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Review

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*Epochs of Irish History: Early Christian Ireland.* By ELEANOR HULL.  
London: D. Nutt. Dublin: Gill & Son. 2s. 6d. net.

This is the second volume of Miss Hull's series of Irish history books. It deals with Ireland under her native rulers, Ireland as the 'Island of Saints,' and with Irish Art, Architecture, Learning, etc.

The authoress aims at being that most ideal of historians, one who lets the old records tell their own story, and avoids comment. She has not only striven for this, but she has in a great degree attained it, and her little books are unbiassed accounts of the state and position of Ireland in former days. Miss Hull has given us no mere record of fights, which is too often the historian's conception of his duty; but she tells us of the social life and of the arts as they were followed by the people she would make us know. After all a nation's life is not in its battles, but in the quiet of the unrecorded achievements along the paths of peace. Miss Hull also avoids discussion of the doctrines and discipline of the Irish church, and, wisely, gives us instead an account of 'the remarkable developments in the national character and conditions consequent on their teaching and system of things.'

In the first section of the present volume Miss Hull gives us the political history of the time from King Laegaire, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, to Finnachta the 'Festive,' and the close of the early Christian period, while in the second section she gives us the ecclesiastical history of that time. The ecclesiastical history is no less important than the political, for it was a time of great activity in the Irish church, the time of St. Patrick and St. Bridgit, of St. Columba, St. Columbanus, and of Adamnan. It was during this time that Ireland earned the name of 'Insula Sanctorum et Doctorum'—the Island of Saints and Scholars, for learning flourished exceedingly within her shores, and from her went out very many missionaries, so that, as one great writer has said, the Celtic missionaries were like a flood over the continent of Europe. Even yet one may hear traditions of them and learn of the love with which they were regarded.

The third section deals with Art, Architecture, Books, Illumination, Learning, and with some of the Irish scholars who, in the ninth and tenth centuries, kept alive the torch of learning, and passed it on to continental Europe. Such men were Sedulius, Abbot of Kildare, John Scotus Erigena, Virgilius, Dicuil, Dungal and many others.

Altogether these little books of Irish history will be found to contain as much interest and information as could well be put into the space, and they are written in an easy and attractive manner. So little is known, except by specialists, of the condition and position of the ancient Celts, that Miss Hull's books must find a large welcome, which they well deserve.

*Woman of Seven Sorrows.* By SEUMAS MACMANUS. Dublin: Gill & Son. 7d.

This is an allegorical drama by an author who has already shown us his dramatic powers in several moods. The woman of the title is Ireland, and

her sorrows are told and not exaggerated. In the end she gets happiness, and the children rally round her, the young men and maidens also. There is sorrow but not bitterness, and while the play is propagandist in its nature, it is not rabid. It is well and clearly told, and is pleasing in diction and expression. We can imagine that it would act well; indeed, it has been acted very successfully, and the acting rights are free. E. O'G.

*Heroic Romances of Ireland.* Translated into English Prose and Verse, with Preface, special Introduction, and Notes, by A. H. LEAHY. Vol. ii. D. NUTT. 3s. 6d. net.

This volume, handsomely printed and bound, contains translations of five of the lesser *Táin bó*, or Cattle-raids,—*Táin bó Fraich*, *Dartada*, *Regamoin*, *Flidais*, and *Regamna*. All are preludes to the great *Táin bó Cualnge*, the Cattle-spoil of Cooley, and, with the exception of the first, have appeared with German translations in Windisch's series of Irish Texts. Readers of the *Celtic Review* will find *Táin bó Flidais* specially interesting, in that a much fuller and quite different version of it is now being given from the Glenmasan Manuscript by Professor Mackinnon. Mr. Leahy gives the literal prose rendering with expanded metrical version on the opposite page, the latter serving largely as a commentary on the other, which is often laconic to obscurity. Both are well done in their respective styles. The prose version will be found useful by students of Middle Irish, and if in the verse translation occasional liberties are taken, these are largely a matter of taste, and can readily be checked by reference to the left-hand page. Mr. Leahy's method of dealing with Irish proper names is apt to mislead the purely English reader. In the prose version he very properly keeps, as a rule, the Irish form. In the other he is not consistent, sometimes giving Irish forms in the text with so-called pronunciations in footnotes, sometimes *vice versa*. It should have been made clear that the suggested 'pronunciations' are far from being phonetic; e.g. mac Fiachna was not sounded mac Feena, *Firbolg* is not adequately represented by *Feer-bol*, nor *Loegaire* by *Leary*, though the latter is the modern Anglicised form. Neither is it correct to say that *mag* was pronounced *maw*, though this may come near *magh* in modern Irish. A little care under this head would have saved English readers from amazement. Mr. Leahy has done well in adding a specimen of Irish text with exact interlinear translation. The volume should do much to popularise the study of Irish.

*Contribution à la Lexicographie et l'Étymologie celtiques.* By J. LOTH. Macon : Prolat, 1906.

Professor Loth in this is less impersonal than usual, less Homeric. He indulges in light badinage at the expense of Professors Anwyl and Zimmer, with a side glance at Mr. Wh. Stokes and Professor d'A. de Jubainville