

heroines, is in its dramatic and ethical treatment of character on a level with the greatest productions of the language. Although Griffin was not a master of the Irish language, he yet knew enough of it to enable him to read the Irish peasant through the surface, and presented him with a degree of fidelity and an art which have never been surpassed. This knowledge, moreover, strengthened that gift in him which Carleton (his only serious rival in the field of Irish fiction, if we except the Banims), calls "the dark moving passion" and to which doubtless is due the deep and noble pathos of his work.

Griffin's command of the English language was in no wise impaired by the pronounced Celtic strain of his work, nor were the other constituent elements of his style. It would seem to be, indeed, the other way, as the critical reader of his prose may observe, whilst with reference to the most Celtic example of his verse, that exquisite ballad "Gille Machree,"—so Irish in its rhythm, its diction, and its thought,—it has only to be remembered that two such judges as Davis and Duffy have ranked it among the finest results of ballad poetry, the former pronouncing it perfect of its class, and the latter as "striking on the heart like the cry of a woman."

The same cause holds good in regard to other Irish writers, who have at all risen above the surface of the commonplace, and left us anything that will survive their own generation. Banim's ballad, "Soggarth Aroon," whose place in the national heart is not more assured than its rank among the greatest ballads, has an idiom which is as Irish as if it were written in that language.

Need it be said that in oratory, as in fiction and poetry, the same cause has produced a like result? Examples, numerous and striking, could be adduced, but this paper is already too long. Among our greatest orators were, it must be admitted, men whose style and matter were, like Grattan's and Sheil's, cast in classic moulds; but occupying no lower plane of imaginative or effective eloquence were orators, like Curran and O'Connell, who had, moreover, in full measure the national gift of humour and its attribute, the "dark, moving passion of the Celt." We are proud of them all, whilst we are at no trouble to know which