

THE WORLD'S DEBT TO THE IRISH

Though great the warrior's glory,
Much the toil and short his state,
Swift and short his life has passed,
In exchange for hell at last.

Still, stealthy trades his meanest
Murky, worn, lankest, leanest,
Whosoever hath good at first,
Still he seemeth wicked worst.

Such the stains that fell upon
Hapless Cellach, Eogan's son,
Roaming now from place to place,
With a band of outlaws base.

Woe who leave high heart of saints,
For dark hell and horrid plaints,
Christ our light o'er combats dim,
Who forsakes Thee, woe to him.

These early Irish hymns show very clearly that there was no phase of music in verse so far as the repetition of similar sounds at regular intervals is concerned that the Irish poets were missing. On the contrary it is quite evident that the instrument of rhyme in poetry was perfected by them to an extent that made it a precious heritage of the race forever after, almost exactly in the form in which the Irish had originally fashioned it. There are perhaps more musical languages than the Gaelic, though it would be very hard to get a Gael to confess that. I have heard an old Irish speaker on the Aran Islands say that he was quite sure that Irish had