

*THE BREHON LAW.*

As the Anglo-Irish legislators, by a statute passed in Kilkenny in 1367, denounced the Brehon Law as "wicked and damnable": as Edmund Spencer, of "Faerie Queene" renown, asserts that it is in many things "repugning quite both to God's law and man's": as to it Sir John Davis attributed such desolation and barbarism in Ireland, "as the like was never seen in any country that professed the name of Christ": and as the notable assembly of American Irishmen lately holden in Chicago, after threatening to persecute England with the utmost rigor of their power, strongly advised the study of Gaelic literature, we, piqued by curiosity, and desirous of obtaining favor in the eyes of those who have power to injure, naturally devote our spare moments to the contemplation of those laws, which after surviving the ravages of time and of Saxons, Danes and Normans, remain to-day substantially what they were more than a thousand years ago.

We are told that to properly present them to others we must imbibe the Gaelic spirit to some extent, otherwise it is "the lark and not the nightingale"; that a heart attuned to the Gaelic pulse, and a mind capable of understanding (for the time at least) the Gaelic mode of reasoning, are required. So, if we fail, our readers must blame our grandsires and their Saxon blood, and not ourselves.

Mr. Lawrence Ginnell, of the Middle Temple, barrister-at-law, has lately given to the world a most interesting and readable introduction to these ancient laws: (*The Brehon Laws—a legal hand-book*, by Lawrence Ginnell, of the Middle Temple, barrister-at-law, London. T. Fisher Unwin, 1894). Briefly, yet clearly, he treats of their existing remains, the Legislative Assemblies of the olden days, and the classification of society in Ireland—the laws of distress—the criminal law—the law of marriage—fosterage and contracts. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis, 'tis true, however, that Mr. Ginnell appears to have been suffering acutely, while his book was passing through the press, from an attack of Anglomania. In a legal treatise it seems out of place to be hurling assegais at the pachydermatous Anglo-Saxon, who does not know he is hit.