



TOMÁS BAIRÉAD PAPERS

GP2/130

Galway County Council Archives

Connacht Journalist as Gaelic Author

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Highly Praised By Eminent Critics

"A writer to be watched... Tomas Bairread is undoubtedly a discovery and a distinct acquisition to the ranks of Gaelic writers," was the opinion expressed by Leon O Broin, well-known Gaelic scholar, over the radio the other night in a review of the second book of short stories, "An Geall a Briseadh," from the pen of Tomas Bairread, who is perhaps better known throughout Ireland as Tom Barrett, the genial and popular journalist of the *Irish Independent* staff.

Mr. Barrett's first book, "Cumhacht na Cineamhna," published about a year ago, liberally took the Gaelic world by storm, revealing in its author a master of the short story and a weaver of beautiful and melodious composition through the medium of words and phrases evidencing the greatest care in selection, and written in the choicest Connacht Irish. Underlying every one of his stories, apart altogether from the plot and entertaining narrative, some deep thought finds expression, and the whole—story and treatment—has a great deal in common with the artistic gems of the French short story master-writers.

So great has been the demand for "Cumhacht na Cineamhna" that a second printing is now in progress. Leon O Broin on the radio on Monday night said the book undoubtedly deserved the high praise accorded to it by an eminent critic who had stated to him that personally he knew nothing better in contemporary literature than three of the stories, particularly, in that book.

Mr. Barrett's new book is just as good—we hesitate to use the word "better," although there are people who say it is, for having read and re-ideomatic Connacht Irish still chiming in our ears, we ourselves think it could not be surpassed; but, in a word, having derived equal enjoyment and enlightenment from both, we say they are equally excellent.

Another remark made by Mr. O Broin may be quoted:—"Tomas Bairread is a journalist by profession, and it is probably this fact which accounts for his great success in stories that require to be treated objectively. He has imagination, and has, besides, at his command all the resources of his native Connemara Irish, and writes with great care."

Perhaps he might have added that Mr. Barrett's knowledge of shorthand, adapted by himself to Gaelic use, is also to some extent a help in the exercise of that care which his writing manifests.

A great many of our younger readers are now able to read Gaelic, and which of them would not wish to spend a term in the Gaeltacht? Here is their opportunity of having the Gaeltacht in their homes, the best of Connacht Irish for their entertainment and instruction being set out in these two books, and at the cost of an evening's seat in the cinema.

Both books are published by An Gúm (Government Publications Office) at half-a-crown each.—W.S.