Review

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folk-lore, but emphasises the fact that the former is mainly of matriarchal character, while the latter is patriarchal. 'The deities of the Teutons are controlled by a Great Father, and their elves by a King. The deities of the Celts are children of a Great Mother, and their fairies are ruled over by a Queen.' Students of comparative mythology will find much to interest them in this volume, and to those unfamiliar with the distinctive giant lore of Scotland, Mr. Mackenzie's review of it will be welcome, especially as he considers that it differs from both Irish and Norse material in essential particulars, and belongs to the class of lore once prevalent throughout the British Isles. D. M'C.

Sea Tangle. Edited by Mrs. KENNEDY FRASER and KENNETH MACLEOD.
London and New York: BOOSEY and Co. 5s. net.

This charming volume is a further instalment of the treasures of Hebridean song collected by Mrs. Kennedy Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod. The first volume, the *Songs of the Hebrides*, met with an immediate and well-deserved success, and the present book, consisting of about half a dozen songs, is not merely a supplement to the earlier volume, but is meant to be the first part of the second volume of the *Songs of the Hebrides*. We extend to it and to its two editors a very hearty welcome.

The songs are chiefly of the heroic ballad type. To the musical archæologist these old airs, now fortunately recovered, will have a powerful fascination. They have come down from the days when the folk really believed in the old Celtic mythology, — when the heroes and heroines of their sagas were not, as in later times, mere misty, vague forms, but real awe-inspiring personalities; and when wedded to their simple native airs, as here, these old ballads have a powerful, romantic charm and an irresistible appeal, not to the Celt only, but to all lovers of the truth and sincerity that generally characterises the art expression of primitive races. It has been widely believed that the old Celtic heroic ballads were sung to monotonous and uninteresting chants, but here we find that quite on the contrary these ballads have much force and fire, and remarkable artistic fitness in the wedding of air to words. Deirdre's lament is a most powerful musical setting of the old poem in Dr. Carmichael's *Deirdre*, where the heroine anticipates evil from the apparently friendly message of the Irish King, by instinctive apprehension of tragedy to come. Naoise, in each alternate verse, tries by gay words to dispel her dark Cassandra-like forebodings, but all in vain. Many composers and poets have tried well, but with indifferent success, to recreate the Deirdre tale of old-world sorrow: here is the real article, for truth and inevitableness of phrasing, both in words and music, far superior to halting modern efforts. We suppose the explanation is, that the folk singers and composers believed what they sang of, and so gave their efforts the note of sincerity and moving power. The *Sea Tangle* song is of more recent date than the heroic ballads. The subject is parallel with the theme

of the old Scottish ballad 'Binnorie.' Two sisters love the same man, and the one is jealous to the point of murder of the other. Mrs. Kennedy Fraser has woven together very skilfully at least two songs dealing with this story. The whole setting is intensely dramatic, and the despairing death cry 'U-vil, U-vil' of the drowning sister harrows the listener's soul and haunts the memory.

But for the inspired expression of brooding melancholy, we give the palm to Lady Clan Ranald's lament for the death of her daughter in the wonderful song entitled 'Caristiona.' Its overwhelming emotional power is only equalled by its masterly simplicity. Alike in the curve of its musical phrases, the remarkable rhythm, and the passionate, heart-broken words it is truly remarkable among Gaelic lyrics of grief. One winter's evening it was our fortune to hear it crooned over by the fireside by Mr. K. MacLeod. Its weird strains haunted our memory and imagination for weeks and months. At last it became a question whether the time of release from 'Caristiona' would ever arrive. To get rid of the obsession we went to hear Madame Gerhardt give her magnificent renderings of the art songs of Germany. Madame Gerhardt sang divinely, but to our astonishment—after the concert was over, the haunting Gaelic lament returned again and refused to be banished.

One song of a very lively and lightsome nature, 'Hame cam our Bot-tachan,' relieves the noble sadness of the majority of this collection.

'Fàillte na mór-thir' is a very melodious air, superior to the form published some years ago. We have heard a very similar variant from a Kintail Highlander in London. But we prefer the chorus word 'Heterinn' to 'Hetigan' given here.

It is needless to say that Mrs. Kennedy Fraser's accompaniments are of first-rate quality. There is not a meaningless chord for the pianist all through the book. Her accompaniments interpret or anticipate the inner meaning and soul of the words and music, intensifying their message, and fusing all into a musical unity, and a veritable thing of beauty. We could imagine that many of these airs and accompaniments could be very effective if expanded into orchestral arrangements.

We confess to a feeling of disappointment in finding that the grand old heroic ballad 'Brataichean na Féinne' is not included in this volume. But we have no doubt it will find a place in a further issue. Through the kindness of the editors, it has already been heard on mod platforms with much appreciation. There are phrases in it that awake reminiscences of Wagner's 'Flying Dutchman' music. Indeed in several of these Gaelic songs there are phrases and passages that curiously suggest Wagnerian characteristics. It may be that great musicians think alike; at any rate the composers of these beautiful Gaelic airs were great musicians by virtue of innate and original talent, that owed nothing to the technical training of the schools.

We should add that excellent English translations, well adapted for singing, have been made by the editors. These songs of the people have

an irresistible appeal to certain moods of the mind. When the poet Longfellow wrote his well-known poem the 'Day is Done,' he sings the praise of the simple and heart-felt lay as a cure for the sad and restless spirits. He would have read to him, not the works of the grand old masters, whose mighty thought suggest 'life's endless toil and endeavour'—they could have no soothing power for the wearied, restless mind—but rather—

Read from some humbler poet
Whose songs gushed from his heart
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start.

Who through long days of labour,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

So it may be that an important element in the charm of the old Celtic songs lies in their very remoteness from the busy fret of the modern world. This, along with their intrinsic merit and freedom from all tawdry ornament or cheap vulgarity, makes them a perennial joy to all possessed of musical taste and discernment.

M. N. MUNRO.

Songs of the Mountain and the Burn. ALICE C. MACDONELL. London : John Ouseley, Limited. 2s. *net*.

This volume of poems shows the heart of the writer to be in the Highlands, and her mind to be filled with love of her native land and of the things that belong to it. There are many moods and phases represented, and a large range of feeling is shown. Some of the poems are fine spirited pieces—telling of the Gordon Highlanders at Dargai or of the Highland Brigade in South Africa,—some are pathetic and moving, and tell of loved scenes in Lochaber, of departed friends and dreams, of memories and tales of the past. All are sincere and spontaneous. The authoress has undoubtedly gained in power of expression since she published her former volume. Miss Macdonell's poems show strongly her Gaelic inheritance, and are sure to be appreciated by Highlanders; especially will they come home to those who have left the Highlands. The book is prettily bound and well printed.

Buile Suibhne: The Adventures of Suibhe Geilt. Edited with Translation, Introduction, Notes, and Glossary by J. G. O'KEEFE. Irish Texts Society. London: David Nutt.

Suibhne, son of Colman Cuar, king of Dal Araidhe in the north of Ireland, having incurred the just anger and the curse of the saint, Ronan Finn, was doomed to wander naked through the world, flying in madness like a bird of the air. The fulfilment of this extraordinary doom began at the battle of Magh Rath, for when Suibhne heard the three mighty shouts