New Industry for the Highlands
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O'Curnan's Lament.

The following Lament is one of the pearls of Irish peasant poetry. It has been finely translated by Dr. Sigerson in his "Bards of the Gael and Gall," but his rendering, usually so close to the original, is in this case a free one, and is not of much use for learners. We therefore append a literal prose version.

The story connected with the poem is that O'Curnan loved the daughter of a farmer in the County Waterford, in whose service he lived, and was promised her hand if he served her seven years. At the end of the time when his reward was drawing nigh, his master sent him with a load of butter to the Cork market, and on his return O'Curnan found that his love had been hastily wedded to another and wealthier suitor. He lost his senses under the blow, and became a wandering beggar for the rest of his life. The poem is said to have been composed by him; and, certainly, it has a simplicity and intensity which seem to tell of a personal sorrow, and which form a striking contrast to the love verses, often so cold and tedious, elaborated by the 19th century poets, such as O'Keeffe and O'Sullivan.

O'Mahony prepared a little piece to his song, and sang it with profound emotion.

Helen, thy beauty is to me, !

Like those Nician barks of yore

To his own native shore.

The weary-worn wanderer bore

The glory that was Greece,

Like those Nician barks of yore,

To his own native shore.

Oh there is no knowledge nor cure for my woe but in the fair woman that received me,

No cure for me on sea or shore, none in any herb nor in any hand;

To me alone is left the power to soothe and console by the white hands of maiden;

I know not a herb from a cuckoo, I know not from day—my heart would know my love;

If she would come to me timely with succour.

Oh succour me, dear one; give me a kiss from thy mouth,

And lift me up to thee from death;

Or bid them make for me a narrow bed,

In the dark neighbourhood of the worm's nest;

My life is not life, but death, my voice is no voice, but a wind;

I care for me but in thee alone, flower of maidens.

Now, who do you think was the first to praise in fit words. And it is unique, and can't write verses that will sing.

It was the poor cripple !

Beattie's interesting article, and also the following letter from the Hon. Stuart Erskine, which exhibits that known young Caledonian in a new and, I think, more welcome light, one in which, to say the least, he looks handsomer:

Mary, sweet and fair, that left this wound in my bosom,

A wound that the Island of Fodla has nothing to heal,

I'd swear by my hand that if thou hadst left me alone

Thou wouldst not let me die here without succour.

I do not eat an ounce of food, nor sleep a wink when I lie down,

There is no joy nor strength in me, but a little shadow;

Unless I get repose or rest from the fierce love in my heart's core.

I shall not live a day, a month, nor a quarter.

Oh there is no knowledge nor cure for my woe but in the fair woman that received me,

No cure for me on sea or shore, none in any herb nor in any hand;

To me alone is left the power to soothe and console by the white hands of maiden;

I know not a herb from a cuckoo, I know not from day—my heart would know my love;

If she would come to me timely with succour.
those which exist in Western Ireland largely obtain. Moreover, the application of the principles underlying Celtic art to the production of carpets, rugs, etc., would result in the establishment of a series of industries which would provide new fields of enterprise for the men who are reared for the class and the interests which you represent.

I have observed that the British Statesman, when he desires to legislate against an Irish interest, withdraws his favour and protection from that interest, so as to prepare the minds of its adherents for the treatment which he is about to administer. So, in 1879 and 1880, Gladstone gave Parnell and the Land League a free hand in Ireland, in order to prepare your minds for the Land Bill of 1881. I admired your presidential address of our Chief Secretary, which was delivered last week in the Dublin Press, but cannot at all agree with the insertion of an order of supineness. It obeys orders from London, and the order has been out from London that the Gaels are to make things as uncomfortable as possible for Irish landowners and their receivers and get them in this manner to think about what an Irish agrarian revolution might mean for them, so their minds will be prepared for that acceptance of the Government Land Bill, which, from all I can learn, is likely to be of a very drastic nature. There is no supineness at all, if there is, it is a supineness calculated and premeditated—a card deliberately played with a clear purpose in view. The British Administrations are never supine: the interests of their own country, the Empire, and those of their Party, do not permit them to indulge in such a luxury. The British Government is, in my opinion, always dealt with, very intelligently, very intelligently, with the Irish problem from its own point of view. When fierce and over-concrete is it with a clear purpose, and when supine it is with a clear purpose, that which produced the speech of Lord Salisbury was delivered with a purpose. It will be succeeded in due course by another, in which he will enlarge on the discussion on the necessity of giving the soil of Ireland to the people in order to consolidate their affections and loyalty to the Empire, and abolish the danger which, as he informed the Junior Constitutional Club, was far greater than that which has arisen out of South Africa. The British Statesman, as you will readily understand, is governed in his sentiment by his Party interests and by the point of view of his own people, never by justice or by sentiment. The delay is, I think that the British Statesman lies awake at night thinking about us, and how he might make us happier and more prosperous.

Not he. He thinks about matters more important; and, when he has finished, just turns on his pillow, and goes to sleep. Clever dog.

I perceive from your writings and correspondence that you are a thinker, and invite you to think about the less apparent, yet tremendously important aspects of the Land Question. It is fluid now, and the settlement of it may be made to flow into such shapes and take such impressions as we prepare for it. Every kind of property you can think of is a mould or form assumed by land, and we ourselves but a mould, "dust of the earth." But, indeed, I have so many things to say on the subject that I hardly know where to begin. Just one thing to conclude with for the present. Within the last half-hour I was told me that the ground round her house and garden in the suburbs of Dublin was £12 a year. The ground is less than an acre. So, land then, at least £24 an acre per annum. How is it we hear nothing of the invisible demon landlord of the cities and towns, while you poor landowners out in the country have been so long bearing the brunt of the storm? This invisible demon landlord gets £100 or £200 per acre rent, and no regards him, and you can try to get, 10s. or 15s. per acre, and the whole country is up against you. It is a little curious; is it not?—Ed.

Dear Mr. Editor,—As all parties seem to agree that the question of land tenure is not a good economic arrangement that the fact is abundantly plausible that it should remain permanently. I think we may assume that this will not be the case. A different tenure will take its place.

I venture to think that this change will take place gradually not suddenly. In your letters to X you appear to assume that the only serious obstacle to a change is in the reluctance of the present owner in carrying out a new or order of things, and that if they were persuaded to change their views and to sell the land on condition of the Government for an immediate settlement, coming to some understanding with parties whose power to make a law or to prevent a law would be in question, the matter of price, all difficulty would then be over, and the business might be completed. I think you are mistaken. There are several other points, some of them of great importance, and the principle of a system of land tenure cannot be accomplished as one might throw off an old jacket and put on a new one. How many years did it take to complete the change of land system in Prussia? A hard spade and a little digging is the way to find gold. We are not far from our goal, but we must have the perspicacity to point out in more detail some of the reasons which induce me to think that this business must of necessity occupy a considerable time.

Not, dear M., I believe, if we are in earnest; then if it was means to settle things at once, provisionally, working back in each case upon the provisions of the provisional arrangement after an accurate and final arrangement. Then the provisional arrangement, if properly framed, might be accepted by many as final.

Example.—A provisional arrangement in the Land Act of 1881 that Griffith's Valuation should be the standard of rent till the Land Court should in each case decide the fair rent. You understand what I mean.—Ed. A.R.

Dear Mr. Editor,—I promised to explain my reasons for thinking that the change in the system of land tenure now proposed will be gradual, not sudden, change. It will be admitted that land purchase depends on the assent of the persons who are to supply the money for the operation; that is to say, on the assent of a majority of the taxpayers of the United Kingdom. The word "offer" is valid till endorsed by this Congress.-A.H.