

During his first four years' stay in his native parish,—he returned there from Queenstown in 1889,—he wrote his first stories, published later in book-form, under the title of "A Spoiled Priest." They were manifestly weak, indeed one can hardly believe, they are due, to the now virile, masterful pen, of the author of "My New Curate."

Cardinal Newman's critics—and he, incontestably the greatest master of Modern English Stylists, had them!—accused his poetry of being too prosaic and his prose of being too poetic, but Father Sheehan has solved to a remarkable degree the secret of melodious, cadenced prose, which while it sounds like music, is so absolutely spontaneous that it in no way suggests metre. His is the artlessness of art. Critics tell us that the great test of good English, is the facility with which it may be read aloud. To any one who has attempted to read aloud, either "The Blindness of Doctor Grey" or "The Queen's Fillet," it will be no surprise to hear their author proclaimed the peer of any living English writer.

"Corona Mariæ" and "Cithara Mea" are the title of two volumes of verse, issued over the signature of "P. A. Sheehan," and each one goes to prove that its author is possessed of true poetic insight, with a heaven-born gift of harmonious expression.

It happens all too frequently that literary aspirations interfere with the pastoral duties of priests, but the scholarly Canon of Doneraile, is a striking exception to the general rule. Although his literary output is immense and ranges from philosophical dissertations like, "Under the Cedars and the Stars," "Parerga," and "The Intellectuals," through mazes of exquisitely polished verses, to the modern society novel typified in "Lisheen" and "Glenanaar," he is, nevertheless, in close touch with his parish, a typical Irish priest, who finds time to teach the children catechism, to hold the young girls of his parish spellbound, by his vivid delineations of Mary, all beautiful, and to hear the last rites of the Church, to those who have borne for Christ's sweet sake, the burden and heat of the day.

The two chief objections made to Canon Sheehan's two novels are:—their rather freely-drawn portraits of Irish clerical life, and their somewhat disparaging view of the Irish temperament. To those who stigmatize the author of "Luke Delmege" for his compromising picture of the old Canon we can but reply that the Irish clergy at large, owe a life-long debt of gratitude to Father Sheehan for having set them before the world as