

However, a movement for its preservation is now popular in Ireland, and it remains with the present generation to decide whether or not the Irish are to be, as Grattan wished, a bi-lingual people, whether or not Gaelic is to be a dead language.

The influence of Irish literature upon that of mediaeval and modern times is considerable. A favorite theme in the middle ages was the Irish "Aes Side" or perpetual youth, while the stories about Queen Mebh or Mab and the fairies were extensively drawn upon by Chaucer, Spencer and even Shakespeare. "Visions of the other World," a Gaelic work constituted three out of the five main sources of the plot of Dante's "Divina Comedia." And those clever bits of forgery, translation, and patchwork, Mac Pherson's Ossianic poems, had much to do with the great romantic revival which commenced at the end of the eighteenth century, as seen in the works of Goethe, Wordsworth, Chateaubriand and Byron. But the greatest work of Irish in the world of literature was certainly the invention of rhyme.

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