

## THE FEIS CEOL

(By C. W. WILSON, in the *Irish Year Book*.)

The objects of the *Feis Ceoil* are:

(a) To promote the study and cultivation of Irish music.

(b) To promote the general cultivation of of music in Ireland.

(c) To hold an annual Festival, or *Feis Ceoil*, consisting of prize competitions and concerts, similar to that held in 1897.

(d) To collect and preserve by publication the old airs of Ireland.

An article in *The Evening Telegraph*, September 1894, by the late Mr. T. O'Neill Russell, started the movement which led to the foundation of the *Feis Ceoil*. But it was not until 1897 that the first Festival was held in Dublin. Prizes were offered for solo singing and playing, for choral and *ensemble* singing, and for compositions. The entries totalled 417, and consisted of 40 *ensemble* and 377 solo entries. Concerts were held at which Irish music (hitherto unpublished or little known) and the prize compositions were given. Of late years the number of entries for the competitions have been so numerous that there has been no time available during the Festival week for concerts other than the Prize Winners' Concert, which is held on the Saturday evening, and always proves a source of great interest to the public.

The largest number of entries for the competitions was received in 1918, when the entries reached the total of 689 (87 for *ensemble* and 602 for solo competitions). In 1920 there were 78 entries for *ensemble* and 530 for solo competitions, a total of 608. It is much to be regretted that the choral competitions, which gave promise of being so successful at the start (17 choirs entered for the first Festival), and which reached a maximum of 45 in 1907, should have attracted only 14 entries in 1920.

In the solo singing competitions an Irish Melody is invariably one of the test pieces. Since 1906 competitions for choral and *ensemble* singing with Irish words have been held. The scarcity of test pieces suitable for these competitions is a serious drawback to their success, and though the *Feis Ceoil* has spent a good deal of money in providing choral music with Irish words the interest shown by the competitors and the public in general has been very disappointing. Prizes have been awarded annually for the best unpublished airs sent in for competition. A selection of these was published under the editorship of the late Mr. P. J. McCall and Mr. Arthur Darley. Prizes are offered each year for composers who will arrange some airs from this collection either as songs or instrumental pieces. It is hoped by this means to create a series of Irish pieces suitable for concert and other performances. The Irish Folk Song Society of London has given a magnificent gold medal for annual competition for a collection of unpublished Irish airs with words, but up to this it has not been awarded by the adjudicators.

The annual competitions have been held in Dublin, with the exception of two years, when the competitions were held in Belfast.

The want of a large Public Hall has been keenly felt by the *Feis Ceoil* since the Royal University Hall ceased to be available. In

1916 the Festival was held in the Marlborough Street Training College, and for a couple of years subsequently in the Mansion House. In 1920 the latter building was not available, and the competitions were held in the Antient Concert Rooms, but though very convenient for the ordinary competitions, the accommodation there is very inadequate for the choral and band competitions and for the Prize Winners' Concert.

The direction of the *Feis Ceoil* is in the hands of an Executive Committee, elected annually by the members, an Honorary Secretary, Miss Edith Mortier, a Registrar, Mr. C. W. Wilson, and two Honorary Treasurers, Mr. W. P. Geoghegan and Captain H. M. Fitzgibbon.

The Offices are at 37 Molesworth Street. The annual subscription entitling to membership is one guinea.

## SUMMER SCHOOL OF CATHOLIC STUDIES

Many of our readers will doubtless be interested to know that a summer school of Catholic studies, inaugurated by the Religious of the Sacred Heart, will be held at Timaru during the first days of January, 1926; following the ladies' Retreat. Those gatherings now form quite a feature of Catholic educational and social life in Australia, and the Nuns of the Sacred Heart deserve the thanks of the community for their enterprise in this as in numerous other movements. An announcement regarding this latest phase of Catholic activity appears elsewhere in the *Tablet*.

## OBITUARY

MRS. MARGARET McDONALD,  
POOLBURN, CENTRAL OTAGO.

One of the oldest residents of the Central Otago district, in the person of Mrs. Margaret McDonald, passed away recently, after a short illness; aged 82 years. She was attended in her last hours by Father Fenton. A native of Co. Wexford, Ireland, she arrived in New Zealand 47 years ago, and was married the same year to Patrick McDonald (who died 19 years ago). Two years later she settled in Poolburn. Her kindly nature and hospitable disposition endeared her to all who knew her. Up to her death, she took an intense interest in her native land, and was a constant subscriber to the *N.Z. Tablet*. The esteem in which she was held was shown by the very large number who attended her funeral. The interment took place at Omakau; the Rev. Father Howard officiating at the graveside. Two sons, three daughters, and eleven grandchildren are left to mourn their loss.—R.I.P.

## IRISH HISTORY COMPETITION

The period to be covered for this year's Competition in Irish History is from the death of Hugh O'Neill to the Act of Union. To facilitate the study of the history of this period we reprinted (commencing in our issue for April 1, and concluding in the issue of the *Tablet* for August 19) that portion of Sullivan's *Story of Ireland* which treats of the subject. The information therein contained may be supplemented by reference to Carey's *Irish History Lessons* or other works obtainable at the *Tablet* Office.

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