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Major Dobbs

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titled, *Lá i n-Éirinn*—A Day in Erin." The singer, now grown old, recalls a summer day when, scythe in hand with three comrades, he cut the long swarthes down a great meadow, and the scythe was as light in his hand as a blade of grass. A troop of laughing girls, raking and scattering the hay, followed the stalwart mowers, birds sang overhead and bees hummed among the flowers. "God of Grace," he cries at the end, "'twas well to be in fair Ireland that day." I have seldom read anything that gave one so vivid a sense of manly strength and vigour attuned to Nature in her wholesome sweetness, and rejoicing in the mere physical contact with our mighty mother Earth. I must quote the final stanza to show the beautiful metrical structure of the original:—

Dí an ton 'r an pmólaic i g-coill na g-cró beas—
 Agus veanaibh ceoil bhinn mar ceól na m-báir,
 'S an fuiread aepac 'r aghán 'na béitín
 'S a tuarad péim ann ran ppéir go n-áir,
 Dí an ceirpead doibinn ar báir na cpaioibe
 'S an piobán pinte le poir go binn—
 A'r a'ós na n-ghára ir é bí breas, beic
 I n-Éirinn áluinn 'ran aimpir pin.

The following rough version is merely meant to suggest the sentiment and general metrical effect of the Irish:—

A blackbird sang from the hazel copses,
 And like a minstrel his rich song trolled,
 And a lark that hovered in sunny spaces
 Dropped down from heaven his notes of gold.
 From the leafy branches the ouzle fluted,
 And strained his throat with his sweetest lay—
 O God of grace, but 'tis I was happy,
 Alive in Erin that summer day!

One meets in these poems little or nothing of the vague melancholy of unfulfilled desire which is so characteristic of modern English verse. When the poet falls into a mood of this kind, as he sometimes does, a note of humour generally shows us that his spirit is buoyant enough even in the dire circumstances related in "*Mo teun nac b-fuit mire*"

Mo teun nac b-fuit mire mo lacain big bán,
 Agus fnaipainn cap faile go fnaic no go Spáin,
 Ní fnaipainn i n-Éirinn don tpeactmain amáin
 San ite, san ol, san cphirsin lán.

But if there is little melancholy, there is much of tragic power, as in "*Cap eir an áa ta*" ("After the Battle), and of grave thought, as in the fine poem "*to Death*." In the former poem the writer imagines himself on some Elizabethan or Cromwellian battlefield, and summons up a terrible picture of death and havoc:—

For Erin's sake they dared to die,
 And now on the bare hillside they lie.
 No kindly hand about their bed,
 But the tall weeds stand around the dead.
 And over the field in the upper sky
 The mountain eagles and ravens fly.
 They are scorched by the heat of the noon-day sun,
 And the night-rains beat them when day is done.

There was many a kiss upon a mouth
 From whose lips the black blood oozes out.
 There were rich and poor, there were low and high,
 That now on the moor all naked lie.

These few stanzas will give to the English reader some idea of the nature of the poem.

It may be hoped that Dr. Hyde will see his way to issuing this volume again in a better form. Printed as it is from outworn stereotypes, the effort necessary to decipher the type is sometimes considerable, and if Irish is to make its way the avoidable difficulties ought not to be increased. Let us hope that the audience which this little volume may win for itself will encourage Dr. Hyde to give us more apples from the same good tree, and to put them in a better basket.

T. W. ROLLESTON.

MAJOR DOBBS.

BY A DESCENDANT.

"At the first Dungannon meeting he proposed all the resolutions relative to the liberties of Ireland, which were previously discussed at a meeting at Lord Charlemont's House, by his Lordship, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Flood, and Mr. Dobbs.

"At the second Dungannon meeting he moved the Address to the King, approving of what the Irish Parliament had done, and carried it unanimously. He and Colonel Irwin, the chairman, Captain James Dawson, the secretary, Lieut-Colonel Thomas Morris Jones, and Captain Francis Evans being the representatives of upwards of 300 companies were ordered to present the Address to his Majesty.

"Mr. Dobbs was the first man in Ireland who exerted himself openly, and called loudly for the liberties of his country in a letter addressed to Lord North dated 1st January, 1780. Upon its being published Lord George Gordon requested an audience and read the letter to his Majesty. He also made it a part of his speech in the British House of Commons.

"I believe Francis Dobbs was not only the proposer but the author of all the resolutions at the first Dungannon meeting, but he always gave special credit to Mr. Flood for his counsel and advice. Mr. Dobbs had always great admiration and respect for Lord Charlemont, the generalissimo of the Volunteers of Ireland.

"Some other particulars may be found in the Address on the Union.

"Maxwell's 'History of the Rebellion' gives some particulars in its chapters on the compact between the Government and the State prisoners."

Will the "descendant," or one of the many "descendants," write me a Life of the hero.

I alit upon him by a sheer accident, for he does not come at all into that tissue of nonsense which we call "The History of Ireland."

Such a book would do the poor old country a great deal of good.—ED.

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