



**TIPPERARY HISTORICAL JOURNAL
1989**

© County Tipperary Historical Society

**www.tipperaryllibraries.ie/thc
society@tipperaryllibraries.ie**

ISSN 0791-0655

Book Reviews

Thurles: The Cathedral Town. Essays in honour of Archbishop Morris. Edited by William Corbett and William Nolan. pp. 279. Published by Geography Publications, 1989. (£20 & £10).

When Theobald Walter Butler with his well-ordered Anglo-Norman force drove up the valley of the Suir in the last quarter of the twelfth century to possess the lands granted to him in Eliogarty, he did not experience much opposition from the native O Fogarty chieftains, whose power even then was on the wane. He chose *Dúrlas* as the centre for his capital manor because of its situation in the heart of the most fertile land in the *tuath* beside a fort in the river, and also because it was the power-base of the O Fogartys. Here Theobald set up his headquarters, erected a motte and bailey fortification and laid the foundations for the town of Thurles almost exactly 800 years ago.

In this attractively produced volume the editors have brought together twenty essays on aspects of the history of the town over the eight centuries and present them as a tribute to Archbishop Thomas Morris on his retirement from the See of Cashel and Emly. In a biographical note William Corbett explains that Dr. Morris, born in Killenaule about nine miles south of the town, has lived most of his life in Thurles since he came there as a student in 1924. His 30 years as Archbishop were marked by devoted service to priests and people, and his leadership role in the religious, cultural and educational life of the town is reflected in the choice of subjects made by the editors.

In a wide-ranging introductory essay, William Nolan examines the traditional townland and street names, points to the insight they give to history and makes a comparison with the modern names approved by the people of the town in 1920. He conducts the reader through the centuries epitomising the essays that follow, placing them in the context of the town's history, with a commentary illustrated by charts, maps and tables of landowners and traders at different periods.

When he doffs his academic gown, he gives a delightful vignette of the town as seen through the eyes of a country boy viewing it from his native Slieveardagh hills, and later as a pupil and student coming to grips with the wonder and delight of urban life. Supplementing the essay are appendices giving sources for the history of Thurles and a list of the Archbishops of the diocese since the twelfth century.

G. A. Empey, a recognised authority on medieval Ireland, discusses the Anglo-Norman system of landholding and administration, interpreting contemporary deeds in an intelligible way for the lay reader: Thurles as the capital manor was the administrative and military centre of the entire cantred of Eliogarty, having all the paraphernalia of officials and institutions for the efficient control of the area.

The lord reserved for himself a demesne corresponding in area to the present civil parish of Thurles; the remainder of the cantred was settled by granting sub-manors in Drum, Moycarkey, Templemore and such places to Cantwells, Purcells, Hacketts and others of his knights, bound to their lord by strict observances. These sub-manors, based on the Gaelic *tuaths*, correspond geographically to the later civil parishes.

Although a highly effective system in a land of peace, it was surrounded by a dispossessed and hostile population; torn by internal disputes, it disintegrated in the fifteenth century. Yet the Civil Survey shows that the Butlers, Mathews and Archers had maintained their hold on almost all the land in the parish of Thurles in the late seventeenth century. By then the Reformation had driven another wedge between the native and colonial populations, and the wars and confiscations of that century had perpetuated the rift.



Into this scene came the remarkable lady Thurles, described by James Condon as 'an English gentlewoman by birth and breeding, an unrepentant Catholic and a royalist'. Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Poyntz of Iron Acton Court near Bristol, married Thomas Butler, Viscount Thurles; after his death she married George Mathew to form a link between two influential families. During that turbulent century she side-stepped her way through difficulties, while holding to what were at times conflicting loyalties to religion and king.

Mr. Condon makes the point that her religious influence continued into the next century, when her direct descendant of the fourth generation, Nano Nagle, founded the Presentation Order in Cork and three Butlers in succession ruled the see of Cashel. By taking up residence 'in a humble thatched cottage' in Cathedral Street in 1757, Archbishop James Butler effectively established Thurles as the ecclesiastical centre of the archdiocese, an influential move in the future development of the town.

His successor Dr. James Butler II was a firm supporter of law, order and good government in all things. His enduring contributions to church, politics and education are examined in an essay by Patrick Wallace, who concludes that Dr. Butler was a 'bridge-builder in the political field, an innovator on the educational scene and the author of a catechism which for two hundred years helped to teach the faith not just in Ireland but throughout Australia, America and Canada'. Fr. Wallace recalls that the Archbishop initiated the moves which brought the Presentation and Ursuline nuns to Thurles and that the terms of his will aided the coming of the Christian Brothers to the town.

Thurles as it is to-day was shaped by the events and people of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; not surprisingly, the great bulk of this book (about four-fifths of its pages) is devoted to these two centuries. Anne Lanigan has undertaken the painstaking task of poring over the minutes of Thurles Board of Guardians, revealing the fate of the workhouse child in the period 1840-1880.

Thurles workhouse, completed in 1842 after the passing of the Poor Law, was modelled on the English system but unsuited to Irish conditions where nearly 2,500,000 people were destitute for much of the year. The building was designed to give 700 inmates food, clothing and shelter of a rudimentary kind.

If there was a natural reluctance to enter its doors, when famine struck in the later 'forties there was a rush to the workhouse for sustenance, with severe overcrowding, hunger and disease were rampant; between 1847 and 1851 over 3,000 inmates of Thurles workhouse died, including 1,880 children under 15.

James Condon presents another insight into the effects of the famine in mid-nineteenth century Thurles. By ingenious use of maps, data from Griffith's Valuations and valuator's field records, he has reconstructed the streets of Thurles with their inhabitants in 1850. By comparing those with the inhabitants listed in the 1845 rates books, he reaches the conclusion that there was a very large number of changes in the names of occupants. He suggests that the urban poor were early victims of the famine, and that their houses were occupied by rural people drifting in to the town.

Commitment to the community was demonstrated by Thurles Savings Bank, which between 1829 and 1871 provided a deposit service on a voluntary basis to encourage the habit of saving among the working people. Dr. James P. O'Shea has delved into the surviving documents of the bank and into relevant Parliamentary Papers to provide a detailed and interesting analysis of how the bank operated. The text is backed up by nine tables of statistics, a map showing the distribution of depositors by parish and graphs of the course of deposits and withdrawals.

Writing on the Cathedral of the Assumption, James O'Toole describes its forerunner the Big Chapel, which served as a cathedral until Archbishop Leahy decided to replace it. The foun-



ation-stone of the new building was laid in 1861, and the writer traces the various stages of the work, the disagreements and frustrations that beset the progress until the consecration ceremony in 1879. By then Leahy had died and Croke had succeeded him.

Thurles like every town and village had its characters and raconteurs. Brigid Condon has done an important service in preserving on tape and in print the memories of the early decades of this century, as told by Timmy Maher and Jack Ryan. Recorded in the racy vernacular of Thurles, they present charming pictures of those bygone days, the hardships and deprivations that were relieved by the fun and diversions that coloured their daily rounds.

Dennis O'Driscoll's personal reminiscences of childhood and adolescence in more recent days is of a different genre. Written in a pleasant literary style, laced with a gentle humour when dealing with what he regards as peculiarities of the town, he cannot withhold his genuine feelings of attachment to the people and scenes of his youth.

Donal O'Gorman's account of the game of hurling begins: 'Thurles is a name synonymous with everything that is great in hurling', and he goes on to recall hurling matches long before the meeting in Hayes's Hotel to establish the G.A.A. Although the dominance of the Sarsfields club over long periods in Tipperary is detailed, he gives due recognition to the Kickhams, Fennellys and Rahealty, the contribution of the Christian Brothers School to the game and the recent rise of Dúrlas Og.

Recording the origin and development of Semple Stadium, the author recalls the great Munster finals of the past, the time of the 'meat teas', the hawkers, the musicians and the golden voice of Micheal O'Hehir. Donal's untimely death adds a poignant note to this essay, which is based on material from his forthcoming history of the Sarsfield club, 'Through the Thatch — The Story of the Blues'.

In his study of the Franciscan House in Thurles, Fr. Conlan refers to the friendship that the Order received from the Mathews family in the eighteenth century, and traces the fortunes of the Franciscans in the parish to their withdrawal in 1891. Rev. Harden Johnstone records the chequered history of St. Mary's Parish and describes the silver vessels, the memorial tablets and other donations to the church by benefactors.

Six essays on the educational institutions take up 75 pages. Following a slight relaxation of the penal laws in 1782, Archbishop James Butler sent Anastasia Tobin to be trained in the religious life by Nano Nagle in Cork, with a view to returning to Thurles to establish a Presentation Order school for poor children. However, Anastasia was attracted to the Ursuline Order and when she returned she founded the Ursuline school in 1787. Sister Mercedes Lillis records the early struggle to establish the school, the poverty and privations which almost led to its collapse in the middle of the nineteenth century and its ultimate triumph to the centenary celebrations in 1887.

Dr. Butler, although disappointed that his initial venture did not turn out as he intended, left a bequest to be used for a poor school. Sister M. Ligouri tells how Archbishop Bray purchased property in Chapel Lane for the Presentation sisters, who moved there in 1817 and opened a school which was soon filled to overflowing. A new convent was completed in 1826; extensions were made to meet the demands of a growing community; a primary school and an orphanage were added, and foundations sent to other towns.

The exceptional contribution of the Christian Brothers to the education and general life of Thurles is recorded by An Bráthair Seán O Dugáin. Founded by William Cahill of Thurles and Thomas Cahill of Callan, who built the monastery and school in 1816, the Brothers' school operated on the principle that neither privilege of birth nor influence should be the criteria for preferment, but that their schools would provide education for all who attended.



But for many bequests and donations from private sources, they would not have maintained their high standards of service. The famine years placed a severe strain on the nuns and brothers, whose heroic service for the destitute and sick then has not been fully appreciated.

Fr. Christy O'Dwyer's essay on St. Patrick's College is entitled 'The Beleaguered Fortress'. This is justified by its persistence in surviving in spite of severe problems that beset it from the outset. The foundation-stone was laid in 1829 in the presence of Daniel O'Connell; but on the opening day in 1837 the building was still incomplete.

Fr. Dwyer explains that for 30 years the College 'burdened by debt and uncertain as to its objective, struggled to survive'. 'Cut-backs' led to a walk-out by the entire student body in 1860 as a protest against the quality of the food. By careful administration the College has flourished as a seminary preparing priests for the home and foreign missions.

The Pallotine Order, which came to Thurles in 1909 to educate priests for the foreign missions, is described by Fr. Donal McCarthy as having a tendency to do 'anything that the church asks us to do'. An old corn-store was bought and a college erected there in 1911; this was replaced by a modern building in 1959. Fr. McCarthy outlines the missionary work of the Pallotines in Argentina, England, Tanzania and the United States.

Antoin O Briain writes a note on the recent accession to the educational scene, the Vocational School. Since it commenced in 1928 with a domestic economy room, a woodwork room and two classrooms it has made extraordinary progress. Now in extensive new premises it offers excellent facilities and a wide range of courses to about 500 students.

The final essay by Fr. Mark Tierney on the Cashel Diocesan Archives is a tribute to the initiative and encouragement of Dr. Morris, who assisted Fr. Tierney enthusiastically during the ten years he spent on the arduous work of cataloguing and calendaring the mass of diocesan papers and arranging them chronologically. The archives in Archbishop's House are a model repository, which will be a most valuable source for scholars and for local historians.

Cardinal O Fiaich contributes a foreword in Irish, a language dear to the heart of An Dr. Tomás O Muiris. Over 20 pages of clear photographs include one of Dr. Morris from a portrait by Catherine Daly. There are few lapses. It is doubtful if the parish of Thurles maintained a population of 294,276 Irish and 18 English in 1659 (p. 11); and one sympathises with the poor fellow whose place of 'internment' was the cemetery (p. 139).

The editors, while honouring Dr. Morris, have also placed all those interested in the past of Thurles in their debt. Whoever undertakes to write the comprehensive history of the town and parish — and someone must - - will find the task greatly facilitated by this volume.

Séamus O Riain

Green Against Green: The Irish Civil War. By Michael Hopkinson. 336 pp. Gill & Macmillan. £12.95.

Books on this subject have been few and far between, so some notice of this new study by a British historian with no Irish ties seems justified in a Journal catering for the county which saw most of the fighting in 1922-23. Mr. Hopkinson's twin aim is to take a fresh scholarly approach and to place the war in the 20th-century Irish context. In this reviewer's opinion he has succeeded in the first, but not in the second.

However, the book can be recommended (even if with qualifications), especially for younger



readers, anxious to get an unbiased picture of the Civil War. The author must be praised for his skilful use on the amount of MS material that has become available in recent years. To this reviewer's knowledge more has arrived in the UCD Archives since the book came out.

Some readers may be disappointed at how superficially an academic passes over the political background; the opening 50 pages, covering 1912 to 1921, are undistinguished. The remaining 225 pages of main text concentrate on the actual hostilities, with periodic breaks to explain inter-connected political moves.

Perhaps because of the chaotic nature of the fighting, the book is oddly structured – almost as if Parts and chapters were slotted in as afterthoughts. There are Parts on the war's opening, the early war and the war's end, but none on the main hostilities, which are 'lost' in the previous two Parts. Similarly, the 'first executions' (of minor Republicans) get a separate chapter; but the Free State's horrendous reprisal executions of 8 December 1922 get less than one page.

This reviewer was disappointed at how little space is devoted to the social impact on the conflict, e.g. its effects on ordinary families caught up, that lasted for decades after 1923. He would also challenge the view that the War had a damaging effect on the image abroad of the new State; how explain de Valera's eminence in the League of Nations, or the Cosgrave regime's role in the Statute of Westminster earlier? Clearly, Mr. Hopkinson does not realise that many prominent anti-Treaty figures who lived into the 1950s privately agreed that the War was a disastrous error. As this Journal hopes to show next year, there is no substitute for personal contacts and interviews.

Tipperary readers will find much to interest them. There are new insights into Dan Breen's personality, and passing references to the feud between Lacey and Robinson – although the author does not know about the accepted cause of this. The parts played by South Tipperary Brigade men in the Four Courts and the foray by Michael Sheehan into Co. Wicklow are covered; the suggestion that on the long list of people Collins was to meet on his last journey were Breen and Lacey may be new to some.

Since reliance on (and access to) them is vital for serious readers, a mild protest must be made at the jumble of footnotes. They seem to be lumped together almost capriciously, often distant from the facts they authenticate; in some cases no source can be found at all. Frequently the *Irish Times* is treated as sacrosanct as if no paper giving an opposite view then existed; and the frequent use of Judge Kingsmill Moore as an impartial observer of the period will amuse older readers.

A few minor slips make one wonder if anyone this side of the Irish Sea saw the proofs. Lismore is not in Cork, nor Ballybacon near Tipperary town. The pro-Treaty TD Sean McGarry gets two entries in the index – because it was not appreciated that two references in adjoining paragraphs (on p. 190) are to the same person!

None of the foregoing criticism is meant to detract from the considerable achievement of the writer in digesting so much material and in effectively marshalling his facts. It is surely an indication of his perspicience that, while the bulk of the MS material comes from the pro-Treaty side, Mr. Hopkinson never overlooks the atrocities on the Free State side. This book may not be the last word on the Civil War; but it cannot be overlooked by any serious future student of the conflict.

Marcus Bourke



William Smith O'Brien: Ireland — 1858 — Tasmania. By Richard Davis. pp. 71. Published by Geography Publications, Dublin. £5.

Because of his brave stand at Ballingarry in the ill-fated Young Ireland Rising in 1848, William Smith O'Brien is for ever associated with county Tipperary. There are, however, other reasons justifying a review of this short book on O'Brien. The author, a distinguished Australian historian, is of Clonmel ancestry; the publishers are closely associated with the society that sponsors this Journal; and the society itself took on the task of launching the book on Ballingarry last Summer.

Prof. Davis's latest book is an interesting addition to the published work on O'Brien. Above all, it makes judicious use of the O'Brien *Tasmanian Journal* in the National Library of Ireland. It also includes many previously unpublished illustrations dealing with O'Brien's period in Van Diemen's Land. Indeed, while the text runs to 65 pages, no less than 22 of these comprise plates of different kinds.

Prof. Davis lucidly explains the major question about O'Brien's public life — how a liberal Protestant from the landowning class came to lead a badly-armed band of so-called rebels in a countryside wracked by famine conditions. He is less convincing in his later attempts to explain O'Brien's failure to return to public life and his refusal to support Fenianism, the natural heir to his Young Ireland movement.

It is interesting to discover that there was, after all, a human side to this otherwise arrogant, conceited personality. While in Tasmania, he developed (at the age of 46) an attachment for the 13-year-old daughter of one of his jailers, recalling the later (and also rarely noticed) romantic exploit of the Fenian, John Boyle O'Reilly, in Australia. Equally interesting is O'Brien's attachment to the Irish language, on which the historian Seán Ó Lúing has added a brief appendix.

Comparisons between Mitchel's *Jail Journal* and O'Brien's undeservedly lesser-known *Tasmanian Journal* lead Prof. Davis to favour the latter in style and content and general balance and maturity. He goes into some detail on this topic, and his views will convince most readers, and may even make some wonder if Mitchel's classic has been over-rated. Moreover, one cannot but compare O'Brien's liberal attitude to the aboriginal race with Mitchel's later open advocacy of negro slavery in the U.S.

Although this book is modestly priced and generally well produced, one detects occasional signs of haste in the final stages of publication. Mitchel's surname is several times wrongly spelled, and Prof. Davis may wonder about his legal rights because of the omission of the vital copyright sign. Finally, even for (or, dare one suggest because of) the small bulk of the book, an index would have helped.

Eddie Dalton

The Fenians in Australia 1856-1880. By Keith Amos. pp. 330. Published by New South Wales University Press. £15 sterling.

As two other contributions (one by the author of this book) to this Journal demonstrate, the impact of the 1988 Australian bicentennial celebrations continues. Without the advantage — or perhaps the burden — of any Irish blood in his veins, this Australian academic spent three years researching a topic of interest to Irish historians — the extent, if any, to which Fenianism got as far as Australia, and the inter-action between the minority Irish culture the movement represented and the majority British culture that dominated the growing nation that has become modern Australia.



This book is a good example of how a scholarly thesis (in this case for a Ph.D. degree) can be turned into a readable, entertaining and often exciting study for the average student of history. Moreover, this reviewer feels bound to state that he failed to discover the condescending tone discerned in Dr. Amos's work by that enthusiastic revisionist, the Tipperary historian, Professor R. V. Comerford.

Specifically, Dr. Amos's task involved wading through a mass of primary and secondary material (much of it unavailable in this part of the world), to ascertain what became of the 62 Fenians who were shipped out to Australia after the rising of 1867. His task was not made easier by the fact that on their release (or escape) the 62 scattered over three continents — a few returning home to Ireland, more settling in the United States, but most remaining on in Australia.

Almost as intriguing as the search for the later careers of the Fenians is Dr. Amos's attempt to assess their impact on a society that resented their arrival and always remained suspicious of their presence. There are even tentative — and, to this reviewer, largely speculative — attempts to assess the role this handful of Irishmen played in the development of a latent Australian identity.

Each reader of this prodigiously-researched and attractively planned book will retain his or her own individual memories. For this reviewer three stand out: the vivid portrait of John Boyle O'Reilly (for so long forgotten until President Kennedy's quotation from him during his 1963 Irish visit), the almost incredible story of the magazine produced by the Fenian prisoners on the long sea voyage of 1867-1868, and the new insights from Australian sources into the famous *Catalpa* rescue in 1876, master-minded from New York by John Devoy. Of all the legacies of Fenianism, from the '67 rising to the 1924 Free State Army mutiny, the *Catalpa* mission captured most public imagination.

Readers of this Journal searching for Tipperary references will not be disappointed, for they are scattered throughout this book. Over half a century before the Fenian movement began, the little-known Castle Hill rising of 1804 in Australia had been led by a Tipperary man, Philip Cunningham, who had arrived in 1801 to serve a sentence imposed for rebellious activities in Clonmel in 1799. His rallying-call to his men was the United Irishmen's slogan 'Death or Liberty' — to which he added 'and a ship to take us home'. Captured when wounded, Cunningham was publicly hanged from a shop staircase.

Although the Young Irelander John Mitchel escaped from Australia in 1853, it was not until 1949 that the identity of those who assisted his escape (described in his classic *Jail Journal*) was fully revealed through the recollections (recorded in 1915) of a participant, Daniel Burke. Burke, with his brother John, Patrick Foley and Michael O'Keeffe all helped to conceal Mitchel while he was on the run; all were from Tipperary. O'Keeffe had been evicted from the family holding by Lord Hawarden, a detail that makes identification of his native place easy.

Not all the Tipperary references in this book are to 'patriotic' Tipperary men. Prominent on the official side in attempts in the 1860s to dissuade London from sending out Fenians was one William Burges, a wealthy Anglo-Irish Protestant landowner of Clonmel origin, who continued his hostility to the Fenians after their arrival. Burges seems to have been a kind of prototype Ian Paisley, for his concern for the unsettling effect on society of the Fenians led to his being satirised in the Australian press in the 1880s.

The academic standing of this book is evidenced by the fact that its distribution in this country is in the hands of the Ulster Historical Foundation. Readers of this Journal who fail to find the book in their bookshops may purchase it direct from the Foundation at 68 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast BT9 6NY. Incidentally, the UHF's Administrator, Dr. Christine Kinealy, is herself of Tipperary origin.

Marcus Bourke



Dúchas 1983 - 1984 - 1985: Lgh. 171. Foilsitheoirí: Coiscéim. 1986. £3.50

Sa bhliain 1983 bhunaigh Coiste Dúiche Thiobraid Arann de Chonradh na Gaeilge *Dúchas*, éigse bhliantúil, agus é mar aidhm aige ‘roinnt de mhórphearsana náisiúnta Thiobraid Arann a thabhairt chun cuimhne.’ Tá fáil anois ar léachtaí *Dúchas* na mblianta 1983, 1984 agus 1985 i bhfoirm leabhráin, agus más léiriú ar imeachtaí na heagraíochta ábhar an leabhráin seo, dob fhiú go mór í a bhunú. Ocht gcinn de léachtaí atá i gceist, ar ghnéithe éagsúla de shaol agus de shaothar an chéad triúir a comóradh: Pádraigín Haicéad (c. 1600-1654), Seathrún Céitinn (c. 1580 - c. 1644) agus Micheál P. Ó hIcí (1860-1916).

Dob iad na modhanna síochánta ba rogha leis na sean-Ghail Chaitliceacha chun a gcuid talún a chosaint i dtosach an seachtú haois déag. B’shin é an meon a bhí ag Pádraigín Haicéad, ar de shliocht na sean-Ghall é féin, nuair d’fhill sé ar Eirinn ina shagart, timpeall na bliana 1634, dar le Nicholas Canny ina léacht ‘Pádraigín Haicéad: an sagart agus an File, i gComhthéacs a Aimsire.’

Dob í an taithí a bhí aige ar an mór-Roinn ba chúis leis an athrú meoin a tháinig ar an Haicéadach sa bhliain 1641 áfach, mar ba léir dó, ó doirteadh fuil phrotastúnach i dtosach an éiri amach, nárbh aon mhaitheas modhanna na síochána feasta. Thug sé tacaíocht as san amach don láimh láidir, mar a léiríonn an dán ‘Iar dTionsgnadh don Chogadh so na hEireann insa bhliadhain 1641.’

Nuair ba léir go raibh buaite ar na Caitlicigh, rinne an Haicéadach a dhícheall chun a spioraid a mhúscailt, rud a chabhraigh go mór, dar le Canny, chun an creideamh caitliceach a choinneáil beo in aghaidh ionsaí an phrotastúnachais. Tugann an tAthair Aibhistín Valkenburg léiriú neamhchoitianta dúinn ar an taobh daonna den Haicéadach — á chur i gcomparáid, in áit amháin, le ‘Savanarola neamhbhalbh’ agus leis an ‘easpag Romera neamheaglach’.

Tá dhá léacht ag an Athair Pádraig Ó Fiannachta sa leabhar, ceann amháin ar Sheathrún Céitinn an diagaire, bunaithe ar fhianaise ‘Eochair-Sgiath an Aifrinn’, an ceann eile ar an Athair Micheál Ó hIcí agus Maigh Nuad. Tá stíl liteartha an Chéitinnigh faoi chaibidil ag Tadhg Ó Dúshláine: ‘Idirghabhálaí tábhachtach idir an traidisiúin dúchais agus an traidisiúin iasachta ab ea an Céitinnigh’ dar leis — tuairim a léiríonn an t-údar tré thagairtí flúirseacha do litríocht eorpach na linne, agus go háirithe do litríocht an Bhéarla. Seo gné de scríbhneoireacht Chéitinn nach gnách trácht a dhéanamh uirthi agus is spreagúil an léacht í seo.

Is ar Chéitinn an staraí, údar *Forus Feasa ar Eirinn*, a dhíríonn Donnchadh Ó Corráin. Má tá locht féin aige ar an gCéitinnigh mar staraí, is mó an locht atá aige ar staraithe ár linne féin, a bhfuil ‘dhá dtrian den eolas i bh*Forus Feasa* ar aigne agus ar aois an Chéitinnigh faoi cheilt go fóill’ orthu, dar leis.

Ceist na Gaeilge san Ollscoil agus an pháirt a bhí ag an Athair Micheál Ó hIcí sa chonspóid is ábhar do léacht Shéamais Uí Bhuachalla. Cuntas ar shaol agus ar chúla Uí Icí atá faoi thrácht ag Máire de Róiste.

Chomh maith leis na léachtaí seo, tá roinnt alt gairid sa leabhrán — ceann ó Lorcán Ó Riain ar *Drámaíocht na Gaeilge*, dán dar teideal *Sláinte na bhFilí* ó Liam Prút, *Agallamh Beirte* (idir an tAthair Ó hIcí agus an tAthair Ó Fiannachta) ó Sheán Ó Morónaigh, cainteanna a tugadh ag uaigh an Chéitinnigh agus ag uaigh Uí Icí, agus fiú téacs ‘Fáilte Leas-Mhéara Chluain Meala, Liam de Norradh (25/5/’84).’

Baineann níos mó le héigse den chineál atá i gceist le *Dúchas* ná léachtaí. Tá an ghné logánta den ócáid an-thábhachtach fad, ach an focal a bhíonn beo ar ócáid ar leith, in áit ar leith, ní i gcónaí a mhaireann sé ar pár. San léacht acadúil, ní mór a bhíonn idir an chaint agus an focal scríofa de ghnáth; uaireanta féin, is ag an bhfocal scríofa a bhíonn an tús ar an gcur i láthair sa mhéid nach ndéanann lucht acadúil ach scríbhinn a léamh ós árd gan cur léi ná baint di ar mhaithe le spéis an lucht éisteachta a choinneáil.



Is léir nach mar sin a bhí ag *Dúchas*. Tá an caidreamh idir na léachtóirí agus a lucht éisteachta le braith go soiléir; ní gá ach féachaint ar léacht an Athar Ó Fiannachta nó léacht Mháire de Róiste le cruthú d'fháil air sin. Ach níl an *lucht eisteachta* i gceist a thuilleadh anseo; is ar *lucht léitheoireachta* atá an leabhrán dírithe. (Thóg sé cúpla neomat orm ciall a bhaint as tagairt Uí Fiannachta don 'Riagánach' san chéad alt dá léacht, mar ní raibh coimhthéachs beo na cainte soiléir dom aous mé a léamh. Bhi an Riagánach agus a thuras go Co. Thiobraid Árann go mór i mbéal an phobail nuair a bhí an léacht á tabhairt, ní foláir).

I bhfocail eile, is fiú go mór léachtaí *Dúchas* a choinneáil i bhfoirm bhuan, ach níor mhíse cóiriú a dhéanamh orthu sara gcuirfí i gcló iad. Maidir leis an gcuid "logánta" den éigse, b'fhearr tuairisc a thabairt uirthi san réamhrá, dar liom, ná í a scaipeadh ar fud an leabhair idir na léachtaí. Níor mhíse don eagarthóir - - nil aon eagarthóir luaite — súil níos géire a choinneáil ar an nGaeilge chomh maith; tá mórán dearmad le tabhairt faoi deara sa leabhar nach dearmad cló iad. Mar fhocal scoir, b'fhí dáai a lua leis na léachtaí, go háirthe mura bhfuil sé i gceist an t-ábhar a fhoilsiú ach uair gach tríú bliain.

Fáiltim roimh *Dúchas 1*, agus guím gach rath ar lucht stiúrtha na héigse.

Pádraigín Riggs