

SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE ---

In November, 1964, The Gaelic Society was privileged to present Brother Charles B. Quinn, Academic Dean of Iona College, New Rochelle, who spoke on the effect of the Irish language on Anglo-Irish literature. Brother Quinn is a native of Co. Clare and a member of An Fainne.

He keynoted his address with a definition from Padraic Pearse: that literature is "... a mirror of the mind of the race that composed it, an illumination of the mind and aspirations of the people." Anglo-Irish literature "mirrored" the dominant concerns of a people suffering a cultural transition and these forces were religion, nationalism and rebellion. The revitalization of the Irish language, and the accompanying review of national ideals, caused Anglo-Irish authors to handle these themes with new awareness. This period, known grandiloquently as the Irish Literary Revival, passed through six phases. Brother Quinn defined these as developing from a rediscovery of past glories; through awareness of poetry and drama in everyday life and a passionate determination to make a new Ireland; to the disillusioned realism of the post-revolutionary period, and corresponding new techniques.

After the lecture, Pat Bridgeman's singing was warmly received. We would like to thank Pat for the gracious manner in which she acquiesced to the many "requests" from the audience -- she sang at least half-a-dozen encores!

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The Society's lecture series continued in January, 1965, when Dr. Robert A. Fowkes gave a talk on the relationship of the Celtic languages, and Irish in particular, to the other members of the Indo-European family of languages. Doctor Fowkes is a professor of German at NYU and also an advisor in the Linguistics Department. In recognition of his teaching achievements, Dr. Fowkes received one of NYU's "Great Teacher" awards in 1964. Of Welsh descent, he has taught himself to speak the language of his ancestors and has presented papers on Welsh Philology before the Linguistic Society of America. Dr. Fowkes has also been active in the field of Celtic Philology.

In his lecture, Dr. Fowkes first demonstrated the concept of families of languages by comparing words in modern Romance languages with their original Latin forms. By comparing words in modern English, Dutch, German and Scandinavian, he then proceeded to demonstrate how the original forms can be recreated in a parent language (Proto-Germanic), of which there is no written record. Finally, Doctor Fowkes showed how these various subfamilies, including Celtic, could all be connected together as branches of one larger family, Indo-European.

Once again, we had the pleasure of hearing Grainne Conroy sing -- she had sung for us in January of 1964 at our first lecture. This time she sang "The Kerry Dances", "The Snowy-Breasted Pearl" and, in Irish, "The Castle of Dromore", one of her favorites.

Billy Greenall's sensitive interpretation of the music from the films "Mise Eire" and "Saoirse" on the accordeon was warmly applauded. His rendition of several ceili favorites was so enthusiastically received that the chairs were pushed back and a "High Caul Cap" was soon in progress.