Review: Irish Poems and Plays

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August, describing Professor Le Braz's valuable gift of Breton Manuscripts to the Library of Rennes University.

Appended is a full list of the principal words studied in the course of the volume, classified under six heads—Gaulish or Old Celtic, and Ogamic; Irish; Scottish Gaelic; Welsh; Cornish; and Breton. The largest proportion is given to Breton, while the smallest is given to Scottish Gaelic, of which only ten words have been dealt with. A table of contents closes a full and valuable volume.

We congratulate the *Revue* on attaining its semi-jubilee, and, at this season of good wishes, cordially wish it increasing honour and prosperity.

IRISH POEMS AND PLAYS.

Select Poems of Mangan, 4d. *Select Poems of Gerald Griffin*, 4d. *The Last Irish King*: A play in three acts. T. O. RUSSEL. 6d. *Plays for the People*. W. P. RYAN. 6d. Dublin: M. H. Gill and Co.

Mangan, by his four great achievements, 'Dark Rosaleen' (for which Mrs. Needham has composed such beautiful and fitting music), 'Kathleen Ni Holohan,' 'The Ode to the Maguire,' 'Kinkora,' is first among those 'who sang to sweeten Ireland's wrong.' One thinks of these poems as final expressions of moods of the Irish Gael. Ireland was in the dust after Limerick, but her poets declared that 'the little dark rose' would bloom again, that 'Kathleen Ni Holohan' would again be crowned, and their broodings and their broken utterance find splendid expression at last—

'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 shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen.'

And

'Young she is, and fair she is, and would be crowned a queen,
Were the king's son at home here with Kathaleen Ni Holohan!'

Ireland had mourned her kingdoms and chiefs—

'I am Mac-Leag, and my home is on the lake:
Thither often, to that palace whose beauty is fled,
Came Brian to ask me, and I went for his sake,
O my grief, that I should live, and Brian be dead!'

And

'O, mournful is my soul this night for Hugh Maguire!
Darkly, as in a dream he strays! Before him and behind
Triumphs the tyrannous anger of the wounding wind,
The wounding wind that burns as fire!'

And it is Mangan who has given a distinctive form to the Irish writer who must use English, although Moore, before him, brings an Irish rhythm into English verse (in that one metrical achievement of his, 'At the lone hour of midnight'). Besides Mangan's four great poems—'Dark Rosaleen' is surely among the world's great lyrics—there are two powerful poems that must be taken account of, 'The Nameless One' and 'Siberia.' If the world forgets these, it is not because they lack power, conviction, or fitness of imagery, but because the world must put away things that bring it no beauty and no love. 'The Time of the Barmacides' and 'Twenty Golden Years Ago' are fine, poetic pieces, and his translation of 'Mignon's Song' (Goethe) has lightness and freedom. It is a pity that 'Riding Round the Parapet' is not included in this little volume.

Gerald Griffin will be remembered as a novelist and not as a poet. Some of his verse might be placed with Moore's, and he is best, perhaps, when he writes in the Moore tradition. Griffin has many admirers, and this little book will be welcome. It contains an interesting notice of his life.

The Last Irish King is a play in three acts, and in verse. It concerns Art MacMurrough, who would certainly have driven the English out of Ireland had the other provinces, forgetting their feud with Leinster, come to his aid. Art MacMurrough changed the English dynasty by his wars, and his victories cost Richard the Second his life and throne. The play is declamatory, the verse is good, but the speeches are long for any but a French audience, though perhaps an Irish audience comes next in ability to concentrate its attention to the spoken words.

In *Plays for the People* Mr. W. P. Ryan gives us two plays in Gaelic and one in English. 'An mi-adh mór' has been produced in Dublin, and the play, which has good things in dialogue, obtained a certain success. 'Gradh agus Gréithidhe' has not yet been produced. It is faulty in construction and has little characterisation, but the dialogue, as in most Gaelic plays, is good. 'The Wake of the People' is quite otherwise. One may acquiesce to Elizabethan verse in an Irish play of the heroic or romantic period, but one objects to Elizabethan verse in an Irish peasant play. The verse is not bad, but it fails to justify itself.

Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaidhealach. The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry, with Lives of the Highland Bards. By JOHN MACKENZIE. With an Historical Introduction, by JAMES LOGAN, F.S.A.Scot. Edinburgh: Norman Macleod. 8s. 6d.

It is now over sixty years since Mackenzie published this collection, and it still maintains its high place in the esteem of all lovers of Gaelic poetry. It had become scarce, and had run to a price beyond the reach of the average book-buying Highlander, so that the re-issue at the moderate price quoted above is very welcome. Mr. Macleod has already shown some

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