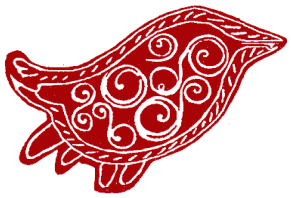
Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society

www.corkhist.ie



Title: Review: "Worthies of Thomond", by Robert Herbert (Printed by Geo. McKern and Sons, Limerick)

Author: B. O'K.

Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 1944, Vol. 49, No. 169, page(s) 70-71

Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society

Digital file created: June 3, 2015

Your use of the JCHAS digital archive indicates that you accept the Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.corkhist.ie/info/tandc.pdf

The Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (IE-148166, incorporated 1989) was founded in 1891, for the collection, preservation and diffusion of all available information regarding the past of the City and County of Cork, and South of Ireland generally. This archive of all content of JCHAS (from 1892 up to ten years preceding current publication) continues the original aims of the founders in 1891. For more information visit www.corkhist.ie.

This content downloaded from www.corkhist.ie

All use subject to CHAS Terms and Conditions

Digital content (c) CHAS 2015

Malachi Horan Remembers. By Dr. George A. Little. Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son. 1943. Price, 6s.

Wooden ploughs drawn by bullocks, grave-robbers and body-snatchers, travel by coach, public hangings, charms and cures, local craftsmen and their ways—these are among the things Malachi Horan remembers. It will come as a surprise to readers of this book that there still lives a man who has seen them all, and what is still more surprising is that that man should have passed his long life almost within sight of our capital city.

"I was born in this house ninety-five years ago," Malachi begins, and from that on the reader forgets the modern world and accompanies Malachi as he lives the old times over again. With Malachi as his guide he finds himself in a different world when "the old times were hard times and hard times bred hard men and hard men made rough manners." Here we have a first-hand account in homely expressive language of the way in which the ordinary people lived—their trials and triumphs, their sorrows and joys, their hard lot and homely amusements.

No man has seen more changes of every kind than Malachi, and like all old-timers he is not without regret at the passing of the old things as he adds wistfully, "We had good times too in the old days." In these days of sophistication and commercialised amusements, when life everywhere tends to be ordered on the same universal pattern, and when the craze for pleasure and excitement is deplored by all thinking men, Malachi's summing up of our modern world is worth dwelling on: "Maybe they are better off these days, but I wonder are they as happy at just being men." And again when he says, "There are few, now, who have the kindness—aye, or indeed the wit—to listen to the old."

The old times may have been hard times—to us, indeed, they seem impossible times, but they did not destroy Malachi's zest for living and keen interest in everything around him. "Yes, I am ninety-five, but I don't feel it," is his comment, challenging, as it were, this softer age in which we now live. An outlook such as his, so sane and solid, is a tonic to jaded minds.

Malachi, like most old people who have lived their lives on the soil, is a philosopher. Words of wisdom punctuate his anecdotes and reminiscences, and they impress the reader all the more that he is never trying to be clever. In speaking of the Fenian rising, he observes: "It is not always those that die fighting die hardest for the country—people are inclined to forget that." When recounting fatal accidents, he says, "It is the easy way that men gets killed that shows God's hand in it." And again, "if it is money you want to be making, you must think of nothing else." To Malachi poverty was no disgrace nor riches the highest good. "But sure what man is poor that is doing as he wants to do" is his trite remark. As a final quotation, his attitude to prayer is worth noting as showing his deep spiritual outlook and that of his hardy generation. "Aye, the Man up there is the right doctor. If you suffer enough and do your best, He has the pity and He has the cure . . . Aye, Sir, there is a power in prayer. It gets into a thing and stays in a thing. It is like the tempering of a plough-share. The share looks the same after it's treated as before, but the nature is changed."

In *Malachi Horan Remembers* the folklorist will find material as interesting as it is instructive. Stirring and important political events will be re-enacted before the eyes of the student of recent Irish history. The average reader cannot fail to be interested in that grand old man, Malachi, and in the tale he has to tell.

P.G.S.

Worthies of Thomond. By Robert Herbert. Published by the Author and printed by Geo. McKern & Sons, Limerick. 2s.

This little pamphlet of 56 pages is the first of a projected series in which Mr. Herbert intends to present a complete compendium of short "lives" of famous personalities of Limerick and Clare. In undertaking this work, the author is doing a valuable service, for the complete series, provided as it will be with an index and bibliography, will be a most useful "Who's Who" of the many little known, but none the less interesting, figures in the past and present of Thomond. It is true that notes on many of these men and women have appeared from time to time in the local papers and scattered here and there in various publications, but now, carefully edited, they appear for the first time in this readily accessible form.

This content downloaded from www.corkhist.ie

All use subject to CHAS Terms and Conditions

Digital content (c) CHAS 2015

The first pamphlet contains short biographies of 33 notabilities whose colourful activities both at home and abroad are of absorbing interest.

Andrew Cherry, starting as a printer's apprentice in Dublin, joined a strolling company of players and after many vicissitudes appeared in 1802 at the Drury Lane Theatre, where several of his own plays were produced. Though he had a considerable reputation as an actor, he is best remembered in Limerick as the author of " The Dear Little Shamrock."

Charlotte Grace O'Brien was born in Co. Limerick in the first year of the great potato famine (1845), and having witnessed many of the harrowing scenes which followed in its wake, grew up a rebel and remained so all her life. She became a strong Parnellite and this led her to her life's work, the care of the poor emigrating Irish. She exposed the awful conditions existing in the Cobh lodging-houses, in the emigrant ships, and in the dock slums of New York, and it was due to her efforts that improvements were eventually effected.

Peter Count Lacy, when only 13, commenced a brilliant military career. Having fought at the Siege of Limerick, he left the country after the Treaty and served first in the Irish Brigade, later in the Polish army, and eventually became a close friend of the Czar of Russia. He fought in almost every part of Europe for more than 50 years, and died on his estate in Livonia in 1751.

Standish Hayes O'Grady, the great Irish scholar, friend of O'Curry, O'Donovan and Ó Longáin, and editor and translator of *Silva Gadelica*, was born at Castleconnell.

George Alexander Osborne, pianist and composer, born in the city, led a distinguished life in Brussels and Paris and became a close friend of Liszt, Auber, Cherubini, Heller, Ernst, Berlioz and Chopin.

Peter Woulfe, mineralogist, alchemist and chemist, born near Limerick in 1727, studied in Spain, France and Germany, and built up a high reputation in Europe as a chemist. He invented an apparatus still in use and still called after him " Woulfe's Bottle."

Seán Cláragh Mac Domhnaill, the Gaelic poet ; Lady Rosina Lytton, the novelist ; and Thomas Barnard, an associate of Goldsmith and member of the famous Literary Circle, are but a few of the more interesting worthies dealt with in this issue. Those who read it will look forward with pleasure to the succeeding pamphlets in the series.

B. O'K.

Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society. Vol. X, No. 3 (1943). Dundalgan Press, Dundalk. 10/-

We are accustomed to variety in the Louth Journal and the present number is no exception, as will be clear from the articles listed below.

"Archbishop Cromer's Register," concluded, by Rev. A. Gwynn, S.J., contains letters from the Primate touching on matters of Church organisation and discipline in the early sixteenth century. There is a wealth of material here for parochial history and clergy lists in eight northern dioceses. Mr. H. G. Tempest writes on " Bellew's (or Castletown) Castle, Dundalk " (with plans, elevations and drawings by V. J. O'Connell, M.Inst.R.A.), " Two Fireplace Inscriptions " (illustrated), " Collon Estate Rental and Account, 1779–81," and " Pippard *v.* Mayor of Drogheda." Mr. O. Davies continues his descriptive notes on " Old Churches in Co. Louth." Dr. Estyn Evans, M.R.I.A., author of *Irish Heritage*, has an interesting article—" The Fireplace." He deals with the Irish open fire and its associated domestic furniture, and reminds us that it symbolises the continuity of tradition " for there are thousands of homesteads where it is not allowed to go out . . . It is a sacred flame, a shrine at which countless ancestors have worshipped."

The remaining articles include : " Notes on the Old Fortifications of Drogheda " (W. P. Allen, N.T., P.C.) ; " Old Title Deeds : Dundalk " (Joseph Martin) ; " Documents at Redhouse, Ardee," (E. MacLysaght and H. F. McClintock) ; and " Franciscan Foundation at Drogheda " (Rev. A. O'Neill, O.F.M.).

A feature of this number is the amount of illustration—2 plates and 17 line drawings in the text.

P.J.H.

This content downloaded from www.corkhist.ie

All use subject to CHAS Terms and Conditions

Digital content (c) CHAS 2015