

Irish Folk Songs

By
C. M. FOX.
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KELLY, THE BLIND PIPER OF TRALEE.

"Oh, dear old airs of Ireland,
Fresh from the heart you spring!
Oh, grand old airs of Ireland,
Your spell around us fling!
The ear may be untuned, untaught,
The eye unused to glisten!
But yet when these sweet strains
Arise,
The heart keeps still to listen.
Old airs, old airs, ye raise the dead,
Ye bring the past before me;
The very winds that swept the hills
In youth are blowing o'er me!
They rustle through the bearded
grain,
Amid the trees they dally;
They stir the primrose in the mead,
The shamrock down the valley.
I'm home again: The Irish earth
And Irish sky are meeting,
And these old airs on Irish winds
Go by me like a greeting,
How sweet they are! How grand
they are!
How tender and how glowing!
How weirdly sad, how wildly glad,
How full to overflowing!

With memories of olden days,
With Ireland's grief and glory—
The pride and pathos, love and hate
That chequer her sad story!
The burning sense of bitter wrong,
The scorn of base compliance
That flings even in the face of Fate
Its deep and stern defiance.

Tell me not of Italian airs,
To sense, not heart, appealing;
Was ever sound so full of soul
Or notes so strung with feeling
As in those dear old airs that spring
From passion or devotion,
Or love that hides within the heart
Like pearls within the ocean?

Old airs, old airs, how gracefully,
Each changing mood ye render,
The sad, the proud, the fierce, the
gay,
The martial and the tender,
Fresh as the breeze from Connacht
to Kinsale,
And sweet as the hawthorn hedge
in bloom
Old songs of Innisfail."



TURLOUGH MACSWEENEY, Donegal Piper.

COLLECTING folk songs belonging to one's native land is a pursuit which gives the collector an infinite amount of pleasure as well as trouble, in spite of the difficulty of unearthing the native folk-song singer,—sometimes hidden far away in remote country villages, or, strange to say, sometimes living quietly among us,—until some words of persuasion and gentle encouragement will bring us quite a treasure trove. It was by rare good luck last year in Ireland, while walking through the little town of Bangor, Co. Down that I noticed an old man playing on a little wooden whistle. Round his neck hung the following inscription, "Blind From Earliest Age of Life."

"Over fifty years a flute did play,
But now my teeth are in decay,
Dear kind friends in your charity
Please will you remember me."

I noticed that the air he was playing was an old Irish modal strain, so going up to him, I asked, "What is the name of the air you are playing?"

"Shure then, ma'am, its called 'Dobbin's Flowery Vale' in the North, 'Lisnaveague' in the South, and 'Pastion Fionn' in the West," and he commenced to recite d'Altin's beautiful version from the Gaelic, which one can read in both languages in "Hardiman's Minstrelsy."

I was much surprised by his flow of oratory, and realized I had come across a rare find. When I asked him if he could find his way to my

house (which was situated on a high hill), he said humorously, "Troth, an' of course I can, for haven't I tramped all over the North and South and East and West with nothin' but my whistle in my pocket and my blackthorn in my hand?"

The next day the blind man promptly made his appearance, and as he was walking up the avenue, my brother took a snap shot of him, and later on photographed him playing on his whistle. Needless to say he played me many beautiful and wonderful old airs. One on which I set particular value was called "The Witches' Lament for King O'Connor" (last king of Ireland). This wonderful old piper told me he was born in Tralee seventy years ago, and his name was Kelly, and that he had learnt most of his old airs from another piper called Joyce, who attended Bunting's meeting of harpers in Belfast. He took leave of us, saying he would look in again on us next summer, and would bring me another wallet full of good old tunes.

Another interesting personality is Turlough MacSweeney, the Donegal piper. This grand old man, whose photograph figures in this article, is a thorough Celt and proud of his royal origin, for in ancient days his ancestors were kings of Ulster. I had the pleasure of taking down from him "The Yellow Bittern," and "Easter Snow." Turlough played at several of the Fels Ceoil competitions, and it was at these festivals I made his acquaintance. When at home in Donegal he works on his farm during the summer and pipes to the country people during the winter evenings. The people gather round the cheery peat fires and listen to the sad and moving strains of Turlough's pipes. At all the merry-makings and weddings in Donegal the piper plays an important part, for who but Turlough can clear the floor and set the feet a-jiggling merrily to "Maggie Picky," or "The Trip to the Cottage," or some other merry jig and reel.

Yet another interesting folk-song singer rises up before my memory, merry, laughing Bridget, employed in my parents' home in Co. Down. From her I collected "My Love Nell," "Kelly's Cat," and "The Rambling Irish Man," all three published in New York and sung in America by the great baritone singer, Mr. David Bispham. This light-hearted child of nature would suddenly throw down her kitchen utensils, much to my mother's consternation, and sometimes while holding a broom in her hand would exclaim, "Och ma'am, get yer pencil quick. I mind another grand tune and do take it down as quick as ye can before it slips right away."

Annie Younge, a native of Dro-more, Co. Down, was quite another type of folk-singer. She was much more self-contained and painstaking, and would go over and over the air until I took down the tune, and my sister wrote out the words. Her mother was a hemstitcher, and in the summer evenings sat outside her cottage, where other hemstitchers would join her, and together they sang the old songs. Little Annie used to sit and listen to her mother and the women singing, and she certainly listened to good account, for she gave me more than twenty beautiful Ulster songs, among them "The Cavan Recruit."

I will now turn to folk song singers on the concert platform, beginning with Mr. Denis O'Sullivan, who, born in San Francisco, is of Irish parentage. He created the part of "Shamus O'Brien" in Stanford's opera, and in 1898 commenced a series of song recitals in his native California. He then appeared in London and gave a song recital which was most favorably commented on by all the critics of the London press. He returned to America and created the part of "The Little Corporal." Last year he went to London, and his artistic career has been a veritable triumphal progress ever since. His recital in November was a most remarkable display of a singer who can go "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," with consummate art, striking responsive chords in the hearts of his listeners. His singing of "The Lark in Clear Air," "Mollie Macree," "Widow Malone," "Owen Roe's Lament," and the "West's Asleep" is never to be forgotten.

Miss Madeleine O'Connor, who made her debut as a singer of old Irish airs is a daughter of the late Dr. Francis O'Connor of Limerick. She has been heard in the Beltaine Festival and several Gaelic concerts. She is studying Gaelic and hopes to sing the Gaelic songs in public shortly.

Miss Lucie Johnstone is a well known Ulster singer, and has lately taken up Gaelic songs. She can well claim to be the most distinguished Irish contralto of the present day. She has sung at every Fels Ceoil, and appears at all the St. Patrick's Day concerts and Gaelic Oireachtas. Her favorite Gaelic songs

are "Lough Lein" and "Grannia Weale."

Mrs. Kate Lee is the popular and energetic Hon. Secretary of the Folk Song Society in London. Mrs. Lee is of Irish descent on her mother's side, and she inherits a truly Irish temperament. The Folk Song Society under her management has been most successful. A delightful lecture by Mr. Alfred Percival Graves, on "Irish Folk Songs" was given last season at the Marchioness of Londonderry's. Mrs. Lee has a special gift for singing folk songs in the "old style" and without any accompaniment, and she has also made a collection of Sussex songs which she will shortly bring out.

Mr. Gabriel Thorp of Listowel has taken up folk songs with great success. Humor is his special gift, and though for many years a resident in London, he has never lost his delightful brogue.

Mr. O'Shea is a purely Gaelic singer, and sang several songs in his native tongue at the London and Dublin Oireachtas.

Miss Drury is another singer of Gaelic songs and a most active member of the London branch of the Gaelic League. Miss Drury conducts classes for the singing of Gaelic songs, and is to be found at every meeting connected with the Gaelic movement in London.

Before bringing this article to a close, I must mention Mr. Fionian MacCollum, an ardent worker for the Gaelic movement in London. It was through his singing a few old songs in Gaelic that I conceived the idea of bringing out the book of Gaelic songs. Mr. MacCollum was educated at Mount Mellary, and used to hear the good monks sing "The Spalpan Fanach." Apropos of the appropriation of our songs by other countries, I may state that "Robin Adair," "The Campbells Are Coming," "The White Cockade," "Lochaber No More," and many others are of purely Irish origin. One collector of the name of Oswald put a lot of our beautiful tunes into his "Caledonian Pocket Book."

The Gaelic Renaissance has brought about the annual Fels Ceoil, the Oireachtas, the revival of the Irish drama and Irish literature, and last but not least, our Irish music, and readers of this little article who many years ago left home for "the land beyond the sea" may feel in their hearts the memories of their early years stealing back to them in the old songs of beloved Erin.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

When a Catholic is so deaf to the teachings of the Church as to go before a civil magistrate or a non-Catholic minister, there is every reason to fear that his faith is so weak that the rude blasts of temptation and adversity will be more than sufficient to extinguish it. The children of such a Catholic may learn to use a phrase often heard in many parts of this country: "I am a friend of the Catholics, for my father was once a member of the church," or "My mother ought to be a Catholic." Expressions of that kind tell of an immortal soul bartered to satisfy the cravings of an unholy love. A Christian marriage invokes a blessing on the husband, wife and children; unchristian nuptials entail male-diction and misfortune. Much of the misery which haunts the footsteps of the married couple proceeds from such a difference of natural disposition in the man and woman as will not coalesce to form an agreeable companionship. If human weakness and folly can mar the beauty of the Christian nuptials, over which the Church extends the mantle of her protection, it vitiates much more those in which religion has no part. The Protestant does not reflect as a Catholic, and, however well his conduct may seem to accord with the maxims of human prudence, he cannot be a good Christian husband. He differs essentially from his companion in his manner of thinking. Both the present and the future are viewed from a different standpoint. What should be all to his wife is of little importance to him; he lives for time and the world, she for eternity and God. In a word, they remain, as before marriage, not one, but two.—*Sacerdos, in the Sunday Democrat.*

With the Naturalists. Point Euchre Now!

A MARVELLOUS TREE. — Undoubtedly the most marvellous tree in the world grows in Brazil. It is the carnauba palm, and can be employed for many useful purposes. Its roots produce the same medicinal effect as sarsaparilla. Its stems afford strong, light fibres, which serve also for joists, rafters, and other building materials, as well as for stakes for fences. From parts of the tree wines and vinegar are made. It yields also a saccharine substance, as well as a starch resembling sago. Its fruit is used for feeding cattle. The pulp has an agreeable taste, and the nut, which is oleaginous and emulsive, is sometimes used as a substitute for coffee. Of the wood of the stem musical instruments, water tubes, and pumps are made. The pith is an excellent substitute for cork. From the stem a white liquid similar to the milk of the coconut and a flour resembling maize may be extracted. Of the straw, hats, baskets, brooms, and mats are made. A considerable quantity of this straw is shipped to Europe, and a part of it returns to Brazil manufactured into hats. The straw is also used for thatching houses. Moreover, salt is extracted from it, and likewise an alkali used in the manufacture of common soap.

THE NATIVES ABOUT GORILLAS.—Natives in the countries inhabited by great apes regard them

Advocates of progressive euchre reform are now advocating a change in the system of scoring the game. They believe that the score should be computed by points and not by games, as is generally done now.

Point euchre, they say, is recognized by euchre players as the only fair way in which the game can be played, as each player receives credit for all points made at each game.

It can be played at any progressive euchre, either at home or in clubs. Excitement begins with the first hand and continues until the last hand is played. Many objectionable features of the old game are overcome in point euchre, as fast playing is one of the essentials of the game.

A point euchre tally card is numbered from 1 to 120. Each player has a tally card and each receives the number of points made at the end of each game.

For example, in the first game at the head table one couple make 5 points, the other side 4 points. The cards of those having 5 are each punched 5, and the others are punched 4. Winners move as in the older game.

All other players receive punches for the number of points they have made, while the head table players were making their 5 and 4 some players at the other tables may have made as many as 10 points.

Should the head table players at



William Chapman

(See article "Irish Litterateurs.")

always as human beings of inferior types, and it is for this reason that for a long time it was found impossible to get hold of an entire gorilla skin because the savages considered it religiously necessary to cut off the hands and feet of the animals when they killed them, just as they do with their enemies, possibly for the purpose of rendering them harmless in case they should by any chance come to life again.

WOLVES IN FRANCE. — We are accustomed to thinking of France as a country every inch of which is settled and cultivated, and to regard the wolves which once swarmed in that fair country as having vanished long ago. But it seems that wolves still are numerous and destructive to life and property. So rapidly did the wolves increase after the war with Germany that in 1882 a law was passed offering a reward for every one of these fierce animals killed. Since the institution of these premiums nearly 9,000 wolves have been killed, and over £26,000 has been paid out in premiums. Last year there were one hundred and fifteen wolves killed.—*Catholic Times.*

A PRIEST'S FARE.

The venerable Father Rafael Chaca, of San Angel, where he is the parish priest, has reached the great age of eighty-two years in excellent health, which he attributes in a large measure to his inviolable custom of eating fruit for supper, his custom for half a century.—*Mexican Herald.*

ENGAGEMENT RINGS.

The maidens of Denmark never receive a diamond engagement ring. They are always presented with a plain gold band, which is worn on the third finger of the left hand. On the wedding day the bridegroom changes the ring to the right third finger, which is the marriage finger in that country.

THE 'MAINE' VICTIMS.

The families of the victims of the "Maine" disaster in Havana Harbor, Cuba, have not yet received compensation for the loss of their relatives. Claims aggregating two millions, five hundred thousand dollars have been made. Will Cuba pay or will the United States have to foot the bill?

ST. PATRICK'S POT.

M. C. D. Borden created a sensation in Fall River, Mass., on Feb. 27, by posting notices in four iron work mills announcing a 10 per cent. advance in wages to take effect on Saint Patrick's Day.

CATHOLIC PIONEER DAYS IN MONTREAL

FROM THE FL...
OF THE...
TRUE WITNE...
OF THE...
YEAR...
1851.

On Sunday, August 2...
pers, we had the satisfi...
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touching ceremonies, w...
occur so often in Mon...
mean the consecration...
stone of the new Catho...
Griffintown. The proc...
in front of St. Patr...
and was composed of...
Men's St. Patrick's an...
Societies, accompanied...
spective bands, and he...
propriate banners. A...
course of our Cathol...
zens, of all origins, co...
well its ranks. His L...
Bishop officiated. The...
preached by the Rev. F...
S.S.

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alluded to the large as...
people upon the Lord's...
said, it were meet tha...
tion of the Temple of...
should be celebrated w...
and so great rejoicing...
clamor of trumpets, an...
of the assembled thou...
rael—with the songs of...
and the singing men, t...
their sons, and the...
clothed with fine linen...
cymbals and harps, and...
how much more is it b...
we, under another and