

honor and suitably entertained, whilst in return they would sing or relate the stories of love and heroism which were so dear to the hearts of their hearers, the reciting of which in all parts of the country made the different tribes to know about one another, to value one another's prowess and in some degree to realize the whole nation. The fact that there was so much love for literature prevailing in the land, that there was a considerable number of these bards in the country travelling about, that they met from time to time to compete with one another and to confer as to the correctness of the tales, many of which they mutually told, and the love of literature that prevailed in the land, all tend to make us believe that the chronicles which were thus handed down from mouth to mouth and finally gathered together and written down, contain much that is true, and represents in a very real way the life and character of the early Irish.

The historian class of poet sat in the courts with the judges, to quote historical precedent and custom, thus to guide the administration of the laws, and of the enlightened character of those laws we can have two great proofs. One is the position which they gave to women, which is always a certain sign of the position of a nation. This is shown both in their marriage and their property laws, by which very full privileges were maintained for them in the way of enjoying their individual property. If a wife, too, were made a subject of ridicule by her husband, or if she were not given her full rights in social and domestic matters, she could separate from her husband, taking her own property and her husband's