Review

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(3) "to lie; to shuffle or cheat in joke; to boast unduly"; (4) "to sport, frolic." As a substantive *fratch* means (1) "a quarrel, dispute, wrangle" (the usual meaning); (2) "a rude, quarrelsome person"; (3) "a playful child"; (4) "a lie; a petty deception or theft."

As an adjective *fratch* means "quarrelsome, easily offended, touchy,"; while *fratchy*, *fratchous* and *fratchety* have much the same meaning, "peevish, irritable, ill-tempered, cross." Wright also gives *fratcher*, "a scold, a quarrelsome person; a faultfinder," and *fratched*, 'restive, vicious,' applied to a horse.

The following are some of the instances quoted by Wright:

"Whenever awm a bit . . . fratchy wi' th' missus . . . aw goes to th' owd flute."

"We call them fratchy when folks are nasty-tempered, and one don't like to speak to them."

"The misses 's that fratchy to-day ther's nowt enybody can do as pleāses her."

Similar meanings are assigned to these words in Murray's New English Dictionary and in Whitney's Century Dictionary.

Although I did not look to an English origin for this word, it will be seen that the meanings of *al-fraits* given in my Dictionary, and drawn from life, are identical with those quoted from Wright above. I think there can be no doubt that the English word *fratch* is the essential element in *al-fraits*. It is identical in sound with the stressed syllable of the word, and identical in meaning with the entire word. The first syllable is probably *old* or *ol'*; *old fratch*, *ol' fratch* might readily become *al-fraits*.

PÁDRAIG UA DUINNÍN.

BOOK NOTICES

GUTH ÓN MBREATAIN .i. Llais o Gymru. Dánta is Amhráin. TADHG Ó DONNCHADHA ("Torna") d'aistrigh ón mBreatnais. Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son. 1s. and 1s. 6d. net.

This is a little collection of translations from various Welsh poets from Davydd ap Gwilym, the greatest of all Celtic poets, who lived in the fourteenth century, to Torna's own friend Gwynn Jones. The earlier poems are all in *dán díreach*, which suits the style of the original; but the fact that Torna has written, not merely in the older metres but in an archaic form of the language, will, I fear, prevent them from being appreciated by readers of Modern Irish, in spite of the copious glosses appended to each poem. This love of archaisms is shown even in the versions of late Welsh lyrics. Thus, Daniel Evans, who died in 1846, is represented as addressing the daisy in stanzas like this:

*Atú gá bhrath i mbliadhna
gus tú an chéad scath, a sciamhdha;
ó's liotsa buaidh na dtáinte i dtaoir
seo m'fháilte dhaoibh a dhiargha.*

In these lines the obsolete and, to the modern speaker, unintelligible *atú* (glossed *atáim*) is evidently chosen to rime with *tú*, but there is no such rime

in the original, which is in fact simple colloquial Welsh, with only five riming syllables. Torna's version, which requires an archaic pronunciation, has four glosses to the four lines, and sixteen riming syllables! A good deal of the book is written in the style of a period a little too early for the scope of GADELICA. I should recommend the reader who is unaccustomed to the poetry of the earlier bardic schools to begin at the end of the book, where he will find some pretty translations of modern Welsh songs.

O. J. BERGIN.

IRISLEABHAR MUIGHE NUADHAD, 1912. Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son. 1s.

The annual *Irisleabhar* issued by the Columban League, Maynooth, is always welcome; and this year's number, like its predecessors, is remarkably good value for a shilling.

Father Paul Walsh contributes a new edition of the poem *Diombdigh triall ó thulchaibh Fáil*, and sets a good example, which should be generally followed, in not basing his text solely upon the College MSS. Two other texts from MS. are *Eachtra Chlainne Ua gCorra*, hitherto known from Stokes's edition, and *Beatha St. Tomás Chantarbuiri*, a text not previously edited. Neither of the two can be said to possess much value. The former text is a jumble of old and new forms, of corruptions, misspellings and misprints. Not that the fault is wholly its editor's; it is not easy to edit satisfactorily from very late MSS. a Mid. Ir. text which has never been drawn into the main stream of modern MS. literature. The Life of St. Thomas, which would be interesting if properly edited, is printed from a couple of 19th century MSS. without introduction or notes or even an attempt to paragraph the text.

Folklore is represented by a few short pieces from Donegal. One would like to see folk matter occupying a more prominent place in the Maynooth journal than hitherto. A text copied from a poor MS. is often worthless; but versions of folk-tales and folk-songs, conscientiously recorded, seldom fail to possess a certain value, and would moreover tend to an increased familiarity with the living speech, which to a majority of Maynooth students should be more useful in after years than the ability to transcribe from more or less antiquated MSS.

One would also like to see more attempts like *An Aisling i bhFílidheacht na hOchtmhadh Aoise Déag*; there is crying need for the treatment of literary subjects in Irish.

An article in English on "Irish Spelling Reformed" calls for a passing reference. The writer's attitude is one of hide-bound conservatism. His case is mainly built on parallels drawn, not from Welsh or from Scotch-Gaelic, but from German and English, and consequently beside the point. He has yet to realise that the great argument in favour of ordinary type for Irish and improved spelling, is the simple fact that the language is in a dying condition. Had Irish even the one-twentieth part of the vitality of German or English, there would be no talk of reform and comparatively little need of it.

T. F. O'R.