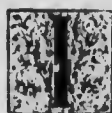


WELSH, IRISH, AND COLONIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.



In the first section, the influence of the Celtic temperament and culture has been recognised as stimulating and modifying the trend of early English intellectual life; but in this work it is not possible directly to take cognisance of the literatures of the races other than Angles who have contributed essential elements to the mixed people now inhabiting the British Islands. Besides English in its various dialects and successive stages, at least five languages have been spoken by those at home within this area even if we arrange the Celtic tongues in two groups only—Irish, Manx, and Scotch Gaelic; Welsh and Cornish. The *lingua Latina rustica* was spoken in the Roman colonies for four centuries at least; and in the Middle Ages Church and Law Latin was the literary vehicle of some of the greatest Englishmen, and practically the vernacular of synods and of monasteries. From the Norman Conquest to the days of Edward III., as we have seen, Norman French was the language of literature. And it should be remembered that for generations the old Norse in some shape was spoken and written not merely in Shetland and Orkney and at the court of the Jarls of Caithness, but in the Western Islands of Scotland, in the Danelagh of England, and in the Danish kingdoms of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford: good authorities hold that considerable portions of the collection called the *Corpus Poeticum Breve* were written by the Scandinavians of Ireland. Other languages were doubtless spoken in Britain before the arrival of the first Celtic invaders, those of the Ivernian or other prehistoric inhabitants; and some Celtic philologists now trace the peculiarities of Irish, Welsh, and the neo-Celtic tongues to the old pre-Aryan language, characteristics they share with other languages of the old Mediterranean stock, ancient Egyptian and modern Berber. In Wales, as in France, the best authorities hold that the vast majority of the present inhabitants are sprung—not from the Celts or any of the successive invaders—but from the race or races who held the land before the coming of the Aryans. *A fortiori*, this is even truer of Ireland and the Highlands. The first Celts to invade Britain were the Goidels, who became incorporated with their non-Aryan subjects; a like process took place when the later Brythonic conquerors established themselves in Britain. Nowhere in the 'Celtic fringe' are the people of pure Celtic descent; and it may well be that what is especially characteristic of Irish literature and is interpreted as the true 'Celtic note' is not of Celtic origin at all, but reflects the moods of the earlier non-Aryan inhabitants of Erin, from

whom the conquering Gael, invaders from Britain, learnt the manner of the gods of the land, the really autochthonous legends and folklore.

The Cymric literature of Wales has a history of nine or ten centuries and still flourishes; and for three or four hundred years men of Welsh blood have been contributors to English literature. Such Welshmen have not been very numerous nor of the first importance. They have not been regarded as wholly aliens in England; and as they wrote in the literary English of their time, it has not been thought necessary to treat them in a separate division of this work. Vaughan the Silurist and his brother are amongst the most unmistakable; James Howell, cosmopolitan though he was in temper, was Welsh by birth as he was in name and blood. John Davies of Hereford was a Welshman born just outside the principality; Sir John Davies may have been of Welsh blood. The Pembroke Herberts were a great Welsh house, and Lord Herbert of Cherbury and George Herbert were apparently both born at their father's home of Montgomery Castle. John Donne, a power in English literature, was said to be of Welsh descent; and the great Puritan, John Owen, is known, apart from his Welsh name, to have been of an old Welsh family. Roger Williams, in Milton's words, 'that noble confessor of religious liberty,' and founder of Rhode Island—was a fiery Welshman. And earlier, Asser, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Walter Map, and the nationalist Bishop Pecock by their writings left their mark deep enough on mediæval Latin, Anglo-French, and English thought. These are all notable figures in the history of our literature before the end of the seventeenth century, and are treated in their proper chronological places. Guilleim, in virtue of his great folio *Dyniaid y Heraldia* (1610), the eponym of the science, was born at Hereford of Welsh family. And dozens of others might be named, from the voluminous Giraldus Cambrensis to John Owen the Latin epigrammatist, whose interest as authors, however great, is inconsiderable in connection with the story of English letters.

From the Anglo-Norman Conquest of Ireland—which was both the continuation and the completion of the Norman Conquest of England—there had been much writing from Ireland and about Ireland by Englishmen for a longer or shorter time resident in Ireland, but not much that ranks as literature. Spenser wrote his book on Ireland and most of the *Faerie Queene* at Kilcolman, his home from 1589 on, but his connection with Ireland is wholly external. Sir John Davies, Sir William Temple, and Sir William Petty were Englishmen who lived for a time in Ireland and wrote about Ireland. Richard Stanyhurst, on the other hand, was born