



TOMÁS BAIRÉAD PAPERS

GP2/147

Galway County Council Archives

AUTHORS HONOURED

IRISH ACADEMY AWARDS

Tomás Baird, of the reporting staff of the *Irish Independent* has been granted the O'Grady Award for 1937, by the Irish Academy of Letters for his novel "Cumhacht na Cinneamhna."

The Harnsworth Award for the same year goes to Mr. Liam O'Flaherty for his novel "Famine," and the Casement Award to Mr. Paul Vincent Carroll for his play "Shadow and Substance."

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CLARE WOMAN'S

NEW BOOK

G.P. 1/47

LITERARY AWARDS TO GALWAYMEN

BEST WORKS IN 1937.

("Connacht Tribune," Special Correspondent.)

Galway is again in the news in the literary world. Of three awards given by the Irish Academy of Letters for the best contributions to English and Gaelic literature by Irishmen in 1937, two have gone to Galwaymen. First, in the Gaelic class, Liam O'Mahony, a native of Aran Islands, has been given the Harmsworth award of £100 for his novel, "Namine," and Tomas Baird, a well-known Dublin journalist, who comes from West Galway, has been given the O'Growney award of £50 for his collection of short stories, "Cumhacht na Cinneamhna," his first book. The reputation of O'Flaherty as a writer of English has, of course, been long established.

Few books in modern Irish have been given such an enthusiastic reception by reviewers as has been given to "Cumhacht na Cinneamhna." And those who hailed it as a "find" have had their judgment confirmed by the reading public and now by some of the most exacting critics in the country. Of the scores, or possibly hundreds, of books published by An Gum this is the first I believe to be given the coveted O'Growney award. I have heard it said that it is one of the few creative works in Irish that can hold its own against similar works in English and Continental languages. Some writers have given us good Irish but indifferent stories; others have given us good stories but Irish not so good; but this is among the very few that has got a combination of all the qualities that go to make literature. The second book by the same author—"An Geall a Briseadh"—is proving equally popular.

I am told that a strong reaction is setting in all over against the idea that because a work is in Irish it should be read. I find a growing conviction here even among Gaelic enthusiasts and old language workers that it is past time to cease assessing the merits of an Irish book on the quality of its Irish or by strings of adjectives, whether intended to show the large vocabulary of the writer or to puzzle or impress the reader.

It is admitted, however, that if we are to have good fiction we must have good Irish also; but if Irish is to have a modern literature fit to rank among the great literatures of the world those with ambition to become writers must first learn their craft. If we had only the French conception of things artistic—"Produce only the best"—we would place a sound knowledge of technique among the first essentials to be mastered in the writing of fiction. And those who wish to do anything great in the creative line must be prepared for grey hairs and bald patches, because nothing likely to live can be produced without hard work.

The success of "Cumhacht na Cinneamhna" by a writer virtually unknown up to a year ago should encourage budding writers in the West. Only those with a knowledge of newspaper work in Dublin can appreciate the difficulties and disadvantages of a reporter in writing such a book.

A very clever young woman from the West has also added to our stock of Gaelic literature. She is Mrs. Kissan (Miss Mairead O'Grady, M.A.), University College, Galway, and of Kilmaley, County Clare. She is now living in Dublin. Her latest work is an excellent translation into Irish of Barrie's "Peter Pan."