

'Strange as it may appear,' says Mr. Nolan, 'it is a fact that the intentions of the promoters of the melodies were largely frustrated by Moore,' and, 'adds Moore's critic, that anyone can see this who takes the trouble to go through them 'taking twenty-seven years for their publication.' No one can deny that the Melodies of Ireland are a great work and any work of the kind—if really great—is not made to order. The 'Elegy' occupied the best eight years of Gray's life to write, and who would have the courage to say on reading intelligently this great work that the period was either wasted or too long? The 'Elegy' did not deal with the music of a nation as the *Irish Melodies*, and Moore, who had other great works to attend to—such as that masterly and enduring Oriental romance 'Lallah Rookh,' in which Irish characters are at home—is chided for producing such a national work in the time! What evidence does Mr. Nolan submit in support of Moore's frustrations of the promoters' intentions? There is no such evidence in existence. On the contrary, the promoters in their advertisements state that their intention was 'to form a collection of the best original Irish Melodies with characteristic symphonies and accompaniments; and with words, containing as frequently as possible allusions to the manners and history of the country. Sir John Stevenson has very kindly consented to take the arrangement of the airs,' add the promoters, 'and the lovers of simple national music may rest secure that in such tasteful hands the native charms of the original melody will not be sacrificed to the ostentations of science.' (*Moore's Poems*, Longmans, 15th edition, 1843, London.)

And, although the promoters had promises of assistance from several distinguished literary characters, it fell entirely on Moore to produce the Melodies of which every Irishman—William Rossetti's ludicrously supercilious critical memoir on one side—may well feel proud.

Mr. Nolan asserts that Moore altered or tampered with the original airs, and submits in support a statement made by one Professor Stanford! Mr. Nolan should state the period to which these airs belong, as I, with Moore, believe, while some musical antiquaries refer us for some of our melodies to the fifth century, that there are few of a civilised description (and by this I mean to exclude all the savage ceanans, cries and so on) which can claim quite so ancient a date as is allowed to the Scotch by Mr. Pinkerton (see Pinkerton's second volume *Scotch Ballads*), that none of the Scotch popular airs are as old as the middle of the sixteenth century. But music is not the only subject upon which our taste for antiquity is rather unreasonably indulged; and, however heretical it may be to dissent from these romantic speculations, I cannot help thinking that it is possible to love our country very zealously, and to feel deeply interested in her honor and happiness, without believing that Irish was the language spoken in Paradise. (Vide *Translations Gaelic Society*, Dublin, 1809.)

John Boyle O'Reilly—whose writings are by no means to be despised—said that Moore's Melodes were his best work; in them he preserved the music of his nation and made it imperishable. 'He struck it out,' says O'Reilly, 'like a golden coin with Erin's Harp upon it, and it has become current and unquestioned in all civilised nations.' (*Life of John Boyle O'Reilly*, by J. J. Roche.)

Is not this evidence, taken from publications in the author's lifetime, the utterances of men whose intentions are alleged to have been 'frustrated,' sufficient, satisfactory, and conclusive to disprove such allegations as have been made by Mr. Nolan?

Mr. Nolan submits Sir Robert Stewart in support of Moore's mutilation of Irish airs. Who was Sir Robert Stewart? Was he a more ardent or enthusiastic patriot than Moore, as it is primarily on the question of patriotism that Moore is impeached? Is not the best evidence of this so-called mutilation to be obtained from the writings of Moore himself, who frankly and honestly explains the position, and replies to his

'fastidious critics who think that his symphonies have nothing kindred with the airs which they introduce,' and who anticipated the criticisms of Sir Robert Stewart, Professor Stanford and Mr. Nolan in his letter on 'Music,' in which he shows the absurdity of the contention raised by the three gentlemen? (See prefatory letter, third number, *Irish Melodies*.)

The final paragraphs of Mr. Nolan's article are not relevant to the questions raised in the other portions of the article, the allegations in these paragraphs being—(1) that Moore blundered in entrusting to Lord John Russell the publication of his works; (2) the dedication of his poems to Lord Lansdowne; and (3) practically abandoning his country and his faith—having, as Mr. Nolan alleges, died in 1852 without the consolations of his church. With regard to (1), it cannot be maintained that Lord John Russell failed in the task committed to his care (see edition Lord John Russell's *Life of Moore*, Auckland Public Library); and the very least that can be said of (2) and (3)—the latter of which is not true in fact—is to subjoin the weighty tribute to Moore's patriotism and sterling qualities by that great ecclesiastic, Archbishop McHale. 'Moore's genius,' wrote that eminent prelate, 'must ever command the admiration of his compatriots from generation to generation. Seated amidst the tuneful followers of Apollo,' concluded that illustrious man, who translated the melodies into Irish, 'he essayed the instrument of every muse and became master of them all. Sighing at length for some higher and holier source of poetic feeling he turns to the East and listens with rapture to its poetical melodies. Subdued by the strain he lets fall the lyre, seizes the harp of Sion and Erin at once, and gives its boldest and most solemn chords to his own impassioned inspirations of country and patriotism.'

The testimony of Thomas Davis, of Thomas Francis Meagher, of O'Connell, of Madden, of Sydney Smith, and of scores of others—not to mention two of Moore's immortal prose works—in support of my contention and to disprove the absurd and ridiculous charges levelled against the national poet of Ireland, has not been requisitioned, and high above them all stands the one man—the one poet—that could be said to have taken Moore's place, a warm and enthusiastic Irishman, Denis Florence McCarthy, and in Moore's Centenary Ode (1878) he said of him—

'And so we rank him with the great departed,
The kings of song who rule us from their urns.
The soul inspired, the nature noble-hearted,
And place him proudly by the side of Burns.'

This discussion is not without its lesson. In this great and young land of our many another Irishman, like Moore, will be criticised for being 'too ardent' by some, and perhaps with being 'too lukewarm' by others; but if an Irishman, young or old, is true to himself he will require no teaching in the principles of liberty and loyalty. It is the inherent language of humanity, which has often been criticised and checked, but never crushed, and to-day is found in the immortal melodies of Ireland's national bard—Thomas Moore.

Mr. John McCormack, the renowned Irish tenor, who is now touring Australia with triumphant success, has received a most flattering offer from Oscar Hammerstein, the famous American impresario. Mr. Hammerstein, who is building a new opera house in New York, has offered Mr. McCormack 2250 dollars a performance for ten appearances with a new company which he is forming for the opening of the edifice. He has already engaged Tetrassini, the renowned soprano, Tittò Ruffo, the greatest baritone of modern times, Mary Garden, Charles Dalmores, Frida Hempel, and other operatic notabilities, and he considers that if he can engage Mr. McCormack he will be able to give the finest presentations of 'Rigoletto' and similar operas that the world has yet seen. If he can possibly arrange his concert dates to fit, Mr. McCormack will accept Mr. Hammerstein's offer, for the fee proposed is equal to that received by Caruso, the well-known Italian tenor.

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