

Siobhán a'tSagairt

(Source "Colaisde Muinteoireachta Na Mumhan",

Liam De Róiste unpublished)

Not far from the lodge was the cottage of Siobhan Bean Uí Cheilleachain ("Siobhan a'tSagairt"), a famous bean-sheanachaidhe, having an amazing store of songs, poems, stories, proverbs, rhyming riddles. She used illustrate some obscure sayings and difficult passages by actions. On one occasion, I recollect, she illustrated thus the line, "go ceafrach, buacach, beannaich" by holding aloft a poker in her hand, and assuming a martial attitude. She was also skilled in home crafts, and took pride in her variegated-patterned knitted quilts. Once I made arrangements for a Dublin University graduate to stay in her cottage. His bed was of the tester variety, with curtains drawn around it. For his comfort, Siobhan had laid in it two feather ticks, two or three heavy blankets, and one of her intricately-worked heavy quilts. I learned from him afterwards that he put one of the ticks on the floor, a blanket over him and slept soundly thus.

Risteard O Maolcatha used to stay in Siobhan's cottage and recorded, I believe, many of her pithy sayings, rhymes and stories. Perhaps some day, when he casts off the burden of political life, he will give for publication his impressions of his days in Beal-Atha 'n ghaorthaigh.
