Review

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The editor, T[omás] de R[óiste], deals with the life of Fr. Matt Horgan in an interesting article in English, which would, however, have been more valuable had it been better provided with references. Father Matt was something of an Irish poet, and several of his compositions are included in the article.

Viewed from the standpoint of the articles I have mentioned, this year's *Irisleabhar* is, I should say, the most satisfactory one that has yet appeared. If its contributors have not been quite so ambitious, or so numerous, as in some former numbers, they have been more successful. '*Irisleabhar Muighe Nuadhad*' deserves the practical support of being purchased. Disinterested work in connection with Irish for the most part meets with nothing but discouragement; but I hope, though none too confidently, that this Maynooth annual is that fortunate exception which is said to prove the rule.

T. F. O'R.

SCÉALUIDHE ÉIREANN, with complete vocabulary. "AN CONNACHTACH CEASTA" do chuir i n-eagar. Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1913. 1s. net.

Irish folktales, accurately recorded, have a double value, as being (1) specimens of the living speech of a good speaker, and (2) reliable records of folk-tradition. The editor (whoever he may be) of the present book of folktales has effectually destroyed whatever value they might, without his intervention, have possessed. He has tampered with both the language and the subject-matter of the stories, or, as he himself expresses it, he has "modified" them all and "abridged very considerably" some of them.

A sentence in the note which prefaces the book might lead an unsuspecting reader to believe that the editorial alterations merely amounted to following Dinneen's Dictionary in matters of spelling, as for instance writing *sc-* for *sg-*, and the like. But when, turning to a Donegal folktale, one finds words and constructions in it like *ag an ndoras, ná faigheadh, buaibh, ar an gcrann, fearra, gach uair a chraitheann tú*, one begins to realise that a peculiar meaning is to be attached to that innocent phrase about 'standardising the spelling.' As a matter of fact in mere matters of spelling the editor does not always follow his professed guide; otherwise we should not find him consistently using misspellings like the following: *teighleach, goldán, duileóg, aigneas, torramh, áithmhéala, léagha, cneath, calann* (leg. *callán*). Mere misprints, and they are to be reckoned by scores, I pass over.

Two of the nine tales in the book have been drawn from printed sources, one of the two being a Co. Galway folktale which first appeared in the '*Gaelic Journal*,' no. 86, p. 32. Anyone who compares this original version with that printed in '*Scéaluidhe Éireann*' will get a fair idea of the manner in which the editor 'improved' the texts he had before him. I note a few characteristic points. Where the G.J. text has *bhí an saoghal ag 'ul rithe go maith leis*, i.e. 'things were going pretty hard with him,' the editor, misunderstanding the phrase, has altered it to *bhí an saoghal ag rith go maith leis*, i.e. 'he was getting on well,' thus reversing the meaning and contradicting the context! Neither did he understand the word *curaidheacht* i.e. 'sowing, planting (of crops),' for he alters it to *coraidheacht* which he tries to explain as "an effort, a stir; working in return for work done; also excess," thus mixing up three distinct words *corruighe, comhar, and corraidheacht*. On p. 19, l. 5, the preposition *lé* (or *le*) is also misunderstood, being changed to the prep. pron. *léi*. On the same page (*chas sé braitlín, timcheall ar a mháthair* is

'corrected' to *timcheall a mháthar*. On p.20, l. 3, *comharsanaibh* (dat. pl.) is edited into *comhursaihb*. *chuirfeas*, in an oiread is *chuirfeas í*, is 're-spelled' into *chuirrfidh*. On p. 21 *chomh luath a's* is for some occult reason rejected, being replaced by *ní túisce . . . ná*. These instances are typical of the manner in which the editor has interfered with almost every line of the original text.

Unfortunately in the case of seven of the tales the originals have never been printed, and so we miss the interesting results which would follow from a comparison with the printed versions. But, as it is, there are errors of construction which force themselves on one. On p. 23, l. 6 *itheadh* should be *d'itheadh*. P.41, *d'innseadh* should be *do hinnseadh*. P. 44, for *an cor so* read *don chor so*. P. 27w, for *ag iarraidh* read *d(h)iarraidh*. P.35, l.8, for *dúiseochaidh* read *a dhúiseochaidh*; l. 19, for *mar ar* read *mar do*. P.39y, for *go crann* read *do* (or *de*) *chrann*, pron. in Connacht *go chrann*. On pp. 39, 45 *cad a chitodh sé* should be *cad a chitfeadh sé*; the phrase, occurring in a Connacht story, probably represents an editorial 're-spelling' of *céard d'fheicf(h)eadh sé*, which would be the usual Connacht form. The imperfect is frequently mis-used for the conditional, as *cad chuige go gcuirinn*, p. 36, read *go gcuirfinn*.

Turning to the Vocabulary one notices blunders even in simple words. There is no such word as "*earr*, m., an article;" it should be *earradh*. *feistiughadh* (p. 62) is not "protecting" but 'fastening, fixing up.' *eilleóg* (or *eiteóg*) is not "a flighty or winged creature," but 'a wing'; and *ar ei(l)teógaidh* means simply 'flying.' (There is, however, no question of a 'flying mouse'; the *luch* of the text, p. 18, is an inexcusable blunder for *lacha*, 'a duck'!). *leacht(a)* is not synonymous with *leac*, "a flag," but means 'a heap of stones or other monument over a grave.' *cúig-rinn* is not "five-edged" but 'five pointed, five-pronged' (p. 7). *díoghal*, in the phrase *ba mháith an díoghal air é*, should be *díol*, as the literature shows; as it occurs in what ought to be a Donegal folk-tale (p. 30), we may assume that the phrase has been 're-spelled' from *ba mháith an airidh air é*, which would be the Donegal equivalent. *réidh-theighleach* (sic) "seems," we are told, "to embrace the female attendant staff," a strange thing for even a masculine noun to do; I have given the correct explanation above, p.277. *aladh*, 'stock' (*fiche ceann alaidh*, p. 26) should be *eallach*, gen. *eallaigh*, 'cattle.' *tréan-bhainne* and *tréan-chroicinn* (pp.5,27) should be *tréan bainne* and *tréan croiceann* respectively. *Crimtheann* (pp. 7. sq.) should be *Criomhthann*. *Ceadach* (pp. 30 sq.) should be *Céadach*.

'*Scéaluidhe Éireann*' is, as the reader may gather, a book of little or no intrinsic value; and my only reason for bestowing any space upon it here is the probability that it is foredoomed to have an artificial importance thrust upon it one of these days by being given a place on the Intermediate programme and on that of University College. For it is one of a succession of shoddy texts which, beginning with the hopeless '*Duanair na Macaomh*,' have had all the appearance of being written 'to order' for immediate inclusion on the former programme. How it is that so many worthless books manage to edge themselves on to these programmes, I do not pretend to know; but the palpable fact is there, and it is high time to insist that in future those who are responsible for the selection should impartially exact from all texts a certain minimum standard of accuracy and scholarliness before placing them on the programmes of public examinations.

T. F. O'R.