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Dúghlas de hÍde — Douglas Hyde

[Review Article]

Le DIARMUID Ó MURCHADHA

Dúbhglas de h-Íde: Ceannródaí Cultúrtha 1860-1910. Le Risteárd Ó Glaisne. Conradh na Gaeilge, 1991. Ll.382. £15/£10.

Douglas Hyde: A maker of modern Ireland. By Janet E. Dunleavy and Gareth W. Dunleavy. Univ. of California Press, 1991. Pp. xiii + 462. $35.99.

Is tráthúil mar a tharla an dá bheathaisnéis seo i ndhá theanga i gcló i dteannta a chéile go díreach roimh comóradh céad bliain Chonradh na Gaeilge. Óir is beag duine sa tír le céad bliain anuas go raibh an dá phearsantacht chomh follasach ann agus a bhí i nDúghlas de hÍde.

Mac ministéara de shliocht Castle Hyde, gaol an Tiarna de Freyne ó Frenchpark, an mac léinn Diagachta i gColáiste na Tríonóide, an fiagaí/foghlaeir/iascaire ag déanamh caidrimh le huaisle Ros Comáin, an t-ollamh ina bhríste gailf ag rothaíocht thar Faiche Stiabhna, Luan Cásca 1916, ag déanamh iontais desna fir armtha a bhí ag tochailt trinsí ann — b' shin é Hyde.

Ach bhí Jekyll ann chomh maith — an gasúr óg cois tine an tseanchaí, Séamas Ó hAirt, ag iarraidh Gaeilge a fhoghlaim agus a scríobh ina dhialann ('Arthure oge gurteshhae glune ig a Cunninghams badly'), an t-ógánach ag cumadh véarsaí frith-Shasanacha ('Is gráin liom do dhligheadh, is gráin liom do riaghal / Is gráin liom do mhuintir's do bhain-rioghan lag'), an scoláire ag labhairt amach ar an ngá le díghalldú na hÉireann, an t-aighneasóir ag troid ar son Gaelú Ollscoile.

* * *

Undoubtedly the divide between the two traditions in Ireland was never an absolute one. It is true that in the historical landscape of the early nineteenth century one is struck by the

D. HYDE, LLD (TCD), 1888

absence of nationalist figures belonging to the Church of Ireland. It is as if the execution of Robert Emmet had cut off the head and life blood of Protestant nationalism, as if the Act of Union had served to separate brethren politically as well as in religion. It was not until the 1840s that the charisma of Thomas Davis once more evoked memories of Grattan and Flood, of Tone and Russell, attracting idealists from different shrines, rousing young Ingram of TCD to break the

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silence and speak of '98, transporting Mitchel and Smith O'Brien to Van Diemen's Land, enticing Isaac Butt from the shelter of the *Protestant Guardian* to become the precursor of Parnell.

'Uncompromising in his opposition to Parnell' is the Dunleavys' description of the Revd Arthur Hyde, rector of Tibohine and a believer in aristocratic order. Yet he did show some interest in young Douglas's increasing fluency in Irish, and indeed it is remarkable how rural parsonages produced notable Irish language enthusiasts of the pre-Gaelic League era. The Revd James Goodman from Dingle, the devotee of Irish music who was professor of 'Celtic' at TCD in Hyde's time was not the only one. In 1892 a call was made by Dr Alan Simpson of Birmingham for nine fellow-contributors (of £10) to a special literary prize fund for writers of Irish. Only four responded, one being Archbishop Croke of Cashel. The other three were C. of I. clergymen, including Revd Euseby Cleaver from Delgany, who had so generously paid for the printing of Hyde's *Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta* (1889) and lived to become a vice-president of the Gaelic League. Another was Revd James Stevenson of Brinny Rectory near Bandon, of whom, regrettably, little has been recorded. The third was Revd Maxwell Close, Hyde's loyal collaborator, whose bounty helped to launch not only the first *Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge* in 1892 but also the first fasciculus of the RIA *Dictionary of the Irish Language*. Indeed Hyde's clarion call in November 1892 for the necessity for de-anglicizing Ireland contains echoes of Close's speech to a conference of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language three months earlier:

> Teach the child Irish, not only for the above reasons, but also to disabuse his mind of the notion that Irish is a barbarous language, or one to be ashamed of: this is not only an egregious mistake, but, what is more to the point just now, an essentially vulgar notion. Emancipation from vulgarity of thought, and to be able to estimate things according to their native dignity and not according to the Philistine standard, is an important part of education.

MAXWELL H. CLOSE

* * *

B'fhéidir go ndéarfaí gur leor leabhar amháin ar an Ídeach ag an bpointe seo, agus gur shaothar in aisce an dara ceann. Ach ní hamhlaidh atá in aon chor. Ar an gcéad dul síos níl i leabhar Uí Ghlaisne ach leath an scéil; tá an dara imleabhar fós le teacht uaidh. Thairis sin, tá oiread leathchruinne de dheighilt idir bhealach na n-ollún ó Mheiriceá agus modh oibre Uí Ghlaisne ag trácht dó ar 'Dúbhglas de h-Íde' (leagan an Chraoibhín féin, adeir sé).

Protastúnach é, de shliocht plandálaithe ó Chontae Chorcaí, fear a tógadh faoin tuath, a ghnóthaigh céim ollscoile i gColáiste na Tríonóide agus a chuir faoi san ardchathair ina dhiaidh sin. Scoláire agus scríbhneoir é,

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Gaeilgeoir dílis a chaith mórchuid dá shaol le múineadh agus le hathbheochan na Gaeilge.

Má's deacair a dhéanamh amach cé acu Dúghlas de hÍde nó Risteárd Ó Glaisne atá i gceist san alt úd thuas, is de bharr iad beirt a bheith chomh dlúth san i gcosúlacht a chéile a tharlaíonn sin. Bhí sé de bhuntáiste ag Risteárd nár ghá do mionscrúdú a dhéanamh ar aigne ná ar mhianta croí an Chraoibhín. Tuigeann sé go glé fadhbanna an mhionlaigh (ó thaobh creidimh de) agus ualach na nglún anallód anuas ar an té ar mhian leis a chruthú nach cúl le cine ach aghaidh le cine an choiscéim a thugann sé.

* * *

Janet and Gareth Dunleavy approach their subject from a completely different standpoint. Both are Professors of English at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and while they obviously know (and love) their Ireland well, they write as academic observers who feel the need to explain the concerns of life in post-Famine Ireland, the Irish Literary Theatre, the 1916 Rising, the 'Emergency' years, and so on, matters which undoubtedly require clarifying for an international readership but in respect of which a biographer writing in Irish takes his readers' knowledge for granted.

In this context, it is mildly irritating (for those who can read Irish) to find that the Dunleavys never quote from Hyde's Irish publications in the original. Their invariable policy of translating into English extends even to the telegram received by Hyde on board the *Celtic* as he returned from his American tour in 1906. Though this telegram (from the Skibbereen branch of the Gaelic League) was 'probably the first in the Irish language to be received at sea', we are given it only in a literal translation:

> Thousands of welcomes home to you, an Chraoibhin Aoibhin. Behold the country on fire welcoming you!

Accounts of Hyde's career rarely linger over the two periods he spent in North America, one as temporary lecturer (in English, French and German) at the University of New Brunswick, Canada, in 1890-1, the other as Gaelic League propagandist in the US, 1905-6. Not unexpectedly, the Dunleavys supply a much more detailed narrative of Hyde's activities on that side of the Atlantic than does Ó Glaisne (79 pages as against 25). They obviously have made extensive use of archival material in US College and Public libraries, in particular the Quinn papers in New York. John Quinn is one of those enigmatic figures whose significance is largely forgotten in Ireland. Ó Glaisne's references to him come in the main from Hyde's own *Mo thurus go hAmerice* (1937) and simply depict him as an acquaintance who assisted Hyde on his propaganda tour. But the Dunleavys use Quinn's own papers to portray a wealthy and philanthropic New York lawyer who first visited Ireland in 1900 for the commemoration at Raftery's grave. He joined Lady Gregory's literary circle at Coole Park and carved his initials on the celebrated beech tree. In 1905-6 he undertook (and underwrote) the total organization of Hyde's American tour, a task involving two to six hours daily for months beforehand, with a specially-hired secretary working on the project from his New York apartment. Mainly due to his efforts, the tour was a financial success, netting over £12,000 for the Gaelic League. Regrettably, in 1911 when Hyde, in 'one of the most serious missteps of his career', dissociated the League from Lady Gregory's Abbey Theatre which was then performing *The Playboy of the Western World* to riotous audiences in New York (unaware 'that Quinn and Lady Gregory were then engaged in a passionate love affair'), Quinn's regard for the Gaelic League diminished considerably, though he did continue to correspond with Hyde until his

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death in 1924. (Yeats reacted with a poem addressed to 'Dear Craoibhin Aoibhin . . . most popular of men', and seeking 'a bridle for this Proteus that turns and changes like his draughty seas').

Divergence is noticeable also in regard to Tomás Bán Ó Concheanainn who in Ó Glaisne's version (as indeed in Irish-language accounts generally) is esteemed as one of the giants of the early Gaelic League, the Aran islander who returned from America to become its first *timire*, Alice Milligan's 'man on the wheel', precursor for the 1905 trip of Douglas Hyde who recorded: 'Muna mbeadh an chruadh-obair a rinne sé ní bheadh sé in ár gcumas an oiread sin airgid do chnuasacht do Chonnradh na Gaedhilge'.

The Dunleavys however see him through the eyes of John Quinn, who thought him 'a fumbling, procrastinating and conceited ass, . . . stumbling and blundering Concannon', and who pressurized Hyde into sending him home earlier than planned. Quinn was abetted in this by Hyde's wife, Lucy, whose antipathy to Tomás Bán was expressed in such terms as 'rat', 'eel', 'viper'! (Lucy Hyde, nee Kurtz, was never an admirer of the Gaelic world. Nor did she make friends easily; when introduced to W.B. Yeats she 'took an instant and permanent dislike to him, which he in his absentminded manner probably did not notice').

* * *

Ar an taobh eile den scéal, nuair is saothar foilsithe an Chraoibhín atá idir chamáin, is fairsinge agus is tuisceanaí an scagadh atá déanta ag an scríbhneoir Gaeilge. San áit nach ndéanann na Dunleavys ach corrthagairt do *Abhráin Grádh Chúige Connacht* (1893) tugann Ó Glaisne caibidil iomlán dúinn ina bpléann sé tábhacht an leabhair úd agus an ceangal idir línte filíochta ann agus drámaí Synge — go háirithe an *Playboy* a d'adhnaigh easaontas idir Hyde agus Quinn. 'Ar éigean a bheimis ag dul thar fóir dá ndéarfaimis gur chuir na h*Abhráin Grádh* cor i gcinniúint a lán daoine', adeir sé (1.121).

(Dála an scéil, an bhliain dar gcionn chuir an Craoibhín dán in eagar in Irisleabhar an Chumainn seo (Márta 1894) — 'Seághan Clárach cct. ar n-eug Choirnéill Seumais ui Dhaosáin', dán iomráiteach go raibh trí chóip lámhscríofa aige de, ach nar cuireadh riamh i gcló go dtí sin).

Tugann Ó Glaisne moladh cóir chomh maith don *Literary History of Ireland* (1899), saothar ceannródaí a réitigh an bealach do chomharbaí an Ídigh — cé nach raibh sé gan locht. Is í tuairim Uí Ghlaisne gur bhain an Craoibhín an oiread sin sásaimh as saíocht na Gaeilge 'nár mhian leis bacadh an-mhór leis na mionseoraí ann mar bhuneilimintí den scoláireacht' (1.166). Tagraíonn sé in áit eile do 'shimplíocht' an Ídigh sa mhéid gur ghlac sé le 'Mise Raiftearaí an file' mar chuid de shaothar an Reachtabhraigh, nuair ba léir nach gcumfadh aon cheartfhile Gaeilge leithéid 'Le súilibh gan solas, le ciúnas gan chrádh'. Luann sé mar a thaisbeáin Pádraig de Brún agus Gearóid Mac Eoin (*Éigse* 1966-8) gur chosúil gurbh é Seán Ó Ceallaigh ó cheantar Bhaile Locha Riach a chum na línte úd sa bhliain 1882.

Ar ndóigh is mó leabhar scoile a breacadh leis na línte céanna ó shin, agus ar shlí bhí siad inchurtha le filíocht Ghaeilge an Chraoibhín féin, fear gur sásadh é leis an gcomhardadh idir 'bocht' agus 'ucht', idir 'mo shiúl' agus 'mo dhúil'. Ach de bharr chomh tearc agus a bhi dánta a oirfeadh do pháistí, is beag mac nó iníon léinn nár fhoghlaim uair éigin 'Bhí piléar tríd a ucht' nó 'Mar iarann gach alt is féith' as dánta gur róléir idir rian an Bhéarla agus maoithneachas na Victeoireach iontu ó thús deireadh. Bíodh sin mar atá, ba mhairg don té a lochtódh a leithéid sa bhliain 1899. Tugann Ó Glaisne cuntas ar an íde pinn a tugadh i *Fáinne an Lae* sa bhliain sin do 'stripling' go raibh se de dhánacht aige a rá

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nár Ghaeilge in aon chor leagan an Chraoibhín de 'The memory of the dead'. Not *Irish*! (Ba é Pádraig Mac Piarais an 'stripling' úd).

Is é fírinne an scéil nach raibh Dúghlas de hÍde ar comhchéim le fíorscoláirí Gaeilge ar nós Eoin Mhic Néill. B'fhéidir gurbh é an t-oideachas neamhghnáthach — féinoideachas den chuid is mó — a fuair sé ina óige ba chúis leis sin. Mar léiriú ar a easba díograise insíonn na Dunleavys eachtra a tharla le linn a ollúnachta i gColáiste na hOllscoile. Lá geal gréine bhí Myles Dillon agus comhalta leis sáite sa leabharlann ag iarraidh fadhb a bhain leis an gcúrsa Gaeilge a scaoileadh nuair a chuir an tOllamh Gaeilge a cheann isteach, chaith cúpla líne as *The Lotus Eaters* leo, agus as go brách leis, a mhaidí gailf ina ghlaic aige.

* * *

Yet Hyde was untiring in his efforts to publicize and promote national ideals — eclipsing here the scholarly and retiring Eoin Mac Neill who, though the original begetter of the Gaelic League, left it to Hyde to become its first and most memorable president. Hyde it was who took up the challenge of telling the Irish (and American) people just what the League was all about. It was his unbounded zeal and versatile scholarship which put Irish on the Intermediate curriculum in 1899, after he had routed the entrenched opposition of a Trinity College coterie led by Mahaffy and Atkinson. No sooner had the National University been established in 1908 than Hyde (who had played no small part in its setting up) threw himself into the fray once more in the agitation to have Irish made an essential subject for entrance to any of its three constituent colleges. Against all the odds (including episcopal opposition) he steered this campaign to victory in 1910, an incredible success given the Anglified educational establishment of the era. The magnitude of his achievement can best be assessed by trying to imagine the effectiveness of such a campaign today. Even were we to possess a leader of the stature and idealism of Douglas Hyde, could he or she hope to surmount the barriers of crass materialism and cynical indifference encumbering our post-colonial society? Indeed, despite 70 years of native government, one can still hear echoes of the sentiments expressed by one of Hyde's antagonists in 1899 (Prof. George Fitzgerald of TCD, as quoted by the Dunleavys, p. 211):

> I will use all my influence as in the past, to ensure that Irish as a spoken language shall die out as quickly as possible, for I consider the Gaelic League in their endeavour to preserve Irish as a spoken language are enemies of their country whose mischievous sentimentality should be denounced by all friends of Ireland.

This ascription of a backward-looking and retarding parochialism to 'Irish-Irelanders' was something which Hyde was well qualified to controvert. His entrée to that exclusive club, the Irish landed gentry, his brilliant career in TCD where he gained prizes in French, German and Italian as well as in English, his familiarity with London and Paris, his year as a University lecturer in Canada — all these contributed to providing an aura of learning and sophistication which enabled Hyde to confront any academic protagonist on more than equal terms.

It was precisely because he became a highly-educated, multi-lingual, much-travelled observer that he could identify the stifling provincialism which wrote off as insignificant a European literature rooted in Ireland for well over a thousand years. And as he pointed out in an article on 'Games and Nationality' in a GAA annual in 1908 (Ó Glaisne, 1.56):

> There is really and truly only one possible way of preventing Ireland from falling into a second-rate English county, and her men from becoming

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second-rate imitation Englishmen, and . . . this way is the vigorous revival throughout Ireland of all the different marks of nationhood.

(Eaten bread is soon forgotten, and it is lamentable that in 1938 Douglas Hyde was suspended from membership of the GAA when as President of Ireland he routinely attended an international soccer match. This shabby treatment greatly saddened Hyde as it infuriated Taoiseach de Valera. The Dunleavys note a desire for atonement in a ceremony held by the Roscommon Co. Board of the GAA at the grave of President Hyde in the centenary year of 1984 when a commemorative plaque was affixed to the wall of Portaghard cemetery).

Two quotations supplied by Ó Glaisne emphasize that the founders of the Gaelic League were not maudlin sentimentalists but realists desirous of curing Ireland's many ills by re-establishing the intellectual independence of her people. In 1897 Mac Neill diagnosed (p.184):

. . . a symptom of the canker of servility which makes Irishmen, even when professing an uncompromising attachment to their native land, look up to everything alien that claims their admiration, and look down on everything native, however really worthy of their pride and love.

This theme was re-emphasized by Hyde during the campaign for essential Irish in the NUI, in 1909 (p. 368):

I firmly believe that until he [the Gaelic Irishman] loses the sense of inferiority that has been so long and so sedulously impressed upon him that the Irish nation can neither thrive nor prosper.

Now that almost half a century has passed since the deaths of Mac Neill and Hyde, can we honestly say that Ireland has thriven and prospered, or that Irish people have lost their sense of inferiority? What would those two nation-builders think of our queues of unemployed, our litter-strewn streets, our vandalized churches and schools? Would they find Close's 'emancipation from vulgarity of thought' in the derivative mediocrity of our national celebrities? It is disquieting nowadays to hear commentators deprecatingly quoting (or more often misquoting) from De Valera's 'The Ireland we desire' speech of 1943, in apparent disregard of the all-embracing ideals which inspired leaders of that generation, ideals stemming from a genuine pride of nationhood which leads to unselfish co-operation in promoting the common good. As Hyde himself declared in 1901 (Ó Glaisne, 1.272):

Make Ireland intellectually interesting, and the people will desire to live in it and develop it. We believe that one great cause of our decayed industries and dwindling population is to be found in the fact that our education from highest to lowest has been an education for export and not for home consumption.

(A quotation which could with profit be appended to our latest 'Green Paper' on education).

* * *

Ní féidir fiú gearrchuntas a thabhairt ar bheatha an Chraoibhín gan tagairt don 'scoilt' a tharla idir é féin agus 'eite mhíleata' Chonradh na Gaeilge ('Sceilg', Piaras Béaslaí, Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, 7rl.) sa bhliain 1915. Go mion minic ó shin fuarthas locht air de bharr a easpa faobhair in am an ghátair — é sin nó moladh é as a stuaim, mar gur dhuine é a thuig an dochar a dhéanfadh an pholaitíocht don Chonradh. Ach ní mór dúinn a chuimhneamh go bhfuil an dá bhreithiúnas sin bunaithe ar an gceangal a fheicimidne inniu idir 1915 agus eachtraí na mblianta ina dhiaidh sin — agus ní cosúil go raibh an réamheolas sin le fáil go forleathan in Éirinn sna blianta roimh 1916.

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Ag an Oireachtas i gCill Airne, 26 Iúil 1914. Ón taobh chlé: J.J. Horgan, Edward Martyn, Mary Horgan, Dúghlas de hÍde. (*Photo: Cork Examiner*)

Ar an gcead dul síos, ní 'síochánaí' a bhí san Ídeach ach oiread le lucht a chomhaimsire. Fiú amháin le linn a óige ba ghnáthach leis a bheith ag cumadh véarsaí 'tírghrá' ar nós: 'Let each son of Erin unsheath his bright blade . . . We'll avenge the injustice they've done us of yore'. Agus chomh fada anonn le Samhradh na bliana 1914 labhair se mar leanas ag Oireachtas an Chonartha i gCill Áirne, Oireachtas go raibh buíonta Óglach faoi éide i láthair ann. (Níor foilsíodh ach aistriuchán Béarla dá óráid sa *Chlaidheamh Soluis*): 'We will put guns in the hands of our soldiers, please God, and when they fire the noise will be felt from the hills of Ireland right round to the sea shores'.

Tar eis bhunú an tSaorstáit, i mí Lúnasa na bliana 1923, bhreac se síos a thuairim féin i dtaobh an Rialtais nua: 'The Dáil is the child of the Volunteers, and thus it descends directly from the Gaelic League, whose traditions it inherits' (Dunleavys, p.352). Agus ó thaobh na polaitíochta dhe, nár ghné de shaol an Ídigh í sin ón gcéad lá a chuaigh sé in achrann le Mahaffy agus Atkinson? Ba mhinic a ghoireadh se cabhair an Réamonnaigh; ní hamháin sin ach labhair sé féin (i bpáirt na Gaeilge) ag Comhdháil an Pháirtí i mí na Feabhra, 1909 (Dunleavys, pp. 238, 299, 307, 310, 321).

Ach sa bhliain 1915 bhi taoide an mhíleatachais ag líonadh agus ag scuabadh léi sruthanna eile an náisiúnachais, ba chuma cé a bhí i gceannas. B'airde agus b'éifeachtaí glór lucht na ngunnaí ó bunaíodh Óglaigh Uladh agus Óglaigh na hÉireann — agus thar gach ní eile de bharr eachtraí míleata an Chogaidh Mhóir.

Gach uile sheans gur éirigh an Craoibhín as Uachtaránacht an Chonartha toisc é bheith

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dóthanach den síor-chlampar. Níor chás leis tráth a bheith i lár na spairne, agus ainGhaeil a gclaoi thall is abhus, ach ó bhí an leathchéad curtha de aige — agus post seasmhach údarásach a líonadh aige — mhaolaigh ar an bhflosc chun imris. Sa bhliain 1913, an uair a bhi aighneas ar siúl i dtaobh stampaí árachais, thairg sé go n-éireodh sé as oifig, á rá nach raibh a chroí san obair a thuilleadh (Dunleavys, p. 323). Cé nár scaoileadh leis an uair úd, ba róléir nach fada eile a fhulaingeodh se ionsaithe na n-*activists*. Tagraíonn na Dunleavys d'aiste Phiarais Béaslaí ('The Gaelic League: Wanted, a Policy') a foilsíodh i mí an Mheithimh, 1915, mar bhuille na tubaiste, agus deir siad go raibh a aigne déanta suas ag an Ídeach, cúpla seachtain roimh an Ardfheis, go n-éireodh sé as an Uachtaránacht.

Nuair a shiúil Dúghlas de hÍde den ardán úd i nDún Dealgan, thug sé a chúl le stáitse na staire chomh maith, rud is léir ó chuntas na Dunleavys, áit nach líontar ach 19 leathanach de chúrsaí a shaoil ón mbliain 1916 anuas go dti 1938. Agus cé gur mhóraigeanta an smaoineamh é a ainmniú mar Uachtarán na hÉireann an tráth san, agus cé gur mhór leis féin an gradam, ní ligfeadh an aois dó leas na tíre a chothú faoi mar a dheineadh sé sular chaill sé sean-neart a chroí is lúth na mball.

* * *

Which then of the two books provides the better picture of Douglas Hyde? Were one to take the term literally and judge the book by the cover, the University of California Press excels with a dustcover that reproduces John Butler Yeats's captivating portrait of Hyde (commissioned by John Quinn), so lifelike one can almost sense the intelligence behind the luminous eyes. Ó Glaisne was not as well served by his publishers whose cover features a dull black-and-white photograph of Hyde, a side-face pose that accentuates the size of his famous moustache ('like an abandoned bird's nest' in O'Casey's expressive phrase), and a rectangular subtitle affixed to his breast in the manner of Fenian convicts — one expected a better pictorial tribute from Conradh na Gaeilge to its first President.

The Dunleavys' work is replete with personal details and anecdotes taken from Hyde's diaries and correspondence, and occasionally produces an imaginative touch which some may find striking and others excessive, according to personal taste:

> Twice daily he strolled the first-class deck of the White Star liner, pausing occasionally at the stern in the long June twilight to lean on the massive bleached and holystoned teak rails, his eyes fixed on the churning ship's wake stretching westwards, reaching back towards the New Island. He thought of the name the reporter from the *Gaelic American* had put on him ...'

On the debit side, their encapsulation of Irish history (pp. 56-7), while picturesque is not always accurate. Tower-houses are described as 'former strongholds of Saxon knights who had crossed the Irish Sea with commissions from English kings to establish English order in rebellious Ireland'. In Sir Henry Becher's purchase of Castle Hyde estate in 1862 they see a symbolic reuniting of the two severed portions of the Earl of Desmond's confiscated Cork estates, on which the Hyde and Becher families were planted . (In reality, Arthur Hyde was granted Condon lands in north-east Cork and Phane Becher got O Mahony territory in Kinalmeaky, 50 miles to the south-west — and in 1586, not 1599). A few details betray distance from the Irish scene — confusing Dáil and Senate (p. 377), calling Winston Churchill a 'Celt' (p. 331), the hilarious searching for 'insider' information on presidential candidates in the pages of *Dublin Opinion* (p. 366).

But such minor blemishes do not detract from a courageous attempt to unravel the

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tangled web of a complex period in the history of a small island 4,000 miles away, and to relate this to one whose life story was so intimately interwoven with that same island. One cannot but marvel at the diligence with which the Professors Dunleavy have researched their sources — printed, oral, and above all, manuscript — together with the painstaking manner in which they followed Hyde's footsteps wherever they led, familiarizing themselves with the snipe-bogs of Roscommon, the academic ambience of Trinity College, the endless Canadian woods, the green sward of the Phoenix Park. They have presented their conclusions in a manner which can be read on two levels. For the casual reader the book provides a pleasantly evocative and informative account of one of the father-figures of early twentieth-century Ireland. At a deeper level, it analyses for an international readership the basic reasons underlying the social and political upheaval in Ireland that led to the first hair-crack appearing in a monolithic empire. An added bonus is the warm understanding brought by the authors to their onerous task, and the total absence of the type of supercilious condescension displayed at times by academics elsewhere.

* * *

Is é an príomhlocht a gheobhainn ar leabhar Risteáird Uí Ghlaisne ná an tslí ina dtugann sé tús áite do scríbhneoirí eile. Is cuma cé chomh oiriúnach agus a bhíonn sleachta as leabhair eile, nuair a théann siad i bhfad téann siad i bhfuaire. Ar ghá, mar shampla, breis agus trí leathanach de léirmheas Thomáis Uí Fhlannghaile ar *Abhráin Grádh* (ll.116-9) a athfhoilsiú? Nó breis agus 60% den chaibidil 'Gluaiseacht Litríochta' a fhágáil ag sleachta — agus foshleachta, faoi mar a fhaighimid i léirmheas Chathail Uí Áinle agus giota le hEoin Mac Néill ina lár?

Is é fáth mo bhuartha ná, mar adúradh cheana, go raibh ionannas chomh láidir sin idir údar agus ábhar gur ghlinne léiriú Uí Ghlaisne féin ar mheon an Ídigh an uair ná bacann sé le tuairimí daoine eile. Is tuisceanach an tuairisc a fhaighimid uaidh ar shaol teaghlaigh na n-Ídeach i dTigh Baoithín — uaigneas agus fonn ólacháin an athar, neamhleithleasacht na máthar, míshuaimhneas na n-ógánach — go háirithe Dúghlas féin, a bhí ag léamh Diagachta i gColáiste na Tríonóide ach gan fonn dá laghad air lorg a athar a leanúint.

Ina theannta san, cuireann Ó Glaisne ina luí orainn narbh éan cuideáin é an Craoibhín imeasc lucht a chomhchreidimh. Ar l.174 tá liosta cuimsitheach de Ghaeilgeoirí de bhunadh Protastúnach a bhí gníomhach ag tosach an chéid, ag tosnú le duine de bhunaitheoirí Chonradh na Gaeilge, Charles Percy Bushe, mac mic le Charles Kendal Bushe, óráidí mór le rá i bPairlimint 'Ghrattan'.

(Is rí-shuimiúil an mioneolas ar na daoine a luann Risteárd — agus ar a thuilleadh nach iad — atá le fáil sna himleabhair *1882-1982: Beathaisnéis a haon / a dó*', le Diarmuid Breathnach agus Máire Ní Mhurchú (B.Á.C., 1986, 1990)).

Arís, dá bhfiafraítí díom cé acu den dá bheathaisnéis a roghnóinn chun aithne agus eolas a chur ar Dhúghlas de hÍde agus ar a chuspóirí, ní fearrde freagra agam ná an ceann a fuarthas fadó (i gceantar Risteáird agus in aimsir Phane Becher) ón Mathghamhnach ar fiafraíodh de cé acu roinn dá thailte féin ba mhian leis a fháil ar ais. Mar adúirt sé:

'I dteannta 'chéile is fearr iad'.

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