



PATRICK WESTON JOYCE, LL.D. M.R.I.A.

OBITUARY.

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Our Society has lost a distinguished member by the death of Dr. P. W. Joyce, which occurred at his residence, Lyre-na-Grena, Dublin, on the 7th of January, at the fine age of 87 years.

He was a native of Glenosheen, in the heart of the Ballyhoura mountains, County Limerick. In that romantic region his youthful mind absorbed these fairy legends, and that wealth of folk lore, music and song, which increased with his years, and are now treasured in the many valuable volumes which bear his name.

Commencing in the service of the Board of National Education in 1845, his abilities marked him out for rapid promotion, which continued until he was appointed Principal of Marlborough Street Training College, from which position he retired in 1893.

He graduated a B.A. of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1861, and M.A., 1864, and received the honorary degree of LL.D. in 1870. He was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy, in 1863, and a member of the Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland in 1865, and filled the office of President of this Society for the term 1906-08.

His contributions to English literature were numerous; the work by which he is best known is "The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places," and few works have done more than these two volumes to give Irishmen a knowledge of their own land, a third volume was issued quite recently. The "Child's History of Ireland" is a charming volume. "The Social History of Ancient Ireland," published in 1903, may be considered his *magnum opus*. "English as we speak it in Ireland," and a volume of poems by his brother, Doctor Robert Dwyer Joyce, which he edited with some useful notes, were reviewed in our Journal.

Like George Petrie, Doctor Joyce was an industrious collector of old Irish Music. In early life he gave Petrie many airs which are included in Petrie's "Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland," and in 1909 the Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland published a collection of 842 Irish airs and songs, collected and edited by Dr. Joyce; a valuable contribution which was reviewed in this Journal. (Vol. I, 1910, p. 64).

Dr. Joyce may be said to have been the last connecting link with that school of Irishmen which George Petrie founded, whose life-work was to rescue from oblivion every available record of their country's past history, to demonstrate her pre-eminence in art, to preserve her ancient language, folk lore and music, and thus secure for Ireland its proper place amongst the nations.

In the work of our Society he took a great interest, and frequently regretted it did not receive more practical support from his native county. At one time he wrote to one of the Journal Committee "I regret I cannot give you anything for your excellent little Journal, I am doing some work that must be finished if I am spared, so I am working against time, and you know what a formidable old vagabond of an antagonist Father Time is, when his opponent is nearly 83 years of age." He was much interested in the descriptions of the Cromleacs in the County Limerick appearing in the Journal, and directed attention to the most interesting one of the series, Leaba Iscur (Vol. I., July, 1909, p. 30), which is enriched by an original sketch of his own, made nearly 60 years ago. The popular meaning of this dolmen is Oscar's grave, Borlase makes a statement that it properly means "Champion's Bed from *Scor* a champion"; this was severely criticised by Dr. Joyce. In a characteristic letter to the author of the article, he states "Borlase's etymology is indescribable nonsense, Leaba Iscur is as plain a compound as Mallow Street; but we may suppose a Spaniard, who knew hardly any English, and nothing at all of its accents, and modes of forming compounds, proposing the following with calm confidence—Mallow Street in Limerick is a mistaken form of the original. It derived its name from a publican of old time named Mallow, who kept his pub' in this street, and was very kind to the weary traveller, by always 'treating' them whenever they called, so that the house—and from it the street—

came to be called 'Mallow's Treat.' The present form shows the ignorance of the English-speaking people of Limerick." This was a very apt illustration of Borlase's methods, and in the last paragraph the sarcasm is intended to point at the absurdity of those who have only a superficial knowledge of the Irish language, attempting to explain Irish names, just as it is only English scholars who are best qualified to explain the meaning to be attached to English place names.

It was with regret the author of the paper on Carn-Feradaig (Carnary) Cahernarry (Vol. I., 1910, p. 168) found that Dr. Joyce could not agree that Cahernarry was a corruption, and Carnary the correct place name; he could not believe that *Carn* could ever have been displaced for *Cathair* (Cahir) by an Irish-speaking people, the words were so different, and he wrote a long note to the editors, explaining his views, but promised to still further investigate the matter; and before the next Journal appeared he wrote "I have just spent a couple of hours at 'Cahernarry' with the result that I now withdraw—without prejudice as the magistrates say—my note, I am sorry for giving you so much trouble, though so far as my own trouble is concerned, I am not sorry at all, for it has somewhat cleared the view where there was a fog."

Such was the Irish Scholar whose loss we must now deplore. These reminiscences all refer to recent years, and are interesting, as shewing that Dr. Joyce was a student, as well as a scholar to the last. At an age when he might well have retired on his laurels, he remained a willing worker, ready to assist in every effort to elucidate the history, topography, or language, of his country. Truly, the story of his life is a cheering and worthy record; and should prove an incentive to many of the present generation—who we regret, are badly in want of a stimulus—to devote their talents, and a small share of their time, in performing a similar service to their country. May he Rest in Peace.

P. J. L.