

# THE GAELIC LANGUAGE REVIVAL.

## FEIS IN BALLYVOURNEY.

"'Tis fading, oh 'tis fading,  
Like the leaves upon the trees."

Such were the words in which the agonised soul of a patriotic Irishman relieved itself of its feelings about half a century ago in referring to the decay of our native tongue. At that time there was every excuse, indeed, for the wail in which he conveyed the despair that possessed him at the rapid disappearance of so precious a possession. Every day it was becoming more and more apparent that one of the most valuable evidences which supports our claims to a separate and distinct nationality was being gradually effaced. Indeed, for many years even the most ardent were obliged to confess with a bitter pang that the tongue of the children of Eibhear was to all appearances as dead as the mighty heroes with whose wondrous deeds and legends relating to their thrilling careers it was superabundantly laden. But even in the midnight of sorrow and desolation the phoenix spirit of hope buoyed him in his solicitude, and as if in desperation he appealed to his countrymen in that splendid apostrophe—

"Oh, Irishmen, be Irish still,  
Stand for the dear old tongue,  
Which as ivy to the ruin  
Of your native land has clung;  
Snatch this relic from the wreck—  
The only and the last—  
And cherish in your heart of hearts  
The language of the past."

It has been truly said that "the darkest hour is always the hour before dawn," and as if in corroboration of the proverb a new vigour was infused into the language soon after, and its onward course was assured, slowly at first, it is true, but none the less steadily and surely gaining force as the years flew by like the avalanche in its downward course, till now it bids fair to hurl the imposter from the throne so long usurped. This progressive movement is more plainly in evidence for the last half decade of years or thereabouts, since the Gaelic League applied themselves with earnestness to the work. Their programme, however, till quite recently was almost solely confined to instruction in schools, with the exception of the annual festivals in Dublin. At the beginning of this year the first practical steps to give an impetus to the progress of the language were taken in the organisation of feis-anna throughout the country. One of the earliest of these, if not the earliest and most successful, was that held in Macroom in February, and the fillip the movement received as a result can now be plainly traced in the surrounding districts. A very successful feis has already been brought off in Ballingearry, and that, too, in the face of not a little opposition. The country around has caught the blaze, and not a district between Macroom and the borders of Kerry but has its branches of the League working energetically. In the outlying districts to the east the glow has been reflected, and the latest to fall into line is Aghabulloghne, where the establishment of a branch is in course of progress. Foremost amongst those who sprang forward at the first call were the people of Ballyvourney, where an active and useful branch has been a long time established. Though zealously helping forward the neighbours on all occasions, it was but a short time since that they determined to take the initiative on their own behalf. When a feis was mooted assistance was quickly forthcoming, with the result that the committee were enabled to bring off the festival at a much earlier date than was at first thought feasible. This satisfactory consummation was mainly due to the strenuous efforts of the energetic committee piloted by their active President, Dr Lynch, and hard-working Secretary, Mr D Lynch, N T. The feis was held on Sunday in a commodious hall kindly lent by the President. Though of large dimensions the building was packed to inconvenience for a long time prior to the opening of the competitions, while hundreds were debarred from entering for want of accommodation. The following are some of the representative contingents that attended:—

Lee Branch (Cork)—D Fleming, hon sec.

Cork Branch—C O'Kelly, P J Lawless, G Shorten, hon sec County Committee; W Phair, T O, Vice-present; Miss A Corcoran, Mr E Callanan, Mrs Callanan.

Wolfe Tone Literary Society—Mr K Warren, Joint Sec.

Kilmichael—C Manning, J Murphy, M Murphy, D Murphy.

Millstreet—Patrick O'Riordan, Jeremiah Scannell, Matthew Fitzpatrick, James Murphy, Timothy O'Riordan, sec, etc.

Macroom—Dr O'Donoghue, President; Messrs D O'Mahony, sec; P Gallagher, senr; P Gallagher, junr; John M'Carthy, John O'Conner, Cornelius O'Leary, Daniel Sheehan, N T; John Warren, N T; Dan Lucey, Dan Kelleher, G Cunningham, T O'Mahony, T O'Connor, T Conahan, D O'Mahony, junr; Michael Gleeson, J O'Mahony, S O'Mahony, R Quill, P Twomey, M Corkery, P Creedon, C Lynch, Michael Lucey, James Murphy, T C; J J Cronin, Jeremiah J Cronin, T G; John O'Shea, New Street; John O'Shea, Square; James Callinane, Michael J O'Sullivan, John Cronin, T J Twomey, T C.

Ballingearry—Messrs Michael O'Brien, sec Gaelic League; Michael Hallissey, P O'Sullivan, Benjamin Shorten, John O'Leary, Chairman Gaelic League; James Moynihan, Edmond Scriven, Denis Manning, William Cotter, Richd. Shorten, Denis Leary, Cornelius Manning, John Lehane, Jeremiah Lehane, Daniel Lehane, Dan Kelleher, Benjamin Sullivan, Miss M'Carthy, Miss M Cotter, Miss K Cotter, Miss A Dennehy, Miss M Cronin, Miss E Cronin, Cora Moynihan, James Lucey, Miss K Lehane, Miss Casey, Mr P D Lehane, Miss B Lucey, Miss O'Connor, Mr P Sweeney.

Ballyvourney—Dr D Lynch, Chairman; D Leary, treasurer; J Sweeney, vice-president; P Quill, P L G; C Lynch, P L G; Jeremiah MacSweeney, P L G; J Lucey, P L G; J Sullivan, N T; C Lynch, N T; T Scannell, N T; Dan McSweeney, W Sheehan, Jeremiah Lynch, Daniel Lynch, Killeens; D Lynch, secretary; P Galvin, N T; P W Collins, Edward Sweeney, W Riordan, Bagoon; J Herlihy, N T; and T Riordan.

Clondrohid—John O'Leary, N T; M J Whelton, N T; Wm Creedon, Cornelius Dennehy, and John Creedon.

Culleen (Millstreet)—Arthur O'Keeffe, Denis O'Shaughnessy, Patrick Brosnahan, Timothy Carroll, Humphrey O'Sullivan.

On the motion of Mr Lawless, seconded by Mr Shorten, Dr Lynch was moved to the chair.

The Chairman opened the proceedings in Irish, and gave a hearty "caed mille failthe" to all present, particularly to those who came from Cork, Macroom, and other distant places. He said they were assembled there that day to listen to Irish songs, Irish stories, and Irish music. He believed there was no music so sweet as the Irish, and he thought that the Irish dance was unsurpassed.

A Voice—They are better than the sets, anyway.

Dr Lynch, continuing, said they were assembled to give an impetus to the movement for the preservation of the Irish language, and they could not meet for a better object.

The singing competitions were then proceeded with, the following gentlemen acting as a committee of adjudication:—Messrs J O'Leary Clondrohid; J Riordan, Cork; P Lawless, Cork; D Fleming, Cork; G Shorten, Cork; P O'Donoghue, M D, Macroom; and P Crowley, Macroom.

The following are the results of the different competitions:—  
Gaelic Song (old style)—Michael Hallissey, Ballingearry, 1st; Timothy Crowley, Ballyvourney, 2nd. The other competitors were—Pat Mahony, Ballingearry; John Moynihan, Coolavokig; John O'Leary, Ballingearry; Daniel Sheehan, Ballyvourney; Timothy Herlihy, Ballyvourney; Daniel Lehane, Ballingearry; T Murray, Ballyvourney; Denis O'Mahony, N T,