

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO GAELIC AND MANX LITERATURE. BY REV.
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A veritable Renaissance has in recent years been observable in the study of Gaelic and of Gaelic literature. Never since Fingal was King of Seallama, and since Malvina gladdened the declining years of Ossian, has so much attention been paid to Gaelic, and to Gaelic traditions and folk-lore; and have so many men of scholarly ability and taste devoted themselves to the study, and, indeed, to the development of Gaelic. For it has always been conceded that Gaelic possesses intrinsic qualities of an extraordinary kind; and that, therefore, it can, in able hands, take on beautiful and diversified forms and developments. Evolution, in the truest acceptation of the term, is characteristic of Gaelic; insomuch that, were scholars of ability and ingenuity to turn their careful attention to it, it could continuously assume larger and wider proportions. Such a momentum in favour of the language and literature of the Gael has now been gathered, that anything like retrogression is not to be apprehended, so far as regard is had to the production of Gaelic poetry and prose. Eisteddfod is the appellation that is given to the annual gatherings of the Welsh—which having their origin in the unrecorded past, call forth unabated enthusiasm wherever they are held. Prizes are wont to be given which are very much appreciated, as they deserve to be, for superior excellence in prose and verse; in vocal and instrumental music, and in other avenues of intellectual effort and research in connection with the history and language of the Cymri. The Gaels of Scotland have been very slow in instituting any gatherings similar to the Welsh Eisteddfod. Regrets are now unavailing, that the other members of the large Celtic family did not, centuries ago, follow the example of the Welsh in the way of holding annual gatherings for the honouring and perpetuating, in healthful and ever-increasing vitality, of their own particular language with all its literature, and with all its traditions, that could in that case be found to pertain to it. Had such gatherings been in existence for centuries, it may be confidently maintained that Scottish and Irish Gaelic as well would to-day have treasures of valuable literature in prose and verse of which too high an opinion could not be formed;—treasures which, unhappily, have sunk into the deep sea of forgetfulness. Much praise is to be awarded to those intelligent and enthusiastic Gaels, who were successful some six years ago in establishing the Gaelic Mod,—an annual gathering at which prizes are given, after the example of the Welsh Eisteddfod, for the best productions in Gaelic prose and verse, in vocal and instrumental music, as well as in other attainments of a literary and artistic character.

The fifth Mod was held in October of last year in Perth. It was very successful. Unmistakable indications are available that the Mod is growing in popular esteem, and that it promises fairly to intensify the ardour of Gaels for their language and their traditions, and thereby to subserve the patriotic and very commendable purpose which its founders had in contemplation. The next Mod is to be held in Inverness, which possesses the best and most intellectual Gaelic Society in the world—a Society that has already published some twenty volumes of Transactions, which contain papers of a very instructive character, dealing as they do, with an extensive variety of Gaelic subjects.

In the centuries that have gone, there must have been a continuous intimacy between the Gaels of Ireland and the Gaels of Scotland. A reciprocal influence