

sody in his Latin verses. St. Columbcille, the apostle of Scotland, was the first to employ in Latin, trisyllabic rime, well known in Irish at that time (sixth century). His great contemporary Columbanus, who was probably then the most influential man on the Continent, introduced Irish final and alliteration rimes into his Latin verses. In the next century the prominent Latin Irish poets SS. Ultan and Cuinmain Fota helped to increase the popularity of Irish prosody. In the poems of SS. Oengus and Cucuimne of the eighth century, we find alliteration, assonant and consonant rime in such a perfect fashion, that in the whole history of versification, it is equalled only by the Munster Irish poets of a thousand years later. Let us conclude this list by the name of Sedulius Scotus, of the ninth century, whose Latin poem—*The Rose and the Lily*—“leads the way of the lighter literature of Europe.”†

Hence that the Irish introduced rime into Latin is extremely probable; that they introduced assonance and alliteration is certain.

But the Irish came into contact with other nations than the Roman Empire. First of all they taught rime to the Saxons. Aldhelm the first Anglo-Saxon to write rimed Latin, was the pupil of the Irish Abbot Mailduff—after whom is called the famous monastic centre of learning—Malmesbury. And what was perhaps even more important for Saxon literature, the Irish also taught them, alliteration. This is not remarkable when we consider that the Irish christianised and civilized six sevenths of England, that Gaelic was a court language in Northumbria, and that Caedmon lived and sang in an Irish atmosphere.

The Germans also are indebted to the Irish for rime. Otfried, who introduced rime into High German was the pupil of the Irish monks of St. Gall.

But the influence on Norse literature was even more important. The Danish invasions brought a number of Norse poets to Ireland, where they were well received by the Irish chiefs—which speaks well for Irish hospitality. They learned rime and alliteration, and the glorious Irish poems and romances. They even intermarried with the Irish. Now note. It was these Norse Irish who settled in Iceland (known to the Irish monks centuries previously) and who produced the famous Sagas and Eddas, which without their Irish coloring and Irish form would have been dull.

† Sigerson—“*Bards of the Gael and Gall*”; a wonderful book from which many of the facts here cited are taken.