[Sir Samuel Ferguson: 1810-1886]

Life

[Sir Samuel Ferguson]; b. 10 March 1810, High St., Belfast, the grandson of John Ferguson of Collen House, Co. Antrim, a man of means who squandered his inheritance; ed. Belfast Academical Institution, Belfast, and afterwards at TCD which he left before graduation due to his father’s declining fortunes; provided for his legal education by writing, beginning with “The Forging of the Anchor”, an industrial poem; contributed more than 90 items to Blackwood’s Magazine and Dublin University Magazine, et al., 1832-1850, promoting a view of Irishness informed by contemporary antiquarianism and Protestant conservative principles; entered the London Bar, and joined N. E. Circuit in Ireland, 1838; worked with members of the Irish Ordnance Survey during the early 1830s;

contrib. four-part review articles of Hardiman’s Irish Minstrelsy (1834) to Dublin University Magazine (April-Nov. 1834), calling it ‘politically malignantly and religiously fanatical’ as well as ‘spurious, puerile, unclassical - lamentably bad’; pointed out the militant Catholicism of the more blood-thirstily anti-English poems and in the majority of Hardiman’s notes; criticised the botched translations of the versifiers and provided his own rendering of some originals in an appendix; contrib. “Hibernian Nights’ Entertainments” to Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine [1833-34], and Dublin University Magazine [1834-36], later printed piratically in New York (1859) and finally reissued by Lady Ferguson (1887); poss. influenced by earlier Royal Hibernian Tales (Belfast 1832); qualified at King’s Inns and called to the Irish Bar, 1838; practised successfully for many years;

issued Cromlech on Howth (1841), a poem treating of the death of Oscar son of Finn - and an inspiration to Lady Wilde in naming her second son; withdrew his assistance from the editorship of the Dublin University Magazine, then in Charles Lever’s hands, at the latter’s acceptance of the dedication of Thackeray’s The Irish Sketch Book (1842); his poems prominent in Gavan Duffy’s Ballad Poetry of Ireland (1845); travelled on the continent, 1946-47, sketching Irish ecclesiastical remains; studied painting in Italy; active in Irish Council of 1847; published a “Lament for Thomas Davis” (Feb. 1847), composed earlier;

m. Mary Catherine Guinnness [b.1823], Aug. 1848; retained by Robert Holmes as part of John Mitchel’s defence team in treason-felony trial of 1848; attended inaugural meeting of Butt’s Protestant Repeal Association as a founding-member, declaring repeal of the Union to be ‘the great principle of self-government to counter the anti-national and servile spirit in the land” (Warder, 13 May, 1848); he quickly withdrew from the Association in view of its Young Ireland connections; issued Dublin (1849) and Inheritor and Economist (1849), both verse satires; defended Richard D’Alton Williams against treason-felony;

took silk [QC], 1859; DL, 1864; issued Father Tom and the Pope; or, A Night in the Vatican (1865), a burlesque in prose, soon after reprinted piratically in New York - his authorship being attested by Lady Ferguson in her biography though previously ascribed to William Maginn by W. B. Yeats (Representative Irish Tales, 1891); published Lays of the Western Gael (1865), containing poems on Irish themes printed over the thirty previous years; also Deputy Keeper of Dublin Records, 1867; lectures on Dublin architecture, 1867; published his poetic version of Ulster epic Congal (1872), based on O’Donovan’s translation but without many supernatural passages, and accompanied by notes acknowledging Macpherson’s ‘grandeur of thought’;

Ferguson resisted, with William Wilde, Lord Talbot de Malahide, et al., the attempt to bring RIA antiquities under the control of the British Museum in London; he was elected Vice-President of RIA and Chairman of Manuscript Committee in 1876; wrote preface to facsimile edn. of An Leabhar Breaic; knighted 1878; hon degree of LLD (TCD); issued Poems (1880), with ded. to George Fox, his boyhood friend; elected RIA President, 1882; spoke at the RIA in favour of a tunnel under the Liffey rather than a railway bridge [i.e., Butt Bridge] to preserve a view of the ‘architectural beauties bequeathed to us by that splendid race of men who once inhabited Dublin’; d. 9 Aug. 1886, at Strand Lodge, Howth;

his funeral service was conducted in St. Patrick’s Cathedral; bur. Donegore, Co. Antrim; an anonymous obit. [by J. P. Mahaffy], appeared in Athenaeum (14 April 1886); he collected Ogham casts and wrote extensively on Ogham controversies viz., Ogham Inscriptions in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland(1887), edited by his widow; also The Remains of St. Patrick (1888), being the “Confessio” translated into blank verse; other posthumous publications were Lays of the Red Branch (1897), with an introduction by Lady Ferguson, and Poems of Sir Samuel Ferguson (1917), introduced by A. P. Graves;

he was called by Yeats ‘the greatest poet Ireland has produced, because the most central and most Celtic’, and thus a national author ‘unjustly neglected by his fellow-countrymen’; a close friend of Frederick William Burton, Petrie, and others; Padraic Colum issued edited a modern selection as Poems (1963); his house on N. Gt. George’s St., Dublin, bears a plaque, while another was unveiled at his birthplace in 1910, and renewed reinstated on 10 March 2010; the article in the [British] Dictionary of National Biography is by Norman Moore; his best-known songs are “The Coolin” and “The Lark in the Clear Air”, based on Gaelic originals.
Sir Samuel Ferguson

Sir Samuel Ferguson and the Ireland of His Times

Works
Poetry
• *The Cromlech on Howth* (London: Day & Son 1841; 1864);
• *Dublin: A Satire* (Dublin 1849);
• *Inheritor and Economist* (Dublin: McGlashan 1849);
• *Father Tom and the Pope, or a Night in the Vatican* (Baltimore: Robinson 1865); Do. [pirated edn.] (NY: Morhead, Simpson & Bond 1868);
• Alfred M. Williams, ed. & intro., *Lays of the Western Gael and Other Poems* (London: Bell & Daldy 1865), and Do. [2nd Edn.] (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker 1888 [var. 1880]) [see details];
• *Congal: A Poem in Five Books* (Dublin: E. Ponsonby; London: G. Bell & Daldy 1872), consisting in 48pp. of poetry & 85pp. of notes; Do. [2nd edn.] (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker 1893), and Do. [another edn.] (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers & Daldy 1907);
• *Deirdre: A One-Act Drama of Old Irish Story* (Dublin: Roe 1880);
• *Poems* (Dublin: McGee; London: G. Bell 1880) [ded. to George Fox];
• *The Forging of the Anchor* (London, Paris, NY: Cassell 1883) [iil. edn. of the early poem];
• Lady Ferguson, intro., *Lays of the Red Branch* (London: T. Fisher Unwin; Dublin: Sealy Bryers & Walker 1897);
• A. P. Graves, intro. [signed 1916], *Poems of Sir Samuel Ferguson* (Dublin: Talbot/London: R. Fisher Unwin 1917) [vars. 1914, 1918];


**Literary prose**

• *Hibernian Nights’ Entertainments* [1st, 2nd, & 3rd ser.] (Dublin: Sealy, Bryer & Walker; London: G. Bell 1887), prose stories orig. in *Dublin University Magazine* and *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* [details];

**Miscellaneous**

• *Ireland’s Claims to an Adequate Parliamentary Representation of Learning: in a letter to James Mac Cullagh… &c.*; with an appendix containing correspondence with Mr. Hallam on the claims of Archbishop De Londres to a niche in the New House of Lords; and a letter to Lord Morpeth on the formation of a Museum of National antiquities in Dublin, by Samuel Ferguson (Dublin: James McGlashan &c 1847), 27pp.;
• *Our Architecture: Dublin Afternoon Lectures* (London: Bell & Daldy 1867);
• Preface to RIA facsimile edn. of *An Leabhar Breac* [The Speckled Book of Lecan] (Irish MSS Commission 1876).
• ‘On a mode of sub-acqueous tunnelling’, in Proc. of the RIA, 2nd Ser., IV, Sciences (1884-86, pp.78-81.

**Prose (Journal publication)**
Poetry

*Poems of Sir Samuel Ferguson*

Bibliography of British Fiction (Cardiff) as listed under *Entertaining Stories Now Extant*

There exists an earlier published collection, *Gillmore*, 1835; *Rosabel of Ross*, 1836); first issued jointly, NY 1859; reissued Lady Ferguson, 1887.

*Usnach*, 1834; *The Captive of Killeshin*, 1835; *The Rebellion of Silken Thomas*, 1835; *Corby MacGillmore*; *An Adventure of Shane O'Neill*. 3] *The Rebellion of Silken Thomas*; *Shane O'Neill's Last Amour*, 1834) and in *Hibernian Nights Entertainments*, *Dublin University Magazine* (Jan., Feb., March, April, June, July, Aug., Sept., Nov., Dec. 1835) [see details];

*Scotic Controversy*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (June, Oct. 1836);

*Attractions of Ireland*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (July, Sept., Dec. 1836);

*Curiosities of Irish Literature: The Mere Irish*, in *Dublin University Magazine* IX (1837 [var 1836]), pp.546-58;

*Gallery of Illustrious Irishmen: [George] Petrie*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (Dec. 1839);

*Dublin Penny Journal*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (Jan. 1840);


*Petrie's Round Towers*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (April 1845);

*Letter to Arthur Hallam: Henri de Londres*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (Nov. 1845);

*Irish Novelists* (*Dublin University Magazine*, Dec. 1845); *Architecture in Ireland*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (June 1847);

*review of William Reeves's Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor and Dromore* (1847), in *Dublin University Magazine*, Vol. 31 (Feb. 1848), pp.207-77;

*Annals of the Four Masters*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (March, May 1848);

*review of Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture in Dublin University Magazine* (July 1849);

*review of Ruskin's Stones of Venice, in Dublin University Magazine* (Sept. 1851).

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Poetry (Journal publication)

*The Forging of the Anchor*, in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Edinburgh) (Feb. 1832);

*An Irish Garland*, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, 33, 203 (January 1833), pp.87-8 [containing a virulent attack on Irish Nationalism]; [anon.];

*Father Tom and the Pope*, in *Blackwood's Magazine* (May 1838) [rep. in W. B. Yeats's *Representative Irish Tales*, 1891, and therein attrib. to William Maginn -see note].

*Lines on Mangan*, in *Dublin University Magazine* (May 1847).

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Bibliographical Details


*The Confession of St. Patrick* translated into blank verse by Sir Samuel Ferguson, LL.D, Pres. Royal Irish Academy, Transactions of RIA, Vol. XXVII [Polite literature and Antiquities], VI (Dublin: RIA 1885) [cited in Rev. George Thomas Stokes, DD, and the Rev. Charles H. H. Wright, DD, *Writings of St Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, a revised translation, with Notes, critical and historical* (London: James Nisbet & Co.; Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Co., publisher o Dublin Univ., 1887). Ferguson writes: ‘it was the first occasion on which he experienced what he conceived to be the presence of an in-dwelling coercer of his will, to obedience to whose promptings all his subsequent life was to be conformed.’ [Ferg., [q. tit.]] p.113-14; Stokes, p.40.]


Ogham Inscriptions in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland [Rhind Lectures, Edinburgh 1884] (Edinburgh: David Douglas 1887). Papers incl. ‘Fasciculus of Prints from Photographs of Casts of Ogham Inscriptions’ (RIA Transactions, 1880); ‘Account of Ogham Inscriptions in the Cave of Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon’ (RIA Proceedings, 1864); ‘On the Difficulties Attendant on the Transcription of Ogham Legends, and the Means of Removing them’ (RIA Proceedings, 1870-71); ‘On Paper Casts of Ancient Inscriptions in the Counties of Galway and Mayo’ (RIA Proceedings, 1872); ‘On the Ogham-Inscribed Stone of Callan Mountain, Co. Clare’ (RIA Proceedings, 1873); ‘On the Collateral Evidences corroborating the Biliteral Key to the South British Ogham Alphabet’ (RIA Proceedings, 1873); ‘On the Evidences bearing on Sun-worship at Mount Callan, Co. Clare’ (RIA Proceedings, 1873); ‘On an Ogham-Inscribed Stone from Mount Music, Co. Cork’ (RIA Proceedings, 1874); ‘On a Recently Discovered Ogham Inscription at Breatagh, in the Co. of Mayo (RIA Proceedings, 1874); ‘On an Ogham-inscribed Stone (No. 1) at Monataggart, Co. Cork’ and ‘On Further Ogham Inscriptions discovered at Monataggart’ (RIA Proceedings, 1874); ‘Additional Note on Ogham Inscriptions at Monataggart, Co. Cork’ (RIA Proceedings, 1875); ‘On an Ogham Inscription at Mullagh, Co. Cavan’ (RIA Proceedings, 1875); ‘On the Alleged Literary Forgery respecting Sun-Worship on Mount Callan’ (RIA Proceedings, 1875).
Lady Mary C. Ferguson, *Sir Samuel Ferguson in the Ireland of His Day* 2 vols. (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood 1896) [see details]; Vol. 1 is available at Internet Archive in page or text formats.;

W. B. Yeats, review of *Sir Samuel Ferguson* [...] &c., by Lady Ferguson, in *The Bookman*, 10 (1906) [rep. in John Frayne, ed., *Uncollected Prose*, Vol. 1, pp.p.405; see extract];

A. P. Graves, 'Introduction', *Poems of Sir Samuel Ferguson* (Dublin: Talbot; London: T. Fisher Unwin [1918]) [see extract];


Patricia Colum, 'Introduction', *Poems of Samuel Ferguson* [Comhairle Ealaion ser. of Irish Authors, No. 2] (Dublin: Allen Figgis 1963), pp.1-10 [see extract];


Robert O'Driscoll, 'Ferguson and the Idea of an Irish National Literature', in *Éire-Ireland*, 6, 1 (Spring 1971), pp.82-95 [see extract];


Terence Brown & Barbara Hayley, eds., *Samuel Ferguson: A Centenary Tribute* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 1987), 74pp.;

Peter Denman, *Samuel Ferguson: The Literary Achievement* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe; NY: Barnes & Noble 1990), vii, 229pp.;


Gregoir Ó Dúill, *Samuel Ferguson: An Introduction to his Life and WorkFortnight*, 322 (Nov. 1993), 15pp. [supplement], and Ó Dúill [a biography in Irish], (Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar 1994), q.pp.;


Eve Patten, *Samuel Ferguson and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press 2004), 208pp. [see details];

[...]
References


*Hibernian Nights* separately listed [note that the following pagination is irrational]: "The Return of Claneboy", pp.43-98, how Aodh Bui O'Neill regained his territory on the death of William de Burgh"; "The Captive &c.", pp.98-146, Leinster Clans v. English, esp. the O'Nolans, 14th c.; "Corby MacGillmore", pp.140 [err.], in which a warlike abbot preaches to a relapsed McGillmore, warring with the Clan Savage, 15th c.; "The Rebellion of Silken Thomas", pp.278, the real hero is Sir John Talbot; "The death of the Children of Usnach", pp.14-92, the beautiful saga; "An Adventure of Shane O'Neill's", pp.143-84, Shane and Irish in general appearing in unfavourable light.

Stephen Brown, *Ireland in Fiction* (1919) - cont.: Samuel Ferguson, son of John Ferguson, Collen House, Co. Antrim; ed. Acad. Inst., Belfast, and TCD; first deputy keeper of public records; besides the *Hibernian Nights*, Sir Samuel also wrote a very amusing if not very reverent sketch, "Father Tom and the Pope", which had the unique distinction of being rep. in *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1910, without the author's name. There was an American ed. which contains stories not included in the Irish edn.

Note: W. B. Yeats included "Father Tom and the Pope" in his *Representative Irish Tales* (1891) but attributed it to Maginn. Later he corrected attribution in the article "Irish National Literature, IV: A List of Best Irish Books", published in *Bookman* (Oct. 1895), reflecting the claim on it made Lady Ferguson's life of Ferguson (1896) - a fact cited in Helen Mary Thuente, Introduction to rep. edn. of *Representatie Irish Tales* (Gerrards Cross: 1979).

A. W. Ward & A. R. Waller, *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, 18 vols. (1907–21), Vol. XIV ["The Victorian Age, Pt. 2"], IX - Anglo-Irish Literature; Sect. 20: 'Sir Samuel Ferguson': [...] The elegy on Davis certainly shows Ferguson at his highest as a lyric poet, and is rightly described by Gavan Duffy as "the most Celtic in structure and spirit, of all the poetical tributes to the lost leader." Ferguson was held back from his higher literary work by the exigencies of the Irish potato famine and expressed his feelings at its mismanagement in verse full of bitter invective; but he lived to turn his fine satiric gift against the successors of the Young Ireland poets and patriots, with whom he had sympathised, when he found them descending to what he characterised as "a sordid social war of classes carried on by the vilest methods." In his satiric poems *At the Polo Ground*, he analyses, in Browning's manner, Carey's frame of mind before giving the fatal signal to the assassins of Burke and lord Frederick Cavendish [viz., the Invincibles' assassination]; and, in his Dublin eclogue *In Carey's Footsteps*, and in *The Curse of the Joyces*, he unsparingly exposes the cruelties of the Boycotting system. In 1864 appeared *Lays of the Western Gael* containing a series of Irish ballads full of much finer work than he had yet achieved. Of these, *The Tain Quest* is, perhaps, the noblest effort; but the magnificently savage lay *The Welshmen of Tirawley* is the most striking. In 1872 appeared *Congal*, a splendid story of the last heroic stand by Celtic paganism against the Irish champions of the Cross, in which the terrible shapes of Celtic superstition, "the Giant Walker" and "the Washer of the Ford," loom monstrously before us, and in which the contending hosts at Moyra are marshalled with fine realism. But Ferguson's genius was to break into even finer flower at the last, and, in *Deirdre and Conary*, published in his final volume of 1880, he reaches his fullest height as a poet. [...] Further notes that Lady Ferguson [née Guinness] published a *History of Ireland Before the Normans* in which she included illustrative poetry by Ferguson prior to their marriage. [See Bartleby.com Great Books Online: link.]

Brian McKenna, *Irish Literature, 1800-1875: A Guide to Information Sources* (Detroit: Gale Research Co. 1978), cites John Pentland Mahaffy, 'Sir Samuel Ferguson,' in *Athenaeum* 88 (1886), 205, an 'elegant tribute' [which] not only
conveys a vivid impression of the man but also a neatly summarizes his literary career'; [Fr.] Matthew Russell, 'In Memoriam,' Irish Monthly 14 (1886); W. B. Yeats, 'The Poetry of Samuel Ferguson', in Dublin University Review; 2 (1886), rep. in Uncollected Prose (1970); also essays by Aubrey de Vere (Irish Monthly, 1887), A. P. Graves (Irish Book Lover, 1910), and Eleanor Hull (New Ireland Review, 1897).


**Chris Morash**, ed., The Hungry Voice (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan 1989), selects "Dublin, A Poem" [omitting 106-310, exc. 126-150], which appeared in Dublin University Magazine Vol. 34. No. 199 (July 1849); "Inheritor and Economist", in Dublin University Magazine, Vol. 33, No. 197 (May 1849) [omitting 500-620]

**Seamus Deane**, gen. ed., The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing (Derry: Field Day 1991), Vol. 1, selects "A Dialogue Between the head and Heart of an Irish Protestant" (1833) [1177-85]; Hibernian Nights' Entertainment (1833) [extracts, "The First Night" & "The Death of the Children of Usnach" [1186-91, 1191-1200], FDA ed. notes that Ferguson's four-part review of Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy appeared in Dublin University Magazine between April and November 1834 but does not supply extract.


**COPAC** lists An account of further explorations at Locmariouer, in Brittany [account of inscribed stones in the sepulchral monument, called Mane Nêlud, at Lochmariaker, Brittany] (1863); Aiden's Grave, etc. (1925); The book of Irish ballads, / edited by D. F. McCarthy.. (1846 Congal. A poem in five books, etc. (1872; 1907); The Cromlech on Howth: A Poem (London: Day 1861); The Cromlech on Howth: A poem. With illuminations from the Books of Kells and of Durrow, and drawings from nature by M. S. [i.e. Miss M. M. Stokes.] With notes on Celtic ornamental art, revised by G. Petrie. (London: 1864); Fasciculus of prints from photographs of casts of Ogham inscriptions (1881); Father Tom and the pope (1906) The Forging of the Anchor. A poem ... illustrated, etc. (1883); "Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy" (1834); The Hibernian Nights' Entertainment (1857; 1887); Ireland's claims to an adequate parliamentary representation of learning in a letter to James Mac Cullagh ...; with an appendix containing correspondence with Mr. Hallam on the claims of Archbishop De Londres to a niche in the new House of Lords; and a letter to Lord Morpeth on the formation of a museum of national antiquities in Dublin (1847); Lays of the Red Branch.... With an introduction by Lady Ferguson (1897); Lays of the Western Gael, and other poems (1865), and Do., With an introduction by A. M. Williams (1888); and Do. (rep. 2001); Leabhar breac: The Speckled book, otherwise styled Leabhar mór dúna doighre, the Great book of dúna doighre; a collection of pieces in Irish and Latin, comp. from ancient sources about the close of the fourteenth century: now for the first time published from the original manuscript in the library of the Royal Irish academy (1876); Ogham inscriptions in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland (1887): The Ogham monuments of Kilkenny, with remarks on certain Ogham formulas, in a letter to John G. A. Prim (1872); On the Patrician documents (1885); On the rudiments of the common law discoverable in the published portion of the Senchus Mor (1867); Our Architecture (1864); Poems (1880); Poems of Sir Samuel Ferguson: with an introduction by Alfred Perceval Graves (Dublin: Talbot Press [1918]); Poems of Sir Samuel Ferguson (Every Irishman's Library 1916); The Poems of Samuel Ferguson. Edited with an introduction by Padraic Colum. (1963); The Remains of St. Patrick … The Confessio and Epistle to Coroticus. Translated into English blank verse (1888); Report to the Council from the Committee of Polite Literature and Antiquities: on inaccuracies of transcription alleged to exist in the Academy's edition of Leabhar na h-Uidhri / Royal Irish Academy. (1875); Selections [from Samuel Ferguson], edited by A. H. Miles. (1891); Shakespearean Breviates. An adjustment [in verse] of twenty-four of the longer plays of Shakespeare to convenient reading limits, by Samuel Ferguson [1810-1886] (1882); John O'Hagan, The Poetry of Sir Samuel Ferguson (1887); Arthur Deering, Sir Samuel Ferguson, poet and antiquarian. A thesis &.c. (1931); Sir Samuel Ferguson in the Ireland of his Day, etc. Lady Mary Catharine Ferguson (1896).

**English Novels 1830-36: A Bibliography of British Fiction** (CEIR / Cardiff) lists The Royal Hibernian Tales: Being a Collection of the Most Entertaining Stories Now Extent (Belfast: Joseph Smyth, High St., 1832), 144pp., 18°. Prefatory address 'To the Reader' (p.[3]) compares the contents to English Nights, Arabian Nights, and Persian and Chinese Tales emphasising their moral and didactic purpose as 'tending both to enrich the fancy and improve the mind' while making claims for the originality of the collection and noting that the stories are 'adapted to every person of every inclination and disposition'. Contents: "The Black Thief and the Knight of the Glen", pp.[5]-19; "Will O’ the Wisp", pp.20-27; "The
Invincibles: Ferguson's response to the Phoenix Park Murders of 1882 are encapsulated in the poem "In Carey's
Who fears ...?: Ferguson attempted to suppress some of his patriotic poems ‘lest my any means, the Nationalists should
claim them for their own’; but, according to Yeats, ‘The suppression was not carried far enough. We claim him in every
line. Irish singers, who are genuinely Irish in thought, subject and style, must, whether they will or no, nourish the forces
that make for the political liberties of Ireland.’ [Q. source.]

Influence: W. B. Yeats’s poem “Fergus and the Druid” is based on the then-recent poem “The Abdication of Fergus
MacRoy”, in which Ferguson makes the Irish king a poet. See John Frayne, ed., Uncollected Prose, Vol. II [1972], p.161:;
‘as the legend was shaped by Ferguson ... he gave up his throne that he might live at peace, hunting the woods’; cited
Daniel Albright, ed., Poems of W. B. Yeats, 1992, Notes, p.430), Note further that the story is told in the Book of Leinster,

Edward Dowden (letter to Ferguson), ‘What seems to me most noteworthy in your poems is the union of culture with
simplicity and strength. Their refinement is lage and strong, not curious and diseased; and they have spaces and
movements which give one a feeling like the sea or the air on a headland. I had not meant to say anything of Congal, but
somehow this came and said itself.’ (McCarthy, ed., Irish Literature, Catholic Univ. of America 1904, p.1,170.)

Aubrey de Vere on Ferguson’s poetry, ‘Its qualities are those characteristic of the noble, not the ignoble poetry - viz,
passion, imagination, vigour, an epic largness of conception, wide human sympathies, vivid and truthful description -while
with them it unites none of the vulgar stimulants for exhausted or morbid poetic appetite, whether the epicurean
seasoning, the skeptical, or the revolutionary.’ (Quoted Justin McCarthy, ed., Irish Literature, Washington 1904, p.1169.)

Richard Ellmann wrote: ‘Sir Samuel Ferguson had been writing dull narratives based on Irish subjects for many years ...
’ (Yeats: The Man and the Masks, Faber 1948).

‘Word cataracts’: ‘Sean Lucy comments that Ferguson’s Congal uses what he calls “the word cataracts of medieval
Irish”, viz.: “the deep-clear-watered, foamy crested, terribly-resounding, / Lofty leaping, prone descending, ocean-calf-
abounding, / Fishy fruitful, salmon-teeming, many coloured, sunny beaming, / Heady-eddied, horrid thund’ring, ocean-
progeny-engend’ring, / Billow-raging, battle-waging, merman-haunted, poet-vaunted, / Royal, patrimonial, old torrent of
Eas-Roe.” (Congal, 1872; see Loreto Todd, The Language of Irish Literature, 1989.)

Music: The forging of the anchor: dramatic scene for bass solo, chorus and orchestra [by] Sir Frederick Bridge (1901;
1902); Irish countryside songs, written, edited, and arranged by Alfred Perceval Graves and Charles Wood. (1914); Lark
in the Clear Air, arranged for music by Havelock Nelson; Edgar Martin Deale, Grayston Ives, Brian Trant, Tom Johnston,
Hal Evans, Donald Cashmore, Roger Fiske, Phyllis Tate, Reginald Jacques, Alec Rowley, Henry Geehl P. J. Ryan, Harry
Dexter Herbert Hughes ((1926); also The Battle of Moira: being the epic poem Congal (1980), ande Do., an adaptation by
Hal Evans, Donald Cashmore, Roger Fiske, Phyllis Tate, Reginald Jacques, Alec Rowley, Henry Geehl P. J. Ryan, Harry
Dexter Herbert Hughes ((1926); also The Battle of Moira: being the epic poem Congal (1980), ande Do., an adaptation by
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passion, imagination, vigour, an epic largness of conception, wide human sympathies, vivid and truthful description -while
with them it unites none of the vulgar stimulants for exhausted or morbid poetic appetite, whether the epicurean
seasoning, the skeptical, or the revolutionary.’ (Quoted Justin McCarthy, ed., Irish Literature, Washington 1904, p.1169.)

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abounding, / Fishy fruitful, salmon-teeming, many coloured, sunny beaming, / Heady-eddied, horrid thund’ring, ocean-
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Music: The forging of the anchor: dramatic scene for bass solo, chorus and orchestra [by] Sir Frederick Bridge (1901;
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Hal Evans, Donald Cashmore, Roger Fiske, Phyllis Tate, Reginald Jacques, Alec Rowley, Henry Geehl P. J. Ryan, Harry
Dexter Herbert Hughes ((1926); also The Battle of Moira: being the epic poem Congal (1980), ande Do., an adaptation by
Michael Hall (1995); also Five Irish songs: for mixed chorus a cappella / Nicholas Maw (1973.)

“Song of Sorrow” [quoted by Ferguson in Part II of his review of Hardiman’srish Minstrelsy, 1831; supra: ‘If you would
go with me to the County Leitrim, / Uilecan dubh O! / I would give the honey of bees and mead as food for you; Uilecan
dubh O! / I shall give you the prospect of ships, and sails, and boats, / Under the tops of the trees, and we returning from
the strand, / And I would never let any sorrow come upon you. / Oh! you are my Uilecan dubh O! // I shall not go with you,
and it is in vain you ask me; Uilecan dubh O! / For your words will not keep me alive without food: Uilecan dubh O! / A
hundred thousand times better for me to be always a maid, / Than to be walking the dew and the wilderness with you: / My
heart has not given to you love nor affection, / And you are not my Uilecan dubh O!"

“The Burial of King Cormac” (“Spread not the beds of Brugh for me / When restless death-bed’s use is done; [...] &c., as
supra)) is the object of an exchange between Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom in the “Eumaeus” episode of Ulysses
(Bodley Head Edn. p.777), on the score of the poem being included in schoolroom poetry books known to Bloom; and
note var. “Rossnaree” in that context.

National Archives: Ferguson’s gave an account of the 14th-18th c. Exchequer Records in his capacity as Deputy Keeper
enhanced by the fact that the originals no longer exist in consequence of the burning of the Public Records Office in the
Namesakes, Rev. Samuel Ferguson of Waterside, Londonderry, author of Some Items of historic interest about the Waterside. Lecture (1902); Brief Biographical Sketches of some Irish Covenanting Ministers who laboured during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Rev., of Waterside, Londonderry (1897); William Stavely: Brief biographical sketch and other material on the Ferniskey man [1743-1825] known as the Apostle of the Covenanters (1993); Burt Castle, County Donegal [from Londonderry Sentinel, 5 April, 1906] (1906). Also, Samuel Ferguson, Dissertatio medica inauguralis de siphylide (1806).