the world as struck dumb with admiration of the beauties of the 'Cúirt': Queen Victoria is filled with jealousy at its magnificence, the King of France plans an expedition to inspect it, the Queen of Sardinia comes across the sea, accompanied by her fleet, to marvel at it. In its hyperbole the whole piece is characteristically Irish.

'An Bás' was composed about the same time as 'Cúirt an tSrutháin Bhuidhe.' It is by no means as gruesome in subject as its title would suggest. 'An Bás' was the nick-name of a tailor well known at the period throughout Connemara. One evening Colum chanced to come to a house in which 'An Bás' was working. At night-time other guests turned up, and, accommodation being scarce, Colum was put to sleep in the same bed as 'An Bás.' When the woman of the house heard that Colum and 'An Bás' were together, she said she would give Colum a quart of poitín on condition that he made a song about 'An Bás' before bed-time on the following day. Next morning at the

2 We now know that these lines are really the composition of Michael O'Clogherty, a neighbour of Colum's. To him are due the final three verses of the song.

breakfast-table Colum sat facing 'An Bás,' and had at him with the song. Throughout the poem there is a whimsical play on the nickname of the tailor. The framework of the piece is quite traditional. Encountering the strange bed-fellow, Colum asks—

'An tú Jupiter bí fad ó ann, nó Hercules bí ceannusach,
Nó Neptune, Dia na fairrge, táinic ó'n muir féin?'

The tailor replies that he is neither Jupiter nor Hercules, nor yet Goll Mac Móirne,—he is 'An Bás.' On this declaration interesting developments ensue. History adds that Colum got the poitín.

A poem of a higher order than either 'Cúirt an tSrutháin Bhuidhe' or 'An Bás' is 'Amhrán an Tae.' This is a dramatic little song turning on the mutual recriminations of a husband and wife, the one extravagantly fond of tobacco and the other inordinately addicted to tea:—

'Trátnóna Dia Satairn ag dul faoi do'n gréin,
Sead connaic mé lánamain i ngarrda leó féin,—
Bí an bean is í go caitiseach ag caint ar an tae,
'S níor mait leis an bfear í beit 'tráct air!'

The woman complains that the husband is smoking her out of house and home; the husband retorts that the cause of their poverty is the wife's extravagant expenditure on tea. Both profess profound concern for the welfare of the children. The debate is kept up animatedly, the respective praises of tea and tobacco being vigorously sung in turn. In the end recourse is had to law, with disastrous results to the already small exchequer, and the poet concludes with the cynical touch—

'Táim cinnte gur caillead na páistí!'

The Education Question

13th *August*, 1904.

The Ard-Fheis concerned itself with so many different phases of League activity that one desirous of evaluating its work or underlining its decisions must necessarily take up its Agenda Paper section by section and point by point. We prefer to commence with what appears to us to have been infinitely the most important part of the programme of the Ard-Fheis, as it is infinitely the most important part of the programme of the Gaelic League itself. We refer, of course, to the vital, ever-pressing, many-sided education problem.

When all is said, the task which the language movement has set itself largely resolves itself into the recasting of Irish education along Irish lines. Had the education of the country been sane and national for the last hundred years there would never have been a necessity for the language movement: when it is made thoroughly sane and national again in all its branches the necessity for the language movement will have ceased.

The League ideal in education is, or should be, sufficiently well known. It is that education in this Irish land must be Irish. It must be Irish right through, and all along the line. It must take as its standpoint 'This is Ireland,' not 'This is No-Man's Land,' and still less 'This is West Britain.' It must be based on a primary system, national not merely in name, but in fact and essence; it must include a secondary system which shall be the legitimate development of such a primary

system; and it must culminate in a University which, whatever its form, and that, to us, is a matter of supreme indifference—shall in spirit and complexion, be Irish and national.

This is an ambitious programme. But the Gaelic League must carry out every line of it. To fail in a single tittle would be to fail in the League's primary object. And the failure of the League in its primary object would be for Ireland—the Irish Ireland of our ancestors, for there is no other Ireland—the end of all things. Let us beware, then, lest we fail.

We have not gone into details this week. We prefer to once again put our educational programme before the organisation in all its largeness. During the next few weeks we shall go over in detail the lines of agitation and organisation marked out by the Ard-Fheis. In doing so we shall be largely repeating ourselves. That is a consideration which does not trouble us. The League has had from the outset clear ideas as to what it wants, and clear ideas as to how best to attain what it wants. Its work for ten years has chiefly consisted in hammering away at precisely the same propositions with which it started. And vast as is the programme which remains to be realised it has hammered, we think, to some little effect. Let us keep 'trusting in God and hammering away' for yet a little longer.

The Be-All and the End-All

20th *August*, 1904.

Whilst the significance of the Oireachtas as the outcome and expression of a great movement of national revival does not appear to be appreciated by the daily press of the Irish metropolis, it is coming to be appreciated by many newspapers further afield.

The London *Daily Chronicle*, for instance, had a special representative in Dublin for the Oireachtas. Some of the leading French papers commented on the celebration. At home in Ireland periodicals which have not hitherto been looked upon as even possible allies of the Gaelic League in spreading sound ideals of nationality have devoted a considerable amount of sympathetic criticism to the Oireachtas.

Amongst these the *Society Pictorial* has an article which, with some blunders and *bizarreries*, is on the whole more live and informing than the insipid ill-digested reports we were treated to during the week by the dailies. May we point out one misconception of our contemporaries?

It speaks of certain 'rabid Leaguers' who 'regard the spread of the language amongst those who have no knowledge of it, and its jealous retention by those who have it, as the be-all and the end-all of the vast organisation of the Gaelic League.' The preservation and extension of spoken Irish is officially the primary object of the League; but we suggest that if there be Gaelic leaguers, 'rabid' or otherwise,

who regard the speaking of Irish as the be-all and the end-all of the movement, they have yet to grasp the movement's inner meaning; for our final goal is Irish Nationality, and we value the language not solely or even mainly for anything that it is in itself, but chiefly because it is an essential of Irish Nationality.

It is well that this should be clearly understood both within and without the League. As we put it a few weeks ago, the speaking of Irish is not an end but a means to an end: the end is Nationality.

Essentials

27th *August*, 1904.

One great cardinal principle the Gaelic League has set before it. That principle is, that to preserve the National Language of Ireland is the surest and, under all the circumstances, the most practical permanent way to maintain the identity of Ireland as a Nation, to keep unbroken the line of glorious and tragic history that joins her to the past, and to set free and develop the faculties and energies of her people. That is the one essential principle of the League. With that secure all else will follow. There are many phases in the League's activities, but all are subsidiary to this. When the position of Ireland's language as her greatest heritage is once fixed, all other matters will insensibly adjust themselves. As it develops, and *because* it develops, it will carry all kindred movements with it. Irish music, Irish art, Irish dancing, Irish games and customs, Irish industries, Irish politics,—all these are worthy objects. Not one of them, however, can be said to be fundamental. And again, not one of them but receives its greatest encouragement—its very vital force—from the growth of the language. When Ireland's language is established, her own distinctive culture is assured. With a nation conscious of its own identity we need not fear questions as to what is or what is not Irish in any of these points, whether it be in music or in dancing, in fashion or in accent. All phases of a nation's life will most assuredly adjust themselves on national lines as best suited to the national

character once that national character is safeguarded by its strongest bulwark. We need not fear to assimilate what is best in modern progress when our system is robust and vigorous; there will be no risk in such assimilation when our own constitution is safe; we can negotiate without suspicion when we are conscious of our strength and when our position is securely fixed above the reach of treachery or surprise or insidious attack.

To preserve and spread the language, then, is the single idea of the Gaelic League. While other causes are borne along with it as the water-foot is carried by the current, it alone is our inspiration. And as true and simple sincerity is ever practical and straightforward, so shall we be in our efforts. We have a task before us that requires self-sacrifice and exertion as heroic as any nation ever put forth. That fact we must ever keep in mind. The surest mark of our nationality is on the point of death, and only the most supreme effort can preserve it. Woe to the unfortunate Irishman who by his lethargy, his pride, his obstinacy, or his selfish prejudice, allows the moments to pass, or impedes this national work until it is too late. It is a work that calls for the aid of all. This last chance is too precious to spare the services of a single sincere Irishman. The co-operation of every man and woman in the nation in the nation who believes in the existence of Ireland as a national entity is absolutely demanded. Any man who, while professing to support the Irish language, would for personal or extraneous reasons estrange from the movement the support of any person or class, or who would waste the strength of the movement on subsidiary or non-essential matters, must be regarded as a conscious or unconscious traitor.

The support of the whole Irish Nation, then, is essential. To win and cultivate that support and to direct it to the utmost advantage is the object of the Gaelic League's existence. To focus the strength

thus gained upon the districts where the language still lives is its first duty in carrying out its working. To impress upon every Irish speaker the necessity of preserving his language and handing it down to his children; to insist firmly, uncompromisingly and continuously that all in responsible positions, whether elective or otherwise, in these districts should use the language of the people themselves and urge its use upon those who are under their influence; to secure that Irish-speaking children are taught in the language that is natural to them: these are the methods of the League in the Irish-speaking districts. To agitate unceasingly for an Irish system of education under which all Irish children shall be taught to be in every respect children of Ireland and of no other nation; to secure that teachers capable of educating such children are suitably trained; to make primary, intermediate, and university education racy of the soil; to mould and wield a united Irish public opinion strong enough to carry through these reforms: these are the objects of the Gaelic League in education. To develop in its own ranks an army, organised, harmonious, and active, studying and propagating the language, history and customs of their own country, subordinating all considerations of self to her national welfare, and aiding in every way to build up a power that will rescue the National Language from the jaws of death: that is the mission of the Gaelic League as an organisation.

‘Séadna’ and the Future of Irish Prose

24th *September*, 1904.

A recent writer, to whom, though ignorant of Irish, it has been given to discover that ‘no great secret of nature has been confided to the keeping of Gaelic poets,’ infers from this discovery that a great literature is impossible in Irish. Some amongst us who, perhaps because knowing a little more about the subject, are less confident in their speculations, are commencing to worry themselves seriously over the fact that the language movement has not yet produced a great poet or a supreme dramatist. ‘We are ten years at work,’ they say; ‘we boast that, in proportion to our numerical strength, we are producing far more books than the *Béarlóiri*; yet of what piece of original work in Irish that has been done since the language movement commenced can we say with confidence, “This, at any rate, will live”?’

People who talk thus forget that literatures do not spring up, like mushrooms, in a night. Great literary moments presuppose long formative periods. It takes centuries to make a poet, and the poet generally precedes the prose-writer. A Shakespeare was possible only after the English language had been spoken and written by many generations of educated Englishmen; and a Ruskin was not due for three centuries afterwards. Shakespeare was not the product of the Elizabethan Age; he was the product of ten centuries of English history. France did not give a supreme writer to the world, nor did

Spain, nor did Italy, until the languages of these respective nations had been assiduously and continuously cultivated for many centuries.

This is the substance of a conversation which we had with a fellow-worker in the language movement on a certain evening some six weeks ago. It was during one of the breathing-spaces of Oireachtas week. Our friend was inclined to despond because Ireland had not yet found her Ibsen or her Tolstoy. We put forward the view that Ireland's Ibsen and Tolstoy might reasonably be expected in the days of our great-grandchildren. We admitted that the language movement had, as yet, not produced any literature that could be called great, but we claimed that it had at least produced works which amply showed that great literature was possible in Irish; and we instanced, if we remember aright, An tAthair Peadar's 'Aesop,' Conán Maol's 'Buaiceas' and An Craoibhin's 'Pósadh,' as indications that a literary period of great vigour and with a spacious outlook was at hand. The appearance of such books, we argued, foretells a future literature as surely as the arrival of the first batch of swallows on our coast foretells the coming summer.

Next day, strangely enough, 'Séadna' came into our hands. We had read Part I in the now dim long ago when it appeared in the *Irisleabhar*; we had read Part II when it came out in book form a few years ago; we had occasionally happened on copies of a southern newspaper containing instalments of Part III. But to receive 'Séadna,' whole and complete, into our hands was a new sensation. We read it straight through, commencing it on the top of a city tramcar, continuing it in a train bearing us swiftly westward, and finishing it on the slope of a Connacht mountainside; and when we had read the last time we longed for the presence of our friend of Oireachtas week, for, laying our hand on 'Séadna,' we should have said to him in triumph, 'Here, at last, is literature.'

The appearance of 'Séadna' marks an epoch, for with it Ireland has once again become creative. True, the story is built on the theme, as old as Christianity, perhaps older, of the man who sold himself to the Evil One; true, the speech of the interlocutors claims to be, and is, a photographic reproduction of the homely speech heard by Muskerry firesides; nevertheless, in thought, and speech, and form, 'Séadna' is so entirely original and characteristic, so much the product of An tAthair Peadar's individuality, that it is, in the highest sense, a creation. We have here, indeed, the everyday speech and beliefs of the folk, and yet we have something entirely different from the folk-tale. The folk-tale is an evolution; 'Séadna,' like all works of art, is a creation.

The formative influence of 'Séadna' is likely to be great. Some of our most distinctive writers have declared that it was the early chapters of 'Séadna' which first taught them how to write Irish. Not that they admit themselves mere imitators of Father O'Leary, but rather that 'Séadna' showed them how to be themselves. Before 'Séadna' was written men thought that the way to produce Irish prose was to slavishly follow Keating; the lesson 'Séadna' taught was that, in writing, your prime care must be, not to imitate this or that dead or living writer, but first and foremost to utter *yourself*.

Whilst style, in the ordinary acceptation, is essentially personal and peculiar to an author, there is such a thing as the 'style' of a period, or the 'style' of a national literature. What, in this sense, is to be the 'style' of the Irish prose in the future? We think that in 'Séadna' An tAthair Peadar points the way in which Irish writers should march. And if 'Séadna' may be taken as a foretaste, then we may say that the Irish prose of tomorrow, whilst retaining much of the lyric swing and love of melody of later Irish prose, will be characterised by the terseness, the crispness, the plain straightforwardness, the muscular

force of what is best in medieval Irish literature. Its distinctive note will be strength. It will be founded on the speech of the people, but it will not be the speech of the people; for the ordinary speech of the people is never literature, though it be the stuff of which literature is made. Let us illustrate what we mean; there are passages in 'Séadna' in which, whilst they contain no word or phrase which is not in everyday use amongst the people, yet ideas and images and words and phrases are marshalled with a sequence, an economy, a picturesqueness which we should look for in vain in the ordinary utterances of men either educated or uneducated. In other words, a master of storytelling has given literary form to the talk of the people. We shall quote, not only as illuminating our point, but also as illustrating what is, perhaps, the prevailing note of An tAthair Peadar's style – muscular force – a passage in which the easy strength of the writer reminds one of the superb strength and vigour of the horses he is writing about, – we refer to the passage in Chapter 4 in which the horse-race at the fair is described. It is assuredly no dead or dying language in which can be written prose so instinct with life and movement as this:

> 'Nuair a shroiseadar páirc an aonaigh agus chonaic Séadna na capaill go léir, do tháinig mearbhall air, agus ní fheidir sé cad ba mhaith dhó a dhéanamh. Bhí capaill mhóra ann agus capaill bheaga, seana chapaill agus capaill óga, capaill dhubha agus capaill bhána, capaill ghlasa agus capaill bhreaca, capaill ag siosaraigh agus capaill ag léimrigh, capaill a bhí go deagh-chroicinn groidhe cumasach agus braimíní gránda giobalacha. Eatortha uile go léir, bhí sé ag teip air glan a aigne do shocarughadh ar an gceann a thaithneóchadh leis.
>
> Fé dheire, do leig sé a shúil ar chapall dheas chíor-dhubh a bhí go fuinte fáisgithe ag falaracht ar fuid na páirce agus marcach

éadtrom lúthmhar ar a mhuin. Dhruid Séadna suas, agus do bhagair sé ar an marcach. Sul a raibh uain ag an marcach é thabhairt fé ndeara, do ghluaiseadar triúr marcach eile thairis amach, agus ghluaiseadar a gceathrar an pháirc siar ar a léim-lúth. Bhí claidhe dúbalta idir iad agus an pháirc amuich, agus d’imthigheadar a gceathrar go h-éasga éadtrom seólta de dhruim an chlaidhe sin, gan bárr coise tosaigh ná deirigh do chur ann. Siúd ar aghaidh iad lom díreach agus gan órlach sa mbreis ag aoinne acu ar a chéile. Siúd ar aghaidh iad, ucht agus cúm seang gach capaill ag cimilt nach mór do’n bhfeur glas a bhí ar an bpáirc, ceann gach capaill sínte go h-iomlán, ceann gach marcaigh cromtha anuas agus iad ag gluaiseacht mar ghluaiseóchadh sídhe gaoithe.

Ní raibh duine, óg ná aosda, ar an aonach ná raibh ’na choilg-sheasamh ag faire ortha ach amháin fear na méaracán. Nuair a bhíodar ag déanamh ar an darna claidhe, thug gach aoinne fé ndeara go raibh an capall dubh buille beag ar tosach. Nuair a bhíodar ag glanadh an chlaidhe, do ghluais an capall dubh agus an capall ba ghiorra dhó d’á dhruim, mar a ghluaiseóchadh an priachán, gan baint leis. Do chuir an dá cheann eile na cosa ann. D’imthigh an fód ó chosaibh an chapaill ba shia amach, agus thuit sé féin agus a mharcach ar an dtaobh eile ’chlaidhe.

“Ó!! Tá sé marbh!” do liúghadar na daoine go léir. Ní raibh an liúgh as a mbeul nuair a bhí sé thuas airís, ach má ’seadh bhí a chapall bacach agus b’éigean dó filleadh.

Siúd ar aghaidh an triúr agus an t-aonach ag faire ortha, na daoine chómh ciúin sin gur airigh Séadna go soiléir na buillí fuinte ceólmhara tómhaiste cruadha a bhuaileadh cosa na gcapall san ar fhód na páirce, díreach mar bhéadh rinnceóir ag rinnce ar chlár.

Thug Séadna fé ndeara um an dtaca so go raibh an capall dubh go maith ar tosach, agus é ag déanamh, ceann ar aghaidh, ar bhata a bhí ’na sheasamh ’sa pháirc agus éadach éigin dearg ’na bhárr. Siúd tímpal an bhata san é. Siúd ’na dhiaigh an tarna capall. Siúd ’na dhiaigh sin an trímhadh capall. Siúd ar aghaidh i ndiaigh a chéile iad, i leith na láimhe clé, soir ó thuaidh, an capall dubh ar tosach, agus é ag bogadh uatha. Do ghéaruigh an capall deirig agus bhí sé ag breith suas ar an darna capall. Do ghéaruigh san, agus bhíodar araon ag breith suas ar an gcapall ndubh. Ansan do chonaic Séadna agus an t-aonach an radharc. Do shearg an capall dubh san é féin, do bhog an marcach an tsrian chuige, agus siúd amach é mar a ghluaiseóchadh cú agus gur dhóigh leat ná raibh cos leis ag baint le talamh, ach é ag imtheacht i n-aice an tailimh mar a bhéadh seabhac.

Le n-a linn sin d’eirigh liúgh fhiaigh ó’n áit thoir thuaidh go raibh na capaill ag déanamh air. Do tógadh an liúgh mór-thímpal an aonaigh. B’éigean do Shéadna a mhéarana do chur ’na chluasaibh nó go sgoiltfí a cheann. Bhí gach aoinne ag ruith agus gach aoinne ag liúirigh. Do rith Séadna agus do liúigh sé leó agus ní raibh a fhios aige cad ar a shon.’

We need have no misgivings as to the future of the literary movement which, in its infancy, has given us ‘Séadna.’ The seeds of life are here.

The Philosophy of Education

12th *November*, 1904.

In bringing to a conclusion the series of leading articles which we have devoted to the Bilingual Programme, we may with advantage dwell on certain maxims and methods of modern educationists which are, indeed, applicable to unilingual equally with bilingual teaching, but which in our opinion are especially deserving of the study of every teacher who would make a success of the Bilingual Programme. Educational reform in Ireland has hitherto followed the language movement; it would be only in the nature of things that the introduction of the Bilingual Programme should be accompanied by the growth of truer educational ideals and the employment of saner educational methods amongst Irish educators generally. At all events we desire in connection with the Bilingual Programme to put forward, not indeed for the first time in these columns, the following suggestions for the consideration of Irish teachers. Though the subject is tempting, we shall compress what we have to say within the limit of two articles.

Now, the aim of education is not the imparting of knowledge but the training of the child to be a perfect man or woman—'to prepare for complete living,' said Herbert Spencer. Neither is the chief *means* of education the imparting of knowledge; the imparting of knowledge is, indeed, only an incident of the process of education. The real education consists in the forming of the child's character,

the drawing out of his faculties, the disciplining of his intellect. These are truisms, but they are truisms whose truth is not yet recognised in Ireland except in so far as the Gaelic League has been able to impress its ideas on our educators. We wish we were sure that every teacher in Ireland realised the dignity and responsibility and possibilities of his position. To have confided to one's care the moulding for good or evil of the most beautiful thing that God has made—the soul and the mind of a child—is surely a high dignity and a high responsibility.

Now, we conceive that in educating a child the inculcation of truth, manliness, purity, and reverence, is more important than the teaching of vulgar fractions and Latin roots. Under the National School system instruction in dogmatic religion is rigidly restricted to a single half-hour each day; but there is no hour of the day during which the teacher cannot, by precept and example, enkindle in his pupils' minds a love of truth and goodness and a hatred of falsehood and baseness. The whole life of a teacher should, indeed, be a sermon to his pupils. There is one virtue the inculcation of which is one of the special duties of a teacher—the virtue of Patriotism. We owe it to our children that they should be taught to know and to love their country. If we hide that knowledge from them we commit a crime. *A fortiori*, if actively or by acquiescence, we teach them to be ashamed of their country, to despise her speech, her song, her music, her traditions, we are morally as guilty as if we poisoned their minds against their own parents, and taught them to cast contumely on them; nay, we are, if anything, more guilty, for duty to country is paramount to duty to parents.

Every Irish child has, then, a fundamental right to be taught that Ireland is his mother, and that he owes a duty to that mother—the duty to know her, the duty to love her, the duty to work for her. This, of course, implies his right to be taught her language and her

history, and to be shown how to study and appreciate her literature and lore. The systematic inculcation of patriotism is part of the school *régime* of every enlightened country. Its necessity is understood on the Continent, in America, and partially in Britain. In Denmark old Danish folk-songs are sung in the schools, in Belgium the children are taught that the Battle of Waterloo was a Flemish victory, and that Wellington and the British were mere items in the army which crushed Napoleon; in America school-children salute the American flag as they pass to their desks.

Far more effective than the mere didactic preaching of patriotism would be well-directed efforts to bring the children into some direct relation with the country they inhabit—its natural beauty, its wild living things, its rocks, its rivers, its ruins. Saturday excursions should be made to the scenes of famous fights, the sites of famous *dúns* or churches. The story of the spot should be told in simple language by the teacher, to form afterwards the scheme for a composition exercise. The lives of the children should be brought into touch with the beautiful and mysterious life around them. Love of nature should be instilled, and minute and intelligent observation of the ways of nature encouraged. The children might be asked to bring to school each week some new wild flower or plant, together with its Irish name, gleaned from the old people. The specimens so collected should be preserved, and would form the nucleus of a botanical collection which would grow constantly until it was fully representative of the flora of the district. In places near the sea-coast the children might be asked to bring specimens of the various species of shell and sea-weed to be found on the shore, with the Irish name of each. Thus would be formed another collection in the schoolroom, another treasure-house to be drawn on in future object-lessons. Again, the children should be taught to know and to love every wild thing that flies in

the air or creeps in the grass—to know their names, their haunts, their habits, to recognise their form and cries. They should, above all, be taught that the lives of animals are sacred, and that wantonly to kill or hurt a beast or bird or insect is a wicked and a mean thing. The children again might be asked to note the first appearance in the locality of the migratory birds—to bring the teacher word of the first swallow seen, the first cuckoo heard in spring or the last to leave in autumn. The appearance of rare birds and insects in the locality should also be noted. Every child ought to keep his own record, and the more interesting items in each could be transferred to a common school list kept by the teacher or a senior pupil.

Work of this sort forms part of the school programme in many Continental countries and in America. In America, indeed, the idea has of late years been immensely developed. There are school libraries, formed by the children, school museums, collected by them, school gardens, cultivated by them. Nay, children are taught at school to cultivate orchards, to grow corn, to rear chicken and pigs. To the youngsters it is all play, but in reality they are being trained to habits of observation, of method, of cleanliness, of economy.

> 'In Illinois children are raising corn and oats, sweet peas and lilies, trying experiments with clover and alfalfa. In their arithmetic lessons they keep their accounts, do the book-keeping of their tiny farms; in their composition exercises they describe what they have done. Girls and boys, big and little, plan their home gardens, their school-gardens, and send samples of their results to the State university. Interested fathers are benefiting by the instruction colleges and teachers give their children. An estimate based on the actual results of school experiments credits one county in the next few years with hundreds of

> thousands of dollars' financial increase in agricultural business. A boy or a girl in a corner of Wisconsin owns hens, or a pair of pigs, a present from a father or an uncle. Close to his public school is a county agricultural school. He asks the director how to feed, how to house and care for his new stock. With the right care his animals thrive better than his father's. In his school composition there often figures the child's amount of the father's amused scepticism, and the father's conversion to new ways of farming. Interest in grain-growing, interest in the dairy, a love of the farm, are born that way. And the girl or boy bringing the discoverer's zeal to old tasks becomes a woman, not a drudge; a man, not a bumpkin.'[1]

In Ireland we are, under the aegis of the National Board, and facilitated by the absence of a National University, assiduously and successfully raising not women, but drudges; not men, but bumpkins.

1 Adele Mary Shaw in *The World's Work*.

Hungary and Ireland

26th *November*, 1904.

We do not know that there has been published in Ireland in our time any book in English more important than 'The Resurrection of Hungary.' It may look absurd to write thus of a penny pamphlet, but we are weighing our words. 'The Resurrection of Hungary' marks an epoch, because it crystalises into a national policy the doctrines which during the past ten years have been preached in Ireland by the apostles of the Irish Ireland movement. That movement originated with the foundation of the Gaelic League; the Gaelic League continues, and must always continue, to be the soul and nerve-centre of the movement; but the movement is wider than the Gaelic League. There are departments of national life with which the League voluntarily precludes itself from dealing. Now, the pamphlet before us concerns itself with the whole national life, and more especially with political nationality. It enunciates with regard to political nationality the truth which the Gaelic League enunciates with regard to spiritual nationality; that the centre of gravity of a nation must be within the nation itself. Its main argument is thus not one which can legitimately be discussed in the columns of AN CLAIDHEAMH SOLUIS. We must content ourselves with recommending every member of the Gaelic League to buy the pamphlet and to study it for himself. Here we can refer only to points which come within our own special sphere.

Perhaps the fact which most clearly stands out in the story of a national revival so brilliantly told in this pamphlet is that the revival had its beginning in a language movement. Nay, it is insisted on that the revival would have been impossible only for the fact that the spirit of traditional Hungarian nationality preserved a continuous existence in the ballad-making of certain poets and dreamers who refused to believe that Hungary was dead, and who sang in Hungarian of her coming triumph. The movement of revival which eventuated in the creation of a free and prosperous and renowned kingdom commenced with the language and industrial propaganda of Szechenyi.

Szechenyi's position from 1825 up to the rise of Deak and Kossuth corresponds almost exactly to the position of the Gaelic League.

> 'Revive your language, educate yourselves, build your agriculture and your industries,' this was the basis of his teaching ... He laboured unceasingly to implant love of country in his people's hearts—to improve their intellectual and industrial condition. His busy brain was ever devising new schemes to benefit the country, his iron will surmounting the obstacles that barred their path, his steady hand pointing the way to their realisation. He strove to unite the nation—peasant and noble—in a common brotherhood of affection and awaken them to a recognition that the interests of one were the interests of all—to make them realise that whether they were gentle or simple they were first of all Hungarians.'

The parallel is even closer:

> 'As Szechenyi, a non-Hungarian, speaking Hungarian, realised the value of the language which had come in Hungary

> in those days, as it is in Ireland in modern times, to be deemed a *lingua rustica*—so non-Irish-speaking Irishmen in our time have realised the value of the Irish language and thrilled it again with life. Szechenyi throughout his life could never speak Hungarian without an effort or without an Austrian accent—some of his lieutenants in the revival could never speak three sentences of it—but they taught all Hungary to be proud of it, and taught all young Hungary to speak it, so that to-day the Hungarian language is the only language of millions in Hungary whose fathers and grandfathers spoke no word of it.'

The early pages of the pamphlet tell the fascinating story of how, under Szechenyi's leadership, Hungary waxed hopeful and strong and enterprising and progressive and creative; how a National Academy arose, a national Press sprang up, a national literature, destined before the end of the century to become one of the most vigorous and original literatures of Europe, commenced to grow. Students who would wish to follow the fortunes of the Hungarian language movement in greater detail are referred to the lecture on 'The Need of an Irish Academy,' which was recently delivered in Liverpool by Dr. Kuno Meyer, and which we have been so fortunate as to secure for publication in AN CLAIDHEAMH SOLUIS. Dr. Meyer, who has just returned from a long visit to Hungary, works out the parallel between the two countries in the most interesting fashion. The moral of the whole story is that the Hungarian language revival of 1825 laid the foundation of the great, strong, and progressive Hungarian nation of 1904. And so shall it fall out in Ireland.

Nationality and Gaelicism

17th *December*, 1904.

Inis Fail, in noting the appointment of Miss Milligan as Lantern Lecturer to the Gaelic League, takes exception to a recent statement of hers, 'that while "nationalism" should include "Gaelicism," the latter "cannot include nationalism as it is bigger."' This dictum, the writer thinks, goes to show that Miss Milligan is not sound in her Irish ideas. We do not know in what precise context the words were used, or whether anything which preceded or followed them was so phrased as to give the impression that Miss Milligan was heterodox in her views; but, taking as it stands the naked statement quoted by our contemporary, 'that while "nationalism" should include "Gaelicism," the latter "cannot include nationalism as it is bigger,"' the truth of the contention appears to us so obvious that we are amazed that anyone should call it in question 'Nationalism' (which we here distinguish from 'nationality') we take to mean the spirit of active patriotism, and 'Gaelicism' we take to mean the traditional spirit of Ireland as inhering in her language, literature, and lore; if the meanings we attach to the terms be accepted, then it is self-evident that 'nationalism,' as Miss Milligan contends, is the wider term of the two, but that Irish nationalism must include Gaelicism. A true 'Nationalist'—that is, a true patriot—must be a Gael either in fact or by desire; but a little reflection will show that one may be a Gael without being a patriot. Not to go to past history for examples, the

Irish-speaking parent in Connemara or Iveragh who is ashamed of his Irish speech and refuses to teach it to his children, is, of course, a Gael—*i.e.*, he is in full communion with the whole body of Gaelic tradition; but he is not a patriot—his 'Gaelicism' does not include 'nationalism.' It is very unwise for Gaelic Leaguers to overstate their case, and for our part we shall never fail to protest when we find it laid down that Gaelicism is nationalism,—in truth it is only a part—an essential part—of nationalism,—an element in a compound.

Summing up what we have written in the preceding paragraph in a recent note on 'Nationality and Autonomy,' may we submit the following definitions?:—

1. 'Nationality' is the sum total of all the characteristics which mark off a people as a distinct entity.
2. 'Nationalism' (sometimes used as a synonym of 'nationality') is the spirit of active patriotism.
3. 'Gaelicism' is the traditional spirit of Ireland, which inheres mainly in the language, literature, and lore of Ireland.

A study of these definitions will show that nationalism, in the sense in which we use it, is to nationality as the subjective is to the objective; and further that Gaelicism can be regarded either subjectively or objectively. Regarded subjectively, Gaelicism is an essential of Irish nationalism; regarded objectively, it is an essential of Irish nationality. But it is co-extensive with neither the one nor the other. The Gaelic League states its whole case when it states that Gaelicism is *an essential element*; to state that it is the whole were to state too much.

Ulster

24th *December*, 1904.

'Gaedeal mise, 7 ní heol gur náir dom é.' Thus, in his fine address at the great Belfast meeting on Thursday last, did Dr. Henebry sum up the whole case of the Gaelic League. 'Gaedeal mise, 7 ní heol gur náir dom é.' Here is a rallying-cry, strenuous, adequate, intelligible, which might well be adopted by the whole movement. 'Gaedeal mise.' You and I and all of us are, or should be, Gaels, for Gaelicism is the birthright of everyone who springs from the soil of Ireland. Gaelicism, as we put it last week, is the traditional spirit of this land, the thing which gives continuity to Irish history, the thing whose possession as something still vital and energetic makes the Ireland of today the same Ireland as the Ireland of history; the thing on whose loss would ensue the death of Ireland. Gaelicism is the rightful inheritance not of any one section of the Irish people, but of the Irish people as a whole, and of every individual Irishman. It is, indeed, the actual possession only of a comparative few. Some amongst us have received it unimpaired from our fathers and mothers; a much larger number have grown to manhood or womanhood before coming into contact with it; a still larger number have yet to learn that such a thing exists, and that they have been living outside of it. But Gaelicism is the birthright of us all; of Protestant as of Catholic, of Unionist as of Nationalist, of non-native speaker as of native speaker, of North as of South. When we have all come into our birthright these distinctions,

which now loom large and portentous, will be of less moment, for we shall all be simply Irish. The common possession of Gaelicism, which is the largest and most important element in Irish nationality, is the only thing which can make this land, in fact and spirit, one,—a whole, a coherent entity. Without it we are a mere parcel of warring creeds, and factions, and provinces, thrown together by accident on the same patch of land.

In the Irish Ireland of which we dream Ulster must play a large part. What one may call the Ulster mind is, as we think, one of the most valuable assets of Ireland. An Ireland without Ulster would be a maimed and impotent Ireland. Accordingly, we deem it of vital importance that the language movement should draw closer and closer to it, not merely that large minority of Ulstermen who are sprung from the Gael, who are our own kith and kin, but also that stranger, more aloof Ulster, that Ulster which is so remote from us that we find it difficult at times to imagine that it is part of Ireland. But it is, and we believe that in time even the Ulster which goes mad annually on the Twelfth of July will, through the language movement, find its way into the stream of Irish national life.

The great demonstration of last week was valuable, therefore, first as the starting-point of a wider and more active propaganda in Belfast itself, and secondly as a challenge to Ulster, a call to her to examine her conscience, to consider whether she is wise in consistently siding with the Gall and against the Gael.

The gathering was one of the vastest that has ever assembled under the auspices of the Gaelic League, but its vastness was less remarkable than what we may describe as the reserve-force of the enthusiasm which lurked under its quiet self-possession. Many Protestants sat on the platform and in the body of the hall. The Cardinal-Archbishop of Armagh presided, and was supported by the Bishop of Down and

Connor and a large body of representative citizens. The Cardinal's address, shrewd, kindly, humorous, dwelt happily on the essentially national, as distinguished from sectional, character of the League's spirit. The work of the language movement was a work for all Ireland, and in affording a common platform to Catholic and Protestant, Gael, Sean-Ghall, and Nua-Ghall, North and South, the League was'softening the asperities' of Irish life, 'bringing the people together and giving them a kindly feeling for each other.' That alone, as His Eminence contended, were sufficient to recommend the movement to the support of every patriot.

After the resolutions had been formally proposed by Mr. Ward and seconded by Mr. Walsh, the Most Rev. Dr. Henry followed with a speech which showed that he is whole-heartedly with the League. His Lordship's announcements with regard to the status of Irish in St. Malachy's College and in St. Mary's Training College were greeted with ringing cheers. Elsewhere in this issue we print a report on the position of Irish in St. Mary's.

Eoin Mac Néill, whom the Cardinal introduced as 'a neighbour's child,' dwelt on the necessity for Irishising the home life, and added some clear and straight sentences on the attitude of the League towards politics. Next came the Rev. Dr. Henebry's Irish address, which was perhaps the event of the evening. It was easily followed by a large minority of the audience, and even those who failed to understand the words visibly caught some of their poetry and passion. In English Dr. Henebry dealt illuminatingly with the problem of language and nationality. The Editor of AN CLAIDHEAMH, who followed, confined himself mainly to the education question in its various phases.

Apart from the educative effect which the demonstration is bound to have on Ulster, we look for immediate results in the city of Belfast

itself. Belfast contains some 80,000 Catholics, who are all at least *potential* Gaelic Leaguers where—to leave out of sight for a moment the much larger population of non-Catholics, many of the younger men amongst whom are steadily moving towards nationalism—is a vast field for work. In the ability and devotion of its workers, Belfast is, we think, singularly fortunate. The Old Guard of the League in Belfast, though it has sent 'Conán Maol' and 'Cú Uladh' to fight on other frontiers, still includes Dr. Boyd, and 'Feargus Finnbhéil,' and Tadhg Mac a' Bháird, and Liam Breathnach, and Séamus O Cealláigh, and Liam O Liodáin; and such workers as Donnchadh O Liatháin, and Seaghán O Ciarsaigh and Seaghán O Catháin, and Muiris O Griobhtha have recently brought to Ulster some of the zest and optimism of the League in Dublin and London and Glasgow. With such a spirit animating a large section of it as last week's demonstration shows to exist, and with such workers as we have mentioned thinking and toiling in its midst, Belfast ought to play a distinctive and important part in the movement.

The Case for Irish

21st *January*, 1905.

Certain friendly discussions in which we have recently been engaged suggest the fact that very many, not merely of those who would describe themselves simply as 'sympathisers' with the language movement, but of those who fully accept the Gaelic League's programme and are actual workers within the organisation, have nevertheless no adequate, accurate, coherent idea of the philosophy of the movement. They have faith, but they are either unable to attempt a justification of their faith, or else seek to justify it by arguments which are untenable. It may be asked, 'What matter? Why bother about a man's theories if in practice he is sound?' We answer: If people who in practice are sound, whilst hazy in their theories, were content to work ahead and hold their tongues, we should be the last to complain; but when we find well-meaning but loosely-thinking and ill-informed Gaelic Leaguers attempting to justify the movement by arguments which no sane thinker could endorse, and by propositions which assert either too little or too much, it becomes desirable that there should be a clear statement of what the League does really hold, and as to why exactly it holds it.

In our attempt to offer such a statement we may inadvertently hurt the feelings of certain readers, for we shall have incidentally to point out that propositions which they have been in the habit of maintaining on Gaelic League platforms, and in disputations public

and private, are either untenable or irrelevant, perhaps both. It is better, however, that such things should be pointed out here than that the task should be left to ruder and less sympathetic critics.

As an instance of the sort of 'argument' on behalf of the language movement which we would deprecate, we may refer to the indiscriminate abuse of English as 'an unmelodious jargon,' 'a mere conglomeration of other tongues,' 'a worn-out garment,' and so on, which we frequently hear. Such 'arguments' may or may not be tenable, but they are irrelevant. The English language is not our language; in stating that fact we have stated our whole case against it.

On the other hand, some Gaelic Leaguers have allowed shallow sneerers to ridicule them out of the employment of an argument which is really the very argument of arguments on which the whole Gaelic League case rests,—we mean the argument summed up in the phrase, 'Teanga Phádraic.' This is not a mere catch-cry; but a genuine and legitimate argument; for what is but a compendious statement of the proposition that Irish is the language of our traditions? In the phrase, 'Pádraic' stands, as he does in the mind of every Irish speaker, as the embodiment of the whole Gaelic past, the prototype of native civilisation. 'Ó aimsir Phádraic' is the Irish speaker's equivalent to 'immemorial antiquity'; the phrase to him does not connote merely the fourteen hundred odd years which have elapsed since Patrick came on his mission 'ad Scotos credentes in Christum,'—it connotes the whole past of the Gaelic race ever since there was a Gaelic race.

From this reference to an argument which, as we say, summarises the whole Gaelic League case, we naturally pass to a more explicit statement of that case. The case is simply this, that Irish is the language of Ireland. It is because it is the language of Ireland, and not because it happens to be a rich and beautiful language, a strong and flexible language, a subtle and delicate language, that we would fain preserve

it. If it were a sterile and unlovely speech, weak and unadaptable, rigid and colourless, it would equally be our duty to preserve it, for it is ours, it is the speech we have ourselves fashioned from our inner consciousness for the purpose of expressing our thought, and to disown it, for that it were unlovely, would be to disown ourselves. The fact that Irish is really one of the most wondrous instruments of speech ever moulded by the minds and vocal organs of men, that its past has been glorious, that it contains the seeds of an equally glorious future, are, of course, powerful subsidiary arguments, but they are insignificant when compared with the great central argument that Irish is the language of Ireland. On that argument the Gaelic League stakes its case.

But what exactly does the statement 'Irish is the language of Ireland' imply? Does it imply merely that Irish is the language which, up to a short time ago, Ireland was in the habit of employing for the transaction of her daily business, just as she employed spades and ploughs and rakes and spinning wheels and looms, that it was a mere implement made use of by Ireland,—does it mean only this, and nothing more? Obviously, it means vastly more, else it were no argument. This leads us to the threshold of a large subject—what is a national language, and what its functions?—which will occupy us for the next few weeks. In dealing with the problem we shall be going over ground which has been well trodden before, but which is yet none too familiar to the average Gaelic Leaguer who has occasion to speak or write.

What is a National Language?

28th *January*, 1905.

A language is evolved by a nation for the purpose of expressing its thought. Thus a nation's speech is in a real sense the creation of that nation. Now, anything created by me is what it is because I, its creator, am what I am. I am what I am because of my history, personal and ancestral. Applying this commonplace of psychology, a nation's language is what it is because the nation is what it is. The nation is what it is by reason of its past history, immediate and remote.

Thus the Irish language is, so to speak, the logical and inevitable outcome of Irish history. The Gael being what he is, his language is what it is. Its sounds have been fashioned precisely so, and not otherwise, because the vocal organs of the Gael are of a particular conformation, and because his ear likes or dislikes particular sounds. Similarly, its grammar and idioms are the inevitable outcome of the Gael's way of looking at things. They reflect his personality, and express it. It is because the Gael thinks in a particular way, and not otherwise, that there is in the Irish language a particular idiom which is not in other languages; it is because of this that there are certain grammatical forms in the language which are not in other languages; and it is because a particular point of view has never presented itself to the Gael that a particular idiom or grammatical form occurring in other languages may be absent in Irish.

If we admit all this, and admit it were must, we see how inadequate is the notion of those who tell us that a language is a mere set of labels, a mere collection of declensions and conjugations. Even regarded as a mere set of labels a language is to a certain extent biographical. It is the result of the physical and mental formation of the nation which produced it, and for all time will be a witness to that conformation. But even when arranged in parallel columns in a dictionary a language is very much more than a mere collection of labels. In actual practice there is no such thing as a word apart from its connotation and associations. **One cannot** turn over the pages of a dictionary without coming into contact with the mind of the race which fashioned the language whose vocabulary is there recorded.

So far, we have been speaking of a language proper, apart from its literature and folklore. When we go on to consider the literature of a language, the argument becomes infinitely more compelling. A literature is the expression in literary form of the mind of a race. Races also express themselves in art, in industry, in political institutions, and in other ways, but language and literature must always remain the most important channels for national self-expression, a nation's language and literature must always remain the fullest and most understandable record of its thought. Thus if we want to get at the mind of Ireland we must go to her language and literature. For practical purposes Ireland's mind has not been expressed otherwise than in language and literature. Ireland has not yet expressed herself to any great extent in art—her ancient art, distinctive as it was, was but a very imperfect expression of her personality,—expressed, in fact, only one aspect of a very complex national character; and it stopped short at a very early stage. Nor can Ireland be said to have adequately expressed herself in industry or in political institutions. Emphatically, then, the mind of Ireland has been expressed in her

language, with its literature and folklore. If we do not find the Irish mind here we can find it nowhere.

Seeing that the language of a nation, as to its sounds, its idioms, its grammatical forms, and still more, as to its literature and folklore, is indelibly stamped with the personality of the nation, it is obvious that by coming into touch with the language, we come into touch with that personality. We cannot come into touch with the language without coming into touch with the mind of the nation, nor can we come into touch with the mind of the nation otherwise than through its language,—except, in so far as we can do so through its art, industry, political institutions, and so on. Thus, to get at the real Ireland, we must go to the Irish language. The language sums up what the Gaelic race has been thinking ever since there was a Gaelic race. It contains Ireland's message to her children and to the world. In it, Ireland's temperament is expressed, its point of view is Ireland's. Moreover, it imposes the Irish point of view and Irish modes of thought on those who use it.

All this is next to self-evident, and people who speak of a language as a 'mere set of sounds,' are either incapable of thinking or else are saying something which they do not believe. In point of fact, is the only difference between the Irish-speaking and the English-speaking Irishman (strange contradiction!) this, that the two make use of different 'sets of sounds,' of different declensional and conjugational systems? The merest casual observer can see that there is another and a profounder difference. It is that one is in contact with the Irish mind, and the other in contact with the English mind, that one is in line with Irish history, Irish tradition, the other with English history, English tradition, that one has the Irishman's standpoint, the other the Englishman's.

Remembering this, we come to see that the question of retaining the Irish language is not a mere question of retaining a set of sounds developed by ourselves for the mere pleasure of being unlike other men; it is a question of remaining in communion with the past of our race.

Language and Nationality

4th *February*, 1905.

It will be evident from what we have written in our last two leading articles that a nation's language—fashioned as it is by the nation itself for the purpose of expressing its thought, conditioned by the nation's peculiarities, mental and physical, which, in turn, are conditioned by the nation's past history, expressive of the nation's point of view, working by methods peculiar to the nation, and imposing that point of view and those methods on whomsoever uses it—it will be evident, we say, that this language is an essential part of the nation's nationality.

Nationality we have defined as the sum total of the characteristics which mark off a people as a distinct entity, and we think the definition is both accurate and adequate. Of such characteristics there are many: some are physical, others mental; some are of great, others of minor importance.

It is sufficient for our purpose to predicate that language is one of these characteristics,—that is, that it is an element in the compound, nationality. Every element in a compound is an essential part of the compound: if one element be withdrawn, the compound is not what it was, but something else. Were the Irish language to disappear, then, the people which we should have in Ireland, whatever else it might be, would not be the Irish Nation.

But, from what we have said it is plain that the national language is not merely an element—that is, an essential—of nationality, but that it is the largest and most important of all the elements which go to make up a nationality. It is this partly in virtue of what it is itself—the main expression and record of the nation's thought—and partly in that it is a preservative of most of the other characteristics of nationality which are not merely physical.

For instance, it is a preservative not merely of the literature and the folklore of the nation, but of the nation's habits of thought, the nation's popular beliefs, the nation's manifold bents, prepossessions, idiosyncrasies of various sorts. It is a preservative also of nationalism in art, in industry, in pastimes, in social and civic customs. It is further, partly through its function in keeping the nation in touch with its past, partly through the fact of its enshrining the national literature and lore, the wellspring from which artists and industrialists and publicists draw inspiration.

What is meant by saying that the national language is a *preservative* of many of the other elements of nationality will be grasped at once by remembering how far those amongst us who have retained the national speech have retained the other notes of Irishism in comparison with those who have become English-speaking. How much of Irishism, in mind, in manner, in lore, in music, in song, in pastimes, in dress, in customs social and civic, does one not see in comparing a Donegal or a Galway or a Kerry countryside with a rural district in Meath or Kildare or Dublin!

Wherever the language has persisted all or nearly all of the characteristics—purely physical ones excepted—have disappeared, or are disappearing. And the extent to which they have disappeared is measured by the length of time which has elapsed since the language disappeared.

It has sometimes been said that 'language is nationality.' That dictum we take to be merely a forcible way of stating the truth that language is, so to speak, the determining factor in nationality,—the largest and most important element in the compound. If it be meant that the terms 'language' and 'nationality' are co-extensive,—that they connote exactly the same things—we must dissent.

Nationality, in our view, is a complex thing, and language, whilst the largest and most important of its factors, is still only a part of the whole. We imagine that this is all the dictum means. Language is at once an important element itself, and a safeguard of other important elements, at once a test and a symbol, of nationality; so that, if the statement 'language is nationality' be true only when regarded as a figure of speech, the statement 'there is no nationality independent of language' is true absolutely and universally.

'What about the United States?' says someone. We shall say somewhat about the United States next week.

About the United States

11th *February*, 1905.

The statement that language is an essential of nationality does not necessarily imply that corresponding to every separate nationality there must be a separate language. Nationality, as we have insisted, is a compound, the sum total of many elements. Two or more nations may hold certain elements of their nationality in common, and quite obviously often do.

The French, the Spaniards and the Italians have many common characteristics, though they are three well-marked and distinct nationalities. Now, language does not differ in kind from the other elements of nationality, it differs only in relative importance. There is nothing to prevent two or more nations from possessing a language in common any more than there is anything to prevent them from holding any other characteristics in common.

It is true that two or more nations speaking the same language is not a phenomenon of frequent occurrence, and that for a reason which is fairly apparent. Either of two things commonly happens, and it depends on circumstances which. Either each race ultimately works out a separate language for itself, by the process of gradually modifying the parent speech, or else the most vigorous of the group absorbs the others. Whenever neither of these alternatives happens, there is an historical explanation.

Now, let it be posited that the United States is a nation, and that it holds one element of its nationality in common with England. The fact is inconsistent with no part of the Gaelic League's case. The English language—or perhaps we should say English as spoken in America—is an element in American nationality. The United States is what it is by reason of possessing certain characteristics, and one of these characteristics is English speech. If the United States were to commence to speak Spanish or French tomorrow morning, would anyone contend that it would still be precisely the same nation that it is today? American nationality connotes, amongst other things, the speaking of English. A French-speaking American is as much a contradiction as a French-speaking Englishman.

Everything is explained by history, and the explanation of the fact that the United States speaks the same language as England is patent. The United States is really only an English colony which has grown into nationhood. It never abandoned its language, never adopted a new one. It was English-speaking from the start. Remember that when 'Cousin' Jonathan first broke away from the apron-strings of the mother country, the said mother country was quite a venerable and respectable dame.

She had Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon and the English Bible. She had a distinct, perfect, and fully-developed language, which she had imparted to 'Cousin' Jonathan, thereby enthralling his vocal organs and his mind. 'Cousin' Jonathan merely carried his language to America,—and stuck to it. He never threw it aside for another. On the contrary, he imposed it on everyone who came to share his fortunes. He set to work to build up a nationality of his own around the English language.

That language he has modified somewhat, and may modify more as time goes on. As before, there are historical explanations of the

fact that he has not developed a new language. Steam and electricity have kept him in touch with the mother country, the influence of a great literature to which, equally with the Briton, he is the heir, has enthralled him. Had he been in some way cut off from all communication with England and English literature, he would doubtless by this time have so modified his English speech that it would be for practical purposes a new language.

If America has succeeded in developing and maintaining a distinctive nationality in spite of her English speech, why, it may be asked, could not Ireland do the same? There is no parallel between the two cases. The essence of America's case is that she has not thrown aside one language for another, but on the contrary has simply retained the speech with which she started. In our case, we should be giving up a speech which is our own for one which is not our own. We should be doing what America would do if she were to cast English aside for Chinese or Choctaw.

Far from telling against the Gaelic League's case, the linguistic history of America really provides several most telling arguments in its favour. Thus, whilst the fact that the United States, owing to historic causes, speaks the same language as England, is not inconsistent with its separate nationality, it is yet in many ways a disadvantage from the American point of view. For one thing, it makes London the intellectual capital of the United States. Irresistibly, American literary men and artists are drawn to England, and make it their home. America, intellectually, is a province. She has not yet produced anything commandingly great in art or literature. It is a sort of natural law that creative activity centres round the capital of a race. England has passed her prime when the United States parted company with her; yet how vast has been England's contribution to the world's art and literature since 1776, in comparison with America's!

The fact that unity of speech in some way knits America and England together is recognised by everyone. Admission of an affinity of some sort is behind all the talk of an 'Anglo-American Alliance.' Why 'Cousin' Jonathan at all? Why, 'Hands Across the Sea,' 'Anglo-Saxon Race,' and the numerous other catch-cries heard on both sides of the Atlantic? Say what you will, the idea that England and the United States are in some way *one*, is an idea which is firmly rooted in both countries. And what does it rest on but the fact of unity of speech? 'Race,' 'empire,' 'nation,' may be each separately and distinctly definable, but if you say, as many say, that England and America are a unity, call it a 'race,' 'an empire,' a 'federation,' an 'alliance,' or what you will, your sole reason is this, that both speak the same language. Both may be, and are, nations; but everyone who has eyes to see and a mind to think recognises that there is between them a link stronger than any mere physical bond—the link of a common language and literature.

The Law and the Language

I.

20th *May*, 1905.

On Tuesday last the language movement marched boldly into the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, and for five hours counsel discussed with the Lord Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Andrews, and Mr. Justice Gibson, various questions ranging from the origin of the Irish alphabet to the position of the Pan-Celts with regard to the language movement. Large as was the issue involved—being nothing less than the attitude of British law towards the language of this country—the legal argument turned on the interpretation to be placed on the words 'legible letters,' occurring in 14 and 15 Vic., cap. 92, s. 12. As judgment has not been given up to the moment of going to press, we withhold further comment on the proceedings.

II.
17th *June*, 1905.

At its meeting last week the Coisde Gnótha protested against the grotesque decision of the Court of King's Bench in the case of Naill Mac Giolla Bhrighde, 'by which it was in effect decided that Irish is a foreign language on the same level as Yiddish.' The Coisde went on to invite the people of Ireland to meet this outlawry of the National Language by making more strenuous efforts to secure that it shall become the spoken and written tongue of the whole Irish people. The best answer which Ireland can make to the judges of the King's Bench is to strengthen the language movement at every point. The more vindictive British Law shows itself, the more aggressive and stubborn must the movement become. It is no more within the power of the Court of King's Bench to stay the language revival by a hostile decision than it was in the power of Dame Durden of old to turn back the incoming tide with her broom.

Let the enforcement of the ludicrous law which requires Irishmen to describe themselves on their carts by names not their own for the benefit of the illiterate police constables be opposed by every legitimate means. It looks as if numerous opportunities will be given. As we go to press, Seaghán Ó Ciabháin appears in a Petty Sessions Court near Tralee to answer a charge of non-compliance with 14 and 15 Vic., c. 92,—albeit he has had his name painted on his cart in Irish only for the past four years. On the 16th inst. Pádraig Ó Cearbhaill, T.C., Black Lion, Inchicore, appears in the Southern Division of the Dublin Police Court on a similar charge. All such incidents should be utilised to display the force and passion behind the language movement. The fact that the decision is bound to go against the Gael is immaterial. Every appearance in a court to answer a charge

which calls into question the legality of Irish serves to advertise the movement and to hasten the day when British Law must either recognise the national language of this country or give place to a law which does.

III.
23rd *September*, 1905.

Last week a tribunal of British Law in this country sentenced a member of the Gaelic League to a week's imprisonment *with hard labour* because he had painted his name on the cart in the Irish language. It is hardly necessary to point out that this sentence is illegal. Even British law as ordinarily administered in Ireland does not impose imprisonment with hard labour as an alternative to the payment of a money fine. Tomás Mac Seoinín, of Béal Atha na mBuillí, was on Wednesday week last dragged before the monthly petty sessions' court at Rúsgach (Rooskey) at the instance of one Hogg, a policeman, the charge being that his name and residence, being painted on his cart in Irish, were not painted in legible letters as required by British Law. The Bench, the presiding genius of which was one Browne, R.M., fined him one shilling, with one shilling and sixpence costs. Tomás very properly refused to pay, and was instantly sentenced to a week's imprisonment with hard labour. We have not seen the matter referred to in any metropolitan newspaper. If a Pole or a Finn had been sentenced to an illegal punishment by a Russian tribunal, for the crime of using his own language, the facts would be blazoned in every British and West-British organ in Ireland.

We learn that the fine has since been paid by a friend on behalf of Tomás though without his consent. Accordingly, as we gather, no imprisonment has taken place. However, Tomás has been again summoned to appear in court to-day (Thursday) on a precisely similar charge. We are only carrying out the spirit of the resolution of the Ard-Fheis when we advise all Gaels to simply ignore the British Law which makes it penal for them to use their own language to the exclusion of English. If they are summoned and fined, let them refuse to pay; if they are sent to prison, let them go to prison. The question can be brought to a head no other way.

Review of ‘Beatha Aodha Uí Néill’

22nd *July*, 1905.

Beatha Aodha Uí Néill. Micheál Mhag Ruaidhrí do chum, Uilliam Soirtéal do chuir síos. Dublin: The Gaelic League. Price, 1s. 6d.

Aodh Ó Néill is probably the greatest man of action that the Gaelic race has produced. But it is not in that fact that lies his chief claim to a place apart in the annals of his people. He was a thinker as well as a man of action, a strategist as well as a fighter, a statesman as well as a political leader. Thinkers and doers have arisen in Ireland before Aodh Ó Néill and after him, strategists and fighters, statesmen (one or two) and political leaders; but the combination is found in Aodh alone of Irishmen who have lived within the past seven hundred years. We do not love him as we love Sarsfield and Eoghan Ruadh and Aodh Ruadh and even Seaghán an Díomais; but we feel his greatness, his compelling power, and we stand awed before him. He is the most tremendous figure in our history, and had well-nigh been the most tremendous figure in the history of the world; for he all but overthrew the British Empire. Only one other man has shaken that empire to its foundations as did Aodh Ó Néill. The other was Napoleon Bonaparte.

The book before us is the first attempt to tell the story of this great life to the Irish people in their own speech—the speech of Aodh

himself. The same strenuous tale has been told in English by one of the few Irishmen who have ever written English well. Even Mitchel's brilliant work leaves much to be desired; and it can scarcely be said that in 'Beatha Aodha Uí Néill' we have an altogether adequate and satisfying presentation of the complex personality of Hugh,—with his 'proud dissembling spirit,' his mastery over the minds and hearts of men, his genius for combination, his patient and far-seeing statesmanship. But we have at least something which we never had before.—a narrative, always graphic, at moments intensely dramatic, and now and then rising to a sheer height of impassioned eloquence, of the greatest career in our annals. To have that is to have much. Philosophical history—the detailed analysis of character, the study of the causation of events, the probing to the heart of things,—will come later on. A book which only claims to be a good narrative should not be decried because it is not something else which it does not purport to be.

Micheál Mhag Ruaidhrí would seem to have assimilated everything that has been written either in English or in Irish about Aodh Ó Néill. He has drawn also on certain traditions of the Connacht hostings of Hugh O'Donnell which still live on in Mayo and Sligo. There is an *Irishness* about his way of handling his materials which gives his book a unique interest. His style—we write advisedly—is nearer the style of Keating than that of any other Irish writer of our day. We do not know whether he has made a study of Keating or not.—probably not; but, *mutatis mutandis*, many of his chapters—the first is a good specimen—might easily have been written by the author of *Forsa Feasa ar Éirinn*. One fault—the undue length of many of the sentences—is to be attributed to the fact that, as may be deduced from the announcement on the title-page, the narrative was dictated to an amanuensis. When one is slowly dictating, sentences are apt to

lengthen out, and the conjunction 'agus' to intrude itself where a full stop would be better. If the author had been given an opportunity of hearing the book read over to him he would doubtless have split up many of his sentences, and omitted a number of the conjunctions.

It goes without saying that the work is an inexhaustible mine of North Connacht idiom and vocabulary. A Focloir at the end includes most of the unfamiliar words. The literary flavour of the book is unmistakeable, yet the vocabulary is essentially the vocabulary of the people. Michéal Mhag Ruaidhrí, in fact, as he admits in his valedictory note, knows no other; and if, as some have asserted, there is an occasional non-native idiom, the explanation is that non-native idioms are now part and parcel of the spoken language of the people. To cast out of present-day Irish every form of expression that would not have been used by Cormac Mac Airt would be impossible, and, even if possible, perhaps not altogether desirable.

All Ireland, but more especially Connacht, will welcome 'Beatha Aodha Uí Néill.'

Is the Language Dying?

29th *July*, 1905.

Is the language dying? Is the tide of vernacular Irish still receding inch by inch, as the waters ebb on the sea-shore? Is Irish, year by year, and month by month, and day by day, the language—the living, familiar, inevitable instrument of speech—of less and less Irish men and women? Are its sounds and idioms native and inborn in a constantly decreasing number of Irish children?

These are questions which no one can answer offhand. They are questions which, even after thought, no-one can answer with confidence. The movement is too complex, the forces pulling either way too various and complicated, the field of action too large, the circumstances of each locality too different, for one to be able easily to pronounce on the fortunes of the movement as a whole. And even when we narrow the issue down to this. Is vernacular Irish holding its own? Has the movement, at any rate, *arrested the decay* of the spoken tongue, if it has not yet fertilised it with the seeds of a new life and caused it to 'get up and spread'?—even when we thus narrow down the issue, it is not very easy to give a confident or a general reply. Each will answer in accordance with the facts that have come under his personal observation, or as influenced by the buoyancy or pessimism of his own character. As some see things, decay is going on with as fearful a rapidity as ever; others, equally observant, think that decay has at least ceased if growth has not actually recommenced.

We would set down the following facts which seem to us to confirm the latter and more hopeful view:—

(1). In every district of our acquaintance—and the same testimony is borne by others of other districts—people, with rare exceptions, are no longer *ashamed* to speak Irish.
(2). Speaking generally for the districts which we know—and we know most of Connaught well, and most of Co. Galway intimately—more Irish is now heard than was five years ago.
(3). In a number of purely Irish-speaking districts (that is, districts in which there is no English) literary activity has commenced amongst the younger men; Irish literature is beginning to circulate; and it is becoming 'the thing' to collect songs and stories and to write a little Irish for publication.

On the other hand, three great facts which apply to almost every Irish-speaking district in the country make one uneasy for the future:—

(1). It is still the practice (due to ingrained habit rather than the outcome of a conviction) to speak English to children.
(2). Emigration continues to drain the Irish-speaking countrysides of their best blood.
(3). Education (speaking broadly) and the whole tone of public life are still frankly foreign.

It is with the object of directing the attention of Leaguers during their summer sojourns in Irish-speaking districts to the great problem of the position of vernacular Irish that we have written this article. It is essentially the problem of the movement. Though we succeed in convincing the world of the beauty and value of our buried literature, though with infinite striving we build up a modern literature in every way worthy of the race, though we succeed in rearing a generation of Irish students and readers, in our towns, of what avails it all if, in spite of everything, the living language dies in the home?

How to Solve the Education Problem

16th *September*, 1905.

In the agitation for the reform of the National Board and for the freeing of Irish primary education from the illegal domination of the British Treasury, the decision to withdraw the special fees for Irish must, of course, form one of the main counts in Irish Ireland's indictment of the two conspirators.

But the final objective of the campaign must be, not the restoration of the fees, but the placing of the whole system of primary education in this country on a satisfactory basis. We believe that this can be done, simply and expeditiously, by a drastic reform in the personnel of the National Board. We are not in favour, under present circumstances, of the introduction of the principle of local control, and still less of an interference with the existing managerial arrangements. We simply ask the Board itself be brought into line with public opinion in Ireland; that it be strengthened on the educational side; and that it be freed from the control of anti-Irish politicians in London.

The Gaelic League is by no means bound to the system of encouraging the teaching of Irish by the payment of special fees. The actual arrangement—a three years' course of instruction with fees at the rate of ten shillings per head for every unit in a class which passes—is far from ideal. We ourselves suggested many months ago an alternative scheme—viz., a four years' course with a graduated scale of fees—which, we believe, was on the point of being adopted

by the National Board, when the Treasury stepped in with its ukase that fees of all kinds were to cease.

But it would be possible to devise a scheme for the adequate teaching of Irish which would have as its *motif* a far sounder guiding principle than the essentially vicious one of payment by results. It had been our intention to develop such a scheme during the course of our articles on the bilingual system of Belgium. Let us here anticipate ourselves just so far as is necessary for the purpose of putting our readers in possession of the main essentials of the suggestion.

The Belgian Government lays down as the cardinal principle of its educational system that every Belgian child is entitled to be taught first to speak, read, and write his mother tongue ('langue maternelle'). If the child be a Fleming, he is entitled from the moment of his first entry into school to be taught Flemish; if he be a Walloon he is entitled from the first moment to be taught French. The Government further lays down that every Belgian ought to be taught a second language ('seconde langue'). In theory this second language may be anything; in practice it is always French in the case of Flemings, and Flemish in the case of Walloons. The Government actively encourages the acquiring of the 'two national languages' by every Belgian; it insists that the teaching of the second language be commenced at the earliest possible stage in the child's school career; and it insists that the teaching be on the direct method. The system so works out that, whereas the Flemish child goes to school speaking only Flemish, he leaves it an educated bilinguist, speaking, reading and writing, both Flemish and French; whilst similarly the Walloon child, who on entering school speaks only his *patois*, emerges from his school career with a thorough written and spoken knowledge of both French and Flemish.

There is nothing to prevent the application of this system, *mutatis mutandis*, to Ireland,—nothing, that is, except the 'National' Board and the British Treasury. If we had in this country a really NATIONAL Board of Primary Education, we should expect it to deal with the language problem somewhat in this way: –

Every Irish child is entitled to receive his earliest instruction in the language of his own home. Accordingly, in Irish-speaking districts the first steps of the child's education must be taken in Irish; in English-speaking districts, they must be taken in English. But, from the earliest possible moment, each child must be taught 'a second language,' and that second language must be taught as a living tongue according to sound modern methods.

In theory, this second language might be anything; in practice, it would in Irish-speaking districts be English, and in English-speaking districts Irish. In some Ulster schools, and in a few Protestant schools elsewhere, French or German would possibly be adopted as the second language, until such time as the language movement should have captured—as it inevitably will capture—even the strongholds of Orangeism.

But in 80 per cent of the schools in Ireland, the languages taught would be Irish and English; they would be taught well and rationally, as spoken and as literary tongues; and the children—in Dublin no less than in Connemara, in Wexford no less than in Donegal—would leave school educated bilinguists.

Such a system would of course presuppose two things,—first, the proper training of the teachers, and secondly their adequate renumeration.

The Art Revival

5th *May*, 1906.

Eoin Mac Néill is one of the least communicative of men, and he has never, so far as we are aware, confided to anyone how far he anticipated such developments as—say—the National Holiday movement, or the Oireachtas Art Exhibition, or the Woollen Mill at Kilkenny, when he conceived the idea of founding the Gaelic League. The probabilities are that he never allowed his imagination to roam very far ahead; he had grasped one clear fact and he saw one clear duty,—that the National Language, the breath of the National life, was on the point of extinction, and that a mighty effort was needed if it was to be saved in time. So he and his fellow-workers took off their coats to the task of pioneering the language movement, feeling vaguely rather than formally holding that, the language saved, all else would come right in the end.

Later on thinkers within the League—notably An tAthair Micheál Ó hIceadha, an tAthair Seaghán Ó Raghállaigh, and An tAthair Pádraig Mac Conshnámha—began to develop the 'philosophy' of the language movement. 'Fáinne an Lae' and afterwards AN CLAIDHEAMH SOLUIS commenced to tell the Irish public that a literary revival, an art revival, and an industrial revival would infallibly follow in the wake of the language revival. Wiseacres said: 'We shall see.' Well, we have seen. The literary revival has come with a rush; Irish books and Anglo-Irish books redolent, as far as Anglo-Irish

books can be, of the soil of Ireland, are being poured forth from our towns and even from our country places in ever-increasing volume; the land is on fire with a sort of 'scabies scribendi,' the only fear of the sober onlooker being that we are *over-publishing* rather than under-publishing. The industrial revival? It is surging around us, it stares at us out of every newspaper, it parades through our streets annually on Domhnach na Gaedhilge. The art revival?—but stay, *has* the art revival come yet?

Seeking an answer to that query, we paid last week a third visit to the show of the Hibernian Academy in Abbey Street; we visited the exhibition of pictures, sketches, and crafts which half-a-dozen (mostly) young artists have brought together in Molesworth Street; we took our weekly look in at the Irish Art Companions' in Clare Street; and we marshalled our recollections of the work of Dún Emer, An Túr Gloine, and the Irish Decorative Art Association.

That there is more thought, written, and talked about art in Ireland of late than has been the case within living memory is patent. Of exhibitions the name is legion,—even Belfast is having one this week; and in Dublin 'art teas' have become an institution. But the important question for Gaelic Leaguers is how far is this obvious revival of interest in art a sane and healthy thing; how far is it due to the quickening influence of the language movement on Irish thought and imagination; and—especially—how far has the language movement actually affected artists working in Ireland so that their work commences to be an expression of Ireland—commences in short to be Irish art as the art of a Manet is French art or of a Leempoels Flemish art?

Walking through the Academy, the tangible, physical evidences that this is Ireland, as distinguished from Irelandshire, which, so to speak, strike you in the face are precisely five in number. First, there is the

excellent sentiment in rather faulty Irish which is emblazoned on the frieze of the main salon. For the rest, four artists (three of whom are sculptors) give their own names, or the titles of their works, or both, in Irish. One sees 'Turning in the Cow' by Seoirse Ua Fágáin; 'Fear an Chasúir' by Joseph Hanrahan; 'Una,' a sketch model in plaster by Uilliam Mac Piarais; and 'Maire, bean Artúir Hutton,' by Miss Katheeln Shaw. Apart from these, it is all Béarla an tSasanaigh,—how different from Brussels where every inscription in the art galleries is bilingual, and from Antwerp and Bruges where, for the most part, only Flemish names and descriptions are tolerated.

But what we were in search of was rather that indefinable something about the sentiment or handling of a piece of work which would enable us to say unhesitatingly and with confidence: 'This is of Ireland;' which would enable us to recognise it as Irish if we were to meet it in Paris or in Timbuctoo, just as one who knows anything about pictures can walk into an exhibition and pick out unerringly the French, the Spanish, the Italian, the German, the Dutch, the English pictures. What we asked ourselves was: 'Is there anything here which must infallibly have been painted or modelled by an Irishman, which none but one thinking in an Irish way could possibly have produced?'

We think we found such things. And first amongst them we would place the allegorical head in marble by Mr. Oliver Sheppard which is to form portion of the memorial to Clarence Mangan. That face is an expression of the soul of Ireland if ever the soul of Ireland has been expressed in art. One would as soon think of assigning it to an English, a French, or a Flemish chisel as to the chisel of a Chinese or a Hindoo. Only in Ireland could such a face have been seen or imagined. We must cease talking of the sculptor of this beautiful dream-face, of the exquisite 'La Jeunesse' also on show in Abbey Street, and of the

masculine '98 Memorial in Wexford as 'a *clever* Irish sculptor'; he is a *great* Irish sculptor.

We seem to see (in proportion) more of Irishism in the rather meagre sculpture section than amongst the pictures. How far is this due to Mr. Sheppard's influence? We expect to find that influence—and do find it—in the work of his own pupils, three or four of whom exhibit; but it appears to extend also to such workers as Miss Kathleen Shaw, whose bust of Cardinal Logue has the dignity and simplicity of a poem in *dán díreach*.

The outstanding fact of this year's Academy, so far as the pictures are concerned, is the rise of Mr. William Orpen. We cannot call Mr. Orpen an Irish painter, but neither can we call him English. His training has been partly Irish and partly French; he works in London. We wish he would—or could afford to—make Ireland his home. Mr. J. B. Yeats is more than usually uneven this year; but his portrait of Standish O'Grady—already seen at the Oireachtas—is one of the few things in the Exhibition which haunt the memory with a sense of power. The brooding sadness of the eyes gives mute expression to a whole phase of Irish life and character. 'The Lost Land!'—in how many hearts, bold and sturdy though they normally be, has not the thought at times taken shape!

But it is not so much in the work of the better-known painters as in that of younger workers, some of them with names quite new to the public, that we believe we detect the surest signs that art in Ireland is coming to be expressive of the soul of Ireland. Scattered about the room—many of them in obscure corners—we find loving little records of Irish scenery, studies of street life in Dublin and Cork (notably 'Cork Hill, Dublin,' by Gerald Wakeman), Irish interiors in town and country,—all evidences that our young artists are thinking more about Ireland than formerly and looking at home

more constantly for their inspiration. Amongst older painters, Mr. Kavanagh is more Irish than ever, and his eight contributions to this year's Exhibition include three of the best things he has ever done.

The much less pretentious display in Molesworth Street has in a certain sense more of promise in it than the Academy show. Of the seven artists who exhibit one is a foreigner, though even she is as often reminiscent of Connacht fjords and Fingall roads as of the fields and villages of her own beautiful land. Of the other six, the most ambitious (Mrs. C. L. MacCarthy) seems to be a deliberate imitator of the French impressionists. The rest are Irish through and through. And the most Irish of the five is, as we might *a priori* expect, the one whose life the language movement has come most intimately,—Mrs. Elsie O'Keeffe. Her beaches at dawn and evening, her delicate recollections of beloved bays and rivers in Kerry, her hillsides and woodsides in the Dublin Mountains, above all, the delicious little miniature 'Howth from Sandymount,'—these give the jaded frequenter of picture galleries a rare and exquisite pleasure. Next to her, and strangely akin in mood and outlook, is Miss Maud Lloyd, to whom also—as indeed to nearly all these painters—the Dublin Hills have been a veritable inspiration. Gerald Wakeman is almost purely local; he sees poetry in Ulster villages, in Dublin streets and quaysides, on the banks of canals, even on the golf-links at Dollymount. On his canvas sombre rocks, and sluggish water, and unloading coal-boats, and the bricks and mortar of dilapidated streets take on beauty.

Apart from the two exceptions hinted at, it seems to us that there is no artist here who is not looking out on Ireland and on the world with Irish eyes. And in their work as well as in a proportion of the work at the Academy we believe we see the re-beginning of an Irish art. Others also are working who are represented neither at the Academy nor at the Leinster Lecture Hall,—sculptors, painters,

book-illustrators, designers; some in Dublin, some in Belfast, some elsewhere. Yes, we think the art revival has set in.

And it will be a singularly gracious and noble revival. It will be characterised by a complete absence of what has come to be known as the 'Celtic note,'—which is in reality an Anglo-German note. The little Exhibition at Molesworth Street suggests the points of view it will adopt, the moods it will most love. It will be an art of wind-swept heights and dark woodsides, of broad beaches and sunny meadows, of heath-scented moorlands and ferny hollows, of fireside ingles where seanchaidhes tell tales, and of cottage doorsteps where little children play. It will be an open-air art and not an esoteric thing. It will concern itself with life and not with dreams (or nightmares); with elemental impulses and not with cults. It will bear to English art and to recent Anglo-Irish art respectively the same relation that a Middle-Irish nature poem bears on the one hand to a story in the *Family Herald*, and on the other to one of the sicklier plays at the Abbey Theatre.

‘Seoda na Sean’; and Some Reflections

12th *May*, 1906.

The criticism that ‘there is no ‘thought’ in Irish’ has become trite. It is, however, one of many trite criticisms that happen to be untrue. In the hope of making its untruth as apparent to others as it is to ourselves we commenced a few weeks ago to jot down under the title ‘Seoda na Sean’ passages which had appeared to us personally when we stumbled on them in our delving amongst Irish literature, published and unpublished,—passages in which we believed we saw either an immortal thought or a glowing peace of imagination. We have reason to know that our hope has not been altogether vain. ‘So memorable and worthy things have been said in Irish,’ remarked a Leaguer to us the other day—he was an Irish speaker, too, by the way—as if he had made a discovery! ‘Do b’ áluinn í intinn na sean,’ we quoted in reply.

Could any but a Gael have fashioned the sentence—

‘Is fíor-binn beit ós bán-muir’?

And would not the line be sufficient to make a poem immortal? Yet it is but one of twenty almost equally lovely lines in an anonymous Ossianic-like ode which concludes with this marvellous word-picture:—

‘Beann is aoibne ós iad Éireann
Slé-bean ós fairrge faoileann!’

This is Irish imagination at its best—this is the true ‘Celtic note,’ so far as any ‘note’ can be said to predominate in a literature of such myriad moods as Irish literature. And read the lines quoted from ‘Laoi Bhinne Builbin’ in this week’s ‘Seoda.’ Could even Burns have written them? Remember the summer and winter songs attributed to Fionn, the poems attributed to Colm Cille, ‘King and Hermit,’ the Lament of Crede, and a hundred other pieces in Middle and Early Modern Irish.

But all this, someone will object, is mere imagination-play, mere beautiful imagery, mere happy phraseology,—give us a profound reflection, a masculine or a stirring idea, some thought that has been thought by a Gael which one might take as an inspiration for one’s life. Seadh, a chara, we give you this from Seaghán Ó Dubhagáin:—

‘Leanam lorg na laochraide’

Live up to that aspiration and your life will have been lived gloriously. ‘Let us follow in the wake of the Heroes!’ Here is a watchword for a man or a woman who would nobly strive, for a nation that would greatly dare, for a movement that would essay heroic things. How tame is Longfellow’s famous quatrain in comparison with the energy and conciseness of this! **‘Leanam lorg na laochraide!’** It is the very *summa* of natural and Christian ethics.

In this week’s ‘Seoda’ we include a couplet which has not seldom been in our minds and which we have more than once quoted apropos of recent history in Ireland:

'Ba ṁó 'ná abairt in gach ré,
Comairle Dé fri Éireann uill.'

'Passing the power of tongue to tell has been in every age the design of God for Eire the mighty.' We know Gaels who would sneer at the sentiment. Personally we should as soon think of doubting the existence of God as of doubting that this Irish Nation which has achieved and suffered so much, which has stood throughout the ages for the things of the spirit and of the mind, which has never surrendered or bartered or lowered its ideal—we say we should as soon think of doubting the existence of God as of doubting that this Nation is dear to God. With the old poet we believe that all our chequered history has been ordered to a purpose; and that a destiny more splendid than any of us can imagine awaits a land which has known so much glory and so much sorrow. We believe, too, that we are even now assisting at the fulfilment of that destiny; nay, that we who write and you who read, all of us who as workers, students, thinkers, artists, industrial pioneers, makers of songs and stories, and building up this movement—are humble instruments employed in the working out of some august design of Providence. Put at its lowest, we are taking part in the rehabilitation of a Nation which in the past has done some of the worthiest and noblest things that have ever been done or dreamt of on earth. And that is a task of no small dignity.

There are moments in the movement when we have need of all the old poet's faith in God's design 'passing the power of tongue to tell,'—moments when defeat or apparent defeat casts us down, when dangers or imagined dangers daunt us, when things go wrong around us, when issues seem confused and blurred, when friends are disappointing, when fellow-workers are trying.

'Ba ṁó 'ná abairt in gach ré,
Comairle Dé fri Éireann uill.'

This calm, childlike trust in a Shaping Hand, this confidence in the Wisdom and Goodness which guides our destinies unseen, is one of the most beautiful traits in the character of the *ipsissimus* Gael. ''Sé Dia do ċeap dom é, a ṁúirnín,' said an old woman we once knew who had been tried as few women have been tried. This is not fatalism: it is faith. And we all have need of faith and hope and trust, not only in the movement, but in our daily lives; without these, indeed, life were a meaningless riddle, a perpetual questioning, a painful succession of inconsequences and incoherencies. We have all need of the old Gael's serene confidence in the Hand Which moulds all things to an appointed end; for have not seeming accidents brought strange destinies into all our lives, and do not many of us tread paths whose ends we cannot see?

Folklore and the Zeitgeist

19th *May*, 1906.

We remember as a child sitting by a turf fire and listening to a grey-haired woman telling Irish folktales. From that gentle seanchaidhe we first learned how gracious and noble is Mother Éire, how sweet a thing is it to love her, how proud a service to toil and to suffer for her. In converse with her, too, we first realised that Éire has a voice and a speech of her own; from her we first learned to pronounce Irish words; from her we first heard the names of Cúchulainn and Fergus and Fionn, of Gráinne of the Fleets and the two mighty Aodhs; from her lips we first listened to the tale of

'Brian's wisdom,
Eoghan's genius, Sarsfield's daring,
Emmet's early grave, and Grattan's
Life-long epic of devotion.'

She loved all who had striven for Ireland from the shadowy heroes of old to those of her own blood and ours who had died in '98 or been imprisoned in '67. Her heart had a corner for the Fianna of Fionn and another for the Fenians of John O'Mahony.

She died when we were an Intermediate schoolboy. A year later we were promoted to the Irish class and for the first time saw Irish words in print. Our texts—it was Junior Grade, 1894—were 'Laoi Oisín'

and 'Diarmaid agus Gráinne.' We remember the thrill of pleasure with which we heard the familiar names, the eagerness with which we read the familiar tales. The turf fire was back and the dead voice was speaking to us again. Not content to limit our reading to the two texts prescribed by the programme, we wandered further afield,—finding our way, greatly daring, into the National Library and making the acquaintaince of An Craoibhin's 'Leabhar Sgéalaidheachta' and 'Cois na Teineadh' and—later—of his 'Sgéalaidhe Gaedhealach.' Here we were in the very heart of the land of mystery and romance on which so many years before that kindly hand had raised the curtain, bidding us look with eyes of childish wonder. And in that land we strayed long and far; learning to know its broad highways and its quiet bóithríns, its shining spreading plains and its tangled enchanted woods. At recurring examinations we gained only respectable and never brilliant marks; but all the time we were learning to release ourselves as a child of our Mother and the heir of a tradition.

These recollections have come to us on sitting down to write an article on the Oireachtas folklore competitions. We hope they are not wholly irrelevant. In our mind at any rate they have a subtle connection with the theme. We never listen to a seanchaide by a fireside or at a Feis but all this comes back to us; we never open a book of folklore or read a manuscript folktale submitted to us for publication but years slip away and we are again seated on an earthen floor beside a fire where a kettle sings. And is not this part of the charm of the folklore for us all? It stirs a long-silent chord in our hearts; it awakens dead voices; it recalls mornings long ago on sunny heights and evenings in fireside ingles; it appeals to all that is most inborn, hereditary, primal in our being; it is the voice of our own folk speaking to what is of the folk of us—and there is a good deal of the folk in us all, 'civilised,' 'educated,' labelled and ticketed off by universities and examination-

boards though we be. The folktale speaks the same language as the bird which sings in the blue, as the kine which low in the buaile, as the streamlet which babbles by the roadside, as the sparks which fly upward from a fire. The man for whom an old tale has no appeal is to be feared and pitied even as the man who is irritated by the prattle of children or repelled by the caress of a dumb animal. He is one apart; he is landless and kindless.

We have been re-reading An Craoibhin's 'Cois na Teineadh.' The Dedication and Preface, which were written in 1890, make strange reading today,—as indeed does nearly everything written about the Irish language and Irish literature before the era of the Gaelic League. Wrote An Craoibhin sixteen years ago:

> 'To the memory of those truly cultured and unselfish men, the poet-scribes and hedge-schoolmasters of the last century and the beginning of this—men who may well be called the last of the Milesians—I dedicate this effort to preserve even a scrap of that native lore which in their day they loved so passionately, *and for the preservation of which they worked so nobly, but in vain*.'

Would An Craoibhin write so today? Or would he commence a preface with these mournful words?—

> 'Irish and Scotch Gaelic folk-stories are, as a living form of literature, by this time pretty nearly a thing of the past. They have been trampled in the common ruin under the feet of the Zeitgeist, happily not before a large harvest has been reaped in Scotland, but, unfortunately, before anything worth mentioning has been done in Ireland to gather in the crop which grew luxuriantly a few years ago.'

Since that was written, the strong arms of An Craoibhin and others have grappled with the Zeitgeist, and lo! he has yielded up his spoil. Reverent hands have gathered up the fragments which he had trampled into the dust, piecing them together again cunningly and lovingly. Sixteen years ago An Craoibhin could write with absolute truth that nothing worth mentioning had been garnered in of the once luxuriant crop of Irish folklore; today we can write with equally absolute truth that the mass of Irish folklore which has been recovered and is now preserved for all time either in print or in the MS. Collection of the Oireachtas Committee already ranks with the largest collections of national folklore in the world, and will probably be quite the largest ere the last scrap has been harvest. A bhuidheachas soin le Dia!

An Craoibhin has published half-a-dozen volumes of folklore. Pádraig Ó Laoghaire has given us of the best of Béarra. Seosamh Laoide has rescued a fragment at least of the lore of Farney. Others, publishing the result of their gleaning either in smaller books and booklets or in the columns of the *Irisleabhar*, AN CLAIDHEAMH, and local newspapers, have probably doubled or trebled the harvest of the three main workers. But the amount of published Irish folklore forms only a fraction of the great body which has been saved from the Zeitgeist and of which the largest part is to be found in the piles of MS. accumulated by the Oireachtas Committee during the past nine years. All this will some day be sorted, catalogued, examined, and published. But that is a matter which can wait, and in fact must wait; the thing which cannot wait, which must not be allowed to wait, is the rescue of the large mass of folklore still unrecorded. And here is a task in the accomplishment of which the Oireachtas Committee demands and is entitled to the help of everyone who is qualified to render help.

The work is pressing.

> 'For the folklorist the Gospel saying is... more pregnant with meaning than for any student of man's history—"the night cometh when no man can work"'

For the seanchaidhes are passing from us, and with each one that goes down to his grave there disappears a fragment of as fair and noble an inheritance as was ever bequeathed to a race by its past. How many precious scraps of lore have been lost because someone omitted or was unable to commit them to paper on first hearing them, and on returning to look for them found that the seanchaidhe was dead! Think of Farney where An Laoideach gleaned to such purpose ten years ago; had he delayed his visit until to-day we should never have had 'Sgéalaidhe Fearnmhaighe' or 'Sgéalaidhe Oirghiall,' for to-day all the seanchaidhes are gone, and those who are in their places, even the Irish speakers, are dumb. Think of Roscommon, whose whole lore, with the exception of the fraction saved by An Craoibhin, has been lost within living memory. Think of Tirconnell, not a tithe of whose lore has been collected—some doubt whether it has any lore. Think of the Déise, where an Irish-speaking generation is dying out, and leaving behind it—nothing.

A Gael who lives in a district where Irish is vernacular or who during the summer will have an opportunity of spending a few weeks in such a district, could undertake no more thoroughly useful and meritorious a piece of work than the collection of the songs and stories of the district and their forwarding to the Oireachtas. He may happen to win a prize, but the winning of prizes is not the objective; the objective is the saving of the national lore, down even to the last shred, from that Zeitgeist to whom the Gaelic League has flung down a challenge.

About Literature

26th *May*, 1906.

Perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of the intellect of ancient Ireland was its spirit of daring. Both in the world of action and in the world of thought the old Gael was a brave adventurer. His mind was abnormally inquisitive, restless, venturous, original.

He mingled the spirit of the Vikings or of the Elizabethans with that of the olden Greeks and of the first Christian missionaries. It was his delight to make voyages of discovery on unknown seas, to penetrate virgin fastnesses, to climb untrodden heights, to venture down into unexplored depths; in general, to essay feats never before attempted or dreamt of.

He took a keen intellectual and imaginative pleasure in efforts to overcome matter; a still keener and subtler pleasure in his adventures in the realms of mind. In the domain of action he civilised Europe and discovered America. In the world of thought he speculated daringly in theology, sociology, and pure science,—being the first, for one thing, to teach formally the sphericity of the earth and to expound the law of gravitation.

In literature he invented the novel and (by contriving the rhymed stanza) laid the foundations of modern poetry. He gave Europe its first hymn, its first love-song, and its first mock-heroic. Among his minor achievements are the inventions of blank verse, chain-rhyme, entrance-rhyme, burthens, broken staves, dissyllabic and trisyllabic

rhymes, bilingual or macaronic verse. The *technique* of the poetry of modern civilised nations is purely Irish, or at least Celtic; the inspiration largely so. Take away what the Greek and the Celt have gifted to European literature and what remains?

Eclipse came for the Irish Gael just at the moment when he stood on the threshold of modern philosophy. As he had anticipated Columbus, Galileo, and Newton, so he was about to anticipate Bacon, Pascal, and the great moderns. Tolstoy he partially anticipated, Ibsen wholly. We have said that he invented the novel. The statement, amazing as it may seem to some, does not represent the summit of his achievement in this particular direction. He invented the novel of psychology. In 'Diarmuid agus Gráinne' we have the first patient and detailed analysis of the *mind* of a human being that was attempted in Europe since the days of Greek drama. Has it ever occurred to anyone that Gráinne is a prototype of Hedda Gabler?

To what purpose this disquisition? To this purpose. Is it possible that the Gael has lost all that gallant adventuresomeness of spirit, all that soaring originality of intellect which characterised him in his great ages? Have the Breandans and the Fearghals and the Aonghuses and the unknown shapers of the first European novels left no intellectual descendants? Do Kerry mountainsdies and Iar-Connacht heights and Tirconnell glens nurture today a race in which there lingers no breath of the old daring spirit, no spark of the old consuming fire, no trace of the old high resolve?

Our sires sang poetry which set Europe aglow and which still rings down the evening gale in remote country places at home; we, apart from a few pure and strenuous notes that have recently been heard, can produce nothing better than half-English jingles and frigid imitations of eighteenth-century decadents. Our sires invented the novel: amongst us (apart from the creator of 'Séadna') only two have

attempted anything longer than a storyette, both of these have dealt with incident rather than with character, and only one is readable. Our sires expounded the motions of the spheres and explained the daily ebb and flow of the tide; we have produced a table-book, an elementary arithmetic, and a geography primer,—all three admirable as far as they go, but covering how small an expanse of the mighty ocean of science!

Of course, it were absurd at this stage of the movement to expect philosophical poetry, psychological novels, and deep treatises on metaphysics. But we do think that a little more originality, a little more boldness, a little more ambition on the part of Irish writers were both necessary and desirable. Last week we wrote a glorification of the folktale. But it must be distinctly understood that we hold the folktale to be a beautiful and a gracious thing only in its own time and place,—and its time and place are the winter fireside, or the spring sowing-time, or the summer hay-making, or the autumn harvesting, or the country road at any season. This week we lay down the proposition that a living modern literature *cannot* (and if it could, should not) be built up on the folktale.

The folktale is an echo of old mythologies, an unconscious stringing together of old memories and fancies; literature is a deliberate criticism of actual life. In point of form, the folktale is bound by a convention which, in essentials, obtains amongst the folk universally, whether in Ireland, in Bohemia, or in Afghanistan. Why impose the folk attitude of mind, the folk convention of form on the makers of a literature? Why set up as a standard for the Irish writers of today a standard at which Aonghus Ó Dálaigh and Seathrun Céitinn would have laughed?

'Because we have no other standard,' says someone who reads. But we have. We have the standard of the ancients. Irish literature gave

models to Europe. Is it not high time that it should give models to Ireland? Let us, in attempting to remake a literature here, follow, not the folk, but the makers of literature who have preceded us. Will the ancients suffice as exemplars? Frankly, we are afraid not. We must get into touch also with our contemporaries,—in France, in Russia, in Norway, in Finland, in Bohemia, in Hungary, wherever, in short, vital literature is being produced on the face of the globe. Two influences go to the making of every artist, apart from his own personality,—if, indeed, personality is not, in the main, only the sum of these influences; the influence of his ancestors and that of his contemporaries.

Irish literature, if it to live and grow, must get into contact on the one hand with its own past and on the other with the mind of contemporary Europe. It must draw its sap of its life from the soil of Ireland; but it must be open on every side to the free air of heaven. We would have our literature modern not only in the sense of freely borrowing every modern form which it does not possess and which it is capable of assimilating, but also in texture, tone, and outlook. This is the twentieth century; and no literature can take root in the twentieth century which is not of the twentieth century.

We want no Gothic revival. We would have the problems of today fearlessly dealt with in Irish; the loves and hates and desires and doubts of modern men and women. The drama of the land war; the tragedy of the emigration-mania; the stress and poetry and comedy of the language movement; the pathos and vulgarity of Anglo-Ireland; the abounding interest of Irish politics; the relations of priest and people; the perplexing education riddle; the drink evil; the increase of lunacy; such social problems as (say) the loveless marriage;—these are matters which loom large in our daily lives,

which bulk considerably in our daily conversation; but we find not the faintest echoes of them in the Irish books that are being written.

There would seem to be an amazing conspiracy amongst our writers to refrain absolutely from dealing with *life*,—the one thing with which, properly considered, literature has any concern! We would have every young writer remember that his first duty is to be unafraid. If he has a message to deliver to the world, let him speak out: and the fact that his message is one that has not hitherto been delivered in Irish should not deter him, but rather urge him on. All honour to the ancients: but they have not said everything that is to be said on any subject, and there are some millions of subjects on which they have said nothing at all.

Literature, Life and the Oireachtas Competitions

2nd *June*, 1906.

Commenting on our Irish leader of the week before last—of which our English leader of last week was an expansion—the *Irish Peasant* falls into pretty much the train of thought in which we were when we penned last week's homily on the function of literature.

'Ireland,' writes our contemporary, 'for a long time has been afraid of life. When people are afraid of life there can be no literature or art worth a moment's consideration. In Irish Ireland, however, we are not afraid of life. But we have only discovered a little of its romance and wonder yet. We have not got to the great stage of vision and enthusiasm in which literature—which is something produced by people whose souls are really alive—is possible. But we are rapidly approaching it.'

We hope so. And it was to erect a beacon-light for the guidance of the marching host of young poets and storytellers that we wrote our article. For it seemed to us that there was a danger to be feared from the setting up of false standards,—a standard in poetry which regards the observance of certain recently-devised canons of prosody as the one thing essential to the making of an Irish poem, and a standard in prose which takes the gossip by a country fireside or in a village taproom as the high-water level both of its thought and of its style. For form we would go to the ancients; and for subject-matter we would have our young writers take (as the ancients did) Life; the Life within them and the Life around them.

Our view of literature as a criticism of life has been objected to as partial,—as covering only one aspect of the function of literature. This, however, is to restrict unduly the connotations both of 'criticism' and of 'life.' We do not mean that every piece of literature is for the most part singularly un-didactic; neither do we suggest that every writer ought to take up the discussion of knotty problems, psychological, social, political, and so forth. We simply put in compendious form the undoubted fact that every piece of literature, as indeed every piece of art, expresses the *views* of its creator on whatsoever may happen for the moment to be his theme. Even though it be the mere recording of an impression—a watercolour sketch of a sea-beach, a couplet describing an autumn sunset, a word-picture of a child met in a country laneway—it is, as far as it goes, the author's *view* of something, and is in this sense a piece of criticism. It is a revelation of the artist's soul; a giving back again to others of something as *he* saw it and felt it; *his* interpretation of a fragment of life.

Now we hold that it is time for our Irish writers to make a brave effort to express *themselves*,—to tell us what they think, or at any rate (if they do not yet think) what they *feel*. So far the most part they have not been doing so. They have simply been giving us photographic reproductions of everyday conversation in Irish-speaking districts. Their work in this direction has been most useful from certain points of view. It has been invaluable in introducing students to the idioms of the living Irish language. But it is no more literature than would be a verbatim report of the daily conversation which goes on, say, in the case-room of our printing office. And it is as impossible as the foundation of a national literature as a series of photographs of Irish physiognomies and scenery taken by Messrs. Lawrence would be as the foundation of a national art.

Confirmative of the contention that our writers have not commenced to put *themselves* into their books is the fact that so few distinctive 'styles' have been developed in Irish. Style is personality; and as we have only two or three unmistakeable 'styles,' it follows that only two or three personalities are being given expression to in modern Irish,—a thousand pities when one remembers that individualities are so varied and so rich amongst the writers and potential writers of the language. An tAthair Peadar has a style which is intensely personal, although he genially pretends that he writes only as ordinary folk talk in West Cork; and Conán Maol has a style which is perhaps the most strenuously individual note in all recent Irish literature; and two or three others have styles; but the vast majority of those who write Irish in books and in papers are mere photographers or imitators, without any characteristic outlook or bias or mode of expressing themselves. Almost any passage of Munster Irish that one comes across might have been written by almost any Munsterman; almost any passage of Connacht Irish by any Connachtman; there is no individual stamp on any of it; the personality, the man, the living soul of the writer speaking to you is to seek.

With this advice, then, that they should aim at making whatever they write in Irish a *personal* expression—their own view of something put in their own way—we commend the literary competitions at the forthcoming Oireachtas to Irish writers and would-be writers, native-speaking and otherwise. The competition to which we invite special attention is No. 5; 'For the Best Short Story dealing with Modern Irish Life. Length from 4,000 to 7,000 words.' We have theories of our own on the subject of the Short Story, as perhaps our readers are aware; and we foresee for this type of composition a mighty future in Irish and indeed in European literature. In the past great thinkers and reformers have thrown much of their criticism of life into the

novelistic and dramatic forms. The drama will always be a power, but we believe that the era of the ponderous novel beloved of nineteenth-century Europe is past. The evangels of the future will go forth in the form of light, crisp, vivid, arresting short stories. Gorki rather than Dickens suggests the style.

Literary criticism in Irish has been attempted with some little success. But we want deeper searchings, wider stretches of view, more unconventional and individual expressions of opinion than we have yet got. Competition No. 2 ('A Critical Essay on 'the Place of the Lyric in Irish Poetry') should draw forth good work, if students really competent come forward and if, coming forward, they let themselves 'go.' Writers whose bent is towards affairs rather than towards artistic and imaginative themes can discuss 'The Influence of Irish Local Elective Bodies on the Development of the Nation' (No. 1), or 'What the Irish Press can do for the Language,'—proposed (suggestively) by the *Freeman's Journal* Co., Ltd. (No. 7). There are two competitions for Historical Essays,—No. 8 ('Fiach Mac Aodha' or 'Domhnall Cam'—we hope, by the way, that the mystery surrounding the identity hidden under this sinister-looking *soubriquet* has been satisfactorily cleared up), and No. 9 ('Best Account of the Land Tenure in Ancient Ireland'). The substantial prize of £10 is offered for a Three-Act Historical Drama, and there is a further prize of £5 for a short Two-Act Play suitable for performance by children. We trust that there will be good and sincere work in both of these competitions, though we confess we do not expect the appearance of a masterpiece; great drama cannot grow up in a few years and without traditions.

We have now fulfilled our *geasa* to Séamus Ó Cathasaigh and to-night we shall lay us down to rest with the calm happiness of one who knows himself at peace with the world and with the Oireachtas Committee.

Traditionalism

9th *June*, 1906.

A correspondent writes us:

> 'Now that you have come out of your shell and have been holding forth (very interestingly, if somewhat dogmatically) on such high themes as art, literature, and folklore, perhaps you will go on to give us the benefit of your views on one or two other vexed problems,—say, dancing and traditional music. Some of my friends are haunted by the suspicion that *An Claidheamh* is not quite orthodox on the dancing question,—a suspicion given rise to less by anything you have said on the topic than by your stony silence whenever it agitates the minds of Gaels. As for the subject of traditionalism, I feel that the pen which wrote the article on 'Folklore and the Zeitgeist' could deal with it very sympathetically and illumatingly.'

We are grateful to our friend, but wild horses would not draw from us an editorial expression of opinion on the dancing question. Not that we are without views—we hold views which we might mildly describe as startling; and if ever we conceive a desire to wreck the movement we may possibly give those views to the world in a special number of *An Claidheamh*, taking a railway-ticket to some remote wilderness on the eve of publication. Then from afar we shall,

Bricriu-like, watch with glee the wranglings of the men of Erin. But for the present we keep our own council.

It occurs to us, however, that we might rejoice the soul of Séamus Ó Cathasaigh by writing a little on the subject on the subject of traditionalism with (more or less) reference to the Oireachtas Syllabus. We believe we approach the theme with 'sympathy'; we hope we shall prove 'illuminating'; and we will do our best not to put our opinions too 'dogmatically.' Readers whom we chance to offend will, we trust, transfer their animosity to the correspondent who has drawn us.

The first point that it seems necessary to make is that 'traditionalism' is not essentially Irish. One finds a 'traditional' mode of singing and a 'traditional' mode of reciting in every land in which there is an unspoiled peasantry. We ourselves have heard French, Breton, Flemish, and German traditional singing; ad we have heard French and Breton traditional recitation. The traditional style is not the *Irish* way of singing or of declaiming, but the *peasant* way; it is not, and never has been, the possession of the nation at large, but only of a class in the nation. There was traditional singing in Ireland in the days of Cormac Mac Airt; but traditional singing was no more in favour in Cormac's court than it is in the court of Edward VII. Then, as now, the folk sang in their way, and the 'trained' musicians in theirs; just as the folk spoke, ate, dressed, and lived in one fashion, and the gentles and their hangers-on in another.

This is not written by way of decrying traditionalism. Quite the contrary. Its object is simply to put those capable of dealing with the subject from the technical standpoint on the right track, which they have not been on up to the present. They have seen in the traditional style the *debris* of an antique native culture. We see in it simply a peasant convention, which, in its essentials, is accepted by the folk everywhere.

Of course this peasant convention is not absolutely identical in any two countries. Irish traditional singing, though similar to, is not the same thing as Breton or Flemish traditional singing; it has its *Irish* as well as its *folk* characteristics. It is for experts to analyse it with a view to determining which of its peculiarities are distinctively Irish and which are simply due to the fact that it is the art of a peasantry.

We have suggested that there was in ancient Ireland a mode of singing which was not of the people, but was governed by rules deliberately framed by musicians and taught in schools. What that style was we have no means of knowing. It perished when the native culture perished. Only the steadfast folk, with their lowly but beautiful art, have remained to bear witness to the Ireland that was. The professional musician and the professional seanchaidhe passed away in the wake of the Earls. Thus it comes that the only arts which have survived to us from Ireland's past are peasant arts; just as the only Irish speech which is living to-day is a peasant speech. And those who would build up a great national art—an art capable of expressing the soul of the whole nation, peasant and non-peasant—must do even as we propose to do with regard to the language; they must take what the peasants have to give them and develop it. And this, indeed, is simply doing over again what was done thousands of years ago by the earliest of the professional musicians and seanchaidhes.

We hope that traditional singing and traditional recitation, exactly as we know them, will always be heard in Ireland—by cottage fires in the winter evenings. We would not have them on the stages of great theatres; we would not bring them into the brawl of cities. Not that they are not worthy to be heard in the high places of art; but that they demand for their fitting rendering and their fitting appreciation an attitude of mind on the part both of artist and of audience which is possible only in the light of a turf fire blazing on an earthen floor.

They are of the countrysides and for the countrysides; let us keep them in the countrysides. To transplant them were to kill them.

We hope, in the second place, that an art culture distinctively Irish will grow up in the land; and we have indicated the way in which we think it will grow. Our artists (we refer in particular to singers and reciters) must imbibe their Irishism from the peasants, since the peasants alone possess Irishism; but they need not, and must not, adopt any of the peasant conventions. Duly impregnated with an Irish spirit, duly in tune with the soul of Ireland, they need not be afraid of modern culture. They need not hesitate to learn voice-production; they need not boycott Mendelssohn or Chopin. Their art will be Irish because they themselves will be Irish; it will be Irish even though it may be free from some of the eccentricities which (being ignorant) we to-day look upon as most characteristic of the Irish style.

There are three or four singers (all more or less products of the Oireachtas) who have been working on the lines we suggest. Amongst them are Mairghréad Ní Annagáin, Séamus Clanndiolúin, Pádraig Ó Séaghdha, and Sigle Ní Ailgheasa. All these are palpably Irish; not one of them is out-and-out 'traditional.' They form, in our opinion, the nucleus of a native school of vocal art; and their method has been to *develop* that which they have either inherited or assimilated from the folk amongst whom they were born or have lived.

Perhaps the forthcoming Oireachtas will discover a new Mairghréad Ní Annagáin or another Pádraig Ó Séaghdha.

An Act of Faith

4th *August*, 1906.

An old tradition has it that Patrick of the Gael wrested from the Most High a promise that Ireland should never lose the Faith. And Ireland's fidelity has passed into a proverb among the nations. That old legend refers to the Gael's unwavering faith in spiritual things,—his tranquil reliance on the unseen Power which rules the Universe. Daring thinkers have arisen among the Gael in the past, and will doubtless arise again; but no great mind of our race has ever questioned the existence of the Deity, or led a generation away from God. For it is given to the Gael to believe.

Have you ever noticed the sweet serenity which sits on the unwrinkled brows of the old men and women of the Gaedhealtacht? That is the outward symbol of their inward faith. They do not know what it is to doubt or to waver. Quietly, bravely, they walk down the path of their lives; quietly, bravely, when life is done, they pass out through the portals of death into Eternity. A priest whom we knew many years ago said to us once that if he were to doubt the existence of God his faith could not but return to him if he stood for a moment by the deathbed of one whose spiritual and intellectual sustenance had been received through the Irish language.

But it is not only with regard to God and the things of God that the Gael's gift of faith has been manifested. Akin in some subtle way with his fidelity to God and Patrick is that other beautiful and heroic

faith of his in her whom he has named the Silk of the Kine, and the Bright Dark-Haired Rose, and Caitlín Ní Uallacháin. Through all the long centuries since she walked a Queen among men he has never once doubted that she will reign again. Empires may crumble; states and cities may pass away; mountains may lie level with the plain, and the lakes and streams of the world run dry;—but the Poor Old Woman will be honoured of men again, the Bright Dark-Haired Rose will again be enthroned.

'*Beidh ar fhairrge 'n-a tuiltibh dearga 'r an spéir 'n-a fuil,*
Beidh an saoghal 'n-a chogadh chraorag ar dhruim na gcnoc,
Beidh gach glean sléibhe ar fuid Éireann is móinte ar crith,
Lá éigin sul a n-éagfaidh an Rós Geal Dubh!'

'O! the Erne shall run red with redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread, and flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun-peal and slogan-cry wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
The Judgment Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My Dark Rosaleen!'

This is the grandest Act of Faith that poet has ever made on behalf of a nation. In thought and act, if not in words of such noble energy, we all of us make that Act of Faith daily. Our subscriptions to the Language Fund, our journeys to and from classes and committee meetings, our porings over grammar treatises and manuals on method,

our every task in the movement whether as writers, teachers, students, organisers, branch secretaries, or what not,—each of these is an Act of Faith; for we do these things because we believe that Ireland will live, and grow great and strong and beautiful as she was of yore.

It was because they held this lively faith that Eoin Mac Néill and An Craoibhín founded the Gaelic League; it was because, in exile and sickness, he treasured this holy faith that An tAthair Eoghan Ó Gramhna lived so noble a life and died so noble a death; it is the possession of this vehement and inspiring faith that makes life so well worth living to many a poor and humble and heartsick Gael today.

In a day or two Ireland meets at the Oireachtas to make once more a national profession of faith. THIS LAND SHALL LIVE. That is the thought deep down in the heart of every eager competitor, of every worn student, of every anxious worker, of every zealous teacher that musters up to Baile Átha Cliath next week.

The Oireachtas has many aspects; it is a microcosm of the native civilisation of Éire, a great intellectual, literary, artistic, educational, industrial, and social rally; a review of the fighting forces at the disposal of the Gael; a demonstration of strength intended to inspire ourselves and to overawe the enemy; a national council of war; a milestone on the march towards emancipation. But perhaps we sum it up in all its aspects in describing it as a Nation's Act of Faith in God and in itself.

In my Garden

4th *August*, 1906.

I was lazing the other evening in my garden—even Gaelic Leaguers 'laze' sometimes; and I am fortunate—or unfortunate—in possessing a garden full of quaint crannies and ingles which perpetually invite me to dalliance.

My favourite nook is one overlooking the smooth lawn which stretches at one side of the house. From it I have a noble view of my elms,—I am rather proud of my elms which are among the oldest and loftiest near Dublin. Also this particular alcove is fragrant in the evenings with the scent of *Cape jessamine*—and it is only in the evenings that i have time to 'laze'. So here you will often find me watching the sunset; and here I was on the particular evening already referred to.

Not watching the sunset however,—it was only six-thirty in mid-July, I was reading the *Freeman's Journal* on the British Education Bill, and—I fell asleep. I did not seem to have slept very long when I was aroused by a step on the gravel walk. It was the postman, who, seeing me in my wonted place came up the walk to me with a bundle of letters and papers.

As he laid them on the rustic table before he saluted me in Irish. I started for I had known that the local post-office staff included an Irish speaker.

'You have Irish,' I said to him speaking also in the vernacular, 'To be sure I have Sir,' replied he with what sounded like a note of surprise

in his voice. 'If I hadn't it's a small chance I'd have of my present job.'

'Good,' I said laughing at what I took to be a piece of sarcasm on the well-known attitude of the Post Office towards the things of the Gael. As the postman turned to leave, I noticed that he wore a uniform which I did not remember to have seen before. It was a very dark green and on the collar in small letters of white metal was the cryptic inscription, 'P na hÉ.'

'What does "P na hÉ" stand for?' I asked. '"Post na hÉireann," of course Sir.'

The note of surprise in his voice seemed somewhat accentuated. 'Why this is capital!' I exclaimed. 'Have we brought the Post Office round so far? Who would have dreamt of this two years—six months—ago. And I have seen nothing about it in the papers!'

The postman was now regarding me in downright astonishment as though my enthusiasm were something incomprehensible to him. He saluted me and walked off looking back uneasily more than once.

I turned to the bundle of letters he had left on the table. They were all addressed in Irish and to my surprise the familiar pencilled translation was absent. On looking closer I discovered the stupendous fact that the very postmarks were in Irish.

'The Post Office is marching,' I said, 'Have they made *An Craoibhín* Postmaster General or what does it all mean? Hello, here's my copy of *An Claidheamh Soluis*. It will have something to say about this new development.'

The packet which I drew towards me seemed rather bulkier than *An Claidheamh Soluis* generally is. Have they enlarged the paper I asked myself. Strange that they did not give notice of it beforehand. Or say, this is probably the special *Oireachtas* number.'

I tore off the wrapper and spread the paper out. A large broadsheet and every word of it in Irish. Advertisements and all! The front page

consisted of a couple of signed editorials followed by crisp news notes. At the foot of the page was a literary *feuilleton*. I ran my eye down the columns of news. Their first item that struck me was this (I roughly paraphrase the Irish in which it was written):

> 'The forthcoming Oireachtas promises to be one of the most remarkable in the long history of what has now grown to be one of our most venerable national institutions. We say venerable because though the Oireachtas is not much more than a hundred years old the first festival was held in 1897, yet it is a link with a past which is remote from us less by reason of a span of years which has elapsed than in virtue of the virtue of the enormous changes intellectual, political, social, which has passed over our country since the days when Hyde, O'Leary, MacNeill and their compeers first challenged the intellectual supremacy of a foreigner in Ireland.'

This paragraph was so stupifyingly unintelligible that I glanced at the top of the paper to see was it really *An Claidheamh Soluis* and what was the date of it. There for the first time I read the title: *The Daily Claidheamh*, and the date: *Lughnasa 4, 2006*.

Had I like Rip Van Winkle slept over a hundred years? Impossible! Was I being made the recipient of some strange revelations of futurity? Most improbable! Was this there merely a common or (both literally and figuratively) garden dream?

With admirable presence of mind I determined to waste no time in debating these questions with myself lest supposing I was asleep I might awake before I had extracted all the information possible from my twenty-first century Claidheamh. So I turned eagerly back to the news column and read on:—

'The Oireachtas will, as usual, be formally opened by the Ard-Rí. A unique feature of this year's festival will be the presence on initiation of the state of various distinguished foreign visitors and delegations. Among the more important potentates who will assist at the opening ceremonies are the Emperor of the French, and the President of the Russian Republic, and the Protector of the Indian Commonwealth.

Much interest is manifested in the visit of the French Emperor as it is the first time that a Bonaparte Sovereign has set foot in Ireland. His Imperial Majesty with the Russian and Indian Presidents will be guests of the Ard-Rí at the Palace of the Nation. Among the learned bodies which will be represented are the French Academy, the Hungarian Academy, the Norst-Norsk Theatre and the Japanese Society of Arts. The Oireachtas Oration will be delivered by the Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin and the writing of the Oireachtas Ode has been entrusted to Padraic Ó Domhnallain.

The brilliant young Connacht poet whose recent volume of verse we review elsewhere, and who is by the way the direct descendant of Padraic Ó Domhnallain of Uachtar Ard, one of the pioneer Gaelic Leaguers of the early part of the last century. The evening gatherings of the Oireachtas will be held in the Theatre of Ireland, whose auditorium since recent extensions seats 15,000 people.'

In another part of the paper I found interesting details as to the ceremonies which the approaching Oireacthas—the one hundredth and tenth—was to be opened:—

‘The opening of the Oireachtas is being timed to take place at 10am. The royal procession will start from the Palace of the Nation at 9.30am. The order will be as follows. The Herald of Ireland with his attendants, a detachment of National Guard, headed by a Band of Pipers of the first Regiment of the Light Infantry, a troop of Cuirassiers of the Ministers, the Ard Rí attended by his staff and escorted by mounters Chasseurs, the Boy-Corps of the Palace Cuirassiers. (N.B.—I use “National Guard,” “Light Infantry,” “Cuirassiers,” “Chasseurs,” and “Boy-Corps,” to translate “Fianna Éireann,” “Ceithearnaigh,” “Laochraide Luireach,” “Rapairí,” and “Macraidhe,” respectively.)

The Ministries and other public buildings along the line of march will be decorated. The troops will salute at the statue of the Monument to Ireland Free in Plás na hÉireann and at the O’Growney Monument at the head of Slighe, Eoghan Uí Gramhna. The President and officers of the Gaelic League the adjudicators and officials of the Oireachtas, the members of the Irish Academy, the Bards (robed) with the distinguished personages specially invited will be assembled on the platform around the base of the Hyde Monument in Plás an Chraoibhín.

The general public will be accommodated in the temporary stands which line the four sides of the Plás. On the arrival of the Ard-Rí the cannon in Dún Bhaile Átha Cliath will fire a salute. The Oireachtas will then be formally opened in accordance with the ancient procedure revived as our antiquarian readers recollect in 1913. The Herald of Ireland will proclaim the Peace of the Gael, the Bard of Ireland will invoke the spirit of Gaelic Thought and Imagination, and the Ard Rí will declare the one hundred and tenth Oireachtas in session. The trumpets and

cannon will then salute the Oireachtas and the National Hymn will be intoned.'

In a column of occasional jottings titled 'Brúsgar,' I read the following note:—

'Some of our readers may not be aware of the fact the Oireachtas was some time after its institution of revival in 1897 mainly an indoor festival. We are so used to the open air musters in Plás an Chraoibhín and in Pairc an Fionn-Uisge that we find it difficult to realise that the Oireachtas Ode and Oration were once delivered in a stuffy hall to a sweltering audience. Our correspondent Mac Ui Mhaik Thuile of Inis Chortaidh reminds us of the fact that the first al-fresco performance of plays in Pairc an Fhionn-Uisge in connection with the Oireachtas occured in 1921, and that the Ode and Oration were for the first time delivered in the open air in 1959. It must be remembered that as a result of the draining of the bogs and the reforestation of the country, the temperature of Ireland has risen several degrees with the last century. Which explains why it is now possible for us to hold nearly all our gatherings whether for business or for pleasure in the open air. We who are used to a Baile Átha Cliath of shady boulevards nor cafes in 1906 people then paraded sun baked streets in summer and ploughed their way through sludge in the winter while they restored for "refreshment" to evil smelling dens known as public houses, which no decent woman would enter.'

I next turned to the leading articles. The first discussed an educational measure recently introduced in the Dáil or Lower

Chamber of the Irish Parliament, the second dealt with Irish Drama with special reference to the forthcoming performance of a new play by the great psychological dramatist Aodh O hAodhagáin at the Oireachtas, mentioning incidentally that O hAodhgáin had in the previous year been the recipient of the Nobel Prize and that a French translation of his 'Parnell' had been 'couronne' by the French Academy. The third leader congratulated the nation on the amicable adjustment of a diplomatic dispute which had arose between Ireland and the South African Republic.

Interested by the first editorial I turned to the parliamentary column to read the report of the debate referred to. Only the gist of the speeches was given—a fact for which mindful of the deadly verbatim report of the *Freeman* I was grateful.

> 'The senior member for Port Láirge introduced a Bill for the compulsory teaching of Japanese as a second language in seaports, towns and cities. In recommending the measure to the Dáil he dwelt on the immense and growing importance of Japanese as a commercial language. In fact it bade fair to become a world tongue. He conceived that Irish boys and girls equipped with a sound commercial of Irish and Japanese the two dominant tongues, one of the West the other of the East, would have an enormous advantage over the children of less progressive nations such as Germany and France, not to mention England (laughter) in which Japanese was not taught and Irish as yet only partially.
>
> The Minister of Education (Reacthatre an Oideachais) regretted that the Government was unable to accept the measure. He quite agreed with the member for Port Lairge as to the commercial value of Japanese though he was not impressed by his assurance that it was likely to become a universal language.

Prophecies on that subject were generally unfortunate. A hundred years ago English writers and statesmen were optimistic enough he might say foolish enough to prophesy that English was about to become the universal language and today they were face-to-face with the fact that English was only spoken by a few peasants in Somersetshire.

Coming to the principle policy of the Irish Education Department of the Irish Government on the linguistic question was the policy which had been followed by them ever since their country had achieved independence, and which, if he was not mistaken, was first formulated by *An Claidheamh Soluis* (applause) upwards of a century ago. He might state that policy in two sentences, every child has a right to be taught its own mother-tongue, every child ought to be taught at least one other language. If there would bear with him he would remind them of a few facts now belonging to ancient history, but important to be born in mind in any discussion on the subject. Almost the first act of the Revolutionary Government of 19—(the figure was unfortunately blotted) had been to establish a national education system embodying the two principles he had referred to.

Under that system, Irish was regarded as the vernacular or the first language over one third of the total area of the country. English being regarded as the vernacular over the remaining two thirds. In the first named area English, French or German was taught as a second language in the other Irish was the second almost universally adopted though a few schools, chiefly in the North-East, adhered to French or German for a few years. Irish as they were aware rapidly extended its vernacular area with the result that in a generation and a half it completely ousted English as first language.

The conquest of England by the Russian Republic and splitting up of the British Empire into independent kingdoms and republics soon destroyed the commercial value of English, which henceforward had only a literary and historic interest; its linguistic interest had always been small. This English commenced to drop out of Irish schools even as a second language. Some tongue more valuable either from the intellectual or from the commercial standpoint being adopted in its stead. At present the situation was that every Irish child was taught Irish as a matter of course every Irish child was taught in addition to it at least one other language. The Government laid down so much as de rigeur it refused to go further and specify what languages should be taught in a given district in addition to the national language. That was a matter for local management acting under the control of the district authority. He found that the languages most favoured were such classical literary languages (he did not refer to what were once known as Ancient Classics) as French, German, Italian, with the (in a sense) younger and more vigorous tongues of what he might call New Europe Russian, Norwegian, Danish, Flemish and Hungarian, in theory any language might be taught, even English.

A member interrupting asked whether English was taught in any Irish school. The Minister of Education—Yes, in three, two in Beál Feirste and one in Rath Ó Maine (laughter). Continuing, the Minister said there was nothing to prevent the teaching of Japanese where desired and in fact it had already been placed on the syllabus in Coraight, Port Láirge. Loch gCarmain, Baile Atha Cliath and some other ports who had extensive trade with the East, but he was entirely opposed to setting the precedent of making any particular language other than the

national language a compulsory subject of study anywhere. Apart from the general aspect of the question there was the further important point that the bill proposed by the member for Port Lairge would interfere with the right hitherto enjoyed by local school authorities of arranging the details of their own programmes. He hoped the Dáil would reject the Bill.

Other members have spoken the bill on division was thrown out by 291 votes to 19.'

I found that the result of the debate was favourably commented upon in the editorial columns of An Claidheamh where it was remarked:

'On the linguistic question, Ireland stands in 2006 where the Gaelic League and An Claidheamh Soluis stood in 1906. She will stand there till the end. The mother tongue de rigueur for the rest—liberty.'

On another page of the paper I found a column of literary reviews. One noticed a history of the National University founded by public subscription in 1911 before the War of Revolution in which by the way its students played a prominent part. Another reviewed a new novel by An tAthair Peadar Ó Laoghaire, whom it hailed as the literary descendant of An tAthair Peadar Ó Laoghaire described as 'perhaps the foremost literary figure of the revival of a century ago', a third welcomed Padraic Ó Domhnallain's new book of verse and a fourth discussed issues raised in a recently published work entitled 'A Hundred Years of Irish Literature'. In the course of the last mentioned review I read.

'We agree with the author that Irish poetry was saved from death from inamination by the movement which took its rise

in Connacht about the year 1910. Previously, Irish poets had wavered between two standards of form in the 18th century standard which imposed metrical bonds to strict that they crushed out all thought and the foreign or English standard which though apparently affecting only the externals in reality affected the spirit of the poetry itself depriving it of the life giving sap of native inspiration.

The pioneers of what has come to be known as the Connacht movement like Ronsard and his followers in 16th century France set up again the standard of the Antique. As the poets of the Pleiade revived the ballads, the rodeau and so on, these Western poets revived the Ossianic Laoi of Rosg and some of the similar forms of the Dán Díreach. They raised too the banner of Liberty so boldly and fearlessly of the lives and loves, the hates the joys the sins, the sorrows of men even as ancients did in Ireland ever as the great poets of all time have done mocking at conventions keeping in mind only the one sacred duty of the poet to utter his soul's thoughts be those thoughts what they may.

With regards the tons of 18th century poetry discussed from MSS about the beginning of the 20th century—'

At this moment a voice broke in on my reading. I started and dropped the paper which to my surprise had turned into a copy of the *Freeman's Journal* containing an article on the British Education Bill as it fluttered to the ground from my hand. The bundle of letters and papers which the postman had brought had disappeared if they had ever been there.

'Ag brionglóide do bhíos, is dócha,' I said to myself as I stood up and followed the voice which called me to tea.

The Peace of the Gael

11th *August*, 1906.

It was death to him who broke the Peace of the Gael during the progress of Feis na Teamhrach of old. Tara is a grassy hillside, and Baile Atha Cliath, for good or evil, is the capital of Gaeldom. Feis na Teamhrach has gone with the Ard-Righthe and the Tánaistí; the Oireachtas stands in its place today. Not until an emancipated Ireland directs her own affairs can the hosting of the new Gael vie in native hue, in impressiveness, in ordered beauty with its old-time prototype; but it can at least strive, year after year, to live up to that fair exemplar. Gradually we can shape our Oireachtas into an adequate expression and summing-up of all that this land thinks, does, hopes, has thought, done, hoped; a synthesis in the present of its past and of its future. Let us seek from afar—wandering in the dim aisles of history or traversing the shadowed glens and lonely uplands in which the Gaelic past is still a present—all that was gracious, generous, artistic, in our native civilisation; let us bring each precious relic to the Oireachtas, and weave it into its due place in the radiant fabric of a new national life; thus re-piecing together, reverently, lovingly, the civilisation that shone and glowed on Tara and at Carman and at Taillte, as a rich piece of embroidery or a jewelled hillside shines and glows when the sunlight falls on it.

It is not only the institutions and forms of the past that we would restore, but the spirit also. And that spirit found its most humane and

altruistic expression in the law which established the Peace of Tara. The Gael is in council; let there be peace, let there be brotherhood, let there be mutual trust, and tolerance, and love! The Dove of Peace hovered over Tara when her Feis assembled in the Rath of the Senates; may it hover over Baile Atha Cliath and over every other trysting-place where men meet to take counsel for the weal of the Gael!

Brothers! We are banded together in a companionship holier than that of the Craobh Rua or of the Fianna, and our only strife is with the Outland Races.

The Individual

1st *September*, 1906.

The success of every human cause must depend, under God, upon the men who work for it—the men whom it has itself produced. High and noble as may be its aims, true and beautiful as may be its principles, a human movement must be carried on by human agents. Providence displays itself through its instruments. Their zeal as shown in energy, their earnestness as shown in efficiency, their devotion as shown in sacrifice, testify not alone to their belief in the cause but also to its sacred character. Nor is it by any rough average or loose totalling that man's belief in a cause is to be judged or the success of the cause to be estimated. Each individual stands for himself alone. He cannot escape censure amidst the defects of his fellows, nor will he deserve praise from the efforts of his brethren. With his own individuality he must contribute to the cause, upon his own individuality will both he and it be judged.

It has often been said that Irishmen suffer from exaggerated individuality. That Ireland has frequently suffered from the effects of this evil form of individualism—the individualism that exalts its selfish demands above the interests of the nation—we must, with pain and sorrow, admit. How many Irishmen who might otherwise have served Ireland with head and hand have wrecked her interests on some trivial point of policy or procedure grotesquely distorted out of perspective? How often have men who would have spent their lives in

work for Ireland abandoned her cause through an exaggerated sense of what was due to them individually? How often, alas! has the cause of Ireland been betrayed by the selfish passions and reckless impulses of men who with disciplined minds and guarded hearts would have willingly died for her? Men who would have endured rack and gibbet rather than betray Ireland for material gain have sold her interests for the less tangible but no less real selfishness of their own minds. Men whom sensual passions could not have sacrificed her to the mental passions of pride and envy, of obstinacy and hatred.

Individuality in such an evil sense we must suppress. But there is an individuality which shows itself in power of judgment, power of initiation and execution, power of co-operation and organisation; the individuality which is ready to accept personal responsibility and to utilise its own resources, which pours out what it has of good rather than wait for a suction-pump to extract it. Such an individuality in its people is one of the greatest assets of a nation. The Americans, most democratic of peoples, recognise its usefulness and assist its development by giving the largest executive powers and the most definite personal responsibility to its popularly elected officials of almost every grade. The Gaelic League from the first has possessed this asset to a great degree. None but those possessed of force of character and strong individuality would have been attracted to the movement in its early stages; none others would have stood the strain and responded to the demands which the working of the movement entails. The very nature of the movement develops such a character. To utilise it to the utmost should be a constant object with us in every part of the organisation. Let everyone take up his allotted and definite task, let him concentrate himself upon it, empty his best powers into it, and feel that he is responsible to Ireland and his comrades for its success. Neglect of the work entrusted to him will

not be compensated for by spasmodic efforts in other fields. The secretary who leaves letters unwritten and business undone has no excuse in excursions into abstruse questions or in abstract dialectics. The teacher who neglects his beginners' class in order to discuss the bardic metres is obviously at fault. These are cases where the personal responsibility is clear and definite and the danger may be seen and remedied. But everyone who takes part in the working of the League, from the newest member of a class up to the Craoibhin himself, has a similar individual responsibility. To determine the extent and limits of this responsibility, to accept it and act on it to the full should be the aim of all. A committee will progress by the individual efforts of its members and not by any occult communistic power. A class will depend upon each pupil in it quite as much as upon the teacher. 'Ourselves Alone' should also mean 'Each one of us alone' and in harmony with each other.

The Critic

8th *September*, 1906.

The language movement arose in an Ireland in which, generally speaking, ideas had become stereotyped. It was an Ireland in which men followed certain banners by instinct, and shouted battle-cries without thinking of their full significance, and fought sturdily and often heroically without inquiring if their own lives were consistent with the principles for which they fought. Into this Ireland the language movement brought a critical spirit. It taught Irishmen the full meaning and duties of patriotism; it showed them that in their own hearts and minds a struggle must be fought as keen as that which they waged against those who differed from them, that in their own conduct they must show their loyalty and love to the motherland; it placed before them the fundamental meaning of nationality and an ideal of nationality at once intense and comprehensive, above all parties and embracing all creeds.

The natural result of such a new movement is a tendency towards criticism and examination. Men are shaken in their self-belief, they are thrown back upon themselves, they inquire into the logic of the actions and the magnitude of the omissions of themselves and their fellows. Opinions are analysed and ideas are tested. Criticism becomes almost an instinct and unless it is sweetened by a generous enthusiasm there is a danger of its becoming a dominating and unamiable passion. Habits of mind are likely to be undiscriminating

in their effects; their influence is radial and not rectilineal. When they are prompted merely by instinct or passion they have an explosive force which acts far beyond, and often contrary to, the wishes of the individual; even when founded upon reason and deliberation they demand vigilance and self-knowledge.

It follows that this critical spirit may frequently be exercised through habit or from an acquired fondness, and too often we fear it is. The 'armchair critic' is well known but is not a numerous type in the Gaelic League. We have, however, the people who by devoting all their attention to the defects of others and by an unfortunate readiness to dilate upon the difficulties that occur in other phases of human life make it impossible either to remedy the defects or to deal effectively with the difficulties. What committee has not had some experience of the critic who without ever contributing helpful aid or stimulating energy has dropped a depressing drizzle of criticism—questioning politics, doubting men, and ascribing motives? Are the occasions unknown upon which when an emergency demanded prompt treatment the opportunity has been lost and friction generated through a futile discussion on some side-issue of idiom or grammar? Is the native-speaking critic unheard of who never speaks Irish except to those whom he believes knows less of it than himself. Have we not met the critic whose zeal for Irish has never cost him one half-hour's real labour or one half-ounce of sacrifice who satisfies his conscience by shouting 'Labhair Gaedhilg' in season and (chiefly) out of season with a calm oblivion of time and circumstances?

These, however, are but instances of the abuse of the critical spirit and should not tempt us to deprecate its legitimate use. For legitimate criticism is not only a wholesome and bracing tonic, it is also both an essential to and a symptom of healthy, vigorous life. A too easy contentment with existing circumstances is the fatal enemy of

progress in any form. The free play of criticism is the surest stimulant in developing the powers of any organised body of men—he who fears or resents it may be left wailing in the ambulance. Strong, fearless and independent criticism is as much to be desired and developed as vicious and captious criticism is to be denounced and crushed. The Gaelic League is most decidedly not a mutual admiration society or a log-rolling group. The more of healthy criticism that prevails in it the better. Fairly and frankly critical every member of it should be—critical towards himself, critical towards his organisation, critical towards his nation, and critical towards both friends and enemies outside his nation. But such criticism must be characterised by certain qualities. It must be constructive and have a definite and practicable end in view, it must be sincere, and accompanied by a real intention of practical help, it must be generous and sympathetic, calculated to stimulate and energise and not to embitter and depress.

The Seóinín

15th *September*, 1906.

In the world of Irish-Ireland the abject figure of the Seóinín stands prominently before the eyes of all. Conspicuous but undignified he presents the appearance of a scarecrow and performs some of its functions although not so innocuous. Appeal and exhortation have swept round his feet, censure and denunciation have buffeted his breast, contempt and ridicule have beat upon his face, until he has been stripped of all his trappings of humbug and pretence.

The type which the Seóinín represents is not, of course, confined to Ireland. Every country has its ineffective class of weak character, imitative instincts, and silly and shallow vanities. In those countries they are simply negligeable quantities. But in Ireland where wealth and power and—most insidious of all—social influence are all combined to denationalise and demoralise the people Seóinínism is a national danger which threatens to rot the fibre of the national character. The extent to which it permeates all classes of society, infecting and weakening even those who should be the most robust and independent, is the strongest proof of its abnormal influence.

So far as the Seóinín makes any conscious or coherent defence he sometimes claims that the attacks made upon him are the outcome of spleen and jealousy, that they reveal a spirit of revolt against the amenities of life and against conventions which have still their uses although their development has been forgotten. In this, we know, he

shows his failure to understand the evil which is being attacked or to appreciate the motives of those who are attacking it. In a normal state of affairs it would be more philosophic to smile at the foibles and weaknesses of the frivolous, it would be a waste of energy to devote undue attention to the ephemeral tastes of fashion. In a nation whose very existence is threatened it would be criminal to expend resources on these alone.

It is, however, against no mere idle fashion or superficial folly of unthinking minds that the mind of the Irish nation is being awakened. We do not seek to direct blind prejudice against individual customs and mannerisms. We do not interfere with the right or freedom of indulging in personal taste except it impairs the public welfare. What we condemn in the Seóinín is more profound and fundamental. What we must banish from the minds of all sections of the Irish people is that tendency towards slavish imitation which is the result and the auxiliary of Anglicisation. What we fight against is that spirit which can find no staple base on native soil—no native canons of taste, no native material for art or literature, no native resources for industry, no native fields for enterprise. This hopeless subservient spirit is seen alike in the educated man who despises all things Irish as crude and the uneducated who picks up the (to him) latest music-hall jingle, in the business man who thinks the English accent of a commercial traveller is an indication of superior goods, and in the farmer who clothes his children in English shoddy, in the professional man as much as in the young seóinín of public resorts, in the English speaker who ridicules Irish, and in the Irish speaker who ridicules the early attempts of the student.

The fight against seóinínism is not a fight against refinement and culture. It is a fight against vulgarity, not in favour of it. It is not directed against the ordinary niceties and pleasantness of social

intercourse. It aims at destroying the frigid shams and affectations which destroy it. It does not suggest the adoption of any rough and uncouth aggressiveness—to replace the contemptible by the offensive. It does not advocate the reduction of Irish humanity to a drab monotony of appearance and behaviour. The nature and the history of the Irish people are against it. The temperament that developed elaborate sumptuary laws, that founded great schools, and wrought great works of art should be sufficient proof that the native life it aims at will be one of warm, rich, colouring and cultured completeness.

The Irish-Speaking Districts

29th *September*, 1906.

It is thirteen years, one month and twenty-nine days since the Seven, answering the summons of Eoin Mac Néill, forgathered in the back room at 9 Lower O'Connell Street. Let us try to summarise what has been accomplished in the direction of carrying out the central purpose which those Seven formulated as they sat around the table that July evening. Their central purpose, be it remembered, was the preservation and extension of the Irish language as a vernacular speech in Ireland. This purpose, as was clearly perceived by the Seven themselves, involved as a practical programme the rooting of Irish in the districts in which it was still a vernacular and the extending of it outward from those districts. How far has this two-fold programme been carried out? How far has the vernacular area been preserved, extended, or otherwise affected since the League commenced to work? How has the situation in the Gaedhealtacht changed since that July night in 1893?

We think it may be said:—

(1). That the public opinion of the Irish-speaking districts, so far as such a thing exists, has been converted to the view that Irish *ought* to be retained.

(2). That the once widespread idea that the language is a thing to be ashamed of has, except in isolated districts and isolated cases in other districts, been killed.

(3). That over a fairly considerable area, chiefly in the West, the decay of the language has been positively checked; that is to say, that while the decay still proceeds it proceeds at a much less rapid rate than it did before the Seven flung down their challenge to the Zeitgeist.

(4). That in certain districts where the young people, already speakers, have been made readers and writers of Irish, the decay has not only stopped but the language has entered on a new lease of life, and bids fair to flourish continuously and indefinitely.

Over against all this must be set the facts:—

(1). That while public opinion *in theory* assents to the proposition that Irish ought to be preserved it views with apparent equanimity the continued decay of the language as a vernacular.

(2). That though few Irish speakers are any longer *ashamed* to confess to a knowledge of Irish, yet the great bulk of them (except in four or five small districts of which the largest in area is Iar-Chonnachta with South Conamara and Dúthaigh Sheoighe) persist in the ingrained habit of speaking English, especially to children.

(3). That in the majority of the Irish-speaking districts, in spite of all the propagandist work of the past ten years, the decay of vernacular Irish still proceeds rapidly.

(4). That in general and with the exception of the half-a-dozen localities referred to in (4) above, no relationship has been established between the young school-taught generation and the older people who speak the language

> as their vernacular; which means that the bulk of the work done in the schools in the Irish-speaking districts has, from the point of view of rooting and extending the spoken tongue, proved labour lost.

We think we may fairly sum up by saying that after thirteen years of the Gaelic League the language is still ebbing from the vernacular area, though in perhaps the majority of the districts it is ebbing less rapidly than before, while in a few it has ceased to ebb and is actually on the return flow.

Is the situation one to be viewed with complacency by the organisation.

Wanted—A New Crusade

13th *October*, 1906.

Irish-speaking parents continue to speak English to their children less from any set design than because they have fallen into the habit of it. If you reason with them on the matter they will admit all your arguments with the greatest frankness. They will agree with you that their children ought, on national and other grounds, to know Irish; that a knowledge of Irish is not incompatible with that knowledge of English which is imagined to be so necessary for one who has to 'make his way in the world'; that the schoolmaster has better English than they (the parents) and that if the English part of the children's education is left to him it runs no possible danger of being neglected. All this will be blandly admitted by almost every Irish-speaking mother with whom you stand for a *seanchus* at a cottage door. She will even expand and illustrate the argument for you in a wealth of forcible and picturesque Irish which makes you positively envious. In the middle of the *comhrádh* Patcheen tumbles in the mud or Máirin pinches the baby. Instantly the mother—forgetting all that she has just been admitting—turns round with a 'Musha, ye have me heart broke, Patcheen!' or a 'Is it at the child y' are agin, Máirin?' We have here an amazing and an almost baffling problem in psychology. Has the woman been simply pretending to agree with you out of Irish politeness? Has she, haply, been poking fun at you? Or does English come from her lips quite undeliberately and from pure force of habit

the instant she turns to address her child? The last-named seems the only tenable explanation. It has grown to be an instinct with the majority of Irish speakers to use Irish when speaking to adults and English when speaking to children. They are hardly conscious that they differentiate in the matter. They have done it all their lives. They do it now in spite of their conviction that they ought not to do it.

It is this that is killing the Irish language in its last strongholds. The custom is all but universal in the Déise. We have observed it in Baile na nGall. We have observed it in Baile Mhúirne, within a hundred yards of the splendid League Hall erected by An Dochtúir. We have observed it in Beal Atha an Ghaorthaigh. We have observed it in Ara na Naomh. We have observed it throughout wide stretches of Conamara, more especially North Conamara. We observed it last week in remotest Tír Chonaill. The only considerable district with which we are acquainted in which the practice has not yet gained a footing is Rós Muc.

Who will rise up to preach out the Gaedhealtacht a crusade against a habit which, if persisted in for another generation, will have annihilated the Irish language? The efforts of ten or twelve League *Timthirí* can avail but little. The work of twenty or thirty *múinteoirí* taistil scattered throughout the Irish-speaking territory will prove hardly more far-reaching. The stray holiday-making Gaelic Leaguer stopping to argue at cottage doors is sublime, heroic, but pathetically ineffective. Work in the schools scarcely reaches the parents at all. There is one influence, and one influence only—an influence always present, an influence all but omnipotent—which can substantially affect the situation: the Church.

A crusade preached for twelve months from the altars of the Irish-speaking districts would kill the habit of speaking English to children. The killing of that habit would mean the saving of the life of the Irish language. There are some who hold that it would also mean the saving of Ireland to the Church.

The Church in the Gaedhealtacht

20th *October*, 1906.

The Church, as we wrote last week, can snatch the living Irish language from death. In asking the Church to do this for Ireland, we do not ask her to step outside her function as a Church. The business of the Church is to save souls, not to save nationalities; but can she reach souls by preaching to them in a language which they do not understand? Does the Church fulfil her mission to 'teach all nations' so far, say, as Inismeadhoin is concerned, if she sends to Inismeadhoin a priest unable to speak to the people in the only language they know?

We repeat that we do not ask the Church to undertake the task of saving the Irish language. What we do ask her, or rather her ministers, is not to help in killing it. Every English sermon that is delivered to an Irish-speaking congregation drives a nail into the coffin of the Irish language. English sermons are delivered to Irish-speaking congregations in a score of countrysides every Sunday in the year. Irish sermons are the exception rather than the rule even in cases where the priest is as familiar with Irish as his flock. There is no reason why this should be so. There is every reason why it should not be so. Yet it continues.

Diocesan considerations may sometimes make it necessary for a bishop to send a non-Irish-speaking priest to an Irish-speaking district. Such a priest cannot be blamed for preaching in English,—

but he can be blamed for making no attempt to learn Irish. One would imagine that his conception of duty would include perception of the fact that he is bound to set about acquiring the language of his flock. But there are priests, as there are teachers, who have lived for years in Irish-speaking parishes without making any such attempt.

Scarcely more explicable is the attitude of Irish-speaking priests who never speak Irish except when absolutely necessary. Such an attitude is far more menacing to the continuance of the language than an attitude of open hostility. The people are quick to notice that their pastor regards the use of Irish as a disagreeable necessity, to be resorted to only when he has to deal with some doting *sean-duine* who, *an créatúir*, 'hasn't got the English.' Again, one wonders why so many priests—some of them notable League workers—continue to recite the prayers before and (more especially) after Mass in English, even though the congregation be Irish-speaking. Is there not a rubric of the Church which prescribes *the vernacular* for such prayers?

We have written fearlessly in this article. We know that we shall not be misunderstood. AN CLAIDHEAMH has more than once borne willing testimony to the fact that the clergy of the Catholic Church have given a larger, a more unselfish, and a more valuable meed of support to the language movement than any other class in the community. It was the hand of a priest that raised the banner thirteen years ago; it is the hand of some old-time fighting *sagart* of the Land War, or of some enthusiastic young fosterling of the Columban league, that keeps the banner flying on many a hillside to-day. We should not have written as we have done if we had not noted and admired the work of Gaelic League priests in Irish-speaking districts, and realised that unless their brethren in other Irish-speaking districts go and do likewise the language is doomed to die.

A Voice from the Grave

27th *October*, 1906.

A prominent Gaelic Leaguer priest has written to us protesting against our English leading article of last week as insolent and mischievous. We are very sorry that it has been so looked upon by any of our readers; especially sorry that the view has been taken by one for whose opinions we are bound to entertain deep respect. We need hardly say that the article was not written in a spirit either insolent or mischievous. We had no intention of penning an insult to the Church, and did not dream that anyone could possibly construe what we had written into an insult. We had hoped that the last paragraph of the article would have saved us from any misunderstanding.

Our Very Rev. correspondent gives us reasons for thinking that we were too sweeping in our statement that 'the Church can snatch the living Irish language from death.'

> 'I have,' he points out, 'been preaching in Irish and speaking Irish all my life, and the language has been steadily falling into disuse before my eyes. At this moment the people will speak Irish to *me* and immediately they will speak their bad English to each other and to their children.'

Evidently, then, there are localities in which the inveterate old habit of speaking bad English instead of good Irish works so strongly

against the language that even the clergy are powerless to affect the situation. We were writing with certain districts of the West in our mind, of which we believe we can truthfully say that wherever Irish gets due recognition in the ministrations of the Church the future of the language is safe, while wherever Irish is ignored in the Church its final disappearance seems imminent. The Church, when all is said, is the influence which most profoundly affects both the private and the public life of Irish men and women, and it is almost self-evident that, speaking generally, the Church's attitude towards an Irish movement makes all the difference between success and failure for that movement.

Last week our criticism was mainly destructive. This week we shall try to be constructive. The concrete suggestions we have to make are, however, not our own. They are those of one no longer with us in the flesh but whose spirit still walks in our midst and sometimes expresses itself in strange and beautiful wise from the lips of little barefooted children whom one meets in certain back-streets of Baile Átha Cliath. In what follows it is not we that speak, but An tAthair Séamus Mac Aindréis.

It was, we think, in the autumn of 1899 that we sat with An tAthair Séamus in a room overlooking a bay of the Atlantic. Our talk was of the movement, to which the veteran nationalist was then a comparatively new recruit. With characteristic thoroughness he had come to the Gaedhealtacht to study the situation on the spot and to read Céitinn's 'Trí Bior-Ghaoithe' amid congenial surroundings. He spoke chiefly on the subject which of all others was nearest his heart in those last years of his life—the part which his brothers in the priesthood might play in saving the living Irish language. In his methodical and business-like way he checked off his suggestions on his fingers, and asked us to take note of them. We jotted them

down in a pocket-book carried for the purpose of recording Irish idioms. To-day we have hunted up that old pocket-book,

and from it we extract an tAthair Séamus's suggestions, so far as they relate to the Irish-speaking districts.

We find that the entry is headed, 'What Priests Might Do.' And here, according to An tAthair Mac Aindréis, is what priests in the Gaedhealtacht might do for the language:—

(1). '*Always* speak Irish to Irish speakers.'

We told him of the Galway sagart who has never been known to speak a word of English to a parishioner who knew Irish, and with tears in his eyes An tAthair exclaimed: 'I hope I'll shake hands with him before I die!' We wonder whether the hope was fulfilled?

(2). '*Always* preach in Irish if the majority of the congregation is Irish-speaking, even though it may understand English.
(3). '*Always* say the prayers before Mass in Irish,'—
(4). 'And the prayers after Mass.
(5). 'Make all announcements from the altar in Irish.'
(6). 'Have an Irish hymn sung after Mass.'
(7). 'Have the Irish Rosary recited after Mass.'
(8). 'Have the October Rosary in Irish, as also the Lenten Rosary or Stations of the Cross.'
(9). 'Have the Irish Catechism taught.'
(10). 'Offer prizes for proficiency in it and for regular attendance at the classes.'
(11). 'Have the periodical Missions or Retreats conducted by Irish-speaking priests.'

(12). ‘Insist on Irish speakers making their confessions in Irish.’
(13). ‘Use Irish wherever the vernacular is permitted in Church ministrations, as in portion of the marriage service, etc.
(14). ‘Encourage the giving of Irish names—especially the names of local saints—to children in Baptism and Confirmation.’
(15). ‘Make frequent and fervent appeals from the altar and in the station-houses to the parents to speak Irish among themselves, and, above all, to their children.’
(16). ‘Have the language properly taught to *all* the children in *all* the schools.’
(17). ‘Pray at Mass and privately that God may bless the efforts being made by the Gaelic League to save the Irish language.’

Thus from his grave the old fighting sagart appeals to his brothers who hold the Gaedhealtacht for God and for Ireland.

The Politician in the Gaedhealtacht

I.

3rd *November*, 1906.

The politician we shall always have with us, and it is highly desirable that we should. Every nation has need of politician; Ireland, perhaps, more than most. We could not banish the politician if we would; we would not even if we could. He is a fact, a permanent fact, an inevitable fact.

While it is highly desirable that we should have politicians, it is highly undesirable that the operations of politicians should be allowed, in their actual working out, to injure the dearest interests of the nation. It is evident to everyone that the politician in the Irish-speaking districts is helping powerfully to kill the living Irish language. His whole propaganda is carried on in English. His newspapers are in English. His meetings and conventions are conducted in English. His election literature is printed in English. His speeches from his platform are in English, even when he is an Irish speaker himself. Of course, we are speaking in general terms. There have been such things as Irish speeches from political platforms and such things as Irish election addresses (the latter chiefly in anglicised districts). We are dealing with the general tone and colour of political activity in the Gaedhealtacht; and the general tone and colour of political activity in the Gaedhealtacht is English.

It would be unfair to pillory any one school of politicians for this state of affairs. The Sinn Féin Nationalist is as great a sinner as the Parliamentary Nationalist; the Parliamentary Nationalist as great a sinner as the Devolutionist or the frank Unionist. In this respect even avowed Gaelic Leaguers are far from blameless. The Gael, as soon as he steps on a political platform or enters a political conference, seems too often to forget all the principles and traditions which he cherishes *qua* Gael. We have known Gaelic Leaguers who are punctilious in always speaking Irish from Gaelic League platforms, to address Irish-speaking crowds in English from political platforms. We have known politicians to speak Irish in Dublin and London, and English from the political platform in their own Irish-speaking constituencies. We have known delegates to the Ard-Fheis who shout for 'Gaedhilg' all day in the Rotunda, to go home and shout in English from a platform or in a boardroom of the Gaedhealtacht.

Now, English may be excusable and even necessary at Gaelic League meetings in the Galldacht. From a non-Irish speaker English may be excusable, if not necessary, even in the Gaedhealtacht. But it can never be necessary and it can never be excusable for an Irish speaker to address an Irish-speaking audience in English. The thing should not be tolerated. It has been tolerated too long with disastrous effect to the influence and prestige of the national language.

We were once at a political meeting in a Welsh-speaking part of Wales. A Welsh Member of Parliament came forward to speak. He commenced in English. There was a roar of 'CYMRAEG!' which literally shook the building. The member held up a deprecating hand. He attempted to explain that there were special reasons why he should address them in English on this particular occasion. The only answer was 'CYMRAEG!' shouted with ten-fold volume. The member stammered on in English. The crowd became threatening. A

few moved hastily towards the platform. At the psychological moment the member turned to Cymraeg,—indeed, he finished in Welsh a sentence begun in English. The crowd cheered, then quietened and listened to him with rapt attention until the close of the address. Had he hesitated a moment longer the platform would have been stormed.

We do not advocate the hooting of eminent political leaders who do not happen to know Irish off every platform in an Irish-speaking district on which they appear. We do advocate the insisting on Irish speakers being provided for political meetings in Irish-speaking places. Still more strenuously do we advocate the insisting on Irish speakers speaking Irish on political platforms and everywhere else. 'In Flanders, Flemish,'—'In Wales, Welsh,'—'Gan Acht Gaedhilg San nGaedhealtacht!'

We wrote in a similar strain in AN CLAIDHEAMH SOLUIS some three years ago, and were promptly called to book by one irate reader for having 'sneered at politics,' and by another for having 'attacked the Parliamentary Party.' We never 'sneer' at anything. We never 'attack' brother Irishmen, though we sometimes criticise their acts. To point out what politicians might do and fail to do is more to attack politics or a political party as an institution, than to point out what priests might do and fail to do is to attack the Church, or to point out what Gaelic Leaguers might do and fail to do is to attack the Gaelic League.

II.

10th *November*, 1906.

During last week the politician was rampant in one of the most important Irish-speaking districts in Ireland. Eloquent speeches in English were delivered to Irish-speaking audiences at Bearna and elsewhere. Election literature in English was scattered far and wide. The fact that Irish was the sole home language of a large part of the constituency and use of the home languages of the other part, was completely ignored by one side in the contest, and all but ignored by the other. True, Stíophán Mac Fhinn, whom Gaelic Leaguers of every shade of political opinion will congratulate on his election as the representative of the most Irish city in Ireland, spoke once or twice in Irish during the course of the week. Irish speeches were also delivered on his behalf by Tomás Ó Domhnaill. We feel quite certain that could the national language have been assigned a more prominent place in the campaign it would gladly have been assigned such a place by one side at least. We are attacking no one. We are simply pointing out two lamentable facts: first, that last week a descent was made on an Irish-speaking countryside by a crowd of English orators; and secondly that, as a result of that descent, vernacular Irish in the district has received a blow from which it will reel for many a long day. All this may have been inevitable; if so, more's the pity.

However, such descents, deplorable and harmful as they are, are of comparatively rare occurrence. Perhaps we must tolerate them for some time to come as necessary evils. After all, these incursions are less menacing and symptomatic than the fact that the business of what we may call local politics is almost invariably conducted in English even in the most Irish-speaking parts of the country. Is a grabber to be denounced? He is denounced in English. Is a Co-Operative Society

to be inaugurated? It is given a send-off in English. Is an address to be presented to a priest returning from the Holy Land or from America? It is written, read, and replied to in English. Is a dispensary doctor to be elected? The canvassing, the intriguing, the bullying, the 'warm interchanges' in the Boardroom, are all carried on in English. And so on in almost every department of human activity.

An astonishing and perplexing fact is that in these various acts of public life and social intercourse Gaelic Leaguers often play a prominent part. Nay, in many cases the U.I.L. Committee, the I.A.O.S. Committee, and the G.A.A. Committee in a parish, all consist of substantially the same individuals as the local Gaelic League Committee. Irish speakers who in their capacity as Gaelic League committeemen punctiliously speak Irish, will in their capacity as U.I.L., I.A.O.S., OR G.A.A. committeemen, habitually speaking English. This is only one instance of a failing so common among Gaelic Leaguers as sometimes to suggest the fear that the whole movement is a sham. How many of us act or appear to act on the assumption that Irishism is a thing to be professed and paraded at Gaelic League demonstrations, at Feis and Committee meetings, and in letters to the press, but a thing which no sane man would ever dream of carrying into his daily life!

Unfortunately, the dweller in the Galldacht must for some time to come continue to use English. He must use it almost exclusively in his hours of business, and very largely in his hours of recreation. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true.' Not so, with the Irish-speaker living in an Irish-speaking district. For him only one course is consistent with *bona fide* membership of the Gaelic League: it is to SPEAK IRISH ALL THE TIME.

Wanted—An Irish-Speaking Public Body

24th *November*, 1906.

There are 640,000 Irish speakers in Ireland. Irish is a vernacular tongue over one-third of the area of the country. There are eight Irish counties in which upwards of twenty per cent of the inhabitants are Irish-speaking. There are four Irish counties in which upwards of forty per cent of the inhabitants are Irish-speaking. There are two Irish counties in which upwards of fifty per cent of the inhabitants are Irish-speaking. Coming to smaller divisions, there are perhaps a dozen Rural Districts in Ireland in which more than seventy-five per cent of the inhabitants are Irish-speaking,—while in some of these Districts there are large areas in which the Irish speakers are literally cent per cent of the population.

All this being so, it remains true that there is not, so far as we are aware, a single public body in Ireland which transacts its business in Irish. We are referring more especially to the elective public bodies which constitute the local governing authorities of the country, though if we were to include the voluntary associations—religious, political, agrarian, educational, athletic, industrial, co-operative, social—of the people, the statement would remain substantially true.

There are reasons why public business must continue to be done in English over the greater part of the country. The Ard-Fheis itself must admit English at its deliberations. English is frequently spoken at meetings of the Coiste Gnotha, though Irish is of late

the predominant language there. Indeed, of the League Coisti at headquarters, only one—Coiste na nGclodhann—conducts its business exclusively in Irish. What bodies within the League do not find it practicable or convenient to do, we do not ask outside bodies similarly situated to do. Roughly speaking, an elective body must reflect the linguistic conditions of its constituency. In the east and centre of Ireland English-speaking public Boards are inevitable. In the border districts, where Irish and English are vernaculars, bilingual Boards should be similarly inevitable; and in Irish-speaking districts, where Irish is, for practical purposes, the sole vernacular, we ought to have Irish-speaking Boards.

In point of fact, although Irish speakers are not represented in anything like their due proportion on the public boards of the Gaedhealtacht, yet there are a number of Urban and Rural District Councils which are in a position, if they choose, to make Irish the principal medium of their deliberations; and there are some which, without causing inconvenience to a single member, could make Irish practically the sole medium of their deliberations. The effect both on the fortunes of vernacular Irish in its own district and on the movement as a whole of the decision of a Rural District Council and Board of Guardians to adopt Irish as its language, to the utter exclusion of English, would be tremendous. Are we too precipitate in calling thus early for a thoroughgoing and uncompromising application in at least one district, of the principle underlying our newly-enunciated watchword, ‘Gan acht Gaedhilg san nGaedhealtacht!’

What the District Councils Might Do

1st *December*, 1906.

Speaking broadly, every Urban or District Council Chamber in an Irish-speaking or semi-Irish-speaking district is a stronghold of Englishism—or at any rate of un-Irishism—in thought and speech. Last week we urged that the time had come when the movement might reasonably expect that the Boards in the Gaedhealtacht should declare themselves with the Gael to the extent of making Irish the language of their deliberations. We intend to return to the point. Meantime, let us set down some further headlines. The many local workers who are devoting their attention to the question of Gaelicising the public Boards, and seeing that they utilise their taxing and spending powers to the advantage of the movement, would, we think, do well to direct their efforts especially in the following directions. As opportunities present themselves, let the Boards be called upon—

1. To conduct their deliberations as far as possible in Irish.
2. To make a knowledge of Irish an essential qualification for appointments, and an essential condition of promotion.
3. To follow the example of the Aonach Urmhumhan Council in striking a rate for Irish teaching purposes.
4. To follow the example of the Uachtar Ard Council in putting the Compulsory Education Act in force only in the case of

schools in which Irish is properly taught as a living language to all the pupils.

5. To follow the example of the same Council in promoting lectures on Hygiene, Domestic Economy, etc., in Irish.
6. To follow the example of the same and of several other Councils in placing sign-posts exclusively in Irish at all cross roads in the district.
7. To follow the example of the Lios Mor, Dun Gharbhain, Durlas, and other Councils in making grants for the teaching of Irish in the workhouse schools.
8. To follow the example of the Baile Atha Cliath Corporation, and the North Baile Atha Cliath Board of Guardians, in addressing their official correspondence in Irish.
9. To follow the example of the Baile Atha Cliath Corporation in putting its name in Irish only on its carts (the Cleansing Committee's carts appear in the streets of the metropolis this week with the legend 'Coiste Glantoireachta Bhaile Atha Cliath').
10. To keep their official minutes and send out their Agenda in Irish—proposals to which effect are, we understand, under discussion in Baile Atha Cliath and in Dun na nGall.

In these suggestions we have confined ourselves to ways and means of promoting the welfare of the living language in the Councils' respective districts. The part which the local bodies might play in the industrial revival, in the fight for native control of the schools, in the war with the Banks and the Post Office, scarcely needs emphasising.

The English-Speaking Tradition

15th *December*, 1906.

Our leading articles for the past three months have been devoted to an examination of the actual situation in the Irish-speaking districts, and to the suggestion of remedies for the deplorable state of affairs revealed by that examination. We have seen that, speaking generally, vernacular Irish continues to die in its home; that it continues to die in spite of the fact (we again speak generally) that the public opinion of the Gaedhealtacht, so far as such a thing exists, has been converted to the view that it ought not to be allowed to die; that it continues to die, in other words, primarily and chiefly because *the habit* of speaking English has become ingrained in Irish speakers and that the eradication of that habit has so far proved a task beyond the strength of the language movement.

We have seen the habit in full force in the home, in the school, in the church, on the political platform, in the public boardroom. We have seen that it imposes its tyranny on teachers who spend themselves in the effort to impart a reading and writing knowledge of the language to their pupils; on priests who are thoroughly convinced that the maintenance of the language, is essential to the spiritual, intellectual, and material welfare of their flocks; on politicians who subscribe to the full programme of the Gaelic League; on League workers known throughout the length and breadth of the land as eager and effective writers, students, teachers, or propagandists. In theory, we all admit

that Irish should be spoken; in practice we all—or nearly all—go on speaking English. In the Galldacht this is only ridiculous; in the Gaedhealtacht it is not ridiculous.

The unchecked continuance of the English-speaking tradition for another ten years will mean the death of the Irish language.

Let the tradition, then, be attacked on every League platform, in every League classroom, in every newspaper and periodical which the Gaelic League can influence. Let it be attacked from the pulpit, from the political platform, in the boardroom, in the schoolroom. Let it be attacked directly and indirectly, in season and out of season, night, noon, and morning.

This is a programme in which every Gaelic Leaguer can take part—it is a programme in which every Gaelic Leaguer *must* take part. It was by adopting a strenuous and utterly uncompromising attitude in a similar crisis that the Czechs succeeded in saving the spoken tongue in Bohemia. At the present day a Czech will reply to a foreigner who addresses him in German, but he will not reply to a Czech who does so. In Poland a hundred thousand children strike from school because they are required to repeat the Catechism in German. In Wales the audience at a political meaning storms the platform because it is addressed in English by the member for the constituency. We want a little of the Czech's, or the Pole's, or the Welshman's thoroughness, stiffneckedness, and contempt for 'respectability.'

The Irish-Speaking Child

5th *January*, 1907.

The Irish-speaking child is the most important living thing in Ireland to-day. As Gaelic Leaguers we believe that the maintenance of the Irish language as a vernacular depends on the education—in a wide sense—of the Irish-speaking child. It is a noble thing to think that something like 200,000 boys and girls and young men and young women of Irish birth are to-day learning something about Ireland's ancestral speech, and are thus coming to know for the first time something about Ireland itself—the real Ireland which has hitherto been concealed from them as though by a drawn veil. It does the heart good to contemplate that radiant army as it stands on the threshold of Éire na nGaedheal and salutes from afar its re-discovered Mother Country. But there is another band, smaller, alas! and dwindling day by day, infinitely pathetic, infinitely important, infinitely dear to the heart of Ireland. These are the little children nurtured in remote mountain fastnesses, and in hidden glens, and by lonely seashores, whose minds have never known any thoughts but Ireland's, whose lips have never known any speech but Ireland's. Few though they be in number, pathetic though they be in their lowliness, in their poverty, in their ignorance so carefully fostered by those whose proud task it should have been to lead them to knowledge, these are Ireland's most precious possession; with them she is still passing rich; without them she would be poor indeed. The movement's holiest and highest duty is to save these little souls for Ireland; to educate these

young minds for Ireland; to nerve and strengthen these tiny hands that they may work and fight for Ireland.

Consider the Irish-speaking child. He is the fairest thing that springs up from the soil of Ireland,—more beautiful than any flower, more graceful than any wild creature of the fields or the woods, purer than any monk or nun, wiser than any seer. The birds and the trees, the rivers and the waterfalls have whispered their secrets into his ear; the winds and the waves have made solemn music in his heart. The voice of Éire has spoken to him through generations of soldiers and poets and seanchaidhes whose traditions he has inherited with their speech. The intense spirituality, the astonishing faith, the deep reverence for things unseen which characterised the old Gael are his birthright. And he has within him the wondrous power to hand down this glowing tradition to countless future generations. In the ordinary course of nature he will exercise that power unless he is prevented by force; and we all conspire to so prevent him! Daily and hourly we come between him and the fulfilment of his destiny. We do so when we speak English to him in his home; when we teach him the English catechism in Church and preach to him in English from the altar; when we send him to a school in which he reads, writes, spells, works sums, talks, and is talked to—we do not write 'taught'—all day long in English. We end by effectually killing the vital spark of Irishism within him. Instead of cherishing and nursing the tender and beautiful thing, we slowly murder it. It is the most pitiful tragedy in ancient or modern history.

The language we use is not one whit too strong. No language that could be used would be too strong. By our treatment of the Irish-speaking child, we (the word 'we' covers adult Ireland in general; parents, clergy, teachers, educational administrators, politicians, public men, journalists), are not merely committing an atrocious act of cruelty, but are unconsciously destroying the seed of future hope for Ireland a Nation.

The Fire in the West

12th *January*, 1907.

The education of the Irish-speaking child is, as we wrote last week, the most sacred and important care that falls on Ireland to-day. True, our hopes of an Irish-speaking nation in this land do not entirely rest on the few score thousand children who speak Irish as their vernacular; for we believe it to be possible to impart during his school course such a knowledge of Irish to an English-speaking child as will place him for all practical purposes on an equality in the matters of *blas*, idiom, and fluency with the child whose lips have never known any language but Irish. We say 'for all practical purposes': for there will probably remain nooks and crannies of Irish thought, by-ways of Irish tradition, feeling, and imagination, which will never be trodden by any—save, perchance, by some strangely-gifted and miraculous Irish Concience 'Hibernior Hibernicis ipsis'—who have not trodden them since first their minds began to move down the ways of thought and fancy. It is this fact that makes the Irish-speaking child so supremely important to the movement. In him the tradition of Irishism has never been snapped. We have only to educate him and we place him on an equal footing with the giants of the Gaelic past and with the mightiest of present-day Europe. We have only to educate him and we set him free to strive with the Alcuins and the Fearghals and the Ceitinns, with the Ibsens and the Tolstois and the Jokais. 'Why,' we are sometimes pettishly asked, 'has not the Irish language movement

thrown up a literary figure of European importance?' There are many reasons: one, perhaps, is that the movement does not yet possess a single writer—nay, that there does not exist a single human being—who has received from the start, and in the widest and truest sense, an Irish education.

In certain lonely places of Ireland there burns—now smouldering low—a fire which, if we collect its seeds, and carefully tend and replenish it, will one day illumine the world. That fire is to be found within the ring of Ciarraidhe's hills, and by misty lake-shores in Iar-Chonnachta, and deep in hidden glens of Tír Chonaill. It burns in the hearts of little children who prattle around their mother's knees, or, bare-footed, walk the roads to 'National' Schools or climb the mountains to herd kine and sheep. A holy fire it is and a wondrous: the holiest and the most wondrous thing in Ireland, if we except Ireland's serenity of faith and Ireland's purity of heart—to which things, indeed, this is mysteriously akin. The mightiest and cruellest civilisation in the world has for a full century exerted itself to quench that sacred flame, but without avail. Will the watchers by its hearthstone—the parent, the teacher, the priest—quench it now, or, joining in a hallowed fellowship of protection, carefully nurse and foster it until it flames up, an amazing and beautiful thing, to shine like a never-setting sun beside the Western Sea?

The Formation of Character

26th *January*, 1907.

We do not think we use the language of exaggeration in describing the paper which was read by Conchubhar Mac Suibhne before a meeting of Cumann na Muinteoiri, last week, as the most suggestive and stimulating address we have ever known to be delivered by an Irish primary teacher to an audience of brother teachers. Unfortunately, we have only a summarised newspaper report before us: the address in its entirety would doubtless give us even more food for comment, would doubtless open up even more numerous and more delightful avenues of thought.

In the very title of his paper, An Suibhneach summed up much that AN CLAIDHEAMH has been preaching on the education question for the past four years. If he had called it 'The Cultivation of Patriotism and the Formation of Character in a National School,' he would, to use a somewhat homely metaphor, have put the cart before the horse. In calling it, rather, 'The Formation of Character and the Cultivation of Patriotism,' he insinuated two great facts: first, that the formation of character is the primary object of education; and, secondly, that patriotism, like all great Christian and natural virtues, must rest on a basis of character. Sean Ó Caoimh was quite right in associating himself with An Suibhneach's classification. It is our strong conviction in a similar sense that has

impelled the writing of certain homilies in Irish and English which have appeared in these columns during the past twelve months.

Now, the noblest of all educations is the living in intimate contact with a beautiful human life; and it is by making his own life a thing of grace and beauty that the teacher will gain the happiness of seeing successive generations of good men or women grow up around him. The teacher whose every act does not show that to him untruth and injustice, unkindness and meanness are things unholy and abhorrent, will preach and teach in vain. As Conchubhar Mac Suibhne puts it, in terms of the primary schoolroom, 'boys are much more inclined to imitate their teacher than be advised by him, and it is quite useless to tell them that it is ungenerous and mean to ill-treat children smaller than themselves, if every day they see fellows punished and snubbed by the teacher himself.'

The two gravest faults of Irish children, as we have known them, is a certain lack of veneration for the truth, and a certain thoughtlessness in their treatment of weaker or more sensitive companions, as well as of dumb animals, often amounting to positive cruelty. We do not think that the two mighty virtues of truth and of loving-kindness are sufficiently taught either in Irish homes or in Irish schools. One might almost extend the proposition to this, that the modern Gael—and to a greater extent, of course, the modern Anglo-Gael—is largely deficient in these two noblest of the Christian virtues. If this is true, and few observers of Irish life will deny it, then the cultivation of an austere regard for the truth, and the fostering of some such all-embracing and consuming spirit of human kindness as characterised the Gael of old, should be one of the main and most sedulous cares of Irish educators.

The Passing of Anglo-Irish Drama

9th *February*, 1907.

If it is unlikely to have any other happy outcome—as we fear it is—the tragi-comedy which ran its absurd course at the Abbey Theatre last week will at least concentrate the attention of Gaels on the absolute necessity for the foundation of an Irish Theatre in the capital of Ireland. Anglo-Ireland has shown at its worst, and a very unlovely worst it is. We cannot congratulate either the Theatre or its critics on the way in which they have acted in face of a crisis. On both sides there have been mock-heroics and hysterics; on both a shameful lack of tolerance and broadmindedness; on both an even more painful want of that saving sense of humour which in his most tense and electric moments never deserts the genuine Gael. If 'Art' has contrived to make itself look ridiculous, so have the raucous cryers-down of 'Art.' And both are of Anglo-Ireland; wherein the true Gael who 'sees life steadily and sees it whole' may find a certain grim satisfaction.

Mr. Synge's play was indefensible. But it was defensible—and was ably defended—on almost every ground on which it was attacked. The objections to certain plain-spoken expressions which occurred in the dialogue as it was originally spoken were simply puerile. The serious resentment of the play as a libel on Irish character was almost as inept. Irish character does not need to be vindicated against Mr. J. M. Synge; and if it did, the audience went a passing strange way

about vindicating it. But we do not believe that Mr. Synge intended his play either as a picture or a caricature of Irish life. The charge which we bring against him is graver. Whether deliberately or undeliberately, he is using the stage for the propagation of a monstrous gospel of animalism, of revolt against sane and sweet ideals, of bitter contempt for all that is fine and worthy, not merely in Christian morality, but in human nature itself. He lays the scenes of his plays in Ireland merely because Ireland is the country with whose scenery and life he is best acquainted; but it is not Ireland he libels so much as mankind in general, it is not against a nation he blasphemes so much as against the moral order of the universe.

In 'The Shadow of the Glen' we find Mr. Synge preaching contempt of what he would doubtless call the 'moral convention'; in 'The Well of the Saints' he railed obscenely against light, and sweetness, and knowledge, and charity; in 'The Playboy of the Western World'—not so much perhaps in the mere story or plot as in the amazingly powerful dialogue—he has produced a brutal glorification of violence, and grossness, and the flesh. In these three plays humanity is in savage revolt. In the beautiful and wonderfully impressive 'Riders to the Sea' humanity is represented as passive and despairing in the hands of some strange and unpitying God. A sinister and unholy gospel, truly.

The Anglo-Irish dramatic movement has now been in existence for ten years. Its net result has been the spoiling of a noble poet in Mr W. B. Yeats, and the generation of a sort of Evil Spirit in the shape of Mr. J. M. Synge. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'

'The Playboy of the Western World' was not a play to be howled down by a little mob. It was a play to be left severely alone by all who did not care to listen to it. The course taken by the objectors was not only undignified, but, as events proved, ineffective. It was,

therefore, bad tactics, as well as an infringement of the liberty both of the author and players and of the public. On the other hand, the action of the Theatre authorities in introducing the police, in personally denouncing members of the audience, and in pressing their vindictiveness so far as to go down to the police courts in order to secure convictions, can only be described as lamentable. The author of 'Cathleen Ni Houlahan' at the head of a column of D.M.P men was a sight which will long haunt the memory with that mixture of the odious and the ludicrous which clings to the recollection of the mean deeds of men made for fine things.

Mr. Yeats triumphs for the moment; but he has lost far more than he has gained. As for Anglo-Irish drama—it is the beginning of the end.

Review of Seán Ua Ceallaigh's 'Brian Bóirmhe'

9th *March*, 1907.

Brian Bóirmhe: A Saoghal agus a Bheatha. By Seán Ua Ceallaigh. Ath Cliath. Connradh na Gaedhilge. Price 1s; post free, 1s, 2d.

In his preface Seán Ua Ceallaigh makes the confession that Brian Boirmhe has been one of his favourite heroes from his earliest years. The avowal suggests the spirit in which this very vivid sketch has been written; it is a panegyric, thought by no means an undiscriminating panegyric. Seán Ua Ceallaigh writes of Brian in the same lyric strain in which Miss Porter has written of William Wallace, and Kinglsey of Hereward the Wake and of certain Elizabeth sea-kings. He does not indeed dishonestly gloze over the flaws in his hero's character as a Kingsley would not be above doing, but his aim, like Kingsley's, is to present rather a bold and attractive picture, striking in its main outlines and sufficiently true to history, than a subtle character study on the one hand, or a dry-as-dust antiquarian disquisition on the other. He thinks, and he thinks rightly, that young Ireland will be the better of having set before it in broad relief the figure of Brian, their nation's greatest, or at any rate, most successful man of action. Standish O'Grady has written that he would like to see the Gaels of to-day studying the story of the young Napoleon. Seán Ua Ceallaigh would probably prefer to see them studying the story of the young Brian. And to Gaels at least it is a tale equally inspiring.

Brian, when all is said, is the most commanding figure in Irish history. Only two others can be mentioned in the same breath with him; Aodh Ó Néill and Theobald Wolfe Tone. Each of these had probably a finer mind, a more soaring genius; but to neither were granted the ample stage and the great opportunities which made the career of Brian a possibility. Like Napoleon, Brian was born at a moment when Europe wanted a Man; and, like Napoleon, he rose to the full height of the unique occasion. There is something awe inspiring in his irresistible march towards power; something wonderfully epic and grandiose in the dignity which he achieved and held as long as he lived—'Brian... Imperator Scotorum' in the wording of the entry in the Book of Ard Macha, doubtless dictated by himself; something extraordinarily pathetic in the fact that, his career or glory ended, Ireland was left infinitely weaker than she had ever been before.

For, successful as was Brian's career, the mighty project which he had formed came, in the long run, to nought. That project, we take it, was to found in Ireland a strong and vigorous monarchy such as William the Norman was so soon after to establish in England. This was no vulgar personal ambition. Brian doubtless saw that it was absolutely necessary that Ireland should be welded into a homogenous political entity, and felt that he was the man to do it; seeing and feeling this, he was unscrupulous as to means. Chance or fate ruined his scheme. Had Brian or Murchadh survived Cluain Tairbh, or had any of his younger sons been equally strong and popular, a Dal gCais King might to-day be ruling Ireland. As things happened, Brian's dynasty fell before it had time to consolidate its power, and the old system never recovered from the blow which his usurpation had inflicted on it. The tremendous effort to establish a strong ard-rioghacht eventuated in the overthrow of the ard-rioghacht. Hence

became possible the successful Norman Invasion and the 'English connection.' It is the greatest tragedy in all history.

Seán Ua Ceallaigh has told his tale with unflagging verve and enthusiasm. At the dark problems we have hinted at he barely glances. Enough for him that Brian was, like another conqueror of old, 'mighty, bold, royal, and loving'; therefore let Ireland 'honour' him and 'love' him. To the patient waiting eyes of the Gael he has become a symbol of future redemption. 'Conán Maol,' in a brilliant passage, has represented Éire as weeping on the plain of Cluain Tiarbh over Brian, dead and the monarchy laid low. And a voice from out the wastes of the air of the waters spoke to her saying: 'Tiocfaidh leitheid Bhrian í gceann mile bliadhain.' How the Gael will welcome that coming!

The narrative of the book is lively and easy. A stickler for the dignity of history might find such expressions as 'd'fhill se a bhaile agus a mbear i n-a bheal aige' (in reference to Maelsheachlainn's unsuccessful attempt to enlist northern support) a trife too colloquial. But at this stage in the Irish literary movement undue colloquialism is decidedly a fault on the right side.

The Stubborn Gael

16th *March*, 1907.

Next week is the Gael's week. The Language Movement will for eight days dominate Irish life to the exclusion of almost every other public or private interest. In the churches Irish prayers will be offered, Irish hymns will be sung, Irish sermons will be preached. In the streets of the towns and cities dense masses of men and women will march to the stirring strains of Irish music, or gather round platforms in open spaces to listen in rapt attention to the burning words of orators. In the theatres, and assembly rooms of cities, in the parochial halls and stores of small towns, in country schoolhouses and barns, delighted audiences will laugh at 'An tAthrughadh Mor' or melt with the pathos of 'An Posadh'; glad, resonant voices will join in the singing of 'Go Mairidh ar nGaedhilg Slan'; feet will be set wagging as the jovial piobaire or fidleir strikes up the first notes of some familiar *port*.

So much for one aspect of the Week. In its other aspect it is a week of toil and stress, for from early morn till eve zealous missionaries of Irish Ireland will tramp the streets of cities, and the long white country roads, and the winding boithrini which lead to hillside cottages, pleading with all they meet for help for the good cause, telling of the work that has been done and of the work that is yet to do, gathering in Ireland's willing tribute to the war-store of

those who have once more planted the banner of traditional Gaelic nationality on the heights, sending forth anew the old rallying cry:

'Beiδ Éire fós ag Cáit Ní Dubhair!'

Thus, in both of its aspects the Week will see a notable re-assertion of the continuity, the vitality, the indomitable persistence and insistence of Irish nationality. Here is a thing that refuses to be crushed. You may stamp it under foot; it springs up again. You may enclose it within prison bars; it walks abroad free. You may hurt, and bruise, and maim it; you cannot kill it. Essence of the soil of Ireland, coeval with her hills and her streams, this mysterious spirit is one of the rarest and most beautiful things in the world, one of the tenderest and most delicate; yet one of the fiercest and most passionate, and assuredly one of the strongest and most enduring. Twenty or thirty years ago men like MacHale, O'Donovan, and O'Curry thought it dead or dying; later on English statesmen and newspaper gloated over its passing, and an Irish patriot sadly admitted—'We are all English now.' But they were mistaken; this stubborn thing that inheres in Irish human nature cannot be so easily killed. Today no one really thinks that Ireland is dying; but both the friends and the foes of Ireland are asking themselves; 'What will this nation do when she is free from the intellectual thraldom which has bound her for so long?' We shall see; meantime it is good to know that freedom is at hand and that every day we are straining nearer to it.

Irish History

13th *July*, 1907.

Scarcely, if at all, less important than the study and development of the Irish Language is the study and understanding of Irish History. Let not the ready critic accuse us of abandoning the root idea, the single purpose of the Gaelic League. By no means. The preservation of the historical national language as the living language of the country is the one and only object of the League; upon that we base all our ideas of nationhood; to that we look for the motive power in a glorious future. It is impossible, however, for the possessor of Irish fully to realise its importance or to grasp its significance without a familiarity with the facts and a knowledge of the course of Irish history. No surer means can be imagined for enshrining the new generation with the idea of the language movement than bringing them into touch with their country's story. The student who takes up Irish without a knowledge of Irish history loses the true meaning of the language: his study is but a cult; he may cherish the flower but he has torn it from its roots. But the student of Irish history is inevitably and with increasing rapidity carried on to a realisation of the indissoluble bond which unites all our ideas of Ireland as a distinct entity with the existence of a national language.

The objections that are raised against the study of Irish and the obstacles in its way do not exist with regard to Irish History. The same practical difficulties do not exist to impede it. It does not need

specially trained and qualified teachers; it does not demand the same arduous labour on the part of its pupils. The smallest Craobh can form its history reading class, conducted, perhaps, in turn by the members. The most remote school can have Irish history taught by its existing staff without any alteration in the programme. The ideal is, of course, to have Irish history taught through the medium of Irish. But until a generation comes in which that will be possible we must urge on the study of our history in English in such books as present a point of view as much as possible in sympathy with the historic Irish nation to which the Gaelic Leaguer looks. We admit that from this standpoint our existing histories in English all exhibit deficiencies. Many of them, however, have considerable merits and the sympathy and intelligence of teachers and pupils may easily supply their defects.

In the study of our history whether in Craobhacha or in schools certain points must be carefully attended to. The historic point of view which we mentioned must be consistently maintained: we must never admit a perspective taken from the Pale or the anglicised present. The human interest must be developed: no matter-of-fact dry-as-dust interpretation of the deeds of our heroes or the romance of our sufferings should be allowed to obscure the fact that history is a record of the doings of personalities and not of names or symbols. Local history must be made attractive and local associations interwoven with the narrative. Teachers might take their pupils, and craobhacha might bring their members to historic spots or commanding positions and identify their surroundings with incidents in their country's past. Literary history should not be neglected: as the drama of political history unfolds, the student should become acquainted with the master minds who formed the ideas of their fellow men of the time, and who created the native literature of Ireland.

Misneach!

3rd *August*, 1907.

Next week the eleventh Oireachtas, assembled in Baile Átha Cliath in the face of Gael and Gall, will once more send forth Ireland's challenge to the Outland Races; will once more sound Ireland's slogan to her own faint-hearted, but never despairing, children. Who talks of disaster and defeat? Who talks of death and decay? Shall a nation three thousand years old pass away like a dream that has been dreamt? Shall the stubborn race that has kept its face to the foe for seven long centuries turn tail and flee in these days when, in every European land, the weak are waxing strong and the lowly are raising their heads and looking their hereditary taskmasters in the face? Let this be our answer to the sneerer, and the cynic, and the pessimist. If the nation is resolved to do this thing—to save its language, and with its language, its nationality—what earthly power can prevent it? ARE WE RESOLVED?

There are but two factors in the problem—the will of the Irish people and the inscrutable design of Providence. If we really WILL that the Irish nation should live, then to doubt the success of the language movement is to doubt the existence of God.

The Future of Irish Art

25th *January*, 1908.

We make no apology for devoting both our Irish and our English editorials this week to an event the bearing of which on our own immediate work in the language movement will be obvious to all except the superficial. We mean the inauguration of a Municipal Gallery of Modern Art in Baile Átha Cliath. Such an event is in kind as real a manifestation of the new life which is commencing to surge through the veins of Ireland as is a Feis in an Irish-speaking countryside or a new novel from the pen of An tAthair Peadar Ua Laoghaire; whilst in importance this dream come true is entitled in rank with such still unrealised aspirations as a National Academy or a National University. Ireland in our day is putting herself into communion with her own past on the one hand and with the world of contemporary imagination and endeavour on the other. The establishment of the Dublin Gallery of Modern Art marks a definite stage in the process.

'Not by bread alone doth man live.' Every human life has an almost physical need of a little of the sunshine which gilds the tops of the hills in Tír na nOg. So it is with a nation. The nation which casts beauty out of its house, which elects to make and do and prize only the 'useful' things, shall assuredly perish, and no less assuredly deserves to perish. We in Ireland once pursued the beautiful as the most worthy object of human endeavour. Our forefathers realised that

the beautiful is the truly useful, and that to think a noble thought, to dream a radiant dream, to make a lovely song, to fashion a comely shape, is to do something infinitely more useful than to produce any amount of common, unlovely, unneeded 'necessaries.' The artist had his place, and a noble place it was, in Irish Ireland; in vulgar, squalid, out-at-elbows Anglo-Ireland there has been no room for him.

Mr. Lane[1] and the Gaelic League are allies. We are bringing back the poet and the seanchaidhe: he the sculptor and the painter. Together we are re-creating the conditions which shall make possible an era in which—to re-echo a recent writer—the phrase 'It is beautiful' shall be sufficient justification for any act, object, or institution you will.

To have brought a new beauty into the lives of men and women in Dublin and in Ireland would in itself have been an act as truly philanthropic, as truly *useful* in the best sense, as any act that could be planned by patriot or humanitarian; but Mr. Lane has done more. He has made it possible for young artists so to educate themselves here at home in Ireland that their message of beauty may be delivered to Irish ears in accents which they shall understand, their secrets whispered to Irish hearts in tones which shall stir their inmost chords. Hitherto the Irish-born artist has suffered under cruel disabilities: he has had perforce to go abroad young,—very often to work abroad till the end of the chapter; almost inevitably he has lost his nationality, with a large part of his individuality, and in the rare event of his achieving real distinction—obviously a difficult matter under such abnormal conditions—he has settled down in a modest niche in the Temple of Fame as an 'English,' a 'French,' or an 'Italian' painter or sculptor. Irish art students will still, of course, have to visit Paris and

1 Cartlann: Sir Hugh Percy Lane (1875-1915), established the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art in 1908, the first known public modern art gallery in the world.

the other European art centres: but they will no longer have to seek the major part of their education abroad. Moreover, in process of time an 'art atmosphere' will develop in Dublin, and there will grow up in our midst a school of painters and sculptors whose work will be an authentic expression of the soul of Ireland, because it will be the creation of artists who are in a genuine sense Irish. Ireland will obviously gain, and it may be asserted with equal confidence that the world will gain also.

Thus it is that we see a national and more than a national significance in the opening of the collection which the enthusiasm and munificence of Mr. Lane, backed by the enlightened public spirit of our Municipality, have brought together in the beautiful old house at 17 Harcourt-street. We have spoken of it as a 'dream come true.' And in truth it is difficult to realise that one is not dreaming as one passes from room to room—marshalled, too, by Irish inscriptions over each door—and sees around one the works, in some instances the masterpieces, of the most famous men in modern art. There are pictures here which will make Dublin a place of pilgrimage for everyone who loves pictures. That is very gratifying, but we are thinking rather of the effect of the collection on our own students here at home. To grow up with these Hones and Duffys and Yeats' and Osbornes and Shannons; these Constables and Watts', and Moores and Whistlers and Sargents; these Monets and Manets and Puvis de Chavannes and Courbets and Corots—not to mention the Rodins—at their very door is a privilege which was not granted to their fathers and is granted to their contemporaries nowhere else in Europe save in Paris and (to a lesser extent) in London. It is a fact for which we should all be grateful to the man whose patriotism, enthusiasm, and dauntless courage have brought it into being.

La Fheile Padraic: Notes and Reflections

14th *March*, 1908.

It is five years since the Gaelic League made its first great effort to secure the observation of La Fheile Padraic in a manner expressive of its significance as the national feast-day and befitting the fair and ancient fame of Ireland. To-day the Festival is so firmly established as one of the three or four central events of the year—ranking only behind Christmas and Easter as a day of religious, civic, and social solemnity—that we find it difficult to realise that its institution as a National Festival in the true sense is as recent as it is. In a few years we shall find it no easy matter to reconstitute in our mind's eye the picture of pre-Gaelic-League Ireland. The very terms adopted or invented by the League (some of them not of the happiest) have become part and parcel of the daily language even of Bearloirí,—'Connradh na Gaedhilge,' 'An tOireachtas,' 'An Coiste Gnotha,' 'An Ard-Fheis,' 'Coiste Ceanntair,' 'Feis,' 'Cuirm Cheoil,' 'Seachtmhain na Gaedhilge,' 'La Fheile Padraic,' 'La Samhna,' 'Seachtmhain na gCrann,' 'Éire Og,' and so on. It is only when one's attention is in some way drawn to the fact that the Irish public of 1908 takes the Gaelic League and all its works and pomps so much for granted that, looking back on 1898 and 1888, one realises the mightiness of the revolution that has already been accomplished. The whole national view-point has been changed. A generation has sprung up which in its opinions and ideals is as unlike the generations that immediately

preceded it in Ireland, as those generations were unlike the men of the days of Keating and the Four Masters. Were a cataclysm to occur to-morrow and wipe the Gaelic League off the map of Ireland, the League's work would not wholly be lost. It has ploughed a furrow too deep to be ever effaced. It has given the nation a trend which, humanly speaking, it is bound to follow to the uttermost end of its course. We may all take consolation in the thought that, whatever happens to us or to Ireland, the tremendous labours of the past fifteen years will never go for nought. They are embedded in the fabric of Ireland's future, whatever shape that future may take.

If La Fheile Padraic will, this year again, lack the civic dignity and eclat given to it up to 1906 by the Dublin Language Procession, it will be solemnised on its religious side more widely and more fittingly than ever. Dublin, Belfast, Cork, London, Liverpool and Glasgow, will, amid the larger cities, pay it due honour. In London, indeed, the Irish service has been temporarily ousted from Westminster Cathedral,—a topic on which it might not be wise to write all we know. The Gael, however, will feel at home in Father Moloney's old church at Dockhead. In Dublin the important parish of St. Andrew's will this year be added to those in which there will be a distinctive Irish celebration, including an Irish sermon. Maynooth will have two Irish sermons on La Fheile Padraic,—one by An tAthair Mairtin Ó Riain and one by An tAthair Conchubhar Ó Criomain. Of minor, but still important, fixtures the name is legion.

The Belfast celebration will be carried out in the shadow of the funeral pall of the good Bishop who was so closely identified with its inauguration. Irish Ireland has special reason to mourn the death of the Most Rev. Dr. Henry, so appalling in its suddenness, yet just such a death—in the very midst and heat of his work and duty—which we can imagine a zealous pastor praying for. During the last few years

the dead Bishop's help to the language movement in Belfast was an invaluable factor in its progress. He was the manager of the most Irish Training College in Ireland. He was one of the two or three Bishops whose pastorals of this year had a cheering word for the work of the Gaelic League. When we quoted from it last week we little thought that we were quoting his last message to his flock and to Ireland. *Go mbadh geal í a ait is na Flaithis!*

The life of a nation is a mysterious thing, made up as it is of an endless succession of human lives, themselves ephemeral; or, rather, made up of the thoughts and ideals, the faiths and enthusiasms of which human lives are but the passing embodiments. To none of us is it given to labour longer than the little day appointed to us; yet on all of us rests how sacred a duty to preserve and hand on that little share of the national inheritance of thought and ideal and faith and enthusiasm which has been committed to our charge! Heirs of the past, we stand in a fiduciary relation to the future. Do we realise this? The majority of Irishmen do not. The Irish speaker who brings up his children non-Irish-speaking does not. The Irish teacher who gives no impulse of Irishism to the successive generations of future citizens of his country that pass under his hand does not. The Irish priest who allows a language and a noble tradition which he might save in his parish, did he but choose, to wither before his eyes,—he assuredly does not. Looking around on this La Fheile Padraic these facts are evident to us; but there is also evident to us the no less conspicuous fact that there are parents and teachers and priests who do realise all this, and who are banded with us in this effort to save from the clutch of the Zeitgeist a language and a tradition—which means a nation—the disappearance of which would mark the end of the most glowing and heroic chapter in European history.

Our Heritage of Chivalry

14th *November*, 1908.

At the Commemoration Dinner at University College on Thursday week last a remarkable thing happened. Speaker after speaker had addressed the guests from the President's table. They were all good speakers. Some of them, indeed, are famous as orators, and on this occasion they did not belie their fame. The President of University College, the Archbishop of Tuam, and the Chancellor of the Royal University dealt with grave themes in grave and dignified language, and each received and merited the applause of the distinguished audience. It was towards the end that the remarkable thing happened. The President in proposing the toast of the Professors with the College coupled it with the name of Dr. Sigerson. Then there arose, not on the dais where the other speakers sat at the President's table, but in a place far down in the body of the hall, a man with a leonine head poised grandly on broad shoulders. Immediately there was an outburst not of mere, hand-clapping but of cheering, loud and long and vehement. It was perfectly spontaneous in its coming. It was electric in its effect. The dignitaries on the President's dais looked startled, yet joined in vociferously. For many seconds—nay, actually for minutes—it continue. Then, amid a hush, Dr. Sigerson spoke, in massive and noble sentences, each one unfolding its length like a Miltonic verse, each one closing with a grand Miltonic music. He said not a word about the petty politics of the moment. His thoughts were

with Ireland's past and with Ireland's gift to the nations,—Ireland's two-fold gift of learning and chivalry. Listening to his words every young man there realised his noblest and finest self; realised, too, that he was the heir of a great tradition; and wondered vaguely why it was that that consciousness should wake in him so rarely. When the speaker sat down the cheering again broke out and again lasted many seconds.

The present writer happened to be sitting beside Dr. Sigerson. On his other side sat the President of the Gaelic League.

'You had your audience with you,' whispered An Craoibhin.

'Oh, the young men are always with me,' replied Dr. Sigerson.

And he had expressed a strange psychological truth. What is the secret bond of sympathy between this veteran of the days of Kickham and O'Leary and the young men of to-day? What but a common faith, a common hope, and a common love, all centring in the same dear Cause?

On Monday evening last Dr. Sigerson again addressed a Dublin audience. An Craoibhin was in the chair. The subject was 'The Celtic Origin of Chivalry.' In the course of a paper every sentence of which was luminous, Dr. Sigerson established conclusively Ireland's claim to priority in the manifestation of the spirit and customs of chivalry. There was no chivalry, properly so called, amongst Greeks and Romans. There is nothing essential in medieval chivalry that is not traceable to or at any rate anticipated by Irish chivalry in the first century. Waiving the question of the historic basis of the Cuchulainn saga, we have at all events a tradition at least as old as the seventh or eighth century of a heroic companionship existing in Ireland a few centuries earlier and acknowledging a code of chivalry loftier and more beautiful than any that ever obtained in Europe in the days of the Crusaders and the Troubadours. Grant that the Red Branch is

a myth, and we are face to face with the stupendous fact that in the eighth century Irishmen were able to imagine heroic characters and heroic laws than which literature, tradition, and history have nothing greater to show. Whichever way you take it, Ireland's glory remains unique.

Standish O'Grady would like to set the boys and girls of Ireland reading the story of the young Napoleon. We too have glowed over that great tale of youthful endeavour, and sometimes with reverence we show our boys certain relics of Napoleon which we treasure at Sgoil Eanna. But the hero we would soonest place before Young Ireland as a shining ideal of youthful achievement is our own Cuchulainn.

When we were thinking out a scheme of decoration for Sgoil Eanna, it seemed to us that it would be a noble thing to set somewhere where every boy that entered the School might see it a picture in which the boy Cuchulainn should be the central figure. Accordingly an Irish artist—Edwin Morrow—painted for us a semicircular panel for our entrance hall. It shows Cuchulainn taking arms. He had overheard Cathbhadh the Druid prophesy that the lad who took arms that day should do deeds that should always be remembered in Ireland but that his span of life should be short. Straightway the little lad sought the presence of Conchobhar.

'All victory and blessing be thine, O King; I come to demand arms this day.'

And, after he had rejected all other arms as unworthy of him, he was armed with the famous weapons of Conchobhar himself. Then came Cathbhadh, aghast to find that his favourite pupil had done this heroic but terrible thing.

'Thou, little child, shalt win great fame and glory, but thy life shall quickly pass.'

Cuchulainn made the undaunted reply: 'I care not though I remain in being but one day and one night so that my deeds and my fame live after me.'

These words, in the original Irish of the Book of Leinster Táin, are on a scroll around our panel at Sgoil Eanna.

It seems to us that with such an heroic inspiration in our own literature, we, men and boys of Ireland, have little need to go to foreign literatures or foreign legends to learn chivalry. Not only was Ireland the first nursing ground of chivalry, but chivalry in Ireland reached a finer flower than ever afterwards in Europe.

'I give comfort to him who is wretched, I deal out mischief to him who is strong,' said Cuchulainn. 'I do not slay women or children or folk unarmed.'

Compare the Fight at the Ford with similar episodes in other ancient literatures. And Dr. Sigerson still finds in the Cuchulainn saga an incident still more kingtly, an incident than which, he says, if there be any higher achievement, accomplished or imagined, in historic romance, it is unknown to him. We refer to the march of the Macradh of Eamhain Macha to the relief of Cuchulainn and their fall on the Ulster frontier. The Táin tells the story very simply. Miss Milligan has woven it into ringing English verse:

'Down they came with shouts of contest and the sheen of falchions glancing,
And they rushed across the torrent on the vast invading horde;
There they fought and fell and perished, but they stayed the foe's advancing
Till Cuchulainn rose from slumber with his matchless strength restored—

Till Cuchulainn stood, and, gazing from the woodland o'er the water,
Saw the white limbs tossed and mangled in the torrent on the rocks,
Saw the broken weapons shining in the shallow pools of slaughter,
And the ruddy stains of wounding on the brightness of their locks.

Then his heart was sore with sorrow and his eyes bedimmed with weeping
For the youths who had been keeping through long space of perilous hours,
In the beauty of their boyhood, whilst the Red Branch Knights were sleeping,
Watch and ward beside the ford against the Olnemactian powers.
Forth Cuchulainn went to glory, o'er the stream and plain-land gory.
But pausing in his passing ere his chariot westward rolled,
Their laud be thus repeated: O ye fallen, but not defeated,
Ye shall share the conqueror's fame, who kept the land for him to hold.'

Is Irish a Living Language?

21st *January*, 1908.

If you mention the name of An tAthair Risteard de Hindeberg to anyone who is in any degree intimate with that brilliant but erratic Gael, you will invariably observe a smile stealing across the countenance before you. The smile is not altogether one of amusement. There is in it a subtle suggestion of affection.

It would seem that this Doctor of Philology, whose appearances in print are uniformly so mirth-provoking, is in private live a being to love. We see him, as he has often been described to us, sitting 'with his fiddle under his chin' (this is his phrase) making weird and astonishing music. We see him laying hands on the fiddle of a friend and ruining it for life by tuning it in accordance with some amazing 'old Irish scale' of his own invention; much to the disgust of his friend, who, fond as he is of 'Dick' (so An tAthair Risteard is lovingly called in the Deise) and enthusiastic as he is over Irish music, would much prefer 'Dick' to experiment on his own fiddle.

We see him manufacturing an old Irish harp and allowing his nails to grow long that he may play it in the old Irish fashion. We see him forcing people who have rashly strayed into his parlour and who take about as much interest in the laws of Old Irish syntax as they do in the laws of the First Egyptian Dynasty,—we see him forcing these unfortunates to listen to him by the hour as he discourses in American-English on the sins of the writers of 'revival Irish' in

falling away from the magnificent standard of the ancients, and on the irreparable calamity to Irish civilisation involved in the loss of the infixed pronoun.

In truth, An Dochtuir Risteard and the tales told of him add much to the gaiety of life in the Deise. But, as we have hinted, he is not wholly a comic personage. We have heard stories of kindly deeds done furtively, of a great human sympathy, of a boundless generosity; so that, although our knowledge of him is gained chiefly from hearsay, we have grown to love the man as if he were an intimate personal friend and would not for worlds wish him otherwise than he is. It is because we regard him thus affectionately that we shall be as tender as possible in exposing the foolishness of his most recent contribution (in American-English as usual) to Anglo-Irish journalism. We are still awaiting his contributions to Irish literature.

The first question that presents itself is why should anyone, and why Dr. Henebry above all others, start a discussion on Irish literature *in English*. We can understand reviewing an Irish book in English, since one purpose of a review is to make the book known to as large a public as possible. But there can be no excuse for inaugurating what (it appears) is to be a wholesale attack on the Irish of the revival in the language of the enemies of the revival. No one ignorant of Irish is competent to take part in or even to follow such a discussion.

Why, then, did not Dr. Henebry address himself to Irish speakers, the only people who are really concerned with what he has to say? Is it that he mistrusts his mastery of Irish? Is it that he fears (and here his fears would have some ground) that his Irish would not be understood? Or is it that he wants to advertise to the mere Bearloir—to the *Irish Times*, to Trinity College, to the enemies of Irish in the new Universities—the alleged fact that no real Irish is being written at the present day except by one writer?

We reject all three hypotheses and assume in charity to Dr. Henebry that he writes in English out of pure eccentricity. But it is an eccentricity which those who are concerned for the welfare of the movement should resent. It is strange friendship to the Irish language to select the moment when its position in the new Universities is about to be determined to tell the English-speaking world that the art of writing Irish has for all practical purposes been lost—that all our writers (always with one exception) write only English-Irish. Of course, those who know Dr. Henebry will receive his opinion with their usual indulgent smile; but everyone does not know Dr. Henebry and there are those to whom his magisterial tone and the formidable 'Richard Henebry, Ph.D.' on his title-pages may convey a false impression of authority.

The real question raised by Dr. Henebry's article in the *Leader* is this: Is the Irish language a living language or a dead language? Dr. Henebry insists in substance that it is a dead language. He asserts that we must write it exactly as it was written three hundreds year ago. He refuses to recognise any changes in spelling, any changes in inflexion, any changes in syntactical *ordo*, that have since made their appearance in the language and been generally accepted by those who speak and read it. We can understand a heroic zeal against Bearlachas, though we cannot sympathise with that zeal in all its extremer manifestations. But Dr. Henebry is not animated merely by a zeal against Bearlachas. He is animated by a passionate hatred of change of any sort.

In other words, he will not allow growth in the language. He will not allow the development of new grammatical forms, the acceptance of new conventions in style. He takes his stand (quite arbitrarily) at the year 1600 or thereabouts and calls every change that has come into the language since then a 'corruption,' and 'un-Irish', and 'base.' As well might we say that Ruskin's English is not English because it is

cast in a totally different mould—differing in orthography, accidence, syntax, and above all 'style'—from, say Sir Thomas North's English; or that Balzac's French is not French because it accepts different standards from the French of Calvin.

Literature must be based on living speech. We thought that this had been long ago accepted by everyone in the language movement. In some quarters, indeed, there has been a tendency to push the principle to an absurd extreme and to lay down that literature and the spoken language should accept precisely the same canons. Now Dr. Henebry comes along and would divorce literature from the spoken language altogether. Similar attempts in other countries have either failed miserably, or else have partially succeeded with disastrous results. Modern Greece should be an example and a warning. There, owing to the creation of an artificial literary standard, a complete divorce has arisen between the language of the people and the language of the *litterateurs*,—with the result that the majority of Greeks cannot read what their writers write.

Dr. Henebry would bring about a similar state of things in Ireland. His 'Irish translation' of Seamus Ua Dubhghaill's Irish preface to his 'Cathair Conroi,' would not be intelligible to any ordinary Irish speaker. We have just read it to five native speakers in succession—two of them young lads recently come to Dublin from Western homes in which no English is ever spoken. The passage, in Dr. Henebry's version, was unintelligible to them, one and all. They could only dimly guess at its general drift. Some sentences they could not guess at even remotely. They were as Greek to them. We then read Seamus Ua Dubhghaill's original passage in *living* Irish. Needless to say every word was understood. 'Is *Gaedhilge* í sin,' was the significant comment of one of our native speakers. Dr. Henebry may retort that the speakers in question do not themselves speak or understand 'Irish

Irish.' Well, if there is not 'Irish Irish' in Iar-Chonnachta then 'Irish Irish' is dead and we must put up with such Irish as we have left.

But 'Irish Irish' is not dead. It lives in every Irish-speaking district to-day. For all its differences in 'form, grammar, and idiom' from the Irish of three centuries ago, it is none the less Irish. And 'Irish Irish' is being written by scores of our writers, Seamus Ua Dubhghaill foremost amongst the number. It is high time to protest against the oft-reiterated parrot-cry of his personal friends and exploiters that the Irish of An tAthair Peadar is the only 'Irish Irish' that is being written at the present day.

We believe (though there are competent judges who would not agree with us) that An tAthair Peadar's Irish is the most vivid and vigorous Irish that is being written today. But there are dozens of people who write, and thousands of people who speak, Irish quite as *Irish* as An tAthair Peadar's. Its distinguishing quality is not 'Irishness,' but vividness and vigour,—a quality personal to An tAthair Peadar, innate in him, and not at all due to any exceptional mastery of the language on his part. The same quality marks his English, and if he could write French and German would doubtless mark his French and German. There is Irish not characterised to the same degree by this quality, and as unlike An tAthair Peadar's in style as it is possible to imagine, which is yet quite as 'Irish' as his,—nay, more 'Irish,' if by being 'Irish' we mean being near the traditional model. Such Irish, for instance, is the Irish of Micheal Mhag Ruaidhri. No one who has read 'Beatha Aodha Ui Neill' can fail to see that Micheal's style approaches far more nearly to Ceitinn's than does An tAthair Peadar's.

If Dr. Henebry thinks he is going to impose dead linguistic and literary forms on a living language he is mistaken. Irish literature has taken its path—the path of the living speech. It would require a

stronger man than Dr. Henebry to turn it back now. We have heard the fear expressed that such articles as his in the *Leader* may deter people from writing Irish. We do not think so. Seamus Ua Dubhghaill and the others who like him are writing a simple vigorous living Irish are doing the most thoroughly useful peace of work that is being done in Ireland today. They may not be producing very exalted literature, but at any rate they are answering the cry of the awakening thousands of Irish speakers for something to read in their own language,—something that they can understand, something that is pleasant and familiar and homely, something that is capable of filling a place in their daily lives. Are we to answer this cry by giving our people books that they cannot understand? Are we to answer the cry of those hungry for bread by giving them stones?

Ireland or West Britain

9th *January*, 1909.

When in Norway a few years ago the question of political separation from Sweden was submitted to a plebiscite, nineteen voted against independence: they were ignorant of history or insensible of its teachings. We have in Ireland to-day many, perhaps a majority, who are not familiar with even the bare outlines of Irish history. They know little or nothing of the origin of their fathers or of their spirit and achievements. They are unacquainted with the relations of England with this country, and with the unchangeable purpose of those relations since first an English parliament enacted laws for the destruction of our language until two generations ago when a succeeding parliament connived at and utilised a famine for the destruction of our race. Others there are who have read Irish history, and even some who have attempted to write it, but they have learned little from it. Hence it is that so few have any conception of what nationality is. When men talk and write as if Ireland were but a shire of England, were not girt about by the sea, and had not a nationality and a mission of her own, we feel inclined to cry out with Mitchel:

> 'Heaven! where is the great heart of chief and tanist? How has the rich blood of O'Connor and O'Donnell Roe grown pale! Is this, the stateliest family of the Caucasian race, indeed, starved, and kicked into incurable Helotism?'

This ignorance of history is responsible for the many anomalies against which Irish Irelanders have to fight to-day. It is responsible for the devout Catholic who desires a University to train Irishmen for life in an Empire whose god is Mammon, and for his fellow whose idea of a University is that it should be a 'job-shop degree-factory.' The prevalence of this ignorance it was that led British statesmen into hoping they had come to the final step in the 'perfecting of Ireland' when they placed on the Senate of the University a body of men whom National Ireland has found it so necessary to chastise. But all have not been stricken by the plague. There are in the Ireland of to-day men whom honours cannot buy or flattery deceive or any prospect of worldly success lure from the path of national duty. A new generation has arisen 'out of the ashes,' and old ideals have been re-born. The foundations of a new nation have been laid, and no act of England's parliament, even should it be administered after the Britisher's own heart, can prevent the edifice being raised.

The fight for Irish in the University has not yet resulted in victory, but it has made it certain that the safety of the language is assured; it has brought many new friends into the open; it has sent a few compromisers into the enemy's camp, and it has raised once again above party and class interests, the ideal of Irish Nationality. The governors of the National University may ignore Irish opinion or attempt to meet by a shifty settlement the demands of the people, but they will do so at the cost of that success which they so dearly prize. Ireland if ignored or deceived will suffer for a few years, but she has grown too strong to be strangled by an indigent Government Department. We have outlived Trinity College and the National Board, and it needs no prophetic mind to foretell the end of a West British University should it be attempted to foist such an institution upon us.

Someone has said within the past few weeks that unless Irish be essential in the University the life of the language will be a matter of only a few generations. That is a mistake. Such words of despair serve no good end. They have no foundation in truth, but they encourage the enemies of the language and weaken its friends. The most urgent necessity of the present is a closer acquaintance with the language itself, a deeper knowledge of Irish history, an endeavour to form a clear conception of what nationality is, and, finally, determined action. We require light on many matters, and cool heads to consider them. Noisy threats will not convince the men on the Senate, but if they be honest men they should be amenable to reason. The public want full and accurate information on the University Act as it was finally passed into law. Every worker should know what are the powers of the Senate, and other governing bodies in the University, and what those of the people. We know what we require of the Senate, and we should neglect no legitimate means of voicing and enforcing our demands. Public opinion is our first weapon. When the people are informed and confident of the justice of our cause, and when they realise the far-reaching effects a successful issue might have, they will not be slow to come to our assistance. The University Act empowers County and Borough Councils to raise a rate in aid of scholarships in the University Colleges. It is for the public to consider whether they will endow a University which threatens to exclude Irish from its essential subjects. Limerick Borough Council and three County Councils have already declared that they will not touch a seoinín institution. Many others will inevitably follow their courageous example. We do not want to rush the Senate into a state of excitement or to hasten the Councils into action, but we ask that all parties consider the question calmly, and with reason, and act with firmness. Our regret in the years that are past was the threatened

extinction of our language. We have now a means of hastening its revival; are we to be prevented utilising that means by a Senate that draws its funds from the public purse? Let there be no scruples about interfering with the independence of the Senate. Ireland pays for the Universities, and she ash the right to see that they are used for her best interests.

The fight has ranged Ireland into two distinct and opposing divisions. On one side are those whose concern is the 'Empire,' and who are content to have their country a province within it; on the other are the men and women whose concern is Ireland, and whose aim is to restore her to her birthright. Can anyone with a drop of Irish blood in his veins, or who has a thought of his fathers, whether of the Gael or Gall, doubt the right road? The issue can result only in one of two ways: If the University be frankly and generously Irish it will prosper, and the country will benefit by it; should it become an institution for the Catholic section of the garrison, it will be a failure, and Ireland will survive its influence as she has survived that of all the foreign institutions that have preyed upon her for over a century.

On Trial

27th *February*, 1909.

During these days the men and women of Irish Ireland are on their trial. In a sense, the whole Irish public is on trial. A great crisis has arisen in the affairs of the nation, and unless that crisis be handled with tact, forbearance, but withal firmness, irreparable harm may be wrought to the nation's future. For the first time in recent history the Irish people have been given an opportunity of shaping an educational system for themselves. They have been granted an instalment of Home Rule, of Home Rule in the most important sphere,—that of education. With practical unanimity the democracy of Ireland has determined to use that instalment of Home Rule well and wisely. Seeing with a new-found vision that a system of education, to be of service to Ireland, must have as its aim the training of Irish men and women in a distinctive Irish culture and that such a culture cannot exist or be imagined apart from the distinctive Irish language, it has made up its mind that the Irish language must be part and parcel of the fundamental basis of culture which shall be adopted by the University. So far, so good.

One would have imagined that it only remained for the University authorities, supposed to represent the people and answerable in final resort to the people alone, to carry out the people's behest. But prominent men amongst the University authorities soon began to show that they were not in sympathy with the people's demands and

would resist the granting of those demands to the bitter end. The situation was further complicated when the Standing Committee of the Catholic Bishops threw the great weight of its influence into the scale against the people, and when trusted popular leaders declared themselves with the Bishops and West Britain against Ireland. The delicacy of the crisis rests in this, that the people have now to wage a great fight for the maintenance of what they believe to be a vital principle against revered spiritual and political leaders whom they feel should be in the van with them and not in the van of their enemy. While this fight must be carried on with a perfectly unrelenting determination, it must also be carried on with entire decorum, self-restraint, and good humour. The campaign must not be marred by any ebullition of temper, however natural and excusable, on our part, or by anything in the nature of bluster or swagger, masquerading as 'strength'—of which bluster and swagger are in reality the negation.

There are those who would hurry the leaders of the language movement and the responsible organs of its opinion into a position of broad hostility to the Catholic episcopacy, because the Standing Committee of the episcopacy has declared itself against us on this question, and because individual members of the episcopacy are working against us in various ways. There are those again who think that the language movement would show strength by embarking on a vendetta against Mr. John Dillon, and by driving Mr. Stephen Gwynn out of the councils of the Gaelic League. But real strength consists in proceeding calmly on your own way and with your own work no matter whosoever may seek to bar your progress. It is no part of the business of the Gaelic League to fling in the teeth of the Catholic Bishops all the blunders and alleged blunders of their body in the past history of Ireland; and it would be folly for the Gaelic League to say to everyone who cannot accompany it the whole way

that he is not at liberty to accompany it, say, nine-tenths of the way. It is, however, the business of the Gaelic League to assert its own unfaltering conviction, no matter who may cherish a conviction the exact contrary; it is the business of the Gaelic League to organise and give expression to a national opinion on a question other than one of faith and morals, even though that opinion run counter to the opinion of all the Bishops; it is the business of the Gaelic League, taking the Bishops at their word that they regard this as a question for 'fair argument,' to insist that the letter and the spirit of that implied treaty be adhered to, and to give such publicity as seems necessary to acts which violate that treaty. All this the League has been doing and will continue to do; but the hopes of those are vain who think that now or any time the League will lend its countenance to an anti-clerical movement or that it can ever regard the possibility of such a movement as other than a thing to be deprecated and dreaded no less in the special interests of the language movement than in those of the country as a whole.

This roughly is the consensus of opinion among working Gaelic Leaguers as far as we are able to interpret it. We have no fear but that the League will carry itself as becomes it during this great crisis, doing no act and saying no word which it may afterwards have reason to regret. That our allies in the press and elsewhere will maintain a similar self-possession we sincerely hope. After all, to base our plea on no higher ground, we want to win this fight,—not to make victory impossible by permanently alienating from our case men or institutions whose co-operation is necessary to our final success.

A Matter of Education

24th *July*, 1909.

The aims of the Gaelic League resolve themselves in practice into an educational campaign. However sincere men may object to the compelling of Irish children to study their native tongue none can oppose our objection to systems of education which cater for our country in much the same manner as if it were a British colony in Asia or Africa, or as if our identity were one with that of Cumberland or Kent. To tolerate such a system any longer would be to acquiesce in the placing of our children in the grip of a mental vice that would teach them to regard their race, their country, its language and history, with less pride than they might those of the children of any European nation. Such a system has been that of the primary school. Such a system is that of the Intermediate Board, and such a system has been that of the Universities. Intelligent men of every creed and class are agreed in condemning such mind murder as those system involved. Ireland has a history; why should it be suppressed? Ireland has a language; why should it be destroyed? Ireland has a nationality, written even on her physical outlines by the hand of Providence; why close our eyes to the fact? Whatever be the political fate of our country, there can be only stagnation in national affairs until there be a more general recognition of the essentials of nationality. To set our people back on the way of sanity will need a revolution. The revolution has been begun already, but it must be carried into the

schools and conducted mainly in them. The conference on Bilingual Education which has been arranged by the Coiste Gnotha for Oireachtas week is a hopeful sign for the future of the schools, or for a large number of them at least. Bilingualism is a matter of ways and means, but ways and means so important, that the neglect of them would mean the neglect of the most valuable educational weapon within our grasp. The progress of Bilingualism in the schools marks, very largely, the real progress of the language movement. The great bar to the progress of both is the lack of skill in methods of language teaching, and of a good knowledge of the Irish language itself. The pioneers in Bilingual teaching are largely the most efficient workers in the revival, and we may expect that from the Oireachtas they will send out a call to teachers generally for an immediate stride forward in a knowledge of Irish as well as for the adoption of Bilingual school methods.

Bilingualism, however, is not the only end to be aimed at. A resolution will come before the Ard-Fheis to recommend that more attention be given to the teaching of Irish history in the schools. The subject of the resolution deserves calm and earnest consideration. Bilingualism will give us Irish methods of education, but the teaching of our national history should exercise almost as great an influence in Gaelicising the Anglicised juvenile mind as that which is exercised by the teaching of the language itself. The old style of history—lists of battles and broken treaties with the English—must be set aside. The broad scientific history which shows us as a branch of the Aryan race that played a big part in early European history, and later, as a nation isolated politically from the rest of Europe, but having every interchange with outside nations which progress demanded, receiving and giving, must take the

place of the date book and the agony column style of history which has taught Irishmen to hate their foes but not to love each other.

The Gael is slowly coming to his own. In education two new subjects, viz., our language and history, have been added to school programmes. Education itself is being radically altered both in purposes and methods. Socially new dress costumes and native song and dance are replacing those of the *allmhurach*; and intellectually, the dignity of using our own minds is so widely recognised, that one may now hope for anything from Young Ireland. The few thousand active workers who have had the courage to come into the market place and challenge the right of a world-wide civilization to dominion in our little country have done something that appeals to the spirit of resistance in all brave men. They took upon themselves a battle in which giants might engage and find stressful work to do. That is why the Gaelic League is gathering to itself the best workers that exist in the country. Its work is so noble, unselfish, and demands such sacrifice that every strong-brained man and woman who comes to know of it becomes impatient for participation in the struggle, and envious for a share of the honour that falls to all who serves their country. If the League and the movement which it has set going be wisely piloted we may hope to see within a few years the best minds of all creeds and political parties under the spell of the revival. The Ireland of old drew its people from many lands. The new Ireland, our Ireland, is welding a composite race from men of many parties and creeds, but they are all 'Ireland men.' We all must suffer the pains of the purifying Gaelic fire, and out of the seething pot will come a new Irish mind, a new Irish character, a new race whose home and the centre of whose activities will be Ireland.

Lecture to Carrick-on-Suir Branch of the Gaelic League

Extracts from a Gaelic League lecture given on Sunday 31st *December*, 1911 to the Carrick-on-Suir branch of the Gaelic League.

To be logical, I will begin and end in Irish, but it may be that there are some present who cannot follow me in that language. Ireland is the only country in the civilised world in which a person addressing a gathering of natives of the country has to make a shameful admission that most of his audience will not understand an address delivered in their country's language. The people of Ireland have thrown over the Irish language? And what have they got in its place? They think they have got English, but the broken English they speak is very far from being the English of England. Furthermore, they in Ireland will never be able to speak English, and the most they will ever get in exchange for Irish will be a mongrel gibberish full of the idioms and expressions of the Irish mind that was meant by God to speak Irish.

The subject in which I am about to address to you this night—the Education of the Children of the Nation—is the most important subject that can engage the attention of any people. The Irish people are just now on the eve of momentous issues, and in the near future they may be called upon to provide for the country a system of genuine national education. The philosophy of education and the psychology of the child has been engaging a good deal of the attention of learned people of late. The ancient Gael had developed a system of education

which has never been surpassed by any other people. Under Home Rule Ireland would have an Education Board, having at its head an Irish Minister responsible to the Irish Executive. The business of that education department would be to Gaelicise Irish Education.

If Home Rule does not come what will happen? Will the Irish people haul down the flag of Irish Nationality that they have kept aloft for 700 years, and for the sake of which so many have fought and died. No, they will not. We cannot afford to let this Irish nation perish after having kept up the struggle for freedom so long. If Home Rule does not come then momentous events may happen and happen soon. The people of Ireland may be called upon sooner than they may expect to make great sacrifices for their country. What will happen if Home Rule does not come can be left to the young generation to settle and I can assure you that the young generation will know what to do if the crisis comes.

In this great last fight for Ireland and for the Irishising of Irish education and the killing of West Britonism in their schools every man and woman in Ireland must decide now on which side they will be found—the side of West Britain or of Ireland. The system of education they will have in future should be practical and should teach boys to be useful on their father's farms and in their business houses and girls to be useful in their homes. I would not desire to see any change made in the present managerial system.

In conclusion, you should remember that this country is Ireland, not England, and that you are Ireland's sons and daughters owing devotion and duty to the motherland. In the great struggle that is coming, and which may come in our own time, we must all make up our minds to be on one side or the other. No man can serve two masters. We cannot serve Ireland and serve against her. We must now decide on which side we are to be. If there will be any of Ireland's

children found against her then they will be terribly untrue to all their traditions.

The near future is to decide whether this ancient nation is to perish after such a long and glorious struggle, or whether we are to rear for her a race of men and women that will stand, when the time to do so comes, for right against might, for truth against falsehood, for Ireland against the world.

The Second Coming of Oisín

I.

29th *July*, 1905.

I climbed Binn Eadair on an evening in the early harvest. The ocean was blue beneath my feet, and on either hand the rocks were resplendent in the sunset. Over against me Sliabh Rua and Sliabh Cualann gradually darkened. I lay down, full of thoughts in the midst of that solemness. Aloft on Binn Eadair, Baile Atha Cliath and the everyday things of life seemed strangely remote. The low monotone of the wave which broke on the strand reached me like a voice from the depths. That, and the occasional plaint of a sea-bird, made a music which lulled me into a half slumber.

A sound different from either of these struck sharply on my ear. It was the footfall of one toiling towards me up the height. Presently there topped the heathy knoll in front the bent figure of a man. As he straightened himself to gaze seaward, I beheld a bearded elder, very noble and very mournful in his bearing. He stood outlined against the sky, a heroic shape. As his eye ranged sea and hill it lit with a strange fire, as though he were one returned from far wandering who gazed again on dear familiar things. Yet he sighed as he gazed. His loneliness touched me in a way for which I cannot account. The shadow of a great grief seemed to have fallen on the hillside.

'God save you,' I said at length, anxious, yet reluctant, to break in on his aloofness. Instinctively I spoke in Irish, as I always do when

I am amongst the heather and the seabirds. Besides, to have uttered a word of English in that presence would have seemed to me an irreverence.

He turned quickly, eagerly.

'God and Mary to you, child of the Gael, who salutest me as the Tailgheann and his disciples were wont to do.'

The voice was deep and sonorous, as though it had rung loud above many battles. The Irish was perfectly intelligible, albeit there was something curiously archaic about its sounds and phraseology.

'Who then art thou who knewest the Tailgheann?' I asked. 'It is long since he dwelt amongst us; his bones have rested for many generations by the Church of the Strangers in Down.'

'I am Oisín, the son of Fionn, who was mighty before the Tailgheann came with his books and his bells.'

This communication interested, but did not surprise me. So expectant a mood had fallen on me that I half anticipated it.

'And why does Oisín mourn on Binn Eadair, who long ago found rest?'

'I mourn for the vanished Gael.'

'Can men then return from the Other Country to weep over the desolation of their earthly homes?'

'It is my doom to return because of yore, through love of a woman of the Sidhe, I went out from my own land and dwelt for twice fivescore years in the Country of the Young. I returned and found Almhain desolate.'

'I have heard of that lonely homecoming,' I said. 'The poets of the Gael have sung of it.'

'It was lonely and bitter,' wailed the old man, 'but its loneliness and bitterness were nought to the loneliness and bitterness of this. I yearned for the familiar places, though I knew them changed. I

longed to tread again the sward of Almhain, to wander as of old by the winding shore of Loch Léin, to climb once more the side of Binn Eadair. I have come, and b! strangers dwell in the shadow of Almhain, strangers roam on the banks of Loch Léin, strangers have built their duns on the slopes of Binn Eadair.'

'How knowest thou them or strangers, O Oisín?'

'By their speech, which is infamiliar! I have seen stalwart young men at play, and their calls to me another were in a harsh tongue which the Fianna knew not. I have heard clerics preach, and I did not understand them as I understood the Tailgheann. On the strand of Binn Eadair I spoke to certain fishers, and they answered me in a speech strange and unlovely. There is an enchantment on the land. O dreaming stranger! This is not Éire! Here are only dead clouds and tongueless stones! Éire no longer lives; all this beauty is but her image!'

After this outburst there fell a silence. Then I spoke:

'Thou errest not, O Oisín, when thou sayest that an enchantment is on the land. We call it the Great Enchantment, and there are those of us who strive to break its spell. Éire is not dead; this is but an enchanted sleep, which is in truth the very image of death, but is not death. Strong voices are calling to Éire, seeking to rouse her out of her sleep, and methinks she hearkens. In yonder city'—and I pointed inland to where Baile Atha Cliath lay under her pall of smoke—'in yonder city young men toil and plot to lessen the might of the Great Enchanter. Throughout the Five Fifths they have gallant friends who rest not either by night or day from their war with the powers of that Evil One. And lo! as I speak, they are gathering into Baile Atha Cliath to take counsel together for the weal of the cause. Wouldst thou be convinced, O Oisín, that Éire is not dead? Come with me.'

'Whither wouldst thou lead me?'

'To an Oireachtas and a hosting of the nobles of the Gael. There shalt thou hear the sounds of fingers on harp-strings and the sweet speech of poets; there shalt thou listen to the telling of old tales and to the deep roar of a great host. In old days thy soul loved such music.'

'Give me thy hand.'

Together we descended the hillside towards the darkening strand. What happened thereafter will in due time be told.

II.

12th *August*, 1905.

I have told of my strange meeting with Oisín on the brow of Binn Eadair. I have told of his noble grief as he gazed with yearning eyes over an Éire which to him was not Éire, but only a fair semblance,—a beautiful corpse from which the spirit had fled. I have related also how, in some measure, I cheered his lonely heart with words of hope, and how together we descended the hillside bent on faring towards Baile Atha Cliath.

Of what fell out immediately thereafter I cannot speak. I have no clear recollection of treading the seaside road towards Baile Atha Cliath. Neither do I recall any considerable lapse of time between the moment when he said to me 'Give me thy hand,' and the next moment of which I have a definite consciousness. Yet the one must have been separated from the other by many hours. It may be that when one walks with an Immortal, space and time lose their significance.

I have heard of those who, holding converse with the Sidhe, have imagined that to have taken place within the span of a day or an hour which in reality lasted during the flight of months and years. Of such experiences I know nothing. But this I know, that of the days and hours which I must have spent in company with that wanderer from the Other Country only certain brief and supreme moments stand out in my memory. The rest is a dim haze.

I distinctly recall how we picked our way adown the hillside towards a narrow strip of shore on which broke a white wave. The seabreeze blew on our faces, and a herring gull shrieked near us. My next clear impression is of a thunderous host gathered together in a vast apartment. Methought the very roof shook with the clamours of their applause. And in the midst stood one whom they welcomed with

all that tumult. Serene he stood, a leader amongst his people. A fire leaped from his grey eyes, which blazed beneath a white brow crowned with raven locks. A hush fell,—a hush deeper than the hush as is only possible when a great host waits in expectancy for the happening of something. Then he who stood there spoke in words now triumphant, now full of a quaint and charming humour, now vibrating with scorn or ringing loud in defiance. And Oisín, who was still close to my side, drank in those words, himself silent and motionless.

'Thou hearest and understandest?' I said to him.

'Yea, and my heart has been comforted. Fionn had not a kinglier presence than that chieftain, nor Fearghus more eloquent lips. But he reminds me most of Goll, for the voice is the voice of a man of Connacht.'

'In Connacht he was born and nursed, though he springs from the stock of the stranger.'

'How call you him?'

'We call him the Fair Little Branch,—such the name which the kindly Connacht folk bestowed on him when, a lad, he went amongst them gathering their old songs and singing them new ones. Now that name is known and loved wherever on the round earth a child of the Gael wanders.'

'And it shall be known and loved to the end of time; for the names of such as he do not die.'

. . . . .

The scene faded away from my consciousness, and I began to be aware that we stood—my companion and I—on a green height overlooking a pleasant strand. It was night, and mists obscured the moonlight; yet I recognised that spot on which we stood as that portion of the strand of Muirbhthe which nestles, a green nook, in

the shelter of the New Town of the Strand rising behind on its dark Rock. Binn Eadair now lay afar, facing us across the bay; its shape we could not see, but only its twinkling lights. On the left hand swept a semi-circle of shining points marking the outline of the coast from Muirbhthe to Baile Atha Cliath and from Baile Atha Cliath to Cluain Tairbh; and on the right, unseen, was Dún Laoghaire with its spires and sails, and behind the dim hills. To us from the hollow beneath came up the murmurs of a vast multitude, and the sound of martial music. The heights, and rocky paths, and grassy slopes were covered by that dense throng.

'This doubtless is a war hosting of the children of the Gael?' said Oisín in my ear. 'I had thought that war hostings were no more in Éire,—that her sword had been sheathed.'

'There thou didst err, O Oisín, for the sword is not sheathed, nor shall it be sheathed until it sings triumphant through yet another battle. This, indeed, is a war hosting, and these the battalions which fight under that beloved chief whom but now we saw.'

'Would it were my lot to charge in that battle, with Oscar by my side, and Fionn to cheer us on!'

'We have fighters as bold as Oscar, and counsellors as wise as Fionn; and, O Oisín of the Songs! we have poets too to sing to us of the deeds of our fathers even as thou wast wont to sing to the Fianna on the eve of battle!'

'It is well,' said the old man, 'it is well; yet I tell thee that I would give up the delights of the Other Country to fight one hour with those battalions. For the battle that is at hand will be, methinks, the greatest battle that has been fought in Éire.'

'The greatest and the last,' I said.

. . . . .

This scene in its turn lost its sharpness and faded away, and again we found ourselves in the midst of that thunderous host in that lofty apartment. Now, a young man, dark and slight, was singing to the hushed throng the old songs which one hears on Munster hillsides when the milkmaid gathers the kine about her, or round Munster hearthstones at the winter céilidhe. He ceased, and after a little while there came into presence a company of nobles who were welcomed with deep knells of applause. Amongst them was a tall cleric—'noble-looking as the Tailgheann,' said Oisín—who spoke with the accent of a Tír Chonaill glenside; and other cleric, whom they hailed as the ambassador and spokesman of the men of Alba; and another, not a cleric, who seemed the most beloved in all their company,—a young man, slender and white, with hair and beard like yellow gold. He too spoke, and such speaking I have not often heard; there was no passionate outrush of words, no soaring imagery or dazzling eloquence; only a calm, quiet voice bidding its hearers be of good cheer, and carrying in its evenness and self-possession, an assurance of strength, of conviction, of serene and tranquil courage.

'He speaks like a man of Ulster,' said Oisín.

'He was cradled in an Antrim glen,' I answered; 'and it is that man, O Oisín, whose quiet voice has aroused the Gael from an ignoble slumber to all the activity which thou seest.'

Next there came before us one small and dark, with the nervous face of an artist. And a harp was brought, and he made wondrous music. Through the room there crept first a murmur as though of a distant coming, and then there echoed full in our ears the tramp of marching bands. The face of my listening companion wore a new exultation.

'Methinks,' he said, 'that I hear the approach of an armed battle,—and if I err not, it is the men of Munster who come.'

'Thine ear does not deceive thee; that is the Marching Tune of O'Sullivan.'

But even as I spoke, there had succeeded to the clangour of that march the wailing of one who mourned over the slain,—a long drawn *caoineadh* of exquisite and piercing sweetness. The very soul of the instrument seemed to weep.

'The battle is over,' said Oisín; 'there is one there who caoines her dead.'

'We call it the Caoineadh of the Widow,' I answered.

If that piteous and tender lament had continued longer, I believe that we too should have wept. But presently there broke upon our ears the trills and shakes and rich mellow notes of a Blackbird singing in the greenwood,—''tis like the Blackbird of Doire Chairn,' said Oisín, and his aged heart was melted with love. And then there rang out the cheerful beat of a hornpipe, and anon the merry lilt of a reel.

'The harpers of the Fianna harped not more cunningly than this,' cried Oisín.

Thereafter a stately and gentle priest spoke to us lofty and beautiful things about the destinies of our race, bidding us to lift up our hearts, to be faithful and true, and, forgetting hates and jealousies, to love one another. I could see that Oisín, who doubtless recalled the old bickerings of the Fianna, when Connacht stood arrayed against Leinster, and Munster pitted against both, found his words wise and good. And presently, turning to me, he said:

'Of old we thought it a noble thing to fight one against the other, and behold the foe came and prevailed against us; now I see that the only noble and the only worthy fight for the Gael is the fight against the Outland Races. My blessing on that priest for his words of wisdom.'

And others came, and sang, or spoke, or played to us; one who sang songs of the Déise with a sweetness and a plaintiveness which touched our very hearts and made our eyelashes wet; an old man who

recited for us a song which he himself had made that Oireachtas; and a lad—or so he looked, though they told us he was already a father—a dark and slender lad, with humorous, expressive lips, who lilted first of the Daughter of a certain Palaitíneach, and afterwards of the famous Fair of the Windy Gap; and all laughed, for his songs were merry, and his own laughing face was good to look on. Oisín laughed too, and I laughed with him.

. . . . .

The Round Hall with its thunderous crowd, its harping and its song, was gone. We stood alone on Tara, as the sun was sinking. We looked north and south and east and west, and saw beneath us the Five Fifths of Éire. We gazed on the famous hills,—that on which the Tailgheann had lit his fire over against Tara, and the others. Afar towards Baile Atha Cliath we saw the rearguard of a great host, which had camped all day on the royal hill, and made the silent raths re-echo to the sounds of Irish speech, and song, and story. I turned to my companion, and the sombre eyes now shone even as they had shone on Binn Eadair, but with a more triumphant and gladsome joy.

'Have I kept my bond, O Oisín, and shown thee that Éire indeed lives, and that the final passing of the Gael is not yet at hand?'

'Well hast thou kept thy bond, O son of my heart! The memory of what I have seen and heard will abide with me through the ages in the Other Country.'

Again I directed my gaze towards Baile Atha Claith, and watched until I saw the rearguard of the host wind slowly out of sight. Turning once more to my companion,—

'Let us go,' I said.

But no voice replied to me, and no companion now stood beside me. That majestic and kindly presence was gone. I heard only the breeze stirring the grass, and singing past the Stone of Destiny. I saw only the bare hillside, with its rude image of the Tailgheann and its lonely storied pillar. I recalled that one whose blood runs in my own veins lies buried beneath that pillar in the Grave of the Croppies, sleeping there with his comrades till the awakening. I knelt and prayed. Then, rising, I cast one last look at the silent places where the palaces had stood, and, turning, I descended the hill and followed in the wake of the host.

In First-Century Ireland

The following papers are the substance of a lecture delivered in English to the students of the Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, in April, 1906, and afterwards expanded into a series of three lectures in Irish delivered before the Ard-Chraobh this year. I desire at the outset to express my obligations to Dr. P. W. Joyce, whose two noble volumes, 'A Social History of Ancient Ireland,' have been my most valuable mine of information.

I.

21st *December*, 1907.

Let us imagine that we are foreigners paying our first visit to Ireland just about the time when Christ was preaching in Galilee. What does the land look like as we draw near its coast, borne in our Roman galley propelled by sail and oars? Our first impression is just such an impression as is made on the modern traveller who approaches our shores for the first time. Here is a land of crag and glen, of broad lake and broader plain. Here is a coastline defended at one point by bold granite heights towering to the altitude of two or three thousand feet, at another point by terraces of limestone cliffs rising to a scarcely less dizzy height. Here are blue fjords cutting deep into the heart of the land, and sentinelled on either side by bald or heathy headlands, whose feet are washed by the spray of the sea, while their heads are half buried in clouds. Here are purple mountains carpeted in heath, and furze, and fern. Here are many lakes, long and torturous, filling up the valleys between the heights, or gleaming wide and white on the plains. Here are broad rivers moving across the country and widening into stately estuaries as they reach the sea. Here brown streams rich in trout and salmon; here sombre boglands, the nursery of many flocks of wild birds. At first we are inclined to think that this must be a land of mountains, for except at the Gap of the East—the gap through which in after ages the invader will enter—mountain-group succeeds mountain-group and moorland moorland all around the coast. But we soon see that the island is in reality shaped like a hollow inverted shield: the highlands are all on the coast, and the interior is occupied by an immense plain, across which we may travel a hundred or a hundred and thirty miles without encountering a genuine hill.

As soon as we land we become aware of one fact which sufficiently differentiates the physical Ireland of the first century from the Ireland of the twentieth. Almost the whole of the great central plain and many of the slopes of the outer mountain-rim are still covered by the primeval forest. Bogs there of course are, both among the mountains and on the plain; but vast stretches of country to-day covered by dark blown bogland are in first-century Ireland clothed luxuriantly in a forest mantle of oak, ash, elm, pine, birch, and yew. As we gaze on the dark tracts of forest-land we remember that one of the oldest names of Ireland was 'Inis na bhFiodhbhadh'—The Island of Woods.

Of animal life in this woodland county there is rich store. The stately Irish elk, which stood twice the height of a tall man, has, indeed, long disappeared, though his huge skeleton is sometimes to be found, as it is to the present day. The bear, too, has gone, and only dim memories of him remain; a strong warrior is still called, 'mathghamhain,' the bear, from which honourable designation will come in after centuries the surnames Ó Mathghamhna and Mac Mathghamhna. But the wild boar is still king of the forest, and the wolf still howls in the lonely places. The otter and the badger have not yet retired to the remoter fastnesses. Fierce wild-cats lurk in the woods. The red deer roams the mountainsides and the forest-glades of the lowlands. The fox, the hare, the stoat or so-called weasel, and all our familiar small wild things flourish apace. The kite and the eagle sweep fearlessly over the plains. Of reptiles there are no more trace than in our own day—only the harmless little lizard or arc-luachra, and, amongst amphibia, the common newt and the strange Kerry toad.

We land, not at some busy port, but at a sheltered creek, frequented by fishermen. There are curachs drawn up on the beach, differing nothing in essentials from the curachs we use to-day on our western

coasts; the frame-work of wicker (called cliabh-curaigh, or curach-basket), and the covering, not of tarred canvas, but of hide. There are also representatives of another sort of boat, used chiefly, however, for inland navigation. This is a single-piece canoe, flat, and fashioned from the trunk of a single tree.[1]

We moor our galley, and push on into the heart of the primeval forest. We observe few traces of habitation, and later on we shall see that the population of the country, whilst considerable, consists of communities, small or large, dotted here and there at cleared spaces in the forest. It is obvious that in these days of wild beasts and wilder men, single habitations must be few: men cluster together in village communities,—groups of huts crowding round a strong dwelling in the centre, and guarded by a rath or rampart of earth. Rude roads lead through the forest glades from settlement to settlement.

Striking one of these woodland tracks, somewhat wider and better worn than the others, we conclude that it leads to a settlement of some little importance. As we follow it out, we find that it grows wider and wider; numerous signs of traffic appear; and at last we emerge from the forest depths into a clearing of considerable extent. It is the site of a village.

Let us take a good view of this primitive Irish village which we are approaching. The settlement really consists of the residence of a bó-aire, or well-to-do farmer, with the houses of his dependents clustering round it. The buildings, we notice, are not huddled close together as in a modern town or village: they are detached, and dotted at intervals over the grassy sward. The houses are small structures of wickerwork, thatched with straw, and are for the most part circular

1 Numerous specimens, dug ug in bops or found in lakes near crannogues, are preserved in the National Museum.

in shape. From the groups of houses a series of tillage and pasture-fields stretches away to the outskirts of the forest.

In the centre of the village stands the lios or residence of the bóaire himself. This consists essentially of a space of ground enclosed by an earthen rampart or rath, and containing within itself a number of wooden buildings. (Properly speaking, the rath is the enclosing rampart, and the lios the space enclosed; but the words have long been used interchangeably). At a little distance from the rath is another area enclosed by a strong rampart: that is the badhun or cow-keep (the word comes from bó and dún into which the cattle are driven for safety at night. This, be it noted, is *outside* the rath or homestead proper. Approaching the lios itself, we first pass across the faithche or green—a large level sward used chiefly for athletic exercises and the games of the children. It is at the present moment occupied by a noisy troop of youngsters, encumbered only by the very scantiest clothing, who run, jump, tumble, and disport themselves in a thousand fashions—just such a merry group of Irish-speaking children as we should encounter to-day in a village of Connemara or Erris; many things have changed in Ireland, but the children have not changed.

Inside the faithche or green we come to yet another space, an ornamental lawn (called urla) which stretches immediately in front of the door of the rath: this is a sort of pleasure-ground on which the folk promenade when so disposed. We now come to the lios or homestead itself; and we see that the way in which it has been fashioned is this. A deep circular trench is dug, and the earth thrown up on the inside. If water is convenient the trench is flooded for greater security. Within this moat or ditch the earthen embankment rises to a considerable height; it is neatly shaped and faced, and on its summit there is a quick hedge or palisade of hawthorn, hazel, or

other trees. In the embankment there is one opening for a gate, and opposite the opening is a bridge across the moat, which is drawn up at night.

I have here described the ordinary type of lios or residence. I have made it circular, as a round or oval shape was generally preferred by the builders of ancient Irish mansions, though square and oblong forts were—and are—to be found. I have also made the embankment of earth, as this was by far the commonest material. But in stony countries, as along the rocky western coast, it was found more convenient to build the outer ramparts of stone. The series of huge stone forts of cyclopean masonry which stretch along the west and south-west coasts, and of which the grandest, not merely in Ireland, but in the world, are those on the islands of Aran, were just such dwellings as I describe; but in all probability they belong to a much earlier date than that with which I am now dealing.

Let us enter the lios or enclosure, passing across the bridge which spans the trench. We notice that the ground inside is somewhat elevated above the level of the plain without. The interior of the enclosure is occupied by a group of buildings similar in general style to those we have seen outside. They are all of wood and wickerwood, with thatches of straw or shingle. They are built in this wise. Let us suppose that the house is to be a circular one, as most houses were. The site having been marked out, a number of long and strong poles, peeled and polished smooth, are driven into the ground, placed at a little distance apart, and enclosing a circular space. The interstices are now filled in with twigs carefully interwoven, so that the whole forms a strong and substantial wall. A house of this sort is called a teach fighte, or woven house. The roof is conical in shape, and is formed of hurdles or wickerwork, thatched, as already said, with straw or shingle.

Let us look round the lios, and gain a general idea of the number and the purpose of the buildings which it contains. The most prominent is naturally the dwelling-house itself, a single-roomed circular structure of the sort I have described. Attached to it, but entered by separate doorways, and having no internal communication with the dwelling-house or with each other, are a number of sleeping-rooms, round or rectangular. Next there is the kitchen, a little behind the dwelling-house, and quite a separate structure from it. (In the primitive Irish house, as afterwards in the primitive Irish monastery, the various rooms, such as dining-room, sleeping-rooms, kitchen, library, etc., instead of being merely apartments of the same building as amongst us, were detached buildings grouped close to one another). Near the kitchen is a kiln for drying corn, and dotted about the enclosure at convenient spots are a barn, a sheep-house, a calf-house, and a pig-house. (These seven buildings are enumerated in the old legal tract called the *Crith Gabhlach* as the minimum number of buildings in the homestead of a well-to-do farmer of the bó-aire class: a bó-aire was a farmer who rented land from a chief, and whose wealth consisted chiefly in cattle).

As we make our way through the lios we pass a number of the dependents of the bó-aire intent on their several occupations. Let us imagine that it is late in the afternoon, and that preparations are being made for the evening meal. In ancient Ireland the chief meal of the day was taken in the evening. Breakfast was early in the morning, and there was a light luncheon about mid-day, but the principal meal was that taken after the greater part of the day's work was done. We notice that the lios is full of bustle. The calves and sheep and pigs are being driven into their enclosures for the night. From the lawn without we hear the shouting of the herds as they drive home the cattle. A clatter of vessels resounds from the dairy. Women are

passing in laden with bundles of fresh rushes to strew the floor of the house, that honour may be done to the strange guests. We pause to observe the persons and attires of the men and women more closely. The men are splendid specimens of manhood—just such tall, lithe, graceful figures as one sees in Aran or Tory. They are big-boned and sinewy, but without an ounce of spare flesh; broad in the shoulder, thin in the flank, as lithe as greyhounds, as fleet as stags. They can run down the wild boar on foot; they can bear hunger and cold and thirst without complaint; they think naught of a night spent in the open air on a distant mountain-slope, with no covering from the dew or frost save their mantles and their matted hair. Their clothing consists essentially of a short tight-fitting tunic (*ionar*) and a kilt (*ceilt*) reaching down to the knee or near it, and displaying the rest of the limb bare. Under the ionar is a shirt (*léine*). The flowing *brat* or mantle which they would wear in travelling or on full-dress occasions is thrown aside to allow them greater freedom in their work. Some, however, wear a short cape, furnished with a hood (*cochall*). The heads are bare, save for their thick covering of hair, which falls down behind on the shoulders and is clipped short in front just above the eyes. Long moustaches clothe their upper lips, and in the majority of cases ample beards float on their bosoms. The feet are, for the most part, bare, but some wear stout brogues, often of untanned hide (*cuaroga*), like the bróga-úr-leathair of the Aran islanders of to-day.

The women are comely Irish types, differing little, I daresay, from the maids and matrons one meets to-day in an Irish-speaking countryside. Their characteristic garment is a long kirtle extending neatly to the feet. Like the women of our own day, many of them, especially the young girls, prefer to go bare-footed. The married women have their heads covered either with a hood (*caille*) or with

a web of linen wound round it (*calladh*)—the girls and unmarried women for the most part go bare-headed.

The fact that we are strangers has now been observed, and a lad comes forward to guide us to the presence of the master of the lios. Piloted by him, we thread our way through the busy throng to the door of the dwelling-house. Here we are met by the bó-aire himself, who receives us with that mixture of stately courtesy and kindly good-nature which is still the birthright of the unspoiled Irish Gael. We are conducted within the main apartment, and in the intervals of exchanging civilities with our host, have time to look about us, and note the characteristics of this Irish home of the first century.

II.
28th *December*, 1907.

The house in this particular instance happens to be round, but it might equally be oval or quadrangular. The high-pitched roof is supported by one, two, or more poles, across which runs a beam, from which hang lamps. Along the walls are ranged a series of cubicles or sleeping compartments, each screened off from the rest of the room by a wooden partition, eight or nine feet high, the various compartments thus being open at the top. (We have seen that there were outside the house a number of separate sleeping-chambers, entered by separate doors. But, except in a very large and important mansion, the chief provision for sleeping would be these little cubicles ranged round the wall of the chief dwelling-apartment. Of course, in the cabin of a peasant there would not be even these, and all would sleep as best they could in the same room). Each cubicle contains a bed for one, two, or three persons, the better beds being elegantly curtained; also a rack on which to hang clothes. Outside each cubicle, attached to the wooden partition, is a seat facing into the central apartment.

The fire is placed near the centre of the house, and round it are grouped a number of moveable seats. There are also three or four wooden tables in the apartment, with low seats or couches on which to recline when at meals.

Let us imagine for the nonce that we are foreigners of some distinction. Our host is not a chief, but a mere bó-aire; yet he is a man of considerable wealth and of not a little culture. He will do the honours of his house as punctiliously as would Meadhbh and Aileall at Rathcroghan or Cairbre at Tara. As a preliminary to dinner, we are invited to refresh ourselves by a bath. (The ancient Irish had a veritable passion for bathing: every child was taught to swim, and

a gambol in the river or lake was part of the recreation of every day. Indeed, in those times in Ireland swimming was a necessary accomplishment: the ancient Irish never built stone bridges, and in the absence of a ford or a causeway swimming was the ordinary mode of crossing a river. Moreover, bathing at home was a daily practice, at least amongst the middle and upper classes. It was the custom to wash only the hands on rising; and in the late afternoon, just before dinner, a bath was indulged in. The bath was a large tub or vat called *dabhach*.) Suppose we decline to bathe, we shall at least be pressed to have our feet washed: and, this ceremony performed, we sit down to dinner. To be accurate, we do not so much sit down, as lie down. For the tables are very low, and the seats are long, low couches on which, as amongst the Romans, the guests recline. Our sandals or other foot-covering are removed just before dinner by an attendant.

The table is plentifully spread with an abundance of good cheer. Of flesh meat, pork is the favourite, but there is beef, mutton, and even venison in plenty. The meat is boiled, roast, or broiled much as it is at present. Broth figures largely in the meal, and there are 'kitchens' (*annlann* is the Irish word) of onions, garlic, kale, cress, and other herbs. These come from the lubhghort or kitchen-garden, which we might have seen behind the lios in our passage towards the house. White-meats of various kinds,—new milk, buttermilk, butter, cheese, and eggs—are used in abundance. Honey figures largely in the menu. The drinks, in addition to milk, are such light intoxicants as ale, brewed for the most part from barley; mead, a delicate and delicious drink made chiefly from honey; and wine, which is, of course, imported. Uisge beathadh, or whiskey, was not invented for many centuries after the period we are dealing with.

The majority of the table-vessels are made of wood, beech-wood being the commonest material; but we notice that the best vessels are

of yew. There are corns or drinking horns fashioned from bullock's horn, but the favourite drinking-vessel is the well-known wooden meadar. We eat from platters and use knives, but no forks: dinner-forks, as an invention, are only a few centuries old. Men and women sit at table together; and all join freely in the conversation.

Dinner over, our host invites us to visit the grianán or sunny chamber of the women folk. This apartment, as its name implies, is invariably placed in the brightest part of the dwelling. Often the grianán is a separate house altogether; but in the present instance, as is frequently the case, it is a raised apartment, placed in front over the common sitting-room, immediately above the door. Here the ladies of the house sit and work; here the daughters and foster-daughters of the bó-aire are trained in all the useful and ornamental arts suited to their station in life. Here they are taught to prize the six gifts of perfect womanhood; and these, according to the old Irish, were the gift of beauty, the gift of voice, the gift of sweet speech, the gift of needlework, the gift of wisdom, and the gift of chastity. It was the universal custom in ancient Ireland for fathers and mothers to send their children to be fostered in the home of some friend or relative; and the foster-children lived in their adopted home precisely on the same footing as the children of the family. The old tales give us many delightful glimpses of the life of the grianán, with its large family of young girls, sisters and foster-sisters, living together in amity. The most memorable and beautiful is that which we gain of the home life of Emer, the future spouse of Cuchulainn, in the tale known as the Wooing of Emer.

It is now late evening. The tables in the main apartment have been cleared away; the lamps which hang from the cross-beam are lit, and so are candles made of rushes dipped many times into hot grease. The folk gather round the fire, just as they are wont to do in

our own day, in Irish-speaking homes. A seanchaidhe drops in, and another who has a store of old songs; and just such another night of song and sgéalaidheacht, of seanchus and comhradh, is passed happily away as we have all of us spent by some remembered fireside in the Gaedhealtacht. All too soon comes the signal to retire to rest. Our hosts conducts us to our cubicle (*imda*), where our bed—fortunately a *lige cumtachta* or curtained bed, with a comfortable *dergud* or mattress resting on the substantial *tolg* (bedstead), and furnished with linen sheets, blankets (*setigi*), a quilt (*colcaid*), and a pillow (*adhart*)—invites us to slumber. With the 'slan codlata' of our kindly bó-aire ringing in our ears we sink to rest; and so ends our first evening in an Irish homestead of the days of Meadhbh.

III.

4th *January*, 1908.

We had an object in electing to make our first visit to the house of a bó-aire or well-to-do farmer rather than to the hovel of a peasant on the one hand or to the dún of a chief on the other. The house of the bó-aire may be taken as typical of the Irish residence of the first century. In the dún of a chief we should have found more magnificence, more luxury, more culture; but the main lines of the picture would have remained. In the hovel of a herdsman or fisherman we should, of course, have been prepared for a considerably less degree of comfort. We should have marked without surprise the absence of the grianán and of separate sleeping apartments. The whole family would have lived and slept together—skins and rough mattresses stretched on the floor replacing beds; no tables or chairs would have been used, the meals being partaken of from the floor. But we may be sure that an Irish herdsman or fisherman of the first century would have received us with just such a dignity and courtesy as would his Irish-speaking descendant of to-day.

I trust that it will not be thought that in the descriptions I have given, and am about to give, I am in any way idealising the picture. I can quote chapter and verse for my every statement. It must be remembered that the very considerable meed of culture which we have seen in the house of our bó-aire, and which, in a still greater degree, we shall have an opportunity of seeing in the house of our bó-aire's chief, to whom we are about to pay a visit—it must be remembered, I say that this culture, generous and gracious though it was, was not incompatible with a certain measure of what may be called healthy primitiveness. The old world was in many ways less squeamish than the modern world, and, in so far as it was, the old

world was undoubtedly a better and an honester world. The plainness of speech which would have characterised the conversation of an Irish fireside group two thousand years ago would, I daresay, shock a modern goody-goody—but then we have modern goody-goodies who are shocked, or pretend to be shocked, at the plainness of speech of the average Irish speaker, in his conversation no less than in his folk-tales and folk-songs. The plainness of speech of the old Gael was simply the reflection of a certain simplicity in his life. Our ancestors never committed that cardinal sin against decency of considering the human body an unclean thing, always to be hidden away carefully from sight. They never encased their limbs in cumbrous and inartistic clothes. The feet and legs and arms of men were commonly bare, as were the feet and arms and necks of women. Young children wore little or no clothing. A cultured Gael of the days of Meadhbh would no more have been shocked at the sight of a nude child or a nude young lad, or a nude athlete or warrior, than would a cultured Greek of the days of Socrates, or a cultured Hindoo of our own days. It is expressly stated that the Red Branch heroes, like the Homeric heroes, often went nude into battle. Men frequently took their baths in the common apartment in the presence of the household. Without going so far as to recommend a return to the primitive simplicity, we may note that horror of comely nakedness is modern, mainly British, and almost entirely Pecksniffian.

It need hardly be said that the old Gael, like many Irish speakers of the present day, slept nude. This was the custom of all Europe down to comparatively recent times. In England it subsisted in Anglo-Saxon days, seems to have disappeared some time after the Norman Conquest, but had been restored before the reign of Elizabeth.

To resume our narrative. Whilst we are the guests of the bó-aire, we have ample opportunity of observing the daily life of the

little community which clusters round his house. We can sit on the faithche and watch the children at their games; we can stroll from the faithche to the badhun, or, entering the lios, examine in turn the kitchen (*cuchtair*), the corn-kiln (*dith*), the barn (*saball*)—which, we note, unlike the other buildings, is oblong in shape; the sheep-house (l*ias cáirach*), the calf-house (*lias larg*), and the pig-house (*muccál*). We can watch the dependants of the bó-aire as they go about their several avocations—the men, muscular yet lithe, sallying forth to the fields or to the chase; the women and girls, bright haired and bright-faced, with perfect complexions and teeth, with neck, arms, and feet which might put the masterpieces of Greek sculpture to shame, busied in the dairy or in the kitchen—talkative and sprightly, we may be sure, yet winsome and modest (these are the characteristics which seanchaidhes hand us down of the Irish maids and matrons of the early centuries). Life is simple, and has few complications in this old Irish village. The village-folk till the little patch of ground which they have rescued from the forest; they herd cattle, sheep, swine; they rear bees; they dry their corn in their kiln, they grind it in their mill, they bake it in their ovens; they fashion their spears of the ash that grows in the wild-wood, they twist their shields from the osiers and cover them with the hides of their cattle. They build their own houses. The nimble fingers of the women fashion clothes for their husbands and sons,—card, spin, weave, die, embroider. Periodically, a great event occurs to break the daily routine: men and matrons, youth and maidens, go off to the great Aenach or Fair held by the local chief,—the men to join in council, the youths to engage in warlike exercises, the women to make purchases, to admire and be admired. Often, too,—oftener than is good, perhaps,—the chief summons them to war, and the men, bearing spear and sword, sally out to raid a neighbouring chief or to defend their own frontiers. Then no one

is left behind in the village but anxious women at their spinning, and the children tumbling on the green.

Having spent a few days in quiet observation of this rustic life, we determine to push on to a wider field of inquiry where we shall, perchance, meet folk more famous and distinguished, though scarcely more kindly. Let us suppose that, hearing from our host that the residence of the chief or king of the district is only a short day's journey distant, we decide to proceed thither to pay him our respects. Rising shortly after daybreak—your ancient Gael of all classes was an early riser—we prepare for the journey. Journeys in olden Ireland were usually performed on foot, especially, of course, in the case of the poorer folk. But wealthier people rode in chariots, and our host willingly places his at our disposal. The Irish chariot (*carpat*) was of various forms and materials. Ours, like the majority, consists of a body (*crét*) of wickerwork, supported on an outer frame of strong wooden bars. It has two spoked wheels (*droch* or *rath*) shod with iron (*rotha iarnaidi*). There are two shafts (*fertas*, pl. *fertse*) of hard holly-wood, and the chariot is drawn by two horses, between which runs a pole called a *sithbe*. (Usually, however, the chariots of private persons, as distinguished from warriors, were drawn by oxen,—you will remember the case of St. Patrick.) There is room in the vehicle for two persons a seat being provided for the master or mistress, and a lower one (commonly on the right) for the charioteer (*ara*). Over the chariot is an awning or canopy (*pupal*) supported on poles.

We start on our journey, and proceed over the rough road at a pace which—our car being without springs—makes travelling more exciting than comfortable. Our charioteer, a lad of the bó-aire's people, shortens the road in true Irish fashion by a tale.

Arrived at length at the dún of the king, we find that in general plan it does not differ materially from the homestead we have left.

It is, of course, much larger and more magnificent. The faithche is more spacious, and so is the ornamental lawn before the door; also we catch a glimpse of a picturesque orchard (*uballgort*), stocked with goodly fruit-trees. Instead of the single rampart which enclosed the dwelling of our host of last night, this dún—for dún is properly the name of a lios which belongs to a king—has a triple earthen rampart, with a triple trench; moreover, outside the outermost earthen rampart is a strong wooden palisade called a *sonnach*, enclosing a very considerable area.[2]

On the faithche or green—which, by the way, is outside the sonnach—the boy-troop (*macrad*) of the dún is engaged in sport. This merry band consists of the sons and foster-sons of the chief, with mayhap the sons of minor chiefs held here as hostages for their fathers' fidelity. The boys have a very happy time of it. They are taught to swim, and to perform various feats in the water; to run, jump, wrestle, drive, ride, and use their weapons. Their whole education, the superintendence of which forms one of the most important duties of the chief[3] is directed towards making them strong and clever,—brave and patient in war, gentle and courteous in peace. As we pass across the faithche we pause to watch their sports. A hurling match (*immán*) is in progress,—this is their favourite game. Another group is engaged at what is called the 'hole game'; each boy on one side has a ball which he endeavours to strike into a hole, while the opposite side tries to prevent him. The *cluiche lúibe ocus liathróidi*

2 In addition there would often be a chevaux de frise of stones to prevent a rush of an attacking force. The great chevaux de frise which protected Dun Aonghusa in Aran, on the land side of the cliff, still stands.

3 Conchubhar mac Neasa is said to have spent one-third of his spare time in superintending the education of the Macrad of Eamhain Macha.

('loop and ball game') has its votaries in a corner of the field; and a fourth group is interested in the *roth-chless* or 'wheel-feat,'—a kind of quoit-throwing. Other games they have, somewhat rougher, such as trying to upset one another and trying to tear off one another's clothes. This last was a favourite pastime amongst the boys of the Red Branch at Eamhain Macha; and we recall that Cuchulainn when a little lad was so good at this particular game that whereas the others could not as much as unloose the brooch which fastened his brat, he was able to tear off not merely the cloaks and tunics but the kilts of any three! I think the training of boys in ancient Ireland was on an entirely sensible plain, and if we are to trust the old tales—which in such matters we certainly may—their life must have been a very happy one. As we stand to watch the macrad of the dún we are about to visit, we cannot help observing what fine, comely little fellows they are; the glow of health on their cheeks, the flash of glee in their eyes, their heads bare and their locks braided or floating loose behind them. How sturdy they are, how straight and true of limb, how quick of eye, foot, and hand,—truly the makings of strong, brave men.

We pick our way through the noisy, merry troop, and one of them, noticing that we are strangers, runs and modestly offers to conduct us to the guest-house. Piloted by him, we enter the dún, passing across the triple rampart, and are presently received by the Rechtaire or Major Domo of the palace.

IV.
11th *January*, 1908.

The dún of the king is a reproduction on a larger and more magnificent scale of the lios of our bó-aire. About the enclosure are dotted the usual wooden buildings,—the cuchtair, the áith, the saball, the lias cáirach, and so on. The *tech* or dwelling-house proper stands on a raised platform at or near the centre and commands a view of the whole lios. The structure is, of course, of wood, the platform being of earth. It is to the door of this, across the intervening space of the lios, that our guide conducts us. On the threshold we are received by the Rechtaire.

The Rechtaire (he is also called the *Taisech Teglaig* and the *Fer Taigi*s) is a stately and important-looking officer, habited in a long fleecy mantle, and bearing a wand in token of his authority in the chief's household. He marshals us to the guest-house (*tech n-óiged*) and commits us to the charge of two of his subordinates, who carry us off to the customary bath. Duly washed and groomed, we are conducted to the banqueting-hall. In many chiefs' duns, the main apartment serves at once for living, dining, and even sleeping, but we are imagining that our host is a *rí tuaithe*[4] of considerable wealth and importance. His dún, therefore, boasts a separate banqueting hall, which is, of course, a distinct structure from the dwelling-house proper. It is a large and lofty wooden building, supported on two

4 The graduations were *rí tuaithe* (king or chief of a tuath or cantred); *rí mór-tuaithe* (king or chief of a territory comprising several tuaths); *rí coícid* (king of a province); and—later—*árd-rí* (high king or emperor of all Ireland). It is almost certain that the king of Tara had not been recognised as árd-rí at the period with which we are dealing.

rows of columns which divide it into three long aisles. In the centre blazes a huge fire, where the cooking is carried on during the meal, the attendants serving from the centre aisle. The walls are handsomely wainscoted, and hung with shields, weapons, and trophies of the chase. At the top of the hall is a raised platform, on which sit the king and queen, with the Druids, Brehons, Poets, and chief nobles. At the bottom is a space for the servants and humbler retainers, who, in accordance with the old, kindly custom, dine in common with their masters. The main body of the hall is occupied by the general body of guests. The seats or couches (called *bratrach*, npl. -a, but *imda* is also applied) are ranged around the walls. These are raised, above the level of the floor, and are richly canopied, the canopies being supported on carved pillars of yew, some of which are covered with bronze or silver.

The Rí and his chief guests have already taken their places on the dais. The Rechtaire leads us to the king's *imda*, and our host greets us after the Irish fashion by embracing us and thrice kissing us on the cheek. As foreigners, we are assigned a seat of distinction. Meantime the general body of the guests is assembling, marshalled by the Rechtaire. The warriors march in and take their seats, strictly in accordance with their rank, each hanging his shield and arms above his couch on a rack intended for the purpose, which runs along the panelled walls. The women take their seats opposite to the men. Before the meal commences the host rises and formally welcomes his guests. Then all fall to. A babble of conversation arises, men and women joining in freely. Whenever the din grows too great the Rí commands silence by striking a gong which hangs on a pillar before him.

It is scarcely necessary to describe the feast in detail. Each one, building on what has been said with regard to the evening banquet

in the humbler homestead of the bó-aire, can fill in the picture for himself. Suffice it to say that many of the table utensils are exceedingly rich,—carved yew, white bronze, silver, gold. The joints are pork (*muicc-fheoil*), beef, (*mairt-fheoil*), mutton (*caer-fheoil* or *muilt-fheoil*), venison (*fiad-fheoil*), badger-flesh (*broc-fheoil*), and the flesh of the *togmall*—a small animal which O'Curry has (wrongly?) identified with the squirrel—together with wild fowl of various sorts. Numerous pottages concocted from meat and herbs figure in the menu, as well as various preparations from eggs and the other *bán-biada*. The drinks are ale (*lenn*), mead (*mid*), and wine (*fion*).

The meal over, the remainder of the evening is spent in traditional Irish fashion. The old formula of the seanchaidhes is 'trian le sgéalaidheacht, trian le ceol, agus trian le suan agus sámh-chodladh.' The Rí strikes his bell to command silence. A hush falls, to be broken presently by the voice of a Seanchaidhe as he commences the relation of some famous tale of valour or love or sorrow,—mayhap the battle exploits of the Rí himself or his immediate ancestors, mayhap some old legend of the De Danann gods, Lugh and Aonghus and the Daghda Mór, in which piteous human tragedy mingles with dark mysticism as in the Fate of Tuireann's Children. Next arise the *aes ciúil ocus oirfidid*—the Court musicians—who rouse us with their *gentraige*, melt us with their *goltraige*, and sooth us with their *suantraige*. Anon perchance the *clár fidchilli* or chessboard and the *brannad*[5] are drawn forth and the more sedate amongst the company gather round to play or to watch the play of their friends, while the younger folk engage in *roth-chless* (an indoor as well as an outdoor game). Thus, to use the Irish phrase, we 'bear out' the night until the signal comes to retire to rest.

5 On this a game called *brannaigheacht*, evidently distinct from chess was played.

It will be observed that no mention has been made of dancing, and that for the all-sufficient reason that dancing was not a pastime of the ancient Gael. Such at least is the inevitable conclusion from the complete silence of the tales, ample as they are in their descriptions of social life and customs. Where our reels and our jigs have come from it is not for us to say: certain it is that nothing like them—nothing that one could possibly identify with dancing as we know it—appears to have been in vogue in Ireland for centuries after the date of our imaginary visit.[6]

The rest of our tour may be passed over more rapidly. To give a glimpse of the old Gael *at home* has been the object of this paper. Of his wars and his commerce, his jurisprudence and his religious rites, we do not speak. There is no picture, however, which we would fain give ere we conclude. It is that of an ancient Irish *Aenach* or Fair. We are to imagine ourselves on a wide smooth green overlooking the sea. In the harbour ride many foreign vessels, which have borne merchants from Gaul and Greece and Egypt to buy and sell. One portion of the fair-green is occupied by booths, where rich merchandise is displayed for sale, and buying and selling proceed briskly. In another quarter the nobles and freemen are assembled in council, under the presidency of the Rí of the territory. Here laws are deliberated upon, passed, and promulgated. On other days, courts of justice are held, and decisions on legal points given by the Brehons. There horse-racing, chariot-racing, foot-racing, wrestling, and all sorts of manly games are carried on by the young men; in other parts of the field gleemen (*crossán*) are singing ballads, clowns (*fuirseoir* or *obláire*) are

6 The introduction of dancing at the court of Brian Boirmhe is one of the many anachronisms in An tAthair Peadar's 'Niamh.' His blunder would scarcely have been greater had he introduced Ping-Pong or Bridge.

making jokes, jugglers (c*less amnach*) are performing all manner of tricks. A separate enclosure is set apart for the women, and no man is allowed to enter the women's enclosure, nor is a woman allowed to enter the men's enclosure. At night the vast assemblage of people, gentle and common, encamp in hastily erected booths, or under the open sky. Order and decorum are strictly maintained. All public and private feuds are in abeyance whilst the Fair lasts, and the penalty for breaking the peace is death. These assemblies are, obviously, of immense service: they bring the people together for legislation, commerce, and amusement; they draw the nobles and the common people into friendly contact; they promote interest in the affairs of the commonwealth, and foster a feeling of brotherhood between the different classes and districts.

Our last night in first-century Ireland shall be spent in one of the great Bruigens or public Hostels. It would not do to leave the shores of the country without having visited so characteristic an institution. The *Brugaid* or public Hospitaller belongs to the bóaire class. He is bound to keep open house for the entertainment of all wayfarers. He must maintain roads leading to his Bruigen from all directions, and a light must always burn on his lawn. From such tales as the Destruction of Bruigen Da Derga we are able to construct a singularly complete picture of one of these old Irish inns. Let us imagine that we are approaching one, taking mental notes the while. We observe that the Bruigen has a number of doors—four, six, or seven—always open, and with pathways leading to them from every side. The group of buildings is quite extensive: there is the dwelling-house, with a large structure at the back for servants or sleeping; round this are grouped various outhouses—all, like the dwelling-house, of wood and thatched—a mill, a kiln, a bake-house, cow-houses, sheep-pens, pig-sties. In the court are two immense vats, one for milk, the

other for mead or ale. On the lawn stands a huge torch or candle as a beacon to wayfarers. There are, of course, a dairy and numerous store-houses. The floors are strewn with fresh rushes. Within the precincts are several wells of fresh water, or else, as in the case of Bruigen Da Derga, a flowing stream runs through the centre. The buildings are surrounded by gardens in which grow fruit-trees and vegetables. The whole is enclosed by three immense raths, between which stretch grassy lawns where the men promenade and the ladies sit at their embroidery. Strong fighting-men are always on guard at the doors and on the ramparts.

But our time is up. We must bid farewell to Erin (so the old Gaels called their country). Hundreds of years have gone by since the things I have described ceased to be. Our civilisation has met with shipwreck, and from the battered fragments we in our day are attempting to build up anew that noble ark. A blessing on ye, builders!