

Book Review

THE IRISH TRADITION—By Dr. Robin Flower.

Readers of our Journal may welcome a somewhat belated notice of this valuable little book. It was written by the late Dr. Robin Flower ("Blaheen"), and prepared for publication after his death by some of his friends. There is much in it of interest and value for those interested in Ormond and Thomond. Dr. Flower traces the tradition of scholarship in the old monastic schools to the time of transition after Brian Boru. He points to many reasons from which we may infer that Brian himself was not only a warrior king but regarded himself and was regarded, after the manner of Charlemagne, as a patron and protector of the arts and sciences. He concludes that it was under Brian's patronage that the great Bardic and historian families came into being to carry on the ancient tradition of learning. Much space is devoted to the last days of the monastery of Terryglass in Ormond and to the compiling there in the first half of the 12th century by Aodh Mac Crinnthain of the great *Book of Leinster*, which he calls a *bibliotheca* or collection of all the famous old texts into one volume. Then he traces the survival of the tradition amongst the Bardic schools such as that of the Mac Egans at Coillte Ruad near Lorrha and of the Maolconaire family at Ard Coill near Sixmilebridge. Finally, he gives some account of how, when the "old Irish world" had apparently perished, as Curtis says, under the Stuart Kings and the Cromwellian plantations, there arose again, even in the Penal Days, a new generation of wandering poets, scholars and "philomaths," who, as best they might, did what they could, even still, to keep the same tradition alive. The critical reader may, indeed, be of opinion that some of Dr. Flower's conclusions may be somewhat lacking in proof. It is well, however, to remember that a man like him, who delved so long and with such understanding and profit amongst the old texts in the old tongue, becomes endowed with a sort of sixth scholastic sense—his ability to live with and in the past enables him to bridge the gaps and open the doors of history. The book is beautifully written and is a fitting memorial to one who has done so much for that ancient tradition about which it is written.

D.F.G.

FIND OF STONE AXE.

In March of this year a fine stone axe of unusual size was found on the lands of Mr. Thomas Culligan, of Clonroad, Ennis, at Cloonfeaghera, Corofin, between Corofin and Ruan, Co. Clare. The axe was turned up by an excavator and was picked up by Mr. Thomas Byrth, who gave it to Mr. Culligan. It is being offered to the National Museum.

ARTHUR MSS.

A further instalment of the above Mss., edited by Dr. MacLysaght, will appear in our next issue.

GALWEY. The undersigned is collecting material for a memoir of the Galweys of Lota (Cork), Kinsale, Limerick, and kindred families of the name, and would be grateful for any information.—Sir Henry Blackall, Adah Chiftlik, Kyrenia, Cyprus.

