

A LIVING IRISH LITERATURE

Gaelic literature is still living (writes W. H. Kent, O.S.C., in the *June Catholic World*). And as the movement of revival gains ground and Irishman, and Scotsman, too, return to their national languages, this literature is likely to become more widely known throughout the world, and has a bright future before it. The success that has already crowned other revivals of the same kind, for example, the Czech movement in Bohemia, may serve to reassure those Gaels who are disposed to take a less hopeful view of our present situation. But apart from the pessimists who question our prospects of succeeding in this movement of Gaelic revival or restoration, there are others who are disposed to doubt whether such a success is desirable. Some feel that, however much a restoration of Gaelic to its rightful place as the national language of Ireland might gratify popular sentiment, or patriotic pride, or racial prejudice, the triumph of English culture would really do far more to promote the true interests of Irish literature and Irish education. This view of the matter may well seem plausible to Englishmen or to foreigners who are acquainted with the rich English literature and know little or nothing of the Gaelic. But on further reflection it will be found to be an illusion.

Here, as elsewhere, the true interests of a national literature and the best hopes for the future lie with the native language of the people. And from the foreign language, and the foreign culture, Ireland can only get a literature that would be, at best, but second-rate and provincial. All the arguments that tell in favor of Anglicising Ireland might have been urged with equal plausibility in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in favor of Gallicising England. For French was then the language of the ruling classes, of court and parliament and schools; and it was also the language of a rich and flourishing literature. But the French of Stratford-atte-Bowe would never have been a match for the French of Paris in the realms of literature: still less would it be able to vie with the English of Stratford-on-Avon. And the same holds good of Ireland. Here, too, the true sources of poetry, and of all literature in the highest sense, must be sought in the traditions of the people and in the genius of the national language. It is true some good work has been done by Irishmen who write in English. But Anglo-Irish literature could scarcely bear comparison with that of England itself; nor could anyone who knew them both put it on the same level as the Gaelic literature of Ireland. The literature that springs spontaneously from the native sources and faithfully reflects national folklore and legend and carries on the old literary tradition, must needs be written in the olden tongue of Erin.

AN APPEAL TO IRISH FAITH AND LOVE OF ST. PATRICK, RAETIHI

In the raging bush fire that swept this district in 1918 our little church (St. Patrick's) at Raetihi was burnt to the ground. We are now making an attempt to raise funds to replace that little church in a permanent material which will withstand the brunt of future fires as the Irish Faith has withstood the brunt of the fires of persecution. To us, who have the Faith from Ireland, the name of Patrick is sweet music to our ears. Here is a practical way to show our gratitude for our Irish Faith and our love for St. Patrick, by helping to raise a church worthy of our Faith and of our glorious Saint at Raetihi.

The following donations are gratefully acknowledged:—

Friend, St. Andrews, 5s; Friend, Dunedin, 10s; I. O'Hagan, Apiti, £2 2s; Mrs. and Miss Cromwell, 10s; Father Venning, £1; Mr. and Mrs. McGrane, Ohakune, 10s; P. H. Gosse, Ohakune, 5s; S. B., Taihape, £1; Friend, Masterton, 10s; Mrs. Connolly, Lower Hutt, £1; M. White, Rissington, 5s; A. Fallon, Ashburton, 5s; Friend, Dunedin, £1. Already acknowledged £38 15s; total, £47 17s.

Send a brick (5/-) to-day for St. Patrick's Church, Raetihi. All donations acknowledged in the *Tablet*. Address for donations—

FATHER GUINAN.

Ohakune.

ERIN'S CLAIMS VOICED AT TOWER HILL, LONDON

There are people who still try to persuade their conscience that all the trouble in Ireland is due to the activities of a small, but violent, "gang of criminals," who for obscure revolutionary reasons wish to see their land turned into a wilderness and a desolation (writes Rev. Claud M. Coltman in the *London Daily News*).

Those who cherish this fancy should pay a visit any Sunday afternoon to Tower Hill. There they would find convincing evidence that it is the very soul of a nation, passionate and unconquerable, exalted and heroic, against which their tanks and bombs and guns are being in vain directed.

Tower Hill, so silent and deserted on Sundays, is given over to them without opposition. The police are there, but they have an afternoon's holiday. There is order without orders amongst this great crowd, and when the demonstration is over the Hill is cleared within ten minutes.

In imagination one sees these demonstrations repeated in Canada, South Africa, Australia, and America, wherever Ireland's exiles have scattered and taken root. One wonders whether reason, justice, and light will prevail before the gathering storm bursts on the Empire.

Sunday after Sunday for many months past Tower Hill has been the rallying centre for crowds of London Irish. They come streaming up from all parts of the East End, with their bands of drums, fifes, and pipes to lead them. Standing on the historic hill, one hears the distant music of stirring Irish tunes as contingents arrive from Poplar, from as far east as Custom House and across the river from Deptford.

They march on to the Hill to voice their woes, their hopes, and their defiance. Seeing and hearing it all, one recognises that here is something spiritual and invincible. The soul of a nation is being troubled, and every Irishman, though he may never even have seen Ireland, is troubled with it.

THE SLOW ONE.

When we two walked the morning town,
You scolded me upstreet and down
For absent foot and distant eye
And it was you—oh never I—
Who knew what friend was coming by.

But now alone I thrid the street,
No-one foresees the souls I meet,
And no-one cares to censure me
For blindness or for apathy.
Not even you could this foresee!

And yet I feel you there afar
Forequest the way of saint and star
To set it in my slower head,
When I, like you, am with the dead,
For a'en in that you me foresped.

And when I reach the towered gate
That binds the city ultimate,
And stand in ignorance and fear,
You'll come to lend me eye and ear.
Ah! will you not, my dear, my dear?

—E.D., for the *N.Z. Tablet*.

The interesting fact is mentioned in the Paris edition of the *Chicago Tribune* that the British Empire has emerged from the war with accretions of territory in the total, mandated or ceded in fee, of 914,245 square miles. Thus, England has secured a great addition of nearly a million miles, whereas she denies to the Irish the right to 32 thousand square miles of their own land. The Imperialists pretend to consider it no crime to grab a million square miles of other people's territory, but when one simply demands the land for which one's race have dwelt for three thousand years, one is an immoderate rascal, according to the liars and shopkeepers.