

THE HURLER

(This sonnet is dedicated to Richard "Drug" Walsh, Moon-dharrig, to Tom Semple, of Thurles, and to James Kelliher, of Duncourney.)

UPON his native sward the Hurler stands
To play the ancient pastime of the Gael,
And all the heroes famed of Innisfail
Are typified in him — I see the bands
Of the Croabh Ruadh applauding with their hands,
The Fianna shouting over Cliu Mail —
Oisín and Finn with eager faces pale,
Caoilte and Goll are there from fairy lands

And fierce Cuchulain comes — his godlike face
With yearning wild to grip in hand once more
The lithe camawn and drive the hurtling ball.
In Walsh's, Kelliher's and Semple's grace
He sees again his glorious youth of yore
And mourns his dead compeer and Ferdia's
fall.