

August Matteson.

Memoria of the Nazys of Clauricarde (1722)

[According to F. Levee, The Irish Tradition, p. 95 the anonymous author can be proved to have been Thomas O'Sullivan, a Tipperary man who haunted Lord Harley's library in the seventeen twenties.]

p. clviii (ff.) - clxx

"Concerning the Poetical Seminary, or School, from which I was carried away to clear other things that fell in my way; it was open only to such as were descended of Poets, and reputed within their Tribes: And so it was with all the Schools of that kind in the Nation, being equal to the Number of Families, that followed the said Calling: But some more or less prevented for the Difference of Professors, Convenience, with other Reasons, and seldom any come but from remote Parts, to bear a distance from Relations, and other Acquaintance, that might interrupt his Study. The Qualifications first requir'd, were reading well, writing the Mother-tongue, and a strong Memory. It was likewise necessary the Place should be in the solitary recess of a Garden, or within a Sept or Inclosure, far out of the reach of any Noise, which an Intercourse of People might otherwise occasion. The Structure was a snug, low Hut, and Beds in it at convenient Distances, each within a small Apartment, without much Furniture of any kind, save only a Table, some Seats, and a Convenience for Cloaths to hang upon. No Windows to let in the day, nor any Light at all us'd but that of Candles, and these brought in at a proper Season only. The Students upon thorough examination being first divided into Classes; wherein a regard was had to every ones Age, Genius, and the Schooling had before, if any at all; or otherwise. The Professors, (one or more as there was occasion) gave a Subject suitable to the Capacity of each Class, determining the Number of Rhemes, and clearing what was to be chiefly observ'd therein as to Syllables, Quarters, Concord, Correspondence, Termination, and Union, each of which were restrain'd by peculiar Rules. The said Subject (either one or more as aforesaid) having been given over Night, they work'd it apart each by himself upon his own Bed, the whole next Day in the Dark, till at a certain Hour in the Night, Lights being brought in, they committed it to writing. Being afterwards dress'd, and come together into a large Room, where the Masters wait'd, each Scholar gave in his Performance, which being corrected, or approv'd of (according as it requir'd) either the Same or fresh Subjects were given against the next Day. This Part being over, the Students went to their Meal, which was then serv'd up; and so, after some time spent in Conversation, and other Diversions, each retir'd to his Rest, to be ready for the Business of the next Morning. Every Saturday, and on the Eves of Festival Days, they broke up, and dispers'd themselves among the Gentlemen and rich Farmers of the Country, by whom they were very well entertain'd, and much made of, till they thought fit to take their leave, in order to reassume their Study. Nor was the People satisfi'd with affording this Hospitality alone: they sent in by turns every week from far and near, Liquors, and all manner of Provision towards the Subsistence of the Academy; so that the chief Poet was at little or no Charges, but on the contrary got very well by it, besides the Presents made him by the Students, upon their first coming, which always was at Michaelmas [= Sep. 29, a quarter-day]; and from thence till the 25th of March during the cold Season of the Year only, did that close Study last. At that time the Scholars broke up, and repair'd each to his own Country, with an Attestation of his Behaviour and Capacity, from the chief Professor, to those that had sent him.



The reason of so long a Vacation was, that being under the hard Duties of the School, the Students could not bear the intense Heat of the other Six Months. Nor did they feel much cold in the very regions of Winter; whether from the Closeness of the Place, there being but little or no passage for the cold Air to enter; or so great an occupation of the Brain, and inward Senses, that the outward were stupefied, or became blunt in their Functions, is matter of Reflection, the Fact it self being very true. But certain it is, that the Imagination, or more immediate working of the Soul, is stronger, and of greater Force, than that which depends upon the ministry of the Organs; as may be seen by Lunatic, hair-brain'd People, and Madmen, who tho' tenderly brought up, yet being in the transports of the said Distempers, undergo many Extraneous, which otherwise they could never bear; even so as to lie, and walk naked in bad Weather, without receiving much Harm by it, that can be discern'd. And in Ireland, before the Woods were destroyed, and Mountains clear'd of over-grown Heath, Furze, and other Embarrassments, nothing was commoner, than to find many of both Sexes, who from too much Melancholy, or some such prevailing Cause, occasioned by Grief, Love, Fright or eminent Danger of Life, being turn'd in their Brains, had run thither, and there liv'd in Tatters several Years, subsisting upon Herbs, Berries, raw Fruit, and the like as most of the brute Beasts do; which has given occasion to a Report of the being of wild People in that Country. Wild indeed they were, during the time; and when any of 'em were taken, (which was very difficult to compass, by reason of their great Nimbleness, and Pernicity, exceeding even that of the common Game) it was with long and extraordinary Care and Management, that they were brought to their Senses again, but ever remain'd affected or light. And perhaps if Redlam were set open, there would be such living Scarecrows to be soon heard of, and seen, in the Woods and Mountains of England also; as in the like Case it would be in other Countries.

The Reason of laying the Study aforesaid in the Dark, was doubtless to avoid the Distraction, which light, and the variety of Objects represented thereby, commonly occasions. This being prevented, the Faculties of the Soul occupied themselves solely upon the Subject in hand, and the Theme given; so that it was soon brought to some Perfection, according to the Notions or Capacities of the Students. Yet the Course was long and tedious, as we find; and it was six or seven Years, before a Mastery, or the last Degree was conferr'd; which you'll the less admire, upon considering the great Difficulty of the Art, the many kinds of their Poems, the Exactness and Nicety to be observ'd in each; which was necessary to render their Numbers soft and the Harmony agreeable and pleasing to the Ear. Examples hereoff may be seen in the Preface of Dr.

Lhuin's Irish Vocabulary, annex'd to his Archæologia Britannica mention'd above; which being in a great Variety, saves me the Trouble of enlarging upon 'em here. I have read several of the said Poems, but could not in any of 'em, observe either Dress or Fancy in Imitation of the Classick Poets, or those usually read in Latin Schools. The greatest Beauty of the Composition consisteth in a certain Contexture of corresponding Vowels and Consonants, so plac'd in every Metre, which contain'd four equal Sentences or Parts, that it made it very taking to such as had a Gust that way. For which, both Vowels and Consonants, receiv'd several Divisions; the first, (being either bare Vowels, Diphthongs, or Triphthongs,) into Broad and Small, Short, Long, Midling or Variable. The second also were no less distinguished, and set apart in Ranges, each by it self, under certain Denominations; as Changeable and Permanent, Soft and Hard, Rough and Robust, high, Weak, Barren and Hollow: The Distinctions, and several Uses whereof, especially in Verse, was a sort of Learning that requir'd time, and very necessary to any that might pretend to an Insight in Irish Poetry, which may be us'd as a strong Argument, that letters being essential thereto, especially Short and long Vowels, the Use of 'em hath accompanied it all along. -----

As every Professor, or chief Poet, depended on some Prince, or great Lord, that had endowed his Tribe, he was under strict Ties to him and Family; as to record in good Metre the Marriages, Births, Deaths, Acquisitions made in War and Peace, Exploits, and other remarkable things relating to the same. He was likewise bound to offer an Elegy, on the Decease of the said Lord, his Consort, or any of their Children; and a Marriage-song, when there should be Occasion. But as to any Epick, or Heroick Verse, to be made for any other Lord or Stranger, it was requir'd, that at least a Paræmion, or Metre therein, should be upon the Patron, or the Name in general -----

The last Part to be done, which was the Action and Pronunciation of the Poem, in presence of the Mæccenas, or the principal Person it related to, was perform'd with a great deal of Ceremony, in a Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick. The Poet himself said nothing, but directed and took care, that every body else did his Part right. The Bards having first had the Composition from him, got it well by Heart, and now pronounc'd it orderly, keeping even Pace with a Harp, touch'd upon that Occasion; no other musical Instrument being allow'd of for the said Purpose than this alone, as being Masculin, much sweeter, and fuller than any other. But the Harp, though the chief Ensign and Badge of the Country, is now neglected, and little understood in respect of what it has been -----

THE BRITISH ACADEMY

Prolegomena to the Study of the Later Irish Bards 1200-1500

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Dr Keating was born towards the end of Queen Elizabeth's Reign, in the County of Tipperary, ten miles to the South-West of Clonmell, near a Village call'd Burgess; where a Seminary or School for Irish Poetry had been kept for a considerable time. As his Parents (who were of good Reputation, and in warm Circumstances) design'd him for the Service of the Church, they took care to give him early Education, such as that part of the Country could best afford; so that being often in Company with the Rectors and Scholars of the said Seminary, by Conversation and Use, he attain'd to a competent skill in the Dialect, and Strains peculiar to that Profession: Hereof there are many Instances; and, among the ~~best~~ rest, two elegant Poems, viz. an Elegy upon the Death of the hard Desies, and a Burlesque Poem, in praise of a Servant of his own, nam'd Symon, whom he compares with the ancient Heroes. Being arriv'd at a proper Age, he took holy Orders, and went abroad to perfect his Studies. etc.

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(*Read March 22, 1911*)

ONE of the most characteristic movements of the present time is the growing interest in Keltic studies. This movement has had the effect of stimulating investigations which serve to illuminate many of the dark corners of the history and literature of Ireland and Wales. It is consequently much easier at the present day to form some idea of the general conditions of these countries in mediaeval times than it was twenty years ago. A considerable time must elapse before the whole of the literature surviving in MSS. can be published. But certain broad features are already emerging, and in many cases it is possible to sketch the outlines, leaving details to be filled in later. One of the fields which is now being opened up for the first time is the work of the later Irish bards.¹ The family poets who flourished in Ireland in the period following the Norman invasion have left behind them a considerable body of verse which is as yet all but unknown. In this paper an attempt will be made to give some account of the nature and extent of the literature of this kind produced in Ireland and Scotland between 1200 and 1500.² But before proceeding to deal with the work of the later bards in detail, it will be well for us briefly to examine the relation in which the bards stood to their Irish predecessors on the one hand, and to their contemporaries in Western Europe on the other.

It is fortunately now no longer necessary to insist upon the merits and originality of Old Irish literature. The claims of Ireland upon the attention of all students have been eloquently summed up by

¹ It is not without interest to note that some of the corresponding literature in Wales has been in print for over three-quarters of a century. The *Myvyrian Archaeology* appeared in 1801-7, and the works of Lewis Glyn Cothi were issued in 1837.

² The reason for the superior limit will appear later. The inferior limit was chosen, partly because this paper has arisen out of my studies in connexion with the Book of the Dean of Lismore, and partly because the extensive bardic literature composed between 1570 and 1620, though substantially the same, is slightly different in character owing to the changed conditions.

Prof. Kuno Meyer in the brief introduction to his *Ancient Irish Poetry*. For the space of two or three centuries the lettered classes of the island appear to have been seized with an inspiration which found expression no less in the fervid appeals of the Hibernian missionaries among Angles, Franks, and Germans, than in the glowing verses of the poets of nature. It would almost seem as if the Muse had in anticipation of the troublous years in store been doubly lavish in her gifts. At the very time that literature in the vernacular begins in France the greatest monuments of Irish poetry and romance had already taken shape, and it may be doubted if in the four centuries which succeeded the battle of Clontarf any literary form was employed which was not current in the days of Adamnan. Irish literature presents many points of similarity to that of Iceland, and one of the most remarkable features common to the two islands is, that a century or two of great splendour is followed by a long period marked by an almost uniform lack of originality or brilliance. The political decay which was caused by the storm and stress of the Viking invasions is only too clearly reflected in the literature of the centuries after the death of Brian Boruma. From about the beginning of the second millennium of our era onwards Ireland loses her high place among the literary peoples of Western Europe. With the decline of originality in the treatment of native themes it might have been possible for Irish men of letters to come under the influence of French poetry—‘the source of literary inspiration in the whole of the West.’ But, doubtless from a variety of causes, they did not. It is true that it became the fashion to translate classical and mediaeval authors into the mother-tongue. So, as is well known, we find versions among other things of Statius’ *Thebaid*, Guy of Warwick, *Bevis of Hamptoun*, and others. But these translations, or rather free adaptations, so far as is known, did not exercise any influence upon the productions of the professional literary men in Ireland. Though the greatest poets of England and Germany in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were often indebted to Romance literature for their materials, yet they stamped their own impress so thoroughly on their borrowed themes that their works became truly national. Even Wales came under this influence. For it is now definitely established that *Dafydd ab Gwilym* owes much to Provençal poets.¹ This is in striking contrast with what we find in Ireland. The loftier conception of the Arthurian epic as developed by Wolfram von Eschenbach, the allegory as represented in the *Kingis Quair* and the love-poetry as treated by

¹ See L. C. Stern, *Zeitschr. für celt. Phil.*, vii. 238 ff.

the great bard of Wales are all absent from Irish literature. Ireland stood characteristically aloof from the main currents in European literature, though this does not imply that she had no connexion with the outside world. It is therefore not a mere accident or oversight, or due to a dearth of published texts that in Prof. Saintsbury's *Periods of European Literature* Ireland is only taken into account in the first volume on the Dark Ages by Prof. Ker.¹ Hence it cannot be claimed that the period with which we are here concerned is the most fascinating period of Irish literature; in fact it is in some ways rather the reverse. Nevertheless, although in the three centuries which elapsed between the arrival of Strongbow and the accession of Henry VII there is little or no literature of supreme excellence, there was an almost countless array of poets, and the work of these men is of the highest importance if we wish to understand the social conditions of the period over the greater part of the island. The compositions of the later bards are almost our only source of information, if we desire to form any idea of the intellectual horizon of the better situated classes outside the English pale.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century down to the middle of the seventeenth, when the steady advance of the English power in the island practically put an end to native learning and old literary forms, the professional bard played a very important part in Irish society. As was also the case in Wales, the English Government realized only too clearly the power wielded by the men who followed the poet's calling and endeavoured to put an end to them.² Although bardic compositions only really become frequent in the thirteenth century the fraternity had existed from time immemorial. At an earlier period the bard had been looked down upon by the more learned *fili*. According to the metrical tract published by Thurneysen the bards were divided into a number of grades like the higher order, but as they corresponded more to the strolling minstrels of other countries, they were not able to claim payment for their compositions

¹ Icelandic literature is likewise only noticed in this volume.

² Cp. the entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, a. 1415: 'Lord Furnival . . . harried a large contingent of Ireland's poets, as: O'Daly of Meath, Hugh Oge Magrath, Duffach son of the learned Eochaidh, and Maurice O'Daly. In the ensuing summer too he raided O'Daly of Corcomrua.' See O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 341. In 1403 a statute was passed forbidding the bards to follow their vocation in North Wales, cp. Gweirydd ap Rhys, *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymreig*, p. 195. An earlier attempt to suppress the vagrant bards had been made in the reign of Edward I. It should, however, be stated that the English Government did not scruple to employ the Irish bards to satirize their late patrons when an opportunity presented itself.

according to a fixed tariff as in the case of the *fili*.¹ In the huge miscellaneous MSS. which have come down to us the *fili* occupies the stage to the exclusion of others. The style of composition beloved of this class during the tenth and eleventh centuries was the lengthy historical or genealogical poem, often a mere catalogue of names, in which their learning could be displayed. And reams and reams of this ponderous stuff have been preserved in the Book of Leinster and elsewhere. Hence it is a mere chance if the verses of a gifted son of the muses who had not qualified for the highest degree in the poetic order have come down. During the last few years we have become familiar with the delightful little poems by young clerics and others which Kuno Meyer has rescued from oblivion, and among the despised bards in olden times there must have been many endowed with the gift of song who are unrepresented in the meagre body of spontaneous verse which has been preserved.

The office of *fili* appears to have gradually decayed during the Viking period and the age of lawlessness by which it was followed, though the stages are by no means clear. Meanwhile the humbler bard, advancing in dignity, assumed many of the functions of the learned order. Of the earlier court-poetry comparatively few complete specimens have survived (*infra*, p. 12), and of the little that is known, scarcely anything has been published. It will be seen later that this court-poetry is the oldest literary form in the straight metres with which we are acquainted in Ireland. Such compositions, apart from fragments, are not at all well represented in our surviving MSS. until we reach the time of Brian Boruma, connected with whose court were the well-known poets Erard Mac Coisse and Mac Liag.

In the century and a half which elapsed between the death of Brian and the arrival of the Normans there is a curious gap in this kind of literature. But from the time of Cathal O'Conor (*d.* 1224) down to the beginning of the seventeenth century there is a more or less uninterrupted stream of bardic verse. The island was divided up into the domains of a large number of feudal lords, each of whom—at any rate in the north, west, and south—would have his family bard. Such men might attach themselves to one patron for a long period, but most of them appear to have wandered from mansion to mansion as was the case in France, Germany, and in the Scandinavian North.²

¹ *Irische Texte*, iii. 107. Thurneysen points out that in the metrical texts all memory of a separate metrical system for *fili* and bard has disappeared (*l. c.*, p. 167).

² In Wales the bards had fixed patrons and places of abode. But in addition they made a tour of the country once in three years. This practice was known as *clera*. Cp. Stephens, *Literature of the Kymry*², p. 89.

In mediaeval Ireland all the learned professions were hereditary, and the poet's calling formed no exception to the rule.¹ Thus certain bardic families can be traced for 200 or 300 years or even longer, as in the case of the O'Dalys, the O'Higgins, the Macawards, and several others. In addition to the historical and genealogical lore which they had taken over from the older *filii*, the bards were in all probability the repositories of as much of the old heroic stories as was remembered. To them we perhaps owe in large measure the development of the Ossianic cycle. And to them we certainly owe many, if not all, of the heroic ballads dealing with Finn and his warriors. However, they did not content themselves with the composition of court-poetry and heroic ballads. Being the encyclopaedias of the day, they also wrote a large number of religious poems. At the present moment it is not easy to estimate how much of this later bardic literature has survived, as scarcely anything has been published. It will be well, therefore, to enumerate as briefly as possible our chief sources of information. The numerous late MSS. which contain a few poems dating from the period with which we are concerned are not noticed here. Among the collections preserved in Ireland the following are of the greatest importance²:—

1. THE BOOK OF HY MANE, a large vellum written about 1360, which has recently found a resting-place in the Royal Irish Academy. It contains religious poems by Godfrey O'Clery, Donnchad Mor O'Daly (*d.* 1244), Maelmuire O'Lennain, and others. A description of the volume was given by Kuno Meyer in the *Archiv für celt. Lexik.*, ii. 138-46. Five important poems of the period from this MS. are printed by the same scholar in *Archiv*, iii, p. 234 ff.

2. THE YELLOW BOOK OF LECAN, into which was inserted a *duanaire* or song-book written by Seanchan son of Maelmuire O'Mulconry in 1473. This invaluable collection, which is however in many places very difficult to decipher, contains about three score poems chiefly by Tadhg Óg O'Higgin (*d.* 1448) and another writer, to my knowledge otherwise unknown, Tuathal Macaward. Thirty of the compositions in this collection occur elsewhere in Dublin, Edinburgh, and Oxford.³ The miscellany is of interest as showing that it was not unusual to gather together the works of one or two bards to form a book. Thanks to the considerable number of his poems preserved in the Yellow Book we are able to follow Tadhg's movements for a period of years, which

¹ Prof. J. E. Lloyd, in his *History of Wales*, vol. ii, p. 529, quotes evidence which seems to show that a similar state of affairs existed in Wales.

² Collections containing poems addressed to one family are mentioned later (p. 14 f.).

³ These I hope to publish shortly.

is scarcely possible in the case of any other poet previous to the time of Elizabeth.

3. THE BOOK OF FERMOY, in the Royal Irish Academy, written in part in the fifteenth century. It contains thirty bardic poems; several addressed to the Roche family date from the fifteenth century.¹

4. A paper MS. belonging to the O'Connor Don, written about 1630 in the Netherlands for a certain Captain Sorley Mac Donnell, who was taking part in the campaign in the Low Countries. We have much reason to be grateful to this keen lover of Irish letters, as this is not the only collection of poems which was copied for him. To his interest in late mediæval verse we owe the preservation of Finn's Song-book and the collection of poems addressed to the O'Donnells, now in the Royal Library at Brussels.²

5. THE O'GARA MS., in the Royal Irish Academy, written on paper at Antwerp and Lisle in 1656 by Fergal Dubh O'Gara, a priest O.S.A., whom Cromwell's dissolution of the religious houses had forced to seek refuge in the Low Countries. A description of the contents of the copy made by O'Scannail is given in O'Grady's *Catalogue of Irish MSS. in the British Museum*, p. 339 ff.

6. A seventeenth-century vellum in Trinity College, Dublin (H. 3. 19), consisting in the main of religious poems. See Abbott's *Catalogue*, p. 361.

7. A small paper MS. of the end of the sixteenth or beginning of the seventeenth century, in the Library of the Franciscans on Merchants' Quay, Dublin.

Of the Bodleian collection of Irish MSS. Rawlinson B 514 contains forty-nine bardic poems, several of which do not occur elsewhere to my knowledge.³ The British Museum MS. Add. 19995 (O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 328) has unfortunately suffered so much from the ravages of time that the interesting unique poems preserved in it cannot be satisfactorily made out. Gaelic MS. No. xxix in the Advocates' Library (a sixteenth-century vellum) contains ten religious poems by

¹ See the description given by J. H. Todd in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 1870. Of the non-religious poems only two have so far been published. The one beginning *Baile suthain síoth Eamhna* is printed, with a translation by Hennessy, in vol. iii of Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, p. 410 ff. The address to David O'Keeffe has been recently edited and translated by Miss Knott, *Ériu*, iv. 209 ff.

² The contents of this book were described by Kuno Meyer in *Ériu*, iv. 183-90. He overlooked the following half-illegible note at the end: 'Sorle mac Donnell Captin of muskedtre the best of the Irish wither he will or nott witnes my hand John mac Donell and so till deth . . . and so he shall . . . till deth.' Elsewhere the date 'xii day of Sept. 1622' is given.

³ A list of first lines is given in the Appendix.

Tadhg Óg O'Higgin. No. lxiv in the same collection is a very much torn paper volume which preserves poems rarely found elsewhere.¹ But the most important miscellany of poems of the period outside Ireland is unquestionably the strange medley known as the Book of the Dean of Lismore. As regards contents the Dean's Book resembles two of the volumes written for Capt. Sorley Mac Donnell in the Netherlands about 1630, i. e. half the book is taken up with heroic poetry, for which see the editions by Skene and M'Lauchlan (1862) and Alex. Cameron (1892). The unpublished half consists mainly of encomiastic and religious poetry by Irish and Scottish bards. Other styles of composition, notably satire, are also represented to a degree unknown in contemporary Irish MSS. This Edinburgh book preserves a large number of compositions not found in Irish collections, but it is perhaps chiefly interesting to us as showing the kind of verse in which a Highland gentleman delighted at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

As the compositions of the later bards fall in the main into two distinct classes, it will be convenient to treat the two divisions separately.

ENCOMIASTIC VERSE.

The panegyric has doubtless existed in one form or another in every country in Europe ever since the beginnings of an ordered state of society. Our common conception of a poet is that of a needy man dependent on the bounty of his patron, and if the vanity of so great a monarch as Louis XIV could be gratified by the eulogies of a Molière written to order, can it be a matter for wonder that the petty princelings of other lands should delight in listening to the extravagant praises of their humbler bards? Court-poetry, as it is often termed, is known to have been practised from very early times among the Kelts and Teutons. It is held by Mr. Chadwick and others that the Old English epic developed out of the panegyric, but such early encomiastic verse has not been preserved in any Teutonic language,² though there are indications that it once existed. In later times this species of poetry was only developed to a high degree by the northern branch of the Teutonic race, more particularly in Norway and Iceland. The Old Norse encomia present such close analogies to the work of the later bards in Ireland that it will be more convenient to speak of them later.

¹ A list of first lines is given in the Appendix.

² The Old High German *Ludwigslied* is later than the date commonly assigned to Bragi.

In Gaul it is possible to trace the composition of encomiastic poetry at a considerably earlier date than among the Teutons. Diodorus Siculus, writing about the middle of the first century B. C., says: 'Among the Gauls there are lyric poets called bards. They compose praises for some and satires on others and chant them to the accompaniment of a kind of lyre.'¹ A few decades earlier a Greek traveller relates the story of a bard who chanted the praises of Lovernios, king of the Arverni. This Lovernios was the father of Bituitos, who was sent as a prisoner to Rome in 121 B. C. To celebrate a great banquet a special building had been constructed, as in the well-known Irish story of Bricriu's Feast. The bard in question arrived too late for the festivities, ran after the royal chariot, chanting a poem in praise of the king and at the same time deploring the unfortunate accident which had detained him. 'The king threw him a bag of gold, which he picked up, exclaiming, 'The track of thy chariot on the ground brings gold and benefits to men,' a sentiment very similar to what we find in the later Irish poetry.²

Encomiastic verse of a highly rhetorical character bulks very largely in the poetic literature of Wales. Leaving out of account the poems printed in Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, purporting to be addressed to Urien Rheged and others, as of uncertain date, the section of the *Myzirian Archæology* entitled Gogynfeirdd comprises a large number of panegyrics by poets who flourished between 1120 and 1370. The most voluminous writers, such as Cynddelw, Llywarch ab Llywelyn and Prydydd Bychan, flourished almost without exception before the final subjection of Gwynedd by Edward I. The early Welsh bards were fond of indulging in high-flown language, and employed numerous metaphors and turns of expression which disappeared with them. The loss of national independence naturally robbed them of their chief theme. With the fall of Llywelyn the patriotic fire which glows in the lines of the afore-mentioned Llywarch becomes extinguished. But the formal panegyric survived the downfall

¹ Εἰσὶ δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ποιηταὶ μελῶν, οὓς βάρδοις ὀνομάζουσιν. οὗτοι δὲ μετ' ὀργάνων ταῖς λύραις ὁμοίων ᾄδοντες, οὓς μὲν ὑμνοῦσιν, οὓς δὲ βλασφημοῦσι, Diodorus 5, 31, 2. Cf. also Ammianus 15, 9, 8 'Et bardi quidem fortia virorum illustrium facta heroicis composita versibus cum dulcibus lyrae modulis cantitarunt'. Other passages in Holder, *Altcelt. Sprachschatz*, s. bardos.

² Ἀφορίσαντος δ' αὐτοῦ προθεσίαν ποτὲ τῆς θοίνης, ἀφυστερήσαντά τινα τῶν βαρβάρων ποιητῆν ἀφικέσθαι, καὶ συναντήσαντα μετὰ φθῆς ὑμνεῖν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἵπεροχὴν, ἑαυτὸν δ' ἀποθρηνεῖν ὅτι ὑστέρηκε, τὸν δὲ τερφθέντα θυλάκιον αἰτήσαι χρυσίου, καὶ ῥίψαι αὐτῷ παρατρέχοντι, ἀνελόμενον δ' ἐκεῖνον πάλιν ὑμνεῖν, λέγοντα, διότι τὰ ἴχνη τῆς γῆς, ἐφ' ἧς ἄρματηλατεῖ, χρυσὸν καὶ εὐεργεσίας ἀνθρώποις φέρει, Athenæus 4, 37. See Holder, s. *Lovernios*.

of the native princes, though in a somewhat emasculated form. Thus Dafydd ab Gwilym praises the liberality of Ivor Hael in the days of Chaucer, Lewis Glyn Cothi and Gutto'r Glyn celebrate their aristocratic patrons at the time of the Wars of the Roses, and the bounty of the Vaughans, Wynnes, Lloyds, and others is extolled by William Llŷn under Mary and Elizabeth. The productions of these and other writers of necessity suggest comparison with contemporary verse in Ireland, and the general similarity will be noticed later. Perhaps the most striking difference between the Irish and Welsh compositions of the period is to be found in the fact that the Irish princes celebrated were virtually independent. The martial fame of the Welsh nobles who figure in the poems of Lewis Glyn Cothi and Gutto'r Glyn was gained in fighting under the banner of an English leader, whilst Tadhg Óg O'Higgin's patrons are chiefly extolled for the losses they have inflicted one upon the other. With the lapse of time the life of the Welsh nobles became too humdrum to stir the poets to great rhetorical flights. Hence we are frequently treated to exaggerated accounts of extravagance in food and drink. Thus Dafydd Nanmor, who flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century, sings of a feast given by Rhys of Towyn:—

'Though Rhys owned on his lands one hundred thousand ploughs and three hundred vineyards with wine and a hundred mills a-grinding, though the earth were bread or the taste of water like good Osey, 'twere a wonder were water and earth to last three days at his banquet.'¹

At some future time when a fair number of Irish specimens have been edited, it will be an interesting task to institute a comparison between the panegyric verse of Ireland and Wales. In this manner much light might be thrown upon the state of civilization in the two countries.

Of all the lands in the west of Europe, the panegyric was most extensively practised in Ireland. This may be due in some measure to a fondness on the part of the Irish for the kind of rhetoric which

¹ Cp. W. J. Gruffydd, *Y Flodeugerdd Newydd*, p. 96. In James and Evans' *Hen Gwndidau*, a poet, singing the praises of Sir Walter Herbert, says:

*Ny bu ve wys, yn llys brenin
o bob rhyw rhost, vwy gost kegin
bir kwrw er bod, bragod gasgwin
bara bwrdd tal, nys mal melin.*—l. c. p. 21.

That these exaggerated accounts of feasting had some foundation in actual fact is shown, if other evidence were wanting, by the description of the hospitality at the coming of age of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn in 1770, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 3rd ser. vol. x, p. 334.

is almost inevitably associated with encomiastic poetry, but the chief cause is doubtless to be sought in the political conditions. In later mediaeval times much of Ireland remained largely unaffected by the progress which we find in most Latin and Teutonic countries. Consequently an archaic type of society lingered on over the greater part of the island until the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹ This is perhaps the chief interest of Ireland for the student if he can succeed in detaching intellectual interest from patriotic sentiment. And the archaic character of Irish civilization is reflected to a certain extent in the literature. In a lecture delivered before the British Academy some time ago, my friend and colleague Prof. Ridgeway emphasized the value of the curious document known as the Book of Rights, to which it would be difficult to find a parallel anywhere else in Europe. And this encomiastic poetry, though not by any means confined to Ireland, is one of those survivors of a stage of civilization which had run its course, one might almost say, in England, France, and Germany, before our literary documents in the vernacular begin. The panegyric can be better studied in Ireland than in any other European country. In Scandinavia it is possible to trace similar court-poetry from about 800 to 1200, whereas in Ireland it begins earlier and continues down to the first half of the seventeenth century. The curious thing in Ireland is, that some of the earliest poems in the rhyming metres with which we are acquainted, and the last poems in the old measures about 1630, belong to this class. The earliest panegyrics were doubtless the archaic alliterative rhetorics, as they are termed, which are found imbedded in the oldest Irish epics. It is held by some scholars that the epic in Ireland originally consisted of a string of such rhetorics² in declamatory alliterative prose with short narrative passages connecting them. And the fact that the rhyming metres were introduced from Latin before the epic had attained its highest development, thus destroying the older system, may explain in some measure the amorphous state of the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*.³ In Teutonic, it should be observed, the influence of Latin metrics was not felt for at least three centuries after the date of their introduction into Ireland. It should also be noted that it was apparently only the archaic rhetorics which led up to the regular epic

¹ Cp. the remarks by Mr. Orpen in his *Norman Conquest of Ireland*, vol. ii, p. 328.

² Cp. the introduction to Windisch's edition of the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, p. lxxxi.

³ On the analogy of the Icelandic sagas, however, it would be legitimate to argue that the form of the Irish epic is secondary. This must remain an open question unless it should become possible to derive further evidence from Early Brythonic or Gaulish.

in Ireland. Although we can trace the panegyric addressed to living princes for a thousand years, no great epic poetry resulted from it. The Ulster cycle determined for all time the form of the Irish epic. The germs of the epic in verse may be seen in the Fenian ballads and the *Siaburcharpat Conculaimn*. Otherwise the histories of the exploits of Cellachan of Cashel and Turlough O'Connor are in prose, and the story of the great struggle of Clontarf, instead of giving rise to a *chanson de geste* with Brian as its hero, became merged in the *omnium gatherum* of Ossianic matter with the Battle of Ventry as the result.

Irish tradition regards a poem by Cairpre, son of Etan, addressed to Fiachna, son of Delbaeth, as the first panegyric composed in the island.¹ The subject of this eulogy lived according to the synchronists of the ninth and tenth centuries some seventeen centuries before our era. That this poem is a fiction of a late date is demonstrated by the fact that it is in the rhyming metres. Otherwise the oldest complete composition of this nature is, as far as I am aware, an address to an indeterminable Leinster princeling named Aed, contained in the ninth-century Codex S. Pauli in Carinthia. The poem contains eight stanzas, the last six of which run according to the version given by Stokes and Strachan:²

Son of Diarmait dear to me, though it be to be asked, it is easy, his praise is more beautiful than treasures, it will be sung in lays by me.

Beloved the name—they are no new fames—of Aed who deserves not reproach : the pure form—renown that is not hidden—to whom lovely Liffey belongs.

Descendant of Muredach at every time, rock of choice for noble dignity : a descendant—no evil person was found, of the kings of the clans of Cualu.

The lordship, this is his heritage, every good to him of gods or ungod : the scion of a family without reproach, of the handsome kings of Marg.

He is the bole of a great tree—noble dignity : for battle he is a pre-eminent stock : he is the sapling of silver—high worth—of the children of a hundred kings, of a hundred queens.

At ale poems are chanted : fine (genealogical) ladders are climbed : melodious bardisms modulate through pools of liquor the name of Aed. *

But it is possible to trace the panegyric in Ireland still further back beyond the eighth century. In the collections of Irish Annals old poems are sometimes cited in support of statements, and even the Annals of the Four Masters, compiled in the seventeenth century, contain stanzas which, from the language, must go back to the Old Irish period. The possibility that some of the oldest verse preserved in Irish may go back to the sixth century has been pleaded by Kuno

¹ Yellow Book of Lecan, 16^b, 28.

² *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, ii, p. 295.

Meyer and the late Prof. Zimmer,¹ but this requires further investigation. In the seventh century we are on safer ground. At the year 645 the Four Masters quote stanzas bearing on the vengeance taken for Ragallach, son of the king of Connaught, by his brother Cathal :

He slew six men and fifty, he committed sixteen devastations.
I had my share like another in the revenge of Raghallach,
I have the grey beard in my hand of Maelbrighde son of Mothlachan.²

I see no reason for doubting that this may be a contemporary description. Entire poems dealing with the eighth century and with the Viking period are hardly as frequent as one might expect. However, a considerable number of fragments have been preserved.³ Stanzas from such poems are frequently quoted as illustrations in the eleventh-century treatise on versification. K. Meyer has familiarized us with the ninth-century song to Cerball's Sword by Dallan mac Móire.⁴ Immediately preceding this in the Book of Leinster is another poem by the same author addressed to the same prince of Ossory :

Cerball of the curragh of the lovely Liffey, overthrower of battles on Conn's Half—when he beheld his beautiful countenance Cnogba Corr fell dead.

Our friend and our darling, of lovely aspect, in his hand a spear ; great famous son of Muiregan, with triumphs, with glory.

The triumph of beauty, the triumph of noble race are held by Cerball of Carnsore, the triumph of murderous sword-red battle, the triumph of raiment, the triumph of weapons.

Stately scion, pure, bright, and fair, he will seize mighty Banba ; fair-sheltering bush, most glorious brave man, that is the description of Donn's descendant.

The enumeration of his triumphs shall be heard till Doom ; his battles and his fights, all shall hear them from me.

Whereupon Dallan with true Irish love of detail proceeds to enumerate forty battles in which his patron had taken part.⁵

Although the body of panegyric verse preserved in Ireland is probably of very much greater bulk than that of the Scandinavian North, there is unfortunately nothing corresponding to the Skaldatal. This document gives a list of the northern rulers with the skalds

¹ *Zeitschr. f. celt. Phil.*, viii. 179 f., and *Sitzungsber. d. kön. preuss. Akad. d. Wiss.*, 1910, p. 1031 ff.

² For still earlier verses which may be contemporary with the events see the Annals of Tigernach, *Rev. Celt.*, xvii, pp. 168, 173.

³ Prof. Kuno Meyer informs me that he has counted portions of no less than 130 such poems composed before the year 1000.

⁴ *Rev. Celt.*, xx, p. 7 ff. ; *Ancient Irish Poetry*, p. 72.

⁵ The whole poem is edited and translated by K. Meyer in *Rev. Celt.*, xxix. 210 ff.

who sang their praises beginning with Bragi (c. 800) down to 1260, thus covering the whole period of court-poetry in Norway, which came to an end in the thirteenth century. Several Irish compositions dating from the time of Brian Boruma have been published, e. g. the lament of Eochaid on the death of King Aed O'Neill (d. 1004)¹ and another by Erard Mac Coisse on the death of King Malachy II (d. 1022).² In an interesting poetical dialogue between Erard and Mac Liag the generosity of Brian Boruma is compared with the liberality of Tadhg O'Kelly.³ The latter is also celebrated by Mac Liag in four other poems.⁴ Mac Liag's poem on Kincora has long been familiar.⁵ Several others await an editor.⁶ It is unnecessary to quote any specimens from this period as the ideas expressed are very similar to those found in later compositions.

At the present moment there is a gulf separating the men just mentioned from the poets of the thirteenth century beginning with Murray O'Daly and Gilbride Macnamee. The surviving compositions of the writers enumerated by O'Reilly consist mainly of genealogical and historical pieces, and very few specimens of panegyric are known to me from this age of turmoil. The Book of Fermoy preserves a poem composed before 1095 and addressed to Ragnall, son of Godfrey, King of the Hebrides. It is printed by Skene in the Appendix to vol. iii of *Celtic Scotland*, who holds, however, that the prince celebrated is Reginald, son of Godred, Norwegian King of Man and the Isles from 1188 to 1226.⁷ The Dean's Book has a poem beginning *Dursin tosg Dunche vac Vrane*,⁸ addressed to Donnchad, son of Brian Boruma, but whether it was actually composed at the time is a matter of uncertainty.

In his recently published *Norman Conquest of Ireland*, Mr. Orpen claims to have shown that the period following Strongbow's invasion

¹ The text is printed by K. Meyer in *Archiv f. celt. Lexik.*, iii. 304; for a translation see his *Ancient Irish Poetry*, p. 75.

² The text is printed by K. Meyer in *Archiv f. celt. Lexik.*, iii. 305; for a translation see his *Ancient Irish Poetry*, p. 77.

³ Printed by K. Meyer in *Zeitschr. f. celt. Phil.*, viii. 218 ff.

⁴ K. Meyer, *Z. f. c. P.*, viii. 222-31.

⁵ Hardiman, *Irish Minstrelsy*, ii. 196.

⁶ O'Curry (*Manners and Customs*, ii. p. 117 ff.) enumerates three eulogies of Brian and his family. Extant poems by Erard in praise of Malachy, Maelruanaidh, and Fergal O'Ruairc, are also mentioned by the same scholar (*ibid.*, pp. 127-9).

⁷ It is a curious fact that the test of language fails almost completely in dealing with poetry composed between 1000 and 1600.

⁸ Macgregor, No. LXXIII. (This refers to the number of the poem in my forthcoming edition of the unpublished portion of The Dean's Book.)

was one of peace and prosperity, thus forming a notable contrast to the preceding era of turbulence and unrest. And it is probably not without significance that the stream of encomiastic verse commences to flow steadily once more under the rule of Cathal O'Conor (*d.* 1224) and Donnchad Cairbrech O'Brien (*d.* 1242).¹ This stream, it might be said, continues unbroken down to the first half of the seventeenth century.

From the short description already given of the *duanaire* or song-book in the Yellow Book of Lecan, as well as from other indications, it is clear that it was not unusual for the poems of one or more bards to be collected together to form a book. Hence a large miscellany of bardic poetry might arise by uniting the contents of several such books in one volume. And portions of our extant MSS. doubtless took shape in this manner.

But there is abundant evidence for another method of preserving or collecting bardic compositions. In Wales where the bards periodically went on circuit, the poet was expected to leave a sample of his versification behind him as a return for the hospitality he had received. In this way many Welsh MSS. came to be written² and the same thing may well have occurred in Ireland. This is rather suggested by the contents of the Book of Fermoy. Certain it is that in a number of cases we find a cycle of poems addressed by different authors to the ruler or rulers of one clan collected together. The earliest of such family books now in existence is probably the Book of the Mac Govern or Mac Gaurans (Mac Samhradhain), a fourteenth-century vellum, in the possession of the O'Conor Don, a fragment of a larger book. A century or so later comes the Book of Fermoy which contains some fifteen poems on the Roche family. The next in point of date is preserved in the Advocates' Library, and has remained unnoticed hitherto. It consists of some ten battered leaves of vellum on which are entered half a dozen very difficult encomia by different persons addressed to an O'Reilly chief who flourished about 1500.³

¹ These princes were probably more firmly established than their predecessors owing to the intimate and friendly character of their relations with the English. See Chaps. XVIII-XXII of Mr. Orpen's work. Cathal O'Conor is celebrated by Gilbride Macnamee in the poem beginning *Tainic an Croibhdhery go Cruachain* (edited and translated by me in K. Meyer's *Miscellany*, p. 167 ff.), and by Murray O'Daly in a piece beginning *Fada in chabair a Cruachain* (O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 337). For poems to Donnchad Cairbrech O'Brien see O'Curry, *M. and C.*, iii. 270 f., 281. The verses in praise of O'Donnell by Murray O'Daly are printed in the Appendix to this paper.

² Stephens, *Literature of the Kymry*², p. 137; W. J. Gruffydd in article 'Celt—Language and Literature', *Encycl. Britannica*, 11th ed., p. 643, col. 2.

³ Gaelic MS. No. XXX.

As far as I am aware none of these particular compositions occurs elsewhere. In a MS. in the Royal Library at Brussels there are thirty poems addressed to the O'Donnells. Most of these refer to chieftains who lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but a few are somewhat earlier in date.¹ A collection of some three score poems on the O'Byrnes made between 1570 and 1615 only survives in a transcript which a fellow of Trinity College had made for him in the eighteenth century.² A few years ago the Cambridge University Library acquired a miscellaneous Irish vellum MS. containing, besides other matter, a score of leaves which originally belonged to a large book of poems on the O'Reillys. The twenty poems which have survived are almost all addressed to a Philip O'Reilly who died in 1598. Similarly the Royal Library at Copenhagen possesses a paper volume containing about thirty pieces addressed to a chief of the M'Guire's who lived about 1600.³ As it may reasonably be inferred that each princely house took care to maintain a collection of the eulogies of their race, it is possible for us to realize how many of these old books there must have been in existence and now irretrievably lost. The O'Briens, the O'Kellys, the O'Conors, and the O'Neills,⁴ not to mention others, must all have possessed similar monuments of bardic tribute to the glory of their ancestry, but these have disappeared without trace except in so far as some of the more highly prized of the pieces were thought worthy of a place in other collections. Thus it is evident that the person who wrote the Dean's Book had relations with some bard or bards who had access to a miscellany of poems in praise of the Mac Dermott family.

As our typical bard of the pre-Tudor period we are obliged to take Tadhg Óg O'Higgin, since he is the only one whose career can be followed in any detail. The year of his birth is unknown and his poems give us no domestic details.⁵ In one of them he laments the death of his elder brother and teacher Fergal O'Higgin⁶ who is not directly mentioned by the annalists. We first find him in 1397 in Ulster with Niall Óg O'Neill of Cinel Eogain.⁷ In 1403 he sings a

¹ See *Ériu*, iv. 183-90.

² D. Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*, p. 472.

³ For an account of this MS. see the description given by Stern in *Z. f. c. P.*, ii. 325-65.

⁴ Since the above was written I learn that a late collection of poems addressed to the O'Neills of Clannaboy is being edited for the Irish Texts Society.

⁵ He was the son of Tadhg ollam in poetry (*d.* 1391) son of Gillacolum.

⁶ See O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 366. For a poem by this Fergal see Appendix, p. 49.

⁷ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 363 f.

dirge over Tadhg O'Connor Sligo with whom he had evidently spent some time.¹ In 1410 he laments the death of Tadhg O'Kelly.² At some date between 1412 and 1420 he composed a poem to James, Earl of Ormonde, urging him to return to Ireland (Y. B. L., 379^b, 10 ff.). He was on terms of great intimacy with Ulick Mac William, whose death in 1424 is lamented in a lengthy poem,³ and somewhere between 1426 and 1438 he visited Tadhg O'Brien.⁴ More than once he seems to have been attached to the O'Donnells.⁵ The following princes have one poem each addressed to them in the Yellow Book—Mulrony O'Carroll, lord of Ely, who died in 1443 (380^a, 31 ff.), Thomas M'Guire who became prince of Fermanagh in 1430 (384^a, 17 ff.), and Henry O'Neill, Lord of Tyrone (385^a, 9 ff.) At the year 1448 we find this entry in the Annals of the Four Masters: 'Teige Oge, the son of Teige, son of Gilla-colaim O'Higgin, chief Preceptor of the Poets of Ireland and Scotland, died after penance, at Cill-Connla,⁶ and was interred in the monastery of Ath-leathan.'⁷ There is no direct evidence that Tadhg was ever in Scotland, but it might almost be inferred from the popularity of his poems in the Highlands as evidenced by the MSS. Against this, however, must be set a poem (Y. B. L., 387^b, 7 ff.) addressed to the Lord of the Isles in which he acknowledges the receipt of a present of a golden beaker. At the same time he pleads the risks of the journey and the political situation at home which requires his presence, as an excuse for not acceding to an invitation to visit Alba.

The above are the houses known to have been celebrated by Tadhg. They do, as a matter of fact, include most of the families commonly addressed by other bards in the period with which we are dealing. A complete survey of this literature will be impossible until all the

¹ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 364, and Y. B. L., 388^b, 3.

² O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 365. For other poems addressed by Tadhg to the same family cf. Y. B. L., 383^b, 9, 389^b, 12.

³ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 365, and the poem beginning *Fuda in ráithisi romum*, Y. B. L., 377^b, 30. In a poem beginning *Toghaidh Dia nech na naeidin*, Y. B. L., 382^b, 8, he celebrates Walter son of Thomas son of Edmund Mac William Burke. According to the Annals of Ulster Walter was made MacWilliam in 1402. The Four Masters record his death in 1440. There is no means of fixing accurately the date of composition of this poem. Edmund, Walter's successor, is celebrated in a poem in Y. B. L., 386^a, 44. ⁴ Y. B. L., 389^a, 1.

⁵ Toirdhealbhadh-an-Fhiona (d. 1423) appears to be addressed in a poem beginning *La a Teamraigh ac Toirdealbhadh* (Y. B. L., 373^b, 1), and a piece commencing *Foillsigh do mirbuile a Muire* (Y. B. L., 373^a, 8) takes the form of a prayer to the Virgin to deliver Niall Garbh O'Donnell (d. 1439) from captivity in London, where he was sent in 1435.

⁶ In the barony of Dunmore, co. Galway.

⁷ Strade Abbey, near Foxford.

treasures of the Royal Irish Academy have been described. Nevertheless it may perhaps be as well to give some account of what is readily accessible.

Leinster would be almost entirely unrepresented between 1200 and 1500, were it not for the fact that at least one poem has come down addressed to the well-known Art Mac Morrough.¹ The renown of such a prince must have attracted many bards to his court, but perhaps owing to political conditions as good as none have survived. Further west in Munster we find the O'Keeffes sparingly represented. Miss Knott has recently published an address to David O'Keeffe,² whilst a poem in praise of Conchobar O'Keeffe (thirteenth century), which I have not encountered in Irish collections, is preserved in the Dean's Book.³ The Roches, as already stated, are celebrated in nearly a score of poems in the Book of Fermoy. The O'Gara MS. preserves a few compositions addressed to Mac Carthy Riach,⁴ but other families such as the O'Sullivans and the O'Loghlins of Clare only appear in bardic compositions of the sixteenth century. For a poem addressed to Gerald, Earl of Desmond, see O'Reilly's *Irish Writers*, p. cxxxiii.⁵ Other clans which are represented by a considerable number of eulogies at the beginning of the seventeenth century, such as the Mac Sweeneys,⁶ either do not occur at all before 1500, or only very sparingly, as in the case of the O'Reillys, who only appear in the little Edinburgh book already mentioned. Poems in praise of the O'Rourkes are likewise few and far between in the period in question. The Dean's Book preserves one poem addressed to this house which I have failed to discover in any Irish collection.⁷ Other families represented by isolated pieces are the O'Melaghins,⁸ the O'Maddens,⁹ the Mac Mahons of Oriel,¹⁰ and the O'Mornas or Mac Gilmurry.¹¹ The

¹ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 359.

² *Ériu*, iv. 209.

³ Macgregor, No. XXXIV. See also O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 443.

⁴ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 358.

⁵ By Geoffrey Finn O'Daly, now contained in 23 D 14 (R. I. A.). This Earl Gerald was well known in his day as a patron of letters and as a writer of Irish verse. There is a short poem attributed to him in the Book of Fermoy, and several others are contained in the Dean's Book. A century later a member of a kindred house, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, had in his train a bard named de Nelan, as we are informed by Holinshed. It was under the influence of this man's declamation in the Dublin council-chamber that Silken Thomas finally decided to rise in rebellion.

⁶ O'Grady, *Cat.*, pp. 386, 420-5, 464.

⁷ Macgr. No. XXXVII.

⁸ O'Grady, *Cat.*, pp. 359, 362.

⁹ O'Reilly, *Irish Writers*, p. cxxxiii.

¹⁰ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 404 (see also p. 471).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 345 = Macgregor, No. XXXV.

fortunes of several families naturally fluctuated considerably with the unsettled state of society. Hence it is not surprising to find that a house like the Mac Dermotts which figures somewhat prominently in the Dean's Book¹ should, as far as I am aware, disappear entirely from this class of literature after 1500. For the sake of completeness we may mention that a British Museum MS. preserves poems in praise of Sir Richard fitz Walter de Burgo, second Earl of Ulster (d. 1326), and Sir William M'Keorish de Bermingham.² Another MS. not yet catalogued has eulogies of John Cantwell, Archbishop of Cashel (d. about 1466), James Pursell, Baron of Louth, and Tadhg Mac Donough.³

Scotland is of course much worse situated than Ireland. No doubt the Irish bards who visited North Britain composed countless panegyrics in praise of Highland chiefs. But the whole of this literature has unfortunately disappeared with the exception of what is preserved in the Dean's Book. As far as I am aware, the Irish collections only contain three pieces addressed to princes outside Ireland, one in the O'Gara MS. to John Macdonald of the Isles by Donall, son of Brian O'Higgin, who died in 1501.⁴ The other two are to a King of the Hebrides and a Lord of the Isles already mentioned (*supra*, pp. 13, 16). Otherwise, Scottish families are only celebrated during this period in poems preserved in the Dean's Book. The houses addressed are spread over a fairly limited area. These are the Macgregors, the Campbells of Glenurchy, the Mac Dougalls of Dunolly, the M'Neils of Castle Sween, the Earl of Argyle, Macleod of Dunvegan, Macleod of Lewis, Macdonald of the Isles, Stewart of Rannoch. At the time there were several other powerful clans in the Highlands who doubtless took care that their fame should be extolled in verse just as much as the nobles with whom the Macgregors came into contact. It should, moreover, be remembered that the Books of Clanranald contain ten panegyrics composed at various times between 1514 and 1736, thus proving that the old encomiastic poetry lingered on in Scotland for about a century after it had disappeared in Ireland, a fact first pointed out, I believe, by Prof. Douglas Hyde.⁵

¹ Nos. XVI, XXV, XXXIII ; cp. also O'Reilly, pp. lxxxvi, cxi.

² O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 338.

³ This MS., which I know through the kindness of Mr. Flower, is marked Add. 33993.

⁴ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 370.

⁵ *A Literary History of Ireland*, p. 547 ; Magnus Maclean, *Literature of the Celts*, pp. 129-32. For yet others see now Mackinnon's *Catalogue*, pp. 116-17, 119 and 124. We are, of course, here only concerned with poems in the straight metres. The old encomiastic poetry, however, survives to a small extent at the present day in the Highlands, wherever the clan spirit is fostered. Cp. a

If we wish to draw a picture of the Irish bard, we have to rely for our materials almost entirely on the extant compositions of the poets themselves. Descriptions in English writers are not frequent. Fergus MacIvor's bard in *Waverley* is drawn in part from the imagination. In making the poet very old, Scott was doubtless influenced by the sentimentality of Macpherson and his imitators, one of whom composed a piece entitled *The Wish of the Aged Bard*.¹ But the Wizard of the North was, as we know, acquainted with the Red Book of Clanranald, which preserves a number of panegyrics by the M'Vurichs, who had an hereditary estate in S. Uist as shanachies to Clanranald till the middle of the eighteenth century. Whether Sir Walter had these poems actually translated for him I cannot say. It is a matter of common knowledge, also, that he corresponded with William Owen about the early poetry of Wales. Scott, however, was familiar with the few English writers who give any details concerning the Irish bards. Spenser's description has often been quoted, but it may be as well to reproduce a portion of it here:—

There is none so bad, Eudoxus, but shall finde some to favour his doings; but such licentious partes as these, tending for the most part to the hurt of the English, or maintenance of their owne lewde libertie, they themselves being most desirous therof, doe most allow. . . . A yong minde cannot rest; if he be not still busied in some goodnesse, he will finde himselfe such businesse, as shall soone busie all about him. In which if he shall finde any to praise him, and to give him encouragement, as those Bardes and rythmers doe for little reward, or a share of a stolne cow, then waxeth he most insolent and halfe madde with the love of himselfe, and his owne lewd deeds. And as for words to set forth such lewdnes, it is not hard for them to give a goodly and painted shew thereunto, borrowed even from the praises which are proper to vertue itselfe. As of a most notorious thiefe and wicked out-law, which had lived all his life-time of spoyles and robberies, one of their Bardes in his praise will say, That he was none of the idle milke-sops that was brought up by the fire side, but that most of his dayes he spent in armes and valiant enterprises, that he did never eat his meat, before he had won it with his sword, that he lay not all night slugging in a cabbin under his mantle, but used commonly to keepe others waking to defend their lives, and did light his candle at the flames of their houses, to leade him in the darknesse; that the day was his night, and the night his day; that he loved not to be long wooing of wenches to yeeld to him, but where he came he tooke by force the spoyle of other mens love, and left but lamentations to their lovers; that his musick was not the harpe, nor layes of love, but the cryes of people, and clashing of armor; and finally, that he died not bewayled of many, but made many waile when he died, that dearly bought his death. Doe you not thinke that many of these praises might be

Lament on Sir Charles MacGregor on p. 96 of the collection entitled *Luinneagan Luaineach* (London, 1897), by John Macgregor, M.D., Honorary Bard to the Clan Macgregor.

¹ Mackenzie, *Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*, p. 14.

applied to men of best deserts? yet are they all yeilded to a most notable traitor, and amongst some of the Irish not smally accounted of. For the song, when it was first made and sung to a person of high degree there, was bought (as their manner is) for forty crownes.

If due allowance is made for Spenser's anti-Irish bias and for the reduced fortunes of many of the Irish families at the time when he wrote, it will be found that the above description enables us to form some idea of the content of many of the panegyrics in the time of Elizabeth. The second witness I should like to call is the bitter Dublin apothecary, Thomas Smyth, who wrote in 1561 as follows:—

The thirde sorte is called the Aeosdan, which is to saye in English, the bards, or the rimine sepectes; and these people be very hurtfull to the comonwhealle, for they chiffie manyntayne the rebells; and, further they do cause them that would be true, to be rebelious thieves, extorcioners, murtherers, ravners, yea and worse if it were possible. Their furst practisse is, if they se anye younge man discended of the septs of *Ose* or *Max*, and have half a dowsen aboute him, then will they make him a Rime, wherein they will commend his father and his aunchetours, nowmbrying howe many heades they have cut of, howe many townes they have burned, and howe many virgins they have defloured,¹ howe many notable murthers they have done, and in the ende they will compare them to Aniball, or Scipio, or Hercules, or some other famous person²; wherewithall the pore foole runs madde,³ and thinkes indeed it is so. Then will he gather a sorte of rackells to him, and other he most geat him a Profiecer, who shall tell him howe he shall spede (as he thinkes). Then will he geat him lurking to a syde of a woode, and ther keepith him close til morninge; and when it is daye light, then will they go to the poore vilages, not sparinge to distroye young infants, aged people; and if the women be ever so great withe childe, her they will kill; burninge the houses and corne, and ransackinge of the poore cottes. They will then drive all the kine and plowe horses, with all other cattell, and drive them awaye. Then muste they have a bagpipe blouinge afore them; and if any of theis cattell fortune to waxe wearie or faynt, they will kill them, rather than it sholde do the honour's goode. ¶. . And when he

¹ Cp. what is stated below, p. 25.

² This appears to be true of the compositions of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (cp. Stern, *Z. c. P.*, ii, p. 351), but not to the same extent of the earlier period. Troy and Laomedon are referred to in the stanza printed in O'Grady's *Catalogue*, p. 354. However, in 25 encomiastic poems by Tadhg Óg comprising 890 stanzas, there are but two instances, and these only in the alliterative formula *Gall n'Greg*, Y. B. L., 385^b, 27 and 380^a, 19. Cp. also *aighnes choinnle gloinne Grég* in Gilbride Macnamee's poem *Miscellany presented to K. Meyer*, p. 168. In an elegy on Llywelyn ab Gruffydd, Bleddyn Vardd describes his hero as *gwr prut uegys Priaf*, 'a serious man like Priam,' *Myv. Arch.*, p. 253, col. 1. Similarly Rhys Gryg is compared by Llywarch ab Llywelyn to Hercules and Hector, *ibid.*, p. 208^a, 31, 33.

³ Compare the remark of the Bailie Jarvie in *Rob Roy*: 'It's a queer thing o' me, gentlemen, that am a man o' peace myself, and a peacefu' man's son, for the deacon my father quarrelled wi' nane out o' the town-council—it's a queer thing, I say, but I think the Hieland blude o' me warms at thae daft tales, and whiles I like to hear better them than a word o' profit, gude forgie me!'

h If they go by any house of frugers or religyious house, they will geave them 2 or 3 beifs (beeves), and they will take thesser, and praye for them (yea) and prayes their doings, and saye his father was accustomed so to do; whersein he will rejoice;

is in a safe place, they will fall to the deivision of the spoile, accordinge to the dyscresion of the captin. . . . Now comes the Rymer that made the Ryme, with his Rakry.¹ The Rakry is he that shall utter the ryme ; and the Rymer himself sitts by with the captain verie proudlye. He brings with him also his Harper, who please all the while that the raker sings the ryme. Also he hath his Barde, which is a kinde of folise fellowe ; who also must have a horse geven him ; the harper must have a new safern shurte, and a mantell, and a hacnaye ; and the rakry must have xx or xxx kine, and the Rymer himself horse and harnes with a nag to ride on, a silver goblett, a pair of bedes of corall, with buttons of silver ; and this, with more, they loke for to have, for reducinge distruxione of the Comenwealth, and to the blasfemye of God ; and this is the best thinge that y^e Rymers causith them to do.² (< Information for Ireland)

The third contemporary source of information is the curious volume entitled the *Image of Ireland*, published by Derricke in 1581. In one of the woodcuts at the end of the work Mac Sweyn is represented as sitting at a rude board for a table with a harper and bard at hand to entertain. With regard to these men the poem has the following lines :—

Now when their gutts be full, then comes the pastyme in :
 The Barde and Harper mellodie, unto them doe beginne.
 This Barde, he doeth reporte the noble conquestes done ;
 And eke in Rimes shewes forth at large, their glorie thereby wonne.
 Thus he at randome ronmeth, he pricks the Rebels on :
 And shewes by suche externall deeds, their honour lyes upon.
 And more to stirre them up, to prosecute their ill :
 What greate renowne their fathers gotte, thei shewe by Rimyng skill.
 And thei moste gladsome are, to heare of Parents name
 As how by spoyling honest menne, thei wonne such endlesse fame.
 Wherefore like gracelesse graftes, sprong from a wicked tree :
 Thei grow through daily exercise to all iniquitie.

As the panegyric was extensively practised over a very long period in Ireland, it is but natural that it should have become somewhat stereotyped in form before our period begins. It is, therefore, in many ways, not surprising if we find little or nothing to set by the side of some of the more imaginative encomia of the Scandinavian North, as, for instance, the tenth-century Raven-Song, describing the deeds of Harold Fairhair, or the reception of Eric Blood-Axe in Valhalla.³ One of the most striking poems in this connexion is a poem of incitement addressed to Rolfe Mac Mahon of Oriel by the thirteenth-century poet Gilbride Macnamee.⁴

¹ Ir. *reacaire*.

² *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, vi. 166-7.

³ Vigfusson and Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i, pp. 254 ff.

⁴ The following summary is taken from O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 405 : ' On a mild May morning the poet wanders off to contemplate Emain Macha. He enters the ancient precinct, sits down and deep sleep invades him. Soon he is

What the Irish bards lack in originality is often made up for by a dignified simplicity,¹ and, though all Keltic poetry presents serious difficulty to the student, there is here little or none of the intentional obscurity which is so frequent in the compositions of the skalds. Such kennings as 'wolf of valour', 'glistening fierce dragon', 'fierce blood-stained raven', are common enough, and a bard may endeavour to find a different name or epithet for his lord in each stanza. Thus, a Connaught prince may be styled 'warden of the English', 'lord of Thomond', 'ruler of Leinster', or 'conqueror of Ulster'. The difficult nature of the rhetoric, as in Welsh, is inherent in all stanzas of such forbidding metrical complexity.

There are three points on which the poetry of the bards differs profoundly from the compositions of the Scandinavian skalds, which it may be well to mention at the outset.

1. In the Irish poems there are practically no references to mythology, whereas in the Roman poet Claudian and in the earlier Northern Court-poetry the pagan gods and goddesses are introduced with great effect. In this respect the later Irish and Welsh panegyrists were at a serious disadvantage.

2. The Irish princes celebrated by Gilbride Macnamee and Tadhg Óg O'Higgin had little or no direct connexion with countries oversea, whereas the skald's chief theme is the roving piratical life of the Viking.

3. The later Irish bards never describe at great length any single achievement of the chieftain they celebrate. There is little or nothing which may be compared with Sighvat's description of the Battle of Sticklestead,² or Llywarch ab Llywelyn's account of the battle of Porth Aethwy.³ Otherwise many poems, or at any rate parts of poems, might just as well have been composed in Scandinavia or Wales as in Ireland or Scotland. When a larger number of the compositions of the Irish bards has been published, it will be neces-

aware that his guardian angel stands beside him, and on the instant marks a great body of horsemen that out of the north ride towards Emain: the plain being whitened with the dust of their horses and again made to glow with their red pennons; he asks his companion who tells him that yonder are the sons of kings of Eoghan's seed. Who are these from the eastward, helmeted, with parti-coloured shields slung at their backs, with sword and spear? The Ulidians. Who come up out of the southern airt? Emain's own tribes. Out of the west on foot and all weaponless? The Tuatha Dé. The four divisions converging meet at the Navan Hill, where the first three ground their spears and by acclaim choose Rolfe as their leader, the bards in chorus setting forth his praise.'

¹ W. P. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, p. 332.

² *C. P. B.*, ii, p. 139.

³ *Myv. Arch.*, p. 210, col. 2-211, col. 1. Such sustained descriptions are not, however, frequent in the poems of the Gogyneifidd or Lewis Glyn Cothi.

sary to inquire if there are any traces of Irish influence in the Northern Court-poetry. Such an inquiry would at the present moment be premature. It is, however, worthy of note that some of the Icelandic poets were of Hibernian descent, so Kormak Ogmundarson and Einarr Helgason.¹

When Icelandic poets came to seek the favour of a new patron they introduced themselves with a carefully composed panegyric.² Sighvat the Poet makes himself known to St. Olaf in this manner.³ Something of the kind is also found in Ireland. The Irish Egill Skallagrimsson, Murray O'Daly, who flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century, drew down upon himself the displeasure of O'Donnell by slaying his steward, and had to fly to Clanrickard for protection. In one of the very few poems of his which have survived we find him appealing to Richard de Burgo. He seems to have had a full measure of the notorious impudence of the bardic fraternity in Ireland. This is how he opens:—

This band in your house has come to you from afar. They were wont to quaff wine from the hand of kings or knights.

Ofttimes did they partake of repast at the hands of abbot or bishop. They disturb no foreign house with their converse, their carousing is not overtalkative.

I am their master of teaching, many's the time I was in the midst of foreign courts; little ceremony I make, I sit in the presence of monarchs.

I attain great power from every prince, pleasant to me to be abroad, my person is respected in the eastern land, I was wont to have a knight in attendance.⁴

Certain ideas almost of necessity become conventional. As the bard was partly or wholly dependent on the bounty of his patron, opulence and liberality cannot fail to be a stock theme. This is the same all the world over. Of O'Neill Tadhg Óg O'Higgin says:—

A man is he that receiveth the tribute of each province and bestoweth cattle at the first draught, a feast given by the lord of Etar is not consumed without enriching some one.⁵

¹ Mogk in Paul's *Grundriss d. germ. Phil.*, ii, p. 677. It is probably an accident that these two writers are perhaps the most obscure of all the skalds.

² Cp. what Mogk says about Gunnlaugr Ormstunga, l. c., p. 680.

³ *Corp. Poet. Bor.*, ii, p. 124 ff.

⁴ Macgr. XV., st. 2-5. See also O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 337.

⁵ *Fer ga bfuil cain gach cuigidh
ag dail chruidh leisan ceiddigh
ni hibhther fled fir Eadair
nac medaigh sin fer eigin.*

—From the O'Conor Don's Book = Y. B. L., 381^b, 46-7.

or—

Niall's son will not tolerate (leave) a mantle amongst his hand in making gifts to us, he satisfies a band that is hard to please so that it grows ashamed of its complaints.¹

* Tadhg Óg O'Higgin and others state that they were wont to receive twenty milch-kine for each lay or it might be a wand with rings of gold.² Murray O'Daly represents himself as obtaining a steed every year and a golden beaker.³ In a poem on the death of Malachy II the older poet Erard Mac Coisse says that he received from the monarch 300 goblets, 300 steeds, and 300 bridles.⁴ The following description of Mac Dermott is perhaps worthy of quotation:—

Mac Dermot would sacrifice his eye to save his honour ; if he found any one to desire it he would not be the one to refuse it.⁵

He covets nought on earth save to distribute it to each man.

What matters it however much is demanded of Tomaltach Mac Dermot, son of the princess from Rath Croghan, seeing that his wealth is ever increasing ?

The royal race of Mulroney to whom a glorious reputation is secured, wine from cups of gold is quaffed around it from morning to morning.

Illustrious is the guardian of their honour ; no single man was yet seen leaving his presence with a refusal.

Of short duration would be the store of his wealth unless God assisted him, seeing that one of his hands is engaged in bestowing gifts and the other in making presents.

'Tis not a first night's portion which God grants this man of the gentle white countenance, but to be ever satisfying each single band, that in truth is what He cares for.

What Conor's son bestows and receives, there is nothing like to it save it be ebb and flood.⁶

¹ *Brat ca fein ní failenga
mac Neill ag ar neimera
riaraidh se dhaim ndoidhila
le gur nair a neimela.*—Y. B. L., 374^a, 11 f.

² *Fíchi bó dobeireadh dham
ar gach nduain dia dho chumradh.
Dogheibhinn uadh fíchi bó
leig an aighidh an annro
in tslat fáinne dho uair me
o mac Grainne uair eile.*—Y. B. L., 375^a, 31 ff.

³ Macgr. XV. 26.

⁴ K. Meyer, *Ancient Irish Poetry*, p. 77. Cp. also the interesting dialogue between Erard and Mac Liag, *Z. c. P.*, viii, p. 218 ff.

⁵ This refers to the well-known story of Athirne.

⁶ Macgr. XVI. 4-12. For Welsh descriptions of the kind see Dafydd ab Gwilym, iii. 25 ff., xiii. 29 ff. (= Stern, *Z. f. c. P.*, vii. 16-17). Even the above is not so extravagant as these lines by Lewis Glyn Cothi:—

*Yr aur oedd amlach no'r irwydd yn ddellt,
No'r main ac no'r mell, no'r gwellt a'r gwydd.*

—*Gweithiau*, p. 173, 55-6.

Personal beauty is such an ever recurring theme in all Irish literature that it would be superfluous to lay stress here on this feature in connexion with the poetry of the bards. Let us note that Irish men of letters in this respect resemble the poets of Wales and ancient Greece, thus furnishing a striking contrast to the framers of the Old Teutonic Epics.¹ The noble addressed is invariably compared to Cuchulinn or Conn or Niall Glundub or some other hero of old, but not as in the later poets to the warriors of Greece and Rome. And in this connexion an ancient Irish story is not infrequently introduced. Thus John O'Cluan relates the history of Tuathal Techtmar's youth (Macgr. No. XX), Torna O'Mulchonry the tale of the hag at Mac Dermott's court (Macgr. No. XVI) which is repeated by a Highland author for the benefit of Macgregor (Macgr. No. XXXIII). Tadhg Óg gives the story of Fiacha Sraibtime (Y. B. L., 376^a, 37) and of Cormac Connlorgas (Y. B. L., 375^a, 39). The curious narrative of the showers of Niall Frasach is given by Tadhg O'Daly (Macgr. No. XIX) whilst Godfrey Finn recalls the story of Conn Cédchathach's youth (O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 358). It might also be mentioned here that the rule of the prince in question is commonly represented as having been foretold in the prophecies of Berchan. Occasionally the poet alludes to his patron's success with the fair sex, as in the stanza:—

As in the concourse of a fair the snares of (Dermot) O'Duibne were cast over their women—the wooing of an expert—so a woman leaps out of her five senses to go towards Niall Óg, Eoghan's descendant.²

In many countries plentiful harvests are associated with just rule. So in the nineteenth book of the *Odyssey* Odysseus says to Penelope:—

Thy fame goes up to the wide heaven, as doth the fame of a blameless king, one that fears the gods, and reigns among men and mighty, maintaining right, and the black earth bears wheat and barley, and the trees are laden with fruit, and the sheep bring forth and fail not, and the sea gives stores of fish and all out of his good guidance, and the people prosper under him.³

But nowhere, perhaps, does this idea occur so frequently as in Irish literature. This gives the bard an opportunity of introducing characteristic descriptions of nature. We must, however, bear in mind the small range of natural produce of which he could make use. This is

¹ R. M. Meyer, *Die altgermanische Poesie*, p. 40.

² *Líonta í Dhuibhne a ndáil áonaigh*
ar[a] mhnáib suirge seolaigh
ben ag leim da cóig ciullaibh
diarraidh Neill Óig í Eóghuin.

—From the O'Conor Don's Book = Y. B. L., 382^a, 28-9.

³ I am indebted to Prof. Ridgeway for this reference.

very striking, for instance, if we compare such poems with panegyrics by Turkish authors who had a much wider selection of fruits and flowers to choose from. In Ireland wheat is frequently mentioned, as also apples. It should be remembered that the apple is the ambrosial food of the Irish in all the old stories. But the harvest on which the greatest stress is laid is the supply of hazel-nuts. It cannot be a matter for surprise that the hazel should supply the poets with a large proportion of their metaphors, if we reflect that nearly two-thirds of the soil of Ireland is composed of the calcareous formations so beloved of this tree.¹ As one of the best specimens the following verses from a poem addressed to Cathal Redhand, King of Connaught (d. 1224), by Gilbride Macnamee may be quoted:—

Croghan's Redhand has rendered fruitful the green woods of the warm land ; if a beetle strike any white hazel it will yield a vat full.

His rule has put grain into the ground, it has made blossoms to sprout through the tips of the branches, the sentences of the bright shining light of the Greeks have caused mast to grow in the oak-wood.

Ireland has recognized her ruler ; she has brought forth the increase of a quarter in one month, so that the forest which trembled with age has put forth fruit again under his rule.

When comes the autumn the fruit will reach Galway's prince of the swift steeds ; ear upon ear, cluster upon cluster will there be from Kesh Corrin to Croagh.

The arms of each apple-tree are weighed to the ground in the land of Cathal of Cruachan-Aoi, each bright hazel therein perforce bends down.

Each smooth nut puts forth its shell at the end of its branch on the margin of the cornland, the yellow grain dons its husk underneath a fresh bending brake.

A ruddy cluster on dark leaves amid green woods with soft grass, in plentiful store the nuts fall down with their brown shells.²

¹ It is difficult for non-fruitarians to realize the esteem in which nuts were held in mediæval times as an article of diet. In the Brehon Laws the hazel is reckoned a 'chieftain-tree' along with oak, holly, yew, ash, pine, and apple. Apart from the nuts it bears the hazel was also valued for its twigs, which were extensively employed in wattling. See Joyce, *Social History*, ii, pp. 155-6, 286-7. Similarly the Scandinavian poets Sighvat and Othere the Black both state that they have received gifts of nuts from King Olaf. Cp. *Corp. Poet. Bor.*, ii, pp. 150, 157. It is curious to note, on the other hand, that in the Welsh laws the fine for felling a hazel is only one quarter of that for cutting down an apple-tree, which, in its turn, is only accounted half as valuable as the oak or the beech. Wade-Evans, p. 248.

² The poem is printed in the *Miscellany presented to K. Meyer*. It also contains these characteristic stanzas :

When the curly-locked (prince) rises betimes on a summer's morning to hunt deer, there is dew on the grass, the blackbird sings, the frost has yielded its strength.

Swift steeds by the Shannon's bank on purple straths white with flowers, a graceful stud on the carse of the Moy with green-headed ducks on each ford.

Prowess is, of course, an essential theme of every panegyric, and as we should expect from what we know in general of mediaeval Ireland, freebooting expeditions play a great part. Numbers of these raids are mentioned in the Annals, and what they were really like we may gather from other sources. In one of the plates in Derricke's *Image of Irelande* a picture of such a creagh is given. One party is setting fire to the house of the victim, another is driving away his horses and cattle, whilst a third body is advancing with a piper at their head. A more detailed account corroborating all this occurs in an entry in the Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1592-1599, vol. v :—

In July 1592, the Stewarts of Lochearnside, with an armed body of 'Hielandmen and sorners of clans' invaded the lands of Drumquhassil, wounded many of the tenants, drove away '20 tydie ky, 16 yeild ky, 10 oxin and 12 stirks, and harried the whole guids, geir, insicht and plenishing' of their houses. In October, they renewed the raid on the same lands, appearing this time as a body 'of 200 persons with twa bagypis blawand befoir thame,' and harried the 'puir tenants' of 190 cows, 66 horses, and 300 sheep. In 1593, an attack was made by the Roses of Kilravock on the house of George Dunbar of Clune. They came armed with 'bowis, darlochis, and twa-handit swordis, steel-bonnettis, haberschonis, hacquebutis, and pistolletis', plundered and burnt the house, and went off with a booty of seventy head of horses and cattle. This raid was distinguished by exceptional barbarity, for 'sa many of the nolt as wald not dryve they barbarously hoicht and slew,' while on the women they 'put violent hands, tiritv thair claiths aff thame, and schoit thame naked furth of thair houssis.' Dunbar's wife was not exempted from this treatment, and her infant of twelve days old they 'maist barbarously kaist furth in the midding'.¹

Details of such cruelty are naturally not found in the poems of the bards, but the general state of affairs disclosed is pretty much the same. Let us see what Tadhg Óg finds to extol in the deeds of his patrons. Of one of the O'Donnells it is said :—

An attendant from Tralee follows thee, such is the spoil thou hast sought out, thy charger is checked by the bridle to stay raids by offers of gifts.²

And of Ulick Bourke :—

From Cnoc Laithrig hither many's the grave and tomb-stone (set) in the ground through thee. . . .

Assisting thy hereditary friends thou didst make a circuit of Thomond without leaving a cow from Limerick to this place unless it be a survivor from the raid.

Thou didst not deem it proper to march by night to attack Kilkenny: a wide raid was conducted by thee in daylight to harry the county.

¹ Quoted in the reprint of Derricke's *Image of Irelande*, by John Small, Edinburgh 1883, p. 124.

²

*Comtha o Traighli ad lenamain
asi in tain do thoghabair
fosdar heck ar aradhain
dfosdadh crech re comadhaibh.*—Y. B. L., 373^b, 31.

The meteor-like host, with which thou didst move on this expedition; on the edge of Fethard it left not a people which it did not break in pieces as far as the sea.¹

Note the stress laid on the marching by day. Similarly the superior force of the enemy is not infrequently emphasized. There are numerous other instances where recklessness is extolled. So we read as follows of the foolhardiness of Mac William:—

At Ath Imdain thou didst not think it worth while, though the O'Conors were advancing against thee, to leave the ford without bathing lest they should impute it to fear.²

Or the difficulties encountered may be curiously exaggerated as in a poem by Angus son of Carroll O'Daly:—

Reaving the cattle of the men of Donegal was like meddling with a cold tempestuous sea.³

Reference has already been made to the arrogance of the Irish poets, to which Wales and Iceland scarcely afford a parallel. The tradition started very early, as we know from the story of Athirne, and in the later centuries there is abundant evidence that the bard frequently forfeited the goodwill of his lord as a result of overstepping the mark. To attempt to restore himself to favour he composed a

¹ *Imdha o chnuic Laithrigh ille
fert is oil a nuir uaibse
ní fiu mfeiry a sena sin
na séla atciu ur leiry Laithrigh.
Ac cur let cháirdib bunaidh
do thimchillis Tuadhmunain
gan boin o Luimnech ille
muna bfoil d'fúighlech airgne.
Sibal oidhche ní fíu lib
dinsoighidh Cilli Coindigh
do seolad ruaig lethan laei
uaib do chreachad na cundaei.
An chaer shuaigh thainig tusa
re toighecht don turusa
tuath nachar minairy co nuir
u mbruach Fídhaird ní fúgaib.*

—Y. B. L., 378^a, 38–9, *ibid.* 44–379^b, 3.

² *A nAth Iomdhain ní fíu lat
is siol gConchobair chugat
tocht gun ionnladh asan áth
go ttiobradh ort na ursgáth.*

—From Stowe A iv 3 = Y. B. L., 383^b, 4–5.

³ *Fu buain ré nuir fuair anfadh
buain u gcruidh do Conallchaibh.*

—For the poem cp. O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 353.

poem corresponding in some measure to the *hofuð-lausn* of the skalds.¹ Several of these apologies have survived. Thus, in a late sixteenth-century composition addressed to Cuchonnacht Maguire, Fergal Óg Macaward apologizes for having flung a beaker of wine in his master's face.² In another Tadhg Óg has called Ulick Mac William a drunkard:—

Travelling by night is my state after what I have heard from Clanwilliam ; myself in concealment from house to house, 'tis like to my death.

Thou wouldst have known had I spoken unjustly of thee in solitude, demand a poem from me for my injustice ; let not thy mind be set on an honour-price.³

In another poem preserved in a considerable number of MSS. John O'Cluan apologizes for having struck his lord Aed O'Conor. The chief is flattered for his forbearance as follows:—

I dealt, Aed of the sleek hair, a blow to thee with my hand and thou hast not taken vengeance ; if it had been lopped off in thy house, O chief of Colt, it were not a buffet without retaliation.

Banish me not, son of Eogan, for the hand I lifted in thy house ; strike off my hand as a due, but let not thy reproach be upon me.

Had it been abroad in the Southern Half that I had given the blow, or yet in Ulster, 'tis a weapon surely that had been reddened with my fist, O hawk-like blue-eyed genius of battle.

Thine 'tis in payment of my blow to lop the right hand from me, O gentle noble countenance ; thy due 'tis to have a lay of its value, or else the very hand, O Gairide's griffin.

¹ Although it may be inferred from the poems of Dafydd ab Gwilym and others that the Welsh poets were on a footing of privileged intimacy with their patrons, such compositions as those about to be described are unknown. In one piece, it is true, Phylip Brydydd remonstrates with Rhys Gryg for being indignant with him for composing verses to any other patron beside himself, and Elidir Sais in two poems endeavours to appease the wrath of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. Cp. *Myryrian Arch.*, pp. 240, 257 ; Stephens, *Lit. of the Kymry*, pp. 87, 150 ff., 156 ff.

²

*Corn deighfleidhe do doirt me
i nucht laoiç Locha hEirne
don feirg do eirigh oirne
nir cheilligh an chomairle.
Do doirtios do druim feirge
beirios buaid ndibeirge
cuach fin ndighe ara gruaidh gloin
ri bile nach lfuair iorgoil.—Cp. Stern, Z. f. c. P., ii, 338.*

³

*Sibal oidhchi issed doniam
déis a cuala o chloinn Uilliam
me ar falachta o thigh dho thigh
samalta he is moighidh.
Letrom gloir dogebtha a fīs
da ndernainn ort a nuaignis
ben dim laeidh isin leatrom
na bidh hāeidh re heineclond.*

—Y. B. L., 377^b, 42-3, 378^a, 22-3.

Not kine, not horses, not artificers' gold are promised thee, O ruddy one benign of face! Neither hand shalt thou have, no, nor foot; but a poem in lieu of that which I have done.¹

As in Wales and Scandinavia, and all other countries where the poet was dependent on the bounty of an aristocratic or royal patron, the elegy or dirge is very frequent. The bardic poems falling under this head throw an interesting light on the life of the period, even after due allowance has been made for poetic exaggeration. A powerful prince may be succeeded by a man with no military genius, thus exposing the land to attack from outside. Accordingly Tadhg Óg sings as follows on the death of Ulick Mac William (d. 1424):—

Since our lord departed who is there furthermore whose hand is not against you? Who would dare, were he alone alive in our midst, to come to the confines of our territory to observe the boundary ditch?

Tal's sept has received no insult from us from which our land will not be in conflagration; in other days fires were oftener kindled by us in return for insults offered to us.

Those of the men of Ireland whom Ulick injured are about to encircle you; like a ring of smouldering fire, such is the end of fair Clanwilliam.²

Or the bard may picture what the loss means to him personally:—

My share in the sorrow for Cathal O'Conor's son is all the greater, I stayed with no other lord in the days of Tadhg, would that I had done so!

Unhappy the man who like myself has gained the affection of a constant patron; in expectation of encountering misfortune 'tis fitting to shun the honour.³

¹ Macgr. No. XX¹; O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 367.

² *Cia fesda ac nach fuil derna
ruib ó thesta ar tigerna?
Techt ar cimsaib ar crichi
dfeghain in chluidh coiccrichi
cia do lémhadh a Leth Cuinn
da mbeth na enar aguind?
Gan oirbiri ac aicme Thail
nach bia ar tir ina tendail
doba menci uair eili
teinti uain nar noirbeiri.
Atait ar tí bar timchail
ar loit Ulleg d'Éirindchaib
mar timchall na teinedh diadh
a dheiredh finnchlann Uilliam.—Y. B. L., 377^a, 2-4, 11-14*

³ *Moide mo chuid da chumaidh
mac Cathail Hi Chonchubair
nir an me mairg nach derna
re re Thaidhg ac tigerna.
Mairg do uair mar uair misi
muirn tigerna tairisi
a ndoich in ansoidh dhfaghail
coir in anoir dhingabail.—Y. B. L., 375^a, 3, 13-14.*

Or:—

Ireland has no means of subsistence for the man of learning since O'Kelly's death; far removed from Banba is any prince or royal successor save the one who is most powerful.¹

In order to vary the theme the bard, instead of addressing his master in person, may celebrate his sword,² or his standard,³ or his shield,⁴ or his belt,⁵ or more commonly his patron's hall or rath.⁶ The latter form of address also occurs in Wales and elsewhere. The poet's imagination almost makes us forget the character of the timbered banqueting-halls, or the grim strongholds erected in imitation of the Norman castles. The brilliance of the company is always a favourite theme in such pieces. So in a fourteenth-century lament on the reduced fortunes of the O'Briens:—

On the hither side there was wont to be a concourse of poets around his bright breast; what the company received from the successor to Ireland's monarch was oppressive.

On the other side of the house would be the valiant men of Limerick, every poet received his due from the company, there was drinking of wine to the very door-posts.

No women in the casements, no chess-playing in yon doorway, no carousing, no kindling of lights, it is a great cause for sadness.⁷

An interesting poem, by Godfrey Finn O'Daly, describing a bardic festival has been recently printed in *Ériu*, v, pp. 50-69, with a translation by Miss Knott.

One of the most difficult of the bardic compositions of the period consists of an address to the stronghold of Cloonfree in Roscommon, the residence of Aed O'Conor. A long poem of thirty-eight quatrains, it may be considered a miracle of technical skill, as in addition to the obligatory end-rhymes and alliteration each line contains two and often three internal rhymes. Two stanzas may be quoted here:—

In the palace is the sheen of each smooth hilt so that the bright abode has never grown dark; men find the gleaming dry path into the house by the brightness of the women's footwear.

Mighty palace of gentle outline, rath of princes, rath of bardic schools, Munstermen and Ulstermen gather round Bregia's chieftain, on its hill it hath not selected a niggardly lord.⁸

¹ *Slighi in eгнаigh nochа nfuil
ag Eirinn deis Hí Chealluigh
ingar ri na damna dhi*

Banba acht inti bus treisi.—Y. B. L., 376^a, 33-4.

² K. Meyer, *Ancient Irish Poetry*, p. 72.

³ Y. B. L., 377^a, 37 ff.

⁴ *Zeitschr. f. celt. Phil.*, viii. 227; Hardiman, *Irish Minstrelsy*, ii, p. 190.

⁵ Macgr. No. XXII.

⁶ Macgr. Nos. XVIII, XXI, XXXIII; cp. O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 353.

⁷ Macgr. No. XVIII.

⁸ Macgr. No. XXI.

Compositions of such extraordinary metrical complexity appear to have enjoyed great popularity and were evidently recited in the halls of other princes than those to whom they were originally addressed. In this case a stanza was usually added at the close in praise of the poet's patron for the time being. The number of such adventitious stanzas varies in different MSS., the O'Connor Don's Book usually having the maximum. The common practice of appending two or three stanzas to the patron's wife was pointed out by Stern (*Z. f. c. P.*, ii, pp. 333, 337, 339, 348 f., &c.).

From what has been said it will be clear that the secular compositions of the later bards furnish a valuable source of evidence for the study of social conditions in Ireland during the period in question. This source has not hitherto been accessible to historians, with the consequence that eminently fair writers have been under the necessity of ignoring in large measure the state of culture obtaining in the North and West. Up to the present, works on Irish history professing to deal with the centuries under consideration contain little but a chronicle of the affairs of the English Pale. It may be expected that within a few years the great bulk of bardic verse will have been edited and translated. Then, and not till then, will it be possible to write a dispassionate history of Ireland from the Norman Invasion to the Reformation.

RELIGIOUS POETRY.

The religious poetry of the later bards naturally bears a great resemblance to their secular compositions. In the one case the liberality and munificence of an earthly patron is extolled, in the other the succour of the Virgin or of some saint is invoked. The themes and manner of treatment are, in part at any rate, a legacy from the poets of preceding centuries, but there is a marked change. The poets of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, who are known as the authors of devotional verse, were evidently familiar with the religious literature in the Latin language which flourished chiefly in France. Mediaeval Latin literature reached its high-water mark between 1050 and 1350, and it would be a matter for surprise if the well-informed poets of Ireland had not come under its influence.

The Christian poetry of the Old Irish period, apart from learned compositions as the *Féilire* of Oengus, the *Saltair na Rann* and the versified monastic rules, exhibits the same peculiarities as the secular lyrics. There is the same love of suggestion and of saying half-seen things, the same delight in colour and sound and the tiniest manifestations of nature, all expressed with a freshness that appears to us

surprisingly modern. Some of the best instances are collected together in K. Meyer's *Ancient Irish Poetry*. At the end of the Viking Period, however, life seems to have worn a more sombre aspect than during the preceding centuries, as the early note is more rarely struck. The compositions which have survived become more highly reflective, which is equivalent to saying that they are less spontaneous. The most celebrated devotional poet of the thirteenth century is undoubtedly Donnchad Mór O'Daly (d. 1244), who is styled the Ovid of Ireland in the Annals. Edward O'Reilly in his *Irish Writers* ascribes some thirty pieces to this author, but several of those mentioned are certainly the work of others. It is unfortunate that his poems are for the most part scattered about in late MSS., so that a considerable amount of sifting will be required before a critical edition can be prepared. The pieces beginning:—

Éist ream faoisdin a Íosa
Creidim dhuit abhlainn uasail
Gabum deachmhadh ar ndána

bear a general resemblance to the Latin verses of Marbod of Rennes (d. 1123) and Hildebert of Tours (d. 1134),¹ and I am inclined to think that Donnchad may have been influenced by these writers. It is probably not without significance that he composed a poem on the Fifteen Tokens of the Day of Judgement² on precisely the same lines as the one in Latin on the same subject attributed, though on doubtful grounds, to Hildebert.³

A few religious compositions in much the same strain are ascribed to a contemporary of Donnchad Mór, the turbulent Murray O'Daly.⁴ The chief theme is contrition and prayer for guidance. One of these writers is also the author of a poem on the Legend of the Holy Rood.⁵ A piece of unknown authorship on the Harrowing of Hell has been edited and translated by Prof. Bergin⁶ from the Book of Fermoy, and there is more than one metrical version of the Three Marys.⁷ The

¹ Migne, vol. clxxi.

² Macgr. No. VI. This theme is also treated metrically in Welsh by Llewelyn Fardd, see *Myvyr. Arch.*, p. 250. An Irish prose version was printed by Whitley Stokes in the *Revue Celtique*, xxviii. 308.

³ Migne, vol. clxxi, col. 1287-8; Groeber, *Grundriss d. roman. Phil.*, ii. 1, p. 369.

⁴ Skene-Maclaughlan, *Book of the Dean of Lismore*, pp. 157-60.

⁵ Macgr. No. V. In this poem the well-known Three Kisses of St. Bernard are introduced.

⁶ *Ériu*, iv. 112.

⁷ Macgr. No. IX, attributed by the Dean to Murray O'Daly. A poem on the same subject, beginning *Trí hingiona rug Anna*, is found in Maynooth MSS., and in R. I. A., 23 L 17, but in this copy the first stanza commences, *Sagart do bhí fecht eile*.

Old French versions by Wace and a writer named Pierre at the beginning of the thirteenth century are held to go back to a Latin original which has not as yet been discovered.¹ Other poems deal with the Nativity of the Virgin and the Infancy of Christ.²

As early as the middle of the tenth century an Irishman had made a metrical version of the chief portions of Old Testament history. Poems on biblical subjects were, however, a favourite exercise with writers of Latin verse in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. We may take Peter Riga of Rheims (d. 1209) as a typical instance. He is the author of metrical versions, among other things, of the stories of Noah, Daniel, Susanna, and the Magi.³ Similarly in Irish we find a poem on the Epiphany⁴ and the Beheading of John the Baptist.⁵

The rapid circulation of the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine and of collections of exempla at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, furnished the later bards with new sources of material. This may go hand in hand with an increasing fondness for introducing narrative into their secular compositions (supra, p. 25). The poet begins by stating a theme which is elaborated for several stanzas. Then the story is introduced in illustration, and finally there is a moral application. The first bard known to me who made use of a story of this nature was Godfrey Finn O'Daly (d. 1387). He is the author of what appears to have been for centuries the most popular religious composition in Ireland, if one may judge by the large number of MS. copies. It begins thus⁶ :—

Alas for him whom love of the world deceives, the glamour of the great Fair endures but for a brief space ; alas for him who keepeth not utterly aloof from it during the life of this troublous evil world.

A kingdom vast (bartered) for brief mirth ; life eternal for fleeting space ; to forsake God for vain World's transitory season ; such is a worthless covenant.

O ye to whom prosperity is assured (here), and that deem the measure of your merriness all-sufficing ; therefore it is that your happiness seems sufficient to you, for that joys greater (than such) ye have never seen.

Felicity of the celestial host that up above surrounds the Lord, as against that all felicity that is underneath Heaven is but as the life of one entombed.

To certify that, here's a story bearing on the matter according to the just, a story by which heaven is to be sought, whatever holy book it was taken from.

¹ Groeber, *Grundriss d. roman. Phil.*, ii. 1, p. 647.

² Macgr. No. VIII = *Archiv f. celt. Lex.*, iii. 244, and *Z. f. c. P.*, viii, p. 561 ff. For a Welsh cywydd on this subject see Ashton's *Gweithiau Iolo Goch*, p. 550.

³ Groeber, *Grundriss*, ii. 1, p. 370.

⁴ Macgr. No. II. A lengthy Welsh poem on the same subject by Madawg ab Gwallter (1250-1300) is printed in the *Myvyr. Arch.*, p. 274.

⁵ *Ériu*, iv. 173.

⁶ Macgr. No. I ; O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 357.

Then the poet proceeds to tell a story from the *Gesta Romanorum*¹ of a boy who was born in a dungeon, and who, though unacquainted with the light of day, grows apace, whilst his mother pines away. One day he sees tears streaming down her face and asks her the cause. This affords the poet an opportunity of comparing the mother and son to the dwellers upon earth, and of describing the joys of heaven and the terrors of hell. Another favourite story was that of a pious monk who was saved by the Virgin from the temptation of the Devil in the form of a woman.² A story of two monks³ is told by Mahon O'Higgin (d. 1441). The Dean's Book preserves a variant of the curious story of the Woman and the Consecrated Wafer,⁴ in addition to metrical versions of the Man in the Tree,⁵ from Barlaam and Josaphat, and the North French story of the monk who spent 300 years in his garden listening to the song of a bird.⁶ These appear to be the work of Finlay Mac Nab, the Red Bard, who was probably official poet to the Macgregor.⁷

However, apart from Donnchad Mór, the only bard in the period with which we are concerned whose religious compositions have survived in any quantity, is Tadhg Óg O'Higgin. By a fortunate chance some twenty-one poems of this nature by him are preserved in the Song-book which was inserted into the Yellow Book of Lecan. I do not think that Tadhg was by any means the most gifted of the later bards, but fate has decreed for some reason or other that he should be the one who is best represented in the MSS. that have been spared by the ravages of time. Apart from the miscellany just mentioned, Tadhg's poems are better preserved in Edinburgh than anywhere else. A number of them are scattered through various MSS., but Gaelic MS. No. XXIX in the Advocates' Library is a little vellum book containing nothing but devotional poems—ten in number—by this author. Eight of them occur in the Yellow Book of Lecan. A number of his compositions consist of addresses to the Virgin, into which a consider-

¹ *Gesta Romanorum*, ed. Oesterley, No. 86, p. 414.

² Macgr. No. VII. Probably a variant of the story in Rufinus, cp. *Migne*, vol. xxi, col. 399, *ibid.* lxxiii, col. 1147. See also *Catalogue of Romances in the Brit. Mus.*, iii, pp. 180, 459.

³ O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 380. The source of the story is unknown to me.

⁴ Wright, *Latin Stories*, p. 133.

⁵ Macgr. No. XIV.

⁶ Macgr. XIII; cp. A. J. Herbert, *Romania*, xxxviii. 427.

⁷ It always seems strange to me that no Welsh poet appears to have drawn upon the exempla literature. Was narrative eschewed in the cywydd? In a note on Dafydd Nanmor's poem on Damon and Phidias Mr. W. J. Gruffydd says in his anthology entitled, *Y Flodeugerdd Newydd* (p. 226): 'This is, as far as we know, the only cywydd of this period that tells a story.'

able amount of narrative matter from the Old and New Testaments is introduced. The remainder are drawn in part from the Golden Legend, but sometimes one has to have recourse to the Apocryphal Acts in order to understand incidents referred to by Tadhg. One of his poems is addressed to St. Dominic,¹ whose life was the subject of metrical treatment at the hands of a French poet as early as 1240.²

Another poem contains an invocation to St. Patrick³ which presupposes acquaintance with the life of the Saint as contained in the Book of Lismore. It is not without interest to note that this is the only case, so far as I know at present, in which a native saint is addressed during this period.⁴ Tadhg's most popular composition of this nature, if one may judge from the frequency of its occurrence in MSS., deals with a theme which was first treated by a French poet in the thirteenth century, and which is attributed to the influence of Clairvaux.⁵ The soul is represented as being confronted by three adversaries, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The more one studies the works of these bards, the more one is impressed with the range of their attainments. They were not in holy orders, and yet they must have been better versed in Latin than most of the clergy. Some of them in all probability paid visits to Highland chiefs, and may have acquired English and French, though we could not assume this from merely studying the sources of their compositions. And unfortunately we have evidence of continental travel in the case of one member of the fraternity alone, viz. Murray O'Daly, who may have taken part in a crusade.⁶ In any case, it was no mean achievement on the part of men like Tadhg O'Higgin to show such acquaintance with the voluminous Latin religious literature⁷ of the day in addition to the huge store of native learning exemplified in their other works.

In addition to the compositions already mentioned, Tadhg's poems deal with Mary Magdalen,⁸ John the Baptist,⁹ St. John the Divine,¹⁰ St. Paul,¹¹ St. Andrew, and others. He also treats the story of the Discovery of the Saviour's Cross by Helena.¹² This is of interest as

¹ Y. B. L., 364^a, 12.

² Groeber, *Grundriss*, ii. 1, p. 648.

³ Y. B. L., 370^a, 34.

⁴ In Welsh there is similarly a cywydd to St. David, see Ashton's *Gweithiau Iolo Goch*, p. 589.

⁵ Macgr. No. III; O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 363; Groeber, *Grundriss*, ii. 1, p. 696 ff.

⁶ O'Grady, *Cat.*, pp. 366-8. In st. 6 of the poem printed in the Appendix, p. 44, he laments that he has been absent from Ireland for fifteen years.

⁷ See note, p. 55.

⁸ Y. B. L., 365^a, 28.

⁹ Y. B. L., 369^b, 17.

¹⁰ Y. B. L., 362^a, 19.

¹¹ Y. B. L., 365^b, 30.

¹² Macgr. IV; Y. B. L., 363^a, 31.

being, to my knowledge, the only poetic treatment of the subject in Irish, although a number of prose versions are known, some of which have appeared in print.¹

These religious poems can scarcely be expected to afford such valuable information as regards the life of the period as the panegyrics. Nevertheless some of the metaphors are of interest in this connexion. So the custom of giving hostages is frequently brought in:—

Behold thy captive, O God, who is bold in selling Thee, O King, prepare fetters for me, O God, the end of my days is at hand.

I would fain not be without chains, Thou that didst ascend the tree, better for me to be placed in thy bonds as a hostage than . . .²

I am a hostage though not in custody through failing to find repentance.

The world only gives on loan to men, this world is no estate of theirs, they hold it on rack-rent.³

In other poems Tadhg confesses his weaknesses:—

I am slow to rise at time of matins; allow for that, O Lord, each cold night on which I have arisen.

I have forgotten the King of the Elements, all the times when I have verged on intoxication: to make up for this forgetfulness allow all the wine I have forsaken for water.⁴

¹ Cp. G. Schirmer, *Die Kreuzeslegenden im Leabhar Breac*, St. Gallen, 1886.

² *Ag so braighi dheit a Dhe
is dana ar dho reic a rí
ullmaidh geimeal dam a Dhe
mo ré is gar a dereadh dhi.
Gan beth san igh ní hail lim
a fir dochaidh isa chrann
mo car at geimil a ngeall
ferr dham ina medhir ann.*—Y. B. L., 363^a, 11-15.

³ *Me an braighid gan beth a laim
do dith aithreachais d'faghail
Ar iasacht as eadh do bir
in doman donu daeinib
in bith cé ní duthuidh daib
acht se futhuibh ar formáil.*
—Y. B. L., 401^b, 26, ib. 401^a, 27-8.

⁴ *Ní liom nach aimhlesy eirghe
a n-ionam na hiarmheirghe
leig uam ina aghuidh sin
gach adhuigh fúar dar eirigh.
Rí na ndúl do dhermhuid me
gach trath da ttaighlim [meisce]
ar treig d'fion ar an uisge
leig a ndiol an dermhuid-se.*
—From the O'Conor Don's Book = Y. B. L., 364^a, 41 f.

In other passages the poet uses images drawn from nature :—

From the day that I came on to the earth I am as a straying salmon ; put me safe into the river from the bank, daughter of Joachim.¹

Elsewhere Tadhg is fond of dwelling on the marvels of the Creator shown forth in nature :—

Who could control the flow and ebb, or the growth of the egg in the bird ? Let us attempt to discover an artificer skilled to fashion hazel and apple-tree side by side.²

'Tis Thou that givest the bright sun along with the ice. Thou it was that orderedst the rivers and the salmon in the river.

That the hazel should put forth its blossom, O Christ, 'tis a strange art ; with Thy skill alike Thou causest the kernel to grow and the shapely ear on our wheat.

Though the children of Eve ill deserve to behold the flocks of birds and the salmon, the Living One that was on the Cross it is that creates both salmon and fowl.

'Tis He that causes the sloe-blossom to pierce the side of the blackthorn, the hazel-blossom through another tree, by the side of that, what miracle is greater ?³

Finally, I should like to quote a few stanzas from two fifteenth-century poems by other writers. The first is attributed to Godfrey

¹ *On lo tainig an talam
cigne me is me ar merugad
tuc slan ar an inimmer inn
ou trag a ingen Iachim.*—From Adv. xxix. = Y. B. L., 372^a, 6.

² *Ciu dofedfadh tuili is tragh
na techtadh uighi san eou
call is aball taeb re taeb
faghau saer ann dha budh eol.*—Y. B. L., 368^b, 15-16.

³ *Is tu dober in grian ghel
a neuecht is toidregh
is tu thug na haibni ann
sna maigri ar fut na habann.
An enu do beth ina blath
a Crist is cerdacht neugnath
dot gres araen sa teitni
a dhess chaem dhar cruithneichtni.
Gidh otc ceunchait clamn Eaba
na healta sna heignedha
ise in beo dobi sa croich
doni itir eo agus enlaith.
Blath na nairni is he dobeir
do thecht tre thaeb in droighin
blath na eno tre eraeb eili
re thaeib ca mo mirboili ?*—Y. B. L., 366^b, 19-26.

O'Clery, and deals with the Nativity of the Virgin and the Birth of Christ:—

Mary, the smooth white ewe, bore an illustrious Lamb in the stall of an ass; she merited not a mean cold lodging when the illustrious Lamb was with His mother.

The High-King of Heaven was born in kindly Bethlehem at Christmas; when He was born He took a course from the sun so that He warmed the world with His glowing heat.

The windows of the moon and ether opened at the tidings, so that the sun flung wide his doors, heretofore there had been a veil over his light.

The air was full of his radiance, 'twas easy to notice it, it was one bright grove of angels reaching to heaven over Holy Mary.¹

The other poem is a short anonymous piece on St. Catherine of Alexandria:—

The King of the Greeks' daughter who never refused entreaty, has a bright brow; the complexion of the strawberry is in the hue of her fair cheek.

In her bright cheek is the hue of the strawberry and sunlit eyes; manifold is the waving and the coils and the curling (?) of her coifed tresses.

No Grecian woman surpassed the maiden in . . . form; (she has) a well-set eye that never gazed on youthful warrior, bright lips with white teeth.

Her countenance (glowed) like fire, with bosom like the swan, a virgin that was never defiled; blossom is not whiter than her pale-white hand, her eye is grey in a fair cheek.²

OTHER VERSE.

In Wales and Scandinavia the court-poets did not confine themselves to the composition of official and religious verse. In the North love-songs (*mansöngr*) are preserved in which Kormak, Gunnlaug, and others sing the praises of Steingerð or the fair Helga, whilst in Wales erotic verse is met with from the time of Howel ab Owain onwards.³ In Ireland, on the other hand, no love-poetry known to be composed by the later bards in the period in question has been preserved. It can scarcely be doubted that the men who played such an important part in the society of their day actually wrote many love-poems in praise of the ladies they met at the various houses they visited. As it is, almost all the verses of this description which have survived are in the Dean's Book, and are attributed to Isabella Countess of Argyle.⁴

¹ *Archiv f. celt. Lexicog.*, iii, p. 244; Macgr. No. VIII. Kuno Meyer has recently printed another poem on the same subject, *Z. f. c. P.*, viii. 561 ff.

² Macgr. No. XXXI.

³ Stephens, p. 37 ff.

⁴ According to Henderson, *Home Life of the Highlanders*, p. 97, this lady was the daughter of the second Earl of Argyle, and wife of the second Earl of Cassilis, who was killed at Prestwick in 1527. For a poem by her see

Short satirical poems also occur in considerable numbers in the same Edinburgh book. But here again the authors are, it would seem, exclusively of aristocratic origin, chief amongst them being Countess Isabella, Gerald the Rhymer, Earl of Desmond (d. 1397),¹ and Sir Duncan Campbell. The subjects of the satires which are often of the grossest description, are, as elsewhere, the fickleness of women and the dissolute life of the clergy.² Two of these compositions were in all probability suggested by Brant's *Ship of Fools*.³

The skill of the Irish in playing the harp is noticed by several writers, and is grudgingly admitted by Gerald the Welshman, who had very little that was good to say about the island. Given this passion for music, it is easy to understand how it comes about that the harp forms the subject of a number of poems. O'Curry in his Lectures published two, one by Gilbride Macnamee,⁴ the other a sixteenth-century composition.⁵ Similarly Macgregor preserves an address to a harp which is found also in the O'Conor Don's Book and a Stowe MS. :—

O harp of O'Coscair's Hill that bringest slumber to waking eyes, thou of the sweet melodious voice, pleasant, refreshing, grave.

O choice instrument of the gentle curve, loud-tongued one, crimson as hemlock (?), melodious harp that lulled us to sleep played by harmonious fingers.

Thou healer of every wounded warrior, prince to woo women, sound of carousing that is wont to be heard o'er the dark ale, mystic sweet-sounding voice.

Thou especial delight of all that know thee, smooth sweet-musical weir, bright star above fairy mansions, cherished diadem of monarchs.

O splash of the beach against the gentle wave, shady tree of true melody, feasts consumed in thy presence are like the song of the swan on beautiful lakes.

O strain of fairy women from the mound of Ler, peerless in respect of melody, under thy guidance every abode is full of harmony, thou highest glory of the harp's minstrelsy.⁶

Maclauchlan and Skene, p. 155, and Sigerson, *Bards of the Gael and Gall*, p. 211. Macgregor also preserves the following verses by this lady :—

* There is a youth intent upon me, King of Kings, may he come to fortune ! he was denied by my wrangling (?) and yet 'tis him I choose as companion.

Were all according to my desire there would ne'er be distance between us ; is it not enough to say that, seeing that he understands not how things are ?

Alas ! 'tis not easy unless his ship come—a tale that is grievous to us both ; he is east and I am west, so that our mutual desire will not come to pass again. (No. LXI.)

¹ It is curious to note that whilst the Dean's Book preserves poems by this writer, only one specimen of his verse is known to me from other sources. See Todd's *Analysis of the Book of Fermoy*, p. 33.

² Cp. S. M. Tucker, *Verse Satire in England before the Renaissance*, more especially, pp. 175-7.

³ Skene-Maclauchlan, p. 107 ; Macgr. No. LII.

⁴ *Manners and Customs*, iii. 271.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 287.

⁶ Macgr. No. XL.

2. A white comely blossom has been plucked from its feeble, kinship stalk; my own heart's darling has dropped, the fruitful branch of yonder house

THE LATER IRISH BARDS 1200-1500

41

From what has already been said, it will be clear that we are merely acquainted with a few stray representatives of the non-official poetry of the later bards. The Irish collections consist almost exclusively of panegyrics and religious poems, but until all the material in the Royal Irish Academy has been described, we may continue to cherish the hope that pieces of a more personal nature will be discovered.

In conclusion, I should like to draw attention to a lament in the Dean's Book on the death of a bard's wife. Macgregor ascribes the poem to Murray O'Daly. As the verses are unique in character there is no need to apologize for the length of the quotation:—

1. My soul parted from me ^{last night} yestern, a fair form that was dear to me ^{is} lay in the grave; a gentle, stately ^{pure body} lady was taken away from me with a linen shroud ^{about} around her. ^{or} ^{born has been taken}
3. Myself alone to-night, O God, evil is this crooked world Thou beholdest; fair and whole was the goodly form which was here last night, O King. ^{lovely} ^{was the weight of} ^{the young body}
5. Sad for me (to behold) that couch over there, my long pallet . . . ; we have seen a tall noble form with scattered tresses upon thee, couch. ^{seest} ^{? batted in tears}
6. A woman with gentle countenance lay upon half of my pallet, with naught save the hazel-blossom like to the one with the sweet-spoken dark womanly form.
8. Mael Mheadha of dark brows, my mead-vessel along with me; the flower that has left me was my (dearest) heart, the royal blossom after being planted has drooped. ?
10. My body has passed from my control and has fallen to her share; I am a body in two pieces now that the fair gentle beauteous one has passed away.
11. She was one of my two feet, one of my sides, her countenance was like the white-thorn; she was one of my eyes, one of my (two) hands. A
12. She was the half of my body, the bright candle; Thou hast dealt harshly with me, O King, I am faint in saying it, she was the full half of my soul.
13. Her large soft eye was my first love, her white teeth and . . . ; her fair body belonged to no man before me. ^{her teeth were} ^{white and rounded} ^{her bosom}
14. Twenty years we spent together; our converse grew ever sweeter; the tall bright stem with tapering fingers bore to me children eleven.
15. Though I am alive, I no longer exist since my smooth hazel-nut departed, after my dear love has parted from me, the dark world is empty and bare. ^{has fallen?}
23. Mael Mheadha's voice was full of mirth . . . ; my maidens and my school have dispersed since the gentle fair one has gone from us.
24. The Lord of Hosts and the Lord of Roads has taken her from us; small the affection on the part of the one of the flowing tresses so bright and young to die leaving her husband. ^{in his anger?}
25. Dear the soft hand that was here, King of bells and churchyards; alas for the hand that never sware (false) oath; 'tis a pain for me that it is not placed under my head.¹

¹ Macgr. No. XXVII. The restoration of the text of this poem is due to Prof. Bégin, who has kindly answered a number of inquiries with regard to the rendering of other quotations. *

v. Quiggin, Poems from the Book of the Dean of his own, pp. 42-43.

APPENDIX

A

TWO POEMS BY MURRAY O'DALY FROM RAWLINSON B 514.

ADDRESSED TO DONNELL MÓR O'DONNELL (d. 1241).

I

- 1 A Domhnaill, deglam fa sid, denu-sa aicned indrig ;
ni maith sidh *acht* co subach, na bidh flaith co *frichnumach*.
- 2 Dena righacht is reidhe, ni haicned rig rodheine ;
as lat Erne agus Eine, brat ar n-erghe a hainbfine.
- 3 Tarla damh lamach, dar lem, dofetar isse m'fuihell,
ni derna fuighell acht *fer* ar nach cuirenn a cáinedh.
- 4 Geis do righ, a rí Finde, sceinn re scel an *cet-gille* ;
ni dlesidh gach duine tren go *fessidh* luidhe ar *lethscel*.
- 5 An me docuaid d'iarruid Finn ? *fiarfaig* da fuil 'san airdchill ;
fech, a *cridhe* solus s[a]in, ca dorus tighe a torcair.
- 6 Is hi an foiridhin fallsa do soissed uaib oramsa,
gur b'e, a Domnaill, do dillecht do congbbhuinn ret cipinecht (?).
- 7 Dob'e an coimes echt oile Mac Coissi 's a cirmoiri ;
dail nar b'ferr rium doronadh Find am cend do *comóradh*.
- 8 Tainic is tue mo loissi fa xx. id am fiadhnaise,
dosía ara *corp no* ara cruth, cia les *nach* olc an t-enghuth ?
- 9 Da marband *acus* me ad tig mac rig maith no mac taisig,
fulang hanfaid dob'ussa triasan tarbchoin turussa.
- 10 Mo a ndernais inam dlighe d'falad at fir muinntire ;
ge sith donessi anossa *frít[h]* do sith d'eis Aengossa.
- 11 An ced long triallfus tar tuind uaid, a ri Doiri, a Domnaill,
leic, a *milid*, me tar ais lesna tirib ó tucais.
- 12 Oirdeochad duid a ndlige rim, a *šoerclann* t'Súilige ;
a n-ic Finn *no* Duib *no* Duinn na cuir ind dít, a Domnaill.
- 13 Eacail leamsa do moid *mer*, a Domnaill Droma Lighen ;
ar los do rímhoide rim cros na trinnoide a timchiull.
- 14 Ge tussa nac[h] ti tar aiss ar an *cetglór* docanais,
gach *Conallach* 'sa cruinde go rolunduch romhuinde.
- 15 Clann aindilis an fuind gloin, clann Eochach is clann Ceallaig,
Sil mBaigill ni biad am cinn, ni sailim íad dom indill.¹

¹ MS. imdill.

- 16 Muindtír Teircheirt ar mo thí ni creidim uaid, a airdrigh,
mó sailim mo cin do ceilt d'fir mar ó taibseing *Teircheirt*.
- 17 Da ngréistea, a ri, dom rochtain *muintir* dedgheal Dochartaich,
cuich dob'anathlamh ann sin *no clann* maluchdub Maenaig.¹
- 18 *Clann* Breislein ni biad am cenn ge bhud d'aicmedaib Eirenn,
mac Duinn, ge bocc do bunadh, is mac Cuinn is *Concubar*.
- 19 Dócha iad uili ar mo druim ina duine d'Ib Domhnaill,
ní ticc mac daib *no dalta* lat a ndail na dighalta.
- 20 Gach maith do tír is do tuind cugaib, a cinel *Conuill*,
na raib d'foghail *no d'esbuid* oraib *acht* an t-enfer-soin.
- 21 Ni facadhús re hathaidh me, a mic í *Cuind Cetcataig* ;
a Domnaill, na duin mar sin an suil mongduinn red *muintir*.
- 22 Traethfud-sa th'fere da fédar, dligther airdríc d'uirbrégadh ;
bráithfed, a flaith Breg, do bét, ni maith cnedh gan a coméd.
- 23 *Cethrar* is *gruamda* dar ghin, leoman buidhe is beithír,
matghamain finn, dregan donn, dar lium tecar 'na timcholl.
- 24 Hferg mor-sa is do miri baidfe ceol ar cerdi-ne ;
dan *agus* gan duais da cinn, sámh les *gach* cluais dá cluineun.
- 25 Sloindfed da creide, a cul lag, a mic hua n-Echach Fanad,
ní fuil, a derce ceibfinn cais, *cerd* a n-Eirinn at fécmáis.
- 26 Tucais leat, a cais corcra, *cerda* bregtha banntrochta,
comláine *gacha* cerde, bondbaine is beildeirge.
- 27 Derge n-aigthe is n-ingen, rosc leathan gan luathfillead,
maigrí saer tana troighed, mala cael nar caeloidhedh.
- 28 Colpa seda, sliasad geal, mala dub, Dia dá díden,
ded as caeimhe 'sa *cruinde*, med is saire is sulcuirri.
- 29 Long do brondadh *cona bert* is cloidhem co n-ór d'imbert ;
long *cona bert* do bronnadh 's gan a ceilt ar *cezlongadh*. x
- 30 Tinnsenamh ar sidha ise sin, a mic Ecechain Oilig,
anadh *bud* lomlainn leam sunn, ma ferr, a Domnaill deglum. A Domnaill.
- 31 Do corcra clochan don aib, a Maeil Mhaedoic Mic Amlaib,
nir b'fuirail deit degláid glan, a Mic Amlaib, 'na inadh.
- 32 Logh damh a ndernus ad cill, a Í Neill Teamra, a Tailcinn,
is tu caraim is ru-m-car, a *Caluin* dan clú *crabad*.
- 33 A Dubgail, na delaig rind, a codhnaig cloinde Baighill,
a Í Baigill duinn Doiri ó tuind taibseing *Thoraige*.
- 34 Na deglam ar Dia do nimh, a Diarmaid finn Í Fírgil,
is tú at aenar is imlán ót aeradh ot athimradh.
- 35 A I Bresleín, a barr lacc, a mic Duinn a dun Fánad,
na díslig mesi, a mic Duinn, ma deit budh tresi ad *trenchuing*.
- 36 A Aed Í T[h]ercheirt, na treicc mesi *no mac* mo leithéid,
a cinn Caisil od omhnair, taisich ind 'nar n-ollomhnaib.

¹ MS. maég.

- 37 A *Choncubair* duinn daltaig mic Domnaill I Dochartaig,
na leic loidhe oirnn ón Dalaigh¹ do géice Doiri dimbádhaign.
- 38 Na deglam ar Día nime, a Mailtsechláinn tSúiligi,
masa leir deit ar ndograing, a mic réidh í righ-Domnaill.
A Domnaill.

II

- 1 Cían ó d'ibess digh ndermaid ro-m-scar re Siúir sibhenbhuice,
risin Sinainn moir maigrídh, re Boinn sriubfáinn sriubhaibnigh.
- 2 Nocha dermódainn don digh Muaidh na Šuca nó Sibhinn,
no Buill an buinne braenaídh 'nar muime 'nar macaemhuibh.
- 3 No Finn no Drobhais nó Duib, no Sliccidh n-ughaid n-éaigh,
no ar mbuime núaidhes nellne, no ruaidhes na righ-Erne.
- 4 Nó Eithne na n-ecned ngel no Life leathan Laighen
no Banna no Tuinn Tuaide, no clanna Cuinn Craebruidhe.
- 5 Gídh imdha do clannaib Cuinn gilla ag oirbhiri oruinn,
a ciall go cert no a cuimne terc da mbiad 'nar mbethuid-ne.
- * 6 Cóc bliadhna dec as doigh lim damh a n-ingnuis na hErenn ;
a suil rinn ní fuil festa, ó soin ind ar enmhessa.
- 7 Rainec me, maith an sidhe, saerclann Tiri Tairngire,
ní mé rainec fer bud férr, ass ed² tainec im thimchell.
- 8 Connachta, Dal Cais cialla, Conull, Eogan, Oirghialla,
sluaigh an brogha 's na bruigne uaim ar ndola ar díchaimhne.
- 9 Mar budh eadh as e ar samail ar an echtra allmaraich
bretha Coluim ceibfínn caidh orainn fa Eriinn d'fácail.
- 10 Farir do radsatar Goill brechrugad ingnadh orainn,
Goill dom srained tar sal soir o lár Gaidel do gelladh.
- 11 As eadh bud amharus lium da roisind óca Eiríonn
gan m'aithne ag righ nó ac ruiro díb a haithli m'amhsuine.
- 12 Bess nocha bertha a calad me a Fodla na findchalad,
me úaim gan adhradh a fad sluaigh na talman o tanag.
- 13 Eagail lem croidhe ní céil, da rísainn Inis³ Samher,
gan áes ogbad d'anadh rinn 'na caladh fódglan aibinn.
- 14 Cach uaim 'ga fiarfaige damh, cuich mé féu ar tuinn talman ?
cet fir⁴ deroil dím ag cách am senóir crín gan chonach.
- 15 Gídh eadh ro fácbus, dar leam, aenoclach d'fearib Erenn,
m'aithne doberudh go becht ar feghadh m'aighte ainfecht.
- 16 Da mbeith clann aelta Amlaib adrum 's a derg dondabraig,
sáilim aithne ar an guth nglan gan cruth a aighte d'féghadh.
- 17 Inmain oclaeach airm fada, leoman Leptha Díarmada,
nar leic orainn orlann airm, Domnall Conuill a combainn
- * 18 Conallaigh mo chroinn mela, Connachtaigh as íad m'oideadha ;
na sluaigh fá sech ar m'óigh ann, is suaill nach leath doib Domnall.

¹ leg. oirnn na leic loidhe ón Dalaigh ?² MS. ass.³ vel eo sruth MS. (recte).⁴ MS. .c. f.

* He went into exile in 1213. So this was composed in 1228 ?

- 19 Do-adras ó ais lenaib Domnall Dúna ná innenaídh,¹
mala goirmseada mar Goll, a coimleaba do-clechtsam.
- 20 Da mairredh m'aicned and sin acam am airdrigh Oilig,
gilla an ruisc gormmoill gleghlais, Ó Domnaill ni dermedmais.
- 21 Ni dermed(a)mar a gnúis ngloin 'ga cedlenmain a Cruachoin;
tossach gach beinde buabaill fa linne ar a leathgualainn.
- 22 Día dá íc re íolt ródglan an tres fecht ro-m-furíócraih,
bud nemoman dá cul cam dealogad dúnn re Domnall.
- 23 Da treicinn an finn fallan, Domnall Dúine Cremthannán,
dobeir cend Codhail is Cuilt mo cenn a comhair cét-íuilt.
- 24 Nir chara damh rí remhe failte flatha Sulige,
mar doíinn 'ga gruaidh gelbuile docím úaim nach indermaid.
- 25 Ní deirméd écusc an fír Domnall Ó Domnaill déidghil;
déd ban agus bel corera dán trén bág an banntrochta.
- 26 Bright serce a n-urlabra an fír, gen gáiri 'na gruaidh thibrigh,
sduaidh ina dhegmalaig duinn os gruaid gelbhanaig (?)² Domnaill.
- 27 Rogha na cerd, an Coimthe, do-chum delb ar nDomhnaill-ne;
snas donn a cúil 'na caraib, súil glas corr fá caemmalaigh.
- 28 Domnall Indse Saimér sin mac Enechán úa Donnchaidh
beithir Fánad mar Fér nDiadh ó tanac re headh n-imcían.
Cian o d'ibes.

B

I

A DESCRIPTION OF THE POEMS CONTAINED IN RAWLINSON B 514.

The first 60 leaves are taken up with the Life of St. Columba by Magnus O'Donnell. The following 18 leaves have their own pagination:—

- 1 a. 58 stanzas attributed to Fland Mainistrech, beginning:

Conall cuingidh cloinde Neill tainic a Temraig taibreidh
daithe a fúladh sa tír thúaidh a cuicedh Uladh armruaidh.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

- 1 b. A poem of 30 stanzas, beginning:

Ata sunl rulla na righ cland Echach nach ob essídh
[cúig] mic Echach fú trén tress dleaghar díim a rísencus.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

- 2 a. A poem in 32 stanzas, beginning:

A eolcha Conaill ceoluigh sloinnid dunn daíl co treóruigh
ga cúis far gab Dálach díl urlamhus ar a braithrib.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

¹ leg. Dúna finn-Enaigh?

² gelbam̄ MS.

Ibid. A poem in 46 stanzas, beginning :

Enna dalta Cairpri cruaid rogab tír nEnda armruaidh
facbaid an cuingidh a clann a foscadh cinidh Conaill.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

2 b. Under the heading of *Slicht seinliubair Caillin* and so there is a poem of 12 stanzas, beginning :

Cairpri Eogain Enna eimh agus Conall mor mac Neill
as mesi as eolcha na roinn a triuchadha sa tóraind.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

3 a. A similar heading is prefixed, *Slicht an tseinliubair cedna an duan-sa.*

There follows a poem of 23 stanzas, beginning :

Eistigh re Conall calma agus re hEoghan amra
mar dorinneadar an dail a mullach Droma Cruachain.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

Ibid. A poem of 17 stanzas, beginning :

A liubhair ata ar do lar senchus Coinchubair conchlan
do righ echtach Oilig uill is do righ cinil Conuill.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

Ibid. Another poem of 17 stanzas, beginning :

Ata sunn senchus nach suaill do righ Essa roglain Ruaidh
gach ní dlighes ní duaithnidh as síres o primthuathaibh.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book. Printed by K. Meyer from B iv 2 in *Z. f. c. P.*, viii. 115.

3 b. A well-known poem of 12 stanzas, beginning :

Bendacht ort, a Fíolnd Aídhne, gab ot mhathair comairli,
na bidh gan gart at gnim ngle oir is lat gach ní cuinghe.

Printed by K. Meyer in *Z. f. c. P.*, viii, p. 109. Other copies in the O'Conor Don's Book and in a MS. at Stoneyhurst.

Ibid. A poem ascribed to Fland mac Lonain ollamh Connacht. 64 stanzas, beginning :

Ard do secla a mic na cuach doradrús lat as gnimh truagh
Ecnachan mac Dálaig díl do dhul fon talmain tromdhíl.

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

4 b. 66 stanzas ascribed to Coluim-cille :

Eistea frim a Baithin buain guth mo cluic aní adhuair
gon indiser iar sodhain a ticc fri dederh domhain.

See *Ériu*, v. 11; *Abbott's Cat.*, pp. 291, 307 (?).

5 a. A poem of 35 stanzas attributed to Caillin. Begins :

Ata sunn lecht Conuill cruaidh mor fecht ruc buaidh ar cech leth
sochuide ro-cuir a n-éy mor cuirí mor crich ro-crech.

- 5 b. The next poem has the heading, *Sticht seinliubair Caillin so*. It contains 9 stanzas similar to the following :

*Caillin caidh cumhachtach
 espoc uassal oirnidhe
 dorinde mór d'fètaibh
 as each tír a bfuair
 tainic Caillin caimhfertach
 is aingeal Dé ga forcongra
 corub ann ro-suidhestar
 ac dún Baili buain.*

- Ibid. 14 stanzas ascribed to the same Caillin, beginning :

*Gebaidh crith an talumh tend gach tír falam iar mbráth nglonn
 ba deimhin do cách an brath faiclet ticfa in muir ar cach.*

- 6 a. A dialogue between Caillin and an angel with the heading, *Aingeal d'ixit fri Caillin*. Contains 8 stanzas similar to the following :

*Codludh san imdaidh-se
 don mind óir oirnidhe
 don merge lasamna
 do Caillin caidh
 an mhúir tar minnlochúib
 don grein os minnrendaib
 don breithir blaith.*

- Ibid. A poem of 17 stanzas ascribed to Caireall mac Curnain. Begins :

*Is olc ata a nEri anocht Goill is Gaidil folt ar folt
 siad Gaidil bus melaigh de co n-eir sraonghalaig Doiri.*
Abbott's Cat., p. 291.

- Ibid. A poem of 18 stanzas attributed to Ulltan. Begins :

*Foghar na gaithe-si anoir benus re bord mo curaicch
 is saeth lium an ní diata claidh find na heculsa.*
Abbott's Cat., p. 291.

- 6 b. Seven stanzas, beginning :

*Marthain tar ais d'Eirinn uaim re toighecht go hAraimn uair
 biaidh Eri gan rian gan rath noco toir an t-Aedh Engach.*
Abbott's Cat., p. 292.

- Ibid. A poem of 47 stanzas ascribed to Find. Begins :

*A Oisín an raide rinn ní d'faisdine mic Cumail
 ar tairngire and rig co rath fír ainglide a adhradh.*
Abbott's Cat., pp. 291, 292.

- 7 a. 9 stanzas ascribed to Find, beginning :

*A ben labrus rium an laech ata ní as mó do-traoth mo ceill
 tadbhas damh-sa taibrid recht ruc mo nert is ruc mo ceill.*
Abbott's Cat., p. 291. Duanaire Finn, p. 85.

- Ibid. 20 stanzas ascribed to Find, beginning :

*Uathmar me a Temraig anocht a Adlainn as docht mo scel
 ní mairend don rigraidh reil acht Fíachna fen damna der.*

7 b. 7 stanzas, beginning :

*Congal cind magair maith ri bliadain da bliadain fo tri
d'Éirind gan cogadh can cath fa rí sona secht bliadhnach.*

Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

Ibid. A short prose extract with the heading, *Slicht senliubair is cingín ó Ard Carna andso :*

Buandacht bona I Domnaill ar cáicid Ulad andso .i. cuid da xx ar thír Conuill agus cuid tri xx ar cloinn Aedha Buidhe agus cuid v bfer ndec co leith agus dá fíchlí ar Ó Cathan. Cuid tri xx ar Cínel Moain agus cuid dá xx sa raihte ar Úa Floind agus cuid dá xx ar Mac Gillamuiri agus cuid tri xx ar Ib Eachach agus cuid dá xx ar Oirthearaibh agus an uirrdail cetna ar Oirgiallaib agus cuid da xx ar feraibh Manach agus cuid da xx ar Tir Fíachrach Arda Sratha agus cuid da xx ar Mac Cathmail agus cuid da fer déc ar Mág Cana agus cuid dá fer déce ar xx ar muindtír Birn agus cuid sesir ar Ó Charagán agus rí.

Ibid. A poem of 41 stanzas by Gillabrighte Mac Conmidhe, beginning :

*Rogha na cloinne Conall togha na droinge aderam
tole dar seolad ruc romham Conall tuc d'Eogan ferann.*

There is another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book. O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 353.

8 a. A poem of 33 stanzas by the same, beginning :

*Conall cuingidh cloinne Neill mac do'uaisti don airdreim
les dochuaid a Midhe amach gach fine tuaidh ar tossach.*

For other copies see *Ériu*, iv. 187, and the O'Conor Don's Book.

8 b. A poem of 33 stanzas by the same, beginning :

*Tainic tairngeri na n-ertum uaisti Fodla ferrde daib
ni cian co foirther a formad fóirfed ar fiadh fonnbog Fail.*

Ibid. A poem of 39 stanzas by the same, beginning :

*Cethrar as feili fuair Flann on lo do-crec a cét-rann
ar tolladh Erend uili d'ollamh meirseng Maenmhuaighe.*

9 a. A poem of 26 stanzas by the same, beginning :

*Do-fidir Dia Cínel Conuill do cur an imsnímh tar ais
tainic trebaidh cride Coluim ar fine caidh Conaill cais.*

See O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 350.

9 b. A poem of 25 stanzas by the same, beginning :

*Testa eochair glais Gaidil fá Eirinn do-heccáinedh
budh anbfann doib greim a nglais isa seim óir na fécus.*

10 a. A poem of 45 stanzas by the same, beginning :

*Do slán úaim a Áth Senuig docuaidh cach ad claindebuid
tárurus ort meing as mebuil olc do greim do Gaidheluibh.*

10 b. A poem of 37 stanzas attributed to Brian Ruadh Mac Conmidhe, beginning :

*Imdha urruim ac Utaibh dligid uaisti imarcaidh
asse dleghar do dhuine lenadh sé na sochaidhe.*

For other copies see *Ériu*, iv. 187, and the O'Conor Don's Book.

Ibid. A poem of 38 stanzas by the same, beginning :

Lenfat mo chert ar cloinn Dalaig mo dhúthchas riu reefa me
ní ghébh acht lé cert don cet-seal dogén nert mad eccen hé.

11 a. A poem of 33 stanzas by the same, beginning :

Dimghach do Chonall Dálach díngach ar nach oirches dlái
ní ní acht mar do-an ar eneing an ri is Magh Feilim fáí.

11 b. A poem of 44 stanzas attributed to Ruaidri Ruadh O hUiginn.
Begins :

Fulang annróidh adbhar soidh fadla ar tús as tuar fíedhoil
asse as túr anóra ann run an ansodha d'fulang.

For other copies see *Ériu*, iv. 188.

12 a. A poem of 33 stanzas ascribed to Fergal Ruad O hUiginn. Begins :

Fada adertar na deich rig do breith na leabaid go leir
go roich an t-aenmadh dec díbh deich righ décc a naembhrugh Neill.

12 b. A poem of 15 stanzas by Tadg Occ O hUicind. Begins :

Failsigh do mírbaili a Muiri maidem assad asse ar ton
bíd mo cás ort ina eri nocht do gras a Muiri mór.

Another copy in Y. B. L., 373^a, 8.

Ibid. A poem of 28 stanzas, probably by the same writer, beginning :

Olc cuimhnighim mo cumann aicned muna athcumam
mo cuimhne docóidh a richt nach cóir swirghe ré sesiucht.

13 a. A poem of 36 stanzas attributed to Diarmaid O Cleirig. Begins :

Maruid fós ferta Coluim liaide da lucht uraduill
la ar a cumachta ní cuir mar tá a n-udhachta an erlainmh.

13 b. A poem of 37 stanzas, beginning :

Ní deoraidh meisi a Manainn me este ní hintadhaill
do-gab baid re Manainn me dot grad anaim a Éri.

For another copy see Y. B. L., 395^a, 40.

14 a. A poem of 29 stanzas attributed to Muireduch Lesa-an-Doill. Begins :

Cian ó d'ibess dígh ndermaid ro-m-scar re Síúir sibhenbhuicc
risin Sinainn moir maigrídh re Boinn sriubfuinn sriubhaibnigh.

Supra, p. 44.

Ibid. A poem of 38 stanzas by the same, beginning :

A Domhnaill deglam fa sidh denusa aicned indrig
ní maith sidh acht co subach na bídh flaith co frichnumach.

Supra, p. 42.

14 b. A poem of 54 stanzas ascribed to Tuathal mac Taide Í Uicind.
Begins :

Dimghach Eiri d'fúil Conuill coir estecht a huroghaill
bec tarla fan dimgaidh dib gabla d'fidbaid na n-airdrigh.

- 15 a. A poem of 42 stanzas by Gofraid Mac-an-Baird, beginning :
Minec frith Eri a hEamain a dil celi fa comhair
an tsîn ni fuil na adhaidh gabaidh don fuil righ roghain.
- 15 b. A poem of 48 stanzas attributed to Domnall mac Taidg Óicc Í Uigind :
Cia adeir nar melladh Maghnus ni ceisd is eacil d'aidhnes
si ar clodh ceilli fa clemhnus mor derbus Ere a ainmhes.
- 16 a. 57 stanzas ascribed to Seann O Dalaig Breithfne. The last 7 stanzas are on 18 a. The leaf containing them has been misplaced. Begins :
Cia rer fuirghedh feis Teamra ar claochlogh a cedmeadra
mithid ri a tulaig an trir nir cubaid hi gan airdrigh.
- 17 a. A poem of 33 stanzas by Giollabrighe Mac Conmidhe, beginning :
Caidhet cethri teallaig Temra dhan toich Eri o thuind go tuinn ?
don tsiol is saire rechtus do sil raidhi cennchas Cuind.
- 17 b. A poem of 50 stanzas in a much later hand than the remainder of the poems. It is attributed to Cu-Uladh mac Concubair Ruaidh Mic-an-Baird. Begins :
Fuigheall formaid fuil Dalaigh tnuth da mbúain na mbengánaibh
do-chronaigh suil eigin ind an tnudh ni heidir d'faichill.
- 18 a. A poem of 38 stanzas ascribed to Gofraidh Mac-an-Baird. Begins :
Anois aithnighim m'uabhar airighim ar gach n-aeinfer
ler cuir sinn d'eol ar m'uabar fuarad linn deor do deneam.
- 18 b. A poem of 33 stanzas attributed to Giollabrighe Mac Conmidhe. Unlike the rest of the book this page is not easy to read in consequence of rubbing. The piece begins :
Ceidtreabh Erend Inis Sainher ar selbh dilend dia do rús
ni daim ochtair do fuair Banbha ar rochtain thuaidh tarla ar tús.

II

THE CONTENTS OF GAELIC MS., ADVOCATES' LIBRARY NO. LXIV.

A very dilapidated paper MS., now consisting of 37 leaves. The contents are almost entirely religious poems.

- 1 a. Half of the first leaf is torn away. Gives the end of a poem, the last stanza of which contains the words :
gcreidir mar is coir damh cumacht Muire
- Ibid. A poem, beginning *Triur righ tainic* = Macgregor, No. II. Cp *Abbott's Cat.*, p. 363. 10 stanzas.
- Ibid. A poem, beginning :
Mairg dan budh chara an ogh anam elithe moghain.
 Extends to foot of 1 b (?).

- 2 a. A poem of 60 (?) stanzas, beginning :
Deirbhthsiur don eгна an eigsí.
 Extends to foot of 3 a. See *Abbott's Cat.*, Index.
- 3 b. A poem, beginning :
Gach maith a moradh aluind cerd o craobh ó rath
nona serg a snuadh mar sin buan gach cerd 7 coiridh.
- 5 b. A poem of 46 stanzas on the Legend of the Holy Rood, beginning :
Marthuind duit a croch an choimdedh (= Macgregor, No. V).
- 6 b. A poem of 43 stanzas on the Nativity of the Virgin and the Infancy of Christ. Begins *Fuígeall bennacht brugh Muire*. Printed by K. Meyer from the Book of Hy Mane in *Archiv f. celt. Lex.*, iii, p. 244 = Macgregor, No. VIII.
- 8 a. *Duan anso o fpílip mac Cuinn Crosaigh ann a daispentar tuarusghail uathm(ar) laithe an braich agus an modh ar a dtiocfu Criosd docum an bhretheam nais agus na briathra adera ann . . . grasa nach diongna fu dheredh.* 54 stanzas, beginning :
Tuar feirge foighide Dhe.
 Cp. *Abbott's Cat.*, p. 362. There is another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.
- 9 a. Poem by Tadhg Óg. 29 stanzas, beginning :
Ataid tri comraig am chind.
 Macgregor, No. III. Cp. O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 363.
- 10 a. Poem by Tadhg Óg. 19 stanzas, beginning :
Aithin me dod toide a Eoin.
 Other copies: Y. B. L., 362^a, 19; Book of the O'Conor Don.
- 10 b. Poem by Tadhg Óg. 28 stanzas, beginning :
Cia gabus m'anamain re ais.
 Cp. Y. B. L., 364^a, 12; Book of the O'Conor Don.
- 11 a. Poem by Tadhg Óg. 44 stanzas, beginning :
Bec nach tainic mo t(h)erma.
 Other copies: Y. B. L., 364^b, 27; Adv. XXIX; Book of the O'Conor Don.
- 12 a. Poem by Tadhg Óg. 30 stanzas, beginning :
Gab m'egnach a Eoin Baisdi.
 Other copies: Y. B. L., 369^b, 17; Adv. XXIX.
- 12 b. Poem by Tadhg Óg. 32 stanzas, beginning :
Cairt a sichana ag siol Adhamh.
 Macgregor, No. IV. = Y. B. L., 363^a, 31.
- 13 b. Poem of 34 stanzas by Tadhg Óg, beginning :
Ag so bragha det a Dhe.
 Other copies: Y. B. L., 368^a, 11; Adv. XXIX; Book of the O'Conor Don.

- 14 b. Poem of 36 stanzas by Tadhg Óg, beginning :

Mairg danab soirbh an saegal.

Other copies: Y. B. L., 366^b, 28; Book of the O'Conor Don.

- 15 a. Poem of 38 (?) stanzas, beginning :

*Namadh da caraid clann Adhaim egoir bid gan beth da reir
ge ata fala Dé ar gach nduine ise a geara fire fein.*

- 16 a. Poem of 44 stanzas, beginning :

Gabham dechmadh ar ndana.

Cp. O'Grady, *Cat.*, p. 345; *Archiv*, ii. 141.

- 17 a. Poem of 30 stanzas, beginning :

*Gabam grem maith do Muire minic sinn ga sirguidhe
a cuid do duain De dligi dochuaidh mé na muinigin.*

- 17 b. Poem of 32 stanzas attributed to Donnchad Mór, beginning :

Aithrige sunn duít a Dhé.

- 18 b. Poem of 41 stanzas attributed to Tadhg Óg, beginning :

Teine arna fadodh ferg De.

Other copies: Adv. XXIX, R.I.A. 23 G 23, F ii 3.

- 19 b. Poem of 37 stanzas, beginning :

Ceangal sodenta siogh De.

- 20 a. Poem of 38 stanzas attributed to Fpilip bocht [O hlliginn]. Begins :

Bennachd a mathar ar mac nDé.

Abbott's Cat., p. 362.

- 21 a. Poem of 30 stanzas by Fergal Og [Mac-an-Bhaird?]. Begins :

Ben glas dom croidi a Choimghé.

The opening words are not repeated at the end.

- 22 a. Poem of 40 stanzas, beginning :

Fada mé ar merughad sligheadh.

- 23 a. Three stanzas by Mac Con O Cleirigh. Begins :

Roim na b[pe]cthach (?) ar thech nDé.

Three (?) stanzas by Tadhg Dall. Begins :

*. b[pe]thach uaim Padraig (?) bec na saraidh uaim Letha
port glanta anma o fpianaibh glan Roim iarthar in betha.*

- 23 b. Poem of 44 stanzas by Pilib bocht. Begins :

*Do gein[edh] ingen on umla dar boide mianta mac De
in mac ar a uaisli dfaicsin dar lat fuairsi anaigsidh.*

There is a further copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.

- 24 b. Poem of 38 stanzas, beginning :

Tri gluine ginelaigh mic Dé.

Abbott's Cat., p. 362.

- 25 *b*. Poem of 37 stanzas in rannaigeacht mór, beginning :
Tri mic do Muire mic Dé slat gon duine ag gleic re gnai.
 At the end the words *Tri gluin* are repeated. These belong to the preceding poem.
- 26 *b*. Poem of 27 stanzas, beginning :
Do chodail ar bfer faire.
 See *Abbott's Cat.*, Index.
- 27 *a*. Poem of 15 stanzas, beginning :
Suntach sin a cholann criadh.
- 27 *b*. Poem of 10 stanzas attributed to Fergall Og [Mac-an-Bhaird]. Begins :
Na dena diomus a duine.
 A copy in the O'Conor Don's Book is ascribed to Geoffrey Finn O'Daly.
- Ibid. Poem of 4 stanzas by Fergall Og Mac-an-Bhaird. Begins :
S . . r . . si a mhic an Duilimh.
- Ibid. Poem of 3 stanzas by Solamh Mac Conmidha. Begins :
Cionta na colla is cuis truaighe.
- 28 *a*. Poem of 13 stanzas attributed to Tadg Dall Mac Mathgamna. Begins :
Teach lega leaba fPadraig.
- Ibid. Poem of 30 (?) stanzas attributed to Fergal Og O hUiginn. Begins :
Linn fPadraig na bport solus.
- 29 *a*. Eight stanzas by Fergal Og Mac-an-Bhaird, beginning :
Slan uaim ag oilen Padraig.
 Cp. *Abbott's Cat.*, p. 366 (?).
- Ibid. Poem of 13 stanzas attributed to Aongus mac Aodha Ruaidh I Uiginn. Begins :
Mo chen teid i dteigais fPadraig.
 The opening words are not repeated at the close.
- 29 *b*. A poem of 13 stanzas beginning :
Loch Derg at Roim na hEirind.
- Ibid. Poem of 16 stanzas, beginning :
Tugais damh a Dhé nime onoir ar fad maimisire.
 The poet's name is given as Tuilecna and again in the upper margin above the preceding poem as Tuilecina mac Torna cc. It extends to 30 *a*.
ne O' Duilecinane?
 From f. 30 on half of the page is torn away.
- 30 *a*. Poem in 25 stanzas, beginning :
Tugadh mo coiméd do coigiur.
 Another copy in the O'Conor Don's Book.
- 30 *b*. Twelve stanzas extending to 31 *a*.

31 a. Seven (?) stanzas, beginning :

Fada an suanso ar righ na ndul.

Thirty-five (?) stanzas, beginning :

Maelduin Maelduin o righa in teó.

32 a. Twelve stanzas, beginning :

Do mheall a saogal sibse a ciar brisde bar gcuinge.

32 b. Fifteen stanzas by . . . *gide Buidhe.*

33 a. Poem of 45 stanzas by Donnchad Mor O Dalaigh. Begins :

Lochrann soillsi ac siol Aduim.

Two copies in the O'Conor Don's Book.

34 a. Poem, beginning :

Tainig bhur gcairde a clann Adham.

It may extend to 36 a.

36 a. Poem, beginning :

Coir foighidi re feirg nDé.

36 b. Poem, beginning :

[*Bean ar naitheirghe Éire*] = Macgregor, No. XIX. O'Grady, *Cat.*,
p. 354.

Extends to 37 b.

37 b. . . . *ain .1. rí da choigedh Mumhoín agus airdescub Caisil cē.* Three
stanzas beginning :

. *fesda dom aimsir beag nach tainig mo saogal.*

A poem, beginning :

. *an trath sgarfus rem anmuin.*

cuir a dtalmuín ag

Extends to 38 b (?).

ADDENDA

P. 14. The Magauran Book was transcribed by Adam O'Cianan for Thomas Magauran who, according to the Four Masters, was slain in the year 1343. A stanza on p. 50 affords the only literary evidence with which I am acquainted, that the better known families maintained books in which eulogies of their race were entered. I give the verse according to a transcript made by Joseph O'Longan in 1869 which the O'Conor Don kindly deposited for me in the Cambridge University Library in February, 1913 :

*Ni hinann duchar dhuinde | 's du daimh ri fiesg findbaille
seach dhan gach daine oile | lan dar ndaine a duanoire.*

P. 15. Mr. Purton informs me that a book of poems addressed to the Dillon family is preserved in the Royal Irish Academy.

P. 36. At the outset I assumed that the later bards drew the material for their religious compositions directly from Latin. It still seems probable to me on other grounds that many, if not all of them, were acquainted with that language, but this cannot always be inferred from the devotional poems they composed. F. A. Patterson's work on the *Middle English Penitential Lyric* (New York, 1911) has convinced me that a large part of their ideas and phraseology was drawn from the liturgy which would be accessible to them in an Irish dress. The stories of saints were taken from the homiliaria, many of which are known to have been rendered into the vernacular, and with regard to the exempla Mr. Flower informs me that there is in existence an Irish translation of the *Gesta Romanorum*. In cases where Latin sermons and treatises are closely followed, further study will perhaps show whether such poems go directly back to the Latin original or are based upon an Irish prose intermediary. The O'Conor Don's Book appears to preserve several compositions of this nature. One beginning *Glac a chompáin comhairle* Miss Knott shows to be based upon St. Bernard's *Formula Honestae Vitae* (Migne, vol. clxxxiv, col. 1167).

Martin Martin, Description of the Western Islands (1703)

"The orators, in their language called 'Gs-Dane' (= Aos Dana), were in high esteem both in these Islands and in the Continent; until within these forty years. They sat always among the Nobles and Chiefs of Families in the 'Streak' or Circle. Their houses and little villages were Sanctuaries, as well as Churches, and they took place before Doctors of Physick. The Orators, after the Druids were extinct, were brought ⁱⁿ to preserve the genealogy of Families, ^{to repeat the same at every succession of a chief;} and upon the occasion of Marriages and Births they made Epithalamiums and Panegyrics which the Poet or Bard pronounced. The orators by the force of their eloquence had a powerful ascendant over the greatest men in their time, for if any Orator did but ask the Habit, Arms, Horse, or any other ^{thing} belonging to the greatest Man in these Islands, it was readily granted them, sometimes out of Respect, and sometimes for fear of being exclaimed against by a Satyr, which in those days was reckoned a great dishonour, but these Gentlemen becoming insolent, lost ever since both the Profit and the Esteem which was formerly due to their character; for neither their Panegyrics nor Satyrs are regarded to what they have been, and they are now allowed but a small salary. I must not omit to relate their way of Study, which is very singular. They shut their Doors and Windows for a day's time, and lie on their Backs, with a Stone upon their Belly, and Plaids about their heads, and their eyes being covered, they pump their brains [for] Rhetorical Encomium or Panegyric; and indeed they furnish such a Store from this dark Cell, as is understood by very few, and if they purchase a couple of Horses as the Reward for their Meditation, they think they have done a great matter. The Poet, or Bard, had a title to the Bridegroom's upper Garb, that is, the Plaid and Bonnet, but now he is satisfied with what the Bridegroom pleases to give him on such occasions."

Captain Sorley Mac Donnell 6.

Crossin mela p. 44

