John O Daly's 'Poets & Poetry of Munster' 8112

philosophic historian, who desires to study the character of a people and a period through the truest medium—the popular literature of the time.

The first attempt to form a collection of Irish popular poetry was made by James Hardiman, Esq., whose "Irish Minstrelsy," published in 1831, and which, we must confess, stimulated us to the slight exertions we have made in the cause, has maintained the high position to which it was entitled, from the well-merited literary reputation of its learned editor; but the high price at which it was published placed it beyond the reach of the majority of those to whom works of such a nature are most interesting.

After the publication of Mr. Hardiman's work, the Irish songs were allowed to lie in obscurity, until the editor of the present volume published, in 1843, a small collection of Irish Jacobite Songs, with metrical versions of very high merit by Edward Walsh; and in 1847, the spirited publisher, Mr. James M'Glashan, brought out a very beautiful volume of "Irish Popular Poetry," also edited by the same gifted writer.

In the present volume, the original music has been prefixed to the songs, and is the first attempt of the kind ever made in this country: many beautiful airs are thus rescued from inevitable oblivion. The English versions, by the ill-fated but lamented Clarence Mangan, are all in the same metre with the originals.

The first edition of this book having been exhausted in a very short period, the entire work has been carefully revised, many inaccuracies corrected, and five pieces of new music, with nineteen additional pages of new matter, inserted.

The poem on Sarsfield, at p. 271, is curious, as the production of one who evidently witnessed the scenes he commemorates; and was probably in connexion with that intrepid body of men, known in history as the Irish Rapparees, whose services against the rebels during the revolutionary war were of the highest importance to the Royal cause.

For the memoir and notes accompanying that poem, we are indebted to J. C. O'Callaghan, Esq., whose talents and research, as displayed in his edition of the "*Macariæ Excidium*," just published by the *Irish Archæological Society*, entitle him to a high position as an historian, even in the age which has produced a Lingard, an Alison, and a Thierry.

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN.

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN was the son of James Mangan, a native of Shanagolden, in the county of Limerick, who married, early in 1801, Miss Catherine Smith, of Fishamble-street, Dublin. The subject of our brief notice, the first offspring of this union, was born in the spring of 1803.

His father carried on the grocery business for some time at No. 3, Fishamble-street, but being of a restless disposition, he removed to another locality, having consigned the establishment and his son to the care of his brother-in-law, whom he induced to come from London for that purpose.

By his uncle, young Mangan was placed at the academy of Mr. Courtney, Derby-square, Dublin, where he continued as day pupil until he had attained his fifteenth year; a short time after which he entered a solicitor's office, and by his earnings supported himself and his parents. How long he continued in this situation we have been unable to ascertain; but we next find him engaged in the library of the University, where, it is supposed, he acquired that profound knowledge of various languages displayed in his translations of "The Lays of Many Lands," and "Literæ Orientales," which appeared in *The Dublin University Magazine*. A selection of his translations from the German, from this periodical, were collected and printed in two small volumes, under the title of "Anthologia Germanica" (Dublin: 1845), the expense of which, we are informed, was borne by C. G. Duffy, Esq. Some of his best productions will be found under the signatures of "Clarence," "J. C. M.," and "M.," in the *Dublin University Magazine*, *Dublin* and *Irish Penny Journals*, *Duffy's Catholic Magazine*, and *The Nation* newspaper. To

the latter he was a constant contributor of poetry; and we have been informed, that many of his early pieces were printed in the *Comet* and *Satirist* newspapers. He wrote many articles, both in prose and verse, for *The Irishman;* and also contributed to *The United Irishman* and *Irish Examiner*, during their short career.

The "res angusta domi" opposed an insuperable barrier to Mangan's advancement. All his earnings were devoted to the support of his indigent parents and family. His spirit at length became broken from over exertion, and he was obliged to have recourse to stimulants, which he occasionally abandoned, but finally they produced the usual fatal results. A short time before his death his constitution was greatly weakened by an attack of cholera. On his recovery, we found him in an obscure house in Bride-street, and, at his own request, procured admission for him to the Meath Hospital on the 13th of June, 1849, where he lingered for seven days, having died on the 20th,* the day on which we placed the first sheet of our book in the printer's hands.

For two years before Mangan's death, we were in constant intercourse with him, and induced him to undertake the versification of some of the native poetry of Ireland, of which the songs here printed form part. The remainder of his translations from the Irish, including the satires of Angus O'Daly (known to Irish scholars as "Aongus na n-Aor," "Angus the Satirist;" or "Bárd Ruaḋ," "Red Bard"), a poem of the seventeenth century, we hope soon to present to the public; and in giving this an English dress, we beg to assure our readers that the original lost none of its beauty in poor Mangan's hands, as may be seen by the following specimen:—

* The fate of Mangan closely resembled that of Camoens. The following is M. Chaufepiè's account of the death of the great poet of Portugal:—"Le chagrin que lui causérent les mauvais traitemens qu'il essuya, augmenta ses autres infirmités; en sorte que le trouvant enfin destitué de tout secours, il fut obligé de se retirer dans l'hôpital."

Clann n-Dálaiġ.

Dá n-Aorainn clann n-Dálaiġ,
Nior ḋion dam siol sean-Aḋaiṁ;
Clann n-Dálaiġ ba ḋion ḋam,
Agus siol Aḋaiṁ do Aoraḋ.

THE CLAN DALY.

By me the Clan Daly shall never be snubbed:
I say nothing about them.
For, were I to flout them,
The world wouldn't save me from getting well drubbed;
While with *them* at my beck (or my back) I
Might drub the world well without fear of one black eye!

Muintir Ara.

Muintir Ara, bualta beaga,
Finne iad nár ċosain clú;
Is é is ceól dóib, ceól na cuile,
Ampall a m-beól gaċ duine ḋiu!

THE GOOD PEOPLE (NOT THE FAIRIES) OF ARA.

The good people of Ara are four feet in height;
They are soldiers, and really stand stoutly in fight;
But they don't sacrifice overmuch to the graces,
And hunger stares forth from their fly-bitten faces.

Tiġ fada fairsing air lár bealaiḋ,
'S gan sáiṫ seangáin ann do ḃiaḋ;
Cúraḋ a ċroiḋe air an g-ceaṫarnaċ gortaċ,
Naċ dearnaḋ tiġ crom-ḟlaite air ḟliab!

There is one waste, wide, void, bleak, blank, black, cold odd pile
On the highway: its length is one-third of a mile:
Whose it is I don't know, but you hear the rats gnawing
Its timbers inside, while its owner keeps sawing.

Mangan's acquaintance with the modern tongues was very extensive, as may be seen by his translations from almost every language in the world. His powers of versification were extraordinary. Many of his most beautiful poems were written in an incredibly short period, and with such accuracy, that they never required revision.

As a translator he stood unrivalled. His original compositions, though small in number, possess very high merit.

We may here observe, that all his versions of Gaelic poetry were made from literal translations furnished him by Irish scholars, as he was totally unacquainted with the original language.

In person, Mangan was below the middle size, and of slender proportions; the ashy paleness of his face was lighted up by eyes of extraordinary brilliancy. His usual costume was a light brown coat: he wore his hat closely pressed over his eyebrows, and used to carry a large umbrella under his arm. Of his manners and conversation it would be impossible to give a correct idea; they may be best described by an extract from his favourite Schiller:—

> "His dreams were of great objects,
> He walked amidst us of a silent spirit,
> Communing with himself: yet I have known him
> Transported on a sudden into utterance
> Of strange conceptions; kindling into splendour,
> His soul revealed itself, and he spake so
> That we looked round perplexed upon each other,
> Not knowing whether it were craziness,
> Or whether it were a god that spake in him!".

Mangan's remains lie in the cemetery of Glasnevin, and a subscription is about being raised to erect a monument to his memory—an act of posthumous generosity which adds another name to the sad catalogue of the many men of exalted genius who asked for bread and received a stone.

The humble hearse that bore all that was earthly of him had but few followers. Amongst these, however, who strove to console him in his hours of bitterest affliction and most poignant despondency, was the Rev. C. P. Meehan, who discharged the last obsequies to the soul of this son of song.

Mangan was never married: his brother still survives in destitute circumstances.

THE

POETS AND POETRY OF MUNSTER.

Donnchadh mhic Con-mara.

Donogh Mac Con-Mara, or Mac na Mara, as the name is vulgarly spelled, was surnamed, from the red colour of his hair, Donnchadh Ruadh;* for, as many of our readers may be aware, the Irish peasantry have been long accustomed to designate individuals from certain personal marks or peculiarities — not unfrequently ludicrous; a man with crooked legs being, for instance, called "Cam-chosach," and one with a nose turned awry, "Cam-sproinach," while a corpulent person is styled "Bolg-mhór."

Donnchadh was a native of Cratloe, in the county of Clare, and connected by blood with the Mac Con Maras of that locality. He made his appearance in the county of Waterford about the year 1738, while on his way homeward from a foreign college, whither he had been sent in early youth to pursue his theological studies—the penal laws at that period, as we need scarcely remark, rendering it imperative on a candidate for the Catholic priesthood to forsake his own country, and seek that instruction abroad which he was not suffered to

* The use of *soubriquets* to denote personal peculiarities is of very remote antiquity in Ireland, and still exists to a great extent among the peasantry.

II.

SEAGHAN UA TUAMA.

JOHN O'TUOMY was born at Croome, in the county of Limerick, in 1706. Through his own diligence, and by means of the scanty educational facilities which the country afforded, he made considerable proficiency in Latin and Greek, and was tolerably well versed in the literature of his time. The brief sketch which we propose to give of the life of this poet, interesting as we trust it will prove in itself, will be attended with this advantage, that it may serve to elucidate the meaning of much that might otherwise have appeared obscure in his poetry; and the nature of his compositions will be the better understood from a previous view of his character, and a short narrative of the vicissitudes that marked his career. His poverty, and the restrictions then imposed on education, interrupted his studies too soon, and involved him prematurely in worldly cares. He married young, and embarked in the vintnery business, first at Croome, but subsequently at Limerick, where the site of his residence in Mungret-street is still pointed out with veneration, as having once been the abode of a philanthropist and a true-hearted Irishman. His success in the line he had chosen, as may be anticipated, was but indifferent; for, besides that poets are rarely frugal or fortunate in the management of their temporal concerns, the malediction which invariably pursues the man who trades upon the intemperance of others, marred the best-directed efforts of his industry. His liberality, moreover, far exceeded his means, and must have inevitably led to bankruptcy. The most generous are usually content with relieving those who crave assistance from them; but the house of O'Tuomy was open to all; his hospitality was unbounded; and, in order that this might be made known to all, the following general invitation was written in broad letters on a large board over his door:—

"Ní'l fánaċ ná sáir-ḟear ar uaisle Gaoiḋeal,
Bráṫair de'n dáiṁ-ġlic, ná suairc-ḟear groiḋe,
A g-cás go m-beiḋeaḋ láiṫreaċ gan luaḋ na diġe,
Ná go m-beiḋeaḋ míle fáilte ag Seáġan Ua
Tuama roiṁe!"

"Should one of the stock of the noble Gael,
A brother bard who is fond of good cheer,
Be short of the price of a tankard of ale,
He is welcome to O'Tuomy a thousand times here!"

After this, it is unnecessary to mention that his house was much frequented. Himself, too, the soul and centre of his company (whence his appellation of "Seáġan Ua Tuama an Ġhrinn," "John O'Tuomy, the Gay,") was not more courted for his hospitality than for his gaiety and good humour. His house was a general rendezvous for the bards and tourists of Munster, who came thither on occasional visits, and sometimes met there in a body, so as to form a sort of poetical club. These bardic sessions,* as they may be called, exercised a healthful influence in the country, and aided powerfully towards reviving the national spirit, bowed and almost broken, as it was, beneath the yoke of penal enactments: they were also a source of unalloyed pleasure to all, Mrs. O'Tuomy alone excepted, to whom patriotism and poetry were of less moment than the interests of her establishment, to which it was impossible that such meetings could contribute any advantage. She often warned her husband that his extravagance was disproportioned to his circumstances; she told him that their means of subsistence must not be consumed by "strollers," and that, unless he disconnected himself from

* For a history of those bardic schools, see Haliday's edition of "Keating's History of Ireland," p. vi., note ‡.

such society, he would soon be as penniless as any of his associates. Literary pursuits, she insisted, were barren and useless accomplishments, not unbecoming in persons of large fortune, but altogether unfitted for any one who had no resource but his own exertions for the maintenance of a wife and family. From prudential motives like these, she cherished a general dislike of all O'Tuomy's brother rhymers, and at length succeeded, by her continual remonstrances and objurgations, in breaking up for a season the bardic musters altogether.

We will here introduce an anecdote illustrative of the friendship which existed between O'Tuomy and a brother poet, Andrew Magrath, of whom we shall have more to say presently. One day, our friend, according to the custom of country publicans, had erected a tent on the race-course of Newcastle (or, as some assert, at the fair of Adare), which was surmounted by a green bough,* as a distinctive mark of his occupation, and also as an emblem of the love he bore his own "green isle." He was eyed at some distance by Magrath, who approached and accosted him, and the following short but pithy dialogue took place between the brother wits :—

* This ancient custom gave rise to the old adage, that "Good wine needs no bush."

In 1565, the mayor of Dublin ordered that no person should sell wine or ale in the city without a sign at the door of the house.—*Harris's Dublin.*

An "Act" of Charles II., "for the improvement of His Majesty's revenues upon the granting of licenses for the selling of ale and beer, provided—"That every one so to be licenced "shall have some Sign, Stake, or Bush at his "Door, to give notice unto Strangers and Tra- "vellers where they may receive Entertainment of "Meat, Drink, and Lodging for their reasonable "money." Hence the custom of using the green bush at fairs and patterns.

MAGRATH.*

"Is baċallaċ glas an ċleaċ-sa a d-tóin do ṫíġe,
Ag tarraing na b-fear a steaċ ag ól na díġe."

"How clustering and green is this pole which marks your house!
Enticing men in to drink your ale, and carouse."

O'TUOMY.

"Airgiod geal go pras a réiġfioċ slíġe,
'Tá'n ċaraid ag teaċd, an braiṫ 's an hóp gan díol."

"Bright silver will pave your way, to quaff your fill,
But the hops and malt, alas! are unpaid for still."

It is to be regretted that O'Tuomy's many excellent qualities were not accompanied by greater economy in the management of his domestic affairs. But his improvidence was unfortunately incorrigible, for vain were all his wife's impassioned remonstrances and expostulations. At length his little capital began to melt away in the sunshine of convivial enjoyment; business first languished, and then entirely ceased, and with a young and helpless family he was cast once more an adventurer on the world. After undergoing many reverses he was compelled to accept the situation of servant at Adare, to Mr. Quade, a caretaker or steward on the farm of a gentleman residing in Limerick. Here he seems to have borne his change of fortune somewhat impatiently, for we find him engaged in frequent contests with his mistress, whose ill-treatment evoked his bitterest invectives. This old woman frequently transferred the duties of her office, as poultry-keeper, to the poet, who, however, did not feel at all honoured by the trust; and his most pointed satires against her indicate this to be the chief cause of his hostility. Poets are seldom to be offended

* We should here observe that Magrath was somewhat deep in the books of O'Tuomy for certain old scores.

with impunity. Having the means of reprisal so near at hand, they are not slow to use them with effect against the aggressor. In justice, however, to O'Tuomy, it should be observed that his was not a vindictive disposition; and this, perhaps, was the only instance in which his talents were made subservient to the indulgence of private resentment. From a cane which the old woman carried, both as a support in walking, and to keep the hens in order, O'Tuomy contemptuously designated her in rhyme as "Bean na Cleiċe Caoile," "The Dame of the Slender Wattle," and the poem so entitled we beg to introduce here:—

BEAN NA CLEICHE CAOILE.

Níor ṫagair liom ceart, beart 'ná briaṫar aoiḃ'nis
Leaḃar ná ceaċt, ná rann a ḋeilḃ díreaċ;
Níor cáṫag mé ar fad go teaċt am ṡeirḃíseaċ,
'S am reaċtaire cearc ag Bean na Cleiċe Caoile!

Do ċaiṫiosaḋ seal fá raiṫ air leirg laoiṫe,
A g-caidrioṁ fear, 's flaiṫ, 's creidioṁ Iosa;
Airgiod geal am ġlaic gan doirb níḋ ar biṫ,
Cia dealḃ mo ṁeas ag Bean na Cleiċe Caoile!

Is é lagaiḋ mo ṁeas, do ṁeaṫ, do ṁeirḃ m'inntinn,
Naċ mairion na flaiṫ do lean an creidioṁ díreaċ;
Do ċannaḋ na rannaḋ a scannaḋ treiḃ a sinnsear,
'S do ḃainfeaḋ an ṡail de Bhean na Cleiċe Caoile!

'Is seasaċ nár ċleaċtas teaċt a n-deire coiṁear-
gair,
Ag cearaċt 's ag cairminnt cailliḋe ceisniḋe cinte;
Ná'n aċaran aiṁ, a b-fad o ḃreiṫ an ḟir-ċirt,
Go n-deaċaḋ fá smaċt ag Bean na Cleiċe Caoile!

Cia fada mé taisdiol treaḃ, 's tiġṫe taoiseaċ,
'S go b-feacaḋ gaċ Reaċt 's Aċt ar feaḋ na ríoġ-
aċta;
Níor b-feasaċ mé ar ċleasaḋ frasaḋ feill-ġníoṁaċ,
Go "Preabaire an Ghaid"* atá ag Bean na Cleiċe
Caoile!

Aitċim an Mac do ċeap na ċeiṫre soillse,
Flaṫas, Fearn, Feart, 's Dealḃ daoine;
Go ngaḃaḋ m'anam fearda 'na ṡeilḃ dílis,
'S me sgaraḋ fá ḃlas le Bean na Cleiċe Caoile!

THE DAME OF THE SLENDER WATTLE.

Ochone! I never in all my dealings met with a man to snub me,
Books I have studied, however muddied a person *you* may dub me,
I never was tossed or knocked about—I never was forced to battle
With the storms of life, till I herded your hens, O, Dame of the
Slender Wattle!

I spent a season a chanting poems, and free from toil and troubles,
The faith of Christ I ever upheld, though I mixed with the proudest
nobles,
And gay was my heart, and open my hand, and I lacked not cash
or cattle,
Though low my esteem to-day with you, O, Dame of the Slender
Wattle!

My spirits are gone, my face is wan, my cheeks are yellow and
hollowed,
Because the nobles are dead by whom the true old Faith was followed,
Who sang the glory of those that died for Eire's rights in battle,
And would soon bring down your paltry pride, my Dame of the
Slender Wattle!

'Tis very well known I always shunned contention, clamour, and
jawing,
And never much liked the chance of getting a barbarous clapper-
clawing;
I always passed on the other side when I heard a hag's tongue rattle,
Till I happened, *mo vrone!* to stumble on you, O, Dame of the
Slender Wattle!

* An appropriate name for a flail among the Kerry peasantry.

Though used to the ways of tribes and chiefs, and reading the deeds
    that appear in
The chronicles and the ancient books that embody the lore of Erin,
I scarce ever knew what cruelty was, except through rumour or
    prattle,
Till the dismal day that I felt your flail, O, Dame of the Slender
    Wattle!

O! I pray the Lord, whose powerful Word set the elements first in
    motion,
And formed from nought the race of Man, with Heaven, and Earth,
    and Ocean,
To lift my spirit above this world, and all its clangor and brattle
And give me a speedy release from you, O, Dame of the Slender
    Wattle!

The history of this woman and her husband, and of their subsequent elevation to rank and fortune, is very extraordinary. Tradition represents them as living at Adare in distressed circumstances, when a stranger one day presented himself before them in search of a treasure, which he had dreamed was buried in the neighbourhood. Though he seemed unacquainted with the locality, his accurate description of a ruined mansion in the vicinity, as the place of its concealment, made a deep impression on the old woman, who cunningly resolved to turn the information to her own account. She accordingly advised him to relinquish his foolish search, which, originating from a dream, did not deserve to be prosecuted; and the stranger, according to her advice, left the place. He had no sooner departed, however, than she and her husband visited the spot indicated, and digging, discovered a "crock of gold," covered with a flag-stone inscribed with some half-effaced characters, which they did not take much trouble to decipher, supposing them merely to refer to the treasure they were already in possession of. Filled with joy, they conveyed home the money with secrecy and caution. But it happened that a certain itinerant literary character, who lodged with them, seeing the inscription on the flag-stone, or pot-lid—for into such an utensil

had it been converted—fell to deciphering it, and at length succeeded in discovering the words—
"Atá an oiread céadna ar an d-taob eile,"
"*There is as much more on the other side.*" This, though mysterious enough to the poor scholar, was quite intelligible to the initiated pair, who, at once acting on the suggestion, proceeded to the well-known spot, and secured the remainder of the booty. This treasure was shortly afterwards the purchase-money of a large estate in their native county; and it is said that at this day the blood of the Quades commingles with that of Limerick's proudest nobility.

O'Tuomy's poems are mostly illustrative of his own condition and habits of life. His songs, especially, sparkle with the glow shed over the festive scenes in which he was accustomed to spend so many gay hours with his brother bards. Their inspiration and eloquence would seem to favour the once popular, but now (thanks to Father Mathew) exploded doctrine of Cratinus:—

> "Nulla placere diu, nec vivere carmina possunt,
> Quæ scribuntur aquæ potoribus."

All the poets of this period, it should be remarked, combined in denouncing the persecuting policy of their rulers, and exposed with indignant patriotism the cupidity and bigotry which brought into action the worst passions of the heart, and perpetrated in the name of religion those atrocities which will for ever sully the fame of Britain. But as the sufferer was not permitted to complain openly, the voice of discontent was often veiled in the language of allegory. Ireland was usually designated by some endearing name, such as—"Sighile Ni Ghadharadh," "Caitilín Ni Uallacháin," "Móirín Ni Chuilleonáin;" and introduced under the form of a female of heavenly beauty, but woe-stricken, and dishonoured by the stranger. O'Tuomy's compositions on these subjects are replete with Irish senti-

ment and melody, especially his songs to the airs of "Móirín Ní Ċhuillionnáin," and "Cnotaḋ Bán," "White Cockade," which will be found in this collection (p. 50).

This lamented bard expired, at the age of sixty-nine, in Limerick city, on Thursday, 31st August, 1775, and his remains were borne to his ancestral burial-place — the graveyard of Croome — by a numerous assemblage of the bards of Munster, and others of his friends. James O'Daly, a contemporary bard, who chanted his elegy, gives the precise period of his death in the following stanzas:—

As fada faon gan fearantas,
  Gan bailte-puirt, gan réimeas ríġ;
Meic Móġana n-éaċt do ċleaċtaċ cion,
  Calmaċt, 's cáin, 's cíos:—
Sliocht Lúġaiḋ, 's Chéin, 's Chairbre,
  Faoi eaċtrannaiḋ mar ṫárlaiḋ tím;
D'ḟuig drong na n-éaċt gan ṁarḃna,
  Ar sgaraḋ leat, Ui Thuama an Ghrinn!

Is dísḃaċ, 's as léan, 's as dainid liom,
  Ar d-tagraḋ, ár d-teann, ár n-díon;
A g-Cromaḋ, faon faoi ġairḃ-lic,
  'S glasfarnaċ na n-Gall re d' ṫaoiḃ!
Seaċt g-céad déag gan dearmad,
  Seaċt-moġatt 's cúig, gan ċlaoin;
Aois ṁic Dé do ċeannaig sinn,
  Ar sgaraḋ leat, Ui Thuama an Ghrinn!

Stricken and feeble, without land, or name,
  Mansions, or princely sway,
Are Mogha's ancient race of ancient fame,
  And might, and wealth, to-day!
The noble sons of Cairbre, Conn, and Lughaidh,
  Alas! are foreigner's prey,
But bitterest grief is ours for losing you,
  O'Tuomy, once the Gay!

O, woe! O, sorrow! waking heart-wrung sighs,
  Our guide, our prop, our stay,
In Croome, beneath an unhewn flag-stone, lies
  While the stranger treads his clay.
'Tis seventeen hundred years—the account is true—
  And seventy-five this day,
Since Christ, His death, that we by death lost you,
  O'Tuomy, once the Gay!

III.

ANDREW MAGRATH

(Surnamed "Mangaire Súgaċ").

Perhaps there is nothing more melancholy and deplorable than the sight, too often, unfortunately, witnessed in this world of contradictions — the union of lofty genius with grovelling propensities. To see talent of the highest order debased by an association with vulgar and low-lived habits—the understanding pointing one way, while the bodily requirements and appetites drag their degraded victim in an opposite direction—is indeed a spectacle calculated to excite to thoughtfulness and sorrow every generous mind. The world is familiar with examples of this lamentable and ill-assorted union; and we need only mention the names of Savage, Burns, Byron, and Maginn, as a few of those who have made the most mournful and conspicuous exhibitions of its effects. The subject of our present sketch unfortunately adds another to the muster-roll of those ill-starred children of genius; but we should be unfaithful to the requirements of the task we have undertaken, if we did not allot a place here to the biography of the gay, the eccentric, the jovial, but withal, the witty, learned, and intellectual Andrew Magrath.

This distinguished poet, who, from his convivial

habits, was usually called the "Maŋgaŋe Súgaċ" (*i. e.*, "Jovial," or "Merry Dealer"), was a native of the county of Limerick, and born on the banks of the Maig, a river which he has frequently made the theme of eulogy in his poems. Of his earlier years there are scarcely even any traditional accounts; but we find him, as he grew to manhood, engaged in the occupation of a country schoolmaster. Magrath was the contemporary of John O'Tuomy, and a host of others who at this period acquired a high reputation among the admirers of wit and lovers of song; but, unhappily for himself and those connected with him, his life, and even many of his productions, were at variance with, and unworthy of, his great intellectual powers. Habitual indulgence in intoxicating drinks—that foe to all aspiring thoughts and noble impulses — was his peculiar besetting sin; and, as a consequence, a great number of his songs are so replete with licentious ideas and images, as to be totally unfit for publication. Many of these, however, but particularly some others, in which his better muse predominates, are sung to this day by the Munster peasantry, and, doubtless, will remain unforgotten as long as the Irish spirit shall remain unbroken by the tyranny under which it has groaned and struggled through ages of misrule and unparalleled oppression.

The habits of Magrath were migratory and wandering; he seldom tarried long in any one spot, though usually long enough to leave behind him some rather marked *souvenirs* of his drollery, and reckless love of mischief and merriment. The caustic severity of his sarcasms rendered him an object of dread to such as were conscious of deserving exposure for their misdeeds. He delighted, like Burns, in mixing with low company, over whom, of course, he reigned supreme as a triton among the minnows. We may well believe this, however, when we recollect that one of the brightest wits and orators of his day, Philpot Curran, is said

to have on one occasion disguised himself in the garb of a tinker, and taken up his quarters for a month with a fraternity of "jolly brothers" who sojourned on the Coombe, in this city, until one of them raffled his tools to enable "the tinker" to go on a "tramp." So has it been related by Moore of Byron, or rather by Byron of himself, in his "Journal," that frequently at night, when ennuyé to death by the ice-cold manners of the aristocratic society in which he mingled, he was accustomed to rush into the streets, and take refuge in——a cider cellar!

Many of the productions of our poet were penned amid these bacchanalian revels, and are, indeed, redolent of the Uiſge Beaṫa* bottle.

Magrath tried his master-hand upon several species of literary compositions, and succeeded in all. He is said to have been the author of those beautiful and soul-stirring words adapted to the air called "An Seaŋ-ṫuiŋe" (literally "The Old Man"), which is known in Scotland under the name of "The Campbells are Coming." The incident which gave birth to this exercise of the poetical powers of the Maŋgaŋe Súgaċ, has been preserved by tradition, and is highly interesting. In the course of his wanderings through the country, our poet chanced to meet with a young woman by the roadside who was weeping bitterly, and appeared to be abandoned to inconsolable grief. Upon inquiring the cause of her affliction, he found that she had been induced, at the urgent request of her parish priest, to wed, for the sake of his great wealth and worldly possessions, an old man, the coldness of whose nature presented but an imperfect requital to her youthful warmth of affection. Magrath, who, with all his failings, possessed a heart ever sensitively alive to the wrongs of injured youth and innocence, was moved by the affecting narrative, and immediately produced an

* *Uisge Beatha*, water of life, equivalent to the Latin *aqua vitæ*, and French *eau de vie*.

extempore song on the occasion. The first stanza of which runs thus :—

"Cóṁairle do fuaras aṁuiċ ar an m-bóṫar,
O róġsre sagairt an seanduine a ṗósaḋ:
Ba ċumaḋ leis é, aċd go méadóġsin a ṗócaḋ,
'S a ḃeiṫ fad do ṁairsin ag braiṫ ar na
cóṁarsain!"

"A priest bade me marry 'for better or worse,'
An old wretch who had nought but his money and years—
Ah! 'twas little he cared, but to fill his own purse;
And I now look for help to the neighbours with tears!"

The additional notoriety acquired by Magrath from the circulation of this song was not of a very enviable kind. A general outcry was raised against him by all the old men of the whole surrounding country, and he was compelled, like Reynard, to betake himself to "new quarters." Repairing to Cnoc Firinn, he there resumed his former occupation of school-teaching, and varied his leisure hours by the composition of political and amatory ballads. Here he wrote his popular song to the air of "Craoiḃín aoiḃinn áluinn óg," and declares in the opening stanza that he had been invited to Cnoc Firinn by Donn Firinneaċ,* chief of the Munster Fairies; and here also he produced another song, in derision of those old women who "lay themselves out" to entrap young men into the snares of matrimony, a production, in our opinion, quite as clever and sarcastic in its way as the "Seanduine," though, on account of its perhaps unjustifiable attacks upon the softer sex, who, whether juvenile or ancient, are entitled to our respect, we forbear quoting any portion of it here.

* Donn. One of the sons of Milesius, who, being separated from the rest of his brethren by a magic storm raised by the *Tuatha de Danans*, when effecting a landing on the coast of West Munster, was, with his ship's company, drowned at a place called "*Dumhachaibh*," "Vaults." In recording his death, *Eochaidh O'Flainn*, a poet of the tenth century, writes thus :—

"Donn, 's Bile, 's Buan, a bhean,
Dil, 's Aireach mac Mileadh,
Buas, 's Breas, 's Buaidhne go m-bloidh,
Do bhathadh ag Damhachaibh."

"Donn, and Bile, and Buan, his wife,
Dil, and Aireach, son of Milesius;
Buas, and Breas, and Buana, found,
Were at the Vaults drowned."

It is traditionally believed that *Donn* is chief of the Munster Fairies, and holds his court at *Cnoc Firinn* (hence the appellation *Donn Firinneach*), a romantic hill in the county of Limerick. See Haliday's Keating, p. 294. Dub. 1811.

Andrew Magrath was, perhaps, the most melodious Gaelic poet of his day; and we believe that few who peruse his song to the air of "Cailín Deas Crúiḋte na m-Bó," "Pretty Girl Milking the Cows," given in this volume, will dispute the correctness of our opinion. To his biography we have nothing more to add. He reached, notwithstanding all his irregularities and excesses, an advanced age; but the precise period of his death we are unable to ascertain, though we have been informed that he was living in 1790. His remains repose in the churchyard of Kilmallock, in the county of Limerick; and we have learned, upon good authority, that shortly before his death he bequeathed his manuscripts, which, as may be supposed, were exceedingly voluminous, to a farmer named O'Donnell, residing at Ballinanma, near Kilmallock, at whose house this eccentric genius, but true poet, breathed his last. Peace to his erring spirit! Let us remember his faults but to compassionate and avoid them, while we honour his talents, which were, undoubtedly, of a high and striking order.

IV.

AODHAGAN UA RAIGHEALLAIGH.

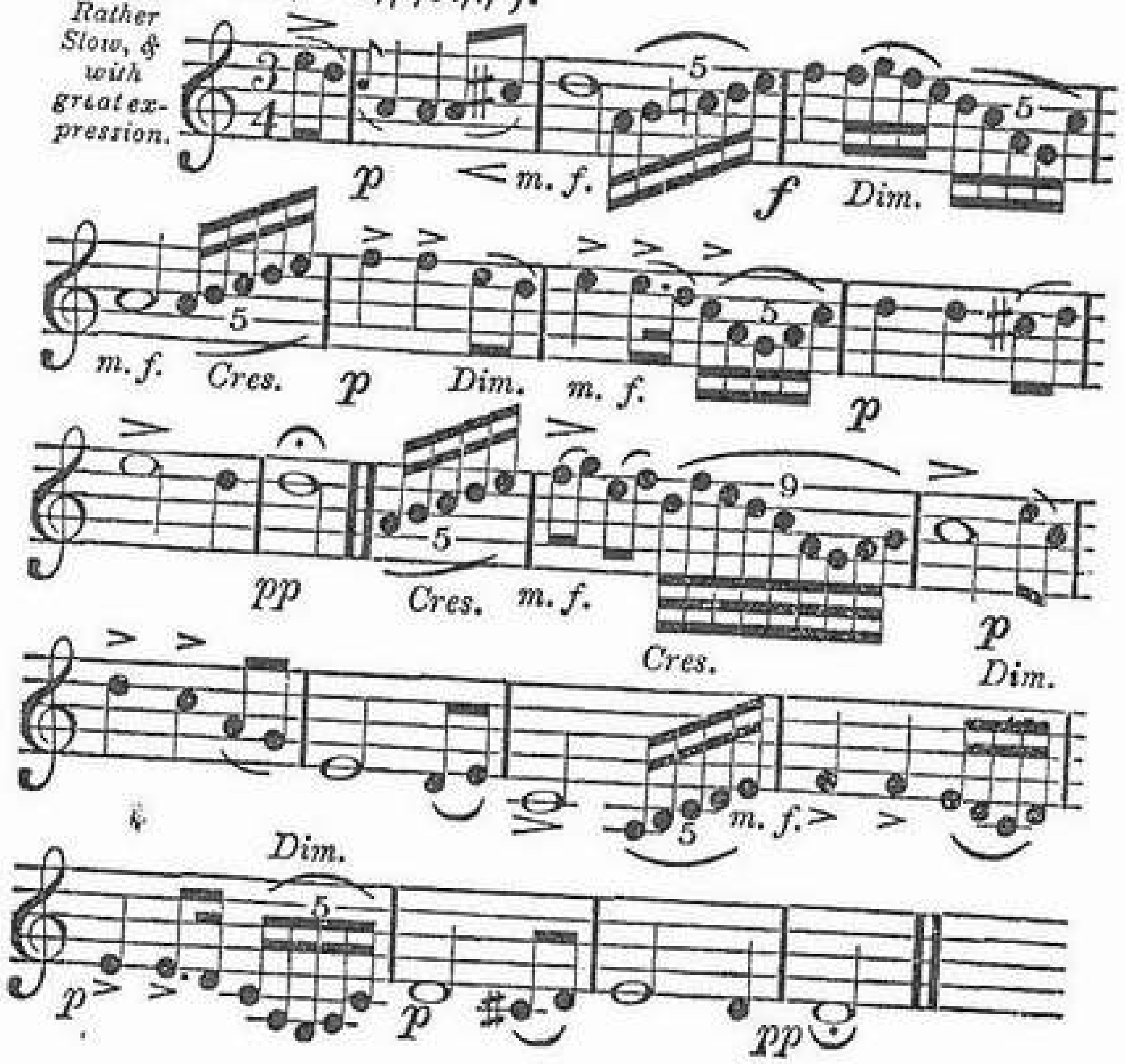
Egan O'Reilly, the subject of our present notice, was, according to Edward O'Reilly's "Irish Writers," the son of John Mor O'Reilly, a gentleman

John O Daly's Poets & Poetry of Munster

An Bheith.

Seáġan Ua Tuama, cct.

Fonn:—Béiṫ Éirionn í.



Am aice cois Máiġ, 'tá'n ṁánlaḋ, ḃéasaċ, ṁín,
Is deise tar ṁnáiḃ, 's as áluinn, spéireaṁuil, í;
A carnḟolt táclaċ, breáġ-deas, dréimrioċ, buiḋe,
'S gur b'ísi mo ġráḋ tar ṁnáiḃ, 'bé'n Éire í!

THE MAIDEN.

BY JOHN O'TUOMY.

THE subject of this song was a young woman who kept an inn on the banks of the Maig, in the county of Limerick. There is also another song to the same air by Eoghan Ruadh O'Sullivan, of Sliabh Luachradh, in Kerry, beginning—

" San Mainistir la a d-tigh tabhairne am aonar bhios,
'S beath-uisge ar clar am lathair fein gan suim ;
Do dhearcasa bab thais, mhanladh, mhaordha, mhin,
'Na seasamh go tlath san t-sraid cois taobh an tighe.

" In Fermoy, one day, in an ale-house I chanced to be,
And before me on the table plenty of wines were laid ;
I beheld a babe, soft, comely, mild and meek,
Standing most feeble in the street close by the house."

A maiden dwells near me by Maig, mild, meek to see,
A beauty transcending all speech, all thought, is she ;
Her golden hair floweth like waves along the sea,
O! she is my love and my light, whoe'er she be

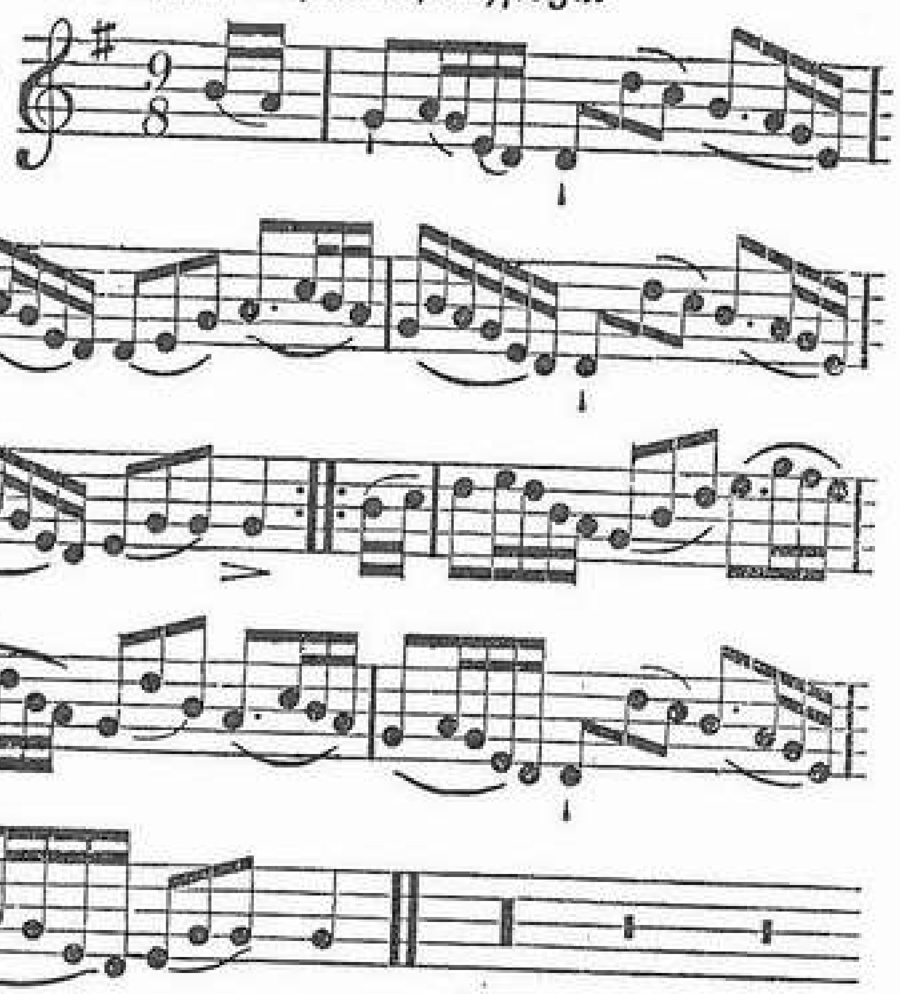
John O Daly's Poets & Poetry of Munster

BINN LISIN AORACH AN BHROGHA.

Brian Ua Flaiṫearta, cct.

Fonn :—Binn Lisín Aoraċ an Bhroġa.

Moderate Time.



Lá meaḋraċ dá rabas-sa liom féin,
  Ar binn lisín aoraċ an Bhroġaḋ;
Ag eisdioċt le binn-ġuṫ na n-éan,
  Ag cantainn ar ġéagaḋ cois aban :—
An "Breac Taiḋbsioċ" san linn úd faoi réim,
  Ag rainnce sa n-gaorṫa le fonn,
Már teinn liḃ-si radarc súl na béil,
  Tá leiġeas luaṫ ón éag díb dul ann!

THE FAIRY RATH OF BRUFF.

BY BRIAN O'FLAHERTY.

This song and air take their name from a celebrated fairy fort situated at the town of Bruff, in the county of Limerick, and like many others in this collection, would have probably been lost, or left in the "world of spirits," had it not fallen into our hands.

Brian O'Flaherty, the author, was an humble peasant, a mason by trade, and, for aught we know, he may have been "master-builder" to his friends—the fairies and "good people" of Bruff.

He was a native of Bruff, or its vicinity, but we cannot discover when he lived. It appears he was not numbered among the literary portion of the bards of his day, but was considered rather presumptive in assuming the name, and for such conduct he was cited, prosecuted, and expelled, at one of the Bardic Sessions then held in Munster. However, Brian was not so easily got rid of, and in order to gain favour, he mustered up all the natural talent he was possessed of, and composed the present song.

Bruff is situated on the banks of the river *Camog* (*Anglicised* "The Morning Star"), and lies about fifteen miles from Limerick. Tradition informs us that the banks of this river up to the town were formerly laid out with beautiful gardens, where all species of plants and trees peculiar to this country grew, and was much admired for being the resort of birds of all kinds, from the melody of whose notes it gained the appellation of *Binn* (melodious). At the west side of the town there is a little eminence called *Lios* (Fort), and there is also a castle, or *Brogha*, which is supposed to have been built by the De Lacy family shortly after the English invasion.

The birds carolled songs of delight,
  And the flowers bloomed bright on my path,
As I stood all alone on the height
  Where rises Bruff's old Fairy Rath.
Before me, unstirred by the wind,
  That beautiful lake lay outspread,
Whose waters give sight to the Blind,
  And would almost awaken the Dead!

Níor ċian dúinn cois dian t-srúill na séad,
'Nar ṁian le fir Eirionn dul ann;
An tráṫ ṫriall ċúġainn an ġrian-ṁilis ḃéiṫ,
Go dian 's í 'n-éag-ċruiṫ go lom!
A ciaḃ-ḟolt breáġa, niaṁraċ, go féar,
Ag fás léi-si roimpe 's na deaig;
"A Bhriain ḋil! cread é 'n dian-ġol so ġníḋir,
Do ċiap me go h-aeġiḃ ós mo ċionn!"

Ní sgaoilfead-sa príoṁ-rún mo sgéil,
Go n-innsir cá taoḃ díom ar ġabair?
An tú Aoiḃill-ḃeag, ċaoin-ċleasaċ, ċlaon,
Mar líonais go léir me do d' ġreann!
No 'n t-síṫ-ḃean ṫug buiḋin-truip na Trae,
Gur líonadar Gréaguig 'na deaḃaig;
Nó 'n Bhriġdeaċ le'r ċlaoiḋeag lé gan réim,
Clann Uisniċ na tréin-ḟir, gan ċaḃair!

" Ní díoḃ me, cia díṫ liom do sgéal,
Aċt síġe-ḃean ó 'n d-tréan-lios úd tall;
Do ḟíor-ġoin do ḟíor-ġol a g-céin,
'S as teinn liom tú traoċta ag neart Gall!
Glac innti! Faig cloiḋeaṁ 'na m-beiḋ faoḃar,
Ag rainnce air ċaoil-eaċ go seang;
Gaiḃ timċioll gaċ críoċ 'na ḃ-faġair Gaoiḋeil,
Go n-innsir do sgéal dóiḃ gan ċam?"

D'éisdeas le binn-ġuṫ a béil,
'S d'éirġios do léim ar mo ḃonn;
D'innsios gur teinn cúis mo sgéil,
Le líng-goil naċ léigionn dam laḃairt!
Bioḋgan mo ċroiḋe stig le léan,
Agus silim fuil ṫréan as mo ċeann;
Mo ċaoin-rosg dá leaġaḋ 'nam mar ċaor,
Ag síor-ṡile déara go trom!

As I gazed on the silvery stream,
So loved by the heroes of old,
There neared me, as though in a dream,
A maiden with tresses of gold.
I wept, but she smilingly said—
"Whence, Brian, my dearest, those tears?"
And the words of the gentle-souled maid
Seemed to pierce through my bosom like spears.

"O, rather," I cried, "lovely One,
Tell *me* who you are, and from whom!
Are you Aoibhill, and come here alone
To sadden my spirit with gloom?
Or she who brought legions to Troy,
When the Grecians crossed over the wave?
Or the dame that was doomed to destroy
The children of Uisnigh the brave?"

"I am none of all three," she replied,
"But a fairy from yonder green mound—
Who heard how you sorrowed and sighed
As you strayed o'er this elf-haunted ground.
And now gird around you your sword,
And spring on your swift-footed steed—
And call on the Gael, serf and lord,
And Eire's green land shall be freed!"

So spake she in musical tones,
And I started as wakened from sleep,
I told her the cause of my groans,
And the anguish that forced me to weep—
Why my eyes were thus blinded by tears,
And my bosom tormented with pains,
Why my heart had been breaking for years,
And the blood growing cold in my veins.

Ag an mín-t-sruiṫ nuair bím-si liom féin,
Ar binn lisín aonaċ an Bhroġaḋ;
Ag smaoineaṁ ar ġníoṁarṫaib an t-saoġail,
An íosbairtsi ar Ghaoiḋil ag neart Gall,
Tá Fleet na d-trí ríġṫe go tréan,
'S an Stíobart san Séamus, 'na ċeann ;*
Laoisig dá líonaḋ faoi réim,
Mile 's seaċt g-céad ann gaċ long.

CAIT NI NEILL.

Anois ó ṫárlaḋ, a b-príosún árd me, a n-géibeann ċruaiḋ,
'S go raċainn do stáir, mar a b-fuil mo ġráḋ geal, 's go b-pógfainn í;
Do ḃrailfinn mo láiṁ ḋeas air a bráġaid, nó faoi na coiṁín caol,
As é 'dubairt Cáit liom, "ġeabaḋ náire, mar a d-tóigfir díom!"

Ní ṫógfad díot, a stóir mo ċroiḋe, mar is tú breoiġ me 'raoir,
Chuir saiġead am ċroiḋe, ná léiġisfior díom, go bráṫ re m' ré!
Dá m-beiṫ an Chúirt na suiġe, 's mé le croċa tríod, 's mo ċúis dá pléiḋ,
Le toraḋ cloiḋim, do ḃainfinn díob tú, a Cháit Ní Néill!

* *Ceann, head, chief, captain, leader,* James, the Chevalier de St. George.

She vanished on hearing my tale,
But at evening I often roam still
To lament the sad fate of the Gael,
And to weep upon Bruff's Fairy Hill.
O! may we soon see the three Kings,*
And JAMES, above all, in this land!
May the winds on their favoring wings
Waft swiftly their fleet to our strand!

KATE NI NEILL.

Now that, in prison, and all forsaken, my fate I rue,
Fain would I seek her, my only true-love, and wed her too,
Around her white waist I'd press my arm with a pleasure new,
But still she tells me—"O, leave me! leave me! you shame me, you!"

No, no, my darling, I'll never shame you; but all night long
You wound my bosom! I'm grown most feeble—I once so strong!
Come good or evil, come Death or Life, or come Right or Wrong,
Sweet Kate Ni Neill, love, I'd choose you only among the throng.

* The King of Ireland, England, and Scotland.