
Review

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and so on, to the number of about fifty things 'good for a tribe.' Women come off badly. 'I distinguish them,' says Cormac, 'but I make no difference between them,' and proceeds to utter one hundred and twenty hard sayings concerning them. They are 'not to be trusted with a secret; stiff when paying a visit; sorrowful in an ale-house; quick to revile; exceeding all bounds in keeping others waiting; eloquent on trifles; painstaking about an elegant headdress.' Of two passages that deal with weather the shorter gives the best seasons thus:

<i>Gem cáin cuisnech,</i>	A fine frosty winter,
<i>Errach tirim gáethach,</i>	A dry windy spring,
<i>Sam tur frossach,</i>	A droughty, showery summer,
<i>Fogmar tromdrúchtach torthach,</i>	A fruitful autumn with heavy dews.

Much, one might almost say most, of *Tecosca Cormaic* is as fresh and applicable now as it was eleven hundred years ago; it is all exceedingly interesting.

W. J. W.

Fianaigecht. Being a Collection of hitherto inedited Irish Poems and Tales relating to Finn and his Fiana, with an English Translation. (Royal Irish Academy, Todd Lecture Series. Vol. xvi. 2s. 6d.)

In view of the legendary connection of Finn and his Fiana with Scotland, this volume ought to be of special interest to Scottish Gaels. The texts given with translation are *Reicne Fothaid Canainne*, a poem composed and spoken by the Fiann-leader, Fothad Canainne, after his death and beheading; the Quarrel between Finn and Oisín; Ailill Aulom, Mac Con, and Find Ua Baisene; a poem by Erard Mac Coisse; a Finn Episode in verse; the Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn. In a valuable introduction of thirty-one pages Professor Meyer starts by discussing the derivation of *fian*, which, and not *fiann*, he asserts to be the true form, referring to the root of *vēnāri*, to hunt, pursue, chase. Irish, he says, has applied this root to warfare, cf. Old-Bulgarian *vojna*, war; and *fian* means (1) warfare; (2) concretely 'a band of warriors on the warpath.' He shows that from the earliest times the word has entered into personal names, the oldest recorded instance being Fiangalach mac Colmain, who died about 589 A.D. In place-names also *fian* and its derivatives are of frequent occurrence, e.g. Termond na Fíán, etc. 'In its stricter sense, *fian* denoted a larger or smaller band of roving warriors, who had joined for the purpose of making war on their own account. They were, however, not mere robbers or marauders, but were held together by discipline, and had some kind of organisation and peculiar customs, while of those wishing to join their ranks some test of skill or bravery was no doubt exacted. Each member of a *fian* was called *fénid*, and their leader *rigfénid*.' 'Many of those who have written on the origin and development of the Ossianic cycle have based their investigations almost exclusively upon the tradition of the twelfth and following centuries, forgetting or ignoring the fact that this later phase is preceded by centuries of gradual growth from small and

obscure beginnings, in which Finn and his *fiana* do not play the part assigned to them by the later and modern legend.' These extracts indicate the drift of Professor Meyer's introduction. In Scotland we get traces of the Fiann all over the Highlands, not only in legend, but also in place-names. (I do not recall any Scottish personal name based thereon.) The oldest recorded example is that in the well-known gloss, said to be contemporary, affixed to a charter of Alexander II. (1214-1249) to the Abbey of Kinloss, wherein occurs 'Tubernafeyne of the grett or kemppis¹ men callit ffenis is ane well.' In Perthshire the *fiann* are specially connected with the numerous brochs and broch-like structures which occur in the basin of the Tay, including Rannoch, all of which are known as Caistealan nam Fiann, the Castles of the Fiann. While Professor Meyer prints the pieces noted above, he mentions, with short notes and approximate dates, fifty-nine poems and prose pieces dealing more or less directly with the subject. The volume is highly suggestive, and throws fresh light on the much debated subject, 'Who were the Fiann?' W. J. W.

NOTE

In my review of Dr. Henderson's book, which I had no opportunity of correcting in proof, the following misprints occur:—on p. 379, 'scheme' for 'theme,' *porljotr* for *þorljótr*, *þor-* for *þor*-, *þórr* for *Þórr*, and near the foot of the page, 'Snorn's' for 'Snorri's.' On p. 380, 'piórs-á' and 'pjórs-á' for 'Þiórsa-á' and 'Þjórsa-á.' On p. 381, *purs* and *puss* for *þurs* and *þuss*.

W. A. CRAIGIE.

QUERY

The following comes from the Provincial Archivist, Toronto:—I am enclosing a query note to you for the *Celtic Review*. Interest in Highland history is being fanned here at present, and Mr. Ferguson's article in the April *Review* has been variously discussed. The *Review* is a constant source of pleasure and inspiration. Long may it thrive.

On page 411 of MacBain's *Excursus on Skene's Highlanders*, MacBain says: '... Dugall was really Somerled's eldest son, and therefore head of the house of Somerled.' ... 'The name Dugall is for Dubh-ghall, "Black Foreigner," that is, Dane.' It would be interesting to explain the seeming inconsistency here. How could Dugall, Somerled's eldest son, get, as a personal name, the name used to designate the visiting Danes?

ALEXANDER FRASER.

REPLY

The explanation of the name given to Somerled's son is simply that, even so long ago, names were given without consideration of their significance, and that Somerled called his son 'Dugall' with as little reference to its original meaning as is the case at the present day.

¹ i.e. warrior.