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The Shee

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PRE-HISTORIC IRELAND.

I hope the interesting and instructive articles on Pre-Historic Ireland will induce those of your subscribers who may have devoted some time to the study of Ethnology to follow the example of Professor Mahaffy in his pleasant seanachus in last week's number. I felt a thrill of mingled pleasure and pride on reading the Professor's testimony to the characteristics of the Western peasantry, and their superiority at least from the human point of view to the peasantry of England. I can assure the Professor that a closer acquaintance with the intimate daily life of the peasantry would not be likely to modify his good opinion. A man must actually live with the peasantry to know the exquisite delicacy of feeling and sentiment which characterizes them, and which makes them so attractive to one another and to strangers. I think myself that on the whole the Irish peasant is, perhaps, the most highly civilized of God's creatures, in spite of the misery which he happily defies and the contempt and scorn of which he has been the victim. I have scarcely ever read an English book in which he has not been grossly libelled. But he has his revenge, perhaps, in his supreme contempt for Anglo-Saxon civilization with its eternal pig-trough. But, as usual, I wander from the point, so revenous, etc., etc.

The physical characteristics of the Western peasantry are certainly not those which ethnologists appropriate to the Celtic type; neither are they Iberian. I would be inclined to say, however, that our Galway peasantry are a blend of Celt and some other race. The Celtic type is to be met with even amid the apparently homogeneous race which the learned Professor refers to. Nay more; the same family may include both types in its members. I think the data of ethnology are too slender for a general induction as regards our racial forbears. But the subject is being carefully studied, and the way is being prepared for a broad, general treatment of the question. In his "Pre-Celtic Syntax in Insular Celtic" Professor J. Morris Jones has attempted what Professor Mahaffy desiderates in your paper. Neither leisure nor means admits of my describing the book or its scope. It suggests, I believe, a wave of Beober immigration to Ireland, or possibly an Egyptian. Perhaps some of your subscribers will give us a criticism of the book. The subject is an interesting one certainly. Will some of our cloistered and leisured writers take it out of its academic swaddling clothes and show it in its graceful nakedness to the general public. I can assure them that the Irish general public has not its nose eternally in the pig-trough, but could take, if it had the opportunity, an intelligent interest in "far-off things and battles long ago"—the very food and staff of literature. The Review deserves success for its successful combination of modernity and ancientry. You are yourself a mixture of, etc., etc. Good luck to you.

M. MOLLOY.

THE SHEE.

Allow me to controvert D. M.'s statements in a late issue, anent fairies. The "gentry" are "as dead as Brian Boru" in the N. West of Connaught. By no manner of means. I know this portion of the country pretty well and can vouch for their being still alive and live-like. I am acquainted with scores of people who have no more doubt about their existence than they have of that of Frenchmen or Spaniards. Not long ago I had from an old country-

man a most detailed description of one of them that he himself met some years ago on a knoll beside an ancient whitethorn on his own farm. "He was about the height of your knee, dressed like a red sojer with shiny top boots on him and the weeshiest wee face you could ask to see," and he went on to give further particulars. "I kept my eye on him and he was very knowledgeable-looking, till a cow roared behind me, and, lo and behold you, when I looked again there was nothing but a bohellon" (or bouchalawn, i.e., a rag-weed). I have no doubt as to the truthfulness of the narrator. But whether his vision was like Macbeth's dagger, "sensible to sight and not to feeling," and had no objective reality; or whether it was merely conjured up by a pervivid imagination brooding over the popular description—I have often met such cases—or whether the whole thing was as genuine as the low of his milch cow, I leave to your readers to puzzle out. Should they desire it I shall be very happy to interview this individual again and state my own convictions. His is not a solitary instance.

A local poet has some very pretty verses on this subject:—

"A ringing their bells, an' playing their flutes,
Beating their drums with the bouchalawn roots—
Dancing along o'er the mead and the cliff—
Such are the freaks of the Fairies of Shriff."

And again:—

"Doubt it! doubt it! say 'tis folly, think'd madness,
as you will;
Think a thousand things to mock'd, but the fairy
liveth still."

Long may he, is the wish of

JACOBIN

THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN T. C. D.

On Monday evening, the 26th inst., a meeting of the Neophyte Debating Society was held in Trinity College, Dublin. The object of this society is to encourage speaking amongst the junior members of the University.

The subject for debate was "That the attempt to revive the Irish language deserves our approval."

The affirmative after showing the superiority of Irish to other languages, stated that the movement would draw the attention of Irishmen to their own country and its welfare.

The negative after speaking of the difficulties of learning the language, spoke about the complexity of the two languages.

The motion was, however, carried.

Will you allow me to enter a protest against what I understand, perhaps wrongly, is asserted by Mr. M. J. Buckley in "A. I. R." of November 10th, viz., that our Irish alphabet is of Roman origin? On first seeing those picturesque columns in "A. I. R." I was struck by their likeness to the Roman character, and on applying to a learned philologist for an explanation was informed that from the original language of the world one great branch called the "Romano Celtic," or some similar name—I quote from memory, but think that is accurate—flowed West, and there divided into the Latin and Celtic group of languages, so that Latin and Celtic are derived from one common origin, and are twin sisters, not mother and daughter, and "the so-called Irish alphabet" is really of ancient lineage and not at all inferior to its cousins of whatever degree, and has a right to hold up its head in all its own native beauty and dignity.

J. M. G.