

GAELIC NOTES.

A FRIEND has kindly given us some Gaelic verses clipped from a Scotch newspaper. They have, however, come into our possession in a somewhat dilapidated condition. Of those that remain intelligible we give the following as an example. Most people who have emigrated will sympathise in the sentiments expressed, though perhaps not all of them had left home with so light a heart.

An usair a dh'fhág mi Tarascabhaig
'S mi sin 'n am bhalach óg
Gur beag 'bha leam de chùram
Cò'a taobh a stùirinn romham ;
Ach nis o'n laidh an aois orm
Tha mi 'smaoineachadh gach lá
O'ar son a dh'fhág me Tarascabhaig,
Am baile 'a an robh mi óg ;

Gur cuimhneach leam 'anair dh'fhág mi'n áit
Mo mháthair 'bhi fo bhrón,
Mo pheathraichean 'bhi dubbach chionn
Nach fuirichinn 'n an còir ;
Tha cuid a nis 'n an sinedh ann
'N ciste chaol fo'n fhòd,
Is dh'fhág sud mise aonranach
'S mo emaintean fo bhrón.

Mo shoraidh nam do Shléibhte
Do gach sliabh 'sh 'ann is tom
Far 'n óg 'bha mise cluaineiseach
N' am buachailleachd nam bò ;
O'n tha mi nis 'fàs fann is sean,
Is m'anail call a treòir,
B'e mo mhiann 'bhi 'n Tarascabhaig,
Am baile 'an robh mi óg.

SLEIBHTEACH.

more easily known from what stock each family was descended. "It would appear, however, from some pedigrees of acknowledged authenticity, that, in a few instances, the surnames were assumed from remoter ancestors, as in the families of the O'Dowds and O'Kevans in Tireragh in which the chiefs from whom the names were taken were contemporary with St Gerald of Mayo, who flourished in the seventh century, and in the family of O'Neill, who took their surname from Niall Glunduv, monarch of Ireland, who was killed by the Danes in the year 919. It is obvious also from the authentic Irish annals, that there are many Irish surnames now in use which were called after ancestors who flourished long subsequent to the reign of Brian. But it is a fact that the greater number of the more distinguished Irish family names were assumed from ancestors who were contemporary with this monarch."

The movement of the "Ancient Order of Hibernians" to establish a professorship of the Gaelic language in the Catholic University at Washington (says the *Brooklyn Catholic Review*) is one most sincerely to be commended. Every lover of linguistics knows that Gaelic is the most fascinating of all languages to study. Besides its immense antiquity, which is shown in its purity of root and of construction, and the historic interest that thereby attaches to it, its mechanism throws a great deal of instructive light upon the process of language development followed by languages of later origin, such as Latin and German. Every one who has ever become, even in the slightest degree, addicted to Gaelic has at once become a Gaelic enthusiast. Some of the most ardent students and admirers of Gaelic during the last thirty or forty years have been Germans, who have produced a great number of grammars, dictionaries and criticisms of the Gaelic language and dialects. Whosoever once acquires possession of Gaelic is bound to ride it as a hobby, but it is a pleasant hobby, and it is now time to concentrate serious attention upon it and turn it into a useful subject of intellectual effort.

Celtic literature (writes Mr Connellan to the *Pilot*) owes a deep debt of gratitude to John Stuart Blackie, who died at Edinburgh, March

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Don't go very well together.

Very true, so our advice to the unlucky possessor of Broken Boots is to "cry quits."
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Some people ask what is the use of learning Gaelic. It seems to us that the question is easily answered. First of all the exercise possesses all the advantages of learning a language, which, in themselves alone, are proverbial. Secondly a knowledge of Gaelic involves an acquaintance with the roots of words in many tongues, and no derivative word can be fully understood unless its root or roots be mastered. Thirdly the Gaelic literature is rich and copious, and such as to study must confer or perfect scholarship. In English we have a fine language, that of Shakespeare—but that, alas! more currently—in which 'Arry expresses himself and which of all tongues is best adapted for the slang and smartness of the day. In French we have a language of which the ordinary English-speaking student may, for example, acquire, as Mr Max O'Reil tells us, proficiency enough to read Zola for his coarseness. In Gaelic we have a pure tongue, a written language of saints and scholars. A language to which to give the mind a little now and then is as restful as it is to the body to withdraw occasionally from a hard and dusty highway to the shelter of some grass-grown lane. We have a language of unique simplicity, of a quaint naïveté—and yet of power and depth. The use of learning such a language, we fancy, cannot be very far to seek.

Hardiman in his *Irish Minstrelsy* writes as follows:—"Carolans never prostituted his muse to party politics or religious bigotry, though attachment to the ancient faith and families of Ireland was the ruling principle of his heart; yet he could discern the virtues and celebrate the praises of those who dissented from the one or claimed no connection with the other."

O'Donovan, in a treatise on Irish family names contributed by him to the *Irish Penny Journal* at the beginning of the "forties" admits that Dr Keating and his contemporary Gratianus Lucius, were generally correct in asserting, on the authority of ancient Irish MSS., that family names or surnames first became hereditary in Ireland in the reign of Brian Boru—who ordained that a certain surname should be imposed on every tribe, in order that it might be the

2. Although unacquainted with the language, he was the promoter of the idea of establishing a Celtic Chair in the University of Edinburgh, and he succeeded in bringing together £12,000 as the means for this excellent purpose. Stuart Blackie, as he was familiarly called, had a predilection for Italy, and came here on several occasions. I met him in 1881 at the residence of a prominent journalist here in Rome, and found him a most interesting personage. Aged as he was, his activity of motion and his rapidity of speech were surprising. He was thin and dry, with long flowing white hair. To some he had a striking resemblance to Theodore Mommsen, the great German historian of Rome, and to others he appeared more like the late Abbé Liszt, the celebrated Hungarian musician and composer. Like the former he had a tendency to Bohemianism, which was marvellously attractive. His conversation and his very manner, might be described as refreshing. There was a buoyancy about him that was quite contagious. His talk was interspersed with quotations from several languages; but he seemed to prefer Italian, which he spoke with a strong Scottish accent. An Italian friend of mine, who visited him some years ago at Oban, in conversing with him on the authenticity of the poems of Ossian, says that Blackie manifested the idea that the majority of them were authentic; but declared that many of them belonged to Ireland, probably brought into Scotland by the early Scots, who emigrated from Ireland and gave Scotland its name. The Finnish or Fenian legend goes back to the time of the northern *Fin Galls* or white strangers. Hence the hero Fingal. Black strangers, or *Dhu Galls*, were, instead of the Danes, so-called from the colour of their armour. The spirit of music was one of the gifts of Stuart Blackie; he wrote verse of a certain quality of freshness and spirit that rendered it attractive, and he sang Scottish songs with much feeling.

The "Jewish Question" is just now very much in evidence on the Continent. It has been exercising the minds of the French and Italian people, and it has been discussed in the German Parliament.

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