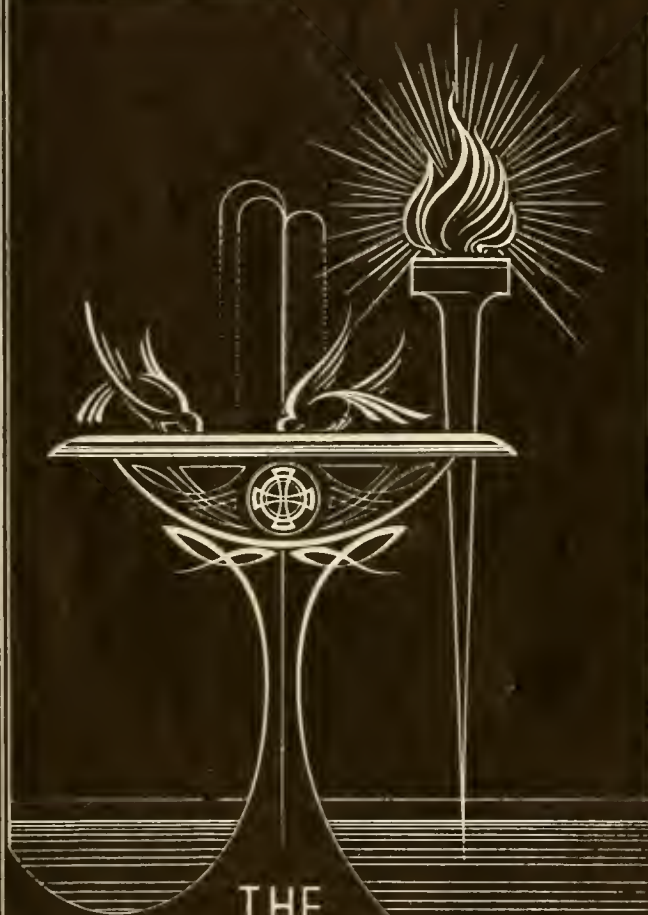


# IRELAND: Elements of her Early Story



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# IRELAND: Elements of her Early Story

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TO THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION

Seán Ua Ceallaigh

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## THE SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

Since the coming of the faith, as previously, the succession to the throne was, in no small degree, determined by the sword. From the time of Laoghaire to that of Niall Frasach who ended his days in Iona the number of kings who died natural deaths is almost negligible. Apart from Lughaidh, son of Laoghaire, killed by lightning, Keating has record only of Muircheartach grandson of Lodharn king of Alba who died; Diarmuid and Blathmhac who both succumbed to the Buidhe Chonaill, having expelled Mochuda from Rathain; Loingseach who died after a reign of eight years; Flaithbheartach who, having reigned seven years, passed away at Ard Macha, and Domhnall who died after a reign of forty-two years.

During the same period we read of Aonghus king of Munster and his wife, killed at the battle of Ceall Osnadh in Carlow; Tuathal Maolgharbh killed by Maol Mor; kings of Leinster and Connacht slain; Diarmuid mac Fearghusa slain at Rath Beag and his head brought to Cluain mic Nois; the king of Connacht and his brother slain also, and the bloody battle of Cul Dreimhne fought. Later, Aodh Slaine was slain by Conall; Aodh Uairiodnach "of the cold pangs" and his successor Maolchobha both killed in battle; Suibhne Meann slain by Conghal Claon; Conall Caol and Ceallach, who for thirteen years held the joint sovereignty, both slain; Seachnasach slain, too, after a reign of six years; Ceannfhaolaidh, after a reign of four years, slain, likewise, by his successor, and Fionnachta Fleadhach, slain by Aodh at Greallach Doluidh, after a reign of seven years.

After this, Congal, having burned Kildare, church and district, met with a sudden and instant death; Fearghal, in whose reign Neachtain expelled the monks of Iona for animadverting on his vices, fell in battle. Foghartach was slain, after a year on the throne, as was Cionaoth, in whose reign of four years the relics of Adhamhnan were brought to Ireland. There is record, at this juncture, of a battle at Murbolg between the Dal Riada and the Picts or Cruithnigh, and, according to Bede, a further battle, at Drom Dearg, between the two kings of the Cruithnigh for the mastery of Scotland. The fighting in Scotland was continued into the reign of Aodh Ollan, when the Dal Riada were defeated by Aonghus king of the Picts, who burned Dun Creige and seized and imprisoned two sons of the king of the Dal Riada. In the course of Aodh Ollan's reign of nine years Munster won the battle of Bealach Feile over Leinster; and in a battle between the high-king himself and Aodh, king of Leinster, the latter fell with many nobles and nine thousand followers. Aodh Ollan was slain at Ceanannas by Domhnall son of Murchadh. During the reign of Domhnall, there was much fighting between Ros Fhailghe and Munster, and Osraighe and Leinster; and, during that of his successor Niall Frasach—both already referred to as having died on their pillows—

between Ui Broin and Ui Maine, Cineal Conaill and Cineal Eoghain. Donnchadh successor of Niall Frasach died also on his pillow, and his successor Aodh Oirdnidhe son of Niall Frasach was slain at the battle of Da Fhearta. In his reign the Danish invasions first began to be felt seriously. Of the high-kings who intervened before the time of Brian Boirmhe only one fell in battle. Niall Caille was drowned; Conchubhar, Maelsheachlain, Aodh Finnliath, Niall Glundubh and Donnchadh died, as did Ceallachan of Cashel. Conghalach was slain at Ard Macha by the Lochlannaigh of Dublin and their Leinster allies. The main events of these reigns are set out in the general story of the Northmen's ravages in Ireland.

Notwithstanding the proportion of violent deaths here noted, the length of the average reign in Ireland, even during its stormiest periods, compares very creditably with those of other countries at their best. Appended is the list of kings in Ireland from the coming of the faith to the coming of the Normans; and overleaf, a list of the Popes during the same period.

| Inaugurated<br>A.D.             | Reigned<br>years | Inaugurated<br>A.D.                      | Reigned<br>years |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--|------------------|
| 377 Niall Naoighiallach         | . 27             | 742 Domhnall mac Mur-                    |                  |
| 404 Daithi mac Fiachrach        | . 23             | chadha . . .                             | 42               |
| 427 Laoghaire mac Neill         | . 26             | 784 Niall Frasach                        | . 4              |
| 453 Oileall Molt . . .          | . 20             | 788 Donnchadh mac Domh-                  |                  |
| 473 Lughaidh mac Laoghaire.     | 20               | naill . . .                              | 27               |
| 493 Muircheartach mac Earca     | 24               | 815 Aodh Oirdnighe . . .                 | 24               |
| 517 Tuathal Maolgharbh . . .    | . 13             | 839 Conchubhar mac Donn-                 |                  |
| 530 Diarmuid mac Fearghusa      | 22               | chadha . . .                             | 14               |
| 552 Fearghus agus Domhnall.     | 1                | 853 Niall Caille . . .                   | 15               |
| 553 Eochaidh agus Baodan . . .  | . 3              | 868 Tuirgeis . . .                       | 13               |
| 556 Ainmire mac Seadna . . .    | . 3              | 881 Maelsheachlain mac Maol-             |                  |
| 559 Baodan . . . . .            | . 1              | ruanaidh . . .                           | 16               |
| 560 Aodh mac Ainmire . . .      | . 27             | 897 Aodh Finnliath . . .                 | 16               |
| 587 Aodh Slaine agus Colman.    | 6                | 913 Flann Siona . . .                    | 38               |
| 593 Aodh Uairiodnach . . .      | . 27             | 951 Niall Glundubh . . .                 | 3                |
| 620 Maolcobha . . . . .         | . 4              | 954 Domhnall mac Floinn . . .            | 20               |
| 624 Suibhne Meann . . . . .     | . 13             | 974 Congallach mac Mael-                 |                  |
| 367 Domhnall mac Aodha . . .    | . 13             | mhithidh . . .                           | 16               |
| 650 Conall Caol agus Ceallach.  | 13               | 989 Domhnall mac Muirchear-              |                  |
| 663 Blathmac agus Diarmuid.     | 7                | taigh . . . . .                          | 10               |
| 670 Seachnasach . . . . .       | . 6              | 999 Maelsheachlain Mor . . .             | 23               |
| 676 Ceannfhaolaidh . . . . .    | . 4              | 1022 Brian Boirmhe . . .                 | 12               |
| 680 Fionnachta Fleadhach . . .  | . 7              | 1034 Maelsheachlain Mor ( <i>Iter.</i> ) | 9                |
| 687 Loingseach mac Aonghusa     | 8                | 1043 Donnchadh mac Briain . . .          | 50               |
| 695 Conall Cinn Mhaghair . . .  | . 9              | 1093 Toirdealbhach Ua Briain             | 12               |
| 704 Fearghal mac Maolduin . . . | . 17             | 1105 Muircheartach Ua Briain             | 20               |
| 721 Foghartach mac Neill . . .  | . 1              | 1125 Toirdealbhach Ua Con-               |                  |
| 722 Cionadh . . . . .           | . 4              | chubhair . . . . .                       | 20               |
| 726 Flaithbheartach . . . . .   | . 7              | 1145 Muircheartach mac Neill             | 18               |
| 733 Aodh Ollan . . . . .        | . 9              | 1163 Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair             | 9                |

There is considerable discrepancy between these dates, drawn from Keating's *Foras Feasa*, and those given by other annalists and chronologists.



## LIST OF THE POPES

| POPE            | Consecrated<br>A.D. | POPE             | Consecrated<br>A.D. | POPE            | Consecrated<br>A.D. |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Damasus I .     | 366                 | John V .         | 685                 | Leo VII .       | 936                 |
| Sitricius .     | 384                 | Conon .          | 686                 | Stephen VIII .  | 939                 |
| Anastasius I .  | 399                 | Sergius I .      | 687                 | Marinus II .    | 942                 |
| Innocent I .    | 401                 | John VI .        | 701                 | Agapetus II .   | 946                 |
| Zosimus .       | 417                 | John VII .       | 705                 | John XII .      | 955                 |
| Boniface I .    | 418                 | Sisinnius .      | 708                 | Leo VIII .      | 963                 |
| Celestine I .   | 422                 | Constantine .    | 708                 | Benedict V .    | 964                 |
| Sixtus III .    | 432                 | Gregory II .     | 715                 | John XIII .     | 965                 |
| Leo I .         | 440                 | Gregory III .    | 731                 | Benedict VI .   | 973                 |
| Hilary .        | 461                 | Zachary .        | 741                 | Benedict VII .  | 974                 |
| Simplicius .    | 468                 | Stephen II .     | 752                 | John XIV .      | 983                 |
| Felix III .     | 483                 | Paul I .         | 757                 | John XV .       | 985                 |
| Gelasius I .    | 492                 | Stephen III .    | 768                 | Gregory V .     | 996                 |
| Anastasius II . | 496                 | Adrian I .       | 772                 | Sylvester II .  | 999                 |
| Symmachus .     | 498                 | Leo III .        | 795                 | John XVII .     | 1003                |
| Hormisdas .     | 514                 | Stephen IV .     | 816                 | John XVIII .    | 1003                |
| John I .        | 523                 | Paschal I .      | 817                 | Sergius IV .    | 1009                |
| Felix IV .      | 526                 | Eugene II .      | 824                 | Benedict VIII . | 1012                |
| Boniface II .   | 530                 | Valentine .      | 827                 | John XIX .      | 1024                |
| John II .       | 533                 | Gregory IV .     | 827                 | Benedict IX .   | 1032                |
| Agapetus .      | 535                 | Sergius II .     | 844                 | Sylvester III . | 1045                |
| Sylverius .     | 536                 | Leo IV .         | 847                 | Gregory VI .    | 1045                |
| Vigilius .      | 537                 | Benedict III .   | 855                 | Clement II .    | 1046                |
| Pelagius .      | 556                 | Nicholas I .     | 858                 | Damasus II .    | 1048                |
| John III .      | 561                 | Adrian II .      | 867                 | Leo IX .        | 1049                |
| Benedict I .    | 575                 | John VIII .      | 872                 | Victor II .     | 1045                |
| Pelagius II .   | 579                 | Marinus I .      | 882                 | Stephen IX .    | 1057                |
| Gregory I .     | 590                 | Adrian III .     | 884                 | Benedict X .    | 1058                |
| Sabinian .      | 604                 | Stephen V .      | 885                 | Nicholas II .   | 1059                |
| Boniface III .  | 607                 | Formosus .       | 891                 | Alexander II .  | 1061                |
| Boniface IV .   | 608                 | Boniface VI .    | 896                 | Gregory VII .   | 1073                |
| Deusdedit .     | 615                 | Stephen VI .     | 896                 | Victor III .    | 1086                |
| Boniface V .    | 619                 | Romanus .        | 897                 | Urban II .      | 1088                |
| Honorius I .    | 625                 | Theodore II .    | 897                 | Paschal II .    | 1099                |
| Severinus .     | 639                 | John IX .        | 898                 | Gelasius II .   | 1118                |
| John IV .       | 640                 | Benedict IV .    | 900                 | Calixtus II .   | 1119                |
| Theodore I .    | 642                 | Leo V .          | 903                 | Honorius II .   | 1124                |
| Martin I .      | 649                 | Christopher .    | 903                 | Innocent II .   | 1130                |
| Eugene I .      | 654                 | Sergius III .    | 904                 | Celestine II .  | 1143                |
| Vitalian .      | 657                 | Anastasius III . | 911                 | Lucius II .     | 1144                |
| Adeodatus .     | 672                 | Lando .          | 913                 | Eugene II .     | 1145                |
| Donus .         | 676                 | John X .         | 914                 | Anastasius V .  | 1153                |
| Agatho .        | 678                 | Leo VI .         | 928                 | Adrian IV .     | 1154                |
| Leo II .        | 682                 | Stephen VII .    | 929                 | Alexander III . | 1159                |
| Benedict II .   | 684                 | John XI .        | 931                 |                 |                     |

This list does not include the 12 Antipopes that arose within the period.

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THIS book is based in the main on the following publications. Works like the Iliad and the Odyssey, it will be obvious, are referred to only for purposes of comparison with our Heroic and Ossianic literature.

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O'Connor, O'Grady, Stokes, Sullivan; magazines, journals, and  
the other publications to which reference is made.

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The author's thanks are offered to Mr. John J. Buckley for assistance kindly given in connection with the illustrations.

## INTRODUCTION



EATING, the Anglo-Irish historian, in his day, like the more earnest writers of our own, felt called upon to refute with mingled vehemence and scorn the studied disparagement of Ireland presented by English writers who had preceded him for a period of four hundred years. He singled out for special censure and discredit Cambrensis, Camden, Spenser, Hanmer, Berckley, Moryson, Campion,

Davies "and every other new alien who has written on Ireland, inasmuch as it is almost after the manner of the beetle every one of them acts when treating of the Irish," that is, "they alight not on any delicate flower that may be in the field or any blossom in the garden, but bustle until they meet with ordure and proceed to roll themselves therein." He continues, in a tone of unaffected resentment: "There is not a historian of all those who have written on Ireland from that epoch to this, but has persistently sought to cast reproach and blame on the naturalised foreign settlers as on the native race." They write not of their valour, their virtues or their piety, he goes on to complain, their literary assemblies unique in Europe, the privileges they granted the learned, the numberless abbeys they founded, the worship they liberally endowed, the reverence they evinced for churchmen and prelates, the maintenance they provided for orphans and the poor, the hospitality they extended to guests, "so that no people in Europe surpassed them in generosity." No, relatively little is recorded of them that is not derogatory.

Still resenting the strange perversion of human taste that seeks out and lingers over scattered cesspools while choosing to remain blind to all that adorned "an island abounding in milk and honey"—as testified by Bede—the historian-priest,



with the force and authority of a scholar of travel, indirectly vindicates by a telling contrast even the least worthy among our race. "There is no country without its lower order," he writes. "Consider the rough folk of Scotland, the rabble-rout of Great Britain, the plebeians of Flanders, the insignificant fellows of France, the poor wretches of Spain, the ignoble caste of Italy, the unfree tribes of every country—and a multitude of ill-conditioned evil ways will be found in them." Nor is he quite content with this retort. "Fynes Moryson has omitted to record anything good of the Irish," he adds, and "the dignity of history cannot be allowed to his composition." Others are similarly disposed of, including some of the early Continental writers. Stanihurst he likens, for his ignorance of Irish, to a blind man trying to discriminate between two colours—"incapable of reading either the laws of the land or its mediaeval lore, and therefore incompetent to express an opinion." He had, in fact, three defects: he was, in addition to being ignorant of the language, "too young and too ambitious to be a competent historian." So he would pursue them no further. "They have no authority for thus writing in disparagement of Ireland, and are but repeating the tales of false witnesses hostile to the country." In his own personal ardour for the truth he quotes the rules of Polydorus for the writing of history: in the first place the author should not dare to assert anything false, in the second he should not dare to omit setting down every truth. But, with all respect to the great historian and the authority he quotes, our native canons in this regard might have sufficed for the national guidance: they most manifestly make provision for the truth, the ample truth, and nothing deviating from the truth; and to this no one has borne more ardent testimony than has Keating himself.

"In Pagan times in Ireland," he says, "no professor of seanchus could rank as an ollamh or author in seanchus, who had been known once to falsify historical truth." The *Foras Feasa* gives a list of twenty such authors, before the time of Patrick, and one authoress Bridhe of the precepts. Similarly no one who had given a partial judgment could hold the kindred rank of breitheamh or judge. Connla, for example, never delivered an unjust judgment, for "he was a virtuous, truly upright man according to the light of nature." Seancha

“never gave judgment without having fasted the previous night.” Sean, Fachtna and Morann are among the others whose exemplary judgments are referred to. Living in pre-Christian times, they were subject to *geasa* to ensure where necessary their judicial probity. Later, the offending judge was mulcted for his offence, not, as now, remunerated beyond the intrinsic value of his services to render him impervious to bribery.

After the coming of Patrick it was agreed to have the seanchus approved and purified by three kings, three bishops and three ollamhs. When revised in this way, the nobles decreed that it be entrusted to the prelates, the prelates in turn ordering that it be copied in their own chief churches. In the old books thus compiled,<sup>1</sup> or copies made from them, the seanchus was preserved “without doing injustice to any one Irish noble as against another.” A summary of the records in the various volumes, being approved every third year at the Tara Feis, was kept in the Psalter of Tara. “The ard-ollamhs inscribed all that were approved of the laws and customs and all that were confirmed of the annals and records in the Roll of the Kings called the Psalter of Tara.”<sup>2</sup> And “no custom or record that did not agree with that book was regarded as genuine.” Hence, in the words of the *Foras Feasa* again, “the Irish records are reliable as the records of any other country, considering that they are borne witness to by the writings of old Pagan authors, and by their having been approved by the clerics and prelates of the Irish church.” It is put in another way in the Tripartite Life of the National Apostle: Until Patrick came, the right to speak in public was given but to three—a historian with a good memory, a poet, a judge. Since Patrick came, these are under subjection to the men of the Lasting Language, to wit, of the Holy Canon.

These assurances notwithstanding, there seems a disposition among modern writers to attribute to our early

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<sup>1</sup>They included the Books of Ard Macha, Gleann da Loch, Ui Chongmhala, Cluain mic Nois, Cluain Eidneach; the Yellow Book of Moling, Black Book of Molaga, Psalter of Cashel, and the rest of the chief books of Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> F.F. ii. 251.



chroniclers and annalists a tendency to tamper with historical truth in the interest of their royal patrons. The compilation of "the Book of Rights" has been suggested as a case in point. To us it would seem as reasonable to contend that the Life of St. Patrick, whose activities were confined in the main within the sphere of influence of Laoghaire and his relatives, was written with a view to the aggrandisement of Laoghaire's line as that the Book of Rights aimed at unfairly enhancing the dynastic claims of Brian Boirmhe. Casting about for motives is as reprehensible in the one case as in the other and would be as justifiable.

There is the further tendency to attribute a mythical origin to early Irish leaders, because somewhat similar characters are met with in classical mythology. As logical would it be to question the existence of the saintly founder of Cluain mic Nois because he is referred to as the Son of the Carpenter and, like Alexander the Great, died at the significant age of thirty-three, or to doubt the main facts of the Battle of Clontarf because the *bean sidhe* Aoibhill na Carraige Leithe is recorded as having appeared there to Brian and, by foreshadowing his imminent death, inspired his historic will and testament.

The fact is, our historical literature is marked from the earliest times by a manifest regard for truth and, while recording the virtues of the race in generous measure, does not lack details of traits which, were an ideal world feasible, we would fain have eliminated from our Annals. Students with the mind will find examples of such undesirable traits in the early lapse of the wife of Partolan, the wayward characters of Macha Mongruadh and Meadhbh, the antecedents of Lugaidh Riabh nDearg who ruled at the dawn of the Christian era; in the later lapse of Lupeta sister of Patrick, the chequered stories of the two Gormflaiths, the licentiousness of Maghnus Mac Donnsluibhe Ui Eochadha on the eve of the Normans' coming. Interspersed are records of discords, bloody battles, confiscations, cattle preys, violation of sanctuary, profanation of churches, as well as phenomena of peculiar range, embracing the appearance of comets and uncommon signs in the heavens, frequent snowfalls and strange showers sometimes, it would seem, recorded symbolically, novel piscatorial gifts from the trackless sea, varying

yields of fruit, now scant, now abundant, plagues affecting man and beast.<sup>1</sup>

The elements that give its tone to the crowded story, however, are the innate modesty, intellectual energy, artistic eminence, evangelistic ardour, instinctive truthfulness, self-respect, idealism and practical patriotism of the people throughout the ages. Fial daughter of Mileadh died of shame because she and her husband Lugaidh unexpectedly met on emerging together from their respective bathing places—he from Loch Luighdeach, she from the river flowing out of it. Emer when wooed by Cuchulainn was remarkable for her chastity and sweet speech, and Cuchulainn's own

<sup>1</sup> According to the Annals of Ulster, the moon was turned into blood Good Friday night 673; the nativity of St. Martin, 691; the twelfth of the Kalends of March, 787; the sky was blood red on the night of St. Stephen's Festival; in 683, Loch Neagh was turned into blood; in 865 Loch Leibhinn in Westmeath was turned into blood which became lumps of gore like "lights" around its border; in 877 a shower which fell was found in lumps of gore and blood upon the plains, twenty years later a shower of blood was shed in Ard Cianachta. The showers were not always so awe-inspiring: in 717, for instance, it rained a shower of honey and a shower of blood, and there was an eclipse of the full moon; in 763 three showers fell in Inis Eoghain—of white silver, wheat and honey.

In 676 a bright comet was seen in September and October; in 744 and again in 764 a terrible and wonderful sign was observed in the stars; in 748 ships with their crews were seen in the air over Cluain mic Nois; in 785 a terrible vision in Cluain mic Nois and great repentance throughout all Ireland; in 910 two suns were seen together the day before the Month of May; in 911 a comet made its appearance; in 916; the heavens seemed to glow with comets; in 1018 "the hairy star" appeared for the space of a fortnight in autumn time; in 1023 there were eclipses of the sun and moon.

In 752 a whale was cast ashore at Warrenpoint having three teeth of gold weighing each fifty ounces, and one was taken to the altar of the church of Bangor; in 758 Beann Muilt poured forth a stream with fishes; in 826 Foreigners made a great slaughter of sea-hogs on the coast of Ard Cianachta South; in 867 there was a strange eruption of water from Sliabh Cualann with numbers of little black fishes. In 890 it is recorded that the sea cast ashore in Alba a female whose length was 195 feet, the length of her hair 17 feet, of a finger of her hand 7 feet, of her nose 7 feet also, and she was altogether whiter than a swan. In 1029 a man was cast ashore at Corca Baiscinn who measured eight feet from the head to the small of the back; and in 1118, following an earthquake, mermaids were taken by fishermen at Lisarglinn in Ossory and at Waterford.



modesty is attested by the story of the approaching women who, by awakening his sense of shame at Eamhain Macha, the day on which he took arms, diverted his gaze towards his chariot, and thus helped to assuage his fury.

“ Noblest face is his, I see ;  
He respects all womankind—”

even when in the grip of a very whirlpool of burning rage. And why should we expect otherwise from the idol of the Red Branch Knights, first Order of Chivalry in Europe, heroes of an ancient epic which is acknowledged to be one of the most precious monuments of the world's literature. Their worthy successors, the Fiana Fail or national militia, were bound never to accept a dowry with a wife, never to deceive a woman. The grand motto of these early heroes of our race was strength in our hands, virtue in our hearts, truth ever on our lips. Nor does the evidence of their valour and their virtue rest solely on a motto which has survived for nigh two thousand years. “ The sea between Ireland and Britain being so billowy and restless during the whole year, it is navigable only a very few days,” wrote Solinus early in the third century in obvious palliation of the failure of the conquering Romans to invade our shores. “ They had heard of the power of the Romans, but they never had felt it.” The Britons, on the other hand, wrote Constantius Chlorus at the close of the third century, “ readily yielded to the arms and standards of the Romans.” Nor is this all. “ Ireland,” wrote Zimmer in our own day, “ was the only land in western Europe that escaped the Germanic invasions.” While affording asylum to Gaulish refugees from Gothic aggression, and sending its own sons and daughters with spiritual balm to ravaged Europe, Ireland regarded Germanic ambitions and Roman designs with supreme indifference, and eventually routed the Norse invader from her sacred shores. And it is a fitting testimony to the abiding chivalry of her warrior race that in the days of our latest native ruler, as in the days of our greatest, a lone lady might make the circuit of Erin with the certainty of being received everywhere with characteristic homage and hospitality.

As the six greatest women of ancient times after the Mother of God were held to be almost entirely Irish, so “ the

four principal languages," in the words of the *Seanchus Mor*, "were Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Irish." The people had a wholesome conceit of native institutions, and in every activity of the national life demanded a high standard of merit. If a bishop conferred orders on one not competent, for instance, he was compelled to give seven cumhals in gold for the honour of the Creator. Similarly the offending physician, like the unworthy judge, was subject to penalties commensurate with his offence. Virtue and integrity were universally enjoined : industry and excellence eventuated. The evidence is for all the world to see in our illuminated manuscripts, exquisite literature, peerless sculpture, enchanting metal-work, all executed with a devotion so constant and so passionate as to seem beyond the conception of the average mind. Thus have fructified the ambition and skill of our early artists, thus have come the just fame of our early teachers, the impartiality of our numberless historians, the proverbial respect for our comprehensive code of laws. Notwithstanding pillage and destruction by Dane and Norman it is admitted that no museum in the world save that of Athens is richer than ours in artistic memorials of a great past, the chief of them stamped in imperishable letters of bewildering ingenuity with the names of the devoted artists who have left us such priceless treasures. When an itinerant unbeliever enters the strong room of our National Museum and, confronted with the Ardagh Chalice and the Tara Brooch, suggests "these surely cannot be the work of Irishmen," he is simply referred to the elegant epigraphs which in appropriate but unobtrusive settings establish their Irish craftsmanship. When his brother moves among the more venerable of the libraries of Europe, the illuminated manuscripts and the ancient glosses left there by our missionaries confirm for him the lesson of early Ireland's eminence in the domain of art and intellect. Through these scattered manuscripts we can visualise the industry of generations of Irish pilgrims, the artistry of numberless Irish scribes who "carried their brains on the points of their pens" and dowered us with memorials like the Book of Kells, "one of the most interesting and beautiful manuscripts which has ever come from the hand of man."

While leading authorities admit that "this ancient Irish volume" occupies "a position of abiding permanence amongst



the illuminated manuscripts of the world," unwitting vandals periodically recommend, on the groundless plea of utility so alien to the immemorial instincts of our race, that we abandon the ornate letters used by all our scribes from Colm Cille to Michael O'Clery and from Michael O'Clery to "Aonghus Draoi," and thus substitute assured orthographical chaos for our peerless phonetic system. These unthinking reformers urge in the guise of a gratuitous plea for Europeanism that we discard, for the literary symbols of our oppressors, the most elegant and legible caligraphy ever known to the world, the characters which constitute the great distinguishing mark of our national language, which have regulated its swelling harmony for fifteen hundred years, and are alone capable of accurately and adequately conveying the elusive sounds and the deep melody of our uncontaminated speech. Not only would these reformers treat with disdain the unique orthography evolved, through long centuries of unremitting attention and observation, by the great masters of our literature, they would anglicise our native accents by clothing them in alien letters which, to the Irish eye and ear, will always bear their English phonetic values. But no more now than in the days of Sean the Proud will the Gael corrupt his ancient speech by divorcing it from the characters which have moulded and preserved it. In them are enshrined and mirrored the mental and manual strivings of fifty generations of our artists and sages. They are the key to the unreckoned volumes of our native literature lying unpublished in the older libraries of the world. Failing the general use of them by the masses our literary heritage would soon become the vanishing perquisite of the book-worm and our ancient art lose half its meaning for the multitude entitled to a common share in its inheritance. For be it not forgotten that in the patterns of the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow are found the models for the ornamentation of the Tara Brooch, while the designs of the Tara Brooch and the High Cross at Ahenny, Kilkispeen, Co. Tipperary, are held by no mean judges to have a common origin. Further, the famous Maghera doorway has been likened to a page of illuminated manuscript, all tending to justify the conclusion that the matchless pages of Ireland's sacred writings were "the precursors of her decorated churches," and that the designs



thus sketched by the pencil were also carved by the chisel on our stone monuments. Thus are our exquisite sculpture, unique metal work and illuminated manuscripts shown to be interdependent, flesh of each other's flesh and bone of each other's bone, though reformers who would have themselves regarded as mere utilitarians refuse to see it—even seek to consign our unique caligraphy to some Chamber of Sighs in the Museum while all the peoples of Christendom zealously lead less respectable evidences of their own past forward to positions of respect and influence and light. But Ireland will not heed such "reformers." Ireland will not turn its back on the creators and custodians and carriers of her literature, will not prove unappreciative of their untiring labours in face of the difficulties, the privations and the native jealousies that ever beset them in every land:

"We even hear of bitter enmities between the rival scholars of different nationalities in the court of Charlemagne," writes Zimmer, "and we read complaints of the Irish monk Dubwin in the eleventh century, who accuses the Frankish monks of looking down upon his fellow-labourers." "Another at Soissons, benumbed with cold," writes Gougaud, "envies a monk in the same town, *viz.*, Carloman, son of Charles the Bald, the good fire at which he warms himself." And, "'twere pleasant for us to-day, O Maelbhrighde," wrote an Irish pilgrim at Mayence in 1072, in the Chronicle of Marianus Scotus, "if the farm workers of the monastery of St. Martin had not made a trap for me on the platform of the common house." Centuries earlier the jealousy of Wilfrid and Egbert had manifested itself in England and Scotland, that of their countryman Boniface in Germany. But the characteristic earnestness of the Irish monks remained unaffected. A story in point is found in *Silva Gadelica*: "Three penitents resolved to quit the world for the aesthetic life, and so sought the wilderness. After exactly a year's silence one of them whispered, 'It is a good life we lead.' At the next year's end the second answered, 'It is so.' Another year having expired, the third exclaimed, 'If I cannot have peace and quiet here I must go back to the world.'"

Out of this spirit of constancy sprang the efficiency of our schools until the seat of learning attached to our Primatial See came to be regarded as the metropolis of Christendom

and our sea-girt land as the acknowledged Island of Saints and Scholars. Tradition said her sacred soil was borne to the East to be there spread as a trusted remedy against snakes and reptiles; the Venerable Bede records that the hallowed leaves of her earliest manuscripts were used as a remedy against disease, while Giraldus Cambrensis, who came with the incredulous Normans, regarded her writings as the work of angelic hands. The potency of her soil as of her writings was appreciated oversea. Waves of her evangelists literally swept and irrigated less favoured lands. Crowning all, the obligation of allegiance to the motherland was ne'er lost sight of, save by traitors:

"What Maolruain of Tamhlacht heard from learned men concerning the desertion of the land was that Patrick and the faithful . . . will be repulsive in Heaven to any man who deserts his land except so far as to remove from the east of it to the west, and from the north to the south." They loved their country and everything worthy of it; cherished culture, harmony, justice, truth, the physical and moral well-being of the race. "Three periods at which the world is worthless," says the *Seanchus Mor*, are "the time of a plague, the time of a general war, the time of a dissolution of express contracts." Further, "he who fails to fulfil his contract is more odious than plague or war." And so, after four centuries and more of the turmoil provoked by the Anglo-Normans since their advent, native Irish respect for the law remained so marked that Sir John Davies, solicitor-general to James I, declared in his Discovery: "There is no nation of people under the sun that doth love equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish . . . the truth is that in the time of peace the Irish are more fearful to offend the law than the English or any other nation whatsoever."

The high ideals of scribe and smith and sculptor, the sincerity of saint and seer and scholar, even the charm of the very soil being thus palpably established, the spirit of the seanchaidhe and his devotion to the truth must not alone remain open to question. We must not, in our day, follow the example of the ingrates who dubbed Herodotus "the father of liars." Rather let us credit our annalists and historians with the love of truth characteristic of the race they have adorned and done much to immortalise, let



us award them without grudge the meed of gratitude their monumental labours have earned them. If we find their ancient dates and their geography somewhat at variance with the theories of modern experts on such matters, let us at least admit that, like ourselves, they interpreted to the best of their ability the material to which they gained access by infinite effort, and duly appreciate the mine of information they have bequeathed us for the elucidation of the long story of our country's colonisation and development. Their conceptions may have been far-fetched in some instances ; but their intentions, manifestly for the best, were always meritorious, and the obstacles between them and the historian's eternal objective so colossal that impartial students can but marvel at the relative success which attended their laborious quest for the prime sources of our Gaelic stock and the true courses of their devious wanderings.

The investigations of modern scholarship, like those of the ancient school, lead to two theories regarding the movements of our remote ancestors : one of a movement from West to East, the other of a movement from East to West. The age-long tradition of the eastern origin of the Gael constitutes in brief outline the burthen of the opening chapter of this volume and is a subject of growing criticism. The other theory is of an Aryan movement from West to East. Though found in germ in the first, it is given a visionary origin in the submerged Atlantis,<sup>1</sup> described in his Dialogue by Plato the Greek philosopher who flourished about 400 B.C. Atlantis, lying off Gibraltar,<sup>2</sup> is said to have disappeared in "one day and one fatal night" through a devastating convulsion of nature, a few of its highest mountains alone surviving. Plato is held to imply that this fatherland of

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<sup>1</sup> "If we admit that it was from Armenia the Aryans stocked Europe and India, there is no reason why the original population of Armenia should not have been themselves colonists from Atlantis. . . the ancient nation that existed before Greek was Greek, Celt was Celt, Hindoo was Hindoo, Goth was Goth."—*Atlantis*, 457, 461.

<sup>2</sup> "The Dolphin's Ridge," or submerged island whose three-pronged form, as disclosed by soundings, pointed respectively towards the west of Ireland, north-east coast of South America and West coast of Africa.

—*Atlantis*, 468.

nations exercised an imperial sway on both sides of the Mediterranean seaboard ;<sup>1</sup> and recent studies suggest that Atlantis, while colonising Europe from its westernmost shores even to the very banks of the Indus, peopled America, north and south, gave its religion of sun-worship alike to Persia and Peru, its knowledge of letters to the Mayans of Central America as to the Phœnicians of the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> "The gods and goddesses of the ancient Greeks, the Phœnicians, the Hindus, and the Scandinavians are simply as the kings and queens and heroes of Atlantis." Pursuing this line of argument, it is held that the first landing at Dun na mBarc on the south-west coast of Ireland by Ceasair and her company to escape the Flood represented a survival from Atlantis ;<sup>3</sup> that Muir Caisp, so much mentioned in the story of the earlier occupations of Ireland, is not the Caspian in the East but the Casperian Sea named from the island of Casperia off the Portuguese coast ; that Scithia was a settlement of Scots in Alpine Gaul, and marked a stage in the movement eastward, not the territory four hundred miles square, bounded on the west by the Ister or Danube and on the south by the Euxine as described by Herodotus and Pomponius Mela, still less as extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The landings of the Fomoraigh, as well as the wanderings from Spain to Egypt of ancestors of Mileadh and their association with linguistic development, give further colour to this view. A concurrent and corroborative though independent theory is that "whereas the earlier philologists took it for granted that the original population before its division into linguistic groups was located in Western Asia, the later philologists are strongly inclined to

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<sup>1</sup> "All the civilisations of Europe, Asia and Africa radiated from the Mediterranean: the Hindoo-Aryans radiated from the north-west ; they were kindred to the Persians who are next door neighbours to the Arabians (cousins of the Phœnicians) who lived alongside of the Egyptians who had in turn derived their civilisation from the Phœnicians."—*Atlantis*, 58.

<sup>2</sup> This theory is learnedly discussed in a new and revised edition of "The Story of Ireland," now in the press.

<sup>3</sup> "This people must have sent out colonies to the shores of France, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Denmark and Norway, who bore with them the acts and implements of civilised life."—*Atlantis*, 248-9.



place its home in Europe in the region to the south-east of the Baltic Sea.”<sup>1</sup>

What is beyond controversy is that the Celts are found established in the heart of Europe at an early period and expanding almost simultaneously East, South and West. It is to be inferred from Livy, the Latin historian of Rome, who flourished at the dawn of the Christian era, that as early as the seventh century B.C. Celtic domination extended from the Rhine to the Loire; while other Latin and Greek writers generally admit its spread over Central Europe between 650 B.C. and 250 B.C. The Celt occupied the upper valleys of the Danube, Rhine, Rhone, Elbe; and these waterways were the main avenues for transcontinental commerce in metal, amber, salt and other products of the time. While the Elder Tarquin reigned in Rome, from 619 B.C. to 579 B.C., Livy tells us further, the supremacy among the Celts belonged to the Bituriges of south-eastern France. To the Celtic land they gave King Ambigatus, a man remarkable alike for warlike prowess and private resources. Under his rule Gaul so abounded in people and agricultural wealth that the government of so vast a population seemed almost impossible. The valley of the Po in northern Italy was also held by them. About 390 B.C. the Senones, a powerful section of these Gauls, in reprisal for a breach of faith, marched down through Etruria and defeated the Roman army some nine miles from Rome, which they laid in ashes.

A century or so later the same enterprising Celts appear in Macedonia, overrun the Balkan Peninsula as far as Delphi, even attempt to plunder the temple of the famous oracle. They assailed the frontiers of Alexander's Empire, as chiefs of the Fian are said to have done in a later age, and swept “the region whence our early records bring the Fir Bolg.” Their leader, Bolgios, as recorded by the Greek historian Pausanias who flourished in the middle of the second century, A.D. invaded Macedonia, 282 A.D., defeated, and slew in battle the Macedonian king. From Macedonia they proceeded further east and settled in Galatia, a little below the southern shores of the Euxine. Two centuries later we hear for the first time of the Belgic Gauls and their country Belgium,

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<sup>1</sup> “Phases of Irish History.”—MacNeill.

indicating a simultaneous westerly expansion. Caesar regarded these Belgae as a Germano-Celtic people, as did Tacitus; and St. Jerome in his day found the Volcae in Galatia and in Treves speaking "languages that differed but as dialects of the same speech." Ptolemy found the same stock represented in Ireland: he names three colonies that succeeded each other along the Leinster coast from south to north as Brigantes, Couci and Menapii. The Couci, believed to be of noble German extraction, are held to have come from the vicinity of the Elbe; the Menapii, from Belgic Gaul, whence may be said to have come also the Flemings who, on a later and more fateful occasion, responded to the traitorous appeal of Diarmuid MacMurchadha. It is worthy of note that the Brigantes were of the same stock as the Meldi, who, as will be seen later, are found as far north as Meaux.

The general expansion to the south-west is regarded as not incompatible, except in the matter of dates, with the movements that led to the successive occupations of Ireland as set out in the *Leabhar Gabhala*. Recent investigation identifies Sicil Greag of Ardl Bhearain, whence Partolan came, as Sicil of the Graians on the river Sicola—now the Sieule, tributary of the Allier—on the Auvergne.<sup>1</sup> Partolan's course, occupying a month in its first stage, led to Aladacia, now Aquitaine, lying between Toulouse and the Bay of Biscay. The Aquitanians were called Iacetania by Caesar and thus probably gave name to Muir nIocht. Aquitania itself seems to have received the name Aladacia from Alaric, king of the Visigoths, who, wresting Dacia from Aurelian in 272 A.D., lived there till 410, when they plundered Rome. Among the names given the Visigoths, on account of their stay in Dacia, are Scythians. Subsequently Alaric and his Dacians settled in south-western Gaul which thus took the name Aladacia and retained it for the three centuries following 415. From Aladacia Partolan went in three tratha or stages to Gothia, apparently down the Garonne from Toulouse to the Visigoth territory beyond the Pyrenees. A month was occupied in the next journey, from Gothia to Spain—probably to Galicia—and nine stages thence to Inbhear Sceine in Ireland. Inbhear Sceine, which is indicated incidentally in *Tain Bo*

<sup>1</sup> This theory, too, is elaborated in the scholarly new edition of "The Story of Ireland," already referred to.

*Cuailnge*, was long regarded as the mouth of the Kenmare river ; but, though vivid traditions of landings survive along the neighbouring Derrynane sea-board, the accuracy of the old location is now seriously doubted and a claim made for the estuary of the Shannon. A curious legend still surviving in Kenmare connects the two estuaries. It is to the effect that one of the islands in Kenmare Bay 'suddenly appeared in its present position and, soon after, a native of Limerick arrived to claim ownership, alleging it was his property which had mysteriously disappeared from the Shannon shore.

Neimheadh came westward from Scythia, which is interpreted to mean, not Scythia west of the Caspian, but the country of the Scutighe referred to by Latin writers as Montes Cottie and generally known as the Cottian Alps, south of the Graian Alps. The proximity of Lyons, originally named Lugdunum, after Lugh, to whom our earliest national athletic carnivals during Lughnasa are dedicated, is significant, as is the fact that Belinus or Bel, worshipped in Tolosa, had his festival in Ireland *la Bealtaine*. In due course Neimheadh and his company are found on Muir Caisp which, as already stated, is held to connote the Casperian Sea, deriving its name from the island of Casperia—now Gomera, one of the Azores—and retaining it to the time of Ptolemy in the second century. For a year and a half they voyaged before reaching southern Ireland where, at Ard Neimheadh in Cork harbour, the leader died of the plague.

After desperate conflicts at Tur Conaing and elsewhere with the Fomoraigh, who were expelled, to return reinforced, three companies of the followers of Neimheadh—under the leadership of Conang, Simeon and Iobath respectively—went to Moin Chonaing, now Anglesey in Wales, to the lands of the "Greeks," believed to be islands on the Swiss lakes, noted, like certain Irish islets, for *crannoga* or lake dwellings and connected by the Rhone with the Mediterranean. Certain fundamental features of early Irish art are traced to this neighbourhood also.

To the descendants of Simeon was allotted the strenuous labour of carrying sacks of earth on their backs to clothe the rocky Alpine slopes with vegetation. Of this, which gave them the name of Fir Bolg or bagmen, they naturally grew



tired, and returned to Ireland. There is abundant evidence from Roman writers that earthworks on an extensive scale were carried out by Celts in this Alpine country, particularly under kings Donnus and Cottius. The tomb of Cottius, who brought his people into alliance with the Roman State and procured them "an everlasting era of tranquillity," is at Susa ; and it is to be noted that on the Kerry coast where our remote ancestors so often landed, places named Susa, Baisleacan, Valencia and the like are still quite common. The name Valencia was also given the area between the Roman walls in north Britain, as well as the historic city and province in Spain, just as we find the island of Gothia in the Baltic, another island of Gothia "beside Crete and Sicily," and Gothia seemingly applied further to some portion of north-eastern Spain during its occupation by the Visigoths. With the spread of knowledge we now find certain place-names common to all the countries of the world. "The Mahanadi in India, the Guadalquivir in Spain, the Rio Grande in Mexico and South America and the Owenmore in Ireland, all mean simply Big River," writes "Conall Cearnach" in an exquisite paper on "the origin of place-names." "There is a plethora of Newtowns, from the various Neustadts of Germany and Austria to Nijni Novgorod, or Lower Newtown in Russia and Navanagar in India. . . In France we find Lyons and in Holland Leyden, both representing the Celtic Lugu dunum or town of the god Lugu." The principal saints, Peter, James, John, Francis, as well as the Cross—symbol of man's redemption—have given names to places throughout the modern world, as Patrick and Brigid have given their names to churches innumerable.

The descendants of Simeon and Iobath, expelled sons of Neimheadh, returned respectively as Fir Bolg from the south of Europe and Tuatha de Danan from the north. They are said to have given eight kings to Ireland, the last of them Eochaidh a great lawgiver, whose queen was Tailte, daughter of Maghmor of Spain. It is noteworthy that the Fir Bolg, held to have come from the Cottian Alps and the Swiss lake-islands, are recorded as having been again driven from Ireland to the Scottish islands by their kindred the Tuatha de Danan. Returning on the eve of the Christian era, they settled eventually in the west of Ireland, and have



many lakes and fortresses named after them, including Dun Aonghusa on Aran Island, where gardens have still to be made and maintained by periodically covering the rocks with sand and clay. It is significant, too, that the Tuatha de Danan are first found at Sliabh an Iarainn, indicating a tendency on their part towards craftsmanship. They are also credited with skill in healing and in poetry, with magic and with satire. Of them was Lugh, founder of the national games, and trained, it is claimed, by Tailte, thus bringing them, too, into contact with Gaul and Spain, even with Holland.

The movements of the Milesians, as traced in the *Leabhar Gabhala*, are said to represent two versions of the same legend. They are brought, through Magog's grandson Feineas Farsaidh and his son Niul, ancestor of the Clanna Neill, into association with biblical history and Greek literature, and their wanderings are made to appear even more comprehensive than those of their predecessors. Feineas is first found in the country of Babylon after the confusion of the Tower of Babel and subsequently presiding over a famous school for twenty years, founding others, and sending his seventy-two students abroad to acquire the languages of the world. His son Niul goes to Egypt where he meets and is treated with marked favour by Moses, and is given the daughter of the king in marriage. Niul's great grandson, however, and his followers are expelled from Egypt. Under Eibhear Scuit they proceed to Scithia Greagdha, where, like the descendants of Neimheadh, they come into conflict with their kinsmen and are driven, after five generations, to an island on Muir Caisp, generally regarded by annotators as the Caspian Sea. In time they reach Gothia where they sojourn for eight generations; elsewhere they are said to have reached the Gaothlaighe, not Gothia, and "three hundred years were the seed of Gaedhal in the Gaothlaighe."

Thence they get back by Creid and Sicil, regarded as Crete and Sicily, and eventually reach Spain under command of Bratha after whom Braganza in Portugal is named, as the Brigantes whom we have already met in the south-east of Ireland in conjunction with the Belgic Gauls are named after his son Brigus or Breoghan. Bile, one of the ten sons of Breoghan, was father of Mileadh, better known as Milesius. Mileadh, educated and ambitious on reaching man's estate,

set sail for the East—passing by Cadiz, the Pillars of Hercules, Sicil, and from port to port till he reached Scithia. Thence, after a period, he proceeded to Egypt where, like Niul, he got the king's daughter Scotá in marriage. After seven eventful years he again set out for home and landed in Irena, an island near Thrace. Eventually he reached Gothia, presumably following the ancient trade route between the East and the Baltic and making alliance with the Picts in Germany before passing into the North Sea ; thence southward by the European sea-board and the Bay of Biscay to Spain—southern Spain, northern Spain, triangular Spain. Subsequently his uncle Ioth and, still later, his sons come to Ireland.

Regarding Mileadh's voyage to the East it has been observed that Meldi, equated with Milesians, have been traced not in Spain alone, but in France as far north as Meaux, in Malta, even in Bulgaria. Whatever some may think of our early ancestors' sway in Egypt and their enterprise over the wide expanse that separates the Caspian from the Baltic, or of the continental exploits attributed in our epic literature to Cuchulainn and Ferdiaidh, Labhradh Loingseach and Criomhthann, Oscar and Goll, Niall and Daithi, over a military theatre fluctuating between Galicia and Galatia, it is safe to say that even in pre-Christian times their activities extended beyond the confines of the vast area later sanctified by the labours of Columbanus and the evangelists who followed in his footsteps through five centuries of glory. Under the stimulus of our new national university we may confidently hope earnest scholars will familiarly people that expansive nursery of our race and identify persons and places now obscure over the ground hallowed anew by the exiled scholars driven by Elizabeth and her successors to found Irish Colleges from Seville to Prague on the one hand, and re-baptised on the other by "the Wild Geese" whose blood crimsoned the most historic battlefields "from Dunkirk to Belgrade"—

When, exiled in the penal days,  
Their banners over Europe blaze.

But this is invading ground beyond the bounds which unforeseen circumstances have set for this volume. And here may appropriately be offered a word of explanation of the enforced limitation alluded to.



Some years ago the publishers of this work requested me to prepare a popular History of Ireland, suitable for secondary schools. Though somewhat interrupted by illness the work was practically ready for the press, to the period of the Reformation, when, in the spring of 1917, the British Government, by including me in a group of close on forty persons deported to England on a bogus charge, rendered it impossible for me to proceed further with my undertaking. Offered the option to choose between certain suggested places of detention, I—in common with a number of others—selected Oxford as a retreat where it might be feasible to pursue the subject uppermost in my mind, particularly as there seemed a prospect of access to the *Annals of Innisfallen*, held in the Bodleian Library there. I had no sooner obtained permission to consult our historic manuscript, however, than we were all discovered to be undesirable visitors, and unexpectedly snatched away to the foot of the Cotswolds, to be there secluded under conditions greatly calculated to induce mental torpor. Meanwhile I had written to Dublin for my unfinished historical materials, to learn that but a remnant of them had survived two wanton raids on my home: even of that remnant, only portion reached me in England. The new loss was the more distressing inasmuch as it included notes, laboriously collected, in reference to ancient Ireland—geological data and records of atmospheric phenomena, early maritime activities and the labours of Irishwomen in other lands—which, summarised, would considerably enhance the interest of my work. Much of the information, moreover, had been gathered during casual hours of leisure in scattered libraries in Brussels, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, in the recently burned library in Cork, as in those of the Royal Irish Academy and Trinity College, Dublin. In acknowledging my obligations to all these institutions for the facilities uniformly afforded me, it is in no sense a gratification to have to record the churlishness experienced in so far famed a centre of study as Oxford.

Owing to the confiscation of my papers and the enforced inactivity referred to, I was obliged, on my release, to approach my task anew, basing the resumed work mainly on rough notes, in Irish, previously made for prize essays on such



subjects as the Influence of the Irish on European civilisation, Land Tenure in Ancient Ireland, the Irish Social System to the Time of the Reformation. The latter essay, representing much effort and earnest study on my part, has, I regret to say, been lost in manuscript ; though I hope some day to piece it together again, at least in its main outlines, from rough material that has survived. The present volume, based almost entirely on notes originally made in Irish, can hardly fail to show frequent traces of Irish idiom. Writing thus under existing conditions it is impossible to avoid the reflection that those so far chosen to preside over the destinies of the Gaelic League, of whom I happen to be the third, have each written a volume of Irish history *in English*—paradoxically, manifestly without premeditation, and, broadly speaking, under the peculiar difficulties that, somehow, always beset Irish historians. My home and office, for example, have been the scenes of four fresh military raids for documents even during the progress of this volume through the press, and in the course of the final raid, which eventuated in my arrest and detention in three different prisons, much useful matter which I had arranged in the form of an Appendix, disappeared and has not been restored to me. So distracting and pre-occupied have recent times steadily proved, indeed, that it now becomes necessary for me to modify my original intention of bringing the work down to the present day, and stop short at the Anglo-Norman invasion, hoping for the leisure another day to complete a corresponding volume on the whole dark era of the Anglo-Norman usurpation.

It will be obvious to readers that the architecture of this work is on somewhat uncommon lines, each essential department of national activity being independently traced from its source, and so treated chronologically as to present a fairly complete outline of its development until arrested by the devouring greed of the Anglo-Normans. Repetition, to a greater or less degree, is probably inseparable from such treatment. On the other hand, for reasons already indicated, ordered notes on geological speculations are absent, that under more favourable circumstances might have appeared. In this domain, the picture of Cuchulainn fighting chin-deep in the snow and similar atmospheric clues will probably inspire, in good time, as fruitful trains of thought towards the elucidation

tion of primeval conditions here as the elk-bones which are held to have emerged in such profusion from Ireland's ancient ice-cap. Such speculation fortunately does not come within the scope of this volume, and may be left to minds specially equipped in that direction. The records of the fruitful labours of the early women of our race, though grouped to some extent under the different countries in which they moved—in other words, under all the countries traversed by their brothers—have yet to be sought over a wide field; but an attempt is made in the Index—under Women—so to co-ordinate the references as to bring the reader into easy touch with their whole story in-so-far as it has been feasible to unfold it. Details of the maritime activities of our early ancestors are met with more casually; and the references to them, also, are grouped, though inadequately, in the Index. For the rest, although the work is based in the main on our native records, the testimony of sober historians from other lands—notably from Germany, France, England, Scotland, America and, less so, early Greece, Italy and Spain—is freely employed to supplement or confirm the evidence of our own historians. Thus it is hoped the object of the publishers and the author is attained, namely, a faithful presentation of the popular features of the motherland that through long centuries of oppression has commanded the growing devotion of her children to a degree for which the world's history affords not a parallel.

Glasnevin, *July* 4, 1921.

## ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS

In a work like this, in which quotation has to be frequently resorted to, alternative spellings, to a certain degree, are practically unavoidable, owing to the different forms in which personal and place names have been used by authors and editors in the past. Examples are afforded by such words as Adhamhnan, frequently spelled Eunan ; Ard Macha, Armagh ; Brian Boirmhe, Brian Borumha, Brian Boru ; Colm Cille, Columcille, Columbkille ; Cluain mic Nois, Clonmacnoise ; Fursa, Fursey ; Gleann da Loch, Glendaloch, Glendalough ; Milidh, Mileadh, Milesius ; O Lochlainn, O Loughlin, Ua Lochlainn ; Lorcan Ua Tuathail, Lorcan O Toole, Laurence O Toole ; Tir da Ghlas, Terryglass, and so on. Readers will easily identify the alternative forms wherever they occur.

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## CONTRACTIONS

F.F. 31, ii.=*Foras Feasa ar Eirinn*, page 31, vol. II.  
300, ii. Man. & Cust.=page 300, vol. II. *Manners and Customs of Ancient Ireland*, O'Curry.  
M. and C.=*Manners and Customs*, O'Curry.  
Moran=*Irish Saints in Britain*, Card. Moran.  
Tripartite Life=*Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*.  
Stokes=*Lives of the Irish Saints*, Whitley Stokes.  
Healy's St. Patrick=*Life of St. Patrick*, Dr. Healy.  
S.M. 47, iii.=*Seanchus Mor*, page 47, vol. III.  
A. U.=*Annals of Ulster*.  
Alzog.=*Alzog's Church History*.  
S. H.=*Social History of Ireland*, Dr. Joyce.  
Tain Bo (Dunn)=*Tain Bo Cuailnge*, Dunn.  
Brenan=*Brenan's Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*.  
F. M.—*Four Masters*.  
I. A. S. S., Healy=*Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*.  
Montalembert=*Monks of the West*.  
Zimmer Irish Med. Cult.=*Irish Mediæval Culture*.



# Ireland : Elements of her Early Story

## CHAPTER I

### THE TRADITIONAL BACKGROUND



THE first inhabitants of Ireland, according to a legend quoted by Keating from the *Saltair of Caiseal*, were "three virgin daughters of the wicked Cain." "Some others say it was three fishermen unwillingly driven by a storm from Spain," Keating adds; "and as the island pleased them they returned for their wives." Having come back to Ireland they were overtaken by the Deluge at Tuaidh-Inbhear and drowned. According to the *Leabhar Gabhala*, Ceasair with three men and fifty maidens embarked in a ship to save themselves from the flood. They rowed from Meroe Island to the Tyrrhene Sea, and after many days' voyaging reached Spain. From Spain they came to Ireland in nine days, landing on "a Saturday, the fifteenth day of the moon at Dun na mBarc in Corco Dhuibhne." Ireland, "where came not evil nor sin, and was till then free from reptiles and monsters, as told them by prophets in the East, would be safe from the flood." From Dun na mBarc they found their way to Cumar na dTri nUisce, and after many journeys, vicissitudes and losses, they were, like the fisher-folk from Spain, overtaken by the flood, and all drowned. *Leabhar Droma Sneachta*, differing somewhat from the *Leabhar Gabhala*, says "thrice fifty women came there and three men, one of whom was Ladhra," the others being Bioth and Fionntan. Barrann and Balbha, as well as

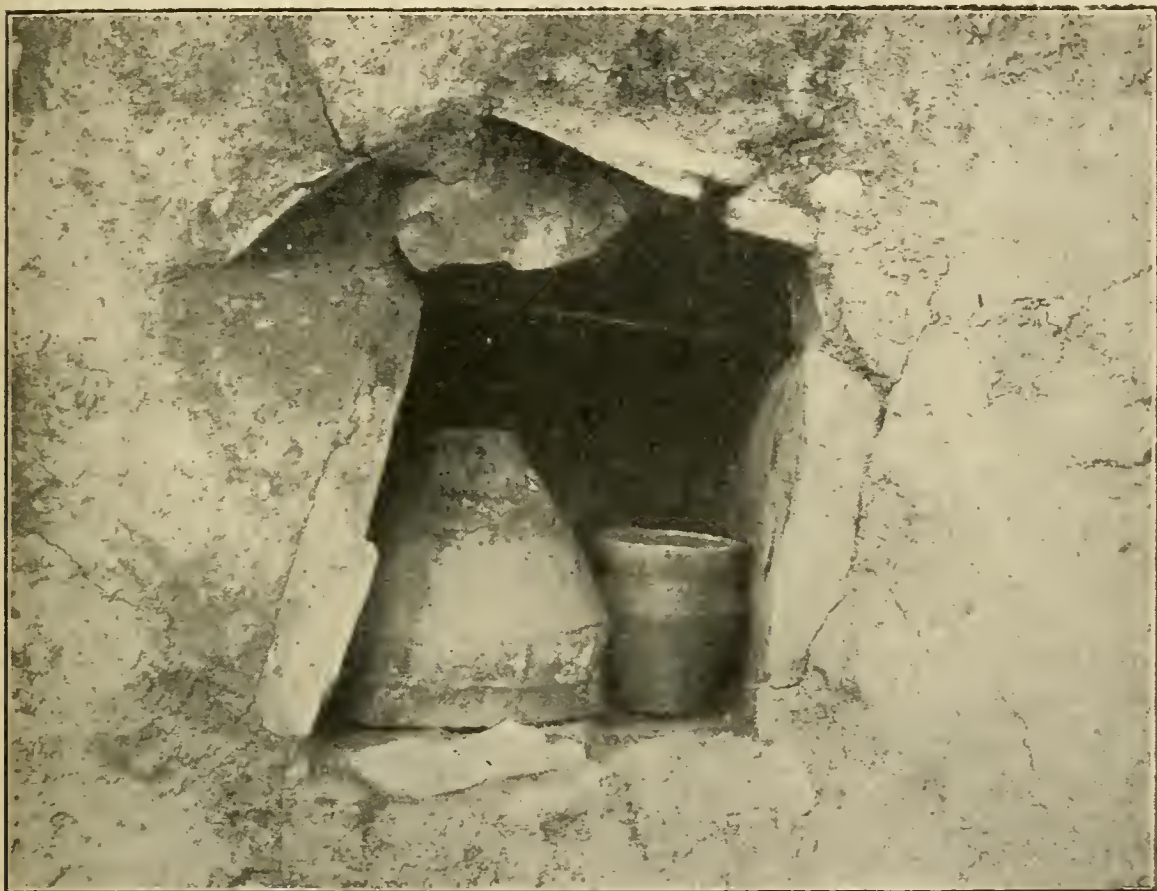
Ceasair, are mentioned elsewhere in association with them, while Banbha, and not Ceasair, is named in the Book of Drom Sneachta. Keating says, further, "there came a youth of the family of Nin mac Beil, whose name was Adhna son of Bioth, to reconnoitre Ireland about seven score years after the deluge." He soon went back with an account to his people, bringing with him some of the grass of Ireland, as recorded also in the *Saltair of Caiseal*. But "know thee, reader, that it is not as genuine history I set down this occupation, nor any occupation of which we have so far treated, but because I have found them written in old books."

**Partolan**, who was the first to "occupy" Ireland, came three hundred years after the Deluge. His course was from "Middle Greece" through the Torrian or Mediterranean Sea to Sisilia, and thence, with his right hand to Spain, till he reached Inbhear Sceine in West Munster after a voyage lasting two months and a half. With him were his faithless wife, Dealgnaid; three sons, Ruaidhri, Seangha and Leighlinne with their wives, and a host of a thousand. His followers included ploughmen, merchants, hospitallers, druids and strong men. Their first dwelling-place was at Inis Saimeir on the Eirne. The seventh year after their coming, the first of them died, namely, Feadh, from whom Magh Feadha in Carlow is said to be named. On arrival in the country, Partolan found but three lakes and nine rivers: seven lakes burst in Ireland in his time. He died, after thirty years, at Magh nEalta, and his sons divided Ireland in four parts. After three hundred years, according to Cormac mac Cuileannain and Eochaidh O Floinn, God sent a plague which destroyed nine thousand of Partolan's race at Binn Eadair as a punishment for his having, like Brutus first king of England, killed his father and mother before fleeing to Ireland. Their burial place was Tamhlacht.

**Neimheadh** was the next leader to come to Ireland, thirty years after the passing of the race of Partolan. He came from Scithia on the narrow sea "between the north-east of Europe and the north-west of Asia" where, according to Pomponius Mela, are the mountains of Riffe. To these—probably the Raphaeen mountain range, regarded by the early Greeks as the northern boundary of the earth—he



gave 'his right hand till he reached the ocean to the north,' then "his left hand towards Europe till he came to Ireland." Thirty-four the number of his ships, and thirty persons in each. Four sons were in his company. His wife Macha was buried at Ard Macha. Four lakes, it is recorded, sprang up in Ireland in his time, and twelve plains were cleared of



BURIAL CIST FOUND AT GREENHILLS, TAMHLACHT, CO. DUBLIN

wood. In his time, also, two royal forts were built in Ireland, one by the Fomorians, who came from Africa and over whom he won two battles. With two thousand of his people, men and women, he, too, died of plague, at Oilean Arda Neimheadh in Cork harbour.

**The Fomorians** were soon avenged for Neimheadh's conduct towards them. Their leaders, Morc and Conang, settled in Toirinis, where they had built a fleet, and enforced a tribute of two-thirds of the children, the corn and the milch kine of the men of Ireland. This tribute had to be given them every year on the Eve of Samhain at Magh gCeidne



between the Droghaoids and the Eirne. In addition they had to get, at Toirinis, from every household in Ireland, three full measures of cream, wheaten flour and butter. A female steward named Liagh enforced the tribute throughout the country. The descendants of Neimheadh tired in time of this tribute. Having, moreover, five powerful leaders to command their forces—thirty thousand on land, and an equal number on sea—they resolved to give battle to the Fomorians. As a result, the tower was demolished and Conang slain.

Morc, who escaped to Africa, returned with three score ships and gave battle to the successors of Neimheadh. This proved a most destructive conflict. All fell or were drowned save Morc himself and a few followers who again took possession of the island. Only one barque's crew of the race of Neimheadh escaped. It included three chiefs, and they resolved to leave Ireland for safety. After seven years' preparation each of them had a fleet, and they departed with their followers, except ten warriors. These remained with a remnant of their people: their descendants were subject to the Fomorians till the coming of the Fir Bolg.

A chief of the three, Simeon Breac mac Stairn, went to Greece, even to Thrace, with a company. The second chief, Iobath, went to the north of Europe. The third, Briotan Maol, went with his company to Dobhar and Iardhobhar in the north of Scotland, where their descendants have since resided. From this Briotan, says Cormac mac Cuileannain, Britannia is named; Keating thinks this more likely than that it took its name from Brutus.

For more than two hundred years the posterity of Simeon mac Stairn were in bondage in "Greece," digging the ground and carrying the earth in bags or sacks of leather to put it on stony crags and thus induce fertility. At the end of that period they decided to leave. Making boats of their leathern wallets, and appropriating the king's fleet, five thousand of them by this means returned to Ireland. They were under five chiefs, Slainghe, Rudhraidhe, Gann, Seanghann and Geanann, whose wives were Fuad, Eadar, Anust, Cnucha and Liobhra. The five chiefs, on arrival, divided Ireland between them.

**The Fir Bolg, Fir Domhnann and Gaileoin**, respectively, are named from them, on account of the bags they carried, the pits they dug, and the darts or spears with which they were armed. Thirty-six years was the length of their dominion. In this period they gave eight high-kings to Ireland. The first of them, Slainghe, died at Dionnriogh; the second, Rudhraidhe, fell at Brugh na Boinne. A joint reign followed. In the time of Rionnal, their sixth ruler, iron heads were first put on spear-shafts. The last, Eochaidh, was king of the Fir Bolg at the coming of the Tuatha De Danann whose king was Nuadh Airgeadlamh. In the battle of southern Magh Tuireadh, fought between them, Eochaidh and 100,000 of his people were slain between the battle plain and Traigh Eothaille near Ballysodare. "There was no rain, no bad weather, during Eochaidh's reign of ten years. It was in his time injustice and lawlessness were put down in Ireland, and approved and elaborated laws were ordained in it." His queen was Tailhte, daughter of Maghmor, king of Spain.

The small remnant of Fir Bolg that escaped from Magh Tuireadh fled to Ara, Ile, Reachra, Inse Gall and other islands of Alba, where their descendants dwelt until eventually driven out by the Cruithingh or Picts. Then they returned to Cairbre Niadhfhir, king of Leinster, and from him obtained a grant of land. The rent, however, was so heavy they could not endure it; so, on the eve of the Christian era, some of them sought out Meadhbh and Oileall and got land from them. They appear always to have been industrious. From them are named various places, forts and lakes in the west of Ireland, including Magh Maoín, Carn Conaill, Rinn Tamhain, Dun Aonghusa, Loch Cime, Loch Cutra, Loch Uair.

**The Tuatha De Danann** are descended from Iobath the third chief of the race of Neimheadh, who left Ireland after the destruction of the tower of Conang. In the course of their wanderings they learned magic until they became skilled in every trick of sorcery. Eventually they went to the country of the Lochlainn where they were welcomed and got four cities that they might teach the young. After some time there they passed to the north of Scotland, and spent seven years at Dobhar and Iardhobhar before coming to

Ireland. Having landed in Ireland they burned their ships and covered themselves, we are told, in a druidic mist for three days. Thus they escaped observation by the natives until they reached Sliabh an Iarainn. Thence they sent an embassy to the Fir Bolg to demand the sovereignty of the country. The battle of Magh Tuireadh south resulted and the defeat of the Fir Bolg already referred to. The victors had brought with them four rare jewels, namely, the Lia Fail, the Sword of Lugh Lamhfhada, the Spear he had when prepared for battle, and the Cauldron of the Daghdha, which provided amply for a whole company.

**The Lia Fail**, or Stone of Destiny was said to roar under each King of Ireland on his being chosen. It was in destiny, says Hector Boetius in his History of Scotland, that a king of the Scotie nation should reign wherever this stone was kept. Feargus the Great, son of Earc, having proposed to style himself king of Scotland, sent to his brother Muircheartach for the stone that he might sit on it for the purpose of being proclaimed King of Scotland. Muircheartach sent it,<sup>1</sup> and Feargus was inaugurated first king of Scotland of the Scotie nation: theretofore the Pictish kings of Scotland had been under tax and tribute to the kings of Ireland from the time of Eireamhon.

Mentioned among the more distinguished of the Tuatha De Danann are three satirists, two female chiefs, a poetess, poet, artist, mechanic, smith and physician. Their king Nuadh lost his hand in the first battle of Magh Tuireadh and his head in the second. They had, in all, nine kings, including the three sons of Cearmad Milbheoil, who ruled at the coming of the Milesians, the Daghdha Mor who died at Brugh from the effects of a cast flung at him at the battle of Magh Tuireadh, and Lugh Lamhfhada who established the Fair of Tailtean. Lugh had been fostered and trained to bear arms by Tailte. In commemoration thereof he instituted games like the Olympiades a fortnight before Lughnasadh and a fortnight after. Tailte, married first to Eochaidh son of Earc last king of the Fir Bolg, was married

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequently the stone was brought forcibly from Scotland out of the Abbey of Scone by Edward I, king of England, "so that it is there now in the chair in which the kings of England are inaugurated."



subsequently to Eochaidh Garbh son of Duach Dall a chief of the Tuatha De Danann. Two hundred years but three was the length of the Tuatha De Danann sovereignty.

Concurrently another branch of the Gaelic race had been making its way towards Ireland by very slow and circuitous stages. Feineas Farsaidh, the Annals say, determined on reaching the throne of Scythia to become acquainted with the various tongues that arose out of the confusion at the Tower of Babel. Accordingly, he sent his delegates into the various countries then inhabited to learn their respective languages and return after seven years. At the end of that time Feineas, his disciples, and a large number of the youths of Scythia went to the Plain of Seanair, leaving his son Neanul to rule in his stead. There he established the first school in the country of Babylon after the Confusion. Seanair he selected as its site that he might be with the people whose native language was Hebrew. Masters of Greek and Latin were associated with him also in the conduct of the schools, according to Ceannfhaolaidh the Learned, who wrote in the time of Ccilm Cille.

**Feineas** presided over Seanair for twenty years, until his younger son Niul had become acquainted with the several languages. Then he returned to Scythia, and there established other schools. These he placed under Gaedheal son of Eathor, whom he commanded "to arrange and regulate the Gaelic language." From this Gaedheal the Gaelic tongue takes its name. After more than twenty years, passed in the sovereignty since his return from Seanair, Feineas died, bequeathing the throne of Scythia to Neanul, and to Niul the profits to be derived from the teaching of the sciences and the various languages in the public schools.

**Niul** soon went to Egypt on the invitation of the king, Pharao Cincris, who, in return for teaching the youth of the country, gave him land at Campus Circit beside the Red Sea. He gave him also, as Giolla Caomhain tells us, his daughter Scotá in marriage. Their union was blessed by the birth of a son, Gaedheal Glas. Soon after, the children of Israel escaping from Pharao encamped beside Campus Circit where dwelt Niul who treated them with characteristic kindness. For this, Moses and Aaron were deeply grateful. It happened that at that very juncture Gaedheal Glas was

wounded by a serpent. Niul took the youth to Moses who prayed to God and, applying the rod held in his hand to the wound, healed it. "And Moses said that in what place soever the stock of that youth might settle, there no serpent would ever have venom."<sup>1</sup> From this Gaedheal are the Gaels named.

By favour of Moses, Niul with 1,000 armed men witnessed next day from the ships of Pharaoh the opening of the Red Sea for the children of Israel and its closing on Pharaoh with 60,000 foot and 50,000 horse. Thereupon Niul determined to remain in the territory. At his death, Gaedheal and his mother Scota took possession of the lands. Gaedheal himself was succeeded in due course by Easru and Sru.

After some years the Egyptians made war on Sru, grandson of Gaedheal. So he and his host set out in four ships for the island of Crete<sup>2</sup> where he died. Thence they sailed under Eibhear Scot to Scythia where, Giolla Caomhain tells us, they came into conflict with their kinsmen. After five generations they were expelled, and eventually reached an island on the Caspian Sea. Having spent a year on the

<sup>1</sup> The tradition has been mentioned already in connection with Ceasair, told by prophets in the East that Ireland was till then free from reptiles and monsters.

Further, the Fir Bolg, according to the Book of Lecan, put Irish earth into leathern bags and sold it to the Greeks to be spread on the ground around their cities as a protection against venomous reptiles.

In Ireland, wrote Solinus, about 200 A.D., "there are no snakes."

"No reptiles are found there, and no snake can live there," wrote Bede later, "for though often carried thither out of Britain, as soon as the ship comes near the shore, and the scent of the air reaches them, they die. On the other hand, almost all things on the island are good against poison."

This is strangely borne out also by a passage in the famous poem of St. Donatus, bishop of Fiesole, who died in 840, in which he says of Ireland:

"No poison there infects, no scaly snake  
Creeps through the grass, nor frog annoys the lake."

Noteworthy is it too that the islet of Lerins in the Mediterranean, opposite the cape of Cannes, is said to have been infested with snakes before St. Patrick's early sojourn there.

<sup>2</sup> "Now called Candia . . . and hence, according to the authors of our records, there are no serpents in Crete, as there are none in Ireland."—F. F. 31 ii.

island, they set sail in three ships, sixty in each ship. "They made for the strait that leads westward from the Caspian to the narrow sea which comes in from the northern ocean." There they were driven by a storm to an island called Caronia in the Pontic Sea where they abode for a year and a quarter. Proceeding again, they were intercepted by mermaids. These mermaids were wont to discourse sweet music to the sailors as they passed, so as to lull them to sleep, and then fall upon them and slay them. Caichear their druid defeated the designs of the mermaids by putting molten wax in the ears of the crews so that they could not hear the music, as Odysseus did on the advice of Circe when passing the island of the Syrens. In this manner they reached port at the extremity of Sliabh Rife in the north. Thence they got to Gothia where a renowned son Eibhear Gluinfhionn was born to one of their leaders. After eight generations they proceeded under Bratha in four ships, by Crete and Sicily, having Europe on the right, to Spain. After this Bratha is Braganza in Portugal named, and after Breoghan or Brigus son of Bratha, the Brigantes. Castile was given the name Brigia in olden times. It was Brigus who finished or built Brigansia near Corunna and the tower of Breoghan in Corunna itself. He had ten sons, one of whom, Bile, was father of Golamh or Milidh of Spain.

History, according to the ancient narrative, repeated itself in the case of Milidh. Desiring to visit his kinsmen in Scythia, he equipped thirty ships on the Mediterranean, and, sailing by Sicily and Crete, was welcomed on his arrival in Scythia by Reafloir the king. Shortly afterwards he was made commander of the forces of Scythia, and got in marriage the king's daughter Seang who, before her death, bore him two sons, Donn and Airioch. Soon the king had reason to feel jealous of Milidh's popularity, and so conspired to kill him. The reverse happened: the king was slain.

**Milidh** then set out in three score ships for Egypt. Here he was welcomed by Pharaoh Nectonibus, given vast territory and the king's daughter in marriage. She took the name of Scota in recognition of the event, and bore him two sons, Eibhear Fionn and Aimheirgin. So high did he stand in the estimation of the king that he was appointed commander of the forces: these he led in many successful battles against



the hostile Ethiopians. After seven years he fitted out sixty ships, bade farewell to Pharaoh, and set sail. When close to Thrace, he landed on an island called Irena where Ir was born. Eventually he reached Gothia, in the narrow sea leading to the northern ocean, and here Colpa of the Sword was born. Thence again into the narrow sea which separates Asia from Europe on the north, and in a westerly direction, having Europe on the left, till they came to Alba. Having plundered the coasts of Scotland they proceeded to the mouth of the Rhine, leaving Britain on the right, and continued in a south-westerly direction, with France on their left, till they landed finally in Biscay. Milidh's subsequent career in Spain was big with achievement.

In sum, this emerges as the general view of the chroniclers. The remnant of the host that set out from Egypt under the grandson of Gaedheal reached Scythia under Eibhear Scot, and after five generations found themselves on an island in the Caspian. Proceeding in a westerly direction, their explorations of the great rivers and plains of Central Europe culminated in their reaching the fluctuating territory of the Goths, whence, after eight generations, they drifted back, evidently by the Ægean Sea, past Crete and Sicily, and thence by the Mediterranean to Spain and Portugal. Years passed, and "Milidh of Spain," sailing back to Scythia over the route finally taken by his great grandsire Bratha, eventually reached Egypt. Thence, after seven years, he set sail for Thrace and, presumably by the ancient trade route, to Gothia, where his son Colpa was born. Instead of returning to the Mediterranean, as did his predecessors, he passed through the Baltic into the North Sea, landing in Scotland, and sailing later by the shores of Germany and France to his native Spain. This rapid encircling tour by Milidh, contrasted with the somewhat aimless wanderings of those who went before him, is certainly striking; but the general feasibility of these traditions, so long accepted by our historians, is not seriously affected, for good or ill, by recent investigation and historical speculation. Simply stated, these Milesian and pre-Milesian traditions embody, on a grand scale, so to speak, all the findings of all the theorists, and more.

## THE COMING OF THE MILESIAANS

After some time, **Ioth** son of Breoghan, who was a valiant man and wise, and learned in the sciences, was sent from Spain to explore Ireland. Landing in Ulster with thrice fifty chosen warriors, he was approached by the natives who addressed him in Gaelic or Scoitbhearla. He and they spoke a common tongue, Ioth explained, because Gaedheal had been teaching the public schools in Scythia before their ancestor Neimheadh left that country for Ireland.

Ioth then proceeded, with two-thirds of his ship's company, to Aileach Neid. There he was welcomed by the three sons of Cearmad Milbheoil, who at that juncture held the sovereignty of the country alternately. Having assured them that he was driven ashore by stress of weather, and did not intend to delay, they asked him to adjudicate in a contention about the valuables of their ancestors. In giving judgment, he took occasion to reproach them for their dispute and to praise their country for its profusion of fruit, milk, honey, grain and corn, and its temperate climate. He had no sooner taken leave of them than the sons of Cearmad suspected from his praise that there was danger of his returning with a vast host to conquer Ireland. So they pursued him, and so wounded him in a conflict at Magh Iotha that he died at sea. In due course his body was exhibited in Spain to incite the sons of Milidh to come and avenge his death.

Accordingly a host was assembled at the tower of Breoghan ; and the sons of Milidh embarked for Ireland in thirty ships having thirty warriors each besides women and camp-folk. They were accompanied by the queen-mother Scotsa—Milidh being by this time dead—and forty leaders whose names are commemorated to this day in our place names.<sup>1</sup> Endeavouring to land at Inbhear Slainghe, now Wexford harbour, they were driven off by the Tuatha De Danann, who are said to have spread a magic mist over the invaders, so that the island in front of them resembled a hog's back. Hence the name Muicinis by which Ireland is known. They

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<sup>1</sup> Among the forty leaders were Breagh, Cuala, Cuailnge, Fuad Muirtheimhne, Lughaidh, Eibhlinne, Nar, Manntan, Donn, Airioch, Eibhear, Aimheirgin, Ir, Colpa and Arannan.



next sailed around the south coast of Ireland, and effected a landing at Inbhear Sceine. Proceeding thence to Tara, they encountered the queens of the three reigning kings. Banba, her women and her druids they met at Sliabh Mis, Fodla at Sliabh Eibhlinne, Eire at Uisneach, and finally at Tara the three royal sons of Cearmad—Eathur, Ceathur and Teathur. A challenge to battle ensued. This the sons of Cearmad submitted to the poet Aimheirgin, whose judgment was that the Milesian host should return to Inbhear Sceine and go back to sea a distance of nine waves. If they succeeded in landing again, they were to have sway over the country. So the sons of Milidh again embarked, but had no sooner put to sea than a terrific storm arose, caused, we are told, by the magic-working druids of the Tuatha De Danann. Arannan, son of Milidh, was swept from the masthead of his ship and dashed to death against the deck. Donn, born in Scythia, was drowned with five other leaders and a numerous host at the Dumhacha or Teach Dhuinn. Ir, born at Irena, was buried at Sceilg Mhichil.

**Eibhear** and his division of the fleet succeeded in landing again at Inbhear Sceine, called after Sceine wife of the poet Aimheirgin, who was drowned there. Tradition, rightly or wrongly, still points out the place at Cuas na Fuirinne and Cuas na gCraobh on the bleak promontory south of Derrynane. Three days later they encountered Eire, at Sliabh Mis, where a great battle was fought. Though the royal ladies Scota and Fas were among the slain, and buried there, the Tuatha De Danann were completely routed. Eire, surviving, hastened to Tara with the news. Meantime Eireamhon and his followers had sailed from Inbhear Sceine right around to Inbhear Colpa, now Drogheda, where Colpa of the Sword, born in Gothia, was drowned. By a coincidence which would seem to have more in it of strategy than chance, they were met, on landing, by their relatives, the survivors of Sliabh Mis. Thus strengthened, they marched to Tailltin, and there fought a battle in which the three kings of Ireland and their queens Eire, Banba and Fodhla were slain and the remnant of the Tuatha De Danann put to flight. In pursuing them northwards, two of the Milesian chiefs, Cuailnge and Fuad, fell at Sliabh Cuailnge and Sliabh Fuaid respectively.



**Eibhear Fionn and Eireamhon**, sons of Milidh, now divided Ireland. Eireamhon took Leinster and Connacht, Eibhear the greater part of Munster, Lughaidh the cantred of Corca Luighidh, and others of the leaders the province of Ulster.<sup>1</sup> Twelve royal forts are mentioned as having been built by them. They included Rath Beitheach in Airgeadros, on the brink of the Feoir in the district of Geisill, built by Eireamhon ; Rath Eoamhain in Laigheanmhagh by Eibhear ; Ard Suird, Dun Eadair, Dun Deilginse in Cuala, and Dun Inn in the west of Ireland. Tea, wife of Eireamhon, had a fortress built for herself at Liathdhruim, now Tara. Twenty-four plains were cleared of wood by the twenty-four slaves who came with them : many of them still preserve their original names.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of a year a dispute arose about the possession of the three best hills in Ireland, namely, Druim Clasaigh in the territory of Maine, Druim Beitheach in Maonmhaigh, and Druim Fhinghin in Connacht. In a battle fought in consequence at a pass in the district of Geisill, Eibhear and three of his leaders were slain. Eireamhon thereafter ruled for fourteen years. The period was marked by constant warfare, and most of his kinsmen fell, including Caichear, Aimheirgin, Manntan, Fulman, Un, Ean and Eathan, in as many years. The nine Brosnas, the Uinnses, the three Sucas and eight lakes, among them Loch Riach, burst over land in his reign.

**A tribe of Piets** had come from Thrace by this time. According to Bede, the widows of three of the vanquished Milesian chiefs were given in marriage by Eireamhon to the leaders of these strangers. They then left for Scotland, and conquered it for Eireamhon, so that their chief, Cathluan, became the first of the seventy kings of the Cruithnigh who ruled over Scotland.

**The three sons of Eireamhon** reigned three years. One died, two were slain by the four sons of Eibhear, who reigned

<sup>1</sup> From Rudhraighe, who sprang from Ir, the real Ultonians are called Clanna Rudhraighe.

<sup>2</sup> They are Aighne, Ai, Asal, Meighe, Morbha, Midhe, Cuibh, Cliu, Ceara, Reir, Slan, Leighe, Lithfe, Line, Laighean, Trea, Dula, Adhar, Deise, Dealala, Fea, Feimhean and Seara.—F. F. 103-5, ii.

for a year until slain by Irial Faidh. His rule lasted ten years. He was defeated by the Fomoraigh at Teannmhagh in Connacht. In the course of his reign seven royal castles were built and sixteen plains cleared of wood. He died at Magh Muidhe and was buried there. Seven further plains were cleared of wood in the reign of his son Eithrial who was slain by Conmhaol. Conmhaol was buried at Aonach Macha called Conmhaol's mound.

**Tighearnmas**, the next king of note, reigned forty, some authors say fifty, years and won twenty-seven battles over the descendants of Eibhear. Nine lakes burst over land in his time. He was the first who found a gold mine in Ireland. At Fotharta, east of Lithfe, he had the gold smelted. Uchadan was the artificer who refined for him. In his time it was that clothes were first dyed purple, blue and green in Ireland, and embroidery, fringes and filigree put on mantles. He is credited with having introduced the custom of wearing one colour in the slave's dress, two in the peasant's, three in the soldier's or young lord's, four in the brughaidh's, five in the district chief's and six in that of an ollamh, a king or a queen. He it was, too, who instituted the worship of the idol, Crom Cruach, and it was in adoration before it he died at Magh Sleacht with three-fourths of the men of Ireland.

After a somewhat brief sovereignty of four years under **Eochaidh Eadghothach**, Ireland was again divided between **Cearmna** and **Sobhairce**, grandsons of Eibhir son of Ir, who reigned for forty years. The line of division is from Drogheda to Limerick. Sobhairce, who built the dun called after him, ruled in the north, and Cearmna, who built another dun, ruled in the south. "They were the first Ultonian Kings of Ireland."

These were succeeded by **Eochaidh Faobharglas** who reigned twenty years and cleared seven plains of wood. During the longer reign of his successor **Fiachaidh Labhruinne**, Loch Eirne and three rivers, the Fleisc, Maine and Labhrainn "burst over land in Ireland."

**Aonghus the Victorious**, son of Fiachaidh, defeated the Cruithnigh and old Britons in several battles in Alba, and placed it under the full sway of the Gaels two hundred and fifty years after the coming of the Milesians to Ireland: as already indicated, Scotland had been under tribute to

Ireland since the time of Eireamhon. Seven plains, north, south, east and west, were cleared of wood during Aonghus's reign of about twenty years, and three lakes burst over Ireland.

**Eanna Airgthioch** who succeeded to the throne was the first to have silver shields made, at Airgeadros, and bestowed on the men of Ireland. The succeeding reigns present little of note except that in the third, that of **Fiachaidh Fionn-Scothach**, wine flowers were pressed into goblets. Which brings us to **Muineamhon**, the first king to decree that collars of gold be worn round their necks by the nobles of Ireland. He died of the plague at Magh Aidne and was succeeded by **Ailideargoid** who reigned for seven years. In his time gold rings were first put on the fingers of the nobles in Ireland. He was slain by Ollamh Fodla.

**Ollamh Fodla** reigned for thirty years. An ollamh in wisdom and knowledge, he established the Feis of Tara. Here in the course of time the nobles and ollamhs of the land met every third year, at Samhain, to lay down and renew laws and statutes and approve the annals and records of the nation. The nobles had seats at the Feis according to their rank, as had the military commanders. Three days before Samhain and three days after it were spent in feasting, peace-making and entering into friendly alliances. Violence, robbery or assault committed during the Feis was punishable by death which even the king had not power to reprieve.

Here ensue sixteen reigns, of average duration and no particular interest, until we reach the martial period of **Seadna Ionarraidh**, the first king to pay fighting men in Ireland. Four further reigns are recorded before that of **Eanna Dearg**. It was in his time, at Airgeadros, that money was first coined in Ireland. He died of the plague at Sliabh Mis. Two more uneventful reigns bring us to **Eochaidh Uaircheas** who used to have bare canoes for a fleet. He was two years on sea, in exile from Ireland, and was wont to plunder the borders of every country he passed by.

A dozen reigns intervene between Eochaidh Uaircheas and Macha Mongruadh with nothing noteworthy except that the first was a joint reign and, at the close, **Diothorba** and **Ciombaoth** reigned alternately, for periods of seven years, with **Aodh Ruadh** father of Macha.



**Macha Mongruadh**, after the death of her father, demanded the sovereignty of Ireland, with the result that a battle was fought between herself and the children of Diothorba, in which Macha was victorious. The children of Diothorba having fled for safety, Macha took Ciombaoth for husband, and instantly pursued the fugitives. Having overtaken them, she succeeded by stratagem in bringing them back bound. She then compelled them to erect a fort for her at Eamhain Macha<sup>1</sup> to be "the capital of the province forever." She was slain eventually by Reachtaidh, and he in turn was slain by Ugaine Mor.

From this period onwards Ireland's foreign intercourse and dominion are much more in evidence.

**Ugaine Mor** who reigned thirty, perhaps forty, years is reputed to have held sway over the islands of western Europe. He was married to Ceasair Chruthach, daughter of "the king of the French." He divided Ireland between his twenty-five children, and fixed rents and duties that obtained for three hundred years—to the time of Eochaidh Feidlioch. The ensuing two reigns lasted, one a day and a half, the second, two years, and culminated in the treacherous death at Dionnriogh, on the banks of the Barrow, of Laoghaire Lorc at the hands of his cruel and jealous brother Cobhthach Caol mBreagh, who himself was slain at the same place on Christmas Eve by Maon.

**Labhraidh Loingseach**, by which name Maon in time came to be known, had been treated savagely in his youth by Cobhthach, with the result that he lost his speech. Having escaped to Corca Dhuibhne and resided there with Scoiriath, the king, he went in the course of time to France—it is even said to Armenia—and the king of the French made him leader of his household guards. He soon became so famous that many of his countrymen followed him to France. With a host of 22,000 troops, called Laighnigh, he was at length induced to return home by Craiftine a musician. Craiftine had been sent specially to induce him back by Moiriath, daughter of Scoiriath, who was violently in love with Labhraidh. He is said to have had peculiar ears. In his time Ireland's oversea influence expanded, particularly

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<sup>1</sup> Another story is told of the origin of Eamhain Macha.—F. F. 155, ii.

between Clanna Neill and the Albanians, Munster and the Saxons, Ulster and the Spanish, Connacht and the Welsh.

Twenty reigns ensue here, of no special moment until we reach the period of the ambitious Clairingheach who is credited with conquests oversea as far as Lochlainn. Between him and Eochaidh Feidlioch, Duach and Fachtna intervene.

**Eochaidh Feidlioch** reigned twelve years. He divided Ireland into provinces, and instituted provincials. Connacht he divided into five parts, Munster into two, leaving Ulster and Leinster intact. He is reputed to have been always sighing for having killed his three sons, the three Fineamhna. He gave his daughter Meadhbh in marriage to Tinne, and Tinne fell at Tara by Monuidhir. Druim na nDruadh, called Cruachan after Meadhbh's mother, he had built by the Gamhanraidhe of Iorrus Domhnann.

**Cruachan** is described in "the Feast of Bricriu" as having seven circles, and seven compartments from fire to partition, with bronze frontings and carvings of red yew. Three stripes of bronze in the arching of the house, which was of oak, with a covering of shingles. It had twelve windows, with glass in the openings. The dais of Ailill and of Meadhbh in the centre of the house, with silver frontings and stripes of bronze round it, and, by the fronting facing Ailill, a silver wand that would reach the mid "hips" of the house so as to check the inmates unceasingly. The Ulster heroes, on a visit there, went round from one door of the palace to the other, and the musicians played while the guests were being prepared for. Such was the spaciousness of the house "that it had room for the hosts of valiant heroes of the whole province in the suite of Conchubhar."

**Meadhbh**, after the death of Tinne, ruled for ten years—behaving much as did Elizabeth of England at a later day—until she married Oileall Mor. At this time there were three orders of champions in Ireland, the biggest, bravest, most intrepid and most skilled of all the race of Mileadh. They were the Clanna Deaghaidh of West Munster under Curoi mac Daire whose royal seat was Cathair Chonroi in Kerry; the Gamhanraighe of Iorrus Domhnann, just referred to, under Oileall Fionn, and the Craobh Ruadh or Red Branch

Knights under Conchubhar mac Neasa whose headquarters were at Eamhain Macha or Emania near the city of Armagh.

**Eamhain Macha** had three dwellings, one for the wounded, one for the arms and valuables including Meisceadhra's brain, and one the house in which Conchubhar and his warriors were served. In the king's house was great state and rank and plenty. Nine compartments were in it from the fire to the wall: thirty feet the height of each bronze partition; carvings of red yew therein; a wooden ceiling beneath, a roofing of tiles above. Conchubhar's compartment was in the forefront of the house with ceiling of silver and pillars of bronze. Their headpieces glittered with gold and were set with carbuncles so that day and night were equally lightsome therein. A plate or gong of silver above the king to the roof-tree of the royal house. When Conchubhar struck the plate with his royal wand all the men of Ulster were silent. The twelve divisions of the twelve chariot-chiefs were round about the king's compartment. Yea, all the valiant warriors of the men of Ulster found space in that king's house at the time of drinking, and yet no man of them would press upon the other. Splendid, lavish and beautiful were the men of Ulster in that house. In it were held great and numerous gatherings of every kind and wonderful pastimes. Games and music and singing there, heroes performing their feats, poets singing, harpers and players on the timpan striking up their sounds. Five and three score and three hundred was the number of Conchubhar's household. The Chariot Chiefs of Ulster performed on ropes stretched across from door to door in the house of Emania. Fifteen feet and nine score was the size of that house, and three feats were performed there, the spear-feat, the apple-feat, and the sword-feat. Among the chiefs of the Craobh Ruadh, who performed those feats, were Conall Cearnach, Laoghaire Buadhach, Fearghus mac Roigh, Cealtchar, Dubhthach and Sceal. The Craobh Ruadh, indeed, occupy altogether the bigger space in our country's annals, mainly owing to the marvellous exploits of their immortal hero Cuchulainn. The name of this Ulster hero promises to endure forever, and to take rank with the foremost spirits on the epic-roll of history.



**Cuchulainn** was nursed in the house of his father and mother in the plain of Muirthemne. From his mother Deichtire, sister to Conchubhar mac Neasa, he heard early of the chosen youths of Emania. Conchubhar, as a rule, spent one-third of each day in superintending these youths, of whom there were one hundred and fifty, at military exercises and hurling. Cuchulainn was soon seized with a longing to go amongst them and, though his mother tried hard to dissuade him, he set out one day for the north. He took with him his shield, hurley, silver ball, dart and spear, and, dexterously plying all five on the way, shortly reached the lawn at Emania where the princes were at play. Rushing into their midst, he seized their ball between his legs and, overcoming all opposition, carried it in triumph over the goal line. Envious of his success and resenting his intrusion, the youths angrily flung their hurleys at him, but he leisurely warded them off with his own. Then thrice fifty balls were flung at him. These again he warded off with his fists, wrists and elbows. Finally he warded off with his shield thrice fifty mock spears cast at him. Then, rushing furiously on his assailants, he dashed fifty of them to the ground, and pursued five others into the king's presence. Challenged by the king, who seized him in his arms, he announced that he was the son of Deichtire, the king's sister, and, though having come from afar, was not received with the courtesy due to a stranger. The king replied that he had insulted the youths by coming amongst them without formally seeking their protection. Cuchulainn having expressed regret for the oversight, the youths intimated their readiness to afford him protection from that forward, and he was released. But he was no sooner free than he again rushed on them and dashed fifty of them to the ground, so that it was thought they were dead. Thus, instead of placing himself under their protection, he, by his own unaided strength and daring, brought them promptly under his sway.

The following year he killed the famous dog of Culann, from which he derived his name. It came about in this way : Conchubhar, having gone out on the green of Eamhain Macha, found Cuchulainn hurling single-handed against the whole band of one hundred and fifty youths. Struck by his prowess, the king asked the young champion to accompany

him on a visit to Culann the smith. The boy agreed ; but he let Conchubhar and his company proceed, and set out himself to follow them, alone, only when the royal youths of Ulster had finished the day's exercises. He arrived at the house of Culann to find the entrance guarded by a most ferocious dog, the king's party having come earlier, and entirely forgotten that he was to follow. The youth in self-defence slew the dog, and in compensation undertook to act as hound of Culann and guard his house and flock and district until he had procured a whelp of the same breed and reared and trained him to the same efficiency as the dog he had slain. Cathbad the druid thereupon proposed to the boy to relinquish his name Setanta and adopt Cuchulainn, declaring that the name would live forever in the mouths of the men of Erin and Alba, a prophecy that seems fully destined to be verified by time.

In due course the boy took arms, and on the very first day shivered to pieces fifteen sets of weapons presented to him by Conchubhar the king. Eventually the king presented him with his own two spears, his sword and his shield. They survived the test. Then he entered a chariot, and similarly shivered to atoms fifteen chariots in rapid succession. Conchubhar in the end presented him with his own two steeds, his chariot and charioteer. Having been driven three times around Emania, he asked the king's charioteer Ibar to take him next to the Ford of Watching at Sliabh Fuaid, where Conall Cearnach guarded the Gate of the North that day. On arrival there, he asked Conall Cearnach to return to Emania and entrust himself with the guarding of the province. Conall having declined, Cuchulainn at once proceeded southwards to celebrate worthily the day on which he took arms. Seeing that Conall determined to accompany him, Cuchulainn took a stone, threw it, and broke the yoke or *cuing* of Conall's chariot, with the result that Conall himself fell from the chariot and had his shoulder dislocated. Cuchulainn continued his journey and crossed the bounds of Ulster three miles above Drogheda. Arriving at the dun of the lady of Neachtan Sceine, he shouted a challenge, the result of which was that her three mighty sons, who promptly accepted it, were slain by him in turn. He seized live white deer, shot down wild white swans, and performed

various other hero-feats before finishing the day's achievements in a royal fury at Eamhain Macha.

Subsequently, having first been betrothed to Emer, he went to the celebrated military school of the Lady Scathach, which he reached with difficulty and as the reward of his personal valour. While with Scathach he performed prodigies of valour, and acquired skill in countless feats of championship. There he had as fellow-pupil and close comrade the valiant Ferdiadh whom he was fated later to slay at Ardee in the most historic combat that marked the eventful progress of the *Tain Bo Cuailnge* or Cattle Raid of Cooley.

## THE TAIN

**The Tain Bo Cuailgne** seems to have arisen partly out of the elopement to Scotland of Naoise<sup>1</sup> cousin of Conchubhar mac Neasa with Deirdre the beautiful young daughter of Feidlimidh the king's seanchuidhe, whom the king intended to wed. Later, Naoise was induced to return to Ulster with his bride and brothers on the guarantee of their personal safety by Cormac son of Conchubhar, his step-father Fearghus mac Roigh, and Dubhthach Dael Uladh. On the arrival of the children of Uisneach at Emania, however, they were treacherously slain by direction of the king. In revenge for this violation of their guarantee, Fearghus and Cormac and their followers gave Emania to the flames and fled to Connacht. There they were welcomed by Meadhbh and Oileall; and forthwith the bitter war between Connacht and Ulster was entered upon. The immediate occasion of the struggle, however, is set down in the *Tain* as "a pillow-talk" between Oileall and Meadhbh in the course of which a discussion arose about their relative means. On comparison it was

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<sup>1</sup> Naoise had ruddy cheeks, most beautiful; red lips; lashes like the chafer, black; teeth like pearls, pure white as snow; mantle of crimson that so well combined with the fringe of red gold on its borders. His tunic of silk of costly price, on it a hundred pearls; for its embroidery had been used fifty ounces of white bronze. A gold-hilted sword in his hand. With his two spears terrible wounds were inflicted. The border of his shield was of yellow gold; the boss in the centre, of silver.



found their respective stocks of pails, pitchers, jugs, iron wrought vessels, cauldrons, keeves, apparel, rings, bracelets, golden and other treasure, sheep, swine, horses, cattle corresponded in value. A white-horned bull, that disdained to remain with a woman's stock, was however found with Oileall's cattle. The rival of that bull, the Donn Cuailnge, was only to be found in Ulster; and to possess the Donn Cuailnge, with the will of the men of Ulster, or in their despite, Meadhbh determined. Her hosting in the historic conflict which ensued is thus recorded:

The first corps had on them black heads of hair, and about them green mantles held with silver brooches; next their skin, shirts of gold thread bearing raised patterns of red gold; swords they wore with white gripes and with guards of silver.

The second corps, the Fir Bolg of Iorrus Domhnann under Ceat, had new-cut hair and about them all grey cloaks; next their skin, pure-white shirts; they wore swords with knobbed hilts of gold and guards of silver.

The last corps, under Fearghus and Cormac of Ulster, wore flowing hair, fair-yellow masses with sheen of gold and all cut loose. Crimson mantles with cunning device of ornament enwrapped them, and at their breasts they had golden-jewelled brooches. Silk shirts, fine-textured and long, touched their insteps. *In unison they both lifted their feet and put them down again.*

Accompanied by Meadhbh and her daughter Fionnabhair, they proceeded by Athlone to Kells. The Gaileoin of Leinster by their expeditious marching aroused the suspicions and the fears of the western queen. Regarding them as a possible menace to her own authority, she had them so distributed among the men of Ireland that not more than five of them remained anywhere together. Thus they proceeded until brought to a halt by Cuchulainn on the Ulster border. Single-handed the Hound of the North held these mighty hosts at bay, slaying their picked men singly, or in hosts to the number of a hundred, according to the manner of their attack. At length he found himself opposed in single combat by Ferdiadh in the historic "Fight at the Ford." This tragic combat at Ardee between two sworn comrades, who had fought together against German Garbhglas "above the

borders of the Tyrrhene Sea," is the most graphic episode in the heroic literature of the Gael.

**Cuchulainn, and Ferdiadh** "after the prolonged and desperate struggle of the first day, went . . . each of them towards the other, and each put his arm around the neck of the other and embraced him three times. Their horses were in the same enclosure that night; their charioteers sat at the same fire, prepared beds of green rushes for the heroes and supplied them with the pillows of wounded men. Then came professors of healing and curing to heal and cure them, and they applied healing and salving herbs and plants to their sores and their scars and their many wounds. Of every herb and every salve applied to the sores and scars and the many wounds of Cuchulainn, he sent a share over the ford westward to Ferdiadh in order that the men of Erin should not be able to say, if Ferdiadh fell by him, that it was the consequence of an inequality of healing."

Early next morning they repaired again to the ford of combat, and at the close of a ferocious day's struggle the amenities of the previous night were repeated.

The third day the fierce fight was renewed. The third night, however, their steeds were not in the same field, nor were their charioteers at the same fire.

Finally, on the fourth day, Cuchulainn after a terrific conflict drove the *gae bolga* into the body of his foe "so that every part of him was filled with its inverted points. 'Enough!' gasped Ferdiadh, and he fell in the ford dead." Then Ferdiadh's grave was dug by the men of Erin, and all the rest of his funeral ceremony duly carried out.

Cuchulainn was borne away by willing hands to have his wounds bathed and dressed. Meanwhile, tidings of his condition reached the ears of his father, Sualtach. "Is it heaven that bursts, or the sea that runs away, or the earth that gapes, or is it that I hear the groaning of my son over-matched?" So he hastened to visit him and, finding him covered with blood and wounds, proceeded to lament and bemoan him.

"Have done moaning and sorrowing for me," objected Cuchulainn. "Get thee away to Emania; tell Ulster that in future they must themselves come and follow up the Tain, as I am no longer able to defend and rescue them. Because

from the Monday before Samhain I have stood in the gaps and passes of Conaille Muirtheimhne against the four great provinces of Erin, daily slaying a man at a ford and nightly a hundred warriors, while for thirty whole nights I had not manful fair play of single combat. None comes to succour, none to comfort me ; yet my wounds are such that I may not endure to have my fighting vesture touch my skin. They are 'felter-hooks' that maintain my mantle overhead ; dried sops of grass they are that stuff my wounds ; from crown to sole of me, there is not a spot on which a needle's point might rest but has some hurt ; in all my body not a single hair doth grow but a dew of red blood garnishes it, only excepting my left arm that holds my shield, and even that bears three times fifty wounds."

Sualtach set out at once on the Liath Macha to bear the bitter news to Ulster. Some accounts say that Curoi mac Daire meanwhile advanced from Munster intent on attacking Cuchulainn ; but, seeing him riddled with wounds after the combat with Ferdiaidh, he refrained.<sup>1</sup>

Conchubhar promptly rallied Ulster and marched to the Hill of Slane in Westmeath to give instant battle to the men of Erin. The hosting of Ulster on the slope of the hill in about thirty successive divisions affords an impressive, even awesome spectacle. Of Conchubhar's own corps it is recorded : another corps there came upon the hill that is in Slane of Meath, which, to look at them, would seem to be of thirty thousand. Forthwith they all put off their raiment of defence and, to make their lord a seat, dug and threw up a sodded mound on which then, upon the highest pinnacle of the hill, he, surrounded by his resting host, sat to wait until the others should have arrived. Accordingly, as each leader would come up he with his people likewise would sit down. With the men of Erin were "the nine chariot-fighters of Norway's warriors."

In the subsequent struggle, Ulster was thrice routed northwards, and as often the men of Erin were forced back on their former positions. Eventually Cuchulainn, who had been kept informed of the progress of events by Laegh, burst his bonds and, notwithstanding his wounds, entered

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<sup>1</sup> See page 26, *infra*.



the conflict. The men of Erin instantly took flight, their retreat being covered by Meadhbh.

Cuchulainn was greatly loved by the women of Ulster for his dexterity in these feats, for the nimbleness of his leap, for the excellence of his wisdom, for the sweetness of his speech, for the beauty of his face, for the loveliness of his look. Many also were his gifts. First, his gift of prudence until his warrior's flame appeared, the gift of feats, the gift of buanfach (a game like chess), the gift of draught-playing, the gift of calculating, the gift of soothsaying, the gift of discernment. Between one ear and the other he had fifty long tresses that were as the yellow wax of bees, or like unto a brooch of the bright gold as it glints in the sun unobserved. He wore a green mantle silver-clasped upon his breast, a gold-thread shirt. Three sets of hair he had ; next to the skin, brown ; in the middle, crimson : that which covered him on the outside formed, as it were, a diadem of gold. About his neck were a hundred linklets of red gold that flashed again, with pendants hanging from them. His head-gear was adorned with a hundred mixed carbuncle jewels, strung. The *lon gaile* or hero's light appeared above his head when roused to special feats of valour, as the light was said to blaze from the head of Achilles.

He dons the gorgeous raiment that he wore in great conventions ; a fair crimson tunic, five-plyed and fringed with a long pin of white silver, gold-encased and patterned . . . next his skin a body-vest of silk, bordered and fringed all round with gold, silver and white bronze which came as far as the upper edge of his russet-coloured kilt. A trusty special shield, in hue dark crimson, with a pure white silver rim. At his left side a long golden-hilted sword. Beside him in the chariot a lengthy spear and keen javelin fitted with hurling thong and rivets of white bronze.<sup>1</sup>

Among his ordinary feats may be mentioned the ball feat or apple feat, the small shield feat, the thunder feat, the prostrate feat, the dart feat, the rope feat, the cat feat, the salmon-sault, the wheel feat, the sod blow, the vertical stroke, cutting his opponent's hair with the sword, climbing against a rock, coiling around the blades of upright spears, the

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<sup>1</sup> His " array of battle " is described at page 300, ii. Man. & Cust.

invalidating feat, the whirl, the war-whoop and various others.

Cuchulainn was slain by Lughaidh, son of Curoi mac Daire who previously had been treacherously put to death by the Ulster hero.<sup>1</sup> Emer's lament for her peerless husband Cuchulainn is, with Deirdre's lament for Naoise, among the most touching dirges in our literature. And Emer herself, indeed, was the model of the matchless women of early Ireland. **Emer** was found by Cuchulainn on her playing-field, with her foster-sisters around her, daughters of the land-owners that lived in the environs of the hospitable dun of Forghail at Lusca. They were learning needle-work and fine handiwork from Emer. Of all the maidens of Erin, she was the one whom he deigned to address and to woo. For she had the six gifts; the gift of beauty, the gift of voice, the gift of sweet speech, the gift of needlework, the gifts of wisdom and chastity.

In revenge for the death of Cuchulainn, Conall Cearnach carried red slaughter through Tara, Airgeadros and other places, until his victims lay piled before the doors of Tara, and the Clanna Deaghaidh were hopelessly vanquished. Conall Cearnach it was, too, who slew Oileall at Cruachain with the cast of a javelin. And, in revenge for this, Conall was himself killed by the men of Connacht.

After the death of Oileall, Meadhbh was married to Fearghus mac Roigh. Altogether she spent ninety-eight years on the throne of Connacht. She was killed, while bathing, with a stone flung at her across a lake by a son of Conchubhar mac Neasa.

Of **Conchubhar mac Neasa** himself we have abundant details. His beard was forked and pointed, his bushy reddish-yellow hair looped to the slope of his poll. A purple-bordered garment encircled him, a pin of wrought gold fastened the garment over his shoulder. Next the surface of his skin was a shirt of kingly satin. A purple brown shield with rims of yellow gold beside him. He had a gold-hilted embossed sword. In his white firm right hand he held a purple, bright,

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<sup>1</sup> The well-known story of the struggle for the 'hand of Blathnaid' seems inconsistent with the advance and retreat of Curoi after the Fight at the Ford (page 24 *supra*).

well-shaped spear accompanied by its forked dart. There was not the equal of Conchubhar in all the world, not alone in the splendour of his figure, but in his carriage, appearance and features. He excelled by his height, symmetry and fine proportions as well as by his eyes, hair and the fairness of his skin ; by his wisdom, prudence and eloquence, as well as by the magnificence of his raiment and his air of distinction. In arms, in amplitude and in dignity he was as famous as he was in accomplishments, in valour and in the nobility of his descent.

The manner of his death was peculiar. Ceat of Iorrus Domhnann and his followers, having succeeded in carrying off a *Tain* from Ulster, were pursued and overtaken by the Ultonians. Disguising himself among the women of Connacht, Ceat then found an opportunity to cast at Conchubhar the brain-ball of Meisceadhra, which he buried in the Ulster king's head. There it was left for seven years by the advice of his physician Fingein. By the end of that time he was told, by his druid, of the Crucifixion of our Saviour. Then he believed. " My heart is broken," he said, " at the sound of the wailing for my God ; that my arm cannot be stretched forth in relief to arrest the pains—because I am not permitted to ride in chariots—and to avenge the death of my Creator. Thereupon " Conchubhar brought out his sword, and rushed at a woody grove which was near him, and began to cut and to fell it. For, if he were among the Jews, he said, he would use them in the same manner. And from the excess of the fury that seized him, the lump started out of his head, and some of his brain came away with it," so that he died immediately.

Intervening between Eochaid Feidleach (father of Meadhbh) and **Criomhthann Nia Nair**, the twelfth year of whose reign synchronised with the birth of Christ, we find, among others, **Eochaidh Aireamh**, " the grave-digger," who initiated the custom of grave-digging in Ireland ; Eidirsceoil ; his son **Conaire Mor**, the first to exact, as *eric* of his father, the Leinster tribute ; **Lughaidh Riabh nDearg** who died of grief for the loss of his wife ; and Conchubhar " of the Red Eyebrows," who was slain by Criomhthann. As is to be expected, the morals of the courts of Emania and Cruachan, like the



morals of all other royal courts, left much to be desired about this period. The succession to the throne was also irregular. Criomhthann died at Howth on his return with vast spoils from a foreign expedition. He was succeeded by his son Fearadhach, in whose reign lived Morann son of Maon. Morann it was who possessed the collar which was said to tighten round the neck of the wavering judge until he gave a just judgment. Two further reigns connect Fearadhach with Cairbre Cinn Chait, who was said to have had ears like a cat's.

**Cairbre Cinn Chait** obtained the sovereignty through the rustic tribes slaying the free tribes by treachery at a feast lasting nine days. Three pregnant queens of the vanquished escaped to Scotland. Their sons, Tuathal Teachtmhar, Tiobraide Tireach and Corb Olom were invited back in time. They regained the sovereignty, and restored prosperity to Ireland.

**Tuathal Teachtmhar** came from Scotland at the age of twenty-five. He defeated the Athachthuaith or rustic tribes already referred to, north, south, east and west, in upwards of a hundred battles. Having convened the Feis of Tara, he took from each of the four provinces a portion at the point where all adjoined, and united into the royal province of Meath the whole four portions thus obtained. On them he erected four chief fortresses. In the Munster portion he built Tlachtgha where on the eve of Samhain the druids of Ireland assembled to offer sacrifices to the gods. All fires were extinguished that night and rekindled from the fire of Tlachtgha. For each fire thus lighted, the king of Munster received a screaball or threepence. In the Connacht portion was erected Uisneach where, at Bealtaine, the great convention or fair of Uisneach was held ; goods, wares and valuables exchanged, and sacrifice offered to Beil. The horse and trappings of every chief who came to Uisneach were given to the king of Connacht. The third fortress was at Tailltin where the men of Ireland formed alliances of marriage. An ounce of silver was given to the king of Ulster for every couple married there. At Tara was the fourth royal fortress. Here the Feis was held, laws and customs instituted, and the annals and records of the country approved.

Tuathal in the course of time gave one of his daughters,

Dairine, in marriage to Eochaidh Aincheann, king of Leinster. Subsequently Eochaid came to Tara, pretended that Dairine was dead, and got the second daughter Fithir in marriage. Fithir on being taken to Leinster was so shocked on seeing her sister Dairine still alive that she died of shame, Dairine at the same time dying of grief. This incident recalls in some of its features the Greek legend that centres round the sisters Procne and Philomela, daughters of Pandion I, who were so brutally outraged by King Tereus. To avenge Eochaid's callous treatment of the royal sisters, their father Tuathal re-imposed the *boromha*, or Leinster Tribute, consisting in this instance, of three score hundred cows, three score hundred hogs, three score hundred wethers, three score hundred ounces of silver, three score hundred mantles, and three score hundred bronze cauldrons. This tribute was paid during the reigns of forty kings until remitted by Fionnachta through the intercession of Saint Moling. Tuathal fell by Mathal who in turn fell by Feidlimidh Reachtmhar son of Tuathal.

**Feidlimidh Reachtmhar** was so called from the excellence of the legal judgments delivered in his time. His law resembled the *Lex Talionis*, an eye for an eye, a hand for a hand, a cow for a cow, and so on. After nine years on the throne, he died on his pillow.

**Conn Ceadchathach**, whose mother was Una daughter of the king of the Lochlain, was the next king of note. He was defeated in ten battles by Mogh Nuadat, forced to cede him half the country, and ultimately slain.

**Mogh Nuadat or Eoghan Mor** reminds us somewhat of Pharaoh. His druid foretold a famine; and Eoghan, to make provision for it, used venison and fish for food, and stored all the corn he could procure, so that the men of Ireland had to seek provisions from him when want overtook them. His mother Beara was of the royal family of Castile. He was succeeded by Conaire. As happens not infrequently in similar circumstances, Sadhbh daughter of Conn Ceadchathach had Oileall Olom son of Mogh Nuadhat as her second husband. Among their nine sons were Cormac Cas ancestor of the Dal gCais and fifth best champion of Ireland in his time, and Eoghan Mor, called probably after his grandfather. Muilleathan, ancestor of the MacCarthy and O'Sullivan tribes, was son of Eoghan.



**Cormac Cas** was the first to impose a rent-tax on Munster. He gave in one day nine ounces and five hundred ounces of silver to bards and learned men for praising him. When in exile he brought thirty preys from England.

**Mac Con** son of Sadhbh anticipated Diarmuid MacMur-chadha by a thousand years. For opposing Eoghan Mor and for other reasons, he was banished out of Ireland by Oileall Olom. In the course of his exile he made influential friends so that himself and Beinne Briot, son of the king of Britain, and many foreigners came to Ireland, and declared war on Art Aenfhir the king. The battle of Magh Muchruime was the result. Mac Con became powerful and reigned for thirty years.

**Cormac mac Airt** succeeded. His mother was Eachtach, daughter of a smith ; his wife, Eithne, daughter of Dunlaing and foster-child of Buicead the famous Leinster brughaidh. He was one of the wisest kings that ever ruled Ireland, and as princely and hospitable as he was wise.<sup>1</sup> In his time the palace of Tara was rebuilt and a Grianan and other houses added. The **Teach Miochuarta** also was made a banquet hall, three hundred feet long, thirty cubits high, and fifty cubits in width. A torch was kept constantly lighting in it. Fourteen doors it had, and thrice fifty beds beside Cormac's. Thrice fifty warriors attended him at meals, thrice fifty stewards and three hundred cup bearers. His household numbered a thousand and fifty men. It was ordained in his time that every king should have ten officers in constant attendance on him, namely a prince, brehon, druid, physician, bard, seancha, musician and three stewards. Cormac had one of his eyes knocked out by Aonghus. Previously, according to the Book of Ballymote, he was symmetrical and beautiful of form, without blemish or reproach. Flowing, slightly curling, golden hair upon him. A red buckle with stars and animals of gold, and fastenings of silver. A crimson cloak in wide descending folds, fastened at the breast by a golden brooch set with precious stones. A neck-torque of gold, a white shirt with a full collar, and intertwined with

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<sup>1</sup> Yet his alleged treatment of Tadhg mac Cein was barbarous. He had a live worm, a grain of barley, and a splinter of a javelin head put into the three wounds of Tadhg mac Cein.



red gold thread. A girdle of gold inlaid with precious stones. Two wonderful shoes of gold with gold runnings. In his hands two spears with golden sockets and many rivets of bronze. After being wounded he gave over the sovereignty to Cairbre, and retired to Cleiteach and Ceanannas. He had ten daughters, one of whom was the romantic Grainne. God gave him the light of faith seven years before his death. He was buried at Ros na Riogh, not at the Pagan cemetery of Brugh na Boinne.

## THE FIAN

**The Fiana Eireann** or National Militia of Ireland under Fionn mac Cumhaill were in their heyday at that period. The Fiana were quartered on the men of Ireland from Samhain to Bealtaine. Their duty was to uphold justice and prevent injustice, to guard and preserve the harbours of Ireland from the violence of foreigners. From Bealtaine to Samhain they were engaged in hunting and the chase and in such other duties as preventing robbery, exacting the payment of tribute, and putting down malefactors. At this season they were obliged to depend solely on the products of their hunting and of the chase as maintenance and remuneration from the king of Ireland. Thus they were to have the flesh for food and the skins of the wild animals as their reward. They took but one meal every twenty-four hours, and that in the afternoon. What had been killed in the morning's hunt they usually sent by their attendants about noon to an appointed hill having wood and moorland in the vicinity. There they kindled raging fires, and into them they put a number of emery stones. Then they dug two pits in the yellow clay of the moorland. Portion of the meat they put on spits to roast before the fire, another part they bound with *sugans* and set to boil in the larger pit, plying it with stones from the fire so that it seethed until cooked. The black sites of these large fires are to-day called *fulachta Fian*.

The body of the Fian, having assembled on the hill, ranged themselves around the second pit, bathing their hair, washing their limbs, removing their sweat, exercising their joints and muscles to rid themselves of their fatigue. After this they took their meal, and finally erected their tents to prepare

themselves for rest. Each of them made himself a bed of tree tops, moss and fresh rushes, called "the three tickings of the Fian," the tree tops on the ground, the moss on these, and the fresh rushes on the surface.

The ordinary host that served under Fionn consisted of the three battalions of the Fian, having three thousand in each battalion in times of peace. But when the high-king was in conflict, or the Dal Riada of Scotland needed assistance, Fionn had seven battalions to enable him to protect Ireland and aid the Dal Riada at the same time. Over these were many leaders. A caithmhileadh was in charge of the battalion as a colonel is in charge of a regiment. "There were, further, the leader of a hundred, like the modern captain, the chief of fifty, like the lieutenant, the head of thrice nine, like the corporal, and the head of nine, like the decurion of the Romans." Accordingly, when mention is made in the records of Ireland of a man being a match for a hundred or fifty or nine, it simply means that he was a match in battle for a similar leader in charge of a corresponding following.

Four injunctions were placed on everyone admitted to the ranks of the Fian. The first, not to accept a dowry with a wife, but to choose her for her accomplishments and good manners. The second, never to deceive a woman. The third, not to refuse a request for valuables or food. The fourth, that none of them should flee before nine men. Fionn attached ten further conditions to the degrees in valour which one was bound to obtain before being received into the Fian. Under them no man was received into the Fian, the assembly at Uisneach, the Fair of Tailltean, or the Feis of Tara until his parents, relatives and clan gave guarantees that they would never demand retribution for his death, so that he might look to no one to avenge him but his own self. Unlike the Spartans, no one was admitted until he had become a *file* and made up the twelve books of filidheacht. No one was admitted until a large trench reaching above his knees had been dug for him, and he was placed in it armed with a shield and a hazel staff as long as a warrior's arm. Nine warriors with nine spears then approached him to within the space of nine furrows. Simultaneously they hurled the nine spears at him, and if he was wounded in spite of his shield and his hazel staff he would not be received into the Fian. No man

was admitted until, with his hair plaited, he was sent through several woods and the whole Fian in pursuit of him with a view to wounding him, while he got but the odds of a single tree over them, and if they overtook him they might wound him fatally. No man was admitted whose weapon trembled in his hand, nor was anyone admitted if a branch of a tree in the woods unloosed from its plait even a single braid of his hair. No man was admitted among them if he broke a withered bough beneath his feet in running; neither was anyone admitted unless with his hand he could pluck a thorn from his foot without stopping in the race for the purpose. Again, no one was admitted unless he leaped over a tree as high as his own forehead, and stooped when running at top speed beneath a tree as low as his knee through the great agility of his body. Finally, no man was admitted among them unless he had sworn to the Ri-feinidh that he would be faithful and submissive to him.

Fionn once made a feast for Cormac at Sidh Truim, the king of Alba, the king of the Greeks and the two sons of the king of wealthy Lochlainn having come on a visit to Cormac. The king of the Greeks and the king of Alba sat side by side at the shoulder of Cormac, the sons of the king of the Lochlainn on his right, the kings of Ulster, Munster and Cruachan all round him. The king of Leinster was there, too, as were the nobles of the Fian, men of wisdom, and thirty poets, each wearing a silken cloak. In all, eight men and eighteen score leaders of hosts were around the king of Ireland.

**Fionn's own household** at Almhain contained twelve musicians, six doorkeepers, three butlers, two stewards of hounds, two masters of horse, two overseers of the hearth, two bed-makers, two keepers of vessels, two horn-players, two spear-bearers, a shield-bearer, strong man, master of the banquet, candle-maker, carver, metal-worker, smith, carpenter, charioteer, barber, comber, three clowns, three jugglers, three fools, a chief poet and a just judge. It contained further three hundred golden cups for strong drinks, thrice fifty golden vessels, thrice fifty silver goblets to hold the mead of May, a vat for six hundred to drink from, drinking horns, a gold cup, a candelabrum seven feet high with gold and silver and precious stones. Besides these, a hundred spotless couches and thirty warriors to every bed around



Fionn's carved couch of gold, ornaments of gold throughout with golden pillars, and couches of wattle and plank.

**The dress** of the Fian was of various colours: the Book of Lismore says it was not unlike the Highland garb of the present day. At the Feast of Aonghus at Brugh na Boinne, the Fian wore green mantles and purple cloaks, the mercenaries scarlet satin. At the Chase of Sliabh na mBan not one of the Fenian huntsmen but had a satin shirt, a tunic, a silken robe, a glittering breastplate, green shield, a lance, two spears and, like Telemachus, two hounds.

**The favourite hounds** of the Fian were Bran and Sceolan, Bran particularly. Hundreds of hounds are enumerated in their hunting lays. In one, the Chase of Loch Lein, some three hundred hounds are named; and Oisín is on record as having said that, besides those mentioned, there were a thousand additional hounds. Oisín was very much attached to them, Fionn even more so. Except over Bran, Fionn was never known to weep, save when his spirit wept over Oscur.

**The horses** of the Fian are often referred to also, notably "the horses of the Munstermen of the great races." Cairbre is represented, too, in the Battle of Gabhra, as having thrown a cast from the back of his faithful steed.

**Their banners**, made of *srol*, were reputed magnificent. They were of various colours—blue, green, red, white—and had representations of trees, animals, military weapons, musical instruments. The sun was represented on Fionn's standard, the *Gal Greine*.

**Their arms** were battle-axes, swords, spears, javelins, slings and arrows.

**The Fian of Leinster and Meath** consisted of the Clanna Baoisgne, and were called after one of the ancestors of Fionn. Fiachaidh, brother of Tuathal Teachtmhar, seems to have been their founder.

**The Fian of Connacht** were composed of the Gamhanraighe and the Fir Domhnann of Erris, Mayo and Roscommon. Goll mac Morna was their best-known leader. Morna was grandson of Fiachaidh, ruler for twenty years of the Fian of Leinster and Meath.

Though some of the greatest battles of the Fian were fought in the South, notably those of Cnoc an Air and Fionn-

traigh in Kerry, no Munster Fian, as such, seem to have succeeded the famous Clanna Deaghaidh.

**Fionn** is variously described as a poet, man of science, battle hero of assemblies, a prince without a peer in bestowing gifts, brave warrior in stern battles. He is, moreover, a craftsman, an excellent metal-wright, a happy, ready judge, a master in every free craft. His wish, we are told, was to listen to the moaning of the bleak winds, the murmuring of the rippling streams, ships straining in the storm, the sea-gull's scream, the vulture croaking over serried hosts, the blackbird's note, the lowing kine, the noise of young deer in their gambols, the music of the chase, the cry of the hounds, the barking of Bran, Oseur's call, a seat in season amid the bards, and sleep by the stream at Assaroe.

“ The cry of hounds at early morn,  
The pattering deer, the pebbly creek,  
The cuckoo's call, the sounding horn,  
The swooping eagle's shriek.”

**Oseur**, like Fionn, is credited with many foreign conquests. The men of Scotland submitted to him at Dun Monadh ; at London of the red ramparts he overthrew the Saxons all on one field. At Rheims he defeated the ambitious Franks. The Spaniards are next vanquished, so that the high tribute of Spain is paid into his hands. Almain, Greece, Hesperia, Syria, Italy, Lochlainn and Wales are all visited, vanquished, and placed under tribute in turn in the course of this great voyage of conquest by Oseur.<sup>1</sup>

**Goll**, leader of the Connacht Fian, makes a voyage of discovery also, and subdues the Welsh, Lochlannaigh, Scottish, Saxons and French before returning to Ireland.

Many bloody battles were fought by the Fian in their capacity as defenders of the country and otherwise, notably the battles of Ventry harbour, Cnoc an Air, and Ceann Feabhrad in the south-west, the battle of Magh Mucruime in the west, and the battle of Castleknock where Cumhall father of Fionn was slain in single combat by Goll mac

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<sup>1</sup> Some of our early writers, indeed, represent Oseur, like Alexander the Great, as having made conquests in India, and bestowed the gold of the Indians on his followers.

Morna who fought on the side of the monarch. Much friction and strife ensued. Eventually the Clanna Baoisgne and their followers, who had been regarded as the national militia, were superseded, in the reign of Cairbre Lithfeachair son of Cormac, by the Clanna Morna, and the final and fatal battle of Gabhra resulted.<sup>1</sup> It was fought between the Clanna Baoisgne under Oscur and the Clanna Deaghaidh under Mogh Corb,<sup>2</sup> supported by the kindred Fian of Alba, Britain and Lochlainn on the one side, and on the other the monarch's household troops of Tara supported by the forces of Meath and Ulster and the Clanna Morna under the command of Aodh mac Garaidh, king of Connacht. Of the 21,000 men who fought under Oscur 18,000 were slain, while only 12,000 of the 28,000 who constituted the royal army fell. The monarch, Cairbre, was among the slain, and the country was sadly weakened as the result of the disastrous civil conflict. Oisín is reputed to have said that after the battle "there existed in Fair Banba but a few warriors renowned for feats, and youths who had not been proved. There was no king who might come hither but would obtain Ireland freely without battle, struggle, contention, conflict or reproof."

**Criomhthann** son of Fiodhach who reigned seventeen years is the next king of note. He won victories and obtained sway in Alba, Britain and France.

**Niall Naoighiallach**, whose mother was Cairionn Chasdubh, daughter of the king of Britain, succeeded Criomhthann. Niall went to Alba with a large host to strengthen and establish the Dal Riada and the Scotie race in Alba. He was the first to give the name Scotia to Alba, having been requested to do so by the Dal Riada on condition that Alba was to be Scotia Minor and Ireland Scotia Major, in veneration for Scota wife of Milidh. "Previously it had been called Alba or Albania from Albanactus, third son of Brutus." Subsequently Niall marched with a full host from Alba to Wales

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<sup>1</sup> Fought A.D. 283 or 296.

<sup>2</sup> Mogh Corb also with three hundred ships went to Lochlainn with the two brothers of his mother, Samhaoir, daughter of Fionn, to obtain the sovereignty of Lochlainn. They slew the king, his eight brothers, four sons and the majority of the nobles; and the two uncles of Mogh Corb remained in possession of the country.



and Anglia and encamped there; he also sent a fleet to Brittany to plunder the country, and brought captive two hundred noble youths, including Patrick and his two sisters Lupeta and Darerca.

The Scots and the Picts at the same time wasted Britain. Envoys were dispatched to Rome to implore the aid of the Emperor Honorius. He wrote requesting the Britons to defend themselves as best they could. The oppression continued, and the Britons again sent envoys to Rome complaining piteously of the cruelty of the Scots and Picts. Then the Romans sent an armed legion to relieve the Britons. Several engagements ensued. The Romans at length grew weary, and, having counselled the Britons to build a strong wall between themselves and their aggressive neighbours, returned to Rome.

The Britons thereupon built a fence of earth from sea to sea. This the Scots and Picts broke down immediately. Envoys were sent a third time to Rome, and another legion came to oppose the Picts and Scots. Having driven them northwards, they again told the Britons they would have to defend themselves thenceforward, and left. Then it was that the Britons built the great wall from sea to sea between Britain and Alba—twelve feet high and eight feet thick, according to Bede. But the Scots and Picts again marched south, passed the wall and devastated all Britain, so that the Britons abandoned stone fortresses and dwellings and fled to woods and desert places. Once more the remnant of them wrote Boetius, the Consul at Rome, imploring his aid and saying, according to Bede: "the barbarians force us to the sea . . . the sea throws us back upon the barbarians, and by this twofold torture we are either slain or drowned." The S.O.S. is no modern British expedient.

The Pelagian heresy, sown in England towards the close of the fourth century, was rapidly gaining ground at this juncture. To put it down, the British decided to send to the French clergy for prelates and preachers. Germanus bishop of Auxerre and Lupus bishop of Troyes were sent them, and they confounded the heretics.

Niall, having taken many captives from Britain in the beginning of the fifth century, arrived in Ireland with a large force of Britons and of Gauls. Here he assembled

additional forces, and sent word to Gabhran chief of the Dal Riada in Alba, to follow him with his whole host to France. While operating in the neighbourhood of the Loire, Niall was treacherously killed by Eochaidh ex-king of Leinster, who accompanied Gabhran, in revenge for Niall's having previously banished him to Alba.

**Daithi**, who succeeded Niall, "led a host to help the Roman general Actius to drive the French from the frontiers of Eastern Gaul," and was killed by a flash of lightning at the foot of the Alps after he had pillaged the penitentiary of a hermit named Parmenius. His remains were brought to Ireland and buried in Roilig na Riogh at Cruachain.

As this rapid survey of the story of pre-Christian Ireland opens with a series of shadowy legends relating to the twilight before the Flood, it may appropriately close with the substantial testimony of the Continental authors who heralded the coming of the faith. Poseidonius, a Greek writer who flourished about 150 B.C. is quoted by Strabo as saying that Ireland, which is named Ierne, stretched farther north than Britain and that its people were fierce and cannibalistic. Strabo himself, writing also in Greek, at the opening of the Christian era, referred to them as quite wild and having a poor way of living owing to their cold climate. Julius Caesar meanwhile described Hibernia as half the size of Britain and as far from it as Britain was from Gaul.

Pomponius Mela, a native of Spain, who wrote his famous Geography about 40 A.D. described Ireland as unfavourable for the ripening of certain seeds; its pasturage, none the less, excellent for cattle feeding, and its people ignorant and devoid of affection. The Spanish historian Orosius also quotes references to the Irish by Ethicus of Istria. With a liberality that will appear uncommon, Pliny, on the authority of Agrippa, noted the length of Ireland as 600 Roman miles, its width 300. Agricola held an Irish king captive in the hope of using him for purposes of conquest, and led his forces to a point close to the Irish Sea in the vain hope that the country might be taken and held by a single legion with moderate auxiliaries. Tacitus, recording the military dispositions on the British border facing Ireland, which were made by Agricola with this design, says that, though the

people and climate of Ireland differ little from those of England, Ireland's approaches and harbours are better known through its merchants and commerce. Similarly Ptolemy, about the middle of the second century, names some sixteen communities settled along the south and east of Ireland and indicates the existence of a city on the coast of Louth. He appears to have had information from Irish traders in reference to Wexford and the Wicklow coast, and he notes the Hebrides as belonging not to Britain but to Ireland.

Solinus, in the beginning of the third century, says, like Poseidonius, Strabo and Pomponius Mela, that our people were barbarous and inhospitable but warlike, our pastures so rich that the cattle run risk of bursting from over-feeding. Constantius Chlorus, at the century's close, refers to the Picts of Scotland and the Irish as invaders of Britain. In the same way Ammanius mentions, in 360 A.D., the devastation of places near the frontier of the British provinces by the Scots and Picts with whom terms had previously been made by the declining Romans. And in 365 he makes further mention of the Picts, Scots, Saxons and Attecotti who were harassing the Briton. Claudian, in praising the Roman general, Stilicho, has allusion to "the Scot" who set all Ireland in motion. He has reference also, in 416, to "the legions that protected the furthest bounds of Britain, bridled the cruel Scot, and scanned the lifeless face of the dying Pict. Finally St. Jerome mentions Scots as present in Gaul in his youth—half-a-century or so before St. Patrick's mission. All of which lends corroboration to the foreign military adventures attributed to the Fian, their predecessors and successors.

We have now given as briefly as possible the story of the Gael to the advent of our national apostle. Certain of the more important events thus recorded will be further classified as we trace from their respective sources the various branches into which the subsequent history of the country divided itself. It is hoped that the inconsiderable repetition thus necessitated will compensate the student by recalling leading historical events in a new setting and impressing them more deeply on the memory.



## CHAPTER II

### THE DRUIDS

"Loud is the roar that sweeps around the cauldron of the *druids*." So did Cohn Cille address the Cauldron of Breacain.



**DRUIDS** were familiar figures from the very dawn of history in Ireland. Three of them, Fios, Eolas and Fochmarc, are mentioned among the followers of Partolan. Neimheadh sent his druids and druidesses under the command of his wife, Reilbeo, "daughter of the King of Greece," to confound the druids and druidesses of the Fomorian at Toirinis, where Conang the Fomorian leader was slain. Moin Chonaing,<sup>1</sup> called, like Tur Chonaing on Toirinis, after the first Fomorian leader, and now known as Anglesea, became the great druidic centre of Wales.

**The Daghdha** was the druidical chief of the Tuatha De Danann who are frequently referred to in our literature as having brought their magic from the East. They had also three leading druids, Brian, Iuchar and Iucharba, two chief druidesses, Beacuill and Dana, and three non-professional druidesses, Bodhbh, Macha and Moirrioghan. At the battle of Maigh Tuireadh, the druids of the contending parties took up their position on rocks and other points of vantage, and exercised their magic arts in favour of their respective troops until the Tuatha De Danann at length prevailed.

The Milesians also had their druids and druidesses. Caichear Draoi prophesied in the course of their early migrations that their ultimate destination was Ireland. At the battle of Sliabh Mis, their chief druids, Uar and Eithear, were slain. Aimheirgin, their first poet, was also a druid, though not so

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<sup>1</sup> Moen .i. a structure of walls or ramparts. M(o)enai Strait .i. Sruth Mona and Muir Mona. Cf. Moin Chuinn.

by profession. Three druid-men, Troig, Dorn and Dearná, and three druid-women, Col, Arcuid and Earuise, were sent by Meadhbh to fight against Cuchulainn.

In short, the druids are found acting in many capacities other than magicians, prophets and poets, such as physicians, counsellors, intermediaries, teachers, while druid and brehon may be regarded as practically synonymous terms.

**Physicians.**—We read of them acting at the battle of Maigh Tuireadh as physicians to heal the wounded. Drostan the druid, says the Dinnseanchus, recommended a bath in milk to heal wounded men; and in the comparatively modern poem, “Eachtra an Amadain Mhoir,” we find a man’s leg restored by the druids’ agency.

**Counsellors.**—Eochaidh Feidlioch having asked his druids where he would build his fort was advised to have it erected at Cruachain. It was a druid counselled Niall Naoighiallach to bind to a stone Eochaidh, king of Leinster, who subsequently slew Niall on the banks of the Loire. As St. Patrick approached Tara two druids instructed Laoghaire as to the attitude to be adopted towards our national apostle, and were confounded.

**Intermediaries.**—When the princes of Munster decided to burn Corc and Cormac—often referred to as the Romulus and Remus of Irish history—and to cast their ashes adrift because they were illegitimate, Dineach the druid implored them to spare Corc and hand him over to himself. Having obtained their assent, he took the youth to Beare island where Baoi lived, and left him for a year under her protection. Then he placed him under the care of the boy’s grandmother, Saruithé. In the course of time, Corc became king of Munster and, having been at Tara at the coming of Patrick, is reputed the first man in Ireland to bend the knee to him.

**Teachers.**—Cathbad the prophet was with Conchubhar mac Neasa in the north-east of Eamhain imparting learning, and with him were eight eager pupils in the class of druidic cunning. The Cruite Caoinbheile, who came from Eas Ruadh to amuse and instruct, out of friendship for Aileall and Meadhbh, are referred to in the Tain as druids, harpers of great cunning and great power of augury and magic. Two druids, Mail and Colpait, were instructing Laoghaire’s daughters at Cruachain on Patrick’s arrival there. It was, indeed, a druid presented

St. Patrick with the site for the school of Elphin, as Baya, an exiled Irish druid, presented to St. David the site for his great Welsh monastery.<sup>1</sup> St. Mochta was brought up in a druid's house in Louth; and we have it on the authority of the *Leabhar Breac* that Colm Cille's mother consulted a druid as to the proper time to have her son educated. This druid was, in fact, the first tutor of the Dove of the Cell. In the "Chase of Glenasmoil" reference is made to Fearghus who bestowed gold on the druids. Even Julius Caesar says "in the sixth chapter of his history" that the druids who came to direct schools in France got free land and maintenance from the kings. They probably came from Ireland, then regarded as the fountain head of the druidism of western Europe.

**Prophets.**—Ceasarn, the druid of Eochaidh mac Earca, king of the Fir Bolg, in explaining a dream of his king, foretold the Battle of Maigh Tuireadh. The Coir Anmann tells of a druid who foretold to Daire Doimtheach that his son, Lughaidh Laighdhe, would be monarch of Ireland. Lughaidh was predecessor of Aodh Ruadh, father of Macha Mhongruadh. As "the seed of the eldest son of the children of Magog" passed through the northern ocean they met a spring which intoxicated them like wine. Then the druid prophesied they would go to Ireland—"farther from us than Scithia"—but only their children would reach it after three hundred years. Druids detained the forces of Meadhbh for the space of a fortnight awaiting good omen, and Meadhbh herself went subsequently to her druid "to seek for light and for augury from him." The druids of Mac Con prophesied his death within six months unless he obtained Tara. Cathbad, the druid of Conchubhar mac Neasa, predicted of Deirdre that great misfortune would befall the northern province on her account, and of Cuchulainn, that his name would live on the lips of the people of Ireland and Scotland for ever. Bacrach, a Leinster druid, also told Conchubhar mac Neasa in explanation of an unwonted change in the luminaries of heaven and earth that the Son of God would be put to death by the Jews. Mogh Nuadhat's druid foretold a famine in Ireland, with the result that the Southern king, by making provision in advance for the destitution, succeeded in placing the whole

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<sup>1</sup> Moran, 29.



people under subjection. Laoghaire's druids Lochru and Luchat Maol predicted Patrick's coming a couple of years in advance, and in great detail,<sup>1</sup> and on his arrival the druids at Tara prophesied that if the fire lighted at Slane were not put out that night it would not be extinguished till Doomsday.<sup>2</sup> In the Battle of Magh Lena a druid is referred to as predicting in great detail, also, the coming of Patrick. Another druid foretold the birth of Saint Brigid.

**Divination**, as a rule, was accompanied by druidic rites. For example, a great meeting was held at Tara, the men of Erin having been without a monarch for seven years. Meadhbh, Curoi and all the provincial kings were present, and a bull feast was made by them to ascertain who might be king. One man ate heartily of the flesh and broth, and slept under that meal. Four druids then pronounced an oration on him. In the course of his sleep he saw in a dream the appearance of the man who was to be king, namely, Lughaidh Riabh nDearg, and he shouted his description at the top of his voice.

**Teinm Laeghdha, or Rhyme Illumination.**—Fionn mac Cumhaill, who was an accomplished druid, chewed his own thumb when he wished to prophesy by means of Rhyme Illumination. One of many notorious cases was when he identified the headless body of Lamna the buffoon, put to death at the instigation of Fionn's wife to conceal an impropriety. Maen mac Etnae, a distinguished poet, identified by means of Teinm Laeghdha for the king of Munster, Connla great grandson of Oileall Olom, the skull of the first lapdog ever known in Ireland. This method of divination seems to have been a charm in rhyme, which led the druid on to the name he sought. That these druidic charms were regarded with anxiety is pretty obvious from a statement in the Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick to the effect that "all the virtues are invoked" in 'the Deer's Cry' "against the spells of women, smiths and druids."

**Palm Illumination, or Iombas Forosnai.**—Another rite, Illumination by the Palms of the Hands, is described in Cormac's Glossary. The poet chews a bit of the raw red

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<sup>1</sup> Tripartite Life, 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 43.

flesh of a pig, dog or cat, and retires with it to his bed behind the door, where he pronounces an oration on it, and offers it to his idols. He then invokes his idol gods, and if he has not received illumination before the next day he pronounces incantations upon his palms and takes his idol gods into his bed so as not to be interrupted in his sleep. Then he places his hands crosswise, one over and one hither upon his cheeks, and is watched so as not to be interrupted until everything he seeks is revealed at the end of a day, or two, or three, as the case may be. Hence Palm Illumination. It was prohibited by St. Patrick, as was Rhyme Illumination, when accompanied by a sacrifice. When not, it was called the Great Extempore Recital, and was not prohibited.<sup>1</sup>

**Sacrifice.**—There are in Ireland, says Keating, as relics of Pagan times very many wide flag-stones with pillar-stones supporting them. These are called idol-altars in the old books. On these altars the druids were wont to make their sacrifices, and slay their male goats, their bulls and their rams. The druids themselves went on their knees under the blood, as it dropped from their victims, to cleanse themselves from their sins as did the high priest among the Jewish people when he went under the sacrificial bridge to let the blood of the victims flow over him. And hence was he called Pontifex, *i.e.* bridge-wright. The use made of the hides of the bulls offered in sacrifice was to keep them for conjuration or laying geasa on the demons. This was done in many ways, such as looking at their own images in water, gazing on the clouds of heaven, or listening to the noise of the winds or the chattering of birds. When all these expedients failed, they made round wattles of the quicken tree and on them spread the hides of the bulls offered in sacrifice, putting uppermost the side which had been next the flesh and thus relying on their geasa to summon the demons and get information from them. Hence the old saw that “one had gone on his wattles of knowledge” when he had done his best to obtain

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<sup>1</sup> At a Council summoned by Domhnall O'Neill, King of Ulster, Flann of Monasterboice, in assessing damages to be paid to Erard Mac Coise for some injury, said that, in future, damages should be paid for similar injuries to all poets who were able to compose Imbas Forosnai, Teinm Laeghdha and Dichetal de Chennaibh.

information. Tlachtgha was one of their principal places of assembly for druidic sacrifice.

The quicken-tree is very frequently referred to in the literature, and its early use in this connection attributed to the East, where the people of Syria and the Athenians were constantly fighting and employing magic against each other. We are told they used to put demons in the bodies of the slain, and restore them to life overnight. Ultimately by thrusting staves of the quicken-tree through the dead bodies they were changed into worms and did not recover. We find a similar remedy applied by the Fiana to the Magic Swine of Aonghus of Brugh and their ashes then cast adrift into the sea.

**Glam Dicheinn or Satire.**—The wife of Caer king of Connacht conceived a criminal passion for Neidhe the king's adopted nephew, "and offered him a ball of silver to purchase his love." Neidhe, who was a distinguished poet too, asked his royal uncle, after much hesitation, for a knife which the king had obtained in Scotland. The king reluctantly declined, it being prohibited to him to give the knife out of his possession. Whereupon the poet composed a Glam Dicheinn or Satire. Immediately three blisters appeared on the king's cheek,<sup>1</sup> and he fled in disgrace to Dun Cearmna, now the Old Head of Kinsale, where he was entertained by Caichear son of Eidersceoil. Neidhe then became king of Connacht, but repented of his conduct after a year, and followed the victim of his satire to Dun Cearmna. So far, Caer had escaped recognition in the southern court. On the approach of his chariot with Neidhe he fled into a cave, but was soon located by his faithful greyhound. As the usurper drew near, Caer dropped dead of shame; and the rock in the cleft of which he lay hidden boiled, blazed and burst,<sup>2</sup> so that a splinter of it entered Neidhe's eye and broke it in its socket. A somewhat similar example is afforded by the story

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Eachtra na Mna Moire thar Lear," where we read that on account of a prophecy by his druids the king of Greece deprived his own daughter of the bloom and beauty of youth.

<sup>2</sup> St. Patrick, while travelling along the road to Midluachair on his way to Ulster, saw slaves felling a tree till the blood came from their palms. In his resentment of such cruelty he cast his spittle on a rock, and the rock is said to have burst in three.—*Tripartite Life*.



of Labhan Draoi, who, hearing of the generosity of Eochaidh Aontsula, ancestor of the O'Sullivans, came from Scotland to ask him for a gift, and would even accept no gift but one of Eochaidh's eyes. So much did Eochaidh dread the druid's satire that he actually gave him the eye. Saint Ruadhan of Lothra happened to be a witness of the incident, and through his instrumentality Eochaidh was instantly compensated at Labhan's expense.

While uttering the Glam Dicheinn, the *corrghuineach* or sorcerer was "on one foot, one hand and one eye," standing, in other words, on one foot, with outstretched arm and one eye shut. Lugh is represented in this attitude at the second battle of Magh Tuireadh.<sup>1</sup> A very interesting account of the procedure in satirising a king in Christian times is given in the Book of Ballymote, and will be referred to in due course.<sup>2</sup>

**Dlaoi Fulla.**—Another well known druidical rite was the Dlaoi Fulla, a charmed handful of straw, hay or grass. When thrown into a person's face it produced *dasacht*, and the victim ran, jumped, fluttered and behaved generally like a lunatic. We find it referred to as practised six hundred years before the Christian era, its origin being ascribed to Nuadha Fullan, a Leinster king who flourished about that period. A further case of it is mentioned in connection with a conflict which centred round the princess Eithne Uathach, daughter of Criomhthann king of Leinster and, later, queen of Aonghus king of Munster. The Dlaoi Fulla was to have been employed by the blind druid Dil against the Deise to whom Aonghus promised frontier territory north of the Suir on condition that they drove out the inhabitants. But Dil's daughter, then attached to Eithne at the court of Cashel, stole the *dlaoi* from her father, with the result that the Deise were victorious. The vanquished descendants of Breasal Bealach fled from the scene with the speed of *osa* or wild deer and thus got the name of Osraighe. They were pursued as far as Luininn which became the boundary between Munster and Leinster. A druid of the Deise is said to have

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<sup>1</sup> Rochan Lug an cetul so sios for leth cois ocus leth suil timchell fer nErenn.—Joyce's "Social History of Ancient Ireland," i. 241, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See Man. & Cust. 216-7, ii.

sacrificed himself at the time, putting himself into the form of a hornless red cow to be slain "that his children might be made free for ever."

Maolochtair, the generous king of the Deise, it was who bestowed on Saint Mochuda the site and grounds of the great school of Lismore. His second wife contracted a deadly hatred for his comely and valiant son Comgan, because the gifted youth rejected the amorous advances of this wicked step-mother. In revenge, she incensed the king's druid against the prince by alleging an unfounded attachment between himself and the druid's wife and thus arousing the druid's jealousy. As a result, the druid flung a tuft of grass or *dlaoi* at the maligned prince, and after a bath his whole flesh burst into boils and ulcers. Within a year his intellect decayed, his hair fell out and he became a wandering idiot. In lucid intervals, however, he uttered prophecies. Victims of the *dlaoi fulla*, or, in the words of the *Corus Bescna*, persons on whom the magic wisp was thrown, were not bound by contracts made in the absence of their guardians.

**The Druidic Breath.**—Cormac mac Airt once sought a double tribute from Munster in one year. On its being declined by the Munster king, he sent a large force southward against the wishes of his druids. They encamped at *Damhghaire*, *i.e.* Knocklong, and their druids opened hostilities by drying up the springs and streams of the province. Mogh Ruith, a famous old druid of Valentia, said to have been educated in the East under Simon Magus,<sup>1</sup> hastened to the relief of Munster and released the springs. Then Cormac, having consulted his own druid Ciothruadh, decided to make a druidic fire from the rowan-tree. If the smoke from this fire went southward, they were to attack the men of Munster; if not, they were to retreat. Mogh Ruith, on the other hand, ordered the men of Munster to go into the wood of Leathard and each of them to bring out in his hand a faggot. The king was to bring a shoulder bundle from the mountain

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<sup>1</sup> Laegh, charioteer of Cuchulainn, was reputed to have worn an over-mantle of raven's feathers which Simon Magus had made as a gift for Darius Nero, king of the Romans. Darius bestowed it on Conchubhar, Conchubhar gave it to Cuchulainn, Cuchulainn presented it to Laegh.

side, where it had grown sheltered from three winds, the north-east March wind, the sea wind and the conflagration wind. The men having returned with the wood, the druid Ceannmhoir built up a pile like a triangular kitchen with seven doors. Mogh Ruith then ordered each man to give a shaving from the handle of his spear. These he mixed with butter, rolled into a large ball, and threw into the fire, causing a tremendous explosion. At the same time he uttered a chant opening with :—

I mix a roaring powerful fire  
It will clear the woods, it will blight the grass.<sup>1</sup>

Then he blew his druidical breath into the sky, and it became a threatening black cloud which descended in a shower of blood. “Upon us,” said Ciothruadh to Cormac, “its entire evil will fall.” Having asked three times about the relative positions of the two fires and flames, Mogh Ruith, who was quite blind, assumed his “dark grey hornless bull hide, white speckled bird headpiece with fluttering wings” and druidic instruments, ascended into the air and beat the fires northwards. Ciothruadh ascended to combat him; but Mogh Ruith was victorious, and Cormac ordered a retreat. Mogh Ruith, drawn by wild oxen, pursued with the men of Munster, and, overtaking Cormac’s three druids, Ceacht, Ciotha and Ciothruadh, blew his breath over them and converted them into stones, called to this day the flags of Raighne.

**Druidic Wind.**—“Let us trust to the powers that they may never again reach Ireland,” said the druids when, on the advice of Aimheirgin, the sons of Mileadh put off from the Munster coast after their first landing there. With that, the druids cast druidic winds after them so that the bottom gravel was raised to the surface of the sea by the force of the storm. “A druid’s wind is that,” said Donn son of Mil. “It is, indeed,” replied Aimheirgin. “A shame on our men of learning is it,” returned Donn, “not to suppress that druidic wind.” “No shame it shall be,” Aimheirgin answered, and he arose and uttered an invocation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Man. & Cust. 214, ii.

<sup>2</sup> Leabhar Gabhala.



**Druidic Fire.**—Three druidesses of the Tuatha de Danann, Bodhbh, Macha and Moirrioghan, once made a journey to Tara, and caused dark clouds and thick mist to surround the multitude assembled there. Showers of fire and blood they also caused to fall from the heavens, thereby suspending all work in the district for three days.

Midhe son of Brath was the first to light a fire for the Milesians in Ireland. It was kindled on the Hill of Uisneach, and lighted for seven years. From it every chief fire in Ireland used to be lighted. Midhe's successor was entitled annually to a sack of corn and a pig from every house in Erin. The druids declared this to be an insult, whereupon Midhe had them summoned together and their tongues cut out and buried in Uisneach.

The druids of Ireland, as already stated, were accustomed also to assemble at Tlachtgha on the eve of Samhain and offer sacrifice to the gods. All fires were extinguished that night, and rekindled from the fire of Tlachtgha.<sup>1</sup>

Aoife, only daughter to Lughaidh son of Cas ancestor of the Dal gCais, was married to Trad, a druid and chief who had little land. A numerous family having been born to them, Aoife suggested to her father that it would be well if they could have more territory. Lughaidh having consulted his oracles said to his daughter: "If thou shouldst order anyone to leave the country, he must depart without delay."

"Depart thou then," she replied, "and leave us the land in perpetuity."

Lughaidh complied, and with his six sons crossed the Shannon. Arriving at Carn Fiachach in Westmeath, he built a large fire which he ignited by his druidic power. From this fire five flames burst forth in different directions. He commanded his five elder sons to follow the fiery streams, one each, and that they would lead to their future inheritance.

**Druidic Mist.**—The Tuatha de Danann having landed in Ireland burned their ships and covered themselves in a magic mist for three days. Thus they escaped the notice of the Fir Bolg till they reached Sliabh an Iarainn, the Iron Mountains in Leitrim. By similar means they prevented

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<sup>1</sup> See page 45 *supra*.

the landing of the Milesians at Wexford Harbour, and later dispersed the Milesian fleet on the Kerry coast. A druid in competition with Patrick at Tara brought snow on the plain and darkness over the earth, but was unable to dispel either. The two druids who instructed Laoghaire's daughters in Connacht at the time of Patrick's arrival there brought a dense darkness over Maigh Ai for three days. But Patrick prayed so that in the end only the druids themselves were enveloped in the darkness, all the other people being immune from its influence. These are not the only examples :

We read in the *Lives of the Saints*<sup>1</sup> of a magic wall placed by Diarmuid's druid between the two armies at the battle of Cul Dreimhne. "My God," said Colm Cille, "why are we not released from this mist?" And they were, and Diarmuid was vanquished. At a later period Broichean chief druid to king Brude of Scotland threatened to prevent Colm Cille's voyage on Loch Ness, as he returned from the Highlands. "Thou wilt not be able," said the druid, "for I will make the wind contrary to thee, and I will bring a great darkness over thee." And he gave effect to his threat, but Colm Cille defeated him by prayer.<sup>2</sup>

**Druidic Baptism or Baiste Geintlidhe.**—The druids had their own peculiar form of baptism. At the birth of Conall Cearnach druids came and chanted baptismal rites over him, saying : Never will a boy be born more impious than this towards the Connacians. As a boy, Oileall Olom, king of Munster, was baptised in magic streams in the beginning of the third century. The three sons of Conall Dearg Ua Corra received druidic baptism to prepare them for a diabolical mission, though they subsequently turned out very pious and exemplary.

The druids generally wore white robes, with garlands of oak leaves, and adopted a distinctive tonsure. Reachrad chief druid and nine others, all arrayed in white, advanced to meet Patrick after he had crossed the Moy into the territory of the sons of Amhalghaidh, brother of Laoghaire. Nor was white favoured in their robes only. It is worthy of note that the Hill of Allen was called after Almu, wife of

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<sup>1</sup> Stokes xix.

<sup>2</sup> Soc. Hist. 223-4, i.

Nuadhat Mor the druid. Nuadhat erected Dun Dronard, which was all *white*, though he was unable to obtain Irish lime. His son Tadhg, to whom he left Almha, was also a druid, and father of Muirne, mother of Fionn.

**Druidic Worship.**—Neither the erection of temples in honour of the gods nor the adoration of them under a roof was permitted by the druids.<sup>1</sup> Crom Cruach the chief idol of Ireland was adored at Maigh Sleacht till the time of Tighearnmas. The principal idol, Crom, was adorned with gold and silver, the other idols were of stone. Saint Patrick put an end to them.

One day while Cormac mac Airt was in the house of Cleitigh, his druids and the whole company adored the Golden Calf in his presence. Maelghean asked him why he did not worship with the others. He would not adore a stock made by his own artificer, he replied, and thenceforward he would adore the God of heaven and earth and hell alone.

**The Aos Sidhe.**—The Aos Sidhe or fairies are often referred to in connection with the druids. Etain, the beautiful queen of Eochaidh Aireamh, for example, was swept away by a fairy after twelve months' warning, though surrounded for protection by the nobles and warriors of Tara. The king's druid, Dallan, afterwards discovered her in the fairy palace of Midhir at Bri Leith near Ardagh in Longford. He had cut four wands of yew, and written Ogham on them: thus was the queen located. When the king and his forces came to bring her back, and demolished the fairy mansion, he was unable to identify her among fifty others until she made some signs and was then restored to her husband.

Cuchulainn, to get fancy feathers for his lady love, cast three times at two birds in a lake, and, one being wounded on the wing, both dived. Cuchulainn went away disappointed and soon fell asleep against a rock. Then two women, one in a green cloak the other in a crimson, approached him, smiled on him, and alternately kept striking him gently with horse switches until he was nearly dead. He was taken thence to Eamhain Macha, where he lay mute for a whole year. By this time a strange man, Aonghus

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<sup>1</sup> Man. & Cust. 182, ii.



son of Aodh Abrat, visited him and undertook to send Liban to heal him if he came on November Eve to wed Fand, daughter of Aodh, who had been deserted by Manannan mac Lir. Cuchulainn, having consulted Conchubhar, returned to the rock and was approached again by the woman in green, who turned out to be Liban and promised that, for one day's fighting against Senach the Distorted, Cuchulainn would be healed and get Fand in marriage. On the advice of Laegh, who paid a special visit to Maigh Meall, Cuchulainn went to fight for Labraid brother of Fand, and he subsequently went to live with Fand until Manannan came to claim her once more. This enraged Cuchulainn, as Cuchulainn's own conduct naturally aroused the fury of Emer. Eventually, both Cuchulainn and Emer had to get drinks of oblivion from the druids of Eamhain Macha so that they might mutually forget the cause of their frenzied jealousy. Such was the influence of the Aos Sidhe who wielded immense power before the coming of the faith.

**Crosantacht** or **Sorcery** is held to be even older than druidism. An ancient writer says in the Book of Lecan that the Tuatha de Danann, "a remnant of the fallen angels," came at the call of sorcerers and those who practise malevolent incantations by walking in circles left-hand wise. They used to be worshipped, and it was they who invented the spells sung by smiths and druids and wise women and pilots and cup-bearers. From them, he adds, druidism came to Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Crosans are frequently mentioned in the lives of the Irish saints. More than one is met in the Voyage of Brendan. We are told, too, that St. Cainneach from an island near Ros Cre saw a vast host of demons flying in the air over his head. And when Donnchadh mac Ceallaigh, father-in-law of Donnchadh son of Flann Siona, was buried at Saighir Chiarain nine coal-black crosans came shrieking over the grave. Every one who saw them took ill for a day and a night. At length the clergy fasted and prayed to ascertain why so good a man was pursued in death, and it was indicated that the demons came from the nether regions in anger because they could make no impression on the king during his lifetime. Two sorcerers of the period,

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<sup>1</sup> "Phases of Irish History," 86.

Fionn Ua Cionga and Rionntach Ua Conarain, learned their hymns and practised crosantacht during their own lifetimes. According to the Annals of Ulster, Maelsheachlain, royal heir of Aileach, died through sorcery in 996.

Thus the functions of the druids, who were supplanted by the *anamchara* at the revision of the social system after the coming of Saint Patrick, degenerated and tapered out into the *piseoga* of our own day. It will be obvious, however, that the druids did not get entirely displaced by the coming of the faith. Raghallach, the lustful king of Connacht, had a druid in the time of Fursa and Feichin; while the Four Masters record in 1097 that "the druid Ua Carthaigh ollamh of Connacht was killed by the Connachtmen themselves," and in 1166 that "the blind Ua Conallta .i. Giollamuire, royal druid of Ireland, died." Druids are even mentioned formally in the retinue of the Maguires of Fermanagh as late as the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

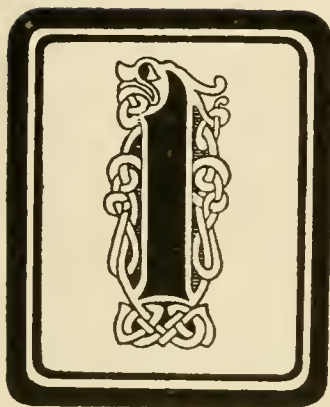
The Christian period has, of necessity, been anticipated somewhat here, as the period covered in the first section has been reverted to again and again as we trace back to their respective sources the various arteries which sustain the main current of Irish history.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Maguires of Fermanagh," Rev. P. S. Dinneen, M.A.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MISSION OF PATRICK



IT would be difficult, if it were necessary, to assign a definite date to the introduction of Christianity into Ireland. The story of Conchubhar mac Neasa rushing into the wood of Lamhraighe on hearing of our Saviour's Crucifixion, and felling the trees, as though they were Jews, is widely known. Another of our early tragedies describes Cuchulainn, after his lamented death, as floating in his spirit-chariot over Eamhain Macha and chanting "a magic song of the coming of Christ and the Day of Doom." Cormac mac Airt, not content with declining to worship the Golden Calf moulded by his own artificer, refused to be buried at the Pagan cemetery of Brugh na Boinne and was, instead, buried at Ros na Riogh, afterwards blessed by Colm Cille. Whatever historical basis there may be for such records,<sup>1</sup> continued through the Fiana period, no one can seriously doubt that Christianity had got a foothold in Ireland before Saint Patrick's coming, and was preached, either previously or concurrently, by **Diaghlan, Ciaran, Iobhar, Ailbè** and others. **Iserninus**, whose original name was Fith, and native place southern Ireland, was ordained with Patrick at Auxerre; and Patrick himself, it seems manifest, regarded the greater part of the south and south-west, where traces of early ecclesiastical foundations abound, as in no urgent need of his presence or personal attention.

The place of Patrick's birth is still a subject of perennial controversy: the neighbourhood of the Severn and the

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<sup>1</sup> "Conchubhar mac Neasa was the first man to receive the faith in Ireland before the coming of Patrick; Morann son of Maon, the second; Cormac mac Airt, the third."—F.F. 345, ii.



neighbourhood of the Clyde have long had their claims to **his** nativity urged with almost equal earnestness, while recently a claim has been forcefully advanced on behalf of the neighbourhood of the Tiber.<sup>1</sup> He was first brought to Ireland in bondage in the course of those maritime expeditions in which Niall of the Nine Hostages and other Irish kings of that period indulged. Having spent about seven years in the service of an Irish chieftain, he escaped and—as appears from the most careful investigations—found his way to Gaul and Italy, eventually returning to Britain. Then it was he felt called back to Ireland, to the children near the wood of Fochlad by the western sea. So he again set out for Gaul and, to fit himself for the mission to him foreshown, studied long and diligently at Auxerre, principally under Germanus. After all his anxious years, however, Celestine, determining in 431 to send a bishop to the Scots believing in Christ, chose and consecrated therefor not Patrick but Palladius. Tigroney,<sup>2</sup> Ceall Fine near Dunlavin, and Donard, all in Wicklow, are regarded as scenes of the early labours of Palladius, whose mission came to a close within a year. Thus unexpectedly came Patrick's turn.

Consecrated by Germanus, Patrick set out to continue the mission in 432, some thirty years after the death of Saint Martin, from whom he is said to have received the tonsure. Some accounts represent him as accompanied by "twenty-four holy clerics," some by even more. Like Palladius, he landed at Inver Dea, the mouth of the Vartry, near Wicklow. After a brief stay, cut short by the hostility of the people, he proceeded northward to Inis Domhnann, near Malahide, and thence to Inis Padraig, off Skerries. Messengers, here sent to the mainland, having been inhospitably received, Patrick and his company are said to have sailed to Strangford Loch and landed at the mouth of the Slaney "which flows into the lake at Ringban about two miles from Saul." Dichu, a local prince, impressed by Patrick's presence, received the company with hospitality and granted a site for the church of Saul, while the prince's brother gave the site for a church at Breachtain. Magh-inis,

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<sup>1</sup> See article by Rev. M. T. MacSweeney in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, April, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Teach na Romhanach.

Rath Colpa and other ancient christian centres, as well as Sliabh Mis, scene of his early captivity, are claimed to have been visited by the Apostle before he came into conflict, about Easter, with Laoghaire, high-king, and his druids, at Slane and Tara. It will not be necessary to elaborate the familiar episodes of that juncture. "To relate Patrick's miracles to you, men of Ireland, is to bring water to a lake."<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate attitude of Laoghaire, who did not himself accept the christian faith, may be designated passive resistance, though it is recorded of him that in the beginning he harboured designs on the saint's life. Some of his immediate relatives, established in different parts of the country, proved somewhat more tractable, some quite otherwise. Coirpre, his brother, sought to take Patrick's life at Tailtean; yet the green of Tailtean—so we read—was blessed by the saint. At Uisneach two brothers of Laoghaire—Fiacha and Enda—"came against Patrick," and some of his followers were murdered there. But Enda believed, was baptised, and gave Patrick his son Cormac and every ninth ridge of his land throughout Ireland. Whereupon the Ard-ri declared: "He shall have the land that Enda had from Laoghaire"<sup>2</sup> .i. fifteen *seanchleithe* of Enda Airteach, north of Cruachain in Connacht." Similarly the king's brother Conall bestowed on Patrick, who baptised him, the site for a church—twenty yards from end to end—known as the Great Church of Padraig at Domhnach Padraig on the banks of the Blackwater in Meath: Conall was subsequently slain at Magh Sleacht. Feidlimidh, another brother of the high king, bestowed on Patrick and his nephew Loman his estate at Trim where one of the first churches in Ireland was erected. He and his whole household believed, and his son Foirtchearn was consigned to the special care of Loman who had come up the river, having separated from Patrick at the mouth of the Boyne.

Anghus, wife of Laoghaire, was baptised also by Patrick. In thanksgiving for his saving the life of her son Lughaidh,<sup>3</sup> through the blessing of the archangel Michael, she gave each

<sup>1</sup> Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, 561.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 81.

<sup>3</sup> Another version of this story mentions Enna.

year to the Apostle a sheep from every flock, and to God's poor a portion of her every meal. This she enjoined further, as a custom throughout Ireland, on all who received baptism and the faith: hence the custom of the Michaelmas sheep and Michael's portion.<sup>1</sup> Donnchadh king of Osraighe also sent food and provisions on the Apostles' feasts for God's poor in every principal church. He also placed an orphan or poor person to be maintained for God's sake in every household in Osraighe, and provided three bags—for a tithe of the household's food, beeswax for the poor, and Michael's portion, respectively. Yet Lughaidh did not die in the faith. The full significance of the queen's injunction will be appreciated as we follow the movements of the apostle and find kingdom after kingdom, at least over the greater part of Leath Chuinn, under the rule of Laoghaire's kinsmen. His more restricted journeyings in Leath Mogha reveal also the intimate relations, through intermarriage, then obtaining between all the royal houses of Ireland, and testify to Patrick's wisdom in primarily addressing himself to the kings and chieftains and, as he proceeded, securing their adhesion as far as possible.

Special reference must be made in advance to two outstanding results of Patrick's mission: the revision, six years after his arrival, of the Brehon Law Code at Tara—where we often find him—and the founding of Armagh after a further six years, or perhaps more. It will be well to bear in mind that the revised Code regulated, among other things, the subsequent inauguration of kings and the conditions under which lands were held by the Church; while the bequests and submission to Armagh, promiscuously mentioned in the Saint's life, could only have been made after Armagh had been definitely chosen as the Primatial See. Here arises a temptation, for order's sake, to trace the labours of the saint circuitously by Naas and Cashel on to Cruachain

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<sup>1</sup> The Martinmas pig has a somewhat similar origin. St. Martin of Tours conferred a monk's tonsure on Patrick. In thanksgiving Patrick decreed that a Martinmas pig be killed on the eve of Martin's feast in honour of the saint and given to Martin's community should they come for it.—Tripartite Life, 561.

On baptising Mochae at Noendruim on his way from Sliabh Mis to Tara, Patrick was promised a pig every year.—Tripartite, 41.



and other seats of royalty in the west, completing the circuit of Ireland by the north and north-east where he finally laid down life's burden. But serious anachronisms would result, and so the order of place, however desirable, must give way to chronological sequence which, again, can be but partial, the Apostle having paid repeated visits to the west, as to many districts in the north and elsewhere.

Of all Patrick's scores of biographers none has been so painstaking as Dr. Healy, who made it one of the great ambitions of his life to travel every rood of ground ever visited by the saint. The great archbishop, collating the various accounts as far as possible, tells how Laoghaire gave to Patrick the site for St. Mel's church at Ardachadh. Thence to Granard, where he got from the sons of Cairbre the site of a church over which he placed Guasacht, son of his former master at Sliabh Mis. We next find him founding a church at Magh Sleacht, the great Pagan centre sacred to "Crom Cruach and his sub-gods twelve," whose effigies the saint demolished. He then crossed the Shannon at Snamh Da Ean, identified as near Battle Bridge and, soon after, was met at Doogarry by the sons of Aileall for whom he ordained Ailbe—first ecclesiastic west of the Shannon—to minister at Seanchua .i. Shancoe. Maine, brother of Laoghaire, he also ordained at Aghannagh.<sup>1</sup>

From Doogarry he proceeded to Kilmore of Moyglass, crossing the Boyle at Cootehall; thence to Aill Fionn .i. Elphin where he met Hono the druid, from whom he bought for gold the site of a church. Here he left Asicus the artificer, Bite son of the brother of Asicus, and Cipia mother of Bite. A mile away, at Seanchill, he founded another church. Thereafter he is found at Cruachain where, as elsewhere related, he met and baptised the daughters of Laoghaire. Castlerea and Fuerty were scenes of his subsequent labours, as were Oran, Baslic and Magh Selce. He went also to Loch Techet and Loch Gara, south-west of Boyle, and founded a church at Druma. We next read that Bibar and Lochru of the Ciarraighe Airteach gave him the site for a church over which he placed Conn the artificer, brother of bishop Sachell of Baslic.

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<sup>1</sup> Healy's St. Patrick, 190.

In Mayo—at Aghamore and at Seanchill, two miles south of Ballyhaunis—he next established churches. From Kiltullagh he proceeded to Kilbannon, Killower, Donachpatrick near Headford, and by Shrule, Kilmaine, Magh Carra to Achadh Fhobhair .i. Aughagower, over which he placed Seanach as bishop. From Aughagower he ascended to Cruachain Aigle .i. Croagh Patrick. Forty days and forty nights he abode in Cruachain, fasting during the whole period of Lent, and haunted by all kinds of visions. Two of many noteworthy requests he is recorded as having made during his sojourn on the Rick are: (1) “that the Saxons shall not dwell in Ireland with consent or without it so long as I abide in heaven,” and (2) “that I myself be judge over the men of Ireland on that day” of judgment.<sup>1</sup> Feeling assured his wishes would be realised, he descended, and celebrated Easter at Aughagower.

At this period Patrick is said to have sent Muinis to Rome, there to report on the progress of his mission and obtain sacred relics which would aid him in his work. Being himself credited with three journeys to the Eternal City, the view is widely held that he made this juncture the occasion of one of them. From Aughagower, at any rate, he is traced through Partry, Ballintober, Manulla; thence by Balla, Kiltimagh, Kilkelly, to the plains of Boyle, Fuerty, Athlone, and thus to Tara, for the revision of the Brehon Laws. The sons of Amhalghaidh were also at Tara to obtain the judgment of the high king on the succession to the western throne and the disposal of their father's property. While Laoghaire and his brother Eoghan adjudicated, Patrick made the acquaintance of one of the contending princes and his son Conall, as a result of which he was invited to preach the faith in their territory, even to participate in the adjudication then in progress, or in giving effect to it. Thus we next read of him in the country of the Corcu Temne, around Castlebar, founding churches and, as he advanced, baptising thousands upon thousands. Among the churches erected was one for Mucna in the wood of Fochlad; among those baptised was Eochaidh son of Naithi .i. Daithi. Aonghus son of Amhalghaidh, on the other hand, planned in vain to

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<sup>1</sup> Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, 117-9.

slay him, and the usual opposition was offered by local druids. At Killala he founded another church which he placed under an aged member of his company, bishop Muireadhach. Having divided the territory of Amhalghaidh according to the wish of Laoghaire, he baptised a vast concourse at Mullachfarry. Dr. Healy traces him hence in great detail through Kilmore, Moy, Downpatrick Head, Enniscrone, and over Tireragh by the Ox Mountains, Traigh Eothaille, Ballysodare. He baptised seven sons of Draighean and gave one of them to Bishop Bron to be fostered. And he blessed the Sligeach, since regarded as the milch cow of the waters of Erin so does it abound in fish.

Proceeding southwards through Tirerrill, says Tirechan, he founded churches at Tamhnach, Echenach, Ceall Angle and Ceall Seanchua. Over the latter he placed bishop Caireall, at whose consecration Bron and Bite assisted. He founded another church at Diseart Nodhain .i. Eastersnow near the southern limit of Moylurg. And turning northward to the Callraighe, he founded a church at Drum Lias .i. Drumlease, where he seems to have spent a considerable time. He baptised Cairthean, king of the territory, his son and many others, including Caichan, who offered his fifth of the land to God and to Patrick for ever, while the king declared it free of all rent and tribute. At Domhnach Mor or Domhnach Arta, east of Drumlease towards Manorhamilton, he founded yet another church; and before crossing the Drowse from north Sligo he seems to have obtained the submission of his old enemy, Cairbre, brother of Laoghaire, as well as the offer of his kingdom. "Fifty bells, fifty chalices, and fifty altars with their altar cloths he left in the land of Connacht, each set in its own church," says the Tripartite Life. Dr. Healy enumerates the fifty.<sup>1</sup> He had left his charioteer between Cruachain Aigle and the sea for ever; his herdsman, bishop Rodan, at Muirisc Aigle; Benen, for twenty years, at Drumlease.

The movements of the Apostle are traced from Connacht across the Eirne and through Kilbarron to Rath Cungai .i. Racoon, territory of Conall Gulban where Asicus and Bite rest in Christ. At Siol Aodha, he blessed Conall son of

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Saint Patrick, 292.



Niall, his son Feargus, their race, duns, churches and estuaries, and prophesied the birth of Colm Cille. Saint Patrick's Purgatory at Loch Derg and many churches are recorded as among the fruits of his visit to that region. Passing through Barnesmore, he directed his course towards the royal palace at Aileach Neid, meeting Eoghan brother of Cairbre and of Conall on the way. After much parley, Patrick blessed Eoghan at Fiodh Mor, with all the people and all the lands of the sons of Eoghan. He founded a church at Domhnach Mor Maighe Iotha and a hermitage at Achadh Druman in the territory of Fearghus son of Eoghan. Caolboth son of Fearghus expelled him. Aodh son of Fearghus, on the other hand, received him with welcome, and they erected Domhnach Mor Maighe Tochair, where Patrick remained for forty days and left the son of Cairthean. From Carndonagh he went to Moville and thence by the estuary of the Foyle to Daigart. He founded seven churches at the river Fochaine .1. Faughan; and is traced through Ardstraw, Leckpatrick, Dungiven, Limavaddy, Coleraine, to Maigh Eilne, and across the Bann to Dail nAraidhe, ruled by the twelve sons of King Caolboth. One of these, Saran, refused him the site of a church at Kilglass. Another, Natshluagh, then in bondage, was humble towards the Saint and offered him the site of his cell. West of the Bann, at Domhnach Combair, a third, Conlaoch, gave him the site for a church also.

From Dail nAraidhe he passed into Dailriada where, about 443, he baptised bishop Olcan of Armoy. Fearghus Mor mac Earca made him an offering of the best part of his patrimony, and was blessed by the Saint in turn. He founded many churches<sup>1</sup> and cloisters in this territory, over one of which he placed Eanan son of Mudhan. Dun Sobhairce he also blessed. About this time it was, probably, that he first visited Armagh and founded its famous school. Patrick re-crossed the Bann at Toombe, and into the region of Ui Tuirtre surrounding Magherafelt. Forty nights he abode at Fionnabhair. Cairtheann Mor, the king, sought to expel him, the upshot being that the kingship was conferred on

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<sup>1</sup> They include Fothrad, Rath Mudhain, Druman Findich, Tealach Cineil Aonghusa, Domhnach Cainre and Cuil Eachtrann.

Cairtheann Beag, then in exile. The new king, moreover, was baptised by the Saint, as was his wife, and their daughter Trea. In this territory he founded seven churches, the names of most of which still survive. Later he went to the men of Gabhra, between Stewartstown and Dungannon, and thence to the men of Iomchlar for whom he established Donaghmore.

Instead of going to Armagh,<sup>1</sup> his biographers note, he now went to Clogher in West Oirghiall, travelling from Tealach Maine, where he had a warm welcome from Maine son of Conlaedh, to the royal seat of the Ui Cremthainn. In crossing the Blackwater his strong man Mac Cartain complained of failing strength after his fourteen strenuous years' labour, and laid down his burden. "I am old and infirm," he said, "and thou hast left my comrades in churches while I am still on the road."

"I will leave thee, too, in a church," Patrick replied, "and it shall not be too near for good neighbourhood nor too far for a friendly visit." And he gave him his own staff, and the Domhnach Airgid containing most precious relics. At the royal palace of Rathmore in the neighbourhood were two sons and a daughter of King Eochu. Cairbre, one of the sons, accepted the faith; the other, Breasal, declined; the daughter Cinnu, though promised in marriage to Cormac son of Cairbre son of Niall, took the veil from the apostle. A site was also found for Mac Cartain's seminary.

From Clogher Patrick went to Maigh Leamhna and from an eminence overlooking Altadavin preached for three days and three nights. Thence he pursued his journey to Teach Talan .i. Tehallen, east of the town of Monaghan. Here Eoghan the king and all his people believed. From Tehallen he proceeded to Crioich Mughdhoirn, coming to Donaghmoyne a couple of miles north of Carrickmacross. On his approach, Victor who lived there hid in a brake; but he was discovered and, being baptised, was instructed, ordained and consecrated bishop of Donaghmore; and all the people were converted. On his way southward to Eanach Conglais futile attempts were made to poison and slay him near a ford on the borders of Louth, Meath and Monaghan. Thence he passed through

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<sup>1</sup> Tripartite Life of St. Patrick. ;

Meath to Dunshaughlin, over which he placed his nephew Seachnall. Before proceeding to the South, he is said to have visited Finglas and Dublin.

Thereafter Patrick went to Naas. The site of his tent at Naas is in the green of the dun to the east of the road. To the north of the dun is his well, wherein he baptised Dunlang's two sons, Aileall and Iollan, as well as Aileall's two daughters, Mogain and Fedelm. Iollan's death is noted at 506.

Naturally, Patrick visited the Palladian churches of Leinster. He baptised, at the same well, Criomhthann son of Eanna Cinnsealach, his wife a daughter of the Deise king, and their son Daithi; and he released some of Criomhthann's people from banishment. This must have been subsequent to the death of Eanna in 445. Through Patrick, Criomhthann gave Iserninus and the exiled sons of Cathbad the finest land in Carlow—from Gabhar Life to Suidhe Laighean. Iserninus, the Apostle, he left at Old Kilcullen, and Auxilius his own nephew, at Cill Usaille .i. Killashee, five miles away. Iserninus also set up a church at Aghade on the Slaney. The Fiana of Feodh came to meet Patrick and Criomhthann at Sic Padraig, barony of Shilelagh.

Patrick also met Dubhthach the poet at Domhnach mor Criathair in Uibh Cinnsealaigh; and Dubhthach's nephew, Fiach of Sletty, who was in training to become arch-poet, was tonsured, and ordained by him, and consecrated chief bishop of Leinster. Criomhthann granted territory for the site of Fiach's church and see near Carlow, and there the king, himself, was buried. The Saint also visited An Fhorrach Mor .i. Narraghmore, and Domhnach Mor Maighe Reta near the Heath, Maryborough. His traces are, indeed, common in all that territory. Hence the record: In thirties and forties Criomhthann king of Leinster gave churches to Patrick. Munster was his next objective.

**Aonghus** King of Munster, was baptised by the Apostle about 450. His brothers, sons of Nadfraoch, were also baptised and the fort of Cashel blessed. Patrick, Aonghus and a great host of followers visited Ciaran, who had eight oxen killed for their refection. Bishops Ibar and Ailbe are also mentioned in association with the Saint at Cullen where Ailill of the Eoghanacht of Ara Cliach withstood him for a time. Nellan and his mother, on the other hand, brought a



cooked wether to Patrick, and in return Nessian was baptised, ordained as deacon and placed over the church of Mungret, specially founded for him. The Apostle extended his journey to Ard Patrick and the Southern Deise; and though he does not seem to have visited Desmond or Thomond he is said to have celebrated Mass on every ridge traversed by him in the South. Men of Thomond, however, came in fleets to meet him at Domhnach Mor Maighe Aine; and subsequently at Tir da Ghlas he blessed them for their generosity. Though he seems to have met with some resistance in Munster, in most places men, women and children evinced a great desire to see and hear him and profound regret at his departure. In finally bidding them farewell, he said with fervour:

A blessing on the men of Munster, men, boys, women; on the land that gives them fruit; on every treasure that shall be produced on their plains: of aid may they ne'er have need. God's blessing on Munster, on her peaks, flagstones, glens, ridges: like sand of the sea under ships be the number of their firesides on slopes, on plains, on hills and hillocks.

While Patrick was on his way to Armagh after his journey through Munster, an attempt on his life by Failge Bearraidhe resulted in the death of his charioteer Odhran. Attacks on the Saint's person or property, indeed, cannot be said to have been infrequent or confined to any particular territory. Coirbre sent two men to Assaroe to resist him and set a dog at him; in Ui Meith Macha three persons stole one of his two goats, and their descendants were thereafter doomed to be distinguished by goats' beards; in the South four persons stole his horses, and they, on the other hand, were forgiven; in the district of Moylurg his horses were taken by force. It may be here noted that Patrick is recorded more than once to have driven his chariot over offenders, even over his sister Lupeta—self-accused of a lapse from the ways of virtue—as he entered Armagh, and over Seachnall, his nephew and bishop, for saying he preached charity so little. This seems to have been no new habit: Cuchulainn, according to the *Tain*, bent down in token of sincerity and respect and regret for the disappointment of Fearghus so that the chariot of Fearghus went over him thrice.

The founding of Armagh has been placed at different dates: its famous school, once "the metropolis of civilisation," in

the words of Darmsteter, is admitted to have been established in 444, its primatial church probably about 457. Indications of the recognition of its ecclesiastical primacy present themselves from an early period. Four churches in the district around Ballaghadereen and Frenchpark, say the Annals of Ulster, sent a cow each to Armagh until remitted in 810. Nodain of Diseart Nodain, in Roscommon, founded a church at Cavetown and gave its patronage to Armagh. Caichan, son of Cairthean king of Drumlease, offered his fifth of the land to God and Patrick for ever, and the king declared it free of all rent and tribute. The king of Serthe gave to Asicus, coppersmith to Patrick, and to his monks after his death, the grazing of a hundred cows, their calves and twenty oxen as a permanent offering. "His relics are at Rath Cungai in Serthe," says the Tripartite Life of the Saint, "and to Patrick belongs the church, though the community of Colm Cille and Ard Sratha have encroached on it."

When it is stated that Armagh was founded after Patrick's tour of Munster, what is probably to be inferred is that thenceforward Armagh's ecclesiastical supremacy was recognised throughout the whole South as elsewhere. Following the example of Dichu at Saul and his brother at Breachtain, Enda brother of Laoghaire bestowed on the Saint, with Laoghaire's approval, every ninth ridge of his land, north of Cruachain in Connacht, while another brother Conall granted the site for a church in Meath. A sheep from every flock each year was not the only gift by Anghus wife of Laoghaire. Nor was Donnchadh king of Osraighe less generous. Iserninus, ordained with Patrick, set up a church at Aghade on the Slaney and recognised Patrick's supremacy. Aonghus king of Munster, imposed a capitation screaball of three pence for every person receiving baptism in his territory. To the time of Cormac mac Cuileannain it was imposed thus : 500 cows, 500 sheep, 500 balls of iron, 500 mantles, 500 inner garments every third year. Here it is not necessary to multiply examples otherwise referred to incidentally and manifesting themselves even in the attitude of princes, kings, high-kings, from Laoghaire's brother Feidlimidh, who gave Patrick his estate near Trim where he founded one of his very earliest churches, and Laoghaire himself who gave him the site for St. Mel's Church Ardachadh, to Brian Boirmhe,



Muircheartach O Briain, and Ruaidhri O Conchubhair who, each in his own way, conferred special favours on Armagh.

In Patrick's retinue during the course of his mission were twenty-four persons—bishop, priest, judge, champion .i. *treinfhear*, psalmist, chamberlain, bell-ringer, cook, brewer, chaplain .i. *sagart meise*, charioteer, fireman, cowherd, two waiters, three smiths, three artisans, three embroideresses. This, says the Tripartite Life, was the number that should be in the company of Joseph—probably, the thirty-ninth successor of Patrick at Armagh, 945—and at the king of Cashel's table from the time of Feidlimidh. Aonghus first christian king of Munster is said to have kept two bishops, ten priests and seventy-two young clerics in attendance on him to say Masses and offer prayers. During the years that Patrick ruled the Church in Ireland, says Nennius in his History of Britain, as quoted by Keating, "he built 355 churches, consecrated 355 bishops,<sup>1</sup> and ordained 3,000 priests. He appointed two archbishops, the archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland, over Leath Chuinn, and the archbishop of Cashel over Leath Mogha. And he set aside a tithe of the land, men and cattle of Ireland for the Church, made monks of the men and nuns of the women, and built monasteries for them." Before the Saint's death at Saul, the first of three famous Orders of Saints had arisen, and their efforts were gloriously seconded by the valiant women of the race.

**The first Order** of the Saints was in Patrick's own time.<sup>2</sup> Then all the bishops, 350 in number, were famous, and full of the Holy Spirit. They founded churches, worshipped one head, Christ, followed one leader, Patrick, had one tonsure, one celebration of Mass, one Easter—after the Vernal equinox. They did not object to having women as house-keepers and companions, because, founded on the rock Christ, they did not fear the wind of temptation. This Order lasted through four reigns, to wit, those of Laoghaire, Oileall, Lughaidh, and Tuathal Maolgarbh, and all throughout remained holy bishops.

<sup>1</sup> Three hundred, three score, and ten, says the Tripartite Life.

<sup>2</sup> The dates of the three Orders were, First, 432–543; Second, 543–599; Third, 599–666.



**The second Order** had few bishops, many priests, 300 in number. They worshipped one head, God, but had different rituals of celebration and different rules of living. They made a uniform tonsure, from ear to ear, shunned having women as companions and housekeepers, and excluded them from the monasteries. The Order lasted for four reigns also, to wit, those of Diarmuid mac Cearbhaill, the two grandsons of Muiredach, and Aodh mac Ainmire. Among them were Finnian, Enda, Colman, Congal, Aedh, Ciaran, Columba, Brendan, Brechen, Caemhghein, Laisrean and many others.

**The third Order** consisted of holy priests and few bishops, 100 in number, who dwelt in desert places, lived on vegetables and water and on the alms of the faithful, held earthly things of no account, and wholly shunned backbiting and slander. They had different rules of living, different rituals of celebration, different tonsures, a different Paschal solemnisation. This Order, like the others, lasted through four reigns, namely, those of Aedh Slaine, Domhnall and the sons of Aedh, to the great mortality of 666. Their bishops included Petran, Ultan, Colman, Edan ; their priests, Feichin, Foilleán, Cumian, Earnan, Cronan and many others. The first Order was reputed holiest, the second very holy, the third holy. The first glowed like the sun with the heat of charity, the second like the moon, the third shone with the bright hues of the dawn.

**Irishwomen** of every rank threw themselves with the utmost ardour also into the work of spreading and establishing the faith. Before a single church had been erected Anghus wife of Laoghaire initiated Mir Mhichil or "Michael's Portion" in token of thanksgiving to Patrick. After the whole land had been studded with them, Sadhbh, wife of Donchadh son of Flann Siona, envious that every principal church had a wall or enclosure round it, got the men of Meath to have her church at Saighir Chiarain—cemetery of the kings of Osraighe—surrounded by a fence.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile hosts of devoted women, young and old, had taken the veil. Eiche, sister of Rioc, Mel and Eunis, was left by Patrick at

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<sup>1</sup> It is recorded later to the credit of Cormac mac Cuileannain that "cemeteries were protected" in his time.

the outset of his mission in the church of Kilglass, three miles south of Ardagh. At Clonbroney, six miles from Granard, he gave the veil to the two sisters of Guasacht, the first of the daughters of Erin veiled for Christ. At Seanchill, near Ailfionn, Mathona sister of Benen received the veil. Having reached Cruachain, Patrick met and baptised the two daughters of Laoghaire at Clebach well, finally giving them the veil and anointing them. After founding a church at Loch Gara south-west of Boyle, he founded Cill Atrochta for Saint Adrochta or Attracta, daughter of the chief Tolan. St. Adrochta, sister of St. Coemhan, took the veil at sixteen, and is still commemorated in Killaracht on the eastern bank of the lake of Bala.

St. Caelinn is referred to as patroness of the district around Castlerea. At Kilmaine Beag in Mayo. Patrick left the two sisters of Bishop Felartus, while at Kiltullagh, in the same county, Semneda daughter of Enda, son of Brian, gave up her necklaces, bracelets, armlets, sandals and other ornaments and took the veil. Not far from Achadh Fhobhair was founded a church for Mathua (daughter of Bishop Senach) and her nuns. Patrick gave the veil to Crebrin and Lesru and blessed a place for them in the Wood of Focluth, where he also built a church for Mucna.<sup>1</sup>

At Drumlease in Leitrim, Caichan on the occasion of Patrick's visit gave his daughter to God. Lasar daughter of Anfolmid of the family of Caichan took the veil from Patrick and abode there, in Druim Dara, for three score years after Benignus, so that the place became the centre of a flourishing community of nuns.

Near Magherafelt he baptised Cairtheann king of the Ui Thuirtre, his wife and their daughter Trea, who took the veil, won fame as a virgin, and gave its name to Ardtrea on the shore of Loch Neagh. Cinnu daughter of King Eochu, though promised in marriage to Cormac, took the veil from Patrick on his crossing the Blackwater to Clogher.<sup>2</sup>

Once when Patrick was at Armagh nine daughters of the king of the Lombards and a daughter of the king of Britain came on pilgrimage to him, and he recommended them to

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<sup>1</sup> Healy's Life of St. Patrick, 253-263.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

settle in different places in the neighbourhood. Sisters also accompanied him to Ireland.

At Naas he baptised Dunlang's two daughters, Moghain and Fedelm. Their father offered to God and to Patrick their consecrated virginity, and Patrick blessed the veils on their heads. They then retired to Cill na nInghean, near Dunlavin, where they lived and died in peace and holiness. Their brother Iollan became a great friend of Saint Brigid, and is supposed to have been buried in her church at Kildare.

**Brigid**, one of the three great patron Saints of Ireland, was born at Faughart, about two miles north-east of Dundalk. Her father was Dubhthach, tenth in descent from King Feidlimidh Reachtmhar the Lawgiver, and her mother a bondwoman, by name Brocesa, who had been sold to a druid and borne away to Louth. The child was baptised by consent of the druid. Being, as she grew to womanhood, dowered with singular grace and beauty, many suitors sought her hand in marriage. Returning to her father's house about this time, the jealousy of her step-mother was aroused, and the father callously proposed to sell her to the king of North Leinster. With seven other virgins, however, she soon received the veil at the hands of Bishop MacCaille. The hill of Uisneach in Westmeath disputes with Cruachan in King's County the honour of being the place where Brigid was veiled, and Bishop Mel of Ardachadh is mentioned in connection with her vows. In due time, under the shadow of an oak at Kildare, she built an oratory which rapidly developed into a double monastery for men and women. As it grew, she asked St. Conlaech to assist her in governing it, and St. Nadfraoch to instruct herself and her nuns. Ecclesiastics visited her from all quarters, and she, in turn, made long journeys through the south and west of Ireland, and elsewhere. The districts she visited, and churches everywhere, were placed under her protection and called by her name, not only during her own time in Ireland, but to our day throughout the world. St. Cuimin refers to her as "Brigid of the blessings, fond beyond all women of mortification, vigils, early rising to pray, hospitality to saintly men." In her own words: "a morsel of fair barley bread is my share of the table, a cress stalk and hot water my portion at night." Cogitosus, who wrote her life at the request



of the community, calls her the abbess whom all the abbesses of Ireland hold in veneration. One could not count the crowds coming to Kildare, he said ; some for food or feasting, some to be healed, some with gifts for the shrine, some to enjoy the wonderful spectacle. The Book of Leinster says " there was not in the world one of more bashfulness and modesty than this holy virgin. She never washed her hands, feet or head before men, never looked a man in the face, never spoke without blushing. She was abstinent, unblemished, fond of prayer, patient, rejoicing in God's commands, benevolent, humble, forgiving, charitable. She was a consecrated shrine for the preservation of the body of Christ ; a temple of God. Her heart and mind were the throne of the Holy Spirit. She was meek before God, distressed with the miserable, bright in miracles. And hence in things created her type is the Dove among birds, the Vine amongst trees, the Sun above the stars." It is thought she had the privilege of weaving the winding sheet in which the body of St. Patrick was laid. On the other hand Ninnidius who gave her the Viaticum at her death about 525 had his right arm encased in metal so that the hand which gave her the Communion might never be defiled. During the Danish ravages her remains were translated from Kildare to Downpatrick.

**Ita**, the Brigid of Munster, foster mother of the saints of Ireland, was born in the Southern Deise about 480. Brendan, on returning from his first voyage, visited her, and sought her counsel before setting out on his second. Having chided him for departing without her advice in the first instance, she recommended him to provide masted ships instead of the boats, covered with dead hides, he had previously used, and he would reach the land for which he longed. Ita in a spirit of mortification is said to have let her side be eaten by a stag. She died about 560, and is still commemorated at Killeedy in Limerick.

**Brigh**, sister of Brendan, established a convent at Eanachduin in Connacht. Here it was that Brendan, who was also a great friend of Brigid, passed peacefully away.

**Fanchea**, who was abbess of a convent near Enniskillen, prevailed on her brother St. Enda of Aran to resign the crown he had inherited and become a monk.

**Moninne** of Sliabh Cuileann, first abbess of the historic convent of Cill Sleibhe or Killeevy, is reputed to have founded seven houses in Britain also, mainly in the south of Scotland. She flourished in the beginning of the sixth century, was also called Darerca and Sarbile, and lived to a great age. The names survive of fifteen abbesses who ruled Cill Sleibhe to 822.

Many stories are told of the time of Diarmuid mac Cearbhaill, showing that interference with the rights or property of nuns was not only resisted and resented by themselves but severely punished by their protectors whether saints, chieftains or kings. At this time Keating records that many people of Corcaigh fell through the prayer of Midhe, a noble female saint to whom they showed disrespect. On another occasion, Guaire took her only cow from a nun named Sineach Cro; and she complained to Diarmuid, the king, with the result that a battle was fought on the banks of the Shannon and Guaire, with the hosts of Connacht and Munster, defeated. Caimin of Inis Cealltra had fasted against him for three days. Guaire submitted by taking a javelin between his teeth; but he so proved his hospitality that the king exonerated him and invited him to the Fair of Tailtean, where he made lavish gifts to the poor and to the bards, and was publicly reconciled to Diarmuid. Somewhat similar is the story told of another nun or recluse whose cow was taken from her by Breasail to make a feast at Kells for his royal brother Diarmuid. Though Breasail had offered for the nun's cow seven other cows and a bull, Diarmuid evidently held his offence unforgivable, judging by the doom of drowning decreed against him. But it is recorded that he was rescued by St. Beacan.

We thus see the early nuns of the race as earnest in defence of their own rights as they were lavish of their labours in the furtherance of the faith. Not content with rendering unstinted service in the vineyard of the Lord at home, hosts of them ventured oversea to Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and the Isles, Belgium, France, Italy, and in all these regions showed the same enterprise and religious fervour as their brothers the missionaries, of the fruits of whose labours at home and abroad Alzog wrote:

“Churches and chapels, monasteries and convents, schools and colleges covered the land, and from hill and

valley one song of thanksgiving went up to the throne of God. Thus Erin became *the Island of Saints*, the home and refuge of learning and holiness, and the nursery whence missionaries went forth to carry the light of faith to the nations of the European continent. Her seats of learning, her monasteries and nunneries, and her charitable institutions were unsurpassed, either in numbers or in excellence, by those of any nation in the world. Her children preserved the faith of Christ as pure and entire as it came from the lips of her apostle; heresy and schism were unknown to them, and loyalty to the successor of St. Peter was one of their most distinguishing characteristics. They have remained faithful and attached to the Supreme Head of the Church, with unvarying uniformity, amid every vicissitude of fortune, from the days of St. Patrick to our own; and there is every indication that their fidelity to the Vicar of Christ will be as unbroken and cordial in the future as it has been in the past.”<sup>1</sup>

Before following them thither it will be appropriate to survey the native social and educational systems of which they were the product.

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<sup>1</sup> Alzog's Church History, vol. 2, pp. 43-4.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

“The Law of Nature was with the men of Erin until the coming of the faith in the time of Laoghaire mac Neill. It was in his time Patrick came to Erin. It was after the men of Erin had believed through Patrick that the dual laws were established, namely, the law of nature and the law of the letter.”—*Seanchus Mor*.



IN the year 438, memorable for the issue of the Roman Law Code of Theodosius, a collection of the laws then obtaining in Ireland was laid before Saint Patrick, at his own request. As a result, Laoghaire, the high king, summoned a convention to consider the revision of the constitution. From this assembly were chosen nine persons: three kings, three bishops and three professors of *seanchus*. The kings were Laoghaire, Daire and Corc—of Tara, Ulster and Munster respectively; the bishops, Patrick, Benen and Cairneach; the professors of *seanchus*, Dubhthach, Fearghus and Ros. Three years were occupied by the revision. When completed, the nobles of Ireland directed that the *seanchus* be kept thenceforward by the prelates, and written in the principal churches of the country. Thus, according to our annals, was the *Seanchus Mor* instituted and compiled.

**The Finé** was the basis of society in early Ireland. It included several degrees of consanguinity, merging after the seventeenth degree into the *duthaigh daoine*. The *fine* was made up mainly of *ceilidhe*, who occupied much the same position as the farmers and peasantry of our day. There were craftsmen, too, but in relatively limited numbers. Twenty-six grades of people are mentioned as constituting the *fine*. They included kings, nobles, lords, farmers, and so on. The structure of society, then, will be explained best by placing the various grades, from the *airdri* or high

king to the *fuidhir* or bondsman, in their exact relation to each other.

**The Airdri** was generally inaugurated on the king's stone at Tara. The ceremony was performed with the consent of the nobles and the professors before the coming of the faith, with the consent of the Church, the nobles and the professors thereafter.<sup>1</sup> The chroniclers came forward with the Book of Instructions for Kings, setting out the rewards and punishments awaiting the king—on the one hand, for doing good, on the other, for failing to carry out the principles of justice and equity. He placed in the king's hand a straight white wand, straight to indicate that the king would show no bias, white as a token of truth, the raising of the wand itself to indicate that equity and justice would prevail instead of force. In ancient times the men of Ireland chose to rule over the territory those who were most accomplished and most industrious in promoting the public weal, like Slainghe and Ollamh Fodla and Cormac mac Airt. The king's fostering care, says the *Crith Gabhla*, must be perfect to all his people, both weak and strong; he must be fully qualified in every respect; anxious to preserve knowledge: he must be the seat of equity.

Long before Saint Patrick's coming it was decided that the Airdri have in his retinue ten men, namely a prince, judge, druid, physician, bard, historian, musician and three *feadhmanaigh*. Their respective functions will be obvious. Since the time of Tuathal Teachtmhar, the province of Meath, which he established, was the free mensal land of the airdri. It contained 6,480 *seisreach*, the *seisreach* being computed at six score acres. Other prerogatives of the airdri, summarised in the "Book of Rights," include the fish of the

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick, accompanied by twelve bishops, attended the inauguration of Duach Galach as king of Connacht. Thenceforward it was a custom with those kings to have at their inauguration on the hill of Carn Fraoich the combarbs of twelve bishops as well as twelve chiefs of the race of Muireadhach and Ua Maolchonaire. Similarly, says the Tripartite Life of the Saint, "no one is king of Cashel until the successor of Patrick instals him and confers rank upon him." In 992, Muireann of Both Domhnaigh, comharb of Patrick, on visitation to Tir Eoghain, conferred the rank of king on Aodh mac Domhnaill in presence of Patrick's Congregation. The custom long survived the Anglo-Norman Invasion.

Boinn ; the deer of Luibneach ; the fruit of Manann ; the heath-fruit of Brigh Leithe ; the cresses of the Brosnach ; the water of the well of Tlachtgha ; the venison of Nas. On the calends of August all these things reached the king of Teamhair. But the airdri was, himself, obliged to give *tuarastal* or *saor-rath* to the provincial kings, and no provincial king had the right to refuse it. The acceptance of this saor-rath was a token of subjection.

There were three classes of kings besides the airdri : the provincial king, the king of a territory, and the king of a tuath or district.<sup>1</sup>

**The provincial king** had five territorial kings under him. His income was derived from mensal and other lands, the proceeds of stock, the *tuarastal* he received from the airdri, and the rent from subordinate kings. Thus the rent due to Cashel included ten hundred kine, ten hundred swine from Muscraighe ; a hundred kine, a hundred swine, a hundred oxen from the men of Uaithne ; two hundred wethers, a hundred hogs, a hundred cows, and a hundred green mantles from the men of Ara ; a hundred cows, a hundred oxen, a hundred hogs from Corca Luighe ; ten hundred oxen and ten hundred cows from Corca Dhuibhne ; ten hundred cows and ten hundred hogs from Ciarraighe Luachra ; ten hundred cows and ten hundred oxen from Corca Bhaiscinn ; a thousand cows, a thousand oxen, a thousand rams, a thousand cloaks from Boirinn ; a hundred oxen, a hundred cows, a hundred sows from Seachtmhodh ; two thousand hogs and a thousand cows from the Deise.<sup>2</sup>

**The territorial king**, or king of companies, had under him two, sometimes three, companies, each of seven hundred men, and three or four districts. It was essential that he have subject to him three district kings. Donnchadh Mor mac Ceallaigh, king of Osraighe, affords an example. He was wont to have food and maintenance distributed among God's poor on the Feasts of the Apostles in every church in Osraighe.

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<sup>1</sup> The provincial king was known as a Ri bunaidh or Ri coigidh, the king of a territory as a Ri buidhean or Ri mor-thuatha, and the king of a district as a Ri beann or Ri tuatha. Roughly, the modern province and county and barony represent the respective limits of their sway.

<sup>2</sup> Book of Rights, 43.



He also placed an orphan or destitute person to be fostered in every community in Osraighe, and otherwise favoured his people in many ways.

**The district king**, though of limited influence and prerogative, was still master of his own district. His income, which was not inconsiderable, consisted of rent from the nobles and the *taurcrech*<sup>1</sup> from the higher king. He had also means of his own, land and its produce. Property becoming ownerless in his district for one reason or another reverted to him unless a noble or an heir appeared with a distinct claim upon it. Besides, he got his share of all fines and taxes, *tuarastal* from the Law Courts, and the spoils of war, as well as a virgin's ring from every virgin married in the district. And, in addition to this, a special tax was laid on the tribe when necessary.

According to the *Crith Gabhla*, the king was entitled to three levies from his people: a *fair*, when necessary, which the people attended with equal immunity; an *assembly* for rectifying the affairs of the people; and a *convention* for the government of the territory. Three pledges were due to him also—for *hostings*, *right*, and *peace*. Three hostings—*within the territory*, to prepare a hosting beyond it; *to the boundary of the territory*, to proclaim right and law, whether by battle or by peace; *over the boundary*, against an aggressive territory. Three rights—to *the supply of fruit* or other produce; *to drive out foreign races*, i.e., Saxons; *to kindle religion* such as the Law of Adhamhnan.

**The Tanaiste**, or heir to the kingdom, was chosen by the nobles and chiefs, or *bo-aires*, in the lifetime of the king. Previous to his election, which took place in the house of the *brughaidh*, he was referred to as *rioghdómhna*. The whole territory was subject to the supervision of the tanaiste who had under his special control five *seanchleithe* more than the *Aire forghaill*. At the king's death the mensal land descended

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<sup>1</sup> *Taurcrech*, the stipends given by the king or flaith to those under them, varied. That of a person elected to bo-aireship before being encircled with beard is five seds, the ogaire ten seds, aitheach ar aitreabh ten cows; boaire feabhsa twelve cows; aire coisring five cumhals; aire desa six cumhals from his flaith; aire ard seven cumhals; aire tuise eight cumhals from his king; aire forghaill nine cumhals from his great flaith; the ri beann twelve cumhals; the ri buidhean fifteen cumhals.

not to the king's children but to his successor, the *tanaiste*. This often led to contention and strife. Before Oileall Olom banished Mac Con, for instance, two races alternately held the sovereignty of Munster: the race of Dairine, descended from Luighdheach son of Iotha ancestor of Mac Con, and the race of Deirgtheine of the *seed* of Eibhear from whom descended Oileall Olom. So that up to that time the sovereignty and the tanistry alternated between the two houses until Mac Con violated the judgment of Oileall.<sup>1</sup> The *tanaiste riogh* had the worthiness of a chief, a lawful espoused wife, full complement of horses, and implements of work for each quarter of the year. If sued, he paid, as did all the other *flatha*, "without court litigation, or borrowing on a pledge."

**The Nobles**, or *flatha*, were numerous and wealthy, and divided into five grades: the *aire forghaill*, the *aire tuise*, the *aire ard*, the *aire eachta*, and the *aire desa*.

**The Aire forghaill**, the more influential of them, had under him, as a rule, twenty *ceile* or tenants and twenty *giallna* or hostages. He was the intermediary between the king and the tribe, and was called *mac nascaire*, because it was under his supervision all the contracts of the tribe were consummated. When he required to give effect to the laws of the tribe, he had a body-guard of a hundred men. He generally let his land to the people by a yearly tenancy. All *airidhe forghaill* did not possess equal power, their influence being regulated by the standing of their district. Thus, some of them, according to the records, were entitled to an *eineachla* or honour-price of fifteen cows; some, of eighteen; and some, of twenty-seven.

**The Aire tuise**, says the *Crith Gabhla*, ranked next the *aire forghaill*. On this point, however, the records are somewhat at variance. The *aire tuise* had under his sway fifteen *ceile* and twelve *giallna*. He generally had twelve steeds, besides two horses on his journey, with a gold bridle and one of silver. He was entitled to *saor-rath* from the king, and his espoused wife, of his own class, had the right to be consulted in everything. He swore the grades beneath him, and dissolved their enmities. Later, he became known as the *taoiseach*.

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<sup>1</sup> F. F. 276, ii.

**The Aire Ard** had ten ceile and ten giallna. The giallna gave him annually three three-year-old cattle, two in-calf two-year-olds, and adequate fodder for them. He had a suite of seven in his territory besides a retinue, of lower rank, of five *foleithe*.

**The Aire eachta** was an influential noble also. He had to keep constant watch in the *bearna baoghail*, the most vulnerable point on the borders of the territory. Five warriors were in constant attendance on him, and he might demand more if he felt them necessary in enforcing the observance of peace and avenging insults to the tribe. He was a military leader, and often had land bestowed on himself and his followers. *Buanacht* this was called. It was quite commendable while the Gael ruled in his own land, but an intolerable tax when imposed by foreigners like the Danes.

**The Aire desa** was a magistrate, and had the power to adjust matters in dispute. Under his sway were five ceile and five giallna. Each of the giallna gave him annually a cow, a three-year-old, three in-calf two-year-olds, besides ample fodder for the lot. "His right on visitation was ten couples from the Kalends to Shrovetide." His house had the full supply of vessels; eight beds with furniture; beds for foster-children, foster-brothers or school-fellows, men, women, boys and girls. He had an espoused wife, of his own rank and attired accordingly; a riding steed with a silver bridle; four steeds with green bridles; a precious stone brooch. Many of the flatha of the aire desa class were prosperous bo-aire who ambitioned further success. The property of the aire desa was in land; that of the bo-aire consisted of cattle.

**The bo-aire**, as indicated, were the next grade of society. They, too, were divided into five classes: the *aire coisring*, the *fear folla*, the *brughaidh leathach*, the *brughaidh ceadach* and the *ogaire*.

**The aire coisring** was the more influential of these. Known also as the *aire fine*, he was the spokesman of the tribe, and explained to the king everything that concerned his people. Among his offices was the making of agreements between contending parties, and acting as surety when necessary. He got pledges from the king, the senate and the tribe to be loyal to each other and faithfully discharge their various



obligations. From this he derived the further title of *nascaire*.

**The Fear Fotla** was a wealthy *bo-aire* who, as a rule, possessed more cattle than his land could maintain. He generally let this surplus stock to people of subordinate rank, such as hostages, and got provisions in return. As chief of the *bo-aires*, one of his concerns was to divide his surplus stock evenly among those who sought it. An index to his wealth is found in the fact that he had more means than the *brughaidh leathach*.

**The Brughaidh Leathach** required to have two hundred head of each kind of beast. He was a great entertainer, whose house was well equipped, and furnished with a hundred beds always ready for visitors. His doors were ever open, except the door exposed to the wind. Roads led to his house from all directions, and lights burned in the lawn through the night for the guidance of travellers. In the *brughaidh's* house, bishops on visitation, kings, professors, nobles and others got free maintenance when travelling.<sup>1</sup> Here, too, the people's leaders were elected. The *brughaidh* was, himself, a magistrate, and his court a venerable institution. *Beoir*, the first *brughaidh*, is referred to as having come with *Partolan*. They were numerous in the time of *Ollamh Fodla*, and at one time, according to Keating, reached a total of more than four hundred: ninety in *Connacht*, ninety in *Ulster*, ninety-three in *Leinster*, and one hundred and thirty in *Munster*, all with open houses.

**The Brughaidh Ceadach** was neither as wealthy nor as influential as the *brughaidh leathach*. A hundred head of each kind of beast sufficed for him. Yet was he hospitable in the extreme. *Buicead Bocheadach* furnishes an example. He kept a *coire* or boiler always on the fire in anticipation of visitors. Under him were seven *aires*, each with seven score cows and corresponding horses and other means. The nobles of *Leinster* and their retinues came to his *brugh*. Some took away a herd of his cows; some, specimens of his stock; some,

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<sup>1</sup> Stanihurst bears testimony to their hospitality. "The Irish are a most hospitable people, and the best way to earn their gratitude is to visit their houses uninvited." Food, at any rate, was never offered for sale in Ireland until the bad examples and the custom of alien rulers obtained a vogue in the land.

scores of his horses, until in the end they left him destitute, save for seven cows and a bull. Then, with his wife and their foster-daughter Eithne, he went in the night to a grove near Kells in Meath, where, at the time, Cormac mac Airt was wont to stay. Here Buicead erected a tent; and Eithne waited on her foster-parents until observed one day by Cormac. The king was so struck with Eithne's charms that he married her, and in return gave to Buicead and his wife the district of Odhrain fully stocked during their lives.

**The Bruighfhear** is described in great detail in the *Crith Gabhla*. He has the land of three times seven cumhals; is *the* bo-aire for giving judgment; a bo-aire who instructs the people by the correct arrangement of his household furniture: a boiler with spits and skewers; a keeve to distribute broth; a serving pot with minor vessels, irons, kneading troughs, wooden mugs and ladles; a washing trough, bathing basin, tubs; candelabra, a candle on a candelabrum without fail; an ever living fire; knives for reaping rushes; a rope; an adze, hatchet, auger, saw, a spear to kill cattle; a bill-hook; a shears to clip trees; a grindstone; implements for every quarter's work; a perfect plough and all appertaining to it.

These, then, are the characteristics of the bo-aire who dispenses judgment. He has two vats—of new milk and ale—in his house constantly. He has three snouts, including a snout of bacon upon the hooks, the snout of the coulter turning up the earth to sustain the visits of king, bishop, bard, judge or any company that might arrive. Three sacks—of malt, bulrushes, and coals—he has in his house each quarter. He has a house of twenty-seven feet, a back house of seventeen; a sheep house, calf house, pig house; kiln, barn, and a share in a mill and in all that it grinds. Twenty cows he has, six bullocks, two bulls; twenty hogs, four house-fed hogs, two sows; twenty sheep and a suitable lawn in which they are always kept; a riding steed, a bridle of cruan, *i.e.*, enamelled; a brass pot to hold a hog; and sixteen sacks of seed in the ground. With his wife, of his own grade, he has four friends. His oath is good, his pledge, his evidence, his surety, his loan. He must be guiltless of theft, robbery, or wounding anyone. Two cumhals are his taurcrech, a cow his *beas tighe*. Three are his company in the

territory ; three for him on *folach*. He is entitled to butter with salt meat at all times, to bacon on third, on fifth, on ninth, on tenth, on Sundays. He is a surety, intermediary, suitor, witness for his people, and much more—his household was a model for the countryside, and interference with him was punished sharply.<sup>1</sup>

In his house all precious things, such as gold, silver and bronze, are lawful ; all things not precious, unlawful. All troughs and seats disarranged on the floor are unlawful. He may or may not have a water-well in the floor of his house, he may or may not have a water-well in his dairy. The direct cast of the cnairseach in all directions from the door of his house is the proper extent of his yard. The father of Emer wife of Cuchulainn was a typical bruighfhear.

**The Og-aire**, advanced apparently from the ceile class as the aire desa was promoted from the bo-aire class, had seven cows and a bull, seven pigs and a *muc forais* or house-fed pig, seven sheep, a draught-horse and a riding-horse. He had land sufficient to maintain three times seven cumhals, and the right to maintain on the pasture land of the tribe seven cows, one of which he left at the end of the year to compensate for the grazing. He had the four ploughing

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<sup>1</sup> For opening his house unlawfully, or going through his house or cattle yard by breaking the door, a fine of five seds ; for looking into the house, a cow ; for removing a lock of thatch from it, a yearling ; two locks, a two-year-old ; for an armful, an in-calf beast or colpach ; for half-a-truss, a samhaisc or "dry" three-year-old ; for a truss, a cow and restitution of the straw. For interference with the lower lath, a dairt or two-year-old ; for a lower wattle, a samhaisc ; for an upper wattle a colpach ; for the front door-post of the house, a dairt ; for the back door-post, a dartaidh. For stealing anything out of his yard, half the honour price of every grade of society, a seventh for stealing into it.

A dairt each for the western lintel of the dairy, and every sheet of matting to the roof ; a dartaidh for cutting or breaking down the dairy lintel. Breaking into his storehouse was liable to the same fine as for the dairy. There were suitable fines and restitution for injuries to a couch, and compensation for injuries to a bed in proportion to the damage. For grinding without leave in his mill, five scoit and forfeiture of the ground meal ; for damage to a kiln, a cow, a heifer and restitution ; to a barn, five scoit and restitution for every damage done it ; to a pighouse, five scoit of pigs. For damage to the hatchet, the billhook, everything practically, there was adequate compensation.



essentials : <sup>1</sup> an ox, a sock, a yoke, a halter, as well as a share in a kiln, mill, barn and cauldron. Nineteen feet the length of his house ; thirteen, of his back house.

**Ceillidhe** or tenants were the most numerous class in the country. They defended and maintained the district ; had the choice of the land, and in many ways resembled the farmers of our day. Unlike some of the present farmers, however, they were almost to a man native Irishmen. Sometimes four of them owned a plough in partnership. Partolan had seven ploughmen among his followers, and the names of his four ploughing oxen still survive. There were two grades of *ceile*, the *free* and the *unfree*, better known as the *saercheile* and the *daercheile*. The *saercheile* was sometimes called a *ceile* simply, and the *daercheiles*, *i.e.* bond-ceiles, *giall*na or hostages.

**The Saercheile** was somewhat independent, inheriting his share of the tribe-land and renting some more from the *flatha* or nobles. When he rented stock or cattle from the *fear fotla*, he needed no surety beyond his own promise. The rent paid by the *ceile* to the *flaith* was called *beas tighe*.<sup>2</sup> It consisted of pigs and bacon, corn, malt and the like, according to station. He was obliged to go to war, if necessary, and do other work for the tribe, such as killing foxes and repairing highways. If he had cattle on hire from the *flaith* he had to give one-third their value every year for seven years. Then they became his own. This will be regarded as exorbitant. But it has to be remembered that if the *fear fotla* amassed a large fortune in his time it was divided

<sup>1</sup> The *aitheach ar aitreabh* had the four essentials for ploughing ; the *bruighfhear* a perfect plough ; the *aire tuise* a plough with its full and proper set of implements.

<sup>2</sup> *Beas tighe* was a house tribute or rent paid to a *flaith* by every one who accepted *taurcrech* from him. A man without land or property, the last surviving of a family, gave a wether, twelve loaves, butter, onions, a drinking vessel, cream, new, skim and butter-milk. To the *bo-aire* was given an in-calf two-year-old cow ; the *bo-aire feabh*sa a three-year-old bull ; the *fear fotla* a cow in addition to a bull every alternate year ; the *aire desa* a cow, a bull and three in-calf cattle from each of his five *daer-cheile* ; the *aire ard* two cows, three bulls, five in-calf cattle from each of his ten *daer-cheile* ; the *aire forghaill* five cows, six bulls and nine in-calf cattle from each of his twenty *daer-cheile* ; the *tanaise* and *ri beann* each six cows, and so on. The *beas tighe* also provided for winter fodder and summer grazing.

at his death to the advantage of the tribe. So was it preferable to the system which followed of paying exorbitant rents to alien landlords to be squandered recklessly abroad. The free acceptance of saor-rath from the flaith placed the saer-cheile under the flaith's dominion. But it was the privilege of the saercheile, if he so desired, to accept saor-rath from no one but the king.

**The Aos Ceard** or artisan class were in great part saer-cheiles, though they do not occupy so important a place in the constitution as the landed class. They gave portion of the produce of their trades as *beas tighe*. If one of them failed to keep his fences in repair and do the other duties of a farmer, he was deprived of his land, unless his tribe made full restitution. Their leader was called an *aitheach ar aitreabh* or resident *aitheach*. He was wealthier than the *óg-aire*, his stock being ten-fold—ten cows, ten pigs, ten sheep; an ox, a sock, a yoke, a halter, as essentials for ploughing; a house of twenty feet, with a back house of fourteen.

**The Daer-cheile** was often the descendant of a stranger, or some other unfree person on the way to full civic rights. He had to go to war, too, and do other work from time to time for the flaith. The rent he paid the flaith was called *biathadh* or *cios bidh*, i.e. food rent. It consisted of pigs, bacon, butter, corn, honey and the like, and had to be contributed twice a year. Thus the flatha were able to regulate their supplies the whole year round by getting their unfree tenants to present their *biathadh* as occasion required. They had, like the free tenants, to pay for the cattle they had on hire one-third their value annually for seven years; but so far from having bought them out by the end of that time, they were obliged to give them back to the flatha. If the flaith died at that juncture, the daercheile might keep the cattle on condition that he paid a *cumhal De* which was put to the credit of the tribe.

**Gabhail Chine**, or gavelkind, was the redistribution, on the death of the ceile, of the land of the tribe. *Ceilsine* had to be given the flaith within a month after the death of the ceile. It was not to his children solely this land was left: the land of the tribe was re-divided, and every adult member got his due portion. This re-distribution, called "gavelkind," was made at short intervals, so that no deserving person

should be in need of land. Indeed, the glory of the Constitution was that the whole territory was at the disposal of the tribe, and the general conditions of society such that the people assisted each other almost automatically.

The tribe also had the power to divide and re-divide the land when necessary. In the time of Aodh Slainghe, for instance, there was available for each person but thrice nine ridges, namely nine ridges of moorland, nine of grass, and nine of wood. Then it was, according to "Leabhar na hUidhre," that boundary fences were first introduced in Ireland. Thenceforward nobody was permitted to let arrears of rent accumulate on his *orba* or on his tribe. This compelled all to be industrious. Without the consent of the whole tribe no one had the right to bestow land, save some he may have purchased. Moreover, he had to leave his own portion at the tribe's disposal. Thus all were obliged to have regard to the stability of the tribe and contribute to its permanence.

If one sold portion of his land without necessity he was required to leave more than an equal amount at the disposal of the tribe.<sup>1</sup> This made it clear that nothing was to be gained by avarice. The person who purchased land without selling any was free to bestow portion of his property, provided he left the tribe-land intact, or bestowed corresponding land on the tribe. The bo-aire was free to bestow the value of seven cumhals of his land on condition that he left at the disposal of the tribe two-thirds of the means accumulated as the result of his industry. If he had amassed means as the result of a trade, he was free to bestow two-thirds of it on the church, which got its own share of the fruits of the territory, and of which more anon.

**Contracts** and customs such as these, moreover, the early Irish regarded as sacred.<sup>2</sup> He who fails to fulfil his contract

<sup>1</sup> S. M. 47, iii.

<sup>2</sup> Laoghaire on being made prisoner at the battle of Ath Dara gave sun, moon and stars as sureties that he would not exact the Boirmhe from the Leinstermen. But he did not fulfil his promise, and to avenge its violation "he was soon afterwards killed by a lightning flash at Greallach Dabhail beside the Lithfe." In the words of the poet, "the elements of God, whose guarantee he had violated, inflicted the fate of death on the king."—F. F. 39, iii.



is more odious than plague or war, says the Seanchus Mor. When a person failed to pay his debts, his relatives were obliged to pay them in his stead. When one did wrong, his clan were obliged to make restitution. When an elderly person or his son got goods on credit while they held land, those who supplied them got no satisfaction from the tribe if the person so supplied became insolvent. Thus when a merchant or trader or other person was over-generous towards an improvident person, he was himself the ultimate sufferer. The concern of the tribe as a whole was to promote universal integrity and apportion the produce of the tuath as custom and the public needs dictated. When this came to be appreciated, no one of worth sought to evade his duty to tribe and territory.

The Finé or tribe was, in fact, like a vast family, organised with military precision, and under the direction of its own Council, called *Cuigear na Fine*, i.e. the five persons of the tribe, or the Council of Five. The settlement of everything practically devolved upon them. Nor were their responsibilities onerous. The laws were peculiarly appropriate, and the people had quite a rare respect for their native traditions until the example of alien institutions shattered their confidence in "the law" and permanently altered their attitude towards it. This the aliens themselves have abundantly established. Until the Invasion, the natives naturally were most successful in Church and State. The great ideal was to conserve and promote the tribe. Time proved how much this was to be preferred to the free admission and advancement of unscrupulous strangers and adventurers.

### **The Unfree Tribes : Their Status and Prospects**

In addition to those enumerated, there were six further grades of society in each territory. Though they resided in the tuath, they can hardly be said to have belonged to the tribe. They were under the sole sway and jurisdiction of the flaith, and were known as the *saorbhothach*, the *daorbhothach*, the *daoraicillne*, the *seanchleithe*, the *saorfhuidhir* and the *daorfhuidhir*.

**The Saorbhothach** or free cottager had his own cottage on the land of the flaith. He was in the service of the flaith,

and thus obtained his livelihood. If a ceile failed to pay his rent, he was deprived of his land, and got a cottage. It would seem that some of the *free* cottagers were ceiles who through want of industry were deprived of their lands, and thus degraded.

**The Daorbhothach** or unfree cottager was a labourer always in the service of the flaith. He and the lower classes resided in cottages around the *lios* of the flaith. *Lioses* and *duns* were so placed as to be able to co-operate in mutual defence in time of strife from one end of the tuath to the other. The remains of such a chain of forts may yet be seen near Derrynane in Kerry.

**The Daoraicillne** consisted of horse-drivers, attendants, "handymen." They were rather destitute and entirely dependant on the flaith.

**The Seanchleithe** class were hereditary followers of the family of the flaith for at least three generations. They comprised waiters, domestic servants and others constantly employed round the *lios* of the flaith, and known as the *fine flatha*. They often sprang from wanderers, prisoners of war, and the like. The ancient Irish were genuinely hospitable, and had shelter and a welcome for all worthy strangers, the humble as well as the exalted.

**The Saorfhuidhir** or *free fuidhir* was a stranger who came into the tuaith without a stain. These were in a position to make terms with the flaith, and decline the terms if not acceptable. They rented land on a yearly lease, and could not be disturbed for that period. If disturbed, they were entitled to compensation for improvements made, or unexhausted manure. This system has survived to our own time in "score ground" or conacre.

**The Daorfhuidhir** or *unfree fuidhir* occupied the very lowest grade of society, and has been referred to as the true tenant-at-will. This class consisted of persons who had earned death or deportation, prisoners of war, persons fined who failed to pay their fines, felons, thieves, and outlaws from other districts. Naturally they were in close bondage. Their protection and shelter devolved on the flaith alone. If one of them got injured, the flaith was entitled to compensation on his account; if one of them committed a crime, the flaith was responsible and made restitution.

Having, so far, examined society from the king down to the fuidhir, let us now consider the stages from the fuidhir to the king.

**Privileges of the Fuidhir :** Though the fuidhre were absolutely subject to the flaith, it does not follow that their lot was always a hard one. Even if no one could enter into a contract with a fuidhir, neither could one enter into a contract with a prisoner, a fool, a son, a woman, nor even a monk.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the fuidhir had the option, like everyone else, of securing his own release and advancement. With ordinary patience and ambition, the daorfuidhir might become a saorfuidhir. It is true he could not inherit means or property from parents or ancestors until his father and grandfather had resided in the tuaith, that is to say, a stranger could not bestow means or property on his children for at least three generations : thus were outlaws, adventurers, and the like kept in their place. But if a daorfuidhir resided under the second successive chief in the same tuaith, or if his father and his grandfather had been loyal to the chief of the territory he might apply to become a saorfuidhir. If the saorfuidhir was loyal to three chiefs in the same tuaith, or if his father and grandfather had been loyal to the territorial chiefs, he might apply to become a bothach, and so on. The saorfuidhir would not be fully emancipated, or naturalised, *i.e.* he would not have the standing of a saer-cheile, until he and his ancestors had been for nine generations in the tuaith.

**Cuig Raith Ceadach :** If there happened to be five fuidhre in a district, each owning a hundred cows, they were empowered to act as surety to each other and elect their own Council. This Council was known as the Cuig Raith Ceadach, as the leaders of the tribe were called Cuigear na Fine or Cuig Meara na Fine, the Five Fingers of the Tribe. Thus the ambition and co-operation of all classes, free and unfree, were encouraged. Industrious fuidhre had, in their way, almost similar privileges to the ceiles. And as the fuidhre

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<sup>1</sup> "Thou shalt not sell to or buy from an unqualified person ; thou shalt not buy from a fool of those among the Feine, from a woman, from a captive, from a bondman, from a bondmaid, from a monk, from the son of a living father, from a stranger, from a thief."

—S. M. 59, iii.



and others merited freedom, as judged by the standards of the time, the tribe assembled, and emancipated them. Our ancestors rewarded industry from the first. Twenty-four *moghaidh* came with the children of Mileadh, and cleared twenty-four plains of wood. And very appropriately these plains were all called after them.

**Fine Thacuir** was the name given to a strange clan received bodily into the community: an individual so received was called a *mac faosma*.

**Tradesmen, and their prospects:** As already stated, industry was encouraged in everybody, and equitably rewarded. The tradesmen furnish an example. Most of them were *ceilidhe*. In the *Feineachas*, craftsmanship was not rated as highly as agriculture. But the arts and crafts were appreciated; some craftsmen ranked as *aires*, some were associated with the ecclesiastics. All *ceiles* might become *aires* by industry, loyalty and integrity.

**Prospects of the Bo-aire:** Similarly, if the *bo-aire* could show he had double the wealth that sufficed for the *aire desa*, he might himself become an *aire desa*, provided his father and grandfather were *aires* possessed of land. And be it remembered the *aire desa* was a *flaith*, and had free land, and elected the king. Hence it is clear that it was open to the humblest person in Ireland to advance steadily from grade to grade until he took rank among the very leaders of the *tuath*. The *Seanchus Mor*<sup>1</sup> puts the general prospects in another way: The case in which the head of a king is on a plebeian is when the son of a man of the plebeian grade has learned until he becomes . . . a bishop or a chief professor so that he is entitled to a fine of seven *cumhals* of *eric*.

It will be convenient to discuss here a number of incidental matters, like food, clothing, fuel, housing accommodation, retinue, maintenance, tribute, which further illustrate the relations of the various standards of society to each other.

**Food** was simple, and the varieties used by the different grades pretty well regulated by custom. The *Crith Gabhla* sets out in detail what people were entitled to, on *folach*, and ordinarily. For the *treabhaire* or simple householder, on *folach*, maintenance for himself alone of new milk and

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. 107, iii.

groats or corn meal, but no butter. The bo-aire got, on folach, the maintenance of two of new milk and corn meal, no butter. Ordinarily, the ogaire got a *cuad* or bowl, six inches deep and six inches in diameter, of thick milk upon new milk every second day and a household cake, known as a *bairghin*, or two: on folach, two with butter at meals "on third, on fifth, on ninth, on tenth and on Sundays" <sup>1</sup> The aitheach ar aitreabh had among his household stock a salted hog with flesh two fingers high in proper joints, four bags of malt and a firkin of wheat. He was accustomed to seasoned fowl, duileasc, or "sea grass," onions or garlic and salt, with butter on alternate days. An ordinary aitheach was not entitled to malt until he became a flaith. The food of the bo-aire feabhsa was strong onions, salt meat with condiments, and butter on the same occasions <sup>1</sup> as the bo-aire above. The fear fotla had butter and condiments at all times, and meat on the particular occasions <sup>1</sup> already specified. The aire desa had butter at all times and seasoned salt meats. The five foleithe of the aire tuise were entitled always to butter and condiments; the suite of seven of the aire ard to bacon, butter and condiments; the retinue of eight of the aire tuise to butter and condiments with ale or new milk, to both on the special occasions <sup>1</sup> already mentioned. On these occasions also, the aire forghaill had butter, with condiments and bacon, and ale or new milk. Other articles of food and drink frequently mentioned are venison, fresh and salt; the flesh of the goat, the badger, the seal; corned meat of all kinds; puddings, including *drisin*; sausages, broth, gravy, dripping, lard; wild birds, such as wood-cock; salmon and other fish. Eggs, particularly goose eggs, were used, and annlan; the milk of kine, goats, sheep and, sometimes, of deer; cheese, curds, maothal and custard. Honey was common, and there was special detailed legislation in regard to bee-keeping. Sleamhcan, now known as "sladdy," was used as well as duileasc. Eight kinds of edibles are mentioned, including wheat, barley, oats, rye. Fruit and vegetables embraced apples, hazel-nuts, sloes, strawberries, whortleberries or "hurds," onions, cabbage, garlic, meacain

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase is repeated in connection with every grade of the *aire* class.

or carrots, parsnips, leeks, watercress, brooklime, nettles, sorrel and shamrock. Oatmeal, wheatmeal and barley meal were also used, as well as stirabout and porridge or *leite*. The stirabout was flavoured, according to the grade of society, with salt butter for the sons of inferior grades, fresh butter for the sons of chieftains, honey for the sons of kings. Stirabout of oatmeal and buttermilk for the sons of the *Feine* grade, new milk with barley meal for the sons of chieftains, new milk with wheaten meal for the sons of kings. Food-rent had to be conveyed to the house in its integrity, in its sweetness, in its soundness.<sup>1</sup> No cut loaf was ever placed before guests.

**Clothing** included a sleeveless undergarment, an *ionar* or tunic bound by a *crios* or belt, a *triubhas* or *briste garraid*, and *stocaidhe* or stockings. The *ionar* was sometimes of silk and satin with hem of gold. Over the *ionar* a *brat* or cloak, namely an unfashioned cloth fastened over the left shoulder with a brooch; in the case of poorer people, by a dealg or pin. A five-folded *brat* was called a *fuan*. They were of various colours: crimson, red, green, greenish, grey blue, yellow, buff, white, grey, variegated red and white, red and blue, grey and green, white and yellow, green and brown, crimson striped, grey streaked, checkered, green spot-speckled, purple and blue with borders of gold. Dyeing, in a great variety of colours, was widely practised.

Originally, purple and blue clothes were worn by the sons of kings; later, satin and scarlet for the son of the high king, brooches of gold with silver insets, silver on his scabbard, brass rings on his hurling sticks. Brooches of silver only for the son of the provincial king; tin on the scabbards of the sons of chieftains, brass rings on their hurling sticks. Black, yellow, grey and blue clothes were worn by the sons of the *Feine* grade; the son of the *aire desa* wore clothes of a different colour every day and two colours on Sunday; the son of the *aire tuise* clothes of two colours every day and new clothes of two colours every Sunday; the son of the *aire ard* new clothes of two colours every day and better clothes of two colours on Sundays and festival days. Sons of the higher *aire* and of kings had new coloured clothes of superior

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. 233, ii.



quality at all times, those for Sunday surpassing those for week days, and those for festival days differing from those for Sundays, and all embroidered with gold and silver.<sup>1</sup> The gorgeous clothing of the Craobh Ruadh, or Red Branch Knights, and of the leaders of the Fian has already been described under their respective headings.

Women wore a longer *leine* and a *caille* or veil. A *cochall* or cape was also worn to which was attached a *cenaid*. *Culpait*, *at* and *barr* were among the names applied to head-gear. *Cuarans* or shoes, tanned after they had assumed the shape of the foot, were worn : *broga* and *ialachain* were other names for footwear.

**Fuel** consisted of turf, wood, charcoal or *gual chrainn* and probably coal from mines. Flint, steel and tinder were used for lighting or kindling fires. Until recently, touch or brown paper steeped in saltpetre and logwood was used. Light was derived from dipped candles, peeled rushes dipped in tallow, meat-grease, fish-oil, butter and lard, beeswax candles, and splinters of bogwood. Oil lamps and beautiful candlesticks are known to have existed also and are referred to in detail elsewhere.

**Houses:** The relative sizes of the houses occupied by the various grades of people we find set out in the *Crith Gabhla*. The smallest house there referred to is the *Teach Incis*, built for an old man who gave up his land to his friends on condition that they maintained him. Seventeen feet the size of it, woven to the lintel ; a weather-board between every two weavings to the roof-ridge ; two doorways, one having a door, the other a hurdle ; a roof of hazel, and a board of oak between every two beds. The og-aire's house was nineteen feet long, the back house thirteen ; the house of the aitheadh ar aitreabh twenty feet, the back house fourteen. The boaire feabhsa had a house of twenty-seven feet with a back house of fifteen, a share in a mill, a kiln, a barn, a sheep-pen, a calf house, a pig sty. The fear fotla had a house of twenty-seven feet with a back house of seventeen. The house of the aire desa, described elsewhere, was twenty-seven feet long with a back house to match ; and that of the aire tuise twenty-nine feet with back house of nineteen : eight beds

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. 149, ii.

in the house with perfect furniture, six couches with pillows and sitting cushions; iron household tools for every work, and a meat vessel to hold a cow and a hog. The aire coisring had a house of thirty feet, a back house of nineteen, while the aire forghaill's house was thirty feet, the back house twenty, with household furniture and implements for every quarter of the year.

A kingly house had six iomdhaidhe, or couches, on the western side near the door for the janitors in arms, the saer-cheiles or household officers, the hostages, judges, rioghan and ri or king. On the south or left side next the king, six couches for other kings, if present, the rioghdomhna, the king's bodyguard, one of the special hostages, warders, poets, harpers, pipers, horn-players, jugglers: forfeited hostages were at the back, or extreme end. At *Fleadh Bhricriu* the men were at one side, the women at the other. At Cruachain the queen sat on the king's left, her daughters next her, and the other women still to the left in order of rank. But women, as a rule, seem ordinarily to have occupied separate houses.

Each king should possess at least three chief residences or duns and each flaith a lios. The dun was surrounded by walls or mounds of earth and a ditch filled with water. The dun of the ri ruireach appears to have been surrounded by a second rampart, called the dreacht giallana or ditch of the hostages. The dun was built at the expense of the territory. Close to the dun the seincleithes, bothachs and other base dependents erected their wicker houses and formed a village. The ceiles appear to have lived on isolated farms of the better or older land, thus forming a chain of residences.

**Retinue :** The bo-aire has a retinue of four, and is entitled to entertainment for four. Six the company in the territory of the aire desa and the aire eachta with entertainment for six. The aire ard—six his suite and six foleithe, apparently a special retinue when he held a judicial court. Aire tuise—eight his suite, six his foleithe, with maintenance for eight. Aire forghaill—nine his company in the territory, seven his foleithe. Tanaise riogh—ten his company in the territory, eight his foleithe. Ri beann—twelve his company, nine his foleithe. Ri buidhean—four score his company, twelve men his foleithe. Ri bunaidh—thirty his company in the

territory, seven hundred his foleithe when governing his people.

**Coinmhe** or “Coyne and Livery”: The flaith and his retinue had the right to stay in the house of the ceile for a day or a month according to the ceile’s standing. But if a flaith did a ceile an injustice, demanded excessive biathadh, for example, the flaith was required to make adequate restitution. Until the flaith had made restitution, the ceile had the option of refusing to give him further biathadh.

**Coshering** or visitation from the Kalends to Shrovetide, remaining but one night at each place—the aire desa and aire eachta ten couples each; the aire ard, twenty couples; and the aire tuise, thirty couples.

**Folach** may be interpreted as maintenance or “separation allowance.” A king-king, a poet-king and a brughaidh are non-folach among the grades of the people. He is entitled to half the folach of every grade for his lawful son, for his wife; to one-fourth for every unlawful. The wives of mercenaries have folach in right of their sons or husbands. Stewards and couriers are sustained with half the folach of their flaith. Every profession that performs the work of a flaith or of a church is sustained to half folach according to the grade whose work is performed. The folach of every grade in the church is the same as that of its co-grade in the laity. Every mother goes with her son upon folach, the same as his father.

**Folach Othrusa** or maintenance for a wounded person: ogaire, two upon folach; bruighfhear, three; bo-aire, four; aire desa, six; aire ard, seven; aire tuise, eight; ri beann, ten. A ri buidhean is non-folach; eight cumhals are pledged to him for his folach, with a retinue to be retained at the expense of the culprit.

**Eineachla**: It is often asserted that slavery and oppression were universal in early Ireland. This is contrary to fact. Let no one in difficulty be oppressed, says the Seanchus Mor.<sup>1</sup> Even when the goods of the daorfhuidhir were stolen he became entitled to restitution. His son received *corpdire* for bodily injury. If his wife or virgin daughter was outraged he sought and obtained eineachla, though the law allowed

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. 338, ii.



him only half the amount awarded to the free clans, even as an og-aire got only two-fifths that of the fear fotla. To protect his wife, further, he was allowed sell nothing in her absence ; and the unfree women, like the unfree men, were protected in other ways. The daorfhuidhir, indeed, was under the protection of the flaith, a guarantee in itself against ill-treatment. Moreover, the fuidhir having a little means, a dwellinghouse, for instance, cow house, piggery, sheep's pen, and calf house, was entitled to *dire*, or compensation, just as if he were a ceile. Diarmuid MacMurchadha is recorded by the Four Masters as having given eineachla amounting to 100 ounces of gold to Tighearnan Ua Ruairc in satisfaction for having borne away his wife. The king and men of Meath gave 800 cows as eineachla to Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair in 1168 for having killed Ua Follamhain in violation of the protection of Connacht and the Oirghialla ; while for the killing of Muircheartach Ua Briain the people of Deasmhumha gave Ruaidhri three times twelve score cows.

**Log enech** or honour price is also set out in great detail. Three seds the og-aire ; ten seds the aire desa ; fifteen seds the aire ard ; twenty seds the aire tuise ; thirty seds the tanaise riogh ; seven cumhals the ri buidhean ; twice seven cumhals the ri bunaidh. The cumhal generally signified three cows ; the sed a cow.

**Military Requirements :** Critics of the Feineachas are fond of referring to the injustice of the flaith having the power to summon the fuidhir to battle in times of strife, ignoring the fact that the ceile also was called on to defend his country, as were, indeed, all classes from the king down, not excluding even the clergy or the women.<sup>1</sup> And he who was not prepared to defend his country in the day of danger was surely entitled neither to shelter nor protection. Everyone had his own duties and concerns then as now, and all were obliged to submit without question to the Feineachas.

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<sup>1</sup> Alzog says that at the first German Council under Boniface in 742 ecclesiastics were forbidden to take arms, and that " the Irish clergy were released from the duty of following their princes to the field of battle about the year 800." But three abbots fell with Cormac mac Cuileannain at the Battle of Bealach Mughna ; and in Ireland as in other countries countless examples of militant ecclesiastics are met with. In 697 Adhamhnan attended a Convention at Tara and had women exempted from military service ; the exemption was re-enacted

**Athgabhail** or **Distrain** : The inference from the statements of some foreign writers is that the *Breitheamhnas Tuatha* of Ireland was either negligible or a mere record of the proceedings and magic rites of the druids. Though Mayne was loud in his praise of portion of the *Breitheamhnas Tuatha*, he sought to show it was in part defective. While admitting that the judgment of "Leabhar Acaille" in the matter of fines was more rational than anything appearing in the law annals of England until quite recently, he seemed to contend that if the early Irish resisted *Athgabhail* there was no remedy for them but fasting, or excommunication. Of course, there was. Some contend, indeed, that, as in India, where it has been legal to seize the wife, son or cattle of a debtor, creditors in Ireland had the option of carrying off women for debt; even that it was in this way the wife of Tighearnan O Ruairc was borne away by Diarmuid MacMurchadha. The distrain of cattle or stock, it is true, has been practically the last resort in satisfaction for debt in Ireland, and, as a matter of fact, the laws of distrain in England have for a long time been based upon our *Feineachas*. Yet distrain was widely resorted to,<sup>1</sup> as evidence whereof a green or *faithche* for the distress of cattle and the like was attached to every substantial habitation; and there were, moreover, detailed rules about the arrangement and accommodation in pounds: the expense of tending and feeding, for example, was added to distress for the period of delay in pound.<sup>2</sup>

Every beast in a man's possession might be distrained: cattle, horses, pigs, dogs; hens, bees, and so on, as also every

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on the translation of his remains to Ireland in 727. But not only during the Siege of Limerick but in our own day Irish women have without hesitation faced the horrors of the battlefield in the combatant as in the non-combatant capacity. In this there is nothing peculiar; for it has been written of the Greek women in the Republic "Then let the wives of our guardians strip . . . and let them share in the toils of war and in the defence of their country."

<sup>1</sup> The laws of distress were declared by "the advice of the Church from the customs of the laity, from the true laws of the poets, from the current opinions of the kings, from the advice of the judges, except what conscience and nature adds from true judgments according to analogy."—*Manufacture of Historical Material*, Jeudwine, 35.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 327, iii.



art. In the distraint of a smith, for instance, a *gad* or tie was put upon his anvil, and a prohibition issued against his working any more on it until justice was done. Ties were put on the tools of carpenters and shieldmakers, and similar prohibitions issued. In the case of a physician his horsewhip and probe were taken up, and if he had not the requisite number of such things a thread was tied about the finger next his little finger until justice was done. The poet was treated somewhat in the same way.

Neither fool, idiot, nor dumb person, male or female, was distrained. If two men incited a fool to a crime, the person who roused him paid one-third *eric*, he who incited him two-thirds, the fool went free.

**Fasting** was practised against ecclesiastics; notice was given that they say not their Lord's prayer or Creed; even ties were put on their bell-houses or at the foot of the altar. The king was fasted on also, and his calves seized if he had not a steward bailiff to sustain his liability.<sup>1</sup> Other debtors, slow in paying, were often threatened with fasting also, and the threat was calculated to prove very effective. For the view prevailed universally that he who heeds not fasting is an evader of the law, and he who evades the law is respected neither by God nor man. Hence, to stop fasting, pledges were given; and of such pledges there were various forms for various ends: four full pledges<sup>2</sup> are referred to, four half-pledges, four third-pledges, four smacht-pledges, the latter to stop fasting, others in connection with the Law of Patrick and the Law of Adhamhnan.

Fasting was sometimes accompanied by ringing of bells, i.e. *ag baint na gclog*; and cursing and excommunication were somewhat kindred expedients. Examples are numerous in the Life of Patrick. According to the Book of Rights, the fall of Tara and the rise of Cashel were due to the fasting by Patrick on Laoghaire mac Neill and the fasting by Ruadhan of Lothra on Diarmuid mac Cearbhaill. It would probably be as near the truth to suggest that the fall of Tara was largely attributable to the friction and jealousies of the Ui Neill themselves. Even the fasting on that historic occasion was not confined to Patrick and Ruadhan: all the saints of the

<sup>1</sup>S.M. 119-121, ii.

<sup>2</sup>S. M. 489, iii.



time were associated in the destruction of Tara. Brendan is particularly blamed by some authors. St. Caimin on the occasion of a conflict between Diarmuid and Guaire, king of Connacht, fasted on Guaire with the result that he was defeated.<sup>1</sup> Maolruain, subsequent to his settling at Tamhlacht, fasted thrice against King Airtri son of Faolmuire. After the first fasting, the king's leg, it is recorded, broke in two ; after the second, the fire fell and burned him from top to toe ; after the third, the king died. It is quite to be expected that the clergy fasted against the Norse tyrant Tuirgeis. Numberless other examples could be quoted. The Four Masters, for instance, record in 1043 the "fasting of the clergy of Ciaran at Tealach Garbha against the lord of Teathbha, and the ringing of the Bearnan Chiarain with the end of the Bachall Iosa against him." Exactly a century later the same annals note that the clergy of Connacht with the archbishop Muiredach O Dubhthaigh fasted at Rath Breanain in the interest of Ruaidhri O Conchubhair, "but it was not observed for them." Another twelfth-century case was that of the head of the students of Doire who fasted because Muircheartach O Lochlain of Aileach was brought to Armagh for burial.<sup>2</sup>

**Malediction**, too, was common. A case is afforded by Ciaran's conduct towards Ceallach his student. Ceallach, who was studying to become a monk, escaped from the monastery to fight with the followers of his father Eoghan Beal against Guaire. Ciaran thereupon cursed him. And though the student later received Ciaran's blessing and

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<sup>1</sup> F. F. 589, iii.

<sup>2</sup> Fasting has been resorted to in Persia and in India for the same purpose. In Persia the creditor, on finding it impossible to collect a debt, sowed rye-seed before the debtor's door and, if necessary, sat fasting in it until the new rye was sufficiently ripe to be converted into bread. The debtor was allowed to taste no food while the fasting lasted ; and, as a rule, this promptly had the desired effect. In India when a Brahmin or other person wished to recover a debt, he came to the door of the debtor, armed with poison or some deadly weapon, and threatened to commit suicide if the debtor passed him by or interfered with him. He then proceeded to fast, and the debtor was obliged to do likewise. But if the Brahmin died as a result of the fasting, neither the debtor nor his descendants would ever be forgiven, with the result that the debt, as a rule, was promptly discharged.

became a bishop, he ultimately died a violent death. Other typical cases are furnished by the action of Colm Cille in converting the Queen of Aodh Ainmire and her handmaid into herons and by his treatment of Conall Clogach. Colm Cille ordered thrice nine bells to be rung against Conall son of Aodh for having incited the rabble against the saint and his clerics. Further, he cursed him, and deprived him of royalty, senses, memory, understanding—somewhat as in the days of the druids—so that the victim was thence known as Conall Clogach.<sup>1</sup> Again, the community of Colm Cille went to Tara in 816 to curse Aodh Oirdnidhe king of Ireland—probably for his invasion of the Cineal Conaill two years earlier, or for complicity in the murder of the Abbot Maoldun.<sup>1</sup> As a final example, Keating's summarised account of the Synod of Rath Breasail closes thus: "The crosses of all the bishops and of all the laity and clergy who were at the holy Synod . . . against whomsoever shall transgress these decrees, and the malediction of them all on whomsoever shall oppose them."

**Excommunication**, always so ready an instrument of Catholic discipline, calls for little comment here. Perhaps the most notorious example of its application in our history is found in the action of Cardinal Vivian, Apostolic Legate, at a Dublin Synod during the progress of the Anglo-Norman invasion. Having first counselled the Irish to fight unto death in defence of their country, the calculating Cardinal, under pressure by the agents of the alien usurper, proclaimed Henry II lawful master of Ireland and fulminated, in the name of the Church, a decree of excommunication against every native who should refuse to acknowledge him or resist his armies. He also condoned the violation of sanctuary, declaring that the Irish were guilty of sacrilege in placing their provisions for safety in the churches and that the invaders were within their rights in breaking open the churches and appropriating the food. The people retorted by a raid on his retinue, carrying off his horse, asses, mules.

**Aireachta or Courts of Law** : It is really a matter for wonder that fasting or such remedies should have been resorted to at all in face of the powerful corrective influence

<sup>1</sup> F. F. 89, iii.

<sup>2</sup> A. U. 816 A.D.



of tradition and public opinion and the various Courts and Assemblies held regularly. At least five Courts are mentioned: the *aireacht foleith*, *aireacht urnuidhe*, *aireacht fodeisin*, *taobhaireacht* and *culaireacht*.

**The Aireacht Foleith** seems to have been the Court of the Council of Five, *i.e.* *Cuigear na Fine*. The king and leading aires of each tuath were privileged to hold this special court. At it appeared *nascairidhe*, or persons who arranged contracts, jurors and witnesses. It was usually held in the open around a *dos aireachta* or post stuck in the ground. The caretaker was called a *dosaire*.

**The Aireacht Urnuidhe** was presided over by a judge, and attorneys pleaded there. It is believed to have come down from the time of Neimheadh. The statutes, acts and judgments of this court were known as the judgments of Neimheadh.

**The Aireacht Fodeisin** was the High Court of the king and was presided over by a professor of law. Sixteen grades of officers are mentioned as attending this court. They are supposed to have consisted of the twelve grades of attendants mentioned in the *Breitheamhnas Tuatha* in addition to the king, the tanist, the aire forghaill and, from the coming of the faith, the bishop.

**The Taobhaireacht** was a court that heard both sides of questions which arose between districts in a *morthuaith*. In it were decided most questions bearing on *dire* or damages, credit, loans, boundaries, genealogies, and the like. The professors explained the history of each case, and quoted precedents; and kings attended the hearing. Flatha and aires were also present to act as sureties. They were known as the *Sic Og*.

**The Culaireacht** was the highest of the Courts, seemingly an Appeal Court. Bishops, kings and poets directed this court, the poets to explain accurately every judgment. No lawyer save the *ollamh aighne* was permitted to plead there. Inter-provincial cases in which the litigants lived under different subordinate kings came within the jurisdiction of the Ardri. When legislation concerning the Ardri was under consideration, or matters of corresponding import, the final decision was given in the Culaireacht of Tara. **Reacht** was the term usually applied to a law or statute.



**Cain** had a somewhat similar meaning. **Urradhas** was the ordinary law. **The Feineachas** embodied the laws in general.

**Judges**, of ability and integrity, were never lacking. They required to be highly educated, and were not entrusted with judicial functions until they were thoroughly familiar with the law in all its bearings. "No person is qualified to plead a cause at the High Court unless he is skilled in every department of legal science." Moreover, a judge guilty of negligence or of giving an unjust judgment forfeited his fee and was obliged to give *eric* in reparation. So too of a bishop who conferred orders on one not competent. Similarly of physicians, of whom two classes, lawful and unlawful, are mentioned: when they transgressed, they had to make reparation. The remuneration of judges was calculated at one-twelfth the value of the matter in dispute. There were four grades of judges, the highest being the *ollamh aighne*.

Before passing from the Courts, a few examples may be quoted from the law tracts to show the minute detail in which legal provision was made for every phase and feature of early Irish society and the generous sense of rigid justice pervading the whole code. No one, chief or tenant, should be oppressed in his difficulty or in his poverty about a thing which he is not capable of rendering.<sup>1</sup> No one found at profitable work shall be defrauded.<sup>2</sup> Let no man be forced while in a state of inability.<sup>3</sup> Further, demanding a debt before it was due was punished by the forfeiture of the debt, honour-price and five seds.<sup>4</sup>

**Sanctuary** afforded another means of protection. The life of Colm Cille, so fruitful in illustrations of early Irish customs and institutions, affords important examples of the violation of sanctuary and the consequences thereof. For violation of sanctuary at the Feis of Tara, for instance, and subsequent violation of the sanctuary extended by Colm Cille to the culprit, the battle of Cul Dreimhne was fought in 561. For the violation of Colm's protection, also, was the battle of Cul Feadha near Clonard fought in 587. Sanctuary, though

<sup>1</sup> S. M. 339, ii.

<sup>3</sup> S. M. 93, ii.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 27, iii.

<sup>4</sup> S. M. 513, iii.

always liable to violation, survived the excesses that accompanied Norse aggression ; and its privileges were confirmed by the Council of Bri MacTaidhg in 1158. The protection of the saints, the successor of Patrick, the clergy and the laity, as of the Staff of Jesus and the sacred relics, was generally sought in relation to sanctuary.

As long as a criminal was in a territory it was not lawful to sue his next of kin or his kinsman surety, but to sue himself according to his rank and to make a distraint upon him. If he absconded, the plaintiff might sue the next of kin or the surety.<sup>1</sup>

The life of every law-breaker was forfeit, that is, it was lawful to kill the thief without name, when there was no power of arresting him at the time of committing the trespass, and the slayer was exempt on account of every person killed in his guise.<sup>2</sup>

“Thou shalt not kill a captive unless he be thine,” says the *Seanchus Mor* ; “that is a captive condemned to death. It is lawful for the person who had him in custody to kill him, and the person who assisted him is exempt if the custodian were unable to kill him. But if he was, a fine for an unjust death is due from him who assisted and is obtained by the family of the captive.”<sup>3</sup>

When a prisoner escaped, through defective fetters, his custodian paid full fine for the offence for which the prisoner had been in custody and full fine for every offence committed subsequently until he submitted to the law.<sup>4</sup>

A person who committed frequent crimes was outlawed. His family had to pay seven cumhals to the chief to exonerate themselves from his crime, as well as seven cumhals to the church, and two cumhals each to the four parties with whom he had *cairde* relations. If the family exempted him from his crimes and restored him, by certain formalities they had to pay the same amount again as a kind of surety for his future behaviour.

Adults were subject to penalties if they neglected to notify danger to cattle or other animals ; to fines, if they distrained unjustly, or contrary to law. Persons who witnessed an

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. 345, iii.

<sup>3</sup> S. M. 485, iii.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 465, iii.

<sup>4</sup> S. M. 499, iii.

offence or neglect of duty were liable to fine if, themselves, negligent in the matter. Fines were imposed for taking fish, trees, fruit, straw for people's bedding ; for injury to a beast that gave milk or was capable of work, and so on. There were severe penalties for injury to the king's highway or to by-roads ; for serious bodily injuries amongst which are specified cutting off the hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, beard, whiskers, false locks of poets.

There was detailed legislation also regarding the conduct of war, the use of boats. Anything rescued beyond nine waves from the shore belonged to the rescuer. What was cast ashore belonged to the owner of the shore, as far as five seds. A lawful barque driven ashore was divided equally between the king of the territory and the owner of the shore. Portion subsequently went to the king of the province, the high king, and others. Hides, salt, iron, foreign nuts, goblets, wine and honey are mentioned among the possible contents of the cargo.<sup>1</sup>

Other subjects of legislation were the threshing of corn, felling of trees ; accidents resulting therefrom, including accidents to animals ; injuries done by or to horses, in ploughing, or otherwise ; chariots at a fair ; bulls, rams, pigs ; mills in grinding ; cauldrons in boiling ; corn in a haggard ; jugglers and jugglery ; even, cats trespassing in a kitchen. Distinction is made between profitable workers and idlers or unprofitable workers, in building, threshing and other occupations. In building, there was no fine for injuries to idlers or unprofitable workers, whereas there was compensation for injuries done to fellow-labourers, profitable workers and beasts.<sup>2</sup>

Twice seven cumhals was the compensation for " the maim of every bishop, professor, chief poet, airchinneach, aire forghaill and other person of the same grade " ; seven cumhals for the maim of every aire.<sup>3</sup>

The physician's share was one-half from kings, one-third from chieftains, one-fourth from Feine grades. Four cows and a samhaisc-heifer was the physician's share for a death-maim from kings, three cows from chieftains, two cows and a colpach-heifer from the aire class, and so on. For lesser

<sup>1</sup> S. M. 427, iii.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 169, iii.

<sup>3</sup> S. M. 475, ii.



wounds the shares were regulated according to their nature and the grade of those concerned.<sup>1</sup>

There were detailed laws, too, about dogs and their responsibilities; the hound, horse, sheep, deer, cow, pig; about hens, geese, bees.<sup>2</sup> Dogs must have been vicious, considering the laws made concerning them; the milk of the sheep seems to have been reckoned of more value than the wool; goats' milk was also regarded as of special value; clutches were rated as more valuable than eggs; the ox and the bull had each a tripartite value: one-third for the body, one-third for the work, one-third for the expectation.<sup>3</sup> One-fourth of the dire-fine for the wounding of a ruminating animal was paid for its complete cure according to the fair-judging Diancheacht. Measurement by grain and eggs is also referred to, and it is recorded that bees had a feeding-space as far as a bell or the crowing of a cock could be heard.

There was very detailed legislation about reciprocal rights among families and the proper distribution of property between the different degrees—of five persons each—of *geilfine*, *deirbhfine*, *iarfine*, *indfine*. The *geilfine* division was the youngest, the *indfine* the oldest. When the fine exceeded five, a man passed from one division to that next above and finally from the *indfine* into the community.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere we read it was lawful to exact a fine from "the whole seventeen men of the family."<sup>5</sup>

The people had a fine conceit of their women. The writer of the poem on Achall in the *Dinnseanchus* says the six best women in the world, after the mother of God, were Meadhbh, Sadhbh, Sarait, Eirc, Eimir, Achall.<sup>6</sup>

Women were suitably rewarded for their work, whether farming, shearing, carding, wool-combing, spinning, tucking, dyeing, milking, calf-rearing, pig-rearing, sheep-rearing, flax-pulling, bee-keeping. They were entitled to give excess of fortune to friends in need, and land within certain limits for the release or relief of friends; as also to invite and entertain half as many as their husbands. Accordingly, we find them prominent in every sphere: the druidess; the abbess, who

<sup>1</sup> S. M. 477, iii.

<sup>3</sup> S. M. 371, iii.

<sup>5</sup> S. M. 489, iii.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 379-81, iii.

<sup>4</sup> S. M. 335, iii.

<sup>6</sup> *Dinnseanchus*, 489.

wielded great power and influence;<sup>1</sup> the woman-brughaidh, the woman-airchinneach, even the woman-judge. The right of daughters to inherit land, says Prof. Sullivan in his Introduction to the "Manners and Customs of Ireland," is said to have been completely established by a legal decision made in the case of Brigh Amhri, daughter of Seanchan, "who pleaded the cause of woman's right." Several women of the name of Brigh are mentioned in the ancient laws as female judges: some appear to have been connected with each other. The mother of Seanchan, chief judge and poet of Ulster in the time of Conchubhar mac Neasa, was Brigh banbhrughaidh, the female brughaidh; his wife was Brigh Breathach "of the judgments;" his daughter Brigh Amhri, already referred to, the wife of Celtchair mac Uthichair, renowned in the Tain Bo. She was one of the nine women who accompanied the wife of Conchubhar at Fleadh Bricriu.

Every woman of the Aire class—perhaps of others, too—got a *tinncur* or *tindscra*, i.e. marriage portion, from her father; if he were dead, from her finé. The bridegroom's wealth should be equal to that of the bride. A bride marrying beneath her got a fortune corresponding to the bridegroom's rank only; similarly one marrying above her got a portion corresponding to the bridegroom's rank also. *Coibce* was a bridal gift by the groom. There was also a wedding collection among friends. Thus: the father is to foster his daughter wholly or to the extent of one-half, to send full price of fosterage or one-half to the foster-father, and to have her wed at marriageable age. She is to bring one-third the proceeds of the marriage collection to the man of equal family. The first wedding gift of every daughter is to be given by her father, two-thirds of the second, half the third and a descending proportion to the twenty-first wedding-gift.

In the event of the father's death the mother assumes responsibility for the fosterage of the son and pronounces

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<sup>1</sup> Just as the virgin daughter and the wife of the daorfhuidhir were assured of the protection of the flaith and entitled to eineachla or honour-price if outraged, so for an outrage on a young nun who had not renounced her veil, honour-price was payable to the successor of Brigid at Kildare.



judgment on him. So also, in the event of the father's death, the son, if head of the sept, takes the father's responsibility for the fosterage of his (the son's) sister and her relief in old age, if necessary.<sup>1</sup> He receives proportion of the marriage gifts, too, but to a lesser degree than the father; and he maintains the widowed mother in her old age. In the same way, the foster-son has the responsibility of assisting his foster-mother in her need and maintaining her in her old age: she may bear witness against him, but he may oppose it.<sup>2</sup> Foster-children generally, in the absence of legitimate children, were expected to contribute to the maintenance of their foster-parents when overtaken by old age as, in the like circumstances, students were expected to contribute to the maintenance of foster-teachers.

There were two kinds of fosterage, or *daltachas*—for affection and for payment. Fosterage ended at three periods: death, crime, and selection—at the age of seventeen for boys, fourteen for girls.

Abduction and the penalties and obligations thereto<sup>3</sup> attaching are exhaustively dealt with, and divorce is referred to.<sup>4</sup> "Separation of husband and wife," if decided by those learned in the law, was recognised under the Brehon code,<sup>5</sup> and was accompanied by equal division of property.<sup>6</sup> In at least seven eventualities could a wife legally separate from her husband, retain the whole or part of her marriage portion, and obtain restitution: if falsely charged or grievously misrepresented by him; if rendered a subject of ridicule by him; if so beaten or maltreated that a blemish was inflicted on her; if openly abandoned or publicly charged with infidelity; if neglected in favour of other women, or if the husband committed adultery; if she received a love potion before marriage; if her full rights were not given her in domestic and social concerns. If a first wife were put away unlawfully, her son was not bound to maintain her until the time of her decrepitude.

<sup>1</sup> A rather cryptic passage in the Brehon Code runs: If a son have not sufficient to support father and mother, let him leave the mother on the fence and bring the father on his back to his own house.

—S. M. 55 iii.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 349, ii.

<sup>3</sup> S. M. 533, iii.

<sup>4</sup> S. M. 317, iii.

<sup>5</sup> S. M. 363-5, ii.

<sup>6</sup> S. M. 389, ii.



After the advent of the Norsemen and largely as the result thereof, respect for the sanctity of the marriage bond waned somewhat, but to a degree scarcely perceptible by comparison with the conditions among continental peoples. Prominent instances met with in the native annals are those of Gormflaith daughter of Flann Siona who died in 947, having been betrothed if not married to Cormac mac Cuileannain and wedded subsequently to Niall Glundubh and to Cearbhall king of Leinster; and of the more notorious Gormflaith, sister of Maolmordha king of Leinster, who was married first to Amhlaoibh Cuaran, then to Maelsheachlain, later to his rival, Brian Boirmhe, and finally had herself promised in marriage to the leading foreign chiefs invited to Ireland to overthrow Brian at Clontarf. A couple of years before Gormflaith's separation from Brian, another wife Dubhcoblach daughter of the king of Connacht is recorded to have died—in 1009. During the fervour which followed the mission of Patrick, it was not unusual for husband and wife to separate by mutual consent, withdraw from the cares of the world, and devote the remainder of their lives to the service of the new Church. In later times, particularly after the incursions of the Danes, references to queens ending their days in religious houses are not infrequent.<sup>1</sup> Conceivably, in those turbulent and more materialistic times, some queens after a period of married life withdrew from the anxieties of the world to the seclusion of the cloister, thus releasing, at least by implication, their warlike husbands from their marriage bonds. Dr. Lanigan in his *Ecclesiastical*

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<sup>1</sup> Obituary notice of the successors of Brigid at Kildare appear steadily through the tenth and other centuries. Miscellaneous notices include the following :—

- 932. Uallach chief poetess of Ireland died, as did Anluith Abbess of Cluain Bronaigh and Cluain Boireann.
- 1063. Gormflaith died on pilgrimage in Ard Macha.
- 1073. Beibhinn daughter of Brian died on pilgrimage in Ard Macha.
- 1077. Gormflaith wife of Toirdealbach O Briain, having distributed much wealth amongst cells, churches and God's poor, died.
- 1088. Dubhcablaigh queen of Munster and Mor queen of Connacht died.
- 1106. The superioress of Cluain Bronaigh rested.
- 1108. The wife and mother of Muircheartach O Briain died, the latter at Gleann da Lochs.
- 1134. Beibhinn female airchinneach of Doire Chuilm Cille died.

*History* partly explains this phenomenon by the old distinction and possible interval between *sponsalia de futuro* and *de praesenti*, i.e. between solemn betrothal or espousal and the consummation or contract of matrimony.

As in the case of Brigid and other historic names, many remarkable women bore the name of Gormflaith. The Annals of Ulster record that Gormflaith, most delightful queen of the Scoti, died after penance in 860. And Gormflaith daughter of Murchadh mac Diarmada comharb of Brigid .i. abbess of Kildare died in good penance in 1112. Other examples have just been noted.

**Public Councils** or assemblies met from time to time also, and anyone dissatisfied with the verdict of the courts or suffering under some other grievance was free to bring his case before these assemblies. The more important of them were known as the *Sabaid Cuirmthighe*, *Meitheal Flatha*, *Meitheal Tuatha*, *Dail*, *Aonach*, *Mathshluagh*, *Tocomrac*, *Feis*, *Clann*, and so on. The *finé* of a lord constituted a clann in its limited sense. Clann in its territorial sense comprised all the flatha of a tuath, sometimes a number of tuatha.

The **Mathshluagh** was summoned by the Aire Fine. When the tribe were dissatisfied with the findings of any particular court or with the conduct of the king, they brought the matter before the Mathshluagh. Questions relating to war and the like were discussed also by the Mathshluagh.

The **Meitheal Tuatha** was a special meeting of the saercheiles and others summoned when it was necessary to make a dun for the king or transact some like business. It was the duty of the people to erect the king's dun.

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- 1137. Mor daughter of Muircheartach O Briain and wife of Maelsheaclain, died at Durrow.
  - 1151. Dearbhforgaill wife of Toirdealbach O Conchubhair king of Connacht died on pilgrimage in Ard Macha.
  - 1167. Dearbhfhorgaill wife of Tighearnan Ua Ruairc finished the nunnery at Cluain mic Nois.
  - 1168. Dubhcoblach daughter of Ua Maolruanaidh of Moylurg and third wife of Toirdealbhach O Conchubhair died on pilgrimage in Ard Macha.
  - 1171. Sadhbh daughter of Ironknee MacMurchadha comharb of Brigid .i. Abbess of Kildare died in penance; and Dearbhail daughter of Donnchadh Ua Maelsheachlain died at Cluain mic Nois.



The **Meitheal Flatha** was another special meeting summoned by the flaith, to discuss urgent business like the defence of the territory against threatened aggression. Absence from this Meitheal was regarded by the people as one of the greatest offences imaginable. It was called *meath meithle flatha*, and was severely punished. "For failing to attend a hosting," says the *Seanchus Mor*, "chieftains were fined more severely than members of the *finé* grade; and the fine for deserting the king at a hosting was greater than that for failing to go into it." All of which implies the general loyalty to the flaith and the Feineachas.

The **Feis of Cruachain** and the **Feis of Eamhain** were convened, says Keating, "to approve those who practised mechanical arts in Ireland, such as smithwork, woodwork, stonework and like handicrafts. And the nobles and ollamhs who were at these two assemblies selected from each assembly three score masters of each craft, and these were then distributed throughout Ireland. No fellow-craftsman to these was permitted to practise his craft without permission from the master of that craft in that district; and the master must examine whether he be competent to practise the craft."

The **Sabaid Cuirmthighe**, or ale-house council, was composed of the chief men of the tuath, mor-thuath or province in which it was convened. "Its functions were ministerial, judicial and legislative." The Sabaid Cuirmthighe of the Ardri was synonymous with the Feis of Tara, described in detail elsewhere.

The **Dail** was a body to which the ceile had recourse when treated unjustly by the flaith. If the ceile established the injustice, the flaith was summoned before a special court for judgment. At the Dail, too, *diré* and taxes were imposed; means were devised for the maintenance of highways; and the affairs of the clann generally, including questions of peace and war, regulated. It was composed exclusively of the Aires, and like the Tocomrac was summoned by the Bruighfhear and held in his house.

The **Tocomrac** differed little from the Dail, and seems to have been held on the eve of the election of king, the enacting of a new law, or some other occasion of importance. It was somewhat of the character of the conventions now held, say, on the eve of a General Election. The Tocomrac of a



*tuath* or *morthuath* could only enact or adopt ordinances in conformity with the *nosa tuatha* or territorial customs, that of a province or of all Ireland could enact *Cana* or general laws. Sometimes laws drafted at a Sabhaid and adopted at a Tocomrac were promulgated at the Aonach.

The **Aonach** was an ancient institution. Aonach Carman is said to have been instituted 580 years before the birth of Christ. "It continued to be held to the time of Cathaoir Mor, who bequeathed it to the Laoighse and the Fotharta"; and was, indeed, celebrated by Donnchadh MacGiolla Padraig on assuming the sovereignty of Leinster in 1032. To mourn for kings and queens and to denounce aggression were among its objects; it lasted from the Kalends to the sixth of August. It also embraced races; athletic, military and musical contests; literature, law and the verification of the national records. Kings, princes and people assembled there, and fair women, the fame of whose beauty and accomplishments reached many lands. Provision on the most lavish scale was made for the entertainment of all classes. The story of the sources of amusement, instruction and edification, fitted into a crowded week, has a glamour surpassed by nothing of the kind in history. It had religious celebrations too, and the law of the assembly was transgressed on pain of death. Among its markets was that of "the foreign Greeks where gold and noble raiment were wont to be." Similarly, in the time of Donnchadh, son of Flann Siona, thousands of trading Lochlannaigh are known to have attended the Aonach of Ros Cre. Other important Aonaigh, like Aonach Urmhumhan and Aonach Macha, were held elsewhere, and their sites are still commemorated not only in Ireland but in Scotland where on the festival of Colm Cille no less than ten fairs were held annually to commemorate him in different parts of Nairn, Inverness, Aberdeen, Forfar, Stirling and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> St. Fechin was similarly commemorated at Grange near Arbroath. Of all these gatherings the most historic is Aonach Tailtean, blessed by Patrick, say the Annals of Ulster, often interrupted, and held for the last time, according to the Four Masters, in 1168. Founded primarily as an athletic carnival, it came to embrace weapon-shows and military

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<sup>1</sup> See Adhamhnan's "Life of Columba" (Reeves).

reviews, and was utilised for the framing of military laws and regulations, the hearing of important appeals, the promulgation of general laws. It was also made to serve the purposes of a Synod. Colm Cille is said to have been excommunicated at a Synod held at Tailtean after the Battle of Cuildreimhne, but the decree was soon annulled. In 1008, by the counsel of the men of Ireland, Ferdomhnach abbot of Kells was elected successor of Colm Cille at Aonach Tailtean. About that period it was customary for the laity to interest themselves in the election of successors to Patrick and Colm Cille. A few examples must suffice. In 988 Dubhdalethe, comharb of Patrick, "assumed the successorship of Colm Cille with the approval of the men of Ireland and of Alba." In 1020 the Annals of Ulster record "Amhalghaidh in the successorship" of Patrick "by the will of the laity and clergy." In 1105, Ceallach, on the death of Domhnall at Duleek, "was instituted as comharb of Patrick by the choice of the men of Ireland." Two years later, when on a visitation of Munster according to the Annals of Ulster, "he received the orders of an archbishop by direction of the men of Ireland." In 1121, eight years before his death, he took the episcopacy of Dublin—on the death of its bishop—by the choice of the foreigners and the Gaedhil. For an interval at this juncture the succession to some of the highest ecclesiastical dignities in the land came to be regarded as hereditary, the reflex largely of a very low state of ecclesiastical discipline on the Continent.

The relations between Church and people were minutely set out in the Brehon Laws. "The social connection which exists between the Church and its tenants of ecclesiastical land," says the *Seanchus Mor*,<sup>1</sup> is preaching and offering, while requiem for souls is due from the Church to the tenants of ecclesiastical lands, and the receiving of every son for instruction,<sup>2</sup> and of every tenant, .i. *manach*, to right

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<sup>1</sup> 345-7, ii.

<sup>2</sup> "The removal of a son from a church incurs forfeiture to the church. . . . full honour price is due to the church from which he is taken. . . . If the son, to be educated for the ministry, has been offered to his own church for instruction and for being in the service of God therein—and she does not receive him, and he then is educated in another church, he is forfeited by his own church to the church



repentance. Tithes and first fruits and alms are due of them to her, full honour price when they are in strong health and one-third honour price at the time of death. 'And every first calf and every first lamb, and every first-born of children and every tenth child from that out.' The Church, too, has the power of pronouncing judgment and proof and witness upon its tenants of ecclesiastical lands, both saor-stock and daor-stock tenants, and upon every other layman, even though he be a saor-stock tenant of ecclesiastical lands, unless there is another church of equal dignity claiming him."

It was the duty of the chiefs to levy from the laity for the Church.<sup>1</sup> "Every king together with his people has a duty towards the Church and its members in their several orders; every order should be submissive to its superiors."<sup>2</sup>

Further: "There are many things that come into the law of nature which do not come into the written law. Dubh-thach showed these to Patrick. What did not disagree with the word of God in the written law and with the consciences of the believers was retained in the Brehon code by the Church and the poets. All the law of nature was just except the faith and its obligations and the harmony of the Church and the people and the right of either party from the other and in the other; for the people have a right in the Church, and the Church in the people. . . that is, baptism and communion and requiem of soul, and offering are due from every church to every person after his proper belief, with the recital of the word of God to all who listen to it and keep it."<sup>3</sup>

According to the *Cain Aigillne*, he who was wisest, noblest, wealthiest, most intelligent, most popular, and most powerful of the whole tribe, most determined to exact his own rights

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that has educated him until his original church pay the price of his education; and if she does not, he shall obtain his share of the land from the tribe; and he takes the abbacy of the church to which he comes, in the fifth place. If the father does not offer him to his own church, it is the father that shall pay the expense of his education."

<sup>1</sup> "The gift of an og-aire," to a church, is three seds or their value; of a bo-aire, five seds or their value; of an aire desa, ten seds or their value; of an aire ard, fifteen seds or their value; of an aire tuise, twenty seds or their value; of an aire forgaill, thirty seds or their value; of a king, seven cumhals or their value.—S. M. 43, iii.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 27, iii.

<sup>3</sup> S. M. 33, iii.



and have his neighbour's wrongs redressed, was best entitled to be at its head. Not so the Church. The *Corus Bescna* says if an abbacy were vacant, preference should be given to the tribe of the *naomh*, provided they had among them a suitable monk, even though he might be merely a psalm-singer. Failing such a candidate among the relatives of the *naomh*, the law was to give the abbacy to some member of the tribe that first bestowed the land.<sup>1</sup>

This was in line with the Roman practice of the time regarding ecclesiastical elections. "By a synodical decree under Gregory in 601 it was provided that on the death of an abbot, no stranger should be elected if a fitting person

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<sup>1</sup> "The tribe of the patron saint shall succeed to the church, as long as there is a person of the tribe fit to be an abbot. Even though there should be but a psalm singer of them, it is he will obtain the abbacy. If there is not one of that tribe fit to be an abbot, the abbacy is given to the tribe to whom the land belongs until a person of the tribe of the patron saint fit to be an abbot shall have been qualified. When he is, he supersedes the abbot from the tribe owning the land, if better qualified than the occupying abbot. If not, he shall succeed in his turn only. Should both tribes lack a person fit to be an abbot, the abbacy goes to one of the *fine manach*, until a fit person from the tribe of the patron saint or the tribe owning the land is qualified. The abbacy is given him, when qualified, provided he is better than the occupying abbot. If neither of the three tribes has a man fit to be an abbot, the abbacy is given, in the fourth place, to the *annoit* church, in the fifth to the *dalta*, in the sixth to the *compairche*, in the seventh to a neighbouring church, and in the event of a fitting man being found in none of these, then the abbacy may be given to a pilgrim in the eighth place.

"If a person fit to be an abbot has not arisen of the tribe of the patron saint, of the tribe to whom the land belongs, or of the *manach* class together, while the wealth is with an *annoit*, *dalta*, *compairche*, or neighbouring church, or with a pilgrim, the wealth must be given to the tribe of the patron saint for one of them fit to be an abbot goes then for nothing. The abbacy leaves them.

"Every one who assumes the abbacy, except the tribe of the patron saint and the tribe to which the land belongs and the *manach* class shall leave all his legacy there, *i.e.*, to the church.

"A pilgrim is not permitted to become head of a cill until he takes the eighth place. If guilty of trespass in the church within, a fine of thirty-three *cumhals* is due of him, for there is no fine for trespass imposed upon anyone but the pilgrim in *Urradhas* Law.

"In case of the tribe of the patron saint not giving security, the church does not return back until it finally comes to the pilgrim. For the abbacy shall pass sooner to the tribe of the patron saint without security than to the pilgrim with security; and it shall sooner

was to be found amongst the brethren.”<sup>1</sup> Four centuries and a half later, another synodical decree made at the Lateran—in 1059—provided, in reference to the election of Pope, that “if a fit person be found in the Roman Church he is to be taken; if not, one may be sought elsewhere.”<sup>2</sup> The precautions which time found necessary in the matter of Papal elections, however, were not universally observed in regard to elections to abbacies or bishoprics. Discipline suffered accordingly. Montalembert,<sup>3</sup> writing of England, quotes Bede as complaining that “numberless places bear the name of monasteries without keeping up the shadow of monastic observances.” Again: “what a monstrous spectacle is that of these pretended cells, filled with men having wives and children. . . . There are even some who have the effrontery to procure similar convents for their wives.” How monasteries came under royal control in England is partly illustrated in the strange story of Etheldreda.<sup>4</sup> A like development is observable on the Continent. There,

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pass to the other tribes upon their giving security than to the tribe of the patron saint without security; but it shall sooner pass to the tribe of the patron saint on their giving security than to the other tribes on their giving security.

“In the case of a church held by a tribe of monks, the abbacy shall always belong to the monks as long as there is one of them fit to be an abbot. Whenever there is not, the case is the same as the previous one.

“When there is commonness of claim and equality of persons in the branching tribes for the abbacy, the succession is decided by lot. If there be among them a person better fitted than the others, he is given the abbacy—God gives it to him.”—S. M. 77-9.

<sup>1</sup> Clery's History of Ireland, 387.

<sup>2</sup> Alzog's Church History, 240, ii.

<sup>3</sup> Monks of the West, 563-4, ii.

<sup>4</sup> St. Etheldreda or Audry, born in Suffolk, lived three years in “perpetual continency” with her first husband. Three years after their marriage he died, leaving Audry as dowry the dole of Ely. There she lived in retirement for five years, making poverty, humility and unending prayer her delight and glory. Then she was prevailed upon to marry Egfrid king of Northumbria, with whom she lived for twelve years “as if she had been his sister, not as his wife.” At length, on the advice of Wilfrid, from whom she took the veil, she withdrew to the monastery of Coldingham, and in the year 672 returned to the Isle of Ely where she founded a double monastery on her own estate. At her death in 679 her sister, Sexburga widow of the king of Kent succeeded her in the government of the monastery.



“ bishoprics like Clermont, Metz and, it would appear, Milan ran in families. Royal blood had a claim on wealthy benefices, and thus what the sovereign gave with one hand he took away with the other. Mediaeval theocracy too often meant a knight in armour, who was consecrated bishop that he might enjoy the resources and command the thousands of serfs attached to a saint's inheritance.”<sup>1</sup>

In Ireland, after the Danish incursions, conditions developed under which king-bishops appeared at Cashel;<sup>2</sup> hereditary successors of Patrick at Armagh; and, for a very brief period, hereditary abbots and ecclesiastical officers at many of the leading monasteries. Each tribe, says Keating, had its attendant patron saint; and a passage in the *Leabhar Breac*, quoted in the *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, provides “ that there be a chief bishop for every chief tribe in Ireland, to ordain ecclesiastics, afford spiritual direction to princes, superiors and ordained persons, hallow and bless the children after baptism, direct the labours of every church and the boys and girls to reading; for unless the boys read regularly, the whole Church will perish.”

When a man grew old he was free to bestow his land on his son in return for maintenance while he lived. If the son failed in his undertaking the father had the right to withdraw the land and bestow it on somebody who would maintain him. Persons advanced in years often bestowed their land on monasteries in return for sanctuary while they lived. Should the land not suffice for the maintenance of the donor

<sup>1</sup> The Papal Monarchy, Canon Barry.

<sup>2</sup> They included Fiedlimidh mac Criomhthain king and archbishop of Munster; Olchobhar, abbot of Imleach Iobhair, who succeeded Feidlimidh as king of Cashel; Cormac mac Cuileannain, the illustrious king-bishop of Cashel, who lost his life at the Battle of Bealach Mughna, and Flaithbheartach who, leaving his retirement at Inis Cathaigh seven years after the death of Cormac, assumed the sovereignty of Munster. Other pertinent records are these: Donnucan, brother of Brian and comharb of Colm mac Criomhthain as abbot of Tir da Ghlas, died in 1007; two years later, Marcan another brother of Brian and comharb of Tir da Ghlas, Inis Cealltra and Ceall Dalua. Anrad O Longargain comharb of Colm of Tir da Ghlas, died in 1097, while Tadhg O Longargain bishop of Ceall Dalua died about 1145, and Domhnall O Longargain archbishop of Munster died about 1158. In 1164 is recorded the death of Donnchadh O Briain bishop of Cill Dalua.



the religious community had no remedy unless the tribe so willed. Moreover, the tribe had the option of taking over the land at the old man's death, but incurred thereby the obligation of providing for some destitute member of the tribe. In the course of time, kings and nobles were wont to end their days in monasteries, as were queens, princesses, abbesses, nuns, ecclesiastics and others.

If a farmer or peasant or other lay person incurred the penalty of the law, himself, his land and stock were pledged therefor. If he fled beyond capture, or had not the means to meet the *eric*, the law required his son or nearest relative to make restitution.<sup>1</sup> But if a monk transgressed, or if anything happened through his neglect or ill-luck, it was not the monk but his tribe that had to make amends.<sup>2</sup> This sympathy with the monk will be appreciated when it is understood that in the Feineachas the bishop sometimes took higher, never lower, rank than the king.<sup>3</sup>

Whether due to the system, as here outlined, or to the example of the selfish rulers of other countries, innovations leading ultimately to abuses<sup>4</sup> in the shape of a plurality of dignities and a plurality of benefices crept into the Church in Ireland as on the Continent.

In 832 the bishop of Armagh, also referred to as abbot, died; in 902 died Ciancomrac bishop and abbot of Lughmadh. In 906 reference is made to Fergil bishop and abbot; Maolcoin abbot and bishop of Ros Cre died in 917. Malefhininne Ua hOenaigh comharb of Feichin and bishop of Tuath Laighne, *i.e.* abbot of Ballysodare and bishop of Leyney or Achonry

<sup>1</sup> S. M. 68, iii.

<sup>2</sup> S. M. 66, iii.

<sup>3</sup> The retinues of a king on circuit, of a bishop on visitation, and of a saoi were each twelve men.—Crith Gabla.

<sup>4</sup> Among the twenty-seven canons passed at the Third Lateran or Eleventh Ecumenical Council, March, 1179, were three—13, 14, 15—which provided (13) a plurality of benefices may not be held by one person, and personal residence is enjoined; (14) Investiture of ecclesiastical benefices by laymen is prohibited; (15) Persons having ecclesiastical benefices are permitted to dispose of the personal property in their possession at the time of election as they may see fit, but not of that accruing from their benefices, which on their death reverted to the Church.—Alzog, 408, ii.

At the Fourteenth Ecumenical Council (Second of Lyons), 1274, "one of the disciplinary Canons touched on the collation and plurality of benefices."—Alzog, 434, ii.

is referred to in 992 ; and in 1010 Muireadhach mac Criochain comharb of Colm Cille and lector of Armagh died. Further, Maeliosa Ua Laeghnean bishop and abbot of Imleach Iobhair and abbot of Bealach Conglais died in 1163. So much for the plurality of dignities.

In 833 Eoghan Mainistreach abbot of Ard Macha and Cluain Ioraird died ; in 881 Maelchiarain abbot of Tir da Ghlas and Cluain Eidneach ; later, Cormac vice-abbot of Clonfert and abbot of Tuam. Colman bishop of Daimhliag and Lusca died in 906 ; his predecessors Seachnasach and Maolruain are referred to as bishops of Lusca only. Reference is made to the death in 953 of Ceileachar comharb of Ciaran and Finnian, *i.e.* of Clonmacnoise and Clonard and to that of Robhartach comharb of Colm Cille and Adhamhnan, *i.e.* of Derry and Raphoe. Flaithbheartach mac Domhnaill comharb of Ciaran and Finnian "fell asleep" 1015-6. Maelbhrighde Ua Crichidhein comharb of Finnian and Comhghall, *i.e.* of Moville and Bangor died in 1025 : he had been delivered in 1006 by Brian Boirmhe from the hostageship in which he was held by the Cineal Eoghain. In 1040 we find reference to Coscrach comharb of Flannan and Brendan, *i.e.* of Killaloe and Clonfert ; in 1042 to Loingseach comharb of Ciaran and Cronan, *i.e.* of Clonmacnoise and Roscre.

But whatever the abuses, whether slight or serious, whatever the lapses or their origin, the general loyalty of the people to the law, civil and ecclesiastical, remained unshaken ; and it was the evidence of this unique Irish loyalty and sense of justice that drew from Coke as late as the corrupt days of Queen Elizabeth of England the following flattering testimony to the character of our race : "There is no nation of the Christian world that are greater lovers of justice than they are, which virtue must, of necessity, be accompanied by many others."

## CHAPTER V

### LEARNING AND THE ARTS

#### Education : Writing, Illumination, Music



ILLUSIONS to education, to schools, and to teachers are amongst the earliest features of our history. Feineas Farsaidh and his son Niul are found in charge of schools in Scythia. The Tuatha De Danan, after expulsion from Ireland, went, we are told, to Greece; thence, after much wandering, to Norway, where four cities were placed under four of their sages that they might there teach their crafts and sciences. Cairbre the poet and Bridhe the poetess are mentioned amongst the noblest of their race at home. Aimheirgin was the great poet of the sons of Mileadh. Another poet of the time was his cousin Lughaidh. Ollamh Fodla is the reputed founder of the Feis of Tara and a college for poetry and law. Thence education advanced steadily in national esteem as is seen from the fact that Eochaidh Fionn son of king Feidlimidh Reachtmhar was engaged as teacher by Laoighseach Ceannmor ancestor of the kings of Leix.

In the reign of Conchubhar mac Neasa the bards of Ireland assembled in convention. There were ten hundred poets with retinues, and they contemplated going to Scotland. Conchubhar and the Craobh Ruadh hearing of their intention had them approached by Cuchulainn, who got them seven years' maintenance and conciliated them. "Men came to the guarded Gap of Ulster," says the *Tain*, "to offer a lay or to fight with a warrior," while in the South flourished Feircheirtne the distinguished bard of Curoi mac Daire of Corca Dhuibhne, contemporary of Cuchulainn. Thrice in all did the men of Erin cast off the poets, says Keating, and the Ulstermen each time retained them. On their second banishment, Fiachna son of Baodan king of Ulster maintained



them, and their number was seven hundred under Eochaidh Rígeigeas. At the third banishment, Maolchobha king of Ulster retained them, and their number amounted to twelve hundred, under Dallan Forgaill and Seanchan.

At Tara three schools, for the study respectively of military science, law and general literature, are said to have been founded by Cormac mac Airt. We are told, too, it was Feirceas son of Coman Eigeas, who at the instigation of Cormac mac Airt slew Mac Con the while he distributed gold and silver amongst poets and professors, his back resting against a pillar stone. The great bards of the Fiana have been referred to. Oisín lamenting them is said to have sighed :

I hear no music, I find no feast,  
 I slay no beast from a bounding steed,  
 I bestow no gold, I am poor and old,  
 I am sick and cold, without wine or mead.

They were succeeded by the distinguished Kerry poet Torna Eigeas, reputed teacher of Niall Naoghiallach and of Corc, king of Munster. Hence, we need not wonder that Ethicus of Istria is recorded<sup>1</sup> as having been in Ireland a hundred years before the coming of Saint Patrick, moved amongst the people, and "delayed some time turning over their volumes." Keating, indeed, gives a long list of authors of Seanchus<sup>2</sup> antecedent to the coming of Patrick, including those who laid the national records before the national Apostle at Tara ; and Kuno Meyer, in his "Primer of Irish Metrics," enumerates over a thousand leading Irish poets, ancient and modern. The reputed poets of the sixth century included St. Brigid and St. Ita, Seachnall nephew of St. Patrick, Benen bishop of Armagh, Cailín bishop of Down,

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<sup>1</sup> S.H. 405, i. and Marg. Stokes, 304.

<sup>2</sup> Aimheirgin Gluingheal, Sean mac Aighe, Bridhe authoress from whom are called the Briathra Bridhe, Connla Caoinbhriathrach a Connacht sage, Seancha of Cuil Chlaon, his son Fachtina, Seancha mac Oilill, Morann mac Maoin, Fearghus Fiannaithe from Ciarraighe, Luachra, Feircheirtne File, Neidhe mac Adhna, Amhnas, Aithirne, Fearghus File son of Aithirne, Meara mac Fionnchuill from Siodha, Seadhamus son of Morann, Fithil, Fearadach Fionn Feachtnach most skilled author in Ireland, Fearghus File, Ros mac Trichim and Dubhthach son of Ua Lughair: the latter trio brought the Seanchus to Patrick to be approved and purified—F.F. 33-5, iii.

Fiach bishop of Sletty, Colm Cille, and Dallan Forgaill, already referred to, who wrote the *Amhra* in Columba's praise.

As a result of the historic Convention of Druimceat, attended by Colm Cille, made up of clergy and laity, and in session a year and a month, it was decreed that the high king and every provincial king and lord of territory keep a special ollamh, that each ollamh have from his lord free land, and that this land and general possessions enjoy special exemptions and sanctuary. Moreover, a common estate was set apart for the ollamhs. Here they gave instruction after the manner of a university, as at Raith Cheannait and Masruidhe Mhaighe Sleacht in Breithfne, where free instruction was given such of the men of Ireland as desired to become learned in seanchus and the other sciences then in vogue. The ard-ollamh of the time, Eochaidh Eigeas otherwise known as Dallan Forgaill, sent out ollamhs and set them over the provinces: Aodh Eigeas to Breagh and Meath; Urmhaol over the two provinces of Munster; Seanchan over Connacht; Fear Fírb over Ulster. Under these was an ollamh in every cantred, with free land from their territorial chiefs, sanctuary, and certain rewards for their poems and compositions.<sup>1</sup> To Seanchan Torpeist, who succeeded Dallan Forgaill and uttered a lament over his dead body, is ascribed "the recovery of the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*," regarded as "the oldest and most fascinating saga-tale not of the Celtic world alone but of all western Europe." Contemporary with Seanchan were Guaire of Connacht and his half-brother Marbhan, a famous nature-poet.

Home education was regulated by the station in life of those concerned. The sons of the peasantry learned to herd kids, lambs, calves, young pigs, to comb wool, kiln-dry corn, prepare malt, cut and split wood; the sons of chiefs learned horsemanship, archery, the use of sword and spear, swimming, chess-playing. The daughters of the humbler classes were taught to use a sieve, grind corn with a quern, knead dough, and use the needle; the daughters of the chiefs, in fosterage, were taught cutting, sewing and embroidery. Neglect of any of these entailed a fine of two-thirds of the fosterage fee. Technical education, for the

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. 95, iii.



mechanical crafts, was directed by the Feis of Eamhain and the Feis of Cruachain. Toomregan in Cavan where Ceann-fhaolaidh came, after being wounded at the battle of Magh Rath in 642, was the residence of teachers of literature, law and poetry; and Keating, writing of the reign of Conchubhar king of Ireland, who died in 831, said that "up to this time there were four chief schools in Ireland, to wit, a school at Ard Macha in which were seven thousand students, according to an old scroll found in Oxford, a school at Cashel, a school at Dun da Leathghlais and a school at Lios Mor, together with numerous colleges. But they were now broken up." The Norse raids had been in progress for a generation.

An important feature of general education was the knowledge it enjoined of historical and romantic tales and poems calculated to inspire truthfulness, manliness, dignity, nobility, virtue. Tales were recited almost by every one. History, tradition, biography, topography, sometimes in the form of verse, were also taught universally, as was native poetry, which, in time, was brought to a truly wonderful degree of development. Intermediate and higher studies embraced philosophy, astronomy, synchronisms, glosses, prosody, orations, the four arts of bardic poetry. The Brehon Laws set forth the studies for the several degrees and even made provision for the protection, remuneration and reward of the teachers, who, moreover, were not answerable for the misdeeds of their students.<sup>1</sup>

In all, seven degrees of wisdom are referred to, the monastic schools and the lay or bardic schools each having distinct courses.<sup>2</sup> The length of the whole course for the seven lay

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<sup>1</sup> The literary foster-father instructs his foster-pupil without reserve, prepares him for his degree, chastises him without severity, feeds and clothes him while learning his legitimate profession unless he obtains it from another person. From the School of Feineas Farsaidh onwards this custom prevailed. The foster-pupil assists the tutor in poverty and supports him in old age; the honour-price of the degree for which he prepares him, all the gains of his art while learning it, and the first gains of his art after leaving his tutor are given the tutor. The literary foster-father has the privileges in relation to the foster-pupil that the father has over a son or the Church over a tenant of ecclesiastical land.—*Seanchus Mor*, 349, ii.

<sup>2</sup> A very full table of degrees and subjects of study is given by Joyce, S.H. 430-6, i.



degrees was twelve years, the candidate who acquitted himself satisfactorily becoming an ollamh at the end of that period and qualified, when in the palace, to sit in the banqueting-house with the king. The ecclesiastical course embraced, in addition to a wide range of ecclesiastical studies, such further subjects as literature, grammar, orthography, criticism, arithmetic, astronomy, history, Latin and other languages. The Seanchus Mor<sup>1</sup> refers to Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Irish as the four principal languages, and it is noteworthy that Maoldubh, Irish founder of Malmesbury, and Adhamhnan, Irish abbot of Iona, were familiar with all four. Greek was known and its literature studied at Durrow in the seventh century ; the Psalter of Caimin was written in Hebrew in the eighth. The abbot of Kildare pardonably boasted of his knowledge of Greek in the ninth ; and about that time Charles the Bald sent for the Irish sage Eoin Scotus to translate him the Greek works of Dionysius when he had failed to find in Europe another equally accomplished for the task. Contemporary Irish linguists were Sedulius Scotus who taught in Liege, being proficient in Latin, Greek, history and mythology, and Dicuil the Geographer, reputed a keen critic of Latin poetry. In 868, after close on a century of Danish devastation, "Dubhthach son of Maoltuile most learned of the Latinists of all Europe rested in Christ," seven years after the death of "Maoladhar Ua Tindidh, most learned physician of the Gaedhil." Cormac mac Cuileannain, wisest of the men of Ireland in his day, was "learned in Irish and in Latin" ; and one of his followers at Bealach Mughna, named Aodh, was "learned in wisdom, law, history and Latin." Like references to distinguished Latinists are met with through the tenth century : in 914, Maelmheadhog abbot of Gleann Uisean, "distinguished scribe, anchorite and adept in Latin learning and the Scotie tongue" was one of the leaders in the battle against the foreigners at Ceann Fuaidh, *i.e.* Confey, near Leixlip ; and in 941, "Aodh, son of Scannlan, lord of Irluachair, a wise man, learned in Latin and in Irish, died."

At this juncture, as previously, the references to distinguished poets are well maintained, and continue through

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<sup>1</sup> 89, iii.

the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In 930, 931 and 932 respectively the Four Masters record the passing away of Aonghus "chief poet of Ireland," Bard Boinne "chief bard of Ireland" and Uallach "chief poetess of Ireland." Cormacan "chief poet, playmate of king Niall Glundubh and author of *Morthmicheall Eireann Uile*," died in 946; and in 971, "Dunchadh, sage, bishop and chief poet or ollamh of Osraighe." In 983 is recorded the death of Aireard mac Coise "chief poet of Ireland," and in 984 of Eochaidh Ua Floinn "chief ollamh in poetry in his time."

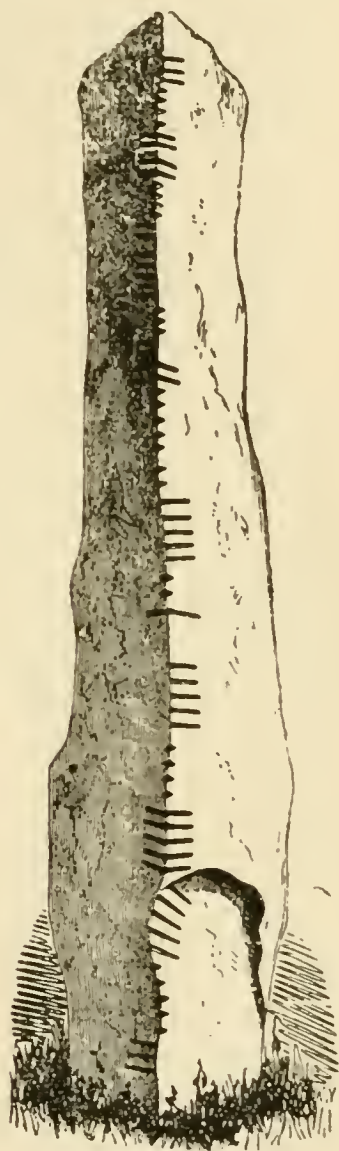
Early in the eleventh century, in 1015, is recorded the death of Mac Liag, the distinguished arch-ollamh of Brian Boirmhe, and reputed author of "Wars of the Gael and Gall." Amongst the other renowned authors and minstrels of the time were Cuan Ua Lochain, to whom is ascribed, at least in part, the "Book of Rights," *i.e.* *Leabhar na gCeart*, and Mac Giolla Caoimh who thus early visited Greece and Palestine. An equally distinguished writer of the time was Giolla Comhghaill Ua Sleibhin, trusted envoy of Maelsheachlain and "chief poet of the North of Ireland," who died in 1031. Just a decade later is recorded the death of Mac Beathaidh, "chief poet of Ard Macha and Ireland in general." In 1064 "Blind O Lonain, chief poet and chief historian of Munster died"; in 1079 Ceallach Ua Ruanadha, "chief bardic professor of Ireland rested in peace"; and in 1088 "Tighearnach Ua Braoin, chief comharb of Coman and Ciaran, a paragon of learning and history, and Maeliosa Ua Maelghiric, chief poet and chief ollamh."

Coming to the twelfth century, the Four Masters in 1118 record that O Baoigheallain chief poet of Ireland was killed by Spailleach O Flannagain; in 1130, that "Gollchluana ollamh of Westmeath in poetry died." The following year "Feardana Ua Carthaigh chief poet of Connacht fell in battle"; in 1139 "Cuchonnacht Ua Dalaigh chief ollamh in poetry died at Cluain Ioraird"; in 1143 "Giolla Aonghusa Ua Clumhain ollamh of poetry in Connacht" passed away. "Ragnall Ua Dalaigh ollamh of Desmond in poetry" died in 1161; "Domhnall Ua Sleibhin chief poet of Oirghialla," in 1168; "Aindileas Ua Clumhain, ollamh in poetry," in 1170. Most of these and countless others unnamed, like Flann Mac Lonain, "Virgil of the Scotie race," and the re-



nowned Cineadh O Hartagain, were the familiar friends and counsellors of kings: Cuan O Lochain, indeed, was chosen Regent on the death of Maelsheachlain II, thus illustrating the national standing of the poet—who was entitled to the same *eineachla* or compensation as the provincial king—as another record, “bishop and excellent scribe,” which occurs frequently in the obituary notices that crowd the Annals, indicates the national appreciation of the tireless writing and unique penmanship of the Gael.

**Oghamehraobh** was the earliest form of writing used in Ireland. According to the Annals it was practised hundreds of years before the coming of Saint Patrick, and it certainly survived him: “Some of the Irish glosses surviving on the Continent since the seventh and eighth centuries are, indeed, in Ogham.” Its alphabet was referred to as *beth luis nion* (*b.l.n.*) from its first letters; the other letters are sometimes referred to as *feadha*. It was generally written on pillar stones, the letters being cut across a perpendicular line called the *fleasc*. In the *Tain Bo*, Cuchulainn is mentioned as having cut the *ogham-craobh* on branches, which he scattered for the hosts of Meadhbh. They were ultimately brought for interpretation to Fearghus mac Roigh. Cuchulainn also met a pillar-stone beside Dun Neachtain in Leinster. On it was a notice that every hero passing by was expected to strike his fighting staff. To give Fionn certain information Lomna cut an ogham on a four square rod.<sup>1</sup> Similar examples might be multiplied. The most usual inscription on the pillar stone was the record of some hero's death: his flag was placed on his tomb,



THE MONTAGGART  
PILLAR STONE

<sup>1</sup> S.H. 401, i.



his name written in oghamchraobh and a dirge chanted over his remains. These stones were placed over heroes' graves as late as 600. Hundreds of them still survive, particularly in Kerry and Cork, occasionally in Connacht and Ulster. Many, also, must be buried away in the bogs. Some, too, are met with in Wales and not a few in Scotland. For a long time the inscriptions were thought to convey little; but their import is no longer in doubt, as they are read with comparative ease since the discovery, in the Book of Ballymote, of the key to the whole system. Their elucidation has also been simplified by bilingual inscriptions—Ogham and Latin—on pillar-stones, especially in Wales.

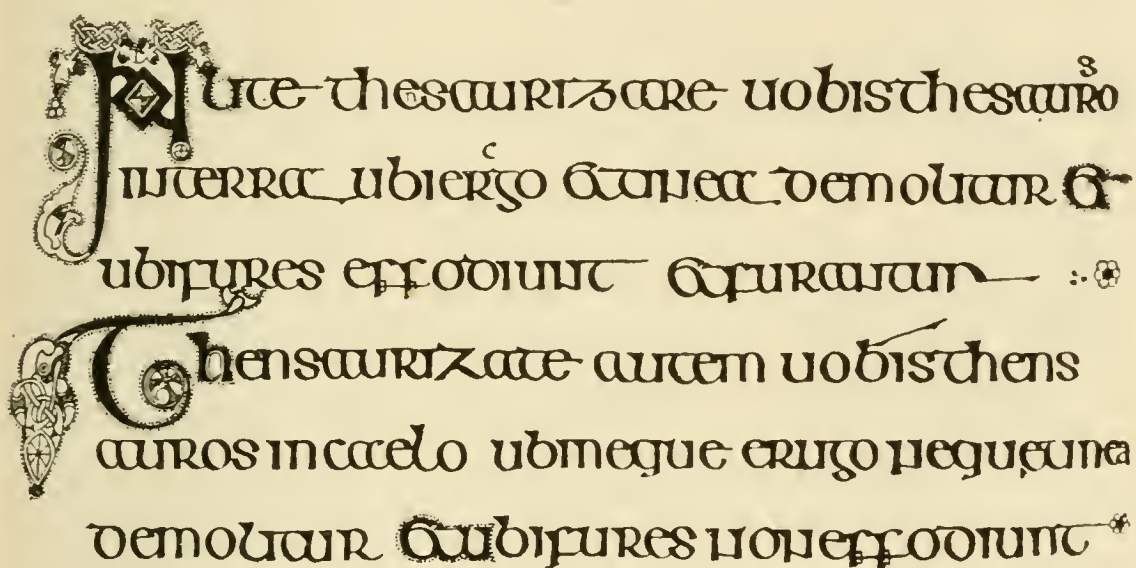
**Taimhlidhe** and **Tamhlorgain** are the oldest writing appliances on record. They were birch tablets and staves, often coated with wax, on which the inscription was impressed with a graph or style. These were in use in Pagan times and subsequently. Bards were entitled to use the *tamhlorga* for protection against dogs.<sup>1</sup> The tamhlorga was sometimes called a *slisneach*. The people of Connacht are said to have regarded slisneacha as swords when seen in the possession of Patrick and his followers as they approached, and so thought to murder them. These again were superseded by parchment, pen and ink: the parchment was made from the skins of goats, sheep, calves; the pens from the quills of geese, crows and swans. Thus came books and illumination, and for the protection of the books came satchels, covers, shrines, some of the latter very beautiful. A book-satchel is mentioned among a number of presents given by St. Patrick to Fiach bishop of Sletty; and Colm Cille, according to the *Leabhar Breac*, blessed one hundred polaires noble, one coloured. In the Tripartite Life,<sup>2</sup> the polaire is defined as a tablet. "An alphabet is written for him" is quite a frequent statement in the Life of the Apostle, particularly on occasions of ordination or consecration.

**Illumination** developed rapidly after the coming of the faith. St. Doig of Inniskeen, who flourished in the sixth century, was "a most skilful writer of books," and St. Ultan is referred to in the next century as "a most accomplished

<sup>1</sup> M. and C. 542, ii.

<sup>2</sup> p. 191.

writer and illuminator of books." Penmanship was brought to extraordinary perfection in the monasteries. Even the ink was unique, some of the illumination preserving its original freshness after the lapse of centuries. The great glory of Irish illuminated manuscripts is the "Book of Kells," a vellum copy of the Four Gospels, in Latin. When stolen out of the sacristy at Kells, in Meath, in 1006, the Annals referred to it as the great Gospel of Colm Cille, "the principal relic of the western world on account of its cover." Though



FROM THE "BOOK OF KELLS"

(Circa 6th century)

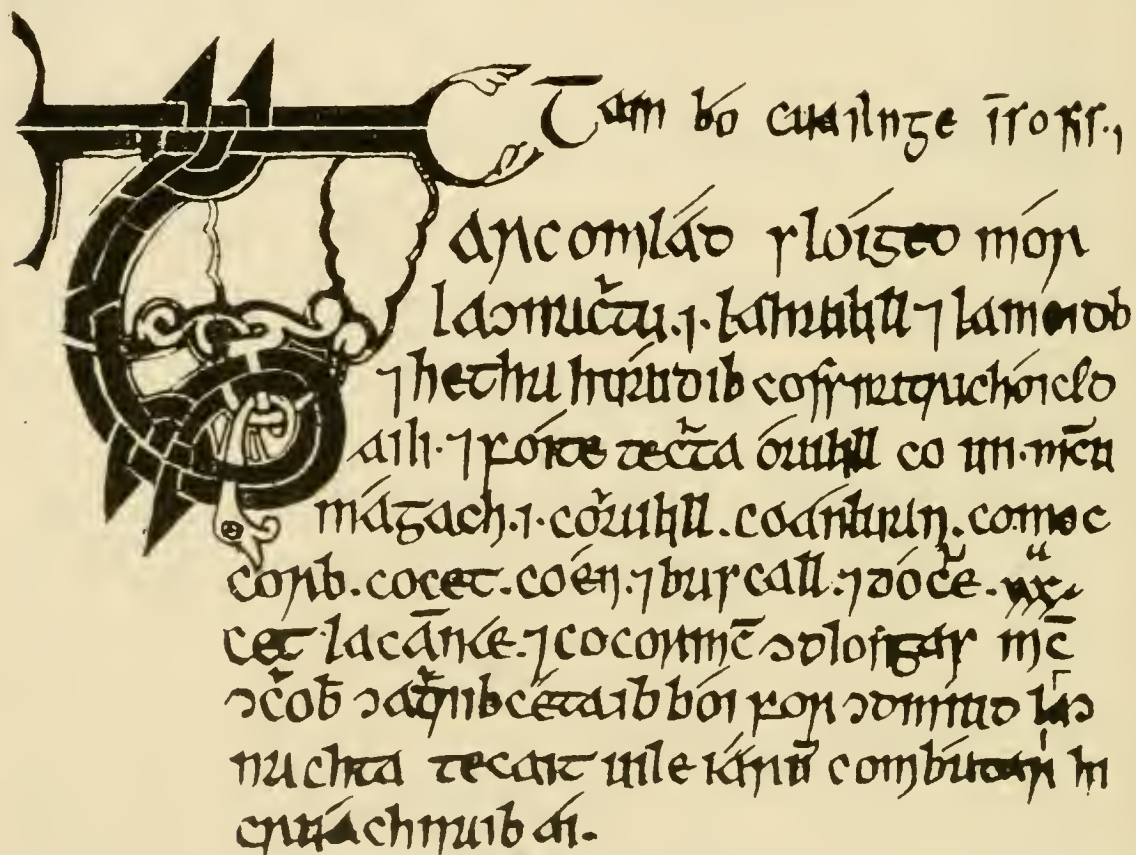
the penmanship appears to have been regarded as of no exceptional excellence by comparison with other native manuscripts of the period, Margaret Stokes extolled it thus :

"It is no exaggeration to say that, as with the microscopic works of nature, the stronger the magnifying power brought to bear upon it, the more is its perfection seen. No single false interlacement or uneven curve in the spirals, no faint trace of a trembling hand or a wandering thought can be detected. This is the very passion of labour and devotion, and thus did the Irish scribe work to glorify his book."

"It is the most astonishing book of the Four Gospels which exists in the world," declares Professor Westwood of Oxford. And, referring to the designs, he adds : "How men could have eyes and tools to work them out, I am sure I, with all the skill and knowledge in such kind of

work which I have been exercising for the last fifty years, cannot conceive. I know pretty well all the libraries in Europe, where such books as this occur, but there is no such book in any of them . . . there is nothing like it in all the books that were written for Charlemagne and his successors."

The opinion is held widely but, it would seem, erroneously, that the copy of the Four Gospels seen in St. Brigid's Convent,



FROM "LEABHAR NA h-UIDHRE"

(Circa 1100 A.D.)

Kildare, by Giraldus Cambrensis in 1185 was no other than the Book of Kells. This marvellous volume is often referred to as the Gospel-book of Kildare and, if other than the Book of Kells, has disappeared for ever. Of it Giraldus said:

"It contains the Four Gospels according to St. Jerome, and almost every page is illustrated by drawings illuminated with a variety of brilliant colours. In one page we see the countenance of the Divine Majesty supernaturally pictured, in another the mystic forms of the Evangelists, with either six, four or two wings: here is depicted the eagle,



there the calf; here the face of a man, there of a lion, with other figures in almost endless variety. . . . If you apply yourself to a close examination and are able to penetrate the secrets of the art displayed in these pictures, you will find them so delicate and exquisite, so finely drawn, and the work of interlacing so elaborate, while the colours with which they are illuminated are so blended, and still so fresh, that you will be ready to assert all this is the work of angelic not of human skill. The more often and

*Aengus a haenach nime,  
 runo ata a lecht ra lge,  
 is aruno do chuaro an ceal  
 is m'aine co naem neam.  
 is a chuam eionech no alt,  
 is chuam eionech no aonacht,  
 is chuam eionech itan cpoir,  
 no leg a palmu an tuoir.*

HANDWRITING OF EUGENE O'CURRY  
 (19th century)

closely I scrutinise them, the more I am surprised, always finding them new, and discovering fresh causes for increased admiration."

This book, Giraldus says further, was reputed to have been written in the time of the virgin, St. Brigid. Others attribute the "Book of Kells" in its original form to Colm Cille.

Excellent though the penwork of the Book of Kells unquestionably is, it is held by some to be surpassed by portions of the Book of Armagh, completed in 807 by Ferdomnach the scribe, who died in 845. Of this work Professor Westwood, who examined it with a magnifying glass says: "I have

counted in a small space, scarcely three quarters of an inch in length by half an inch in width, in the Book of Armagh no less than one hundred and fifty-eight interlacements of a slender ribbon pattern formed of white lines edged with black ones." Other beautifully ornamented and illuminated manuscripts are the Book of Durrow and the Garland of Howth preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, the Stowe Missal in the Royal Irish Academy, and the Gospels of Mac Riaghail, written by a scribe of Biorra in the beginning of the ninth century, and preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

There can be no doubt that the art of illumination was brought from Ireland to Iona whence it spread over Scotland and England. Evidence of this is furnished by the Book of Lindisfarne at the British Museum, the Book of MacDurnan at Lambeth, besides Psalters at Cambridge and the British Museum, all famous for the beauty of their illustrated pages. Subsequently the art found its way to the Continent and spread there until the leading libraries of Europe had illuminated copies of "The Voyage of Brendan" and other subjects, all close rivals of the Book of Kells, and most of them the work of Irish missionaries.<sup>1</sup> An exquisite example, now in Bavaria, has been graphically described by Wattenbach.<sup>2</sup> His paper, in German, has been translated into French in the *Revue Celtique*<sup>3</sup> and into English in the Kil-

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<sup>1</sup> They include Gospels at the Royal Library, Stockholm, at the Imperial Library, Petersburg, and at Nuremberg. Other Irish MSS. are preserved at Mayence, Vienna, Cambrai, Utrecht, Leyden, Brussels, Laon, Paris, Basle, Fulda, Dresden, Trèves, Schaffhausen, Berne, Zurich, Eichstadt, Ingoldstadt, Tegernsee, Windberg, Milan, Turin, Naples, Rome and elsewhere.

The MS. in the Library of Coimbra contained a collection of Irish Canons of *the Council held in Ireland about 684*, and one in the library of Corbie contained an Irish book of Canons also. The Pauline Epistles with interlinear glosses are found at Wurzburg, and a Latin Bible was found in 743 in the tomb of Killian, interred in 687, and, when his festival recurs, is still exposed on the altar of the cathedral church. In a representation of the Crucifixion in this MS., cherubim are seen ministering to the penitential thief, and ill-omened birds pecking at the impenitent sinner.—Zimmer.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce's S.H. 553, i, reproduces an illustration from it.

<sup>3</sup> i. 27.

kenny Archaeological Journal.<sup>1</sup> Both Professor Westwood and Dr. Keller “express the opinion that the Irish style of penmanship was generally adopted on the Continent and continued to prevail there until the revival of art in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.”<sup>2</sup>

Over sixty remarkable scribes are mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters before the year 900, forty of them between the years 700 and 800, and mainly bishops and abbots. Olchobhar, Feidlimidh and Cormac mac Cuileannain, three king-bishops of Munster, who ended their days in 746, 847 and 908, respectively, were all famous scribes. A decade after the death of Cormac—in 918—the Four Masters record the death of the abbot of Ros Cre, “an excellent scribe,” the following year, that of the abbot of Bangor, “best scribe of all the Irish race”; the year next following, the death of “Maolphoil abbot, bishop, anchorite, and best scribe of Leath Chuinn,” and of “Abel the scribe who was martyred by the foreigners.” As in the case of the poets and the historians, the scribes but continued to multiply through the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>3</sup> The perfection of their penmanship was scarcely more to be marvelled at

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<sup>1</sup> Volume for 1870-71, p. 352 (Miss Stokes).

<sup>2</sup> Joyce's S.H. 552, i.

<sup>3</sup> A few casual records from the Four Masters in illustration:—

- 927. Ceiledabhaill, bishop, scribe, preacher, learned doctor, died;
- 936. Joseph, abbot, bishop, scribe, anchorite, wisest of the Irish, died;
- 940. Maolmochta, scribe and abbot of Cluain Ioraird, died;
- 950. Flann Ua Beacain, airchinneach of Druim Cliabh and scribe of Ireland, died;
- 961. Fothadh mac Brain, scribe and bishop of Inse Alban, and Anaile, scribe of Daimhliag Chianain, died;
- 984. Foghartach Ua Conghaile, distinguished scribe and abbot of Daimhinis, died;
- 994. Odhran Ua hEolais, scribe of Cluain mic Nois, died;
- 1006. Ainneadhach, bishop and scribe of Ard Macha, died;
- 1016. Diarmuid Ua Maeltealcha, accomplished sage, scribe and bishop, died;
- 1042. Eochagan, airchinneach of Slane, lector of Sord, and distinguished scribe, met his death;
- 1098. Maeliosa Ua Stuir, scribe and philosopher of Munster and of Ireland in general, died;
- 1106. Maolmhuire, son of Mac Cuinn na mBocht and transcriber of *Leabhar na hUidhre*, killed at Cluain mic Nois by plunderers;
- 1162. Cairbre Mac Samuel, chief ollamh of Ireland in penmanship, died at Ard Macha.



than the rapidity of its execution and the corresponding multiplication of manuscripts at home and abroad.

Though the Irish people were reputed exceptionally hospitable in their entertainment of foreign students, there is record of a learned saint of the Deise, named Coisfhionn, who, on being visited by Colm Cille, refused to let him see his books, which were many and rare. From that time forward, at the prayer of "the Dove of the Cell," not a word of the books could be read by anyone, and they rapidly came to decay. Bede, on the other hand, says such virtue lay in the books of the Irish missionaries in general that "the mere scrapings of their leaves which were brought out of Ireland, if put into water and swallowed, were an antidote to the poison of serpents."

### Music

Our early records abound in references to music. The world was hard on Adam and Eve, we are told in *Saltair na Rann*, through being for a whole year, after their expulsion from Paradise, "without proper food, fire, habitation, music or raiment." According to some of the Irish Visions, like that of Adhamhnan, one of the chief functions of the ministering angels is to chant music of ineffable sweetness for the God of glory. At Eamhain Macha, under Conchubhar mac Neasa, music, singing and games were common: heroes performed their feats, harpers and players on the timpan struck up their sweet sounds. Minstrels and harpers, so says the *Tain*, lulled Conchubhar and his followers to sleep after they had feasted at the end of the day's work. At Cruachain, musicians played while the Ulster guests were being prepared for. Moiriath, daughter of Scoiriath king of Corca Dhuibhne, sent Craiftine the musician to France to induce Labraidh Loingsigh to return home. Cormac mac Airt, we are told by Keating, had among his attendants an *ollamh re ceol* with a band of music to "soften his pillow and solace him in times of relaxation." Examples of the kind could be multiplied. Seachnall, diadem of our princes, says the Book of Leinster,<sup>1</sup> chanted music, noble solace. The death of Ailill Cruitire, son of Aedh Slaine is recorded

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<sup>1</sup> p. 361.

in the Annals of Ulster in the year 634. The same Annals record the death in 1110 of Ferdomhnach the Blind, lector of Kildare and master of harping. And the Four Masters have record in 1168 of the death of "Amhlaoibh Mac Innaigh-neorach, chief ollamh of Ireland in harp-playing."

Music was patronised by the Church in Ireland from the very beginning, though it is recorded of Maolruain of Tamhlacht that he refrained from listening to music.<sup>1</sup> We learn from the Lives of the Saints, however, that Irish missionaries usually carried a harp about with them. Thus Irish professors of music became known and famed all over Europe. St. Gertrude of Nivelles invited Foilleán and Ultar, brothers of Fursa, to instruct her nuns in psalmody. Dungal, founder of the famous school of Pavia, bequeathed at his death three fine antiphonaries to the library of the monastery there. Maongal was appointed head of the music school of St. Gall. Tuathal, his versatile pupil and successor, was a still more celebrated musician. Eventually "the copying of music became such a feature of the work done at St. Gall's that the scribes of the monastery provided all Germany with manuscript books of the Gregorian Chant, all beautifully illuminated."<sup>2</sup> Among the pupils of the school was Notker Balbulus one of the most celebrated musicians of the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup> Britain was similarly indebted to Irish musicians: Aldhelm who succeeded Maoldubh at Malmesbury was trained in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and music by his Irish masters. And Warton says in his "History of English Poetry": "There is sufficient evidence to prove that the Welsh bards were early connected with the Irish. Even so late as the eleventh century the practice continued among the Welsh bards of receiving instruction in the Bardic profession from Ireland." Griffith ap Conan, king of Wales, "whose mother was an Irish woman, and who was himself born in Ireland, brought over to Wales—about the year 1078—a number of skilled Irish musicians who, in conference with the native bards, reformed the instrumental music of the Welsh."

Many musical instruments were in use besides the harp, which was known as the cruit and the clairseach. The pro-

<sup>1</sup> "These ears," said Maolruain, "are not lent to earthly music that they may be lent to the music of heaven."

<sup>2</sup> History of Irish Music, Grattan Flood. <sup>3</sup> Joyce's S.H. 573, i.

fessional harper, specially honoured in early times, was the only musician entitled to honour-price. Several harpers are sculptured on the high crosses, the most notable of them, perhaps being on the high cross of Castledermot.<sup>1</sup>

The timpan, already mentioned as in use by the Red Branch Knights, is referred to also in *Saltair na Rann* and *Cormac's Glossary*. It had from three to eight strings and was played with a bow or the finger-nail. It was drum-shaped with a short neck and bridge somewhat on the principle of the guitar or banjo. Both timpan and harp were usually kept in otter skins when not in use.

The bagpipes, too, go back to the earliest times. They were of two kinds, one slung from the shoulder and inflated by the mouth, the other resting on the lap and inflated by a bellows. The *Bruidean Da Derga* has reference to the nine *cuisleanaigh* or pipers of *Conaire*, thus pointing to the existence of pipers' bands like the band of musicians seen in *Cormac mac Airt's* household. One of the high crosses at *Monasterboice* shows three pipers playing, while one of the crosses at *Clonmacnoise* shows one piper playing three-tubed pipes. Pipes, like harp and timpan, were regarded as very melodious.<sup>2</sup>

The *buinne* was another form of pipe, the performer being known as a *buinnire*. At the banquetting hall of *Tara* the *buinnire* and the *cornaire* or horn-blower sat at the same table. Other instruments were the *feadan* or whistle and the *cuisseach*. The *cuisseach* differed little from the *buinne*. The player on the *feadan* was called a *feadanach*. The *fidil* is also mentioned in "the Fair of Carman."

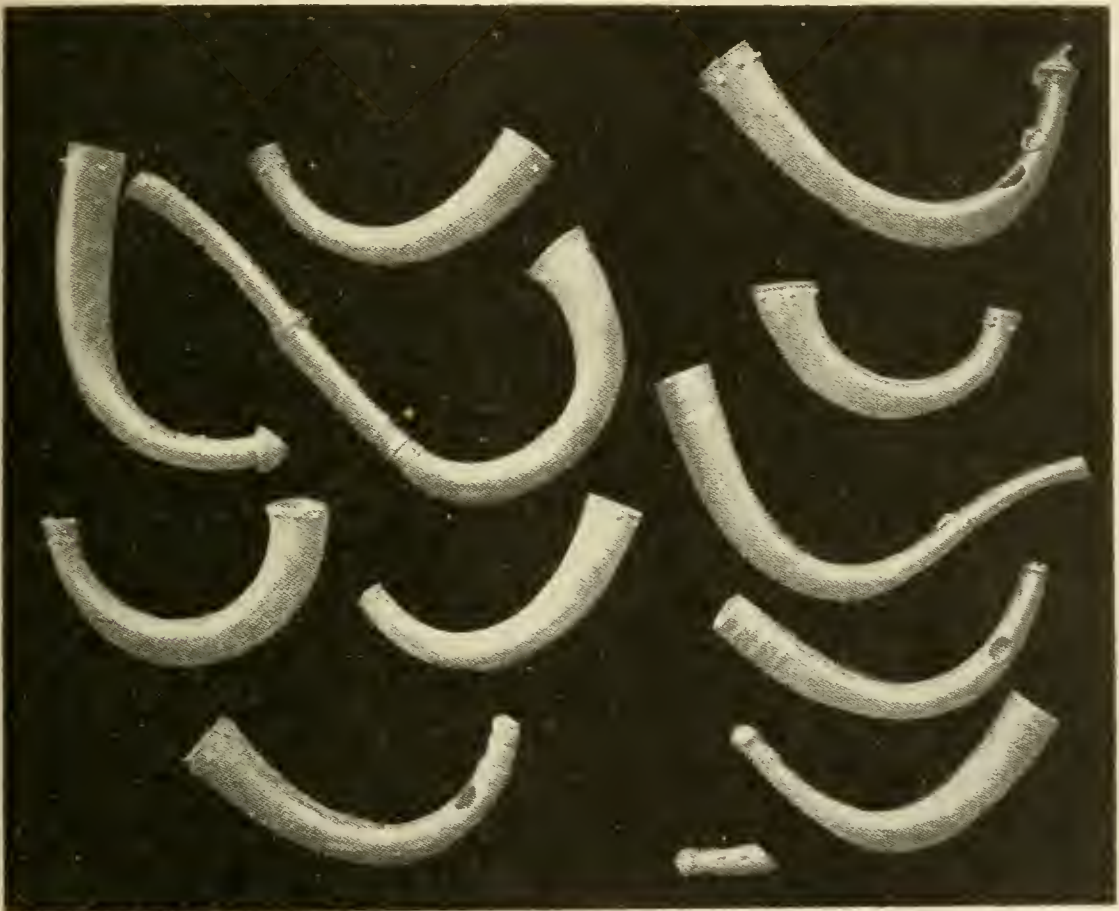
Of trumpets there were at least six kinds, *i.e.* the corn, the *adharc*, the *buabhall*, the *galltrompa*, the *barrbhuadh* and the *dudog*. The trumpet was used mainly for military purposes. It was commonly called a *stoc*, and the performer on it a *stocaire*. Every king and chief had a band of trumpeters. There must have been an endless variety of trumpets in ancient Ireland judging by the types that survive. No fewer than fifty have been found in different parts of the country within the past two hundred years, and about thirty are preserved in the National Museum.

<sup>1</sup> S.H. 576, i.

<sup>2</sup> S.H. 582, i.



Harmony was common among our ancestors. For concerted singing or playing there are at least seven different words, namely coimhsheinm, coimcheadal, aidhbhse, ceapog, clais, claischeadal and fochanadh. Coimhsheinm was applied to instrumental music, coimhcheadal to vocal. Aidhbhse was a hymn of praise sung in unison ; ceapog, a lamen-



BRONZE TRUMPETS

tation. Clais was equivalent to a choir ; claischeadal, to choral singing, and fochanadh to choral singing, or harmony.

Irish musicians had three peculiar styles : geantraighe, goltraighe and suantraighe. Geantraighe incited to merriment, dancing and laughter. Goltraighe, consisting of mournful music and lamentation, caused crying and weeping and shedding of tears. Suantraighe was so soothing it induced sleep. That children were thus sent to sleep is clear from the lines in 'The Youthful Exploits of Fionn' addressed by Muireann to her six year old son Fionn : Sleep with soothing slumber.

Adults, too, were so inveigled to slumber. Cuchulainn, as told in the *Tain*,<sup>1</sup> was lulled to sleep at the Ford by Lugh's singing of "the men's low strain," and it was then the same singer recited "the spell-chant of Lugh." In "the Battle of Ros na Riogh" we are told also that the guests in glittering Dun Dealgan were "put into their bedrooms and lay on their couches; and tunes and songs and eulogies were sung to them."

Every form of occupation, too, had its own peculiar music and tunes, singing, humming, chanting, whistling. This applied, as it still applies, to the milkmaid, nurse, spinner, weaver, blacksmith, sailor, soldier, ploughman, labourer, practically everybody.

A hundred years after the experiment of the king of Wales in bringing over skilled Irish musicians to reform the native music of Wales, flourished the famous timpanist Ua Coinnecén arch-ollamh of the North of Ireland. And, as already noted, the *Annals of the Four Masters* record the death in 1168 of the chief ollamh of Ireland in harp-playing, thus indicating that neither timpan nor harp had lost its popularity in Ireland at the coming of the Normans. There is striking evidence from another source of the pre-eminence of Irish musicians at that period.

The Irish harpers, said Giraldus Cambrensis, who heard them in 1185, "are incomparably more skilful than those of any other nation I have ever seen. For their manner of playing on these instruments, unlike that of the Britons to which I am accustomed, is not slow and harsh, but lively and rapid, while the melody is both sweet and sprightly. It is astonishing that in so complex and rapid a movement of the fingers the musical proportions can be preserved; and that, throughout the difficult modulations on their various instruments, the harmony is completed with such a sweet rapidity. They enter into a movement and conclude it in so delicate a manner, and tinkle the little strings so sportively under the deeper tones of the bass strings—they delight so delicately and soothe with such gentleness that the perfection of their art appears in the concealment of art."

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<sup>1</sup> *Tain Bo (Dunn)*, 182.

## Art—Native Craftsmanship in Metal, Wood, Stone, Glass, Leather

The very earliest of our records make frequent mention of the country's arts and crafts. The crude beginnings of our decorative art appear to have come through Crete, by the Amber Route to Scandinavia and thence gradually to Ireland. Goibhnean the smith, Creidhne the artist, and Luchtain the mechanic came with the Tuatha De Danan. Nuadh, their king, lost his hand fighting at Magh Tuireadh, and after seven years got the *silver* hand from which he derived his name. Eanna Airgtheach, sixth in descent from Mileadh, is reputed to have been the first to make silver shields in Ireland. Shields of bronze, alder-wood, and leather respectively are preserved among the national collection in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy.

**Bronze** has a particularly important place in the history of Irish art, "the Bronze Age" extending approximately from 2000 to 350 B.C. It is divided into five periods.<sup>1</sup>

In the first period, of two hundred years, we meet small **copper** knife-daggers and the earliest of the halberds. The national collection has about fifty coppery halberds. Copper has been found in Wicklow, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Tipperary and Galway.

In the second period, covering three hundred years, we find small bronze daggers, later halberds, early jet necklaces.

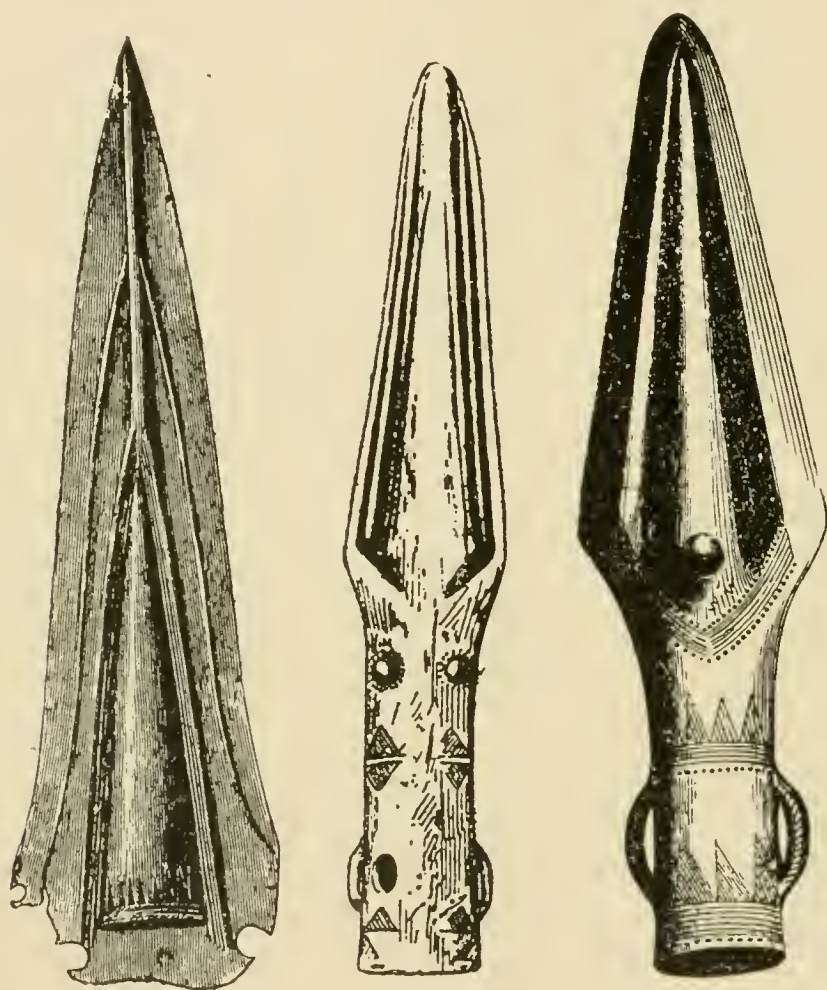
The third period, extending over two hundred and fifty years, brings us into contact with spearheads and dagger blades with bronze handles. About forty bronze daggers, discovered with cremated and uncremated remains in different parts of the country, are yet preserved.

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<sup>1</sup> First period, 2000 B.C. to 1800 B.C.; second, 1800-1500; third, 1500-1250; fourth, 1250-900; fifth, 900-350 B.C. The introduction of iron-working is dated as about 1,000 B.C. on the Levant coast; at 800 B.C. in the middle of Europe. What is called the Hallstadt period—named after Hallstadt, near Salzburg—extended about from 800 B.C. to 500 B.C. It was followed by the La Tene period, or rather periods, approximately 500 B.C. to 300 B.C., 300 B.C. to 100 B.C., and 100 B.C. to 100 A.D. La Tene is on the shore of Lake Neuchatel in Switzerland. No serious student of the subject of Irish Art will neglect reading "The Bronze Age" and the other excellent works written by Mr. George Coffey.]



These are followed in the fourth period, of three hundred and fifty years, by long rapiers, leaf-shaped swords, looped and leaf-shaped spearheads, gold torcs, sickles without sockets, disc-headed pins and bronze razors. The largest rapier ever found in Western Europe was discovered at Lissane, Derry, in 1867: it measures over thirty inches. A



SPEAR HEADS

disc-headed pin, a woollen garment and a razor were included in a find at Armoy, Antrim.

In the course of the fifth period, iron weapons came into general use, later bronze swords, ornamented bronze spears, bronze trumpets, socketed sickles, gold fibulae and gold gorgets. These seem to have been followed by bronze cauldrons and round shields.

**Gold**—Tighearnmas, whose refiner was Uchadan, was the first to discover a gold mine in Ireland. The gold was smelted at Fotharta, east of Lithfe, and was so plentiful in the district

that the people of Leinster got the name of “Laighnigh an Oir.” Gold was also found at Killaloe, Derry, Tyrone, Antrim.

Muineamhon was the first king to decree that collars of gold were to be worn round the necks of the nobles in Ireland. In the time of his successor, Ailldeargoid who was slain by Ollamh Fodla at the Battle of Tara, gold rings were first worn on the nobles' fingers. In the reign of Eanna Dearg, the twentieth king after Ollamh Fodla, money was first coined in Ireland, at Airgeadros.<sup>1</sup> There are over fifty gold rings of the “ring-money” variety in our National Museum, and fifteen gold sun-discs, as against four in the British Museum.

Those linulae or flat collars, regarded as the earliest of the gold ornaments of Ireland, have been found in quite astonishing number all over the country. Close on forty specimens, some of the highest excellence, are preserved in our national collection, which contains also twenty-four golden torcs of various kinds. Two magnificent torcs were found in one of the raths at Tara. Among the other treasures still surviving are gold gorgets in endless variety. A collection of thin gold gorgets, discovered at Moghaun, in the excavations for the Limerick-Ennis railway station in 1854, has been valued at £3,000. Some of them, unfortunately, have been melted down. There are, besides, five large gold gorgets or neck-collars, the ends of which are decorated with ornamented discs. In one instance, the disc is attached to the gorget by perpendicular and cross stitches. Some of these fastenings are composed of fine woollen thread, round which is twisted a thin flat strip of gold. This suggests, even at the cost of slight repetition, a brief consideration of the extent to which the precious metals were used in the apparel, accoutrements and household decoration of the Red Branch and Fiana periods.

Cuchulainn wore a gold-thread shirt, body-vest bordered with gold, silver and white bronze, tunic fringed with a long pin of white silver, gold-enchased, green mantle silver-

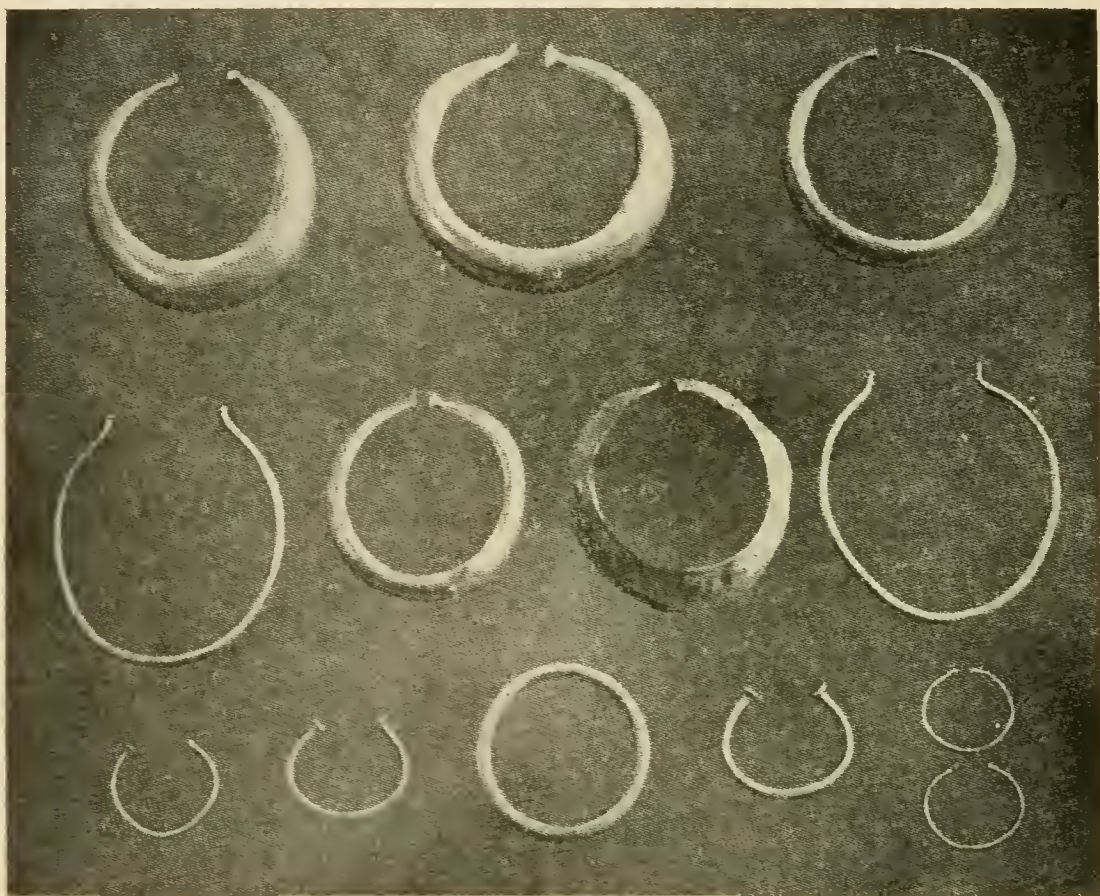
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<sup>1</sup> Siceal and screaball, equivalents probably of shekel and scruple, are the earliest coins specified in the Annals. The screaball, weighing 20 to 24 grains and value for three *pingne* is regarded as the Irish designation for the *denarius*.—S.M. 343, ii.



clasped upon his breast ; around his neck a hundred linklets of red gold with pendants. His shield had a pure white silver rim, his spear rivets of white bronze, his sword a golden hilt.

Eamhain Macha had nine compartments from fire to wall, each bronze partition thirty feet high. Conchubhar's compartment had ceiling of silver and pillars of bronze ; head-



SPECIMENS OF GOLD GORGETS FOUND AT MOGHAUN

pieces glittering with gold set with carbuncles, so that day and night were equally bright ; a plate or gong of silver which when struck enjoined silence on the men of Ireland.

Cruachan, built by the Gamhanruidhe of Iorrus Domhnann, had seven compartments from fire to wall with bronze frontings and carvings of red yew ; three stripes of bronze in the archings of the house ; twelve windows with glass. The dais of Ailill and Meadhbh had silver frontings, strips of bronze round it, and a silver wand.

Almhain, Fionn's household, had a metal-worker, candle-



maker, smith, carver, carpenter ; three hundred golden cups, thrice fifty golden vessels ; thrice fifty silver goblets ; drinking horns ; a vat for six hundred ; a candelabrum seven feet high with gold, silver, and precious stones, besides Fionn's own couch of gold with ornaments of gold and silver throughout and golden pillars.

These palaces have already been described in detail, as have the arms and apparel of Conchubhar mac Neasa, Naoise, the hosts of Meadhbh, Cormac mac Airt and various others.

**Silver**, like the other metals, enters largely into their ornamentation. The silver shields of Eanna Airgtheach have also been referred to. It may be added that the Leinster Tribute, re-imposed by Tuathal Teachtmhar, included three score hundred ounces of silver and three score hundred bronze cauldrons. Cormac Cas in one day gave five hundred ounces of silver to bards.

Kings and princes, indeed, were great patrons of art. Not only did they require jewels, brooches, pins, beautifully wrought swords and daggers for themselves and their friends, but, in Christian times, they presented chalices, bells, crucifixes, shrines and the like to monasteries and churches:<sup>1</sup> the Irish, however, had attained to a great skill in the art of design and the working of metal and various processes of enamelling before the coming of Patrick. The holy bishop Asicus is said in the Tripartite Life of our national Apostle

<sup>1</sup> Cormac mac Cuileannain, king-archbishop, before reluctantly setting out for the battle in which he lost his life, left legacies to the principal churches of Ireland. To Ard Fhionain he left an ounce of silver, an ounce of gold, his trappings and his steed ; to Lios Mor, a chalice of gold and silver and a satin chasuble ; to Cashel, a chalice of gold and silver, four ounces of gold and a hundred ounces of silver ; to Imleach Iobhair, three ounces of gold and a missal ; an ounce of gold and an ounce of silver to Gleann da Loch ; an ounce of gold, a satin cope, trappings and a steed to Cill Dara ; twenty-four ounces of silver and of gold to Ard Macha ; three ounces of silver to Inis Cathaigh ; three ounces of gold, a satin chasuble and his blessing to Mungraid.

Toirdhealbhach Mor O Conchubhair, king of the greater part of Ireland, bequeathed for his soul's sake 540 ounces of gold, 40 marks of silver, and all his valuables, including goblets, precious stones, steeds, cattle, clothes, chess, backgammon, bows, quivers, slings and arms, steeds and cattle to the clergy, with instructions as to the share to be given each church according to rank.

to have been Patrick's own coppersmith, in honour of whom he made altars, quadrangular tables and quadrangular book-covers. Three smiths expert at shaping, Mac Ceacht, Laebhan and Foirtchearn, are named as belonging to St. Patrick's family, and mention is likewise made of three artificers of great skill, Aesbrule, Tairill and Tasach. Foirtchearn is also referred to as first teacher of St. Finian of Clonard. St. Conlaech of Kildare was engaged principally in making chalices, bells and other requisites for St. Brigid. St. Doig of Inniskeen, Louth, chief artist to St. Ciaran of Saighir, was a brazier, smith and scribe, and is reputed in the Martyrology of Donegal to have made 150 croziers, 150 bells, and covers for sixty Gospel books: braziers, the Tripartite states, made the patens, the minstrals and the altar chalices.

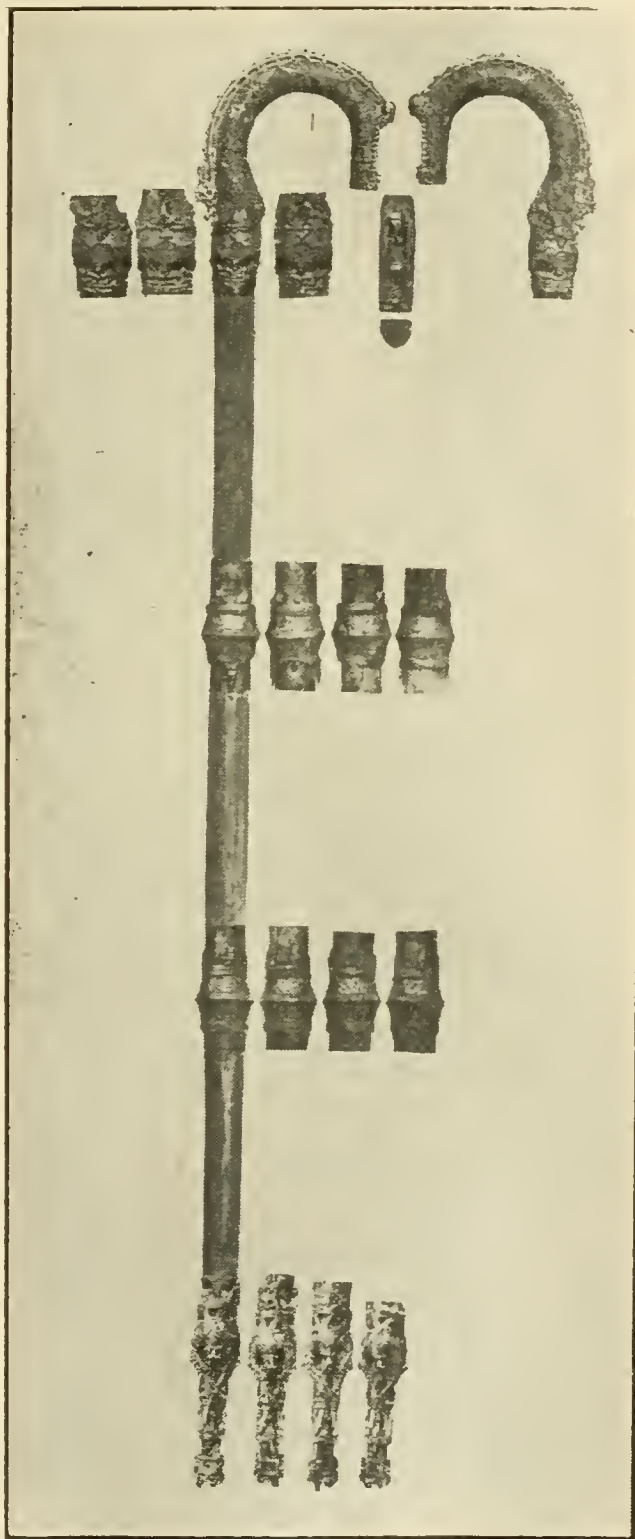
"The chief object," says Keating,<sup>1</sup> "for which the Feis of Eamhain and the Feis of Cruachain were convened was to approve those who practised mechanical crafts in Ireland, such as smithwork, woodwork, stonework or the like handicrafts. And the nobles and ollamhs who were at these two assemblies selected from each assembly three score masters of each craft. These were then distributed throughout Ireland, and no fellow-craftsman to these was permitted to practise his craft without permission from the district-master of that craft, who must examine him as to competency. These masters were called ioldanaigh, *i.e.* ilcheardaigh, on account of being skilled in many crafts." Thus we find the most adequate provision made for the efficient teaching, direction and development of metal-work, wood-work and architecture; and hence it is that, particularly in the domain of metal-work, such a wealth of sacred relics still remains, including croziers, bells, shrines and similar treasures.

**Croziers**, in great variety, survive to our own time. Their custody was hereditary in particular families and attended by privileges such as grants of land. One of the largest and most interesting still remaining to us belonged to the abbey of Durrow and is believed to be the crozier of Colm Cille. This crozier, which must have been a beautiful example of native art, was preserved in the MacGeoghegan family. It is over four feet in length, and represents, with the head of the

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. iii, 43-5.

crozier of St. Blathmac, what survives, in the national collection, of the larger croziers. Examples of the smaller croziers are those of St. Berach and St. Dymphna, two sixth century saints, and of St. Tola of the monastery of Disert O Dea, of which only the head remains. Their keepers were respectively the O Hanleys of Roscommon, the O Luans of Monaghan, and the O Quinns of Clare. They are of about the same length—two feet, four inches or so—as the crozier of St. Murus of Fahan, Donegal. The most complete example now left is the crozier of Clonmacnoise. It measures over three feet and, like the high cross of Tuam, has “a representation of a mitred figure, holding a crozier of the scroll type.” The crozier of Cormac MacCarthy of Cashel, of which the head was found in Cormac’s chapel, is an example of the scroll type. Other croziers, preserved in part, include “the missing crozier of St. Ciaran,” the crozier of the O Bradys, found in Cavan, and the crozier of St. Aodh mac Bric, now in Trinity College, Dublin. A tau-shaped or crutch-shaped crozier, composed of bronze,



THE INNISFALLEN CROZIER

(Discovered in the Laune, near Beaufort Bridge, in 1867, and now in the custody of the Bishop of Kerry).



inlaid with silver, and formerly preserved in the Kilkenny Museum, has panels like those of the Cross of Cong: tau-shaped crosses of stone exist on Tory Island and at Kilnaboy, Clare.

**Bells** seem first to have been made of iron, hammered and riveted, the joints filled afterwards, and the whole then dipped in bronze. They were quadrilateral in form, and would seem to have been sounded by being struck on the outside. Their height varied from four to fourteen inches, and some of them were six by nine inches, even more, across the mouth. These bells belong particularly to Ireland, whence they found their way to Scotland, England and the Continent. Many are scattered among museums and private collections. Among the specimens in the National Museum is the Bell of St. Patrick, six inches high, formed of two plates of sheet iron, bent to meet, fastened by iron rivets, and then dipped in bronze. It is believed to have been buried in St. Patrick's grave, and thence removed by Colm Cille to Armagh. The Annals of Ulster mention it in 552 as the Bell of the Testament. The same Annals, under the year 1044, refer to the Clogan Edechta, *i.e.* the Bell of St. Patrick's Will, the profanation of which resulted in raids for immense cattle spoils and prisoners by the kings of Aileach on Omeath, Mughdhorna and Muirtheimhne. Patrick is not infrequently referred to in the Ossianic literature as the cleric of the bells.

St. Fursa is said to have bestowed a precious bell on Cnobheresburgh, "probably the work of his own hands," and another, which was long preserved in the monastery of Lismore, on some of his Irish brethren.

The bronze bells, which appear later than the iron ones, were naturally of more graceful outline. The Bells of Clogher and of Armagh are examples. The former, near ten inches high, is supposed to have been presented by St. Patrick to the Bishop of Clogher. The Bell of Armagh, nearly twelve inches high, and about eight by eleven inches at the mouth, is, for the most part, of cast bronze. An inscription on it asks for a prayer for Cumascach, whose death is recorded at 908. The Bell of Loch Lene Castle, altogether the most beautiful example in the national collection, is over thirteen inches high, roughly eight inches by eight at the mouth, and decorated with crosses and interlacements. Two bells

of a similar kind have been found at Bangor and Cashel respectively. The O Mellans of Donaghmore, Tyrone, were the hereditary custodians of the Bell of Clogher; the O Beolains of Galway of the Black Bell of St. Patrick. The greatest bell-founder of the eighth century was a monk of St. Gall. Towards the eleventh century it became customary to have historic bells enshrined.

**The shrine** of St. Patrick's Bell is among our most historic relics. In such esteem was the bell itself held that, in the eleventh century, it was elaborately "enshrined in a manner to suit its noble origin," at the instance of the King of Ireland and the Archbishop of Armagh, whose names with those of the keeper and the artificer were inscribed on it, The *Corp Naomh*, a bell-shrine with various decorations, including an ecclesiastic holding a book, and horsemen surrounded by birds at either side, belonged formerly to the church of Temple Cross, Meath.

The Loch Erne Shrine is reputed the earliest in Ireland. It was found in 1891 by fishermen on the shore of Loch Eirne, midway between Beleek and Enniskillen. "It consists of a yew-wood box, covered by bronze plates, apparently tinned, and has the remains of a hinge, or suspension, it would seem, at each end." It is seven inches long, half as wide, and near six inches high. The corners have bronze mountings. A smaller undecorated box was found inside it. A similar shrine, found in the Shannon, is preserved in the Edinburgh Museum. Others are preserved at Monymusk House, Aberdeenshire, and in the Copenhagen Museum. A fourth was discovered in a Viking boat burial near Namos, Norway, in 1906.

The Shrine of St. Maedoc, said to preserve the relics brought from Rome by St. Molaise, is of bronze, and resembles the Loch Eirne shrine, than which, however, it is larger. A **leather case** in which the shrine was carried is one of the few surviving satchels of its kind, others being the satchel of the Book of Armagh, in Trinity College, Dublin, and that of the Irish Missal at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The Annals of Ulster under the year 552 refer to an entry in the Book of Cuana, viz.: "The relics of Patrick were placed in a shrine by Colm Cille at the end of three score years after Patrick's death. Three splendid *mionna* were found in the

tomb, to wit, his goblet and the Angel's Gospel and the bell of the Testament. Thus did the Angel distribute the treasures for Colm Cille: the goblet to Down, the Bell of the Testament to Armagh, and the Angel's Gospel to Colm Cille himself."

The Shrine of St. Lachtin's Arm, made to enshrine the hand of St. Lachtin, patron of Donaghmore church, Muskerry, is of bronze inlaid with gold and silver and set with blue stones. In it is yet preserved the ancient wooden case which formerly contained the saint's hand. It is inscribed with requests for prayers for four persons, including the king-bishop who erected Cormac's chapel, Cashel. Bede tells us King Oswald's arm, blessed by St. Aidan, remained uncorrupt after his death and was preserved in a silver shrine at Bamborough.

Early in the Danish raids Forannan fled to Munster with the shrine of St. Comhghall, but was captured by the Northmen and the shrine broken. The Annals of Ulster record in 799 the placing of the relics of Conlaech, first bishop of Kildare, in a shrine of gold and silver. The following year they note the placing of the relics of Ronan, patron of Dromiskin, Louth, in another shrine of gold and silver. After a further decade, Nuadhat, abbot of Armagh, went to Connacht with the Law of Patrick and with his shrine. Seven years still later Cuana, abbot of Louth, went in exile to Munster with the shrine of Mochta; and Airtre, airchinneach of Armagh, went to Connacht with the shrine of Patrick. In 823 we read of the plunder of Bangor by foreigners and the relics of Comhghall being stolen out of their shrine. These are but casual gleanings. Reference is made to the mausoleum of the kings, Armagh, in 934, 935, 1064 and on other dates. Gold, silver, horses, cows, and the sword of Carlos were given for the ransom of the Danish king to the king of Breagh. In 1033, the shrine of Peter and Paul in Armagh is recorded to have been publicly dropping blood. The shrine of Colm Cille was carried off by the foreigners of Dublin in 1127 and restored after a month. Two years later, countless jewels were stolen from the altar of Cluain mic Nois, but revealed the following year. The relics of Bishop Maoineann and Cuimin Fada were removed from the earth by the clergy of Brendan and placed in a shrine in 1162.



In 1166 we find Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair extolled for covering the shrine of Mohill in as good style as ever was witnessed in Ireland; and in 1170 it is recorded that the relics of Coman were put in a shrine. As might be expected, Scandinavia has still a number of shrines and kindred objects of Irish origin, spoils probably of the Norse raids and pillage.

**The Cross of Cong**, one of the treasures of our national relics, was made about 1123 for King Turlough O Connor. *The Annals of Innisfallen* record that in that year a portion of the True Cross came into Ireland and was enshrined at Roscommon. The exquisite cross in which it was enshrined "is formed of oak, encased with copper plates, the sides framed in silver, and the whole held together by nails ornamented with little heads of animals. On the front the shaft and arms are divided into a number of small panels by silver strap-work decorated at their intersections with settings alternated with flat silver discs in niello work. A crystal of quartz set in the centre of the front face of the cross probably covered the relic. The enrichment of filigree work in the panels immediately adjoining the setting of the crystal is of gold, and the spiral pattern contrasts with the interlaced designs of the other panels. . . The shaft is held in the mouth of a grotesque animal surmounting a boss which carries down the interlacements and settings of the shafts and terminates in four small grotesque heads, the whole forming a socket in which was inserted the pole for carrying the cross. The interlaced ornaments in the panels on the front of the cross are designed in pairs, the design of each pair of panels is different and in no instance repeated. . . The interlaced ornament of gilt bronze at the back is larger and more vigorous in treatment than on the front, as is often the case in the work of the period." <sup>1</sup> The Cross is thirty inches high, and the arms over eighteen inches. On it are inscribed requests for prayers for Archbishop O Duffy, King Turlough O Connor, Bishop O Duffy and its maker, Maeliosa Ua Eachain.

**Soisceal Molaise**, in the shape of a small oblong box, or *cumhdach*, was made for a copy of the Gospels believed to

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<sup>1</sup> Abridged from the description in George Coffey's *Guide to the Celtic Antiquities of the Christian Period*, preserved in the National Museum, Dublin.

have belonged to Molaise who founded the monastery in Devenish in the sixth century. It is inscribed with a prayer for the successor of Molaise and for its artificer. Smaller than the Loch Eirne shrine, it seems to have been made in the first quarter of the eleventh century. Gold, silver, copper, bronze and red enamel were used in its manufacture.

**The Domhnach Airgid**, or cumhdach of St. Patrick's Gospels, is a yew case, covered with bronze, and plated. It belonged originally to the See of Clogher. Both these cumhdachs are preserved in our national collection, as are the cumhdach of the Stowe Missal and the *cathach* or cumhdach of Colm Cille's Psalter. The cumhdach of Dimma's Book is in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin; those of the great Books of Durrow, Armagh and Kells are no longer known to exist. A silver cumhdach of Irish manufacture is mentioned among the treasures of St. Gall's. The cumhdach is peculiar to Ireland.

**The Ardagh Chalice** was found in 1868, with a bronze vessel and four brooches, near Ardagh, Limerick. This chalice, of the two-handled minstral form in use in the early Church, is composed of gold, silver and bronze, richly set with enamel, amber and glass. The number of chalices of its kind known to exist in Europe may be counted on the fingers of one hand: it is the only Celtic example that has survived. The names of the Apostles occur on the bowl, in letters an inch long, and corresponding with those in the Books of Kells, Armagh, Dimma and Moling. The chalice is thought to be contemporary with the Tara Brooch to which it is hardly inferior in execution and excellence. Authorities place it variously between the eighth and tenth centuries. The bronze vessel found with it is exceptionally well made and fits exactly into the chalice. One of the brooches is also very beautiful, though not equal to the chalice in design. Cormac mac Cuileanain bestowed a gold and silver chalice on Lismore and bequeathed a gold and silver chalice to Cashel.

**The Tara Brooch**, rightly referred to as a masterpiece of the jeweller's art, was found on the strand at Bettystown near Drogheda in 1850. "The body of the brooch is of bronze, and is decorated with panels in fine gold filigree work, enamel, and settings of amber and glass. The ornament includes spirals, interlaced work, human heads and animal



forms. On the front the ornament is confined mostly to interlaced work ; the trumpet pattern may be noticed, however, at the base of the pin-head and round the outer margin. The back of the brooch is freer in style than the front . . . . The two principal panels are formed of a hard white bronze, inlaid with fine spirals, apparently of a copper alloy. *The fineness of the work shown in this brooch is beyond*

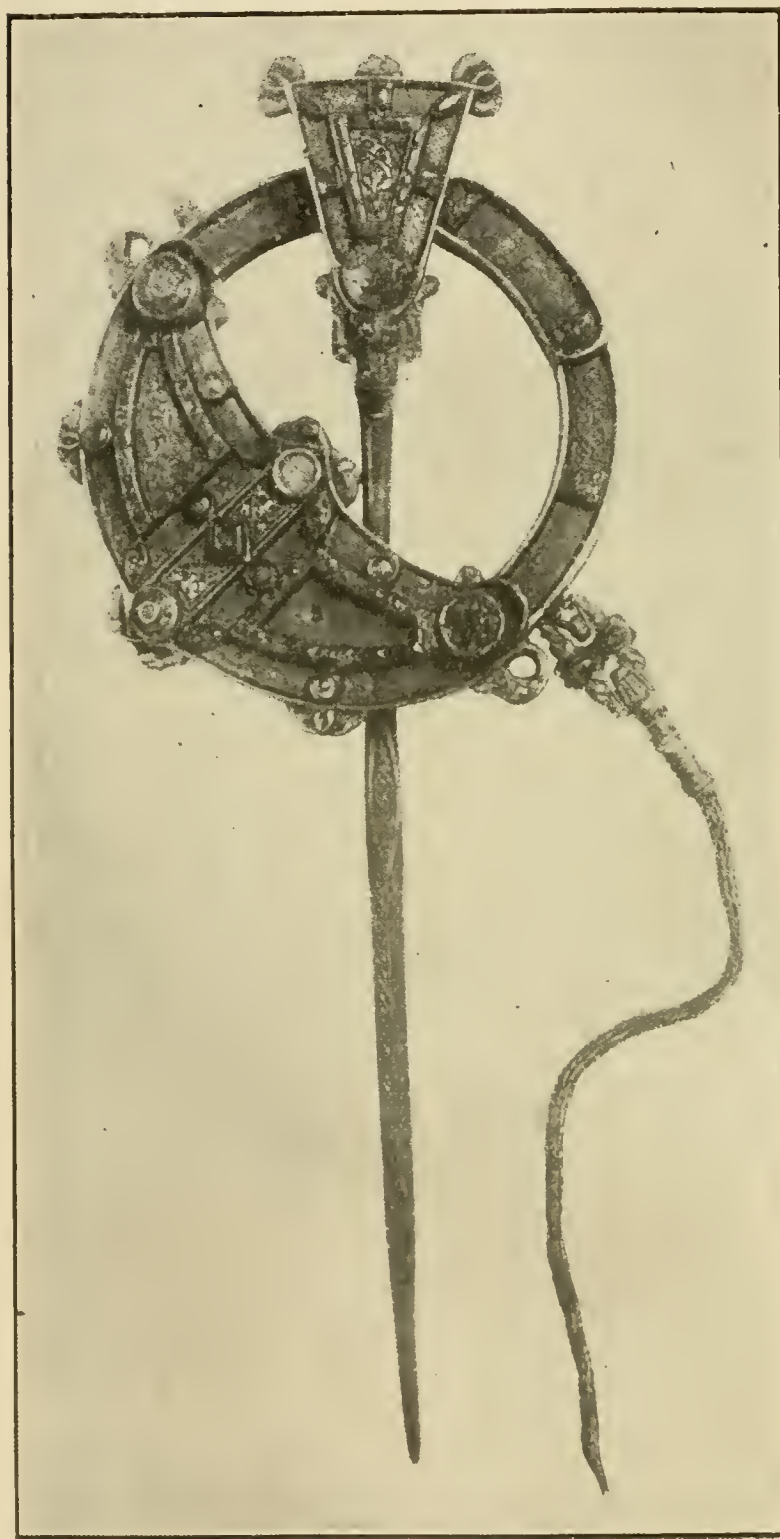


THE ARDAGH CHALICE

*belief.* . . . The inlay of scrolls on the back is equal to penmanship ; and it cannot be too much insisted upon that the patterns and work of the brooch are quite equal in their own class to the work of the best MSS. . . Thus the fine wires of the interlaced patterns carry a minute beading which can hardly be detected by the eye, but needs a strong glass to make it apparent. Even the thin gold ribbons of the central interlacements and of those on the head of the pin, which are set on edge, have a similar minute beading on the edge of the ribbon. . . . The ornament presents such a close analogy to the patterns of the *Book of Durrow*, and



especially to those of the *Book of Kells*, that it is usual to assign it to about



THE TARA BROOCH

700 A.D.”<sup>1</sup> certainly before the Viking invasions. “The Tara Brooch and the chalice of Ard Achadh,” says Prof. MacAlister, “between them illustrate all the materials, technical processes, and methods of construction used in ornamental work in Ireland during the early centuries of Christianity.”

Other beautiful brooches are the Killamery brooch, the Ballyspellan brooch with an Ogham inscription on the back, the Kilmaham brooch and the Virginia brooch with two small human heads at the junction of the ring plates.

Thus varied was the early art of Ireland. Keating

says silver was smelted at Cashel and Armagh for four hundred

<sup>1</sup> Abridged from George Coffey's excellent description in his *Guide to the R.I.A. collection*.

years after the coming of Patrick, and refers to Naomhan, chief artificer of Ireland in the reign of Brian. The Annals of Ulster record the death in 1029 of Maelbhrighde O Brolchain, chief artificer of Ireland; in 1125 the placing of a complete shingle roof and protecting ridge on Ard Macha by Ceallach, 130 years after it had a complete shingle roof on it previously; in 1155, the making of the door of the church of Doire by Flaithbheartach O Brolchain, comharb of Colm Cille.

Miscellaneous relics in our national collection include bronze plaques of the Crucifixion, a fine specimen of which was found at Athlone; an object like a cock, partly of bronze, found at Innisfallen; examples of early enamel work; buckles; book-mountings; shoes, believed to date from the ninth century, and found at Carrigallen and elsewhere. Methers are there in profusion; beads; crucibles; pails, a fine example of which was found in the river at Kinnegad near Clonard; drinking cups, querns and lamps of stone; a stone chalice discovered in a cell on the Blasquet Islands; many fragments of pottery, found notably in Tyrone and Fermanagh; and a very fine pitcher, thirteen inches high, found in Loch Faughan crannog, Lecale, Down. Objects of the greatest interest and variety have been found in the crannogs generally.

These **crannogs** are described as lake-islets of clay or marl, artificially enlarged, and surrounded by piles of timber, the floors being of branches, laid crosswise to grip each other, and strengthened sometimes by stones. Used as places of retreat or protection they were reached, sometimes, by footways slightly submerged and zigzag in shape to confuse unwelcome visitors, sometimes by canoes hollowed out of the trunks of oak trees, and generally measuring twenty feet, though one found under eight feet of bog at Addergoole, Galway, measures over fifty feet. At the crannog of Lagore, near Dunshaughlin, were found light iron swords, tree axes, knives, shears, pins, brooches, the bones of a variety of animals. In the crannogs of Strokes-town, Ballinderry (Westmeath), Tonymore (Cavan) and Glasmullagh (Fermanagh) spades, ploughshares, horse-shoes and bone pins have been found; at Craigyarwarren crannog, Antrim, light swords, billhooks, and the three finest horses'

heads in Western Europe. A horse's head has been found also, with human remains and remnants of harness, mainly of bronze, at Navan. Considerably over a hundred of them have been discovered in Ireland, they are common on the Continent, particularly on the islands of Lake Lemán, and the remains of an excellent one have been found near Glastonbury. We pass easily from the crannog to general architecture.

### Architecture

Irish architecture may be traced to a rude and very remote origin. Two raths are referred to as erected in the course of the invasion of Neimheadh, namely Rath Cinneich in Uíbh Nuallain and Rath Cimbaoith in Seimhne. At Tur Conaing in Toirinis dwelt the Fomorians. Slainghe, first king of all Ireland, died at Dionnriogh, called also Dumha Slainghe. His successor Rughruidhe fell at Brugh na Boinne, reckoned the most impressive relic of antiquity north of the Alps. Breoghan, grandfather of Mileadh, had a castle on his coat of arms; Aileach Neid<sup>1</sup> was in existence when Iotha reached Ulster from Spain. Eireamhon and Eibhear, on Ireland being divided between them, took, each of them, five heroes, and each of those had a *dun* erected for himself, the principal of them being Rath Beitheach, Rath Airde Suird, Rath Carraige Feadha, Dun Sobhairce, Dun Deilginse, Dun Eadair. Tea, wife of Eireamhoin, had a residence erected at Tara, and Irial Faith their son is credited with having erected as many as seven royal raths. Few other residences are referred to until the erection of Eamhain Macha by the sons of Diorthorba, and of Rath Cruachan by the father of Meadhbh. Incidentally we are told that "the first builders, . . . whose monuments still bear witness to their labour, were the dolmen or cromlech builders." In Leinster the roofing stones of the cromlech vary in length from eighteen to twenty-nine feet, and their weight is on an average one hundred and ten

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<sup>1</sup> Aileach was "built of red yew bent after splitting with pure unwrought mass of silver, gold and bronze. It was decked with gems of crystal. Alike were day and night in the midst of it."—Dinnseanchus 49.



tons. In Ulster their average length is twenty-five feet ; in Connacht, from eight to ten feet ; in Munster, seven feet to fourteen. Bones have been found under all dolmens examined, urns under some.

The Fir Bolg after much wandering over the islands of Scotland, were expelled by the Cruithnigh—so runs the ancient story—and came to the king of Leinster, from whom they obtained land, but at a rent they could not endure. Eventually having been driven off by the Red Branch Knights, they approached Meadhbh, and, with the erection of Dun Aonghusa in Aran, brought to a close the series of duns constructed by them in different parts of Ireland. This interesting and historic dun at Inis Mor stands on the edge of a cliff wall rising to a height of about 300 feet. The outer wall is over 2,000 feet long and eight feet in thickness, enclosing a space 1,250 feet, by 650 at its widest. Dun Conchubhair on Inis Meadhoin is an oval enclosure, measuring 221 feet by 115, and surrounded by a wall twenty feet high. Other extensive forts are at Moghaun in Clare, beside which the art treasures already referred to were found ; Dunbeag in Corca Dhuibhne ; Aileach Neid, as it now exists, similar to Cathair Gheal, the Staigue and several kindred structures in Kerry. Cathair Chonroi, Dun Aonghusa and other forts are mentioned in our literature as existing at the coming of Christ. They were, of course, built of stone, and in the cyclopean style : in the east of Ireland wood appears to have been used in place of stone.

A hundred years after the Christian era the four great fortresses of Ireland were erected or enlarged by Tuathal Teachtmhar at Tlachtgha, Tailte, Teamhair and Uisneach. Tara was extended at the hands of many successive kings. Though the Fiana favoured the outdoor life, all the great kings of our race had their architects. The names of some, indeed, are preserved amongst those of the world's great builders, notably Car, builder of Cashel ; Righriu and Garbhan, builders of Aileach ; Bolc, builder of Cruachan ; Troigleathan, of Tara ; Balor, of Breise ; and Criceal of Ailinn.

The house of the flaith was called a lios. A lios surrounded by a clay fence, in the shelter of which was a pen for cattle, was called a rath. A wall of uncemented stones surrounding the lios was a caiseal ; some of the caiseals exceeded 220

feet across. The dun was the residence of the king. A dun, on a point, headland or promontory, connected by a narrow neck with the adjoining land, was protected by a high wall drawn across the neck. A dun, with a stone wall inside, was called a cathair. Most of the cathairs, circular in shape, had platforms on the inside, connected by alternating flights of steps, and reaching almost to the top of the main wall: from these the defenders were able to fling volleys of stones or other convenient missiles. As in Greece, special compartments, over the front of the house, were set apart for the women. Other classes of buildings were the brugh, both, bothan and so on.<sup>1</sup>

Religious buildings included the daimhliag, temple, cell, reilg, eaglais, cro, clochar, monastery. With the spread of the faith, many duns were converted into churches. Kings and chieftains on their conversion offered their duns to God, and cells and oratories soon arose within them. Some confusion thus arose in the naming of them, as in the case of Rathboth, now Raphoe. So, too, it would be difficult to say now whether buildings like Cathair na Mactireach in Corca Dhuibhne were originally duns or churches. Many cells are there enclosed, and the edges of the stones sometimes protrude beyond the door wall to strengthen it. The doors, moreover, are narrower on the inside. Though the measurements of St. Patrick's *fearta* near Ard Macha were, by the Apostle's own advice, caiseal 140 feet, daimhliag 27 feet, kitchen 17 feet, oratory 7 feet, and these were the usual dimensions of the principal churches of the time, the early Irish monks, like those of the East, went into the wilderness and spent their lives in solitary contemplation of the goodness of God. Some of them lived in caves and cells; and in the east of Ireland the cells, made of wood, soon perished. Examples are afforded by Mobhi's cells at Glasnevin when visited by Colm Cille, and by Brigid's house at Kildare, which was made of wattles. Stone cells, accommodating at the outset a single person, were the order in the south and west, where, unlike the east, they still survive, and contrast very unfavourably with the Pagan architecture which pre-

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<sup>1</sup> The reader is referred for further details to the Chapter on the Social System, pp. 78, 79, 80, 81, 86, 91, 92.

ceded them. But disparities like these are true of all periods and of all countries, true of ancient Athens as of the modern capital of Greece.

Many of the *flatha*, as indicated, placed their duns at the disposal of Patrick and his disciples. "The house of Conall brother of the king of Meath, was given up to St. Patrick on the occasion of its master's conversion, and the church of Downpatrick at Tailtean was built upon that site. The fortress of Dun Lughaidh was also given up to St. Patrick when the lord of the country and his four brothers and father were baptised, and the church of Kilbennan was founded within its walls. The cathair or stone fortress of Aodh Fionn, son of Fearghus chieftain of Breithfne, was given up to Caillen that he might erect the monastic buildings within it; and the interior of the fortress of Muirbheach Mil, the Firbolg chief, in the island of Aran, is now occupied by the remains of the primitive cells of the first Christian converts."<sup>1</sup> These royal duns were strongly built and surrounded by stout caiseals. The caiseals of the monasteries were neither so stout nor so high, being merely single walls. The doors, too, were neither so high nor so strong as those of the dun, as may be seen at Innismurray and elsewhere.

It has been held by some authors that the only difference between the cells of the periods *antecedent* and *subsequent* to the coming of the faith was that the former were circular both inside and outside whereas the latter were circular outside and quadrangular inside. Clochan na Carraige in Aran was of the first class. This is nineteen feet long inside, eight feet high, less than eight feet wide, walls four feet thick, door three feet high, two and a half feet wide on the outside, two feet on the inside. The side walls incline towards each other as they rise till they ultimately meet at the top where they are closed by a single stone. Two holes in the centre served as window and chimney.

Foreign writers have alleged also that no building implements were used in ancient Ireland. Margaret Stokes on the other hand rightly contends that the chisel was in use from the coming of the faith, at latest, and that mortar was used from the same period. Flann Mainistreach refers to

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<sup>1</sup> "Early Christian Art in Ireland" (Margaret Stokes), 134.



three builders, Caomhan, Cruithneach and Luchraidh, as in the company of Patrick. Daimhliag Chianain, now Duleek, is reputed the first stone church built in Ireland, and Cianan after whom it is named, died in 490. Gallarus in Corca Dhuibhne may be equally ancient. It is the most beautiful and best preserved church of its period in these countries. Its length is 23 feet, height 16, width 10. The door, in its western end, is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet high; the stone roof a development of the strong side walls, drawing nearer, somewhat in the form of an arch, as they rise, until closed at the top by a single stone: to shed moisture, stones, instead of being laid horizontally, slope slightly outward. Tombstones lying around the church have ogham inscriptions. Beside is Cill Maelcheadair, another very ancient church, and connected with it an Abecedarium stone, with a very early Irish alphabet.

The house of St. Fionan Cam in Loch Luighdheach near Waterville, Kerry, is a cyclopean structure, circular outside, quadrangular inside, 16 feet long, 15 feet wide, and the walls 7 feet thick at the base. Another house of the period is that of Kells in Meath. It is of dressed stone and mortar, and is estimated to have been built between the middle and end of the sixth century.

At the same time was erected Dairbhile's church at Erris. It is 40 feet long, 16 feet wide, and built of polygonal stones of local granite. On the east side, it has a small window, semicircular at the top. The door on the west side is also semicircular at the top. Door and window are each covered with a single stone shaped like an arch. Though striving after the arch, it is evident that native builders were not yet familiar with its principle. But they developed it steadily, as did the Greeks and other peoples.

It is significant that Cadoc of Wales on his return from Ireland determined to build a church on the banks of the Neath. An Irish architect named Liguri so excelled all the others engaged in the erection of this church as to arouse their envy so that they conspired against him and put him to death. From the church the place took its name of Llanliguri.

In the sixth century the piety of the Irish monks knew no bounds. Not content with living in solitude amid the

rocks and heather, many of them ventured out into the desert islands and there erected cells and oratories and churches. In this century were erected Teampoll Mholaise in Inismurray and Teampoll Bhreandain in Inisgluaire. On Sceilg Mhichil off the coast of Kerry was erected another remarkable monastery. The plateau occupied by its buildings is 180 feet in length and 80 to 100 feet in width. They include the church of St. Michael, two smaller oratories, six beehive cells, many stone crosses, five leachta or burial places and two holy wells. On one side they are protected by the towering rock, on the other by a caiseal running along the edge of the precipice. It is "astonishing to conceive the courage and skill of the builders of this fine wall placed, as it is, on the very edge of the precipice at a vast height above the sea, with no possible standing ground outside from which the builder would have worked. Yet the face is as perfect as that of Staigue fort, the interstices of the great stones filled in with little ones, and all fitted as compactly and with as marvellous firmness and skill. . . . There are still remaining six hundred steps cut by the monks in the cliff, which rises to 720 feet above the sea, the lower part of this ascent being now broken away." Fionan Cam is regarded as the founder of this monastery.

As community life extended, so did the dimensions of the monasteries. Thus the monastery, oval in shape, erected in Aran by Guaire Aidhne, who died in 610, for his kinsman Colman mac Duach was 50 feet in length, 17 feet in width, the walls six feet thick at the base. About the middle of the seventh century, the monastery of St. Fechin, resembling that on Sceilg Mhichil, was erected on Ardoilean off Connemara. Here mortar was used in the walls, but not in the cro, nor in the cells of the monks. The transition from dry undressed masonry to cemented walls of dressed stone took place in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries. The cement first used, especially along the coast, was composed largely of shells and sea-sand; inland, a compound of mud and gravel was used. The walls were dry built in the first instance, and the composition poured, in a liquid state, on the top of the wall and allowed to filtrate downwards. "Later on, the wall was well built with two faces, and a rubble core grouted in a similar manner, while in the time of Cormac

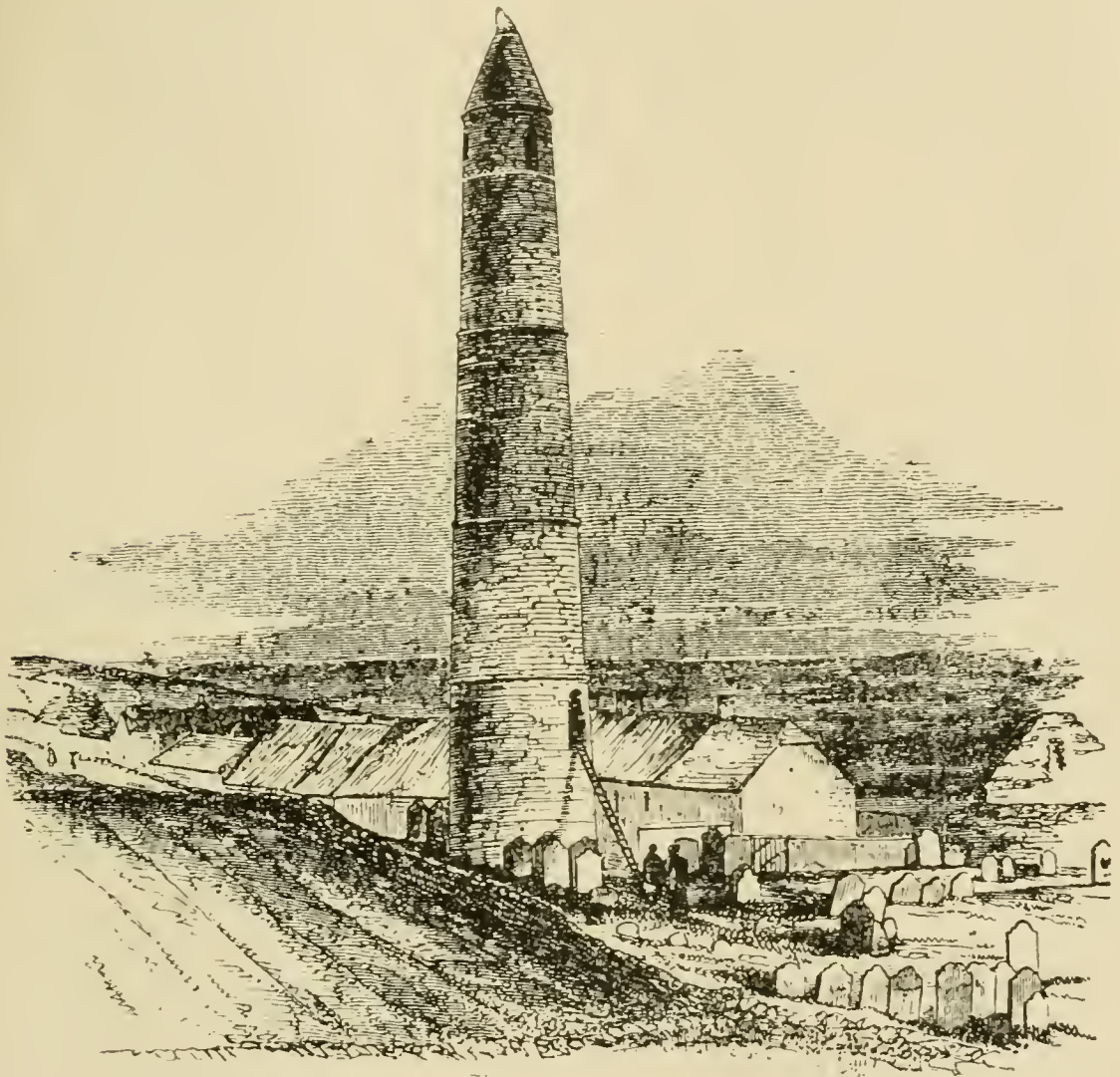
O Cillin, *circa* 950, we have the stones well bedded in good mortar."

By this time Irish monks exercised great influence all over Western Europe, and were, of course, equally active at home. Finding it unnecessary to strengthen or guard their native churches, thanks to the high moral standard obtaining among the people, they proceeded to decorate them lavishly, particularly the doors and windows. An early example of this decoration is to be found in the window of the ancient church at Raith Theas near Tralee. A similar example occurs in the east of Teampoll Riogh at Clonmacnoise. The exquisite window at Rathain, scene of the early labours of Carrthach of Lismore, is among the most ancient of its kind in these countries. It is round, beautifully carved, and but one of many examples that might be named. At the outset, a horizontal lintel crossed the door. This developed in time, as shown in the churches of Maghera, Banagher, Templemartin. A representation of the female hair was placed at each end of the lintel, and the hair was spread out artistically from upright to upright to convey the impression that it bound them. For a long time the horizontal lintel was given more attention than the arch, and it proved more artistic, though, in the end, not so useful. The arch was first scooped out of the stone, or pointed, at the top, as in the window of St. Caimin's arch, formed of two stones so laid as to make two sides of an equilateral triangle. Buildings like the church on Friar's Island, near Killaloe, St. Columba's at Kells, and St. Kevin's at Glendaloch, all erected in the beginning of the ninth century, present examples of the transition from the false to the true arch. A chancel in Glendaloch has an ancient arch at its head, which is probably unique in Ireland. "These buildings were roofed with shingle, but solid stone roofs were not uncommon; and; in the case of St. Kevin's church, Glendaloch, a small round tower springs from the roof."

**The Round Tower** was, for a considerable period, a most important feature of our ecclesiastical architecture. Authorities are divided as to the date, origin and object of these towers. The fact that the bells of the church of St. Brendan of Lothra could be heard at the first site intended by St. Brendan the Navigator for his monastery, erected



subsequently at Clonfert, is held to suggest that the bells must have been rung from a tower. It is almost certain, however, that the round towers were erected to serve as posts of observation and more particularly as places of safety for manuscripts, shrines, treasures, even for the monks them-



THE CLOIGTHEACH, OR ROUND TOWER, OF ARDMORE

selves. The entrance to them, usually placed at a considerable height from the ground, was reached by a ladder which was drawn inside when not in use. The earliest reference in the annals to a round tower—if we exclude the pre-Christian Tor Conaing—is to that of Slane which existed in 950. The round tower of Toomegraney was erected in 965 by the abbot Cormac O Cillin ; Brian Boirmhe is credited with the erection of more than twenty round towers between

996 and 1008 ; the Four Masters record that " the cloigtheach of Cluain mic Nois was finished by Ua Maeleoin " in 1124.

It is estimated that at least five classes of towers existed in Ireland, and they are assigned to three periods, 890-927 ; 973-1013, and 1170-1238. The first, high, strong and rugged, were built of rough stone, undressed by hammer or chisel, but filled in with small stones and sand or gravel. Erected some distance from the church, they stand alone to-day, for the reason that the little churches to which they were attached were of earlier origin and much less durable. In the second class, connected with the church, the stones were slightly dressed, turned, and set in rough layers, small stones being placed at the joints, and mortar used freely. Contrasted with the tower the church seemed low, whereas church and tower were practically of equal height on the Continent. The third class of tower, which rose still higher above the church, was built of dressed stone carefully placed in regular layers, while the fourth and fifth classes were square towers. Cloigtheach Dhiarmada in Inis Clothran is one example ; another is seen between the body and the chancel of Cormac's chapel, Cashel.

Round towers exist or have existed at St. Patrick's church, Isle of Man ; Bartlow and Snailswell in Cambridgeshire ; Brechin, Abernethy and Eglissha in Scotland ; Deerness in the Orkneys ; West Burra, Tingwall and Ireland Head in the Shetlands ; Stremoe in the Faroes ; Nivelles, Epinal, St. Germain, Aix la Chapelle, Worms, Maestricht, Strasburg, Schenness, Ravenna, Pisa, Venice. Some 120 of these towers were found to exist in Ireland in the beginning of the last century ; about 150 still survive throughout the world. An examination of those remaining in Ireland will show that many of them were erected while the Irish builders were striving after the principle of the round arch.

**The Round Arch** may be traced step by step through its whole development. It had its origin in the round cells, which were followed by churches, like Gallarus in Corca Dhuibhne, the side walls of which inclined inwards, from the ground to the ridge, in a curved form. Gallarus had the defect that there was danger, from their weight, of the sides of the roof falling in. This was remedied in a church near Killaloe, which was spanned internally by a semi-circular arch supporting the



stone roof. The roof, in this case also, consisted of regular layers of flat stone steadily approaching each other, from either side, to the apex. In large churches, the vacant space between the arch and the roof was, in course of time, used as a room. A further improvement was effected in Colm's House, Kells, three walls having been built across the space intervening between the arch and the ridge for the purpose of sustaining the roof. Other improvements were also made, so that the arch had been practically perfected at the period of Cormac's chapel, Cashel, which has been referred to as "the Holy of Holies of Irish Romanesque."

In **Cormac's Chapel** two arches surmount each other, and it is regarded as marvellous that a round arch of stone has been used to roof this church at a height of fifty feet, whereas the width of the church is not more than half that measurement. Had Irish architecture been permitted to develop at that juncture, it would be difficult to set bounds to the possibilities of this form of arch, which had the advantage over wood and slate that it was more artistic and more durable, and afforded the high roof so desirable in a damp climate.

Singularly, the other churches in this style, if we except the twelfth-century church of Tuam, were erected in Germany and Bavaria, at Ratisbon, Wurzburg, Salzburg, Earfruth, and elsewhere. These Continental churches owed their existence mainly to the bounty of the princes of Cashel and to the skill and industry of Irish craftsmen and missionaries, with a restricted outlet for their genius at home and a burning zeal to devote their talents to the service of God and the adornment of God's house. The Irish abbots of St. Peter's, Ratisbon, received money for church-building from successive kings of Munster. With it was purchased also a site for "the monastery of St. James to the western side of Ratisbon." Neither before nor since, said a Bavarian chronicler, "was there a more noble monastery, such magnificent towers, walls, pillars and roofs, so rapidly erected, so perfectly finished as in this monastery, because of the wealth and money sent by the king and princess of Ireland."<sup>1</sup>

Many of the churches of Ireland naturally bore evidence of the influence of Rome from the beginning. St. Caimin's

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter on "Germany."



church at Inis Cealltra had a round arch and such beautiful sculpture and ornamentation that it is held to have marked a transition in the enriched round arch style. A distinct native style characterised other churches: the Maghera doorway has been likened to a page of the illuminated manuscripts of the Celtic school. Such was the vitality of this style, indeed, that it was able to influence the Romanesque introduced direct from Normandy; while the effect of the new style was, in turn, visible in the churches of Aghadoe, Clonfert, and other places after the middle of the twelfth century.

At home and abroad, Irishmen were particularly active in church-building at this juncture. A stone church was consecrated by Ceallach the Primate in 1126. Cormac's chapel, Cashel, was completed by King Cormac MacCarthaigh and consecrated in 1134; the same year the same king built the churches of Lismore and the monastery of Iveragh. In 1139 was erected the Abbey of St. Mary in Dublin; in 1142 Mellifont Abbey was erected by Domhnall Ua Cearbhaill king of Oirghialla. St. Malachy built the abbey of Iubhar Chinn Tragha, *i.e.* Newry in 1144; and four years later he consecrated a church completed at Knock near the town of Louth: through the co-operation of Ua Cearbhaill king of Oirghialla ecclesiastical land was assigned to it. Diarmuid MacMurchadha built the Abbey of Baltinglass in 1151. The same year the great Abbey of Bective was built, as well as the Abbey of Magh in Limerick, and the great stone church of Kilbarry in Roscommon begun. Three years later was built the Abbey of Ua dTorna in Kerry; seven years still later the Abbey of Boyle; and after a further three years, in 1164, "the top stone of the great church of Derry—ninety feet in length—was completed within forty days." The Cathedral of Brendan at Clonfert, the east window of which has been described as "a perfect dream of just proportion and simple dignity" was but one of a dozen churches erected in 1166 by Conor O Kelly of Ui Maine who, the next year, built the O Kelly church, Clonmacnoise. In 1168 was built the church of Dearbhforgaill in Clonmacnoise; and in 1169, the Abbey of Holy Cross in Tipperary, one of eighteen abbeys erected in different parts of Munster by Domhnall Ua Briain. The Abbey of Feara Muighe in Cork was built in 1170, and

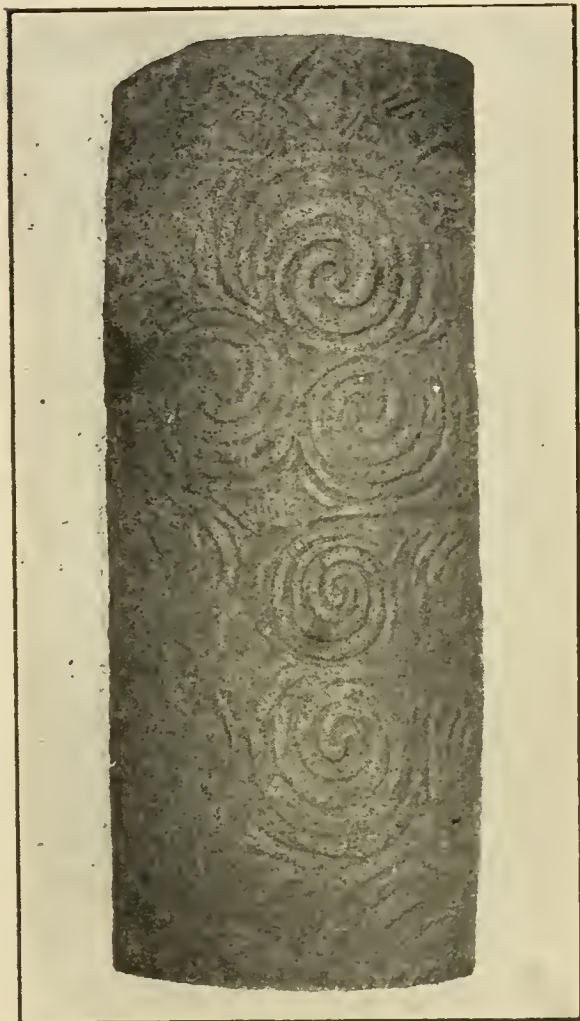
quite a large number of other abbeys and temples arose elsewhere in the same period.

The ruins of the churches built with the co-operation of the architects sent to St. Malachy by his friend St. Bernard show a happy blending of Irish, Roman and Norman influence. For this, as for much more, the English claimed credit, implying that up to that time, notwithstanding what has been here shown, wood alone was used in the construction of churches in Ireland. "They constructed their houses of timber and wicker work," writes Lingard, "with an ingenuity that extorted the praise of the English. Their churches were generally built of the same materials; and when Archbishop Malachy *began* to erect one of stone, the very attempt excited an insurrection of the people who reproached him with abandoning the customs of the country and introducing those of Gaul." It seems clear, from the frequent destruction of churches by fire, that wood was extensively used in church construction; but it is clearer still, and as true as clear, that the Irish, through their familiar intercourse with the Continent, were themselves acquainted with the different styles of architecture, not only before the Anglo-Norman invasion but before the coming of the Normans to England or of the Norsemen to Ireland. Cormac's Chapel, Cashel, has been described by Prof. MacAlister as "the finest building of its size and time in either Ireland or England," and the same writer refers to the sculptured doorway of the cathedral of Cluain Feartha Breandain, built in 1166, as "one of the art treasures of the world." The pages of "Ireland's sacred writings in the early days," says Margaret Stokes, "when the illumination of manuscripts was practised with success in the country, are, as it were, the precursors of her decorated churches; and all the designs of Celtic art given by the pencil in them are carved by the chisel in her stone monuments."

**Sculpture**, or stone-carving—like metal-work and illumination—was keenly practised all over Ireland from an early period. Spiral tracings at New Grange are believed to have been introduced from the Aegean as early as 1500 B.C., but they do not appear to have developed to any appreciable degree. Inscriptions in ogham-chraobh, probably of Greek



origin, came at a later date, and survived the Pagan period ; a carved stone at Loughrea affords evidence of the existence of skilled sculptors in Connacht a century or two before the Christian era. But, as in the case of the other arts, it was under the fostering care of the monasteries that stone-carving,<sup>1</sup>



SCULPTURED STONE SLAB  
AT NEW GRANGE

hardly inferior in design to the best scribal work, was brought to the degree of excellence for which, in time, it became famous. It was chiefly exhibited on doors, windows, tombs, and on the great stone crosses of which over two hundred and fifty still survive in Ireland, and a number, modelled on them, in Scotland and the north of England. A figure of St. John in the doorway of the cathedral of Freiburg in Breisgau bears a striking resemblance to a figure on the sculptured panels of the doorway of the old church at Freshford, Kilkenny. The Irish character of the carvings in such old buildings as San Michele in Pavia has also attracted the attention of antiquarians. The smaller cross of

Monasterboice is regarded as "a fine example of Irish sculpture at its best."

The ornamentation on the high crosses is accompanied by groups of figures depicting scenes in sacred history like the Journey to Egypt, the Crucifixion, Noah and the Ark, David and Goliath, Daniel in the Lions' Den, the Loaves and Fishes, the Flight into Egypt, Eve presenting the Apple to Adam,

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<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that there are close on 1,150 sculptured stones in Ireland.



Thomas doubting, Moses striking the Rock, Moses on the Mount, Paul visiting Anthony, in short, almost every conceivable subject of religious interest. These figures were



HIGH CROSS, DURROW



HIGH CROSS, MONASTERBOICE

intended, like "the Stations of the Cross," to impress, particularly on the illiterate, the truths of religion and, it is thought, may have been used by preachers to illustrate their discourses. Much of our history, as of the development of native art and Christian symbolism, is to be learned from monumental slabs and sculptured crosses in which the whole country, and more particularly the province of Leinster,

abounds.<sup>1</sup> The carved figures cover a wide range, embracing the shepherd's crook, drinking horn, battle axe, harp and harper, various representations of the human form. Mermaids, fishes, lizards, cats, and other creatures, real and imaginary, are carved on the inside of St. Brendan's ancient cathedral at Clonfert, the beautiful doorway of which has been referred to as "the last supreme effort of native Irish art." Stone-carvers are mentioned in the Milan Irish glosses of the eighth century; and flattering testimony has been borne by competent and impartial writers to the proficiency and eminence generally attained by the early Irish in all the realms of art. Of their achievements Romily Allen writes in his interesting volume on Celtic Art:

"It in no way detracts from the artistic capacity of the Celt that he should have adapted certain decorative motives belonging to a foreign style instead of evolving them out of his own inner consciousness. Although his materials may not all have been of native origin, they were so skilfully made use of in combination with native designs, and developed with such exquisite taste, that the result was to produce an entirely original style, the like of which the world had never seen before."

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<sup>1</sup> The subjects carved on two of thirty-six high crosses are thus described in "Early Christian Art in Ireland":

"Monasterboice (south-east cross): the Fall of Man; Expulsion from Eden; Adam delves and Eve spins; Cain kills Abel; the Worship of the Magi, with its type, the three Warriors before David; Michael and Satan at the Weighing of Souls; the Crucifixion and Last Judgment. These subjects occupy nine out of twenty-two panels."

"Clonmacnoise (north cross): Twenty-four subjects in panels, twelve of which have been deciphered. Facing west: Betrayal and Seizure of Christ; Crucifixion, and Tomb guarded by soldiers. East face: The Resurrection, or Christ in Glory; Musicians; Last Judgment; Trumpeters to right, condemned to the left; the Mission to the Apostles. On sides: Christ spearing Satan; David; the Hand of the Father appearing from Clouds."



## CHAPTER VI

### THE MONASTIC SCHOOLS



THE story of the monastic schools of Ireland may well open with a brief account of the rise of our primatial city.

**Ard Macha** or Armagh, is said to be so named from being the burial place of Macha wife of Neimheadh. In the neighbourhood Macha Mongruadh mother of Ughaine Mor also founded historic Emania or Eamhain Macha, once the seat of the Red Branch Knights. Daire, descendant of

Niall Naoighiallach, reigned over Ard Macha when Patrick decided to settle there. History has much to say of the cruelty and avarice of Daire as of the sympathy of his queen, through which Patrick obtained a site for his church and buildings. These numbered, as Armagh developed, a *daimhliag togha*, or church of election, in the south ; a *teach screaptra*, or house of writings, within the rath ; a *cuichin*, or kitchen ; a strong room for refractory inmates ; a *reilg* or cemetery ; a *cloigtheach* or belfry. " All these buildings," says Archbishop Healy, " including the houses for the monks and students, crowned the summit of the holy hill, and were surrounded with a large rath or earthen mound, as well as by a *fiodh neimheadh* or sacred grove."

**The School of Armagh** was founded in the decade commencing with 444, and Saint Benignus or Benen, to whom is attributed the original " Book of Rights," may be regarded as its first president. Subsequently Saint Gildas of Wales was teacher there. The fame of the school attracted strangers in such numbers that one of the wards of the city became known as " the Trian Sacsan " or " Saxon Third." These Saxons, the Venerable Bede assures us, were received with characteristic Irish hospitality, and were provided gratuitously with food, maintenance, books and education, in " the



religious capital of Ireland." Of the scribes of Armagh it has been said that they seemed "to have concentrated all their brains on the point of the pen." In 807 one of them, Ferdomhnach, compiled the famous "Book of Armagh." The influence and the vicissitudes of the ancient city are writ large over our whole history.

**Kildare**, founded by St. Brigid, ranks next to Armagh in ecclesiastical importance. It was called "the strangers' home" from the welcome extended to all who approached its hospitable gates. No one, says one of Brigid's many biographers, could count the crowds of people that came to Kildare from all the provinces of Erin. We cannot wonder that the church, originally of wattles, was soon large, very lofty, richly adorned with pictures, linen hangings and carved doorways. Within it were three spacious oratories, and, at the end of one, two doors opening into two separate partitions, one at the right for the men, the other for the women, at the left. Independent lateral entrances admitted the bishop and clergy into the men's section, the abbess and nuns into the women's. "Kildare," says the author of 'Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars,' "is the only religious establishment in Ireland, which preserved down to a comparatively recent period the double line of succession of abbot-bishops and abbesses, and, what is more, the annalists took care to record the names of the abbesses as well as of the abbots. This, no doubt, arose from the fact that, at least in public estimation, the lady-abbesses of Kildare enjoyed a kind of primacy over all the other nuns in Ireland and, moreover, were in some sense independent of episcopal jurisdiction if, indeed, the bishops of Kildare were not, rather, to some extent dependent on them."

Though St. Brigid was not the first woman in Ireland to dedicate her virginity and her life to the service of God, it is certain she soon so excelled in wisdom and virtue that, as already indicated, she became known as the 'Queen of the South,' the "Head of the nuns of Erin," and, finally, as "the Mary of the Gaedhil." She became, in fact, as much the Patroness of Ireland, as Patrick is its patron saint. Conlaech she selected as bishop of the parent school of Kildare, Nadfraoch to instruct herself and her nuns. St. Conlaech was not only a scholar and a bishop but also "a most cunning

artificer in metal work," and made all kinds of chalices, patens, bells and shrines for the use of his churches and monasteries. Kildare, like the other centres of learning, developed with the years. Its glorious and chequered story, and its unapralleled record in the realms of music and art unfold themselves in the chapter on these subjects.

**Duleek**, or Daimhliag Cianain, was among the very earliest of Ireland's Christian schools. It was founded by St. Cianan about 470, and became a close rival of Armagh on account of the encouragement with which its founder received the admirers of literature.

**Glasnevin**, in the same neighbourhood, was founded by St. Mobhi. Colm Cille was a student there after leaving Moville, and had as fellow-students for some time Saints Cainneach, Ciaran and Comhghall. Mobhi was carried off by the great plague of 544.

**The School of Beigeire** in Wexford harbour was founded by St. Iobhar towards the end of the fifth century. Originally a mere cell and oratory, it developed very rapidly, the sanctity of its founder having attracted hosts to the little island retreat, where fish abounded. Here "the doctrine of magnitude was taught," and "the stranger from the distant shore was welcomed at its gate." As many as three thousand father-confessors are said to have gathered together under the counsel of its founder. His nephew, St. Aban the Elder, was one of its most distinguished teachers. Aban was the spiritual father and first teacher of St. Finian of Clonard. He was famed particularly for his learning and eloquence; and, after a visit to Rome in company with his uncle, he preached the gospel and founded many monasteries throughout Ireland. Iobhar died in Beigeire about the year 500.<sup>1</sup>

**Emly** in the South is referred to in our Annals as Imleach Iobhair. It seems to have been founded by Ailbe who is said to have been consecrated in Rome before the coming of St. Patrick. It is reputed to have had at one time no fewer than six hundred students. In its schools the sciences together with heavenly truths were taught gratuitously. St. Ailbe it was who baptised St. David of Wales. The **Monastery of Ardmore** in Waterford, founded by St. Declan,

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<sup>1</sup> See Healy's "Ancient Schools and Scholars." 158-9-60,



was another very early seat of Christian learning in the south.

**The School of Elphin**, in the west, was founded by St. Patrick, who was presented with the site by a local druid. He then placed the school under Asicus and his son Bite the bishop, and Cipia mother of the bishop. "Asicus was an expert artificer in metal work," and made altars, patens and book-covers for Patrick. So prized were the patens that one of them was taken to Armagh. Bite, on the other hand, took charge of the infant monastery and school, one of the earliest foundations of its kind in Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

**The School of Cluainfois** was founded by St. Jarlath. "There is still," says Archbishop Healy, "a vivid tradition at Cluainfois of conferences held there between the three Saints—Benen, Jarlath and Caillin." The school soon became very famous, and attracted students from all parts of Ireland, among them St. Brendan of Ardfert and St. Colm of Cloyne. Jarlath made 300 genuflections by day and 300 by night, so that, as we are told in the Feilire of Aonghus, his whole life was one continued prayer. Shortly before his death, Jarlath left Cluainfois and, on the advice of Brendan, built his church at Tuam in the neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup> Here his relics were preserved for a long time with great reverence, a special church having been built for the shrine containing them.

**The School of Oendruim** on Mahee Island in Strangford Loch was founded by St. Mochae, grandson of Milchu who held St. Patrick in slavery. Originally a wooden structure, the later edifice was built of stone, and the church was for many centuries a cathedral church. Two most distinguished men, St. Colman of Dromore and St. Finian of Moville, were educated there. St. Colman went subsequently to the school of Emly where he studied under Ailbe. Mochae, bishop and abbot, died in 496.

**The School of Louth**, was founded by St. Mochta, who was born in Britain and brought to Ireland as a boy. Subsequently he went to Rome, where he was consecrated bishop. Returning with twelve disciples, he erected a church at Kilmore, near Monaghan. Forced away from there, he estab-

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<sup>1</sup> *Idem*, 161.

<sup>2</sup> It occupied the site of the present Protestant cathedral.



lished himself at Louth, and with such success that before his death he reckoned among his disciples one hundred bishops and three hundred priests. Patrick himself in his old age spent some time with Mochta.

**Saint Enda** founded the great school which bore his name on the distant islands of Aran. These islands he obtained from Aonghus King of Munster to whom his sister was married. Aonghus died in the year 484. The school soon became famous. It was visited by Brendan before proceeding on his historic voyage. Finian, founder of Clonard, came also there, as did Finian of Moville. Colm Cille himself came "in his currach with his scholar's belt and his book-satchel." With him there was Ciaran, founder of Clonmacnoise, Enda's best beloved disciple. St. Jarlath, St. Kevin, all the leading saints of the Second Order visited or spent their novitiate in Aran. St. Kybi, a native of Cornwall, to whom churches are dedicated at Caernarvon, Caerleon and Holyhead, and who preached throughout the greater part of Wales, spent four years at St. Enda's school. Under its great founder's care were 150 disciples. They divided the day "into periods for prayer, labour and sacred studies." Each community had its own church and stone cells. They assembled for devotions in the church or oratory of the saint, and took their meals in a common refectory. Their food they procured by manual labour: some fished, some cultivated patches of corn; others ground the barley, kneaded and baked it, according to their aptitude. Fruit was not for them, nor wine, nor mead, nor flesh meat. They slept in their day clothes on the bare ground or on a bundle of straw. Yet their island retreat, in spite of its many austerities, was the holiest spot on Irish soil, a paradise which all left with unfeigned regret. In the little graveyard around Cill Enda upwards of a hundred and twenty saints lie buried. Not the least significant of its unique antiquities are the inscribed graves of seven Romans, evidently students of the ancient School of Ara na Naomh. The Pagan remains there are also most interesting.

**Cluain Eidneach**, now Clonenagh, near Maryborough, was under the rule of St. Fionntan, who was famed for the rigors of his own life and the mortification he enjoined on his community. He would not even tolerate a cow in the precincts

of his monastery. His monks, therefore, had neither milk nor butter. Nor were they permitted to take eggs, cheese or flesh meat, but had to rest content with corn and water and herbs. At the request of St. Cainneach of Achadh Bo, the Superior, in time, somewhat modified the rule for the community while, himself, adhering to the original austerities. Comghall of Bangor was among its students; Aonghus Ceile De and Maolruain of Tallaght are referred to as its ornaments.<sup>1</sup>

**Clonard**, more properly Cluain Eraird, was founded about 520 by St. Finian "the tutor of the Saints of Erin." Finian was born in Myshall, barony of Forth, Carlow, and received his early education—it is thought at Tullow—from Bishop Foirtcheirn, grandson of Laoghaire. Foirtcheirn, like Asicus of Elphin and Bishop Conlaech, was a skilful artificer, and made chalices and patens for Patrick. Finian in early life travelled in Wales, where at Cill Muine he made the acquaintance of Saints David, Gildas, and Cathmhaol or Cadoc. After thirty years' pilgrimage, embracing Tours and Rome, he introduced some features of Welsh monasticism into Ireland. On the banks of the Boyne he first built his cell of wattles and clay, his church probably of the same material. Around these he dug a deep trench, and began his life of labour and watching, fasting and perpetual prayer. He slept on the cold ground, and mortified himself in other ways. His food consisted of bread, herbs, salt and water, with a little broiled salmon on Sundays and holy days. Soon crowds of scholars, to the number of 3,000, flocked around him. These students were easily accommodated. They built their own huts, sowed their seeds, ground their corn, prepared their food, fished in the streams and, when occasion demanded, sought the necessities of life from the neighbouring peasantry. They wore little clothing, needed few books, their instruction being given in the open. Finian's discourses could be heard by thousands on the green slopes of Clonard. Brendan's voice, history says, could be heard a thousand paces off; Colm Cille's, fifteen hundred.

Finian, asking once how the members of his community

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<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Healy's "Schools and Scholars" and Dr. Hyde's "Literary History."

were engaged, was answered : “ Some in manual labour ; some in studying the scriptures ; others, especially Colm of Tir da Ghlas, in prayer, with his hands stretched out to heaven, so that the birds came and alighted on his head and shoulders.” At Clonard the study of the Sacred Scriptures was especially cultivated, and Finian’s eminence was probably due in part to his power of expounding the scriptures. He has been likened with reason to the rose tree round which the bees swarm from all quarters to extract the honey :

“ Before three thousand scholars he,  
Their humble master, meekly stood ;  
His mind a mighty stream that poured  
For all its fertilising food.”

He was a philosopher and eminent divine, and obtained the appropriate name of Finian the Wise. Hence, abbots left their monasteries, bishops their sees, and came to Clonard to hear the truth from Finian’s own lips. His school, in essence a holy city abounding in wisdom and in virtue, retained for many centuries its ancient fame. Among its greatest professors was Aileran the Wise who died of the Yellow Plague in 664.

**Inis Cathaigh**, now known as Scattery Island, was founded by St. Senan, whose birth, in 488, is said to have been long foretold by St. Patrick. Having studied for some time at Iarros in his native Clare, he proceeded to Cill Manach. Thence he went, on the recommendation of his tutor, to Wexford, and founded a church at Enniscorthy. He afterwards visited Rome, tarrying on the return journey at Tours. From Tours he came to Wales, and thence to Cornwall, where his feast is still celebrated. Leaving Cornwall he crossed to Cork, and founded a monastery at Iniscarra. Here he was visited by fifty Romans who wished to become his disciples. Subsequently he laboured zealously on several islands on the coast of Clare and Kerry, before establishing his great monastery at Inis Cathaigh about 534.<sup>1</sup> Of him it has been said : “ He was rather to be admired than imitated in his exercise of penance. In the opinion of all others, he

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<sup>1</sup> Some authorities say 520.



had attained the highest degree of excellence in merits and in virtue, whilst in his own estimation he was the most lowly and humble of mankind." Among the later abbots of Inis Cathaigh was Flaithbheartach who urged Cormac mac Cuileanain to battle, and finally ruled as king of Munster. "The Library of Inis Cathaigh was much esteemed for the number of its rare and valuable manuscripts."

**Glendaloch**, once "the luminary of the western world," was founded about 540 by Caemhghein, now popularly known as St. Kevin. In early life, Kevin was educated by Petroc, a holy man from Cornwall. After twelve years he was placed under the guidance of his uncle, St. Eugenius, founder and bishop of Ardsrath in Donegal, who at this time appears to have been in charge of Cill na Manach in Wicklow. Eugenius, desirous of going north, wished to place Kevin in charge of Cill na Manach; but the youth fled to Glendaloch. Previously a beautiful girl of his own age, who had become enamoured of his handsome person, sought his company at every opportunity. To rid himself of her attentions he one day had himself dreadfully scourged with nettles. On being located and joined by her he treated her similarly, so that "the fire without extinguished the fire within," and she was induced to consecrate her virgin life to God.

At Glendaloch, Kevin first lived for seven years, in a cave on the south side, and on the north in a hollow tree. "No man knows on what he lived during those seven years, for he, himself, never revealed it to any one." At length he was discovered by a shepherd. Instantly crowds sought him out, and insisted on building him a cell and oratory beside the lake. His disciples so increased, however, that he was induced again to move to the eastward of the smaller lake where the great seminary of saints and scholars arose under his rule. Here, until prevailed on by many holy men to live in the ordinary monastic way, he was clothed, as in the cave, in the coarsest garments. His bed was the cold, damp ground, he broke his fast at even on a meal of herbs and water, kept constant and prayerful vigils often in the open air. Once, the year of kindly Ciaran's death, he went to Uisneach to confer with Colm, Comhghall and Cainneach. Colm stood up at his approach, and remained standing until the arrival of "that servant of God in whose honour God's angels in

heaven will yet rise from their thrones." He died in 618 at the age of 120.

Perhaps the most celebrated scholar trained at Glendaloch was St. Moling, who had the Leinster Tribute remitted by King Fianachta the Festive. St. Lorcan O Toole and Giolla na Naomh Laighean were later ornaments of the ancient city: the latter became head of the monks at Wurzburg.

**The School of Moville**, five miles from Bangor at the head of Strangford Loch, was founded by St. Finian about 540. Finian belonged to the ruling family of the territory. He was educated by St. Colman, afterwards Bishop of Dromore, passing later under the tuition of St. Mochae at Oendruim. Thence he went to Candida Casa, the White House on the Isle of Whithern at the southern extremity of the inner promontory of Wigtown, "a spot, like Aran, Glastonbury and Iona, to be ever venerated as one of the cradles of Celtic Christianity." Thence Finian went to Rome, where he spent some time "learning the apostolical customs and the ecclesiastical laws." Returning home he brought with him "into Ireland the Mosaic Law and the Whole Gospel," by which is meant, as Archbishop Healy explains, "the first integral copy of St. Jerome's Vulgate<sup>1</sup> which afterwards came into exclusive use in the Irish as in the other churches."

Finian composed a Rule for his monks and a penitential code still extant. It contains fifty-three penitential canons, some of them very rigorous. A penance of seven years, for instance, was imposed for perjury, with the added obligation of releasing a bondsman or bondswoman.<sup>2</sup> He was the patron saint of Ulster:

The clanna Neill a sheltering oak  
Have found in Colm Cille,  
And Ulster's sons are still behind  
Great Finian of Moville.

He died, according to the "Annals of Ulster," in 589 and was buried at Magh Bhile. Like himself, his successors for two hundred years are referred to as bishops: from 731 they

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<sup>1</sup> This was the Gospel copied by Colm Cille.

<sup>2</sup> They were published in 1851 from MSS. in St. Gall, Paris and Vienna.

are described as abbots. Perhaps the most distinguished scholar produced by the school was "the Blessed" Marianus Scotus the celebrated mediaeval historian.

**Clonmacnoise** .1. Cluain mic Nois, was founded by Ciaran mac an tSaoir. Ciaran received his early education at Clonard. On leaving it, Colm Cille lamented his departure :

" The noble youth that goeth westward  
And leaves us mourning here—  
Ah ! gentle, loving, tender-hearted  
Is Ciaran mac an tSaoir."

From Clonard he went to Aran, where he endeared himself to everybody ; and thence on a short visit to St. Senan of Inis Cathaigh. Subsequently he established churches at Iseall Ciarain and at Inis Ainghinn or Hare Island, and in 544 founded the Eaglais Bheag and monastery of Clonmacnoise. That same year he died, at the early age of 33. "Take me out a little from the cell into the open air," he gasped as the end drew near ; and, raising his eyes, he whispered faintly : "Narrow indeed is the way that leads to heaven."

No saint was more beloved. Alcuin who studied at Clonmacnoise called him "the glory of the Irish nation." He was never for a moment idle, never in his life uttered a falsehood. His drink of ale and milk was diluted one-third with water, his bread one-third with sand. His pillow was a cold stone, his bed a hide. The cow-skin couch on which he died was deemed a precious relic, and healed the ailing who on it lay.

Among the distinguished scholars of Clonmacnoise was Colgu the Wise who died the year the Danes first landed on the Irish shores. Alcuin, in his day the foremost scholar in Europe, was a student of Colgu. A letter is extant in which Alcuin attests his gratitude and sends alms from King Charles and olive oil then rare in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Suibhne, another scholar of Clonmacnoise, who died in 891, is referred to as the wisest and greatest doctor of the Scots. Dicuil the geographer is believed to have been a student under him.

**Derry** was founded about 545 by Colm Cille. Originally the place was known as Doire Calgaigh, later as Doire Chuilm

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<sup>1</sup> Healy's "Ancient Schools and Scholars," 273.



Cille. It is believed to have occupied the site of the present Catholic cathedral. As the church of Armagh arose in the neighbourhood of Emania, so Doire grew up almost under the shadow of the Grianan of Aileach.

**Durrow** or Dearmhagh, near Clara, was founded also, about 553, by Colm Cille. In a conversation with his successor, Cormac, who visited him subsequently at Iona, he referred to Durrow as "a city devout with its hundred crosses." It was famed for literature. The monks were obliged to spend portion of each day in transcribing; thus, its library, which included "the Book of Durrow," one of our earliest illuminated manuscripts, was the most select and among the most valuable in Ireland.

**Kells** or Ceanannas, in Meath, was, perhaps, the first school founded by Colm Cille. It, too, was known as Kells of the Crosses. Here was written the peerless book of the Four Gospels, adorned with gold and precious stones and now known as "the Book of Kells." Colm Cille, to whom many ascribe the volume, is said to have written a copy of the Gospels for every monastery founded by him. The beautiful Book of Durrow, just referred to, had on the back an appeal for "a remembrance of the scribe who wrote this Evangel within twelve days." The Book of Derry is lost. His copying the authentic text of St. Jerome's Vulgate, already referred to as brought from Rome by Finian of Moville, is said to have led to his exile to Iona. After the decline of Iona, Kells attained to special prominence among the various Columban foundations.

**Inis Cealltra** in Loch Derg, between Clare and Galway, was another very famous school. It was founded probably by Colm who died of the Yellow Plague in 548. Perhaps the most illustrious teacher of Inis Cealltra was St. Caimin who died in 653. In his time, according to the Life of St. Senan of Inis Cathaigh, seven ships arrived in the Shannon crowded with students for Inis Cealltra. Caimin was half brother to Guaire the Hospitable of Connacht.

**Killaloe**,<sup>1</sup> **Terryglass**,<sup>2</sup> **Lothra**<sup>3</sup> and **Roscrea**<sup>4</sup> were among the other noteworthy schools and monasteries of this territory. The names most prominently associated with them as founders

<sup>1</sup> Ceall Dalua.

<sup>2</sup> Tir da Ghlas.

<sup>3</sup> now Lorrha.

<sup>4</sup> Ros Cre.

or rulers were, respectively, Saints Flannan, Colm, Ruadhan and Cronan. Iniscealltra, Terryglass and Killaloe were under a common abbot in 1009.

**Birr**<sup>1</sup> also was the centre of a monastery of renown, founded by Brendan the Elder about 550. We are told that Brendan the Navigator was about to establish his school in the vicinity of Birr; but, casually hearing the bells of the existing monastery ring as he prepared the site, he decided to move farther away and thus came to select Clonfert. In the seventh century St. Killian was abbot of Birr. Under his administration the influx of foreign scholars was so great that hosts of the native students generously yielded their places to the strangers and finished their own education in other seminaries. "So unbounded was the hospitality of this abbey that the monks themselves were not infrequently sent out by St. Killian through the surrounding country to discover if there was any person in distress."<sup>2</sup>

**Mungret**,<sup>3</sup> according to the Psalter of Cashel, had at one period six churches within its walls. Exclusive of its scholars it contained 1,500 religious, 500 of whom, according to Keating, were learned preachers, and 600 Psalmists to attend choir. The remaining 400, aged men, applied themselves to contemplation, to works of charity, and other spiritual exercises. The earliest abbots associated with Mungret are Nesson and Mainchin. Cormac mac Cuileannain bequeathed it three ounces of gold and a satin chasuble.

**Clonfert** is another great school, in connection with which 3,000 students are mentioned. It was established by St. Brendan the Navigator about 556. Though Brendan is said to have been a professor at Ross in his early years, it is possible he never taught at Clonfert. But it does not follow that the famous western school lacked brilliant rulers. Cuimin Fada, bishop of Clonfert, was, indeed, among the most learned Irishmen of the seventh century. Cuimin was born in Kerry, and educated at St. Finbarr's, Cork. Clonfert seems to have been placed under him in 621 and to have remained under him for forty years. He was prominent in the great controversy on the Paschal Question which led to the historic Conference at Whitby in 664. His famous letter on the sub-

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<sup>1</sup> Biorra.

<sup>2</sup> Brenan, 82.

<sup>3</sup> Mungraid.



ject was discovered subsequently in St. Gall. He was likened to St. Gregory the Great, and said to be the only Irishman of his time worthy to succeed Gregory in the Chair of Peter. The Four Masters quote a touching poem on his death which, it is believed, occurred in his native Kerry, in 661.

**Bangor**, like Clonard and Clonfert, had 3,000 students. It was founded by Comghall between 550<sup>1</sup> and 560. Comghall first studied under a teacher whose conduct was far from exemplary. In the hope of correcting him, the student one day dragged his own coat in the mire. On being reproached by the teacher, the student asked how much worse it was to stain one's body and soul with the rust of sin. Finding this unavailing, Comghall forthwith sought another teacher, and thus reached Cluain Eidneach about 545. After some time here under the severe rule of Fionntan he repaired to Clonmacnoise, where he was ordained. It was then that he returned to his native district and established the School of Bangor. Like other schools of the time, Bangor soon sprang into fame. Bishops left their sees to visit Finian at Clonard; kings abandoned their thrones and spent the rest of their days at Bangor, as did Cormac king of Ui Bairrche of Leinster. Cormac was released from bondage through the prayers of Fionntan. He bequeathed much land for the benefit of monasteries. Comghall, "the holy abbot who had 40,000 monks under his rule," as Keating assures us, had as disciples Molua, founder of a hundred monasteries, and Carrthach of Lismore. In Bangor were educated St. Columbanus, St. Gall, Dungal the astronomer, and St. Malachy who was canonised by Pope Clement about 1190. "Its offshoots extended not only over all Ireland but far beyond the seas into foreign countries and filled many lands with its abounding fruitfulness."<sup>2</sup>

Among the leading schools of Desmond were those of Cork, Ross and Inisfallen.

**The School of Cork** was founded by St. Finnbarr. His teacher Mac Cuirp, we are told, was educated in Rome by St. Gregory, and his school, as might be expected, sent forth a host of holy men. Aonghus, in his Feilire, invokes seventeen holy bishops and seven hundred favoured servants of

<sup>1</sup> F.M. say 552.

<sup>2</sup> I.A.S.S. Healy, 369.



God that rest in Cork with Finnbarr and Neasan whose names are written in heaven. Finnbarr died about 630. In the time of Aonghus, about 800, the school was filled with monks and scholars. The Gospel of St. Finnbarr was worn by Mathghamhain, brother of Brian, at the time of his treacherous murder by Maolmhuadh in the tenth century.

**The School of Ross** was founded by Fachtna who was nurtured under the care of St. Ita. He also seems to have spent some time at the School of Cork before establishing in Ros Ailithir, now Rosscarbery, a great college for the study of the Sacred Scriptures and the cultivation of the liberal arts. Brendan the Navigator has been mentioned among the illustrious teachers of the School of Ross. It was a place of much importance in the ninth and tenth centuries. One of its lecturers wrote a classical geography in Irish towards the end of the tenth century.

**Inisfallen** was founded probably by St. Fionan Cam who is also believed to have established the monastery on the Sceilg rock, and other retreats, like Derrynane, along the coast of Iveragh. The ruins of his house are still visible at Loch Luighdheach near Waterville in Kerry. In Inisfallen were compiled the Annals of Inisfallen, preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Its most renowned scholar was Maolsuthain O Cearbhaill, the *anamchara* of Brian Boirmhe, who, by Brian's direction, made the historic entry in the Book of Armagh in 1004. "Maolsuthain, chief doctor of the western world in his time, and Lord of the Eoghanacht of Loch Lein, died in 1010."

**Lismore**, the glory of the South, was founded by St. Carrthach, a native of Kerry. One day while herding cattle on his father's land, young Carrthach heard the monks of the monastery near Castlemaine chanting their psalms, and became so enraptured that he remained outside the monastery all night. In explaining his absence from home, he indicated to his parents that he intended to join that white-robed choir. Delighted, they at once handed him over to bishop Carrthach by whom he was trained until he obtained permission to found a monastery of his own at Cill Tulach in the neighbourhood. Later, according to the custom of the time, he visited other monasteries of high repute, including Bangor. After some time at Bangor, he returned to Kerry, whence he again set

out for Thomond. Having laboured for a period near Tullamore, he established at Rathain the great monastery over which he ruled with signal success for forty years. Here, too, he composed a rule, yet extant, for his monks. It was probably due to the envy aroused by his success that he felt forced to leave Rathain in his old age. Having visited Drumcullen, Roscrea, Cashel and Ardfinan on the way, he and his followers reached Lismore in the Easter of 635. The king of Cashel had offered him a place for a monastery; the king's son-in-law, Maolochtair, chief of the Deise, granted him a site and grounds. A *lios beag* or little lios for the remainder of his days represented the extent of Carrthach's ambition; a holy virgin of the neighbourhood assured him as he marked it off that it would be a *lios mor* or great lios: it soon became a large city. Feeling his end approaching, Carrthach retired to a cell in the vicinity, where he spent eighteen months in prayer before his death in May, 637. The great luminary of the school of Lismore was Cathaldus, the second apostle and patron saint of Taranto in Italy. Other distinguished superiors of the school were Cuanna, successor and uterine brother of its founder, and Colman ua Liathain who died in 702.<sup>1</sup>

**The School of Mayo**, among the more renowned of the schools of the west, was founded by St. Colman. Trained in Iona, Colman was sent, on the death of Finan, to govern the See of Lindisfarne. Like his two predecessors, Aidan and Finan, he observed and favoured what came to be known as the Irish Easter. It was in his time that King Oswy summoned the historic Council of Whitby which decided against the Irish usage in regard to Easter and the Tonsure. Thereupon Colman, his Irish followers, and thirty native English monks quitted Lindisfarne, reported themselves at Iona, and then retired to Inisbofinne off the Mayo coast. After some time here, Colman, owing apparently to dissension between the Irish and English monks, established for the Saxons the School of Mayo. This was placed under Gerald and became very famous. It was known as "Mayo of the Saxons" and had a bishop in residence. Like many of the other schools, it had a chequered history.

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<sup>1</sup> I.A.S.S. Healy, 468-9; 472-3.



In this brief summary of the story of Ireland's ancient schools, important centres of learning and devotion, like Tallaght, owing to the restricted scope of the work, have been mentioned but incidentally, while others, like the school of Cluaininis in Loch Eirne, are referred to only casually in connection, perhaps, with some Danish raid, mayhap with the labours of some distinguished missionary: the founder of the historic school of Monasterboice, for instance, died the night of Colm Cille's birth in 521. 1,500 students came to Devenish when under Molaise; 1,000 to 1,500 to Old Leighlinn while under Goban. However, the reputation of the less known schools is now not less assured than the fame of the greater ones is admitted. The evidence of the attraction they possessed in their day for foreign no less than for native scholars accumulates with the growth of critical scholarship. England, France, Italy and other countries sent their hosts of students, many of them of royal blood, to slake their thirst at the fountains of knowledge and piety that may be said to have irrigated and hallowed the verdant valleys, the plains, promontories and islands of Ireland until overtaken by the withering blight of the Norman invasion. A few typical examples will suffice to indicate the extent to which foreign students availed themselves of the intellectual and moral fruits of our early schools.

Mochta, founder of the school of Louth and friend of St. Patrick, was born in Britain and brought to Ireland as a youth. Cadoc the Wise of Wales, having spent his boyhood under an Irish teacher, studied subsequently in Ireland, and his countryman Gildas not only studied but taught in Armagh, a historic resort of Saxon students. Numerous bands of them, Card. Moran tells us, were found at Clonard, Bangor, Glasnevin, Lismore, Mellifont, Clonmacnoise. The influx of foreign scholars to Birr was so great under Brendan that hosts of the native students yielded them their places and resorted to other seminaries. St. Ninian laboured at Cloncurry.

As already mentioned, St. Kybi of Cornwall spent a number of years at St. Enda's, Aran, where the graves of seven Romans are still shown. Fifty Romans, as we have seen, are found under St. Senan at Iniscarra, Cork; soon after, seven crowded ships arrived in the Shannon, their freight



being students for Inis Cealltra. Pedrelin, a native of Brittany, set out for Ireland with the consent of his wife and on arrival became a monk. His son Padarn followed, and, living with the father for some years, emulated his piety and austerities. Padarn founded many churches and monasteries in Wales and is referred to in the Welsh Triads as one of "the blessed visitors of Britain." "Crowds of Gaulish students," writes Haureau, "sought the Irish shores in order to win back again from their pupils of former times the learning they had lost themselves." Along with them, says Bede, went Agilbert, later, Archbishop of Paris, "who for the pleasure of reading the scriptures abode not a little while in Ireland."

Dagobert II of France was educated at Slane to have the advantage of proximity to royal Tara. Numerous kings and nobles of England obtained their education at other Irish schools. Among them may be mentioned King Oswald who sent to Iona for Northumbria's first bishop. He had lived in Ireland from his boyhood and "never forgot the lessons of wisdom and piety he had learned there." Marked by the Church among her martyrs, his name occurs in the Irish, English and Scottish martyrologies. Montalembert refers to him as "a soldier and a missionary, a king and a martyr, slain in the flower of his age on the field of battle, fighting for his country and praying for his subjects." Cadwallon, king of Britain, lived with his family in Ireland about seven years, returning to Wales about 630. He lost his life in the disastrous battle fought against Oswald near Hexham. On the occasion of the Great Plague of 664, according to Bede, "many of the nobility and of the lower ranks of the English nation" were in Ireland. "Forsaking their native island in the days of Finan and Colman, they retired thither, either for the sake of sacred studies or of a more ascetic life. Presently some of them devoted themselves faithfully to a monastic life, others chose rather to apply themselves to study, going about from one master's cell to another. The Scots willingly received them all, and took care to supply them with daily food without cost, as also to furnish them with books for their studies and teaching free of charge. Among these were Ethelhun and Egbert, two youths of great capacity and of the English nobility, the former of whom was brother to Ethelwin, a man no less beloved by God, who also at a

later time went over to Ireland to study, and having been well instructed, returned to his own country; and being made bishop in the province of Lindsey, long and nobly governed the church." Prince Constantine, who ruled in Devonshire and Cornwall, decided to come to Ireland after the death of Gildas and enrolled himself as a monk in the monastery of Rathain. Having attained fame for virtue, he was raised to the dignity of abbot about 688. He is said subsequently to have preached the faith in Cantyre and other districts in Scotland where he takes rank among the patron saints. In a letter to Willibrord, Aldhelm wrote: "Countless as are the stars that sparkle in the firmament, yet more numerous were the saints and learned men who at that time adorned the church of Erin." And to Willibrord himself Alzog refers as "an Anglo-Saxon priest educated in Ireland, who, assured of the protection of Pepin, was sent to labour as a missionary among the Frisians by Pope Sergius in 692." King Aldfrid the Wise, whose Itinerary is so often quoted, was educated also in the Irish schools. His reign was "the golden period for the schools of Jarrow, Ripon, Canterbury, Malmesbury and Lindisfarne. With his death on December the 14th, 705, their decay set in, and half a century later through the incursions of the Danes, their light became well nigh extinguished. Yet do we find Ireland still attract students from Britain and the Continent: Sulgen, having spent ten years in the monasteries and schools of Ireland, returned to Menevia, to impart to his countrymen the honied store of sacred knowledge." He held that See about 1070.

It is not necessary to pursue this aspect of the subject. More detailed information appears in the chapter on the achievements of Irish missionaries abroad, as in that dealing with early Irish learning in general. It is, indeed, significant that, in spite of the Danish devastations, the century following Clontarf abounded in poets and sages.<sup>1</sup> And it is

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1024. Cuan O Lochain, chief poet of Ireland, was killed by the men of Teathbha. Within an hour the party that killed him became foul. That was a *poet's miracle*.

1040. Corcan Cleireach, head of Europe in piety and learning, and said to have been associated with Cuan O Lochain in the government of Ireland after the death of Maelsheachlain, died.

1086. Maeliosa O Brolchain, master of wisdom and piety and poetry in either language, died.

characteristic of the support extended to the monastic schools by the kings and queens as well as the people of Ireland, and of the hospitality dispensed by the schools in return, that one of the last references to our last monarch in the native annals concerns his traditional bounty towards the primatial seat of learning. As late as the year 1169, the "Annals of Ulster" have this record: "Ruaidhri O Conchubair king of Ireland gave ten cows every year from himself and from every succeeding king to the Lector of Ard Macha in honour of St. Patrick to give lectures to students of Ireland and Scotland." It is, perhaps, fitting to have this closing reference to the historic school of Armagh which also opened our story of the monastic schools. Truly, Montalembert's tribute to them is not undeserved:

"In these vast monastic cities," he writes,<sup>1</sup> "that fidelity to the church, which Ireland has maintained with heroic constancy for fourteen centuries, in face of all the excesses as well as all the refinements of persecution, took permanent root. There also were trained an entire population of philosophers, writers, architects, carvers, painters, calligraphers, musicians, poets and historians, but, above all, of missionaries and preachers destined to spread the light of the Gospel and of Christian education not only in all the Celtic countries, of which Ireland was ever the nursing mother, but throughout Europe—among all the Teutonic races—among the Franks and Burgundians who were already masters of Gaul, as well as amid the dwellers by the Rhine and Danube and up to the frontiers of Italy. Thus sprang up also those armies of saints who were more numerous, more national, more popular, and, it must be added, more extraordinary, in Ireland than in any other Christian land."

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<sup>1</sup> Monks of the West, 694, i.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE SPIRITUAL EMPIRE OF THE EARLY GAEL: CORNWALL, WALES, BRITTANY, ISLE OF MAN



IN proceeding to trace the wanderings of the early Irish whose evangelising zeal led them to Britain and all over the Continent, a glance at the map will prove instructive and afford evidence that ancient Ireland produced hosts of voyagers besides Brendan the Navigator. Facing northwards from our eastern coast, we find Irish missionaries swarming all over Scotland and the Isles: when we turn our gaze to the south-east, we see them active around the two great headlands on the west and south-west of Britain—first from St. David's along the Bristol Channel and past the Severn to Kynesham and Glastonbury in Somerset; then, around the Land's End in Cornwall, whence we track them to the Channel Islands and Brittany and farther afield. Further evidence of their enterprise is furnished by the landing of Fursa and his companions on the east of England: not only, indeed, do they venture up every creek and estuary on the European seaboard, but their sails are seen on every sea, from Egypt in the torrid East to Arctic Iceland in the Northern Ocean.

Although English civilisation may be said to have been cradled at Iona and Lindisfarne, it will accord best with location and chronological sequence to follow the footsteps of the Irish teachers and evangelists, who carried the lamp of learning into the dark places there, through Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and the Isles, and return by Northumbria, the middle, east and south of England, incidentally indicating steady overflows to the Continent and tracing finally the undoing of Irish achievement through native English envy and jealousy, conceit and greed.

Among the earliest Irish missionaries in Cornwall, where we find the Ui Liathain of Munster settled early, were Bruinseach and Livian.

**Bruinseach** or **Burian** gives its name to the town of St. Burian, where, about five miles from the Land's End, Athlestan, before sailing on his expedition against the Scilly Isles, entered her oratory, and promised, if God blessed the expedition with success, to found and endow with a large income a college for clergy where the oratory stood. This promise was fulfilled; and the collegiate church in honour of St. Burian was not only endowed and granted the privileges of a sanctuary, but the kings of England continued to a late period to be its patrons.

**Livian** or **Levan**, afterwards martyred in Belgium, has dedicated to him the church of St. Levan, about three miles from that of St. Burian—in the neighbourhood of the celebrated Logan rock. The holy well of St. Levan and the ancient church referred to, stood on the edge of the cliff. “In the latter part of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century,” writes Cardinal Moran, “a numerous company of Irish saints, bishops, abbots, and sons and daughters of kings and noblemen came into Cornwall, landing at Pendinas, a peninsula and stony rock where now the town of St. Ives standeth. Hence they diffused themselves over the western part of the country and at their several stations erected chapels and hermitages. . . . While the memory of their holy lives still lingered in the minds of the people, churches were built on or near the sites of their chapels and oratories, and dedicated to Almighty God in their honour. Thus have their names been handed down to us.”

**Ia** or **Ives** landed in Cornwall in the fifth century, and erected her cell near the mouth of the Hayle. Such was the fame of her sanctity that the mariners in course of time called the promontory of Pendinas, just referred to, the bay and the town, after St. Ives this humble virgin from Ireland. Ia and her companions gave their names to seven churches in Penwith.

**Breaca**, a lady of noble birth, baptised by St. Patrick, and Germoe, a prince, are named among a company of Irish pilgrims and missionaries who, in the fifth century also, landed at Riviere on the eastern bank of the Hayle. Several

of this holy company were slain by Tyrannus, a local prince, but Breaca and Germoe crossed from Riviere to the southern coast where they erected churches and cells and where, honoured by the piety of the faithful, parishes still bear their names. So saintly was the life of Breaca and so remarkable for sanctity and prayer that a church, which became famous for pilgrimages, was there erected to commemorate her.

**Fionguaire**, another pilgrim saint, was son of the King of Connacht at Patrick's coming. Proceeding with some companions to Armorica, after embracing the christian faith, he determined in the course of years to devote himself to the service of God. Returning to Ireland, he was urged, on the death of his father, to become king. To avoid such honour he set out for Cornwall, accompanied by his sister Píala who had received the veil from Patrick, and followed by a large number of his countrymen. Landing at the mouth of the Hayle, about the year 470, himself, his sister and many of his companions next day received the martyrs' crown. St. Fionguaire is honoured at Vannes in Brittany, and both he and his companions are named in the British Martyrology.

"Saint Warne's Bay in Scilly records the name of **St. Warn**, about whom the tradition is handed down among the St. Agnes islanders that he came over from Ireland in a little wicker boat, which was covered on the outside with raw hides, and that he landed at the bay just mentioned."

Padstow or Petrocstow, long one of the chief centres of piety and of science for all Southern Britain, was founded by **Petroc** after he had spent twenty years in Ireland, whence he brought with him three monks remarkable for sanctity, Criodan, Medan and Dagan.

**Ruan**, referred to in the ancient legends preserved at Tavistock as "an Irish Scot," built himself an oratory in a forest of the district now called Meneage. His relics were enshrined at Tavistock, and three ancient churches of Cornwall bear his name.

**Ciaran** of Saighir, second Abbot of St. Iltud's monastery, left it to erect another on a small island in the Wye, and subsequently went to the north of Britain. He had previously laboured throughout Brittany where he became honoured as patron in many places. In Cornwall, too, several churches were named after him: he is specially honoured as patron



of those engaged in the tin-mines and is otherwise commemorated there also.

Thus they came, group after group, heedless of wind and tide, time and distance; hence has it been written that "We see the awful fascination of the immeasurable flood in the story of the Irishmen that were washed on the shores of Cornwall and carried to King Alfred. They came, Alfred tells us in his Chronicle, in a boat without oars from Hibernia,<sup>1</sup> whence they had stolen away because for the love of God they would be on pilgrimage—they recked not where. The boat in which they fared was wrought of three hides and a half, and they took with them enough meat for seven nights."<sup>2</sup>

**Germain** of Auxerre on his second visit to Britain in 448 met an Irish chieftain whose son in later years adopted the religious name of German or Germanus. In due time he was consecrated bishop, and laboured in Ireland with St. Patrick, and subsequently, it is told, in the Isle of Man, of which he became Apostle. He evangelised many districts of Wales, consecrated St. Dubricius, father of the Welsh Church; passed subsequently into Gaul, crossed the Pyrenees and for some years laboured successfully in Spain. Returning to Gaul his operations extended over Normandy and Picardy until, on the banks of the Bresle, he received the martyr's crown. Portion of his relics remained in the church of St. Germain at Amiens, and he is honoured as patron of several churches in the surrounding territory.

**David** of Wales, born of an Irish mother, received the waters of baptism at the hands of an Irish bishop, St. Ailbe of Emly. An Irish druid gave him the grounds on which to establish his monastery; St. Aidan of Ferns assisted in founding it and for some time even ruled it as abbot. He is said to have met with St. Finian at Kilmuine; his sister Mor was married in Corca Dhuibhne, scene of Brendan's earliest labours; "in the arms of a beloved Irish disciple

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<sup>1</sup> There is a somewhat similar record of St. Blane, who in 686 passed over from Ireland to Bute in a boat of skins without the aid of sails or oars. Daithi and eight companions are also said to have "set out for Britain in a coracle without sail or oar." A coracle without sail or oars is referred to, further, in connection with Thenog, mother of St. Mungo. See Tathai, p. 189, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> "Irish Nationality," 42.

he breathed forth his soul to heaven." Numbers of the most illustrious Irish saints studied and taught in the monastery of St. David's. Johannes Erigena, having taught geometry, astronomy and other branches of science there, was chosen by Alfred the Great to teach the sons of the Saxon nobility in the royal palace.

**Brenach the Gael**, a holy hermit, is also among the early Irish saints of Wales. A chieftain by birth, "he was venerable in mien though clothed in rough skins. He slept on the hard ground, used for his food a little bread and roots, with milk and water ; and his whole time was spent in meditation and in chanting the praises of God." He travelled to Rome, spending some eventful years in Brittany on his way back, and, having finally reached Wales, "he erected a cell near the confluence of the rivers Cleddan not far from the present town of Milford. Disturbed there by predatory bands, he proceeded to the Gwain, tarrying by Abergwain. Thence he advanced along the valley of the Nevern in Pembroke, and decided to settle in a grove ; but, conceiving that his destiny was not there, he pursued his way to the banks of the Caman, and there erected his cell at the foot of the "Mountain of the Angels," commemorated in Carn Engyli.

**Brecan**, the Irish chieftain from whom Brecknock is named, was converted to the faith by Brenach. This Brecan whose mother was Marchella daughter of Tewdrig, chief ruler in South Wales, asserted by the sword his claim to Tewdrig's territory. In due time he became one of the most prominent chieftains of Britain, and was recognised by Welsh writers as among their own hereditary princes. Through the influence of Brenach he devoted himself to the practice of heroic piety, so that his family ranked not only among "the three holy families of Wales," but among "the three holy families of the isle of Britain." And "such was the education of his children and grandchildren that they were able to teach the faith of Christ to the nation of the Cymry."

Of **Cynog**, eldest son of Brecan, Cressy says in his *Church History of Brittany*: "the fame of his sanctity was most eminent among the Silurians." He was martyred by the Pagan Saxons on a mountain called the Van in Brecknock. A church erected over his tomb and the parish in which it was erected received the name of Merthyr Cynog.



**Keyna**, sister of Cynog, also received the martyr's crown. Crossing the Severn, she erected her cell in a densely wooded glen in Somersetshire, where the local chieftain granted her a site. Here she served God for many years ; and as a result of the pilgrimages to her shrine, the town of Keynsham grew up about it. Her nephew Cadoc, finding her at Mont St. Michael near Abergaveny, prevailed on her to return to her native place where she erected a small cell on the summit of a hill. Here issued forth a spring fountain "which still remains and, through her merits, affords healing to divers infirmities." On being martyred by the Saxons, October 8, 460, St. Cadoc had her remains interred in her own oratory.

**Tathai** or **Daithi**, son of Tuathal, an Irish chieftain, "like the true metal of gold was immaculate, pure and free from the corruption of the world." Adorned with every virtue, his fame spread throughout Ireland, and "attracted to him many persons in pursuit of heavenly wisdom." With eight companions he set out for Britain in a coracle without sail or oar and, carried to the Severn, landed at Givent, Glamorgan. King Caradoc, hearing of his virtues, invited him to settle in the kingdom, with the result that he soon founded the church since known as Llandathan or Daithi's church. To this, hosts of scholars flocked for instruction in all branches of science. Yuyr, son and successor of Caradoc, having built the monastery and college of Caerwent in Monmouth, Daithi was chosen as its first abbot. He resigned in his old age to return to his original church of Llandathan. He was "buried in the floor of the church and his seven associated disciples attended the burial of their master." The most illustrious of his disciples was Cathmhaol, better known as Cadoc the Wise.

**Machuta**, an Irish virgin who tended Daithi's sheep, was martyred by Pagan marauders and in her honour an oratory was erected on the spot.

**Cadoc** or **Cathmhaol**, born of an Irish mother, and baptised and educated by Meathai an Irish anchorite, is styled in the Triads "one of the three knights of chief discretion in the royal court of King Arthur," and subsequently as "one of the three blessed youth-teachers of the isle of Britain." Having spent twelve years under the care of Tathai, *i.e.* Daithi, at Givent, he became "one of the brightest ornaments of the Church of Wales." He was the founder of Llancarvan,



the intimate friend of St. Dubricius, and the author of a large number of poems and sacred maxims preserved to our time. Having built his monastery of Kastell Cadoc, much frequented by the clergy of Britain, he proceeded to Ireland where he spent three years in "drinking in lessons of heavenly and human science"; and returned to erect a church on the banks of the Neath. It was because of his envied energy in the erection of this church that the Irish architect Liguri, was conspired against by native builders and put to death. The place was called, from the church, Llanlinguri. Cathmhaol is recognised as one of the most celebrated fathers of the Welsh Church.

**Samson**, brother of Daithi and companion of David and Gildas, was placed in his youth under the care of St. Iltud, by whom he was ordained deacon. Iltud's monastery, known as Bangor Iltud, was situated at Caerworgan, residence of the kings of Glamorgan. Desirous of greater solitude, he retired to the monastery founded by St. Ciaran on the Wye, and actually succeeded Ciaran as abbot there. He, too, sojourned in Ireland to perfect himself in the ways of holiness; and eventually crossed to the Continent, "taking with him a chariot he had brought from Ireland." His labours "throughout Armorica were those of an apostle." He was present at the Second Council of Paris in 557. More than once he visited the palace of Childebert who founded him a monastery at Pentole in the territory of Rheims. He preferred, however, to reside in his monastery at Dole, where he ended his days. In the ninth century, his relics, long treasured by the faithful, were translated to Orleans.

**Gildas**, companion of Samson in the monastery of Iltud, was born of Irish parents at Alclaid in 490. To perfect himself in philosophy and the sacred sciences, he studied in Ireland. According to his biographer, indeed, he became "rector of the school and a preacher in the city of Armagh"; but, hearing of the death of his brother, he returned to Wales, and was reconciled to Arthur, at whose hands his brother had met his death, about 508. After a period of evangelical effort in northern Britain, he repaired to Rome, and, after a sojourn there, to Ravenna. On his way home, he settled in the little island of Houath on the French coast, and finally founded a monastery on the Hill of Ruyé on the mainland.

After ten years' missionary labour he retired to Glastonbury. Subsequently, on the invitation of King Ainmire, he again visited Ireland. Among the treasures of Kildare was a bell he presented to St. Brigid. St. Brendan paid him a historic visit in Wales.

**Magloire** and Machut belonged to the same family as St. Daithi and St. Samson. Magloire succeeded Samson as bishop of Dole, but soon resigned to found, on the island of Jersey gratuitously presented to him, a monastery in which eventually over sixty monks resided.

**Machut** had been one of the companions of St. Brendan in his voyaging. Later he joined the monastery of St. Aaron in Armorica, which stood on a tract of land opposite the town of Aleth and surrounded on three sides by the sea. So much was he there revered that on the death of Aaron he was placed at the head of the monastery, round which in the course of time the city of St. Malo grew up. Towards the close of his life he was driven by the disorders which then prevailed to abandon his flock for a time. Anxious to end his days in solitude, he pushed southward to the diocese of Saintes where the bishop St. Leontius welcomed him with joy. Adhering to the end to his bed of ashes and raiment of sackcloth he passed away in the little town of Archambiac.

**Joava** was one of the most distinguished Irish missionaries of the monastery of Llandevennec, "the Glastonbury of Brittany," founded about the year 500 near the harbour of Brest. He had spent some time in Wales before crossing over to visit his cousin St. Pol who then governed an island monastery in the Morbihan and later became bishop of Leon. Driven ashore at Llandevennec, he was asked by St. Winwaloe, founder of the monastery, to preach throughout Cornouaille. While once engaged in conference with Winwaloe and other abbots, another Irish priest, named Taidoc, was killed at the altar by an armed party. On this spot a monastery, known in after times as St. Mary's monastery of Doulas, was soon erected and Joava chosen as its first abbot. On the retirement of his cousin from the see of Leon, Joava was appointed his successor ; but, after a year's rule, he passed away in 555. He is honoured as special patron of two parishes in that ancient see.

**St. Cianan**, founder of Duleek, stood by Taidoc's side on



the occasion of his martyrdom. On a journey to the Holy Land, he fasted for forty days on the Alps and decided to retrace his steps. Joava detained him for a time at Leon ; but he returned to Ireland after administering the last sacraments to the martyr.

“ Cornwall received much from christian Ireland,” writes Dom Louis Gougaud.<sup>1</sup> “ Some Irish saints, Fingar, Briac, Maudet, Vouga, landed also in Armorica, having previously passed by Wales or Cornwall. Zimmer, furthermore, has noticed Irish peculiarities of language in the monastery of Landevennec.” Again : “ Several indications lead us to think that Irish influence made itself felt more at Landevennec than in any other Breton monastery. The monastic observances as well as the tonsure of the monks were Scotie and remained in force up to 818.”

“ Holy men from our shores appear in every page of Welsh and Armoric annals from the fifth to the eighth century,” says Card. Moran. “ Their cells and churches, schools and monasteries were spread like a network over the whole country as so many secure asylums of civilisation, science and religion ; and even when the individuals who erected them had passed away, these institutions continued to produce the happiest fruits of social peace and Christian virtue.”

As early as the fifth century “ the conquest of eastern Meath by the kings of Connacht and Uisneach forced part of the population to emigrate and one body of the migrants settled in Demetia in the south of Wales.” And as late as the end of the eleventh century, MacKeenan, a native of Dublin, inherited the kingdom of Gwynedd in North Wales. “ A gift of twenty shillings to Dublin, that city being his native place,” is the first item in a list of similar donations which he bequeathed to the principal churches of Ireland.

Pursuing our inquiries northward, we find the fruits of Ireland's early endeavour no less on the mainland than in the scattered isles. The Isle of Man had Germain, Machuldus, Coeman and Mochanna, all Irish saints, as its chief patrons ; Kentigern, after an eventful sojourn in Wales, traversed Broomfield, Carlisle, Hodan, if we may so far anticipate our early relations with Scotland.

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<sup>1</sup> Les Chrétientés Celtiques, 119, 120, 123.



## SCOTLAND

Hosts of the great teachers and missionaries of early Ireland laboured also in Scotland. One of them, St. Momhaedog, patron of Fiddown, is referred to in the *Feilire of Aonghus* as "the gem of Alba." Another, Servan, sheltered St. Thenog, the Irish mother of St. Mungo. From her, St. Enoch's Square, Glasgow, derives its name. Edana, a Louth saint, who received the veil from St. Patrick, gave its name to Edinburgh where she had one of her many Scottish churches erected. Moluagh's church became the cathedral of the diocese of Argyll; and St. Cainneach of Kilkenny and Achadhbo founded the monastery which in later times became the site of the cathedral of St. Andrew in Fifeshire. Similarly the oratory and cell which, in due course, developed into the cathedral of Aberdeen, were founded by St. Mochanna, whom Colm Cille sent with twelve apostles to preach the Gospel in the east of Scotland. And tradition has it that it was at the suggestion of Moanus, patron of Portmoak, St. Brendan visited the islands north of the Scottish coast.

**Brendan** was perhaps the most distinguished of the many missionary scholars whose work lay in great part outside our shores. He was born near Fenit in Kerry, May 16, 484. Remarkable portents are said to have surrounded his birth and baptism. When twelve months old, he was placed, according to the prevailing custom, under the fosterage of St. Ita, and when he had reached the age of five, Bishop Erc interested himself personally in the boy's instruction. Subsequently he studied at Clonard; and, in visiting other monasteries to make himself familiar with the Rules of the Saints, he sojourned for some time with St. Jarlath of Tuam. Eoghan Beal, king of Connacht, offered him a site for a school, but Brendan preferred to return to Bishop Erc, by whom he was ordained a priest. His fame spread rapidly, and soon many monks wished to join him and live under his rule. But he retired to Mount Brandon, and from his lonely cell on that remote mountain was attracted by the tradition of an island in the western ocean. Soon he set out on his famous voyaging, of which we have records in every language in Europe. His fleet, on the first voyage, consisted of three vessels, each containing thirty men and three benches of

oars. This voyage seems to have lasted five years. A warm welcome and countless gifts awaited his home-coming with his whole company; and his accounts of remote islands, icebergs, volcanoes, and wondrous visions, aroused the greatest interest. His foster-mother, Ita, alone questioned the wisdom of his voyaging—in ships made partly from hides.

After a visit to St. Enda of Aran, he set out on a second voyage, reaching, after a considerable time, a remote island inhabited by the sole surviving hermit of a company of twelve, who directed Brendan to Tir Tairngire, "the Land of Promise." The voyage thereto occupied forty days, and they spent forty days traversing the country, amid forests and orchards, until interrupted by a great impassable river. They then retraced their steps. The most reputable of the American historians contend that Brendan landed on the Western Continent; and maps and charts, showing Brendan's Island in the Atlantic, have been common throughout Europe since the tenth century.

Returning to Ireland, Brendan, after a good deal of missionary work at home, set out on a third voyage. According to the oldest existing manuscript having reference to his missions oversea, he sailed on this occasion to Britain, eventually proceeding as far as Palestine, Mount Sion, Greece.<sup>1</sup> It was during this period he visited St. Gildas in Wales, and founded many of the churches dedicated to him in Scotland and the Isles, thus anticipating Columba, apostle of Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

**Columba or Colm Cille** was born at Gartan, Donegal, December 7, 521. His father, Feidlimidh, was grandson of Conall Gulban, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages. Thus Laoghaire, king of Tara at the coming of Patrick, was his great grand-uncle. His mother, Eithne, of royal lineage also, was eleventh in descent from Cathaoir Mor, king of Leinster. As he grew up, the neighbouring children referred to him fondly as "the dove of the cell." Cruithneachain, his foster-parent, was entrusted with his early education. From him he passed under St. Finian of Moville, county Down, by whom he was ordained deacon. Geaman, an aged bard of

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<sup>1</sup> "Book of Leinster," p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> For full details of Brendan's life and voyages, readers are referred to *Beatha Bhreandain*.



Leinster, seems to have been his next teacher. Subsequently he entered the famous school of Clonard, where he was ordained priest by Bishop Eitchein. Here his gift of prophecy manifested itself: on being asked by Finian why he did not put up his hut at the door of the monastery, as requested, instead of some distance away, he answered, "hereafter the door will be just here."

From Clonard he went with three companions to Glasnevin, where Mobhi had a famous school. The students having been dispersed by the great plague of 544, Columba returned to his native Ulster. At Doire Calgaigh, a fort obtained from his relatives, he had his first church built. While here "he meditated going to Rome and Jerusalem," and is recorded to have gone to Tours, whence he is said to have brought back to Derry the Gospel that had lain on St. Martin's bosom for a hundred years. Between 545 and 562 he founded many churches and monasteries. "A hundred churches which the waves frequent he had on the margin of the sea." Durrow and Kells were his most important Irish foundations.

The crowning glory of his lifework, however, was reserved for Scotland. In 563, two years after a great battle at Cul Dreimhne, "when Colm Cille had made the circuit of all Erin and sown faith and religion," as his biographer assures us, "he meditated going across the sea to preach the word of God to the men of Alba and to the Britons and the Saxons." And the number that went with him from Derry "was twenty bishops, forty priests, thirty deacons, fifty students." Reaching Iona, he turned back, and exclaimed wistfully:

—an eye of gray  
Looks back on Eirinn far away  
While life lasts, 'twill see no more  
Man or maid on Eirinn's shore.

At Iona they set up their monastery of wood and wattles, and practised the submission, the self-denial and the close observance of religious duty which characterised the monastic communities at home. For two years they were there busy. As the community increased, the surrounding islands and "the salt main on which the sea-gulls cried" supplied them with the requisite corn, vegetables and fish, and even with fish-oil which afforded them light at night.



In 565, accompanied by St. Cainneach and St. Comhghall, Columba set out on his mission to King Brude and the Highland Picts.<sup>1</sup> The king barred his gates against them; and his druids, like those of Laoghaire at the coming of Patrick, opposed the Apostle of Scotland in every way possible. Yet those whom even the Romans could not subdue were brought into the fold of Christ by the Irish missionaries.

Among the Picts, as in all the islands, Columba and his followers preached, baptised, erected monasteries, churches, schools. The Orkneys and the Shetlands, the Faroe Islands, Heligoland, even Iceland itself, were christianised by them in turn.<sup>2</sup> They had fleets of boats to visit their scattered communities. Iona, moreover, sent its missionaries to Lindisfarne, to Northumbria, to South Britain and the Isle of Man. Such was Columba's influence, indeed, that on the death of Conall, king of the British Dalriada, the saint, in accordance, it is said, with a vision, had Aedhan, not the more lawful Eoghan, inaugurated at Iona, the first royal coronation of which there is record in Great Britain.

Columba came to be known as the Divine Branch, the Precious Gem, the Royal Resplendent Star, and has been referred to as "the high leader of the Celtic world." He loved Ireland intensely. One of his messages of affection is :

O bear me my blessing afar to the West,  
For the heart in my bosom is broken ; I fail,  
Should death of a sudden now pierce my breast  
I should die of the love I bear the Gael.

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<sup>1</sup> About this period the Picts, referred to in our Annals as Cruithne, seem to have been settled, in the main, north of the Grampian mountain range. Bede mentions their language as existing in the beginning of the eighth century, and being quite distinct from those of the Irish and the British, while the *Annals of Ulster*, after the middle of the ninth, refer to Kenneth MacAlpin as "King of the Picts." They were widely spread through Ireland also, being particularly numerous in Armagh, Monaghan, Tyrone, and great part of Derry and Fermanagh. Connacht, too, had its Pictish communities, particularly around Cruachain; while smaller groups were settled in Munster, Leinster and Meath.

<sup>2</sup> In Adhamhnan's "Life of Columba," Dr. Reeves gives a list of fifty dedications to the great Abbot of Iona, including islands, islets, parishes, churches, lakes, bays, wells, fountains, scattered between Iceland and the Isle of Man.

He was a man of well-formed and powerful frame. His skin was white, his face broad and fair and radiant, lit up by large, grey, luminous eyes ; his well-shaped head was covered with close curling hair. Meat and wine he abstained from, living exclusively on bread and water, and vegetables which often consisted of nettles. He slept on the bare sand, with a stone for his pillow. Three times each night he rose to pray. By day he read or preached to the brethren, recited the Divine Office, or took his share in the manual labour of the monks.

In May, 597, feeling his end approach, he was borne on a waggon to visit the brethren at their work. That night he informed them he would go the way of his fathers. Then, leaving the granary, he returned towards the monastery, resting midway. Here, we are told, his white horse, that carried the milk to the monks, rushed up, laid its head on the saint's breast, whinnied, foamed, and shed copious tears.<sup>1</sup> The attendant, proceeding to drive the horse away, was forbidden by the saint, who exclaimed : " Let him alone, let him alone, for he loves me ! " Soon he ascended the knoll, and blessed the monastery lying beneath, after which he returned and sat in his hut transcribing the Psalter until he reached the words : " But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

He then entered the church for the vesper Mass of the vigil of the Lord's day. At its close he returned to his cell and lay on his bed, with the bare rock for pallet and the stone for pillow, commending to his brethren charity and peace.

When the bell tolled at midnight he hastened again to the church, and knelt in prayer. Diarmuid, his attendant, saw the church filled with an angelic radiance which disappeared as he approached. Entering, he found the saint lying before the altar. Raising the venerable head, he placed it reverently on his own bosom. The brethren, hurrying to the scene with lights, wept bitterly on finding themselves in presence of the dying saint. With cheerful gaze and joyful countenance he blessed them in turn by a gentle movement of the right hand before breathing forth his spirit. That night he passed away. " The great favour has been granted him that although he lived in a small and remote isle of the British ocean his

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<sup>1</sup> A somewhat similar story is told of Cuchulain's steed, Liath Macha.



name has deserved to be honourably known not only throughout the whole of our Ireland and Britain but to reach as far as triangular Spain, and the Gauls and Italy, even as far as the city of Rome itself."

His life, written by Adhamnan, has been described by Montalembert as "one of the most living, attractive and authentic monuments of christian history"; by Reeves "as one of the most important pieces of hagiology in existence." Others have referred to it as "the most complete piece of such biography that Europe can boast of," and "one of the most exquisite pieces of pure biography ever written." It is in great part a record of prophetic revelations, angelic visions, and evidences of really miraculous power. Its existence and the existence of documents like it is our answer to those who—too prejudiced or too indolent to seek the sources of our early history—endeavour to cast doubt on the authenticity of our native annals.

Having dealt in outline with the life of the Apostle of Scotland, it will perhaps conduce to clearness if we follow the labours of his disciples and fellow-teachers, in the first instance from the shores of the Solway Firth in Dumfries by Melrose and the Lammermoor range to St. Abbe's Head, where a monastery for men and women was founded under the influence of Finan, thence over the eastern coast, by Edinburgh, Arbroath and Aberdeen, as far as Nairn and the Moray Firth. Reverting, we may again proceed from Galloway in the extreme south along the western coast of the mainland to Caithness in the extreme north. Finally, we will follow their footsteps through the isles, from Arran in the South, by Tiree, Uist, Lewis, the Flannan Isles, the Orkneys and the Shetlands. In thus tracing their missionary activities all through the mainland and the islands, chronological order can be observed only approximately. In the first section the work of a number of Irish women, including St. Brigid, comes under review; the second embraces St. Ninian's ancient foundation at Whithern where many Irish teachers studied or sojourned, including Manchan of Limerick, Enda of Aran, Tighearnach of Clones, Eoghan of Ardstraw.

**Finian** of Moville, eulogised by Pope Gregory the Great, preached the faith in Alba and, according to the Breviary of Aberdeen, made with his own hands a stone cross of marvellous



workmanship, which he had erected in St. Brigid's honour. He was himself honoured at Kilwinning and at Holywood in Dumfries. In both places his wells are still pointed out. An ancient enclosure, called *Caer Winning* or *Finian's Fort*, at Dalry, seems to indicate that he preached there also.

**Feichin**, patron of Connacht, appears in Scotland under the names *Vigean* and *Viganach*. He was honoured as patron at *Ecclefechan*, in Dumfries, but his chief sanctuary was at *Grange*, near the ancient abbey of *Arbroath*, where on January the 20th a fair was held in his honour. His name occurs in the *Dunkeld Litany*.

**Servan**, a disciple of St. Patrick, sailed early to Alba, and on the shore of the Forth, near *Culross*, erected a monastery. He it was who baptised and educated St. *Kentigern*, popularly known as St. *Mungo*, whom he cherished with the deepest affection and desired to retain beside him or accompany in his missionary labours. He is variously known as *Serb*, *Sair* and *Sare*. Until a late period an annual procession was held in his honour at *Culross*.

**Thenog** or **Thenew** was the Irish mother of St. *Kentigern* of Glasgow. Accused of a crime, she was sentenced to be thrown from the high rock of *Kepduff* in the *Lammermoor* range and, escaping death, was placed by order of the local chief in a little coracle, led into the open sea at the mouth of the *Aberlassig*, now *Aberlady*, and abandoned to her fate beyond the *Isle of May*. The coracle, which had neither sail nor oars, drifted on a sandy beach at *Cullenross*, now *Culross*, in *Fifeshire*. Gaining the shore, she found shelter in a cave in the neighbourhood, where she gave birth to a boy. Mother and babe were provided with food and clothing by shepherds from the adjoining hills, and in due time brought to St. *Servan's* hermitage in the vicinity. The child received from *Servan* the name *Ceanntighearn* or *Kentigern*, and as he grew up in grace and piety he became familiarly known as *Mungo*. His mother in the course of years sharing his fame for sanctity, a chapel was erected on the place of his birth; and a church was also dedicated to her in Glasgow. St. *Enoch's Square*, where the church stood, now commemorates the pilgrim mother of that early and distinguished saint of the Scottish church.

**Modenna**, born in Conaille, received the veil from St. Patrick. After sojourning near Carlingford she proceeded to an island off our western coast where she was under the spiritual guidance of St. Ibar. St. Brigid to whom she was greatly attached presented her with a silver shrine. Returning to the Gap of the North she retired to the foot of Sliabh Cuilinn, where she erected an oratory at Killeevy, three miles from Newry. Subsequently she crossed over to Scotland and there erected many religious foundations, one of the most remarkable of which was at Chilnecase in Galloway, "where for centuries a flourishing community of nuns perpetuated her virtues and lived faithfully in the service of God." Other churches were founded by her at Dundevenal, Dunpelelder and Dumbarton, the castle of Strivelin, Longforgan near Dundee, and Edinburgh which takes its name, not from king Edwin, but from her. Long before king Edwin's time Mo Edana's sanctuary there was a place of pilgrimage. From her also the modern name of Maiden Castle is derived. Her cave chapel close to the Mull of Galloway gives its name to the parish of Kirkmaiden or Maidenkirke. Capgrave says that, clothed in rough garments and with her feet bare, she made a pilgrimage to the shrines of the Apostles in Rome. She is thought to have ended her days at Longforgan near Dundee.

**Triduana** accompanied Curitan, bishop of Rosmarkyn, to Scotland in the seventh century. "Her oratory and tomb, close to the tomb of the Blessed Virgin at Lestalrig in Lothian, became the centre of one of the most famous pilgrimages of Scotland."

**St. Brigid**, also, was venerated in many churches of Scotland. Arriving with nine virgins at Abernethy, she established a church there which was placed under the charge of St. Darlughdach. The Pictish Chronicle says that in the fourth year of his reign, Neachtan Mor, who had been in early life at Kildare, offered Abernethy to God and to Brigid in the presence of St. Darlughdach. In the monastery of Regular Canons there portion of her relics was preserved with great veneration. At Abernethy and Brechin are found the only two round towers on the mainland of Scotland. The town of Brechin had St. Brigid as patron, and Skene says that the diocese of Brechin "emanated from the Irish



church and was assimilated in its character to the Irish monasteries." We find St. Brigid's Convent in the parish of Kilmore in Bute, her churches at Kilbride near Glasgow, Rothesay, Arran, Uist and several other places. Her chapel and burn we meet at Kilbarchan in Renfrewshire, her well at Dunsyre, her chapel and well at Beath in Ayrshire. "Her dedications are also found in the Lewis islands at Borge and in Stronsay and Papa in the Orkneys. Her church in the province of Athol was famous for miracles." St. Brigid was the patroness of the great family of Douglas, and the church of Douglas still bears her name.

**Etharnan**, who has been confounded with Earnan, built a religious house on the Isle of May, and the Annals of Ulster record his death at 669.

**Itharnase "the Silent,"** patron of Clane, Co. Kildare, was venerated at Lathrisk in Fife. In the Breviary of Aberdeen, a special prayer is assigned for his festival, December 22.

**Drostan**, an Irish disciple of Colm Cille, was instrumental in founding a number of churches in the district now known as Buchan on the eastern coast of Scotland. "When Drostan saw himself about to be separated from his loved master," Columba, who had come to bless his oratory, he burst into tears. "Let us call this place the Monastery of Tears," he said, and the great abbey erected there and "for a thousand years replete with every blessing, always retained that name." After the death of Colm Cille, Drostan built a church at Glenesk. His relics have been preserved in a stone tomb at Aberdour.

**Curitan**, who had accompanied St. Triduana to Scotland, returned with St. Adhamhnan to Ireland and "assisted at the Convention of Tara in 697." He is mentioned in the Irish martyrologies on the 16th March as "bishop and abbot of Rosmarkyn in Scotland."

**Mochanna**, known also as St. Machar, is the reputed founder of the church of Aberdeen. Colin Cille, in sending him with twelve apostles to preach the Gospel on the eastern coast of Scotland, instructed him to erect his monastery and church on the banks of a river resembling in its windings the figure of a bishop's crozier. This he found near the mouth of the Don, and there he erected the oratory and cell which, in course of time, became the Cathedral of Aberdeen.



**St. Fiachra's** church in the parish of Nigg, opposite Aberdeen, is but one of many churches dedicated throughout Scotland to St. Fiachra. His name appears in the Dunkeld Litany of the Saints, and is retained also in the burial ground and holy well at Nish. Adjoining is St. Ficker's Bay.

**Modan** was honoured throughout Buchan in the north-east of Scotland. The parish of Fintray was specially dedicated to him. He was not the only Irish missionary of the name who laboured in Scotland.

**"Tallarian** an Irishman," to quote the Breviary of Aberdeen again, "was raised to the episcopal dignity by Pope Gregory and is noted as having daily offered the Holy Sacrifice. . . He laboured in the north of Scotland, and various churches in his honour in the dioceses of Aberdeen, Moray and Ross bear testimony to his labours."

**Gerrad**, another Irishman, says the Breviary of Aberdeen, further, "left his home and, coming to Scotland, associated with himself some followers of Christ at Kenedor, in the province of Moray, where he built a cell." This cell, not far from Elgin, and referred to in local charters as Holyman's Head, became a favourite resort of pilgrims. A spring in the rock, above the hermitage, was called St. Gerrad's well.

**Kentigern**, baptised and educated by an Irish missionary, was consecrated about 540 by a bishop brought specially from Ireland. Determined to seek a temporary asylum in the monasteries of Wales, he turned aside to Carlisle and brought the idolatrous people of the district to the light of the faith. At Crossfield, now Crosthwaite, in the neighbourhood, he erected a cross, and here later a basilica was dedicated to him. Proceeding by the shore, he laboured so fruitfully that in Cumberland eight churches bear his name, while at Broomfield we still find St. Mungo's well. Welcomed in Wales by king Caswallan and his son, he was offered the site for a monastery, and selected a place on the banks of the Elwy, where he erected a church of wood "after the manner of the Britons, seeing they could not yet build of stone." Thus arose the monastery of Llanelwy. He divided his monks into three classes—for agriculture, manual work, and the service of the altar, according to their acquirements and inclinations. When taking his departure from Wales he chose as successor a monk of the monastery, St. Asaph,

to whom the cathedral church and many local places have been dedicated. Returning to Strathclyde, he was welcomed at Holdelm, now Hoddan, by Fial, a prince of Irish parentage, who had welded the people into a powerful and peaceful kingdom. Having addressed Fial, known also as Kederech, his retinue and a vast multitude, he sojourned for a time in their midst, meantime making missionary excursions among the Picts and in the eastern districts of Scotland. In Aberdeenshire and Lothian several churches bear his name, and crosses, erected by him wherever he preached, survived for many centuries. He made seven pilgrimages to Rome, and ended a life of the utmost austerity on his stone couch, January 13, 603.

**Conval**, son of an Irish chieftain, sailed to the banks of the Clyde, enrolled himself among the clergy of St. Kentigern, and, through his zeal in propagating the faith, became known as the Archdeacon of Glasgow. King Aodan welcomed him with high honour and successfully urged him to pass into the territory of the Picts. He also visited Colm Cille; and he is venerated as patron of the parish of Pollokshaws and of Inchinnan on the Clyde below Glasgow, where his relics were long preserved and himself commemorated by a Celtic cross. He was venerated, too, at Cummock and at Ochiltree, and a church bearing his name existed also at Eastwood, where the ancient burial ground is still used and the fountain which supplied his followers with water still visible.

**Kevin** of Glendaloch laboured for a time in Scotland, emulating "the austerities of the fathers of the East and of the hermits of the Egyptian deserts." His memory was cherished at Machririach in Argyll, as at Kilchevin and Kilchowen.

**Moluagh** or **Luanus**, educated at Bangor, was a missionary companion of Colm Cille, and founded the great monastery of Lismore in Scotland. In time, his church became the cathedral of the diocese of Argyll. "His bell was held in great veneration till the Reformation, and his pastoral staff passed into the possession of the Duke of Argyll in whose collection it is still preserved. He predeceased Colm Cille, and has been described in our leading annals as "full of the spirit of prophecy"; "the pure and brilliant, the sun of Lismore in Alba"; "the hospitable and decorous from



Lismore in Alba," who preached and built many churches in honour of God.

**Fintan** of Teach Muna, whose festival is celebrated in Scotland on October 21, had his retreat at Eileanmunde in Loch Leven, Argyll, though his chief Scottish foundation was on the north side of the Firth of Clyde at Kilmun. A picturesque burial ground, in front of which spreads a small sheet of water called Holy Loch, marks the site of his ancient monastery. "Medieval records make mention of the saint's pastoral staff which was held in the greatest veneration throughout Argyllshire."

**M'Aodan**, or **Modan**, son of an Irish chieftain, laboured along the west coast of Scotland where many places bear his name. His first oratory was at Balmaodhan, a short distance from the ancient priory of Ardchattan on the shore of Loch Etive. A flat stone there was known as Suidhe Mhaodain, and a spring beside the ruins has been a centre of pilgrimage. A church was dedicated to him under the Ardgour range at Killevaodin. From him the parish of Kilmodan, above Loch Riddau in the Kyles of Bute, takes its name. His work of evangelisation extended as far as Falkirk, and devotion to him was correspondingly widespread and popular. In the words of Scott :

"Some to St. Modan made their vows,  
Some to St. Mary of the Lowes."

He is patron of the church of Rosneath or Ros Neimheadh in Dumbarton, where he breathed his last in 507—some authorities say in 522—and where his relics were preserved.

**Fionan**, bishop and confessor, gives its name to Glenfinnane. A small green island in an adjacent loch contains the ruins of the monastery founded there by this other disciple of Columba. A rude bell, reputed to have been used by the saint, is still preserved there.

**Maolrubha**, born in 642, cousin of Comhghall of Bangor and student of that monastery, reached Rosshire in 671 and two years later founded the monastery of Aporcrossan, now Applecross. For fifty years he ruled as abbot there, and earned such a reputation for sanctity that he was regarded as patron saint of the whole territory "from Applecross to Loch Broom." A church, erected where he expired, was



superseded by the parish church of Urquhart. His remains were removed to Applecross, and the surrounding country for a radius of six miles from his church enjoyed the privilege of sanctuary. The stream which falls into the bay, the cemetery and a neighbouring mound still bear his name, as do Suidhe Maree, Loch Maree and Inis Maree, in the parish of Gairloch, which contains the ruins of his oratory. The parish of Lochcarron, of which also he is patron, is sometimes designated Maolrubha's Sanctuary and retains its Clochan Mulrui, the stone cell of Maolrubha. "At Contin is an old cemetery called Praes Maree or Maolrubha's bush, and all through Ross-shire, indeed, frequent memorials of the saint are met. His monastery at Applecross was pillaged by the Danes.

All the Irish annals record the death, about 737, of Failbhe, son of Guaire, abbot of Aporcrossan, comharb of Maolrubha, who with twenty-two of his religious perished at sea, and the Annals of Ulster record under the year 801 that Mac Oigi of Aporcrossan, abbot of Bangor, happily ended his life in peace.

**Faolan**, born in Wexford in the beginning of the eighth century, went to Ross-shire where his uncle Comhghan had laboured before him. The ancient churches of Kilkoan and Killellan commemorate them. St. Fillan's Cave is pointed out at Pittenween, and the neighbouring parish of Forgan in Fife has been referred to in ancient documents as St. Fillan's parish. Srathfillan, not far from the scene of the Battle of Bannockburn, is also named after the Wexford saint, and his well and the ruins of his church there are yet frequented by pilgrims. His bell, long venerated there also, is preserved in the Museum of the Antiquarian Society in Edinburgh, and his bachall "still exists and has been described in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland."<sup>1</sup> He was honoured, too, as patron of the parish of Killalan in Renfrew, where Fillan's seat and Fillan's well are still shown in the neighbourhood of the church.

**Finnbarr** of Cork, after a pilgrimage to the shrines of the Apostles, laboured for a long time in Alba. "The cultus of this saint," writes Dr. Forbes, "was very prevalent in Scotland."

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. iii. p. 233.

He is "the patron of Dornoch," says Martin, "and of the island of Barra, which takes its name from him." The island of Davar in the parish of Kilberran was also known in former times as St. Barre's Island, and a statue of the saint was held in great veneration in the island of Barray, at Shilbar. "He obtained special reverence in Caithness," and his festival was kept on September the 25th at Eddlestone.

**Maeliosa**, also a companion of Colm Cille, preached the faith in many parts of Scotland, but chose as his place of retirement, penance and prayer a lonely cave in the west of Arran, where he is yet honoured as patron. For centuries his hermitage was a resort of pilgrims from the mainland and the neighbouring islands, and the names of many of them are rudely carved on the sandstone roof. His cave is scooped out of the rock twenty-five feet above the level of the sea.

**Dabius**, an Irish priest who preached with great success in his own country and in Alba, is patron of Donachloney in Down and of Kippen in Scotland. Churches are also dedicated to him in the parish of Kilninian in Mull and in the parish of Kilblane in Bute. In the parish of Weem his well is still pointed out, and tradition says he had a chapel on a ledge of the rock called Carraig an tSeipeil, the Chapel Rock.

**Cathan**, another Irish saint who laboured in Bute, had a church near the village, called after him, Kilchattan. His name has been given also to a mill, a farm, and a wooded hill, Suidhe Chathain, in the neighbourhood, and to the bay on the south side of which he had a cell. He was bishop of Kingarth. His nephew Blann, born in Bute, but educated in Ireland, had his church on the south side of the island, within the district of Kingarth of which he also became bishop. Having been on pilgrimage in Rome, he brought back a quantity of earth which he scattered over the cemetery attached to his church, at St. Blann's, and had women excluded from burial there.

Dunblane, near the junction between the Allan and the Forth, says the *Festology of Aengus* "is his principal city, and he is also of Kingarth among the Gall-Ghaedhil."

**Seanan** of Inis Cathaigh is known in Scotland as Moshenoc and Kessog. With St. Cuthbert he is joint patron of Eives in Eskdale, and he is venerated at Killenach and Achdashen-aigh in Mull and at Kilmahunah in Cantyre.

**Earnan** or **Mearnog**, disciple of Colm Cille, and patron of the Innes family, was known in Scotland as Marnan and Marnock. About three miles south of Kilfinnan, beside the shore, are the remains of a church in a field called Ard Marnoc ; and on an eminence in the neighbourhood, tradition says, he lived in " the exercises of prayer and of a penitential life." Other dedications to him are on the island of Inchmarnock, off the coast of Bute, and on the mainland. He died at Aberkerdoure. Portion of his relics and of the bier on which they used to be borne through the parish of Marnock were held in veneration at Aberbrothock.

**Ciaran**, patron of Ossory, is honoured all along the Mull of Cantyre. " The oldest church of Campbelltown bears his name, and other churches were dedicated to him in Carrick, Islay and Lismore." His hermitage near Campbelltown, his cave hidden deep in the rocks, and his holy well are visited by pilgrims. The path of pilgrimage, says Card. Moran, extends from the oratory of the saint down to the seashore where St. Ciaran's rock bears the impress of his knees.

**Buite**, founder of Monasterboice, and contemporary of Ciaran, preached with success in Scotland, too. Having lived many years in a monastery in Italy and perfected himself in the practices of piety he set out for home, bearing with him from Rome many precious copies of the Sacred Scriptures, altar vestments and relics of the saints. Accompanied by a venerable senior, he was joined on the way by a company from Germany of sixty men and ten virgins who desired to become pilgrims under his guidance. Sailing from Gaul, they landed in the Pictish territory of Scotland where Buite preached the faith and erected an oratory before returning to Ireland.

Hinba has been identified as Elachnave, a small island south of Iona, in the broad channel separating Mull from the coast of Lorne. To the south-east of the island are clustered several interesting ruins, including beehive cells and an oratory of rude masonry without lime or cement. There is also a little well, " fashioned and fructified in the living rock," and named after Columba ; an ancient cemetery with uninscribed headstones ; a pile of large stones grouped like a rude altar, and a square pillar-stone bearing an incised



cross. Adhamhnan mentions that when the holy mysteries were celebrated by Columba on the island of Hinba, Saints Comhghall and Cainneach were present as well as Saints Brendan and Cormac.

**Comhghall's** chief Scottish foundation was in the island of Tiree, where he built an oratory about 568. Subsequently holy men came from Ireland and prevailed on him to return to Bangor. "Compared with its extent," says Reeves, "the ecclesiastical remains of Tiree are very numerous. Kilbride, Kilchenich, Kilfinnan, Kilmoluag, Claodh Odhrain and Templepatrick, commemorative of Saints Brigid, Cainneach, Finnian, Molua; Odhran and Patrick, in the common calendar of Ireland and Scotland, are the names of farms on which there are or were religious houses."

**Cainneach** erected cells also on the islands of Ibdon and Eininis. Even a burial ground at Iona still bears the name Cill Chainneich. On the mainland he built a hermitage at the foot of a mountain in the Druim Alban or Grampian range; and to the present day the remains of an ancient church survive at Lagan Kenny towards the eastern end of Loch Laggan. He founded also on the east end of the province of Fife not far from the mouth of the Eden a monastery which in later times became the site of the Cathedral of St. Andrew. So many places commemorate his name that he is regarded as the favourite Irish saint in Scotland after Brigid and Columba. Like Comhghall, he was prevailed on by his followers in Ireland to return in time to Achadhbo.

**Donnan**, before coming from Ireland to Iona, was "already mature in sanctity." He erected on the island of Eigg a monastery which by its fame attracted many monks from Ireland. Whilst offering the Mass there on April 17th, 617, he and his fifty-two brethren were attacked by a body of Picts instigated by a native chieftain, and massacred on the altar at the conclusion of the Holy Sacrifice.

The Annals of Ulster refer in 616 to the burning of Donnan of Eigg with one hundred martyrs. Later the monastery was restored, and at least four successors of St. Donnan are named in our native calendars. The saint has at least a dozen dedications in Scotland and the Isles. He is commemorated by a well yet pointed out on the island and by other memorials preserved at Kildonnan on the banks of

the Helmsdale in the valley of Strathhill. His pastoral staff was held in veneration at Husterless, an island parish of Aberdeenshire, but was destroyed by the Reformers. The names of his martyred companions are preserved in the Martyrology of Tallaght.

**Flannan**, patron of Killaloe, is named in the Scottish calendars on December the 18th. West of the island of Lewis in the Atlantic, about twenty miles from the shore, are "the little islands of St. Flannan," and on the longest of the group is the little church of the saint. These islands, it is said, are never approached, even by fowlers from Lewis, except "with prayers and ceremonies."

**Becan** "the solitary" of Tir Chonaill, spent some time in Iona while his uncle Seighne was abbot there. Desiring greater solitude, he retired to the island of Rum and, erecting his hermitage there, led a long life of prayer and penitence. Tighearnach records his death in 677. Ten years earlier, in 667, the Annals of Ulster record that Colman came to Inisbofinne with the relics of the saints and the people of Skye.

**Cormac** was secured a welcome at the Orkney islands through the influence of Columba and the authority of King Brude. Three times he undertook long voyages in search of a desert island where he might found a hermitage. In the course of the third voyage he found himself exposed to much danger, being driven by a storm for fourteen days to unexplored regions where the sea was full of jelly fish, "foul little stinging creatures about the size of frogs," which not only clung to the oars but dashed themselves violently against the sides of the frail coracle. Fortunately, however, a north wind sprang up when they were almost in despair, and swept them back to Iona. "A short distance from the shore of South Knapdale in Argyllshire, opposite the old church of Kilmorey, is a small island still called 'the Island of the Great Cormac,' and in one of the compartments of its ancient chapel is preserved a recumbent statue of the saint." He has been referred to as "Cormac of the Sea, of spotless purity," and styled Abbot of Durrow, bishop and anchorite. He is one of the chief patrons of the Hebrides, and is said to have died in Orkney.

**Bearchan** of Cluain Sosta in Offaly, one of the great prophets of the early Irish Church, spent half his missionary career



in Alba. Scottish writers say he was bishop in the Orkneys and "venerated for his sanctity in the province of Stirling." He was patron of Inchmahome in the lake of Menteith and of Kilbearchan in Renfrew, and it is related in Stuart's "Sculptured Stones of Scotland" that a fine Celtic cross is dedicated to him in the parish of Houston, barony of Barochan.

**Ronan** the Kingly, Abbot of Cingarad in Scotland, is patron of many churches and of many isles, including Ronay, Raasay and Eilean Rona, "where there is a very ancient Irish oratory and some venerable Celtic crosses"; St. Ronan's Isle, on the west coast of the mainland in Zetland; and St. Ronan's peninsula, very far south in the bay of Scallaway, where "the foundations appear of an old chapel." The Annals of Ulster record his death in the year 737. Thus we see, in the words of Card. Moran, that "from Eilean Rona which stands sixty miles to the north-west of the Butt of Lewis, past the Flannan Islands and St. Kilda, down to Ailsa Crag and Sanda, the traces of hermitages and oratories are found throughout the great insular range of the Hebrides."

Their missionary labours, as well on the mainland as on the islands, continued to a very late period.

**Odhran**, an Irish saint, and his whole community are thought to have been slain by the Danes about 875 in the Isle of May where a monastery "of fair coursed masonry" was erected, but soon afterwards destroyed by the Saxons. The church, however, was much visited by the people and has a celebrated cemetery "where the bodies of the martyrs repose."

**Monan** was a companion of Odhran. He laboured before his martyrdom at Inverary, Fife. Later his relics were brought thither, and King David II erected a noble church in his honour. He is commemorated chiefly in the parish of Abercromby in Fife.

**Dubhthach**, whose body was found incorrupt seven years after his death at Toyne in the diocese of Ross, was honoured at Arbroath, at Kilduthie near the Loch of Leys and at Arduthie close to Stonehaven. Loch Duich and Kilduich also derive their names from him. He died March 8th, 1068.

**St. Malachy** paid two visits to Scotland. During the first,



he visited King David and helped with his own hands to erect an oratory of wattles and clay on the shore near Portpatrick. Just before his death he again visited it and with a company of his brethren established a monastery at Viride Stagnum, the Green Lake, over which he is said to have place as abbot a holy man named Michael, from Bangor.

**Iona** during all this time maintained the high standard of learning and piety set by its founder. For a long century and more, its pious monks, wherever they turned, were interrupted by eager men and women hastening to obtain the monastic blessing. And so far from contenting themselves with the evangelisation of Scotland, they penetrated early to Lindisfarne and from the famous monastery which they founded there, carried the light of learning and christianity all over England.

**Baithen**, who succeeded Columba as abbot, was remarkable alike for his spirit of prayer and his fine scholarship. He prayed between every two morsels of food, while he walked, and even while he carried his handful of oats to the sheaf. "Be assured," said Fintan, when asked about his learning, "that he has no equal this side of the Alps in his knowledge of Sacred Scripture and in the profundity of his science." Columba likened him to St. John the Beloved in "his innocence and simplicity of heart." Three years he ruled at Iona, having died in 600.

**Laisren**, abbot of Durrow in Colm's time, succeeded Baithen. **Ailither**<sup>1</sup> was the fourth Abbot, and he was followed by **Seighne**, nephew of Laisren. To Seighne, who ruled from 623 to 652, Cuimin Fada addressed the famous letter on the Paschal question in 634, thirty years before the historic Council of Whitby. In 640 the Roman clergy sent him an important communication on the same subject. Like Aidan and Colman of Lindisfarne, he was "an ardent defender of the ancient Irish discipline both as to tonsure and Paschal observance," having been a pupil of Columba; and he was able of his own personal knowledge to testify to many things concerning Columba to Failbhe, the eighth abbot of Iona.

**Suibhne**, an "outsider," succeeded Seighne. He died in 657.

**Cuimin**, a nephew of Seighne, succeeded Suibhne. He wrote

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<sup>1</sup> Reeves has Fergna ("Adhamhnan's Life of Columba).

a tract which forms the groundwork of Adhamhnan's Third Book. It has found its way into different records. He was an excellent Latin scholar and a graphic writer. Falvius or **Failbhe**, as already indicated, succeeded him. He died in 678.

**Adhamhnan** was the ninth abbot. He was a cousin of Seighne, and received his early education in his native Ulster. About 650 he began his novitiate in Iona, and, after thirty years there, became abbot. Bede refers to him as a virtuous and learned man, pre-eminently skilled in Sacred Scripture. He ruled Iona from 679 to 704, meanwhile paying several visits to Ireland, as head of the Columban houses, and life-long friend of Fionnachta, ardri. In 684, one of the generals of the Northumbrian King Ecgfrid visited with pillage the eastern plain of Meath, carrying off many captives, male and female. Bede deplored this unprovoked attack on the Irish monasteries in which the English had been educated. The following year, advancing against the Picts and Celts of Scotland, Ecgfrid was slain and his army routed at Dun Neachtain. Then his brother Aldfrid, son of an Irish mother, returned from his exile in Ireland—where he had made the acquaintance of Adhamhnan—and succeeded to the throne. Adhamhnan paid him a visit at Bamborough to seek the release of the Irish captives, with the result that he was able soon to bring sixty of them back to Ireland. He seems to have been weaned somewhat from the Irish observance of Easter in the course of this visit to Bamborough and of a visit at the same time to Jarrow, where the community were surprised at his frontal tonsure. Returning to Iona, he tried to induce his monks to adopt the Roman Paschal observance. Such was their attachment to their founder, the effort was in vain. He was more successful in Ireland where a synod was held on his return with the captives in 686. In 692 he paid another visit to Ireland to protest against the remission by Fionnachta of the Leinster Tribute at the instance of St. Moling. However, he forgave Fionnachta. On his return to Iona he wrote his peerless "Life of St. Columba." In 697 he paid a further visit to Ireland and, this time, had women exempted from military service. The exemption was re-enacted on the translation of his remains to Ireland in 727.

**Ceolfrid**, trained in the school of Wilfrid, is said to have given the last blow to the Celtic customs. A year after the



death of St. Wilfrid, Neachtan, king of the Picts, asked Ceolfrid for written arguments in reference to Easter and the tonsure, and for architects to build him a church of stone. The architects were sent, as well as a letter to show that, according to the usage of the Church, Easter ought to be celebrated the third week of the first lunar month, and always on Sunday. The tonsure he admitted to be "an indifferent matter in itself," but "he insisted on the fabulous tradition" by which the Roman tonsure, in the form of a crown, was attributed to St. Peter; with the front of the head shaven, to Simon the magician. The king decided to keep Easter thus, and ordained that the clergy of his kingdom assume the orthodox tonsure. Bede says the change was received with universal joy in the Pictish nation. Yet the monks of Iona acted as their brethren of Lindisfarne and Ripon had done fifty years before. They preferred to leave rather than give up their tradition—and determined still to persist. "Neachtan," say the *Annals of Tighearmach*, "expels the family of Iona from the country beyond dorsum Britannia."

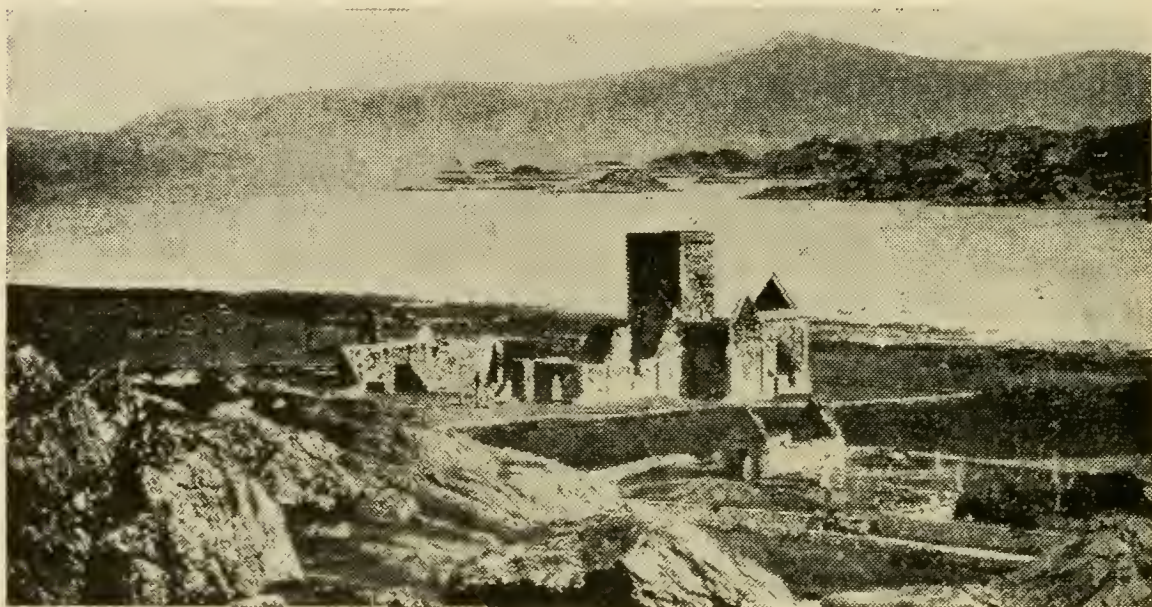
**Egbert**, while seeking a superior ascetic education in the monasteries of Ireland, conceived "the divine idea" of sending missionaries to Germany. He chartered a ship to take him direct from Ireland to Friesland; but the ship was cast ashore, and he resolved to devote himself, also, to the conversion of the Columbite monasteries. "He found other missionaries for the Continent, and thus came Vicbert, Swidbert, the two Ewalds and Willibrord, all venerated apostles of Germany." Alzog refers to the famous Willibrord, who established the bishopric of Utrecht, as "an Anglo-Saxon priest educated in Ireland." In the year of Ceolfrid's death, eleven years after that of Adhamhnan and seven after that of Wilfrid, he is said to have procured the triumph of Roman unity in the monastic metropolis founded by Columba. He had lived there for thirteen years before his death at the age of ninety.

Iona at length became a favourite place of pilgrimage. Kings and princes sojourned there. Niall Frasach gave up his crown, and died there in 778. Artgal, son of Cathal, king of Connacht, died there in 791. Many princes of the Picts and Saxons ended their days there also. In all forty-



eight Scottish, four Irish and eight Norse kings are said to be buried in its sacred soil.

In 795 the Gentiles pillaged the holy isle, and in 802 it was ruthlessly given to the flames. Two years later the community got "a free grant of Kells without a battle." In 807 they began to build a new city in Kells, and in 814 their great church was completed there. Ceallach the abbot, however, clung to Iona during his lifetime. So did many others, until they were obliged to fly from the Gentiles in



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825. But Blathmac fearlessly remained, hid the gold-adorned shrine containing the relics of the founder, and refusing to disclose its whereabouts to the marauders, was martyred.

Altogether, some fifty successors of Colm Cille in the Abbacy of Iona are commemorated in our annals. Giollacrist, the last of them, ruled there at the close of the twelfth century. Owing to the Viking incursions, however, the early authority of the great monastery had been passing away since the end of the eighth century, partly to Ireland, and partly to Dunkeld which under the rule of Kenneth mac Ailpin had attained to a position of eminence in Church and State by the middle of the ninth century. The fruits of the unselfish enterprise in Britain of the early monks of Iona, and the cold ingratitude with which they were treated by those whom they christianised and educated will appear from the ensuing account of their labours in England.

## ENGLAND

“To this day, that year,” 633, says Bede, “is looked upon as ill-omened, and hateful to all good men, as well on account of the apostasy of the English kings who had renounced the mysteries of the faith as of the outrageous tyranny of the British king. Hence it has been generally agreed, in reckoning the dates of the kings, to abolish the memory of those faithless monarchs and assign that year to the reign of the following King Oswald, a man beloved of God. . . Oswald, as soon as he ascended the throne, being desirous that all the nation under his rule should be endued with the grace of the Christian faith . . . sent to the elders of the Scots, among whom himself and his followers when in banishment had received the sacrament of baptism, desiring that they would send him a bishop by whose instruction the English nation which he governed might learn the privileges and receive the sacraments of the faith of our Lord. Nor were they slow in granting his request ; for they sent him bishop Aidan, a man of singular gentleness, piety and moderation.”

**Aidan**, a monk of Iona, who had been educated at St. Senan's, Inniscattery, was thus chosen at a conference following the death of Colm Cille, to convert the people of Northumbria, who had relapsed after the mission of Augustin. Cormac, the first prelate sent from Iona to King Oswald, had returned with a report of his failure and represented the English as “a barbarous, stiff-necked and intractable race.” “It seems to me,” said Aidan, “that you have been over rigid with these uninstructed hearers, and, contrary to apostolic practice, have not offered them first the milk of milder doctrine, until, little by little, strengthened by the Divine Word, they became capable of receiving the more perfect counsels, and walking in the higher paths of virtue.” Thus inspired, Aidan himself set out in 635. He brought with him several of his brethren, and their number increased from day to day. At the desire of the king, he duly selected the seat of his bishopric, his choice falling on Lindisfarne, a bleak and arid island not far from Berwick and connected only at low water with the mainland.

“Dry-shod o'er sands, twice every day,  
The pilgrims to this shrine find way ;  
Twice every day the waves efface  
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace.”

Here was erected the mother church of Northumbria, the religious capital of the north of England and the south of



Scotland, "the Iona of the Anglo-Saxons"; and here, as Mrs. Green truly says, "were the English taught writing and the letters used among them till the Norman Conquest." This Bede verifies: "Churches," he says, "were built in divers places; the people joyfully flocked together to hear the Word; lands and other property were given of the king's bounty to found monasteries: English children as well as their elders were instructed by their Scottish teachers in study and the observance of monastic discipline." Aidan was assiduous in teaching music to familiarise the English of the North with the solemn melody of the Roman chant. He has been referred to as "a pontiff inspired with a passionate love of goodness and full, at the same time, of a surpassing gentleness and moderation." Yet never through fear or respect of persons did he keep silence with regard to the sins of the rich, but was wont to correct them with a severe rebuke. Montalembert says "he expended on alms all that he received from the kings and the rich men." Thus, having got the choice horse of the stables of Oswin to help him in crossing rivers and performing urgent journeys, he soon presented horse and trappings to a beggar. Bede, too, pays tribute to his love of peace and charity, of continence and humility; his industry in keeping and teaching the divine commandments; his austerity in reproving the haughty and powerful, and at the same time his tenderness in comforting the afflicted and in relieving or defending the poor; finally, his mind superior to anger and avarice, and despising pride and vainglory. Further, says the great English chronicler, "it was a touching spectacle to see the king, who during his long exile had learned the Celtic tongue, translate to the great chiefs and the principal officials of his court."

Aidan, who had been ably seconded by Ceadmon, father of English sacred poetry, died August 31, 651, with his head resting against one of the buttresses of a modest church he had just built, and his remains were borne to his monastic cathedral at Lindisfarne. Under his inspiration convents for men and women arose and flourished at the mouth of the Wear, at Hartlepool and at Whitby. So, under St. Bees, an Irish princess, was established at Hartlepool the first convent ever seen in Northumbria. At Maolros, or old



Melrose, on the north side of the Tweed, arose also a house for novices under the patronage of Lindisfarne. It was placed by Aidan under Eata and "for two hundred years was a centre of piety and of Christian life for all Lothian."

**Bees**, to avoid marriage with a Norwegian prince, sailed in a skiff from Ireland to Whitehaven, and proceeded thence to Northumbria. Having received the veil at the hands of St. Aidan, a monastery soon grew up under her patronage at Hartlepool. Leaving it to be ruled by St. Hilda, she proceeded to Strathclyde and on the east coast of Cumberland founded in the year 646 another monastery which gave its name to the town of St. Bees and for nine hundred years preserved the piety of its foundress. "She was celebrated during her lifetime for her austerity, fervour, and anxiety for the poor"—combining with her prayers the care of the industrious and of the destitute sick—"which led her during the erection of her monastery to prepare with her own hands the food of the builders and to wait upon them in their workshops." Down to the Middle Ages she was recognised as patroness of the industrious and often oppressed population of the district. It was to St. Bees and her bracelet—regarded with veneration as late as the twelfth century—that the tillers of the soil had recourse against the new and unjust taxes with which their lords burthened them. She died about the year 650, and her feast was kept throughout Britain and Scotland on October 31st.

In 657, King Oswy built Hilda a monastery at Whitby. **Hilda**, be it said to her credit, never swerved from the rules and the customs learned from her Irish director and teacher, St. Aidan, and she steadily supported the Irish monks against her countryman Wilfrid in the Paschal controversy to which reference will be made later. She was buried at Whitby; but when the Danes destroyed her monastery there, her remains were transferred to Glastonbury.

**Finian**, successor of Aidan at Lindisfarne, is referred to in the *Breviary of Aberdeen* as "a man of venerable life, a bishop of great sanctity, an eloquent teacher of unbelieving races, remarkable for his training in virtue and his liberal education. While he surpassed all his fellows in every manner of knowledge as well as in circumspection and prudence, he

chiefly devoted himself until his death in 661 to works of benevolence and charity and presented in his whole life a most apt example of virtue. The episcopal church of Lindisfarne, built by him, was entirely of hewn oaks covered with reeds. Under his influence, another monastery for men and women was established by Aeba at St. Abbe's Head near Coldingham, at the end of the Lammermoor range. It was burned after Aeba's death "by a heavy vengeance from heaven." Through the medium of these various centres, active intercourse was maintained between Scotland, the north of England and Ireland. Hosts of the natives of Northumbria, in fact, came for education and inspiration to Ireland, "the cradle of their bishops and missionaries." Thus they became strongly imbued with the Irish spirit of faith, and naturally practised the rites and customs peculiar to Ireland.

**Colman** succeeded to Lindisfarne, over which he ruled till the conference of Whitby in 664. His part in the Conference and its effect on his missionary career will be discussed in due course.

**Tuda**, an Irish monk, trained in the southern Irish monasteries where the correct Easter computation obtained, succeeded Colman at Lindisfarne. But he was carried off by the plague after a couple of months, while on a visit to the monastery of Paegnalech on the western bank of the Wear at Durham.

**Eata**, one of "the twelve boys of the English nation," trained by Aidan, left Melrose on the death of Tuda to take control, at Colman's request, of Lindisfarne. He preserved and handed down the traditions of Celtic piety, and had as successor there the illustrious Cuthbert, born at Kells according to Ware's Life of Mathew O Heney, Archbishop of Cashel; at Kilcudrig, four miles from Dublin, according to other authorities.

"**St. Cuthbert**, patron of the church, city and liberty of Durham, an Irishman by birth, of royal parentage, who was led by God's providence to England"—so ran the inscription under the figure of the saint on the altar screen in the Cathedral of Durham until the Reformation. The stained glass windows which adorned the cathedral had first among the incidents of his life a representation of "the birth of the saint



at Kells " with " the bright beams shining from heaven on mother and child." The mother, Sabina, was daughter of Muirheartach, king of Ireland; "the name of the city in which he was baptised Ardbraccan;" and the name given him M'uallog. He was instructed in his youth by the bishop of Kells, on whose death, mother and child disappeared and, reaching Portpatrick in Galloway, sailed by another vessel to the coast of Argyll. Robbers, attracted by the mother's ornaments, made a futile attack on them. After a time they crossed into Lothian, where Oswald held sway and Aidan laboured. The mother soon left the child in the care of a virtuous lady at Wrangholm and went herself on a pilgrimage to Rome, where she was held in great repute for her sanctity and at her death honoured as a saint in some of the churches of the Marches.

As a boy, Cuthbert excelled in all athletic exercises and at the age of fifteen presented himself on horseback, and armed with a lance, at the monastery of Maolros, two miles below the abbey of Melrose. Soon he was observed to be assiduous in prayer, vigils and manual labour. He was singularly eloquent, too, and sang his vigils immersed to the neck in frozen water. For some time he lived as a hermit near the village of Dull, in Atholl. He erected a cell on the summit of the Rock of Weem, about a mile from the village. Besides the oratory of wood, he set up a stone cross. The church, and a well which burst forth from the solid rock, were later dedicated to Dabius, and Adhamhnan founded a monastery there after Cuthbert's death. After some years, Eata took him to Ripon, where he was wont to wash the feet of travellers who arrived cold. Wilfrid opposing the Celtic customs, Cuthbert returned with Eata to Melrose, and was elected abbot there when the plague carried off Prior Boisil in 664, memorable as the date of the historic conference of Whitby. He was himself stricken also with the plague, but one day jumped out of bed, exclaiming "What am I doing in bed? . . . Give me my staff and shoes."

Colman having left Lindisfarne after what is referred to as "the Roman triumph" at the conference of Whitby, Eata of Melrose, to preserve the hold on the island, became abbot, with Cuthbert as prior. After twelve years there,



and while yet under forty, Cuthbert retired to the island of Farne almost opposite Bamborough. Here he hollowed out a cave in the rocks through which he could see nought but the sky, and built a cell of stones so large as to seem immovable. Sheltered by an ox-hide from the elements, he subsisted on a little plot of barley, the island being too bleak to grow wheat. So great became his fame that he was visited by all kinds of sufferers, for whom he made a refectory at the landing place. His old friends visited him on feast days. In the course of the eight years he spent there (676-684) Northumbria was convulsed by the conflict between Wilfrid and King Egfrid.

Then he was waited on by the king, and induced to accept the Episcopal dignity, which he did the following Easter, being consecrated at York by Theodore and six bishops. He prevailed on Eata to accept Hexham and give him Lindisfarne which included the Roman city of Carlisle. To the last he retained his habits of cenobite and hermit, often, in the course of his visitations, sleeping in tents and in huts made of branches. Two years of the Episcopate consumed his strength. He returned to Farne in 687, and after two months there, passed to his reward on March the 20th.

**East Anglia** was really converted by King Sigebert. Driven to Gaul in his youth by his step-father, King Redwald, brother of King Edwin, he became a Christian and thoroughly imbued with the Christian faith under the guidance of Columbanus and his disciples. Summoned to the throne of East Anglia in 631, he brought with him from France a Burgundian bishop named Felix, who also was educated by Columbanus. Felix fixed his See in Dunwich, then an important port in Suffolk. They founded several schools on the French model, and in time got into communication with Aidan of Lindisfarne. Within two years, in 633, Fursa was in their midst. "There came out of Ireland," says Bede, "a holy man called

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<sup>1</sup> The shrine containing his relics and remains was preserved with loving care at Lindisfarne and at Durham, in spite of the successive ravages of the Danes and William the Conqueror, until the Commissioners of Henry VIII broke it open in the Cathedral of Durham, stole the jewels and costly property and laid violent hands on the body, of which they broke the limbs.

Fursa,<sup>1</sup> renowned both for his words and actions, and remarkable for singular virtues, being desirous to live a pilgrim for our Lord whenever an opportunity should offer. On coming into the province of the East Saxons, he was honourably received by the aforesaid king; and, following out his usual employment of Evangelist, by the example of his virtue and the efficacy of his discourse, he converted many unbelievers to Christ, and confirmed in His faith and love those that already believed."

When Fursa stopped at Cnobheresburgh, *i.e.* Burghcastle, in Suffolk, Foilleán and Ultán, Gobán, Dicuil and other Irish missionaries tarried with him; some more proceeded to France. Fursa preached with success at Burghcastle, and won the respect and admiration of Sigebert who made him a grant of a large estate near the sea, at the junction of the Ware and the Waveney. Here, says Bede, he erected "a noble monastery." Sigebert, following the example of the Irish kings, cast away sceptre, purple and crown, received the tonsure and entered a monastery, "the first example, among the Anglo-Saxons of a king abandoning secular life and sovereignty to enter the cloister." Subsequently, however, he was obliged to come forth and lead his people to battle—armed with a staff only, not a sword—and thus he fell. Elric who had succeeded to the throne being also killed, Anna the new king proved a zealous supporter of Fursa, embellished and enriched the monastery, and helped to found throughout East Anglia a number of double communities of monks and nuns.

Fursa, himself, having completed his monastery and relieved the countryside from famine, desired to withdraw from the world, and so placed the monastery under the care of Foilleán, Gobán and Dicuil. In 645 he went to live with his brother Ultán who previously had retired to a lonely hermitage. After a year in retirement, the Mercian pagans again threatening invasion, he resolved to visit the sanctuaries of Rome and the shrines of Christ's martyrs and apostles, but sojourned in France where his marvellous missionary labours won him immortality. Before his death he longed to return on a visit to his brothers, but was taken ill and died

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<sup>1</sup> Ozanam and others regard Fursa as the forerunner of Dante.



on the way. Thereupon Foilleán and Ultán also went to Flanders where we shall follow all in due course.

“The personal influence of King Oswy . . . and the intervention of the Celtic bishop Finan as administrator of the sacraments in all these details which impose a special character on the conversion of the **East Saxons** are identically reproduced in the history of the conversion of the Mercians,” or midland English. Peada, son of the tyrant Penda, was their king. To claim the hand of King Oswy’s daughter, he had himself instructed and was baptised by Bishop Finan on the same spot, near the Roman wall, and on the same day as the king of the West Saxons. His whole followers were baptised with him. He then brought home with his young wife, four monks of Lindisfarne, Diuma the Celt who became first bishop of the Mercians, Cedd, Adda and Bethin, natives trained by Aidan. Diuma was consecrated by Finan, bishop of Lindisfarne. During his two years’ episcopacy he won many to the faith, and the first monastery of the Mercians was founded at Peterborough, the cradle of Christianity in central England. He was succeeded by another Irishman, Ceolach, who returned to Iona after a brief but successful Episcopate, and soon afterwards home to Ireland. Ceolach’s successor, Trumhere, an Anglo-Saxon by birth, was educated by the Scots and, like Diuma and Ceolach, consecrated by Finan, bishop of Lindisfarne. Of his two successors, Jaruman and Ceadda, one was born in Ireland, “the other, a Saxon by birth, had been ordained by the Scots.”

**Cedd**, in response to an appeal by King Sigebert for teachers, was sent from his work among the Mid-Angles “to evangelise the new nation” of the East Saxons. Returning, after some months, to Lindisfarne to report progress, he was there consecrated, in 653, bishop of all the territory of the East Saxons, whose See was at London. For ten years he laboured, like Aidan, to prepare a native clergy. He ordained numerous priests, erected many churches, founded two monasteries “as hives of Christian piety” at Ithancaster and Tilbury; meantime, to renew his spirit, making repeated journeys to Lindisfarne. But he had the mortification of seeing King Sigebert assassinated by Saxon barbarians because “he was too merciful to his enemies.” A native monk of Lindisfarne, his linguistic attainments are attested by the fact that he



was interpreter at the Conference of Whitby in 664. He always adhered to the Irish usages in the matter of Easter and the Tonsure. During a visit to Lastingham he was carried off by the plague after a few days' illness. The news having reached Essex, thirty East Saxons, most of them priests ordained by him, hastened to Northumbria, and within a few days all save one of them, having died of the same dread disease, rested beside "the father of their spiritual life." They were no sooner dead than the people whose apostle Cedd had been "apostatized in a body."

**Jaruman**, the Irish bishop of Mercia, who succeeded Trumhere, was chosen, on the death of Cedd, to stem this national apostasy of the East Saxons and proved eminently successful. Leaving a number of priests to explain the sacred mysteries, he returned to his own flock in Mercia and held the See until 669.

**Chad** or **Ceadda**, brother of Cedd, was one of the twelve Saxon youths trained for the sanctuary by St. Aidan. Having completed his sacred studies in Lindisfarne he resided for some time in Ireland "in the sublimest practice of every virtue." At the request of Oswy he went to Kent in company with Aedhead who subsequently became bishop of Ripon. Later Ceadda was consecrated in the kingdom of the West Saxons. Like Aidan he travelled about on foot, preached everywhere—in the open country as in the castle—and gave in alms all he received from the rich. He has been referred to as an admirable teacher, a true servant of God, a most meek man, and his labours throughout Northumbria and Mercia as those of a true apostle. He fixed his See at Lichfield, built a house at Chadstowe, now Stowe, and a monastery at Ad Barvoe where King Wulfhere gave him land for a site to the extent of fifty families. He died March 2, 672.

**Dicuil**, one of Fursa's companions, first preached the faith amongst the South Saxons. Although the oldest of the Teutonic settlers in England, they had little more than a strip of the southern coast for their territory, being cut off from the rest of England by the Andredeswald, "wood of the uninhabited district," extending for more than a hundred miles from the borders of Kent to the Hampshire downs—northwards almost to the Thames, eastwards towards Kent, from which it was separated by an immense marsh. The

people were exceedingly barbarous. Still Dicuil and a little community of Irish monks ventured amongst them about 635 and erected a small monastery at Bosham three miles west of Chichester. Though they made little impression for a time, some of the nobles gradually yielded to their teaching and example: one of them, Damian, became bishop of Rochester in 656, and five years later the king himself became a Christian. His example was followed by members of his court, and others, and thus, as time wore on, arose the See of Chichester. St. Wilfrid arrived in their midst in 681.

**Wessex** was really christianised by Birinus who was consecrated by the bishop of Milan after he had promised Pope Honorius in Rome that "he would scatter the seeds of the holy faith in those furthest inland territories of England which no teacher had yet visited."

On the death of Birinus, in 650, "the Celtic element reappeared among the Saxons of the West in the person of Aigilbert, a Frank," whose father's house had been specially blessed by Columbanus, and "who had long studied in the Irish monasteries from which he had newly arrived." So pleased was King Kenwalch with his learning and activity that he induced him to become bishop of the kingdom. After ten years, however, the king, who knew but Saxon, tired of sermons in Latin or Celtic and sought a bishop acquainted with Saxon. Thereupon Agilbert resigned, becoming subsequently bishop of Paris, after which he sent his nephew Leutherius to the West Saxons. Kenwalch at the same time founded a monastery for the Saxons at Winchester, and protected and favoured the national sanctuary of the Celts at Glastonbury. It was in his time, too, the Celt Maoldubh came to lay the humble foundations of Malmesbury.

**Maoldubh**, whose very name attests his origin, established himself upon the borders of Wessex and Mercia—between the middle and West Saxons—where he founded the great school of Malmesbury, originally Maoldubh's Burgh. He was very soon able to form a community from the number of scholars that surrounded him there, including Aldhelm who in 675 succeeded him after fifteen years. Aldhelm claimed to have been the first man of Teutonic race to cultivate the Latin muse. In truth, he was a great linguist and



musician, having been trained in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, as on the harp, by his Irish masters. His fame attracted to Malmesbury an increasing number of monks and students, until the extent, variety and grandeur of its buildings made it the most magnificent edifice in England. Maoldubh, moreover, had made it absolutely independent.

**Aldhelm**, through jealousy of the Irish, to whose learning and piety he often refers with enthusiasm, ungratefully gave credit for his education to Adrian of Canterbury. Nor were his relations with the priests of Cambria particularly happy. Of them he wrote to the king of Cornwall: "Beyond the mouth of the Severn . . . they refuse to pray with us in the churches, or to seat themselves at the same table; more than this, what is left from our meals is thrown to dogs and swine, and the dishes and bottles we have used have to be rubbed with sand and purified with fire . . . if one of us went to live in their country, the natives would hold no communication with him until he had been made to endure a penance of forty days."

It would be too much to expect that these enterprising Irish missionaries who christianised England and Scotland from John o' Groat's to Land's End and all the islands from Jersey to *Ultima Thule*, could escape the envy of the native English monks. Nor did they. The attitude of Aldhelm has been referred to. The jealousy of Wilfrid was much more serious and its effects, as affecting the date of Easter, the form of the tonsure and the whole future of monasticism in England, so far-reaching as to demand more than ordinary notice. To him far more than to Danish pillaging and destruction was due the decline of religion and education, and the ultimate undoing of all that had been accomplished there by Irish enterprise and genius.

**Wilfrid** was born, in 634, of noble parentage. Desiring at thirteen to devote himself to the service of God, he was sent to Lindisfarne. After some years there, and before submitting himself to the Irish tonsure, he set out for Rome, sojourning on the way at Canterbury and at Lyons. Presented to the Pope in due course, he retraced his steps, studied for three years at Lyons, and submitted himself to the Roman tonsure, leaving the hair in the form of a crown. He arrived back in England to find that the king, Alchfrid, had estab-



lished a monastery at Ripon, and placed it under monks of the Celtic ritual, who came from Melrose, among them being Cuthbert. Wilfrid sought through the influence of the king to have the date altered on which the Irish monks were wont to celebrate Easter. The monks declined. Abbot Eata and Cuthbert, as already indicated, returned to Melrose. Wilfrid, though not yet a priest, took their place, and, at the request of Alchfrid, was ordained at Ripon by Agilbert who happened to pass by the way. Thus did he become the king's Confessor, with vast resources at his disposal and a burning zeal for the correction of the Celtic ritual. In the reforms which he sought to introduce, however, he got no direct co-operation, even from Canterbury.

The Paschal question which so exercised Wilfrid had been under consideration by the clergy of Ireland for thirty years previously. At a council held at Leithlinn the year of Wilfrid's birth, it was decided, at the suggestion of Pope Honorius I, to send deputies to Rome to study the subject there. On their return the whole South of Ireland, through the influence of Cuimin,<sup>1</sup> adopted the Roman cycle and Paschal calculations. The North of Ireland and Northumbria declined. In Aidan's time the original custom, brought to Ireland about the time of Patrick, was not questioned. In the time of Fionan, Ronan, a much travelled Irish monk, argued in favour of the custom subsequently adopted by the Council of Nice, assailing Fionan "with violence and ferocity." In the time of his successor, Colman, the dispute became general, the two kings of Northumbria becoming involved. Alchfrid and his queen, under the influence of Wilfrid, adopted the new Roman custom; Oswy, the Celtic; his queen, under the influence of a Roman missionary, the Roman. Thus *two* Easters<sup>2</sup> came to be celebrated under the same royal roof. And to arrive at uniformity, Oswy summoned the historic Council of Whitby.

"Since the earliest days of Christianity," says Montalembert, "a division had existed as to the proper date for

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<sup>1</sup> It was then he wrote the famous letter discovered later on the Continent.

<sup>2</sup> The Easter to which the Irish clung so tenaciously was really an old Roman Easter fixed by an earlier Roman Cycle.—Card Gasquet.

the celebration of Easter. Some churches of Asia Minor followed the custom of the Jews by placing it on the 14th day of the first lunar month of the year. But all the churches of the West, of Palestine and of Egypt, fixed upon the Sunday after the 14th day of the month nearest the vernal equinox, so as not to keep the feast along with the Jews, and the General Council of Nice erected this custom into a law of the church. The only mistake made by the Celts was that of neglecting to keep themselves informed of the difficulties which arose as to the manner of determining the first lunar month which ought to be the Paschal month. . . . In respect of the dispute between St. Augustin and the Britons of Cambria, they had remained faithful to the custom which prevailed at Rome itself when Patrick and the other missionaries to the British Isles brought thence the light of the Gospel. At this period, in Rome and in all the West, the ancient Jewish cycle of eighty-four years was universally followed to fix this date. The christians of Alexandria, however, better astronomers than those of Rome, and specially charged by the Council of Nice to inform the Pope of the date of Easter of each year, discovered in this ancient cycle some errors of calculation, and after two centuries of dispute they succeeded in making the Roman church adopt a new Paschal Cycle, limiting the celebration of Easter to the interval between the 22nd of March and the 24th of April. The Celtic churches had no knowledge of this change which dated from the year 525, . . . they retained their old Jewish Cycle of eighty-four years, and adhered obstinately to it. They celebrated Easter always on Sunday, but not always on the Sunday appointed by the Roman Church after the new calculations. Thus it happened that King Oswy was eight days in advance of his wife and complained of having to rejoice alone in the Resurrection of Christ, while the Queen was still commemorating the commencement of the Passion in the services for Palm Sunday. Throughout this controversy, the Roman church displayed an exemplary moderation. . . . She did not impose on Wilfrid the mission he had taken upon himself. It was not at Rome but at Lyons he received the tonsure which the Romans themselves do not seem to have

taken much pains about. . . It is already evident that under the veil of a question purely ritual was hidden one of political and personal interest. . . it was a struggle of race and influence. On one side the Celtic spirit, . . . of which the great Abbot of Iona was the type, and the apostle of Northumbria the representative; on the other the spirit of Rome, of discipline and authority as represented by Wilfrid. England was the stake."

Thus arose the Council or Conference of Whitby, convoked by King Oswy to regulate and terminate an unseemly dispute. He desired the question publicly debated in a parliament composed of the principal ecclesiastics and laymen of the country as well as those entitled to sit in the national councils of the Anglo-Saxons. The Conference was held in the double monastery of monks and nuns governed by the princess Hilda, then fifty years of age. Though baptised by bishop Paulinus during the first Celtic mission, St. Hilda was completely devoted to the Celtic tradition, having received the veil from Aidan. Her whole community were of the same view, and much under the influence of Colman, then the only prelate of Northumbria. Colman attended the Conference, as did Cedd, a monk of Lindisfarne, partly educated in Ireland, and now bishop of the East Saxons. He acted as interpreter, with wonderful impartiality, between those who spoke Irish, English and Latin.

Oswy having opened the proceedings, Colman explained on behalf of the Celtic monks that they derived their usage through Colm Cille from St. John the Evangelist, inspired by the Holy Ghost. They kept Easter as did Polycarp and all his disciples of old. They dare not and would not change it. Agilbert, the Frank, on being asked to speak, desired to be represented by Wilfrid. After a long discussion, Oswy declared against the Celtic monks. Agilbert returned home. Cedd renounced the customs of Lindisfarne. Colman, on the other hand, refused to recognise the decision of the Council and, abandoning his diocese, went to Iona to consult the Fathers of the Order. He took with him part of the bones<sup>1</sup> of Aidan, founder of Lindisfarne and first Evangelist of

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<sup>1</sup> He left part of the bones behind, says Bede, to be interred in the sacristy.



Northumbria. Tuda, a Celtic monk, succeeded Colman as bishop of all Northumbria. However, both Tuda and Cedd, the interpreter at Whitby, were carried off by the plague, that very year, 664, as was the archbishop of Canterbury.

Wilfrid succeeded, but he failed to win the attachment of either Hilda, the monks of Lindisfarne, or any of those who revered the memory of Aidan and Columba. He ungratefully refused to be consecrated by any of the Celtic bishops. On the contrary, attended by a great retinue, he went to Gaul where with much pomp he was consecrated bishop of York by Agilbert assisted by eleven other bishops. After the ceremony he was borne in a golden chair through the kneeling multitude. His consecration as bishop of York, not of Lindisfarne, was designed to efface all traces of the Celtic mission in that region. It did not succeed. Returning, he was shipwrecked on the coast of Kent, but escaped to find that in his absence Oswy had returned to the Celtic usage and appointed Ceadda or Chad, a disciple of St. Aidan and brother of Cedd the interpreter, as bishop of York. So Wilfrid was obliged temporarily to retire to Ripon. Subsequently he was deposed as bishop of York by the metropolitan, Theodore, and the diocese was divided between three bishops taken from the Celtic monasteries: Bosa, educated at St. Hilda's monastery, was placed over York; Eata of Melrose, "one of Aidan's twelve boys of the English nation," over the new Hexham; and Eadhead, who had been associated with Ceadda at Ripon, over the third diocese, *i.e.* Lindisfarne. This was done without consulting Wilfrid, who was expelled. Soon, however, he decided to appeal publicly to Rome. On the way there with a large retinue, he was driven ashore at Friesland, and succeeded in making many conversions in north-eastern Germany. Rome in due course declared in his favour, but on his return to England he was tried and committed to prison by Egfrid. He was shortly transferred to another prison near Dunbar. On his release towards the end of 680 he set out for Mercia, but had no sooner accepted the hospitality of Beorthwald, a noble, than he was banished by orders of the king. He next went to Wessex where a similar fate awaited him. Finally he proceeded to Sussex—where, as already stated, was a small foundation of

Celtic monks at Bosham, established about half a century earlier. In Sussex he met with much success.

Aildfrid succeeding to the throne in 685 restored Wilfrid, who in 687 regained the favour of Theodore, and had Hexham, Ripon, York and Lindisfarne united under his crozier. Lindisfarne so opposed Wilfrid's administration, however, that he was obliged after a year to give it up to a new bishop, Eadbert, "who calmed all parties."

Theodore, the metropolitan, died in 690, and was succeeded by Berthwold, a monk of Glastonbury, who presided over the English church for forty years. He, also, was hostile to Wilfrid, as was Canterbury throughout. Aildfrid, too, having lived long in Ireland, favoured the Celtic as against the Benedictine spirit. Moreover, he desired that Ripon be separated from York, and placed as a separate diocese under Eadhead, with the result that Wilfrid was expelled, and went to Mercia, where the vacant See of Lichfield was placed under him. After Wilfrid had spent twelve years here, Berthwold, now metropolitan, convoked a council of bishops at Nestrefield near Ripon, at the instigation of Aildfrid, when Wilfrid, who was bidden to appear, was divested of all that he had either in Northumbria or in Mercia. In the course of his final reply he gave new evidence of his rooted antipathy to Ireland. "Since the first fathers, whom holy Gregory sent," he said, "was I not the first to root out the evil plants of Scottish planting, and bring the Northumbrians back to the Roman Easter and the crown-shaped tonsure."

Once more, at the age of seventy, he set out for Rome, and was absolved unanimously. He returned to find the friendly king of Mercia had entered a monastery. Aildfrid refused to accept "the mandate of the Holy See," and was reconciled to Wilfrid only on his death-bed. Wilfrid was warned under pain of death to quit Northumbria within six days. After a stormy interlude, the archbishop of Canterbury summoned a further Council of bishops, nobles and abbesses, and as a result of much discussion a general reconciliation took place. Wilfrid got back Ripon, Hexham and their rich possessions for which he always longed. Four years later, June 23, 709, he died very wealthy at Oundle near Northampton.



“Left to himself,” says Montalembert, “he loved pomp, luxury, magnificence and power.” He it was who set the example of pilgrimages to Rome. Previously nobody had thought of them. Some years after his death, the Eternal City seemed irresistibly to attract Saxons of all ranks, princes and bishops, monks and laity, men and women, rich and poor. And, as unworthy monks introduced indolence and vice into the cloister, so the conduct of the pilgrims soon aroused the indignation of the faithful in France and Italy, with the result that the English assemblies and princes were implored to forbid absolutely the pilgrimages of women to Rome. Nor was this all. “In the midst of the peace and security which we enjoy,” wrote Bede in 731, “many Northumbrians, some noble, some humble, put aside their arms, cut their hair, and hasten to enrol themselves in the monastic ranks, instead of exercising themselves in their military duties.” Montalembert goes farther: “Since the death of Aildfrid,” he says, “there was scarcely a great noble who had not taken advantage of his position to acquire a monastery for himself, or even for his wife. They all professed to be abbots . . . submitting themselves to a kind of tonsure.” Elsewhere he says: “Who will not regret with me that the church which alone had the necessary discernment and authority should not herself have set limits at a suitable moment to the unlimited increase of wealth in the monastic corporations.”<sup>1</sup> Ten years after the death of Bede, the Second Council of Cloveshoe found it necessary to lay down the most stringent rules as to the demeanour, dress, occupation, amusements and food of nuns, abbots and abbesses. The abuses and the decadence here implied were the outcome largely of the monastic luxury initiated by Wilfrid, who for fifty years had tried with all his might to discredit and defeat the Irish monks, and was never discriminating in the language he employed towards them. The alleged grounds of his opposition to them were the tonsure and the paschal question. The result was to blunt in England the faith planted there by the self-sacrifice and

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<sup>1</sup> “It is upon this rock,” of property, “that the monastic ark has perished, drawing with it in its shipwreck the whole Catholic Church of England.”—Monks of the West, ii-640.



example of the Celtic monks.<sup>1</sup> So far as Wales and Cornwall were concerned, his zeal for reform respecting Easter and the tonsure had anything but the desired effect. At least Bede wrote, after Wilfrid's death: "The Britons . . . for the most part, as a nation, hate and oppress the English nation and wrongfully and from wicked lewdness set themselves against the appointed Easter of the whole Catholic Church . . . yet they can in neither purpose prevail as they desire, for though in part they are their own masters, yet part of them are brought under subjection to the English." Again: "They hold high their tonsured heads but not in the form of a crown." What his interference effected in Lindisfarne and Iona has already been explained.

Glastonbury of the Gael, "the national sanctuary of the Celts," in Britain, survived to flourish anew and restore education to England. "Here," says an ancient writer, quoted by Cardinal Gasquet, "rest the relics of a band of holy Irish pilgrims, who, returning from a visit to the shrines of Rome, turned aside to Glastonbury out of love to St. Patrick's memory,<sup>2</sup> and were martyred in a village named Shapwick. Hither, not long after, their remains were brought by our glorious king Ina," son of Ceadwalla. "In later centuries were brought hither, even from distant Northumbria, the relics of Paulinus and Aidan and Ceolfrid, of Boisil, of Benet Biscop and of others," including the saintly Hilda.<sup>3</sup> Here also rest David and Gildas of Wales.

"Soon after the close of the Celtic period," says Card. Moran, "the monasteries and schools of England began to decay. They were brought almost to ruin by the terrible devastations of the Danes: the first sign of returning life and of the revival of piety and learning among the people was when the Celtic monks began once more to instruct the Saxon youth in Glastonbury."

At the period, through the neglect of the successors of Alfred, "there were no public schools throughout the king-

<sup>1</sup> At Lindisfarne for more than a century wine and beer were totally unknown. At Coldingham, Adhamhnan lived on two meals a week, and often passed whole nights in vigils.

<sup>2</sup> St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, has been erroneously regarded as first abbot of Glastonbury. Sean-Phadraig is said to have been among its first abbots. <sup>3</sup> "Last abbot of Glastonbury."—Gasquet.

dom, education was an object which the nation in general disregarded, and hence to such an extent had ignorance prevailed that, it is said, an ecclesiastic could scarcely be found capable of either writing or translating a Latin letter. It happened, however, that about the year 950 a number of Irishmen, distinguished for talent, and deeply versed in every department of literature, repaired to Glastonbury where they undertook to give lectures and to employ every means in their power for the re-establishment of knowledge. . . . Their instructions were attended by members of every rank, and among their pupils is noticed the celebrated St. Dunstan."<sup>1</sup>

Not only was Dunstan, who had an appropriate biographer in William of Malmesbury, skilled in the Scriptures and the sacred writings of the fathers of the Church and in ancient poetry and history, he showed a special taste for arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. "Bells which he, himself, had made for Abingdon were still preserved there in the thirteenth century," while "at Glastonbury they showed crosses, censers and ecclesiastical vestments, the work of his hands. Above all, he loved the scriptorium, and spent much of his time in writing and illuminating books." So great was his proficiency in all branches of human science that his enemies, confounded by his genius, could only allege against him that "he had been trained to necromancy by his Irish teachers in the island of Avalon."<sup>2</sup>

Osbern, author of another life of Dunstan, says: "The Irish teachers were skilled in every department of learning, sacred and profane," and "under them were educated many young English nobles sent to Glastonbury with that object."

Who can wonder then that Montalembert says: "Of the eight kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxon confederation, that of Kent alone was exclusively won and retained by *Roman* monks. To the *Celtic* monks the others almost entirely owe their conversion. Even among the Saxons of the South—in Sussex—the Romans left no trace. The Celtic monks founded a small monastery at Bosham, under the leadership of an Irish compatriot of Fursa. Though the people of Sussex were not converted by them, they owe the faith to a monk trained in the school of the Celtic missionaries."

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<sup>1</sup> Brenan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," 188.

<sup>2</sup> Moran, 27.

## EGYPT TO ICELAND

The stories of the voyaging of Brendan between the Holy Land in the East and the "Land of Promise" in the West and of Cormac and others in the Northern seas derive added interest, if not confirmation, from Dicuil's great work *De Mensura Orbis Terrarum* written in the first quarter of the ninth century.<sup>1</sup>

**Dicuil** tells us, in this "interesting monument of early Irish Scholarship," that his country was Ireland, his teacher Suibhne. And of the islands north and north-west of Scotland he says, some of them he lived in, some he visited, some he had merely seen, and of some he had only read. Thirty years earlier, about 795, he had got information about Iceland from priests who had dwelt there. Further information he had obtained from the Report of the Commissioners sent by the Emperor Theodosius to survey the provinces of the Roman Empire and from the *Natural History* of Plinius Secundus. He also quotes from others, including Caius Julius Solinus and Dionysius.

Speaking of the Nile, in his sixth chapter, he says: "Although we never read in any book that any branch of the Nile flows into the Red Sea, yet Brother Fidelis told in my presence to my master Suibhne, to whom under God I owe whatever knowledge I possess, that certain clerics and laymen from Ireland, who went to Jerusalem on pilgrimage, sailed up the Nile for a long way." From the river the pilgrims saw "the Barns of Joseph," *i.e.* the Pyramids, rising like mountains, four in one place, three in another. They landed and, coming to one of the greater pyramids, saw eight men, a woman and a lion lying dead beside it. The Pyramids were built entirely of stone, square at the base, rounded towards the apex and tapering to a point. Fidelis, measuring one of them, found the square face to be 400 feet in length. Going thence by the canal to the Red Sea, they found the passage to the eastern shore at the Road of Moses to be only a short distance. Fidelis wished to examine the spot, where Moses entered the Red Sea, for traces of the Chariots of Pharaoh; but the sailors, being in a hurry, refused to facilitate him.

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<sup>1</sup> Published in Paris in two editions, 1807 and 1814, respectively.



Of Ireland he merely says there were islands round the coast, some small, others very small. But he quotes the somewhat haphazard statement from Solinus that "Britain is surrounded by many important islands, one of which, Ireland, approaches to Britain itself in size. It abounds in pastures so rich that if the cattle are not sometimes driven away from them they run the risk of bursting. The sea between Britain and Ireland is so wide and stormy throughout the entire year that it is navigable only on a very few days. The channel is about 120 miles broad."

Passing towards the Faroe Islands, the author informs us: "There are several other islands in the ocean to the north of Britain, which could be reached in a voyage of two days and two nights with a favourable breeze. A certain trustworthy monk told me that he reached one of them by sailing for two summer days and one night in a vessel with two benches of oarsmen. Some of the islands are very small and separated by narrow straits. In these islands for almost a hundred years there dwelt hermits who sailed there from our own Ireland. But now they are once more deserted, as they were from the beginning, on account of the ravages of the Norman pirates. However, they are still full of sheep and of various kinds of sea-birds. We have never found these islands mentioned by any author."

The Faroe Islands, it may be observed, are appropriately named, in Irish, *Oileain na gCaorach*, i.e. the islands of the sheep.

Comparing the conditions at the Equator and in the Arctic regions in a manner which leaves no doubt as to his acquaintance with the theory of the sphericity of the earth, he asserts those writers are mistaken who say the Icelandic Sea is always frozen, with a perpetual day from spring to autumn and a perpetual night from autumn to spring. For Irish monks had sailed thither in an open sea in a month of great natural cold and, whilst there, enjoyed alternate day and night except about the summer solstice. A day's sail further north, however, brought them to the frozen sea.

Cormac the Navigator is reputed to have made three voyages in the northern ocean, seeking a desert island where he might lead a hermit's life. Adhamhnan says he sailed

northwards for fourteen days until terrified by the sight of monsters. Returning he touched at the Orkneys.

"It is now thirty years," says Dicuil, "since certain clerics who remained in that island, *i.e.* Ultima Thule, from the 1st February till the 1st August, told me that not only at the summer solstice—as Solinus said—but also for several days about the solstice, the setting sun at eventide merely hid itself, as it were, for a little while behind a hill, so that there was no darkness even for a moment; and whatever a man wished to do he could do, . . . as it were in the light of the sun; and if he were on a mountain of any height he could doubtless see the sun all through."

Thus it came that when the Norwegians first reached Iceland, A.D. 860, they found Irish books, bells and croziers, left there by men who professed the Christian religion and were called Papas, or Fathers, by the Northmen. Dicuil, who was a keen critic of Latin poetry and a prolific writer, finished his work in the spring of 825, "when night gives grateful rest to the wearied oxen that had covered the seed-wheat in the dusty soil."

## CHAPTER VIII

### EARLY IRISH ON THE CONTINENT

*(The Spiritual Empire of the Gael continued)*

#### ITALY



IN attempting to classify under the different countries of Western Europe the continental labours of our early missionaries and scholars, it becomes necessary to point out that the more earnest of them travelled extensively, moving from country to country without regard to territorial boundaries. To give anything like definiteness of location to their individual activities would therefore be impossible. Accordingly, names and records will be found, as far as feasible, under the countries with which they were most prominently associated.

"The influence of the ancient Irish on the Continent," says Dr. Sigerson, "began in the works of Sedulius,<sup>1</sup> whose 'Carmen Paschale,' published in the fifth century, is the first great Christian Epic worthy of the name. Though he adopted the Latin forms of verse, he infused into them certain characters which reveal the Gael." Distinguished in his native country, he travelled in Gaul, Italy, Asia, returning finally to Rome, "where he shone by his astonishing erudition and beautiful composition." A Council of seventy bishops in the pontificate of Gelasius said: "We have the highest opinion of the Paschal work written in verse by the venerable Sedulius"; and Hildephonsus, Archbishop of Toledo, said of him further: "He was an evangelical poet, an eloquent orator and a Catholic writer." Deeply versed as he was in sacred and profane literature, the Church has

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<sup>1</sup> Some hold this Sedulius was not of Irish origin, but was confounded with one of the many later Irish missionaries of the name.



honoured many of his hymns with a place in the Divine Office. His death occurred about 494.

**Columbanus**, most distinguished of all our missionaries, was born in Leinster about 540. Resolving early in life "to rush to the standard of the Cross," he is represented as stepping over the prostrate form of his widowed mother who threw herself on the threshold in a vain effort to prevent his leaving her for ever. We next find him studying diligently at St. Sinneill's famous school at Cluain-inis in Loch Eirne, and subsequently at Bangor, "the Valley of the Angels," where he was ordained. Conceiving, about the age of fifty, an irresistible desire to evangelise foreign countries, he set out from Bangor with twelve disciples, among them Gall, Deicolus, Killian and Potentinus. Arriving in France about 590, when crime and vice almost unspeakable were rampant there, "Columbanus' preaching everywhere found open ears and hearts." His praises being soon on everybody's lips, he was invited by king Guntran of Burgundy to his court at Orleans, pressed to sojourn in the kingdom for the kingdom's salvation, and finally given the ancient Roman fort at Annegray as a site for a monastery. When the number of the pilgrim's followers became too great, Childebert II, nephew and successor of Guntran, granted him the site of another strong castle at Luxeuil, eight miles distant. And the great monastery erected there again proving inadequate to his growing needs, he erected a third, five miles to the north, at Fontaine. Concurrently, leagues of forests and defiles were transformed into rich pastures, until the complaint was made that the monks, with their clearances and their cultivation, were destroying the chase in the surrounding woods. These monasteries consisted of clusters of huts, with a couple of larger buildings, church, guest house, school, barn, and all surrounded by ramparts of palisades or stones. The three were under a common rule.

This celebrated Rule of Columbanus was exceedingly rigorous: it allowed but one meal a day towards evening—the food being of "the roughest and meanest kind." It ordained also that the monk go to rest so fatigued that he should fall asleep on the way, and get up before he had slept sufficiently. For three weeks the saint himself lived on grass, the bark of trees, and bilberries. He even required his

sick brethren to thresh the wheat. Yet they became so numerous as to be able to organise the perpetual service and celebrate God's praises in unending song. To their untiring industry is it due, indeed, that half of France and of ungrateful Europe have been restored to cultivation and life.<sup>1</sup> Evidence of this unselfish industry emerges incidentally from one of the letters written by Columbanus on the historic Easter controversy then raging : in it he asks " but a single grace " —to be permitted to "live in silence in the depths of these forests beside the bones of seventeen brethren whom I have already seen die."<sup>2</sup>

Childebert II died by poison in 596, leaving two sons, under age, between whom Burgundy and Austrasia were divided. The real ruler, however, was Brunehilde, their grandmother and guardian ; while Neustria was governed by her enemy Fredegund in the name of her own son, a minor. Expelled from Austrasia for her arbitrary methods, Brunehilde went to Burgundy, where she behaved similarly. To induce her son Thierry to repudiate his lawful wife after a year was, perhaps, the least of her serious crimes. At the king's instigation, moreover, the bishop of Venice, who had induced him to marry, was murdered by ruffians. Columbanus, too, was threatened with the vengeance of Brunehilde because he would not lend himself to her wicked schemes. So far from accommodating her, however, he succeeded in leading Thierry back to virtue ; but Thierry again relapsed under his mother's influence. Eventually, the Irish monks refusing to admit the royal party to the monastery at Luxeuil, Columbanus was ordered out of the country on pain of death. He was taken to Besançon, where a native monk interceded for him in vain. However, he returned to Luxeuil, and, on being again requested to leave, replied : " Having left my country for the service of Jesus Christ, I cannot think that my Creator means me to return." The rude soldiers, moved by his earnestness, implored him, unless he wished them to lose their lives, to leave. This " the Driver of the Chariot of God " did, in 610, amid the lamentations of the community.

Passing through Auxerre, Autun and other centres, he

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<sup>1</sup> Montalembert, 554-i

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 555-i



embarked on the Loire. On arrival at Orleans, where he and his retinue were regarded as outlaws, no one would sell them provisions. A Syrian woman, however, relieved them, and was rewarded by the restoration of her blind husband's sight. Sailing by Tours, Columbanus was naturally anxious to visit the tomb of St. Martin; but he would not be permitted to land. However, the boat was stayed by an invisible force, and reached port, so that the saint was able to spend the night near the holy tomb. He was even found there by the bishop, who hospitably took him to dine.

From Nantes, Columbanus wrote to Attalus of Luxeuil a letter of rare wisdom and affection, urging adherence in his absence to their old Easter custom, and recommending, as his successor, Attalus himself—or Waldelenus, should Attalus prefer to come to him. Even from Nantes his departure was hastened by the bishop and court. But the Irish-bound vessel on which his companions had already embarked was driven aground at the mouth of the Loire and remained so for three days. The captain thereupon had the monks to disembark, and he was soon able to proceed on his voyage. Columbanus thereafter was permitted to go where he pleased. The passion for pilgrimage at once re-awakened in him, and he determined that Italy should be the scene of his final labours. So he directed his steps towards Soissons, the court of Chlothar II, king of Neustria, where he was warmly welcomed and pressed in vain to sojourn. Here, however, he left Potentinus, who came originally with him from Bangor, and was still abbot of Coutances where Jonas wrote his life of Columbanus. He was, himself, given a royal escort to Theodebert, King of Austrasia, whose estates he had to traverse on the way to Italy. As he passed through Paris, Meaux and Champagne, the Frank nobility brought him their children to be blessed. Among those thus blessed were Burgandofara, who subsequently founded with her patrimony the famous double monastery of Eboriacum, and the three brothers Ado, Rado and Dado, sons of Autharius a Burgundian nobleman. Ado founded the monastery of Jouarre (Ussy); Rado, treasurer to Dagobert, laid the foundations of the Abbey of Reuil; and Dado or Audoenus, advisor of Dagobert, and Keeper of the Royal Seal, erected with the aid of his brothers the monastery of Resbach in the forests of



Brie, modelled on Luxeuil, and having as its first abbot Agilus of Luxeuil, a disciple of Columbanus.

Theodebert, like Chlothar, received Columbanus cordially. At the court of Austrasia, moreover, he had the consolation of being met by a number of his brethren from Luxeuil. The king, reminding him that there were still many pagans along the Rhine, and offering him a grant of any fiscal lands he might select within the Austrasian dominions, Columbanus agreed to "make an attempt to spread the seed of the Christian faith in the hearts of the people." Provided by the king with sturdy oarsmen, the monks descended by the Moselle to Coblenz and by the Rhine to Mainz. Thence they passed through Worms, Speyer and Seltz, where they entered the territory of the Alamannians. Reaching Basel, Ursicinus bade farewell to his master, and, penetrating into the passes of the Jura, built his hermitage on the banks of the Doubs at the foot of Mount Terrible. The others continued their journey and, leaving the Rhine at Waldshut, ascended the Aare and Limmat till they came to Zurich. After a brief stay they proceeded to Tuggen on the southern extremity of the lake. So impetuous were the missionaries that they broke the beer boilers of the natives, burned their temples, and threw their gilded idols into the lake. For this they had to flee to Arbon on the southern shore of Lake Constance, where they were welcomed warmly by Williamar the parish priest and, after seven days, conveyed to Bregenz. Here they laboured for two years among a people accustomed to offer sacrifice to Wotan.

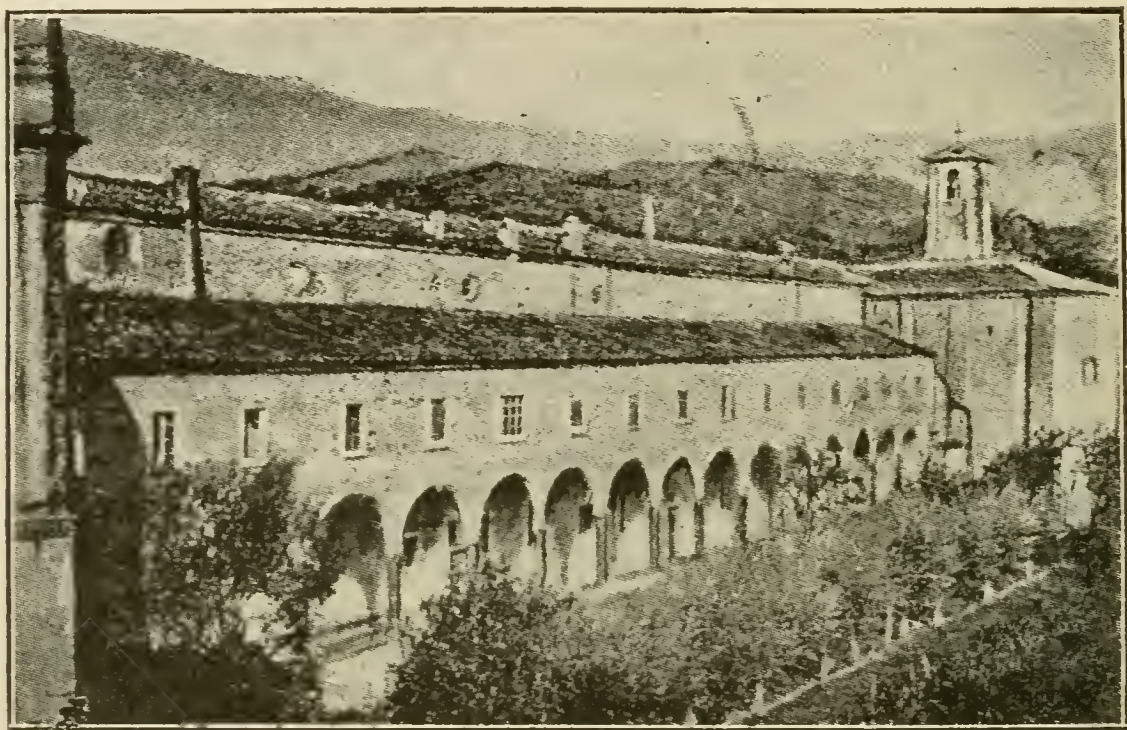
Austrasia and its dependencies having, after a series of bloody conflicts, fallen again into the hands of Brunehilde and Thierry, Columbanus felt obliged to proceed elsewhere. Gall, fever-stricken, had, perforce, to remain behind. Accompanied by Attalus, Sigisbert and others, Columbanus pursued the journey across the Alps. At Chur, Sigisbert turned aside by mountain passes over fields of perpetual ice, and in "a desert land, a place of horror and vast wilderness" laid the foundation of the celebrated abbey of Disentis.<sup>1</sup>

Agilulf, king of the Lombards, and his queen Theodelinda, received Columbanus in their court at Milan with all possible

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<sup>1</sup> Burned with its valuable MSS: in 1799 by the French.—Metlake 172.

deference, and bestowed on him the territory of Bobbio in a gorge of the Appenines between Milan and Genoa. Here he restored an old church and added a monastery ; and, despite his great age, he shared industriously in all the labours of the workmen. "He made Bobbio a citadel of orthodoxy against the Arians, and established there a focus of knowledge and instruction long the light of Northern Italy." The



MONASTERY OF ST. COLUMBANUS, BOBBIO

monastery established, he visited Rome. "A saint is now drawing near," said the Pope at his approach. Luxeuil founded by him previously, was the most celebrated school of the seventh century. And, as monasteries arose all over Britain through the labours of the children of Iona, so "from the banks of Lake Geneva to the coast of the North Sea, every year saw the rise of some monastery peopled and founded by the children of Luxeuil." He was, himself, according to his biographer, Jonas, the first to establish the monastic order among the French, at a time when, as Alzog says, "ecclesiastical discipline had become greatly relaxed and Christian morality was almost unknown." His disciples are said to have founded, in all, one hundred and five monasteries in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and



Belgium, and countless churches have been dedicated to them.

He was a prolific and versatile writer. At the age of sixty-eight, with the characteristic genius of his race, he addressed to a friend an interesting epistle in Adonic verse. And while at Milan, he was induced to write Pope Boniface II, in the name of king Agilulf, a letter which has been warmly discussed ever since as much for its boldness as for its essential loyalty to the successor of Peter. Over a decade earlier, finding himself seriously involved in the Easter controversy, he had written to the Synod of 602: "If I am the cause of this tempest, make it cease by casting me into the sea." He has been referred to as a formidable rival to St. Benedict, but, as Montalembert well says, "neither in his writings nor in his life is there anything to indicate that this rivalry was intentional."

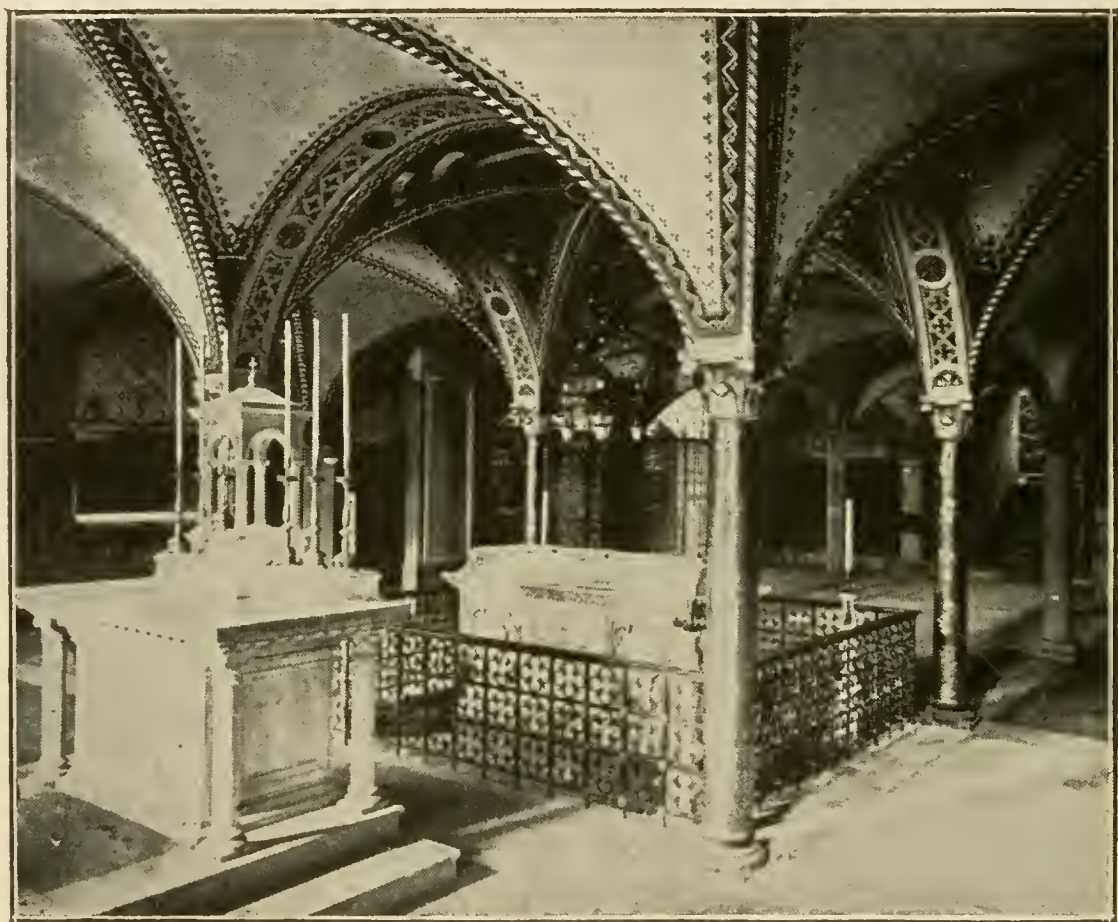
Thierry, his persecutor, died suddenly at twenty-six. Soon after, his four sons and his mother Brunehilde were delivered up to Chlothar II and subjected to untold sufferings. Brunehilde, who with all her faults was not altogether devoid of charity, ended her life by being put to the rack for three days, and afterwards tied to the tail of a wild mare and dragged to death. Chlothar II sent Abbot Eustace to invite Columbanus back to Luxeuil, but the latter reluctantly declined. Before long, he retired to a cave on the opposite side of Trebia, which he converted into a chapel and dedicated to the Mother of God. There he ended his days in fasting and prayer. After his death, November 23, 615, it was venerated and frequented by afflicted souls. Three centuries later, the records state, those who entered there sad and down-cast left consoled and rejoicing.

The remains of the saint were laid to rest in the abbey church by the monks of Bobbio. The precious relics with those of his successors, Attalus, Bertulf, Bobolen and Comgall, and twenty-one other saints of the great monastery repose in a marble shrine on the high altar in the crypt of the church there dedicated to Columbanus.

**Frediano** was commanded by Pope John II to fill the episcopal chair of Lucca. This saint of our race, historians assert to be no other than St. Finian of Moville. He was a most successful administrator. "If ever a bishop ruled his



clergy with a strong hand and insisted on the fulfilment of all the duties of the ministry, it was Frediano. He set himself to imitate the most perfect patterns, such as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine." Periodically he retired to some hermitage so that, undisturbed, his heart and mind "might be refreshed by a holy and spiritual life." He formed into a community a number of devoted priests driven from their



TOMB OF ST. COLUMBANUS

monasteries by persecution, imposed on them the Rules of the Lateran Canons of Rome, lived, dined, prayed, sang psalms with them, and employed them in teaching and in paying visits of inspection throughout the diocese. In this work he was, himself, most assiduous. He died in 588. In a parchment, dated 680, express reference is made to the monastery of St. Frediano, city of Lucca.

**Sillan** died also at Lucca on his way from Rome in the sixth century. His ancestors appear to have belonged to Connacht ; at least, his brother Maedoc and his sister dwelt

off the Connacht coast. He was a friend and benefactor of St. Ita. His sister was married in Lucca to a wealthy nobleman named Goffredus. She died in the convent of St. Salvatore there, as did her brother later on. The remains of the saint with the precious parchments, seals, diplomas and manuscripts of the monastery have passed through many vicissitudes. His tomb which stood in the centre of the church has disappeared, Margaret Stokes tells us, as has the old coffin on which was his effigy between two saints.

**Pellegrinus**, whose original name, like that of many another Irish saint, is forgotten, penetrated as far as the Holy Land, and fasted forty days in the desert. He returned through Egypt, whence he sailed to Italy, landing at Ancona, and journeying thence to Lucca. Finally he sought repose in the district of Garfaguana in the Apennines, and died in 643.

**Cathaldus**, who was born in Ormond in 618, and educated at Lismore, went also on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Returning he was shipwrecked at Taranto, of which, at the urgent request of the natives, he became bishop about 680. He is venerated as the second apostle and patron of the city. His relics, enclosed in a silver shrine adorned with gold and jewels, are preserved in the Cathedral, and he is commemorated with much pomp on March 8th as on the 8th and 10th May of each year. His life, in prose and verse respectively, has been written by the brothers Morini of Taranto. He died in 690.

**Donatus**, the brother of Cathaldus, founded the church of Lecce in the neighbourhood of Naples. He died about 700. Bishop **Cumian**, about twenty years after the death of Donatus, came from Ireland to end his days at Bobbio. Yet he was spared to labour there for twenty years, and a monument was erected to him by one of the Lombard kings.<sup>1</sup>

**Dungal**, a monk of Bangor, is found at St. Denis in 810, a year memorable in history for its two eclipses of the sun. Charlemagne, struck by the phenomenon, requested Abbot Waldo to get an explanation from Dungal, and Dungal, in 811, presented a most learned and interesting report thereon. Yet he was not more famed as astronomer than as theologian and poet. The opening lines of a poem he addressed to Charle-

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<sup>1</sup>Card. Moran on the authority of the *Bobbio Chronicle*.



magne are, indeed, characteristic : “ While the great men of the world,” he said, “ do honour to the king by bringing large and weighty gifts of glittering silver and gold, multitudes of precious stones set in sacred shrines of metal, shining garments and purple robes embroidered in gold ; tawny steeds, foaming beneath the restraining bridle, whose lofty necks are laden with trappings of barbaric gold—while such tributes are yearly paid to the great King Charles, the Irish exile sendeth verses.”

By this time the subject of Iconoclasm agitated the greater part of Europe, the war having spread from Constantinople. The views of Pope Hadrian had been embodied in the Acts of the Sacred Council held at Nice in 787. In 794, on the initiative and under the presidency of Charlemagne, a largely attended synod of Frank and German bishops was held at Frankfort. After ten days' discussion the Synod, misled by a defective translation, censured the decision of the Council of Nice in regard to the honour due to sacred images. This censure, in turn, was effectively refuted by Pope Hadrian. Claudius, a Spaniard, appointed bishop of Turin by Louis the Pious, successor of Charlemagne, soon broke into revolt, took away the crosses from his cathedral, tore the pictures from the walls, broke the images of the saints and denounced their worship, and condemned the custom of pilgrimages to Rome and to holy places generally. His disloyalty reached its climax in a letter to his friend Abbot Theodemir in 824, in which he inveighed against any veneration whatever of images or the cross, the invocation of saints and the celebration of their festivals.

With a view to reconciling the contending parties, and with the consent of the Pope, another conference was summoned in Paris in 825 by Lothair who succeeded Louis the Pious. The same year, by the Edict of Lothair, Dungal, who had not been much heard of during the reign of Louis the Pious, was placed in charge of the school of Pavia. “ We desire then,” says the Edict, “ that at Pavia, and under the superintendence of Dungal, all students should assemble from Milan, Brescia, Lodi, Bergamo, Novara, Vercelli, Tortona, Aequi, Genoa, Asti, Como.” Moved by “ the scorn of the divine cross ” evinced by Claudius, Dungal replied in a letter of extraordinary learning and conclusive argument,



under the force of which Iconoclasm reeled for seven centuries. His varied attainments were appreciated alike in France and Italy. "Dungal," says Muratori, "carried into Italy the Scotie love of learning, and I was the first to observe that he presented fine copies of books to the very ancient monastery of Saint Columban of Bobbio, whence copies of these were spread throughout other parts of Italy." Among them was the Antiphonary of Bangor, a book of hymns in Latin, dating from the seventh century. "This golden fragment of our Irish liturgy," to use the words of Cardinal Moran, "lay in Bobbio for eight hundred years, until transferred by Cardinal Frederic Borromeo to the Ambrosian Library of Milan.

**Donatus**, born in the kingdom of Scotia of noble parents, appears to have been educated at Iniscealltra. As he grew in wisdom and learning, the memory of his sayings was preserved ; and as he went forth to teach and shed abroad the light of knowledge it was said of him : " Yea, he loved all the people ; all the saints are in his hands ; and they sat down at his feet : everyone shall receive his words."

Early in life he made the acquaintance of a noble brother and sister, Andrew and Brigid ; and in the course of time " the greatest happiness of Donatus was the instruction of Andrew, while the greatest enjoyment of Andrew was obedience to Donatus." One day he revealed to his disciple a desire to visit the holy places of Italy. Andrew, in spite of the entreaties of sister and relatives, decided to accompany him. Embarking on a ship, with scant provisions, they soon reached their destination, and rested at the monasteries and hermitages on their way to Fiesole, then without a pastor and passing through a crisis. Tired after their journey, they entered the hospice, and were soon led to the abbey, which was filled with people. There Donatus said, in answer to an inquiry : " We are both men of Scotia ; he is named Andrew, I Donatus." He had no sooner spoken than he was led into the bishop's chair. Though he strove hard to avoid the Episcopal burden, " his resistance was overborne by the people, and he was enthroned in the chair of Fiesole." He was bishop in 824, when Louis the Pious and Lothair, patrons of Dungal, reigned together.

In the words of his biographer, " he was liberal in almsgiving, sedulous in watching, devout in prayer, excellent in

doctrine, ready in speech, holy in life. His countenance betrayed the serenity of his spirit, and the gentleness of his speech revealed the serenity of his heart. . . Happy Scotia which brought forth such a one : let Hibernia rejoice, which sent forth such a teacher ; let Fiesole and the whole province of Tuscany be glad." Elsewhere he says : " He whose duty it is to guide the young in the way of good works and good actions may well follow the holy footsteps of that most perfect youth Donatus. In him wisdom and learning grew with increase of years, and his memory was stored with all things most worthy. In the government of the flock committed to him, he was diligent as Moses, faithful as Abraham, chaste as Joseph, just as Phineas, courageous in battle as David, and following Christ our Saviour in love and charity."

He was present at the Coronation of Louis II in Rome, and, having returned, and ruled his diocese for sixteen years, he again visited Rome in 861 to attend a Lateran Council against John, Archbishop of Ravenna. Three fragments of his writings have been preserved. One, the prologue to the Life of St. Brigid of Kildare, has been translated into many languages, and in this rendering was familiar to Moore :

For westward lies an isle of ancient fame,  
By nature blessed, and Scotia is her name.  
Enrolled in books—exhaustless is her store  
Of veiny silver and of golden ore  
Her fruitful soil for ever teems with wealth,  
With gems her waters, and her air with health.  
Her verdant fields with milk and honey flow,  
Her woolly fleeces vie with virgin snow.  
Her waving furrows float with bearded corn  
And arts and arms her envied sons adorn.

The story of his death is very touching. In a long prayer he blessed the people, who crowded round him weeping, signed them with the cross, and passed away. He was laid in a stone coffin, and his epitaph was carved on his tomb.

**Andrew**, with the approval of Dungal, restored an ancient sanctuary, laid waste by the fierce soldiers of Totila. He obtained the co-operation and the alms of the pious people of the neighbourhood and laboured, himself, "after the



manner of a reasonable bee." Having enlarged the basilica and re-established the monastery near that of his master, he drew around him a number of devoted men, famed for their lives of austerity and purity. During their labours they lived on most scanty subsistence "rejecting all superfluous things and distributing the surplus among the poor." Andrew did not long survive his master. His biographer records that himself and his well-loved sister Brighid had the mutual consolation of meeting each other just before his death. Strengthened by Brighid's cheering words, he raised himself on his knees from his harsh hairy couch, clasped his hands, bade farewell to his sister and his brethren, and, with a prayer on his lips, passed to his reward. The monks carried the body reverently away, and laid it on a bier opposite the altar. Meanwhile all the people of Fiesole and the surrounding country hastened to the monastery of St. Martin and, approaching the body, kissed the hands and feet in reverence, and carried away with them whatever shreds of the holy man's garments they could secure. The embalmed body of the saint lies beneath the high altar.

**Brighid**, immediately after the death of her brother Andrew, left the monastery and settled near the source of the river Sieci. Here she founded a church which she dedicated to St. Martin of Tours. In her old age she sought another place in the forest, where she might lead in solitude a life of penitence and prayer. High up among the Apennines she found a lonely cave in a region haunted by wolves. Here, at Opa-cum, or Lobaco as it is now named, she spent her remaining years in fasting, vigils and prayer, her food consisting solely of fruit and roots. Peasants visited her hermitage to offer her portion of the spoils of the chase. Knights and holy matrons came there also, and now and then came a devout monk with comfort to her soul. She died about the year 870.

Venerating her as a saint, the people buried her remains, and, on the site of her hermitage, erected a church to her memory. In after years her birthday was celebrated with great solemnity in this church of St. Brigida ; and as a result of the pilgrimages to her shrine the surrounding wastes were reclaimed, the forests cleared, and the fields planted, so that in a short time "the region was no longer uninhabited." Her grotto remains, as does her church.



## GERMANY

We have seen how, as Columbanus proceeded from France to Italy, some of the more zealous of his followers, notably, Deicolus, Potentinus, Ursicinus, Ceallach or Gall, and Sigisbert, turned aside to carry the Gospel into wayside places and thus succeeded in establishing famous monasteries in Germany and Switzerland, where, indeed, they but followed in the footsteps of Fridolin the Traveller.

**Fridolin** was born in Ireland, some say of royal parents. He embraced the ecclesiastical state, and being a man of great eloquence and piety, preached with much zeal in various parts of the country. Desiring to spread the Gospel in other lands, he crossed over to France, and attached himself to St. Hilary's monastery of Poitiers, of which in time he was elected abbot as the reward of his industry, piety and learning. Thus he became the intimate friend and adviser of King Clovis, who helped him to rebuild the church of St. Hilary, to which, when completed, its patron's remains were translated.

Leaving at Poitiers two nephews who had joined him there and taking with him part of the relics of St. Hilary, he proceeded towards the east of France where, on the banks of the Moselle, he erected a monastery, since called Helera—in honour of St. Hilary. It was endowed by Sigebold, bishop of Metz, and dedicated in 714. He next founded the monastery of St. Nabor; and, having supplied both with priests and monks, he proceeded to Strasburg and there erected another church in honour of St. Hilary. After some time, he founded at Coire, in the Grison country, a further church in honour of his favourite saint. While here engaged he ascertained there was an uninhabited island on the Rhine and, exploring the river, discovered the island of Seckingen. Attracted by its solitude, he resolved to establish religious houses there. The inhabitants of the neighbouring districts, regarding him as a spy or, at best, an intruder, seized, cruelly flogged and scourged him, and finally cast him into prison. Having effected his escape, he successfully appealed to the king for a grant of the island, and soon had erected a church and a monastery. The inhabitants, so far from molesting him, now aided him in his work, as did Urso, a nobleman of Glaris in Switzerland, who, indeed, endowed his monastery

with extensive lands. Having completed the monastery, he established a nunnery in connection with it. Both soon became celebrated ; and Fridolin's labours there were commemorated by having his figure placed on the cantonal arms and banner. In all, he founded eight monasteries on the Continent, six of which he dedicated to St. Hilary. He spent the closing days of his laborious life at Seckingen, and, at his death on the 6th March, 514, was buried in his own church there.

The " chief assistant " of Columbanus " in these missionary labours," says Alzog, " was another Irishman, named Gall, as daring and resolute as himself, and able to preach in the German as well as in the Latin language."

**Gall**, cured of his fever, chose a retreat where the Rhine falls into Lake Constance. Passing, towards evening, with a deacon, where the Steinach hollows a bed in the rocks, his foot caught in the brushwood, and he fell. Here is my chosen habitation, he said, here my resting place for ever. He arranged two hazel boughs in the form of a cross, attached to it the relics he carried round his neck, and spent the night in prayer. Forthwith he erected an oratory and huts for twelve monks whom he diligently instructed in sanctity and theology. His labours were rewarded by Sigebert with vast territory between Lake Constance and the Alps. The bishopric of Constance, offered him by the Duke of Alamannia, he however declined, recommending in his stead, a native disciple, named John, who in due course was consecrated. Magnus, another disciple and deacon, he sent across the Alps to inquire after Columbanus. He returned with tidings of the great saint's death, and with his crozier, bequeathed to Gall. Ten years later, on the death of Eustatius, a deputation of six Irish monks came from Luxeuil to pray Gall's acceptance of the government of the abbey. This also he declined, while detaining the deputation for several days and treating them with the utmost kindness. While on a visit to Williamar at the castle of Arbona, to preach on an occasion of great solemnity, he was taken ill, and died after a fortnight, on the 16th October, 645, at the age of ninety-five.

The miracles attributed to him, as to Columbanus, are almost numberless ; and such was the effect of his preaching that, even before his death, the entire country of the Alamans



had become a christian province. His hermitage attracted pilgrims in increasing numbers until, aided by the munificence of princes, it developed into a noble abbey and was recognised as one of the most celebrated schools in Christendom. Its abbot eventually became prince of a canton of a thousand square miles with a population of 135,000.

**Deicolus** or **Dicuil**, believed to be a brother of St. Gall, had accompanied Columbanus on his expulsion from Luxeuil. On the road to Besançon, he felt his limbs fail so that he could not proceed. With the consent and blessing of Columbanus, he decided to make his pilgrimage in the desert. Seeking a place of rest, he met a swine-herd with a drove of swine. The herd, astonished at his apparel and appearance, asked whence he came. Be not afraid, dear brother, he replied. I am a traveller and a monk. Of your charity, show me where a man may live. Sticking his staff in the ground, he assured the anxious herd his drove would be safe, and the pair set out through the wood. Thus was discovered the site of the historic town of Lure and of its monastery whose abbot, "eleven centuries after this adventure, was reckoned among the princes of the Holy Roman Empire."

Instigated by a local ecclesiastic, the local chief, Werfair, sought in time to persecute and mutilate Dicuil; but, before his unspeakable order could be carried out, he was himself seized with a shameful and mortal illness. His widow made a gift of all the land surrounding Lure to "the traveller of Christ," and soon numerous disciples came to join him. One day a boar, pursued from the royal demesne by Chlothair II and his party, took refuge in Dicuil's cell. "Since thou comest to seek sanctuary," said the monk, "thy life shall be spared," and he patted the boar on the head. Chlothair on coming up found the monk to be a disciple of Columbanus. He thereupon bestowed on his community "all the forests, pasturage and fisheries possessed by the public treasury in the neighbourhood of Lure, which became from that time, and always remained, one of the richest monasteries of Christendom."

**Ursanne** or **Ursicinus** also left Luxeuil with Columbanus, and, having founded a little Christendom on the shores of Lake Bienne, settled amid the rocks overlooking the upper course of the Doubs. Here herdsmen, searching along the



wild gorges for their cattle, discovered him on a mountain, living "like another St. John Baptist, in community with the bears." Thence arose the name Ursicinus or Urson. His example of mortification excited the sympathy and admiration of some, the envy, derision and hostility of others. A wealthy resident of the neighbourhood invited him to his house, nominally to preach. Having made him drunk with wine, to which he was not accustomed, the host and his family sought to mock him and to bring him into public contempt as a glutton and a hypocrite. Far, however, from having the desired effect, his disciples so increased that he was obliged to remove from the heights and erect his convent on the river bank at the foot of the pass. Attached to it was a hospital for the sick poor. Baggage cattle were also kept there to help travellers over the mountain paths.

The monastery was ruled after Ursanne's death by Germain of Luxeuil, first martyr among the disciples of Columbanus, and by Vandregisil who was so impressed by the traces of the industry, piety and example of Columbanus that he determined to come to Ireland to seek "the secrets of penitential life and the narrow way." But he did not succeed, having been intercepted by influential people who knew his worth. Subsequently he built the famous monastery of Fontenelle, planted the first vineyard of Normandy, and at his death left three hundred monks in his monastery.

**Disibod**, born in Ireland of a noble family, was remarkable for great genius and considerable learning. He was ordained priest in his thirtieth year, and subsequently elected bishop. Having governed his See for ten years, he was obliged, according to Marianus Scotus, to resign it in 674. Thereupon he forsook Ireland, and with three learned and religious men, Gisualdus, Clement and Salust, travelled into Germany where he preached the Gospel assiduously for another decade. At length he arrived at a wooded mountain where, through the bounty of the owner, he founded a monastery which attracted round him many of the religious of the order of St. Benedict. The place was named Mount Disibod, changed later into Dissenberg, in the Lower Palatinate, where he laboured with great industry for thirty years. His death occurred on the 8th July; and his life was written by Hilgardis, a nun educated at Dissenberg.

**Killian**, patron saint of Wurzburg, was born of illustrious parents in Ireland. Giving evidence of sanctity, in early life, he was placed under holy men and instructed in sacred history. Arrived at a proper age, he embraced the monastic life and, on being admitted to Holy Orders, resolved to visit foreign places and preach the word of God to pagan peoples. Accompanied by a priest named Colman and a deacon named Totman, he set out for the Continent, in spite of the wishes of his community, and preaching through Gaul, in due time reached Wurzburg in Franconia. Here he remained for some time, instructing the pagan people, and converting large numbers. A few christians already among them rendered him much assistance. Gozbert, duke of the country, soon showing indications of a leaning towards christianity, Killian, in 687, repaired to Rome to perfect himself for the missionary labours that opened up before him. The Pope, impressed by his pure faith and profound learning, empowered him to convert Franconia: some say, he consecrated him bishop. Returning in company with his disciples, Colman and Totman, he was welcomed by the duke and received at Court. At a Council of the nobles, subsequently convened by the duke, Killian explained the doctrines of the Christian religion and controverted the arguments of the heathen priests, with the result that many fell down and embraced the God of the Christians and with Gozbert and several of his subjects thereupon embraced christianity.

But Geilana, the duke's wife, resisted obstinately, and took sides with the heathen priest, the more maliciously because Killian convinced the duke she was unlawfully married to him and they should separate. To this the duke consented, but desired the matter postponed as he was about to proceed on a military expedition. After his departure, Geilana sent conspirators with whom she had plotted to assassinate Killian and his companions. While praying in the oratory, Killian, Colman and Totman were set upon and, offering no resistance, were instantly beheaded, and their bodies, vestments, crosses, ornaments and sacred books buried in a deep pit, on the 8th July, 689. The duke, on his return, inquired for his spiritual guide, and was told that he and his companions had left the country. The truth soon became known, however, and Geilana and the assassins



all met horrible deaths. The remains of the martyrs were disinterred in 752, and honourably laid in his church by St. Burchard, bishop of Franconia :

“ Lest dishonoured they should sink in dust,  
Burchard erects this monumental bust.”

**Virgilius**, perhaps the most distinguished Irish missionary who preached the Gospel in Germany in the eighth century, was raised to the priesthood and had even been Abbot of Acadh Bo before he left his native land. Arriving in France about 743 he was graciously received by Pepin, who became much attached to him and detained him for two years at Carisiacum near Compeigne on the Oise, sending him then with a strong recommendation to Otilo, duke of Bavaria. Through the good offices of Otilo, he was appointed abbot of St. Peter's monastery at Saltzburg, and soon found himself in conflict with St. Boniface, archbishop of Mentz. In 746 a priest used defective Latin in administering baptism, and Boniface, coming to hear of it, ordered Virgilius and Sidonius, a companion and countryman, to rebaptise those thus baptised. They refused, but Boniface insisted ; whereupon Virgilius communicated all the facts to Pope Zachary for his decision. The Pope was astonished, and warned Boniface never again to act in a similar manner, explaining at the same time that though the priest's Latin was bad the baptisms were none the less valid, and the contention of Virgilius accordingly sound doctrine. Boniface, hurt by the Pope's rebuke, and, like his countryman Wilfrid, jealous of the esteem in which Pepin and Otilo held Virgilius, treated him with much harshness and preferred several puerile charges against him. These alone would not have attracted the notice of the Pope had they not been supplemented by a misrepresentation of the view of Virgilius on the sphericity of the earth and the existence of antipodes, on which he had written a treatise. The Pope, acting obviously on a misrepresentation of the theory of Virgilius, pointed out that if it were proved that he held the doctrine of there being another world and other men living under the earth it would be necessary to convene a Synod and adjudge according to the canons the author of the error. Virgilius had no difficulty



in convincing the Pope of the correctness of his theory, with the result that no Synod was convened. On the contrary, the reputation of the Irish exile for sanctity and learning and ecclesiastical knowledge was vastly enhanced. German writers recognise in him "a man the most learned amongst the learned."

In 756 Virgilius was appointed Bishop of Salzburg by Pope Stephen II and King Pepin. It is said he had his consecration deferred for two years. Having taken possession of his See, he consecrated a basilic in the city in honour of St. Stephen, and placed in it an abbot and monks from St. Peter's. He enlarged the cell of St. Maximillian, built by St. Rupert, first bishop of Salzburg. He also built a basilic, which he constituted his cathedral and dedicated to St. Rupert whose relics he enshrined in it. And he established at Ottenga a monastery which was endowed by Count Gunther.

Karastus and Chitimar, son and nephew of Baruth, the Slavonian duke of Carinthia, were at that time hostages in Bavaria, and not only became warm friends of Virgilius but christians through his teachings. On the death of Baruth, Karastus became duke of Carinthia and introduced christianity among his subjects. Karastus, who died in the third year of his reign, was succeeded by Chitimar, who was of a very religious disposition and under the spiritual guidance of Majormas, a priest ordained by Virgilius. Chitimar entertained an almost filial respect and veneration for his teacher Virgilius, and made yearly presents to St. Peter's monastery to mark his love for its saintly bishop. Moreover, he requested Virgilius to visit his territories and confirm his subjects in the faith. Virgilius, unable to comply, sent Modestus, a bishop, several priests, a deacon and inferior clerks, with power to consecrate churches and perform all the necessary offices of the ministry. Modestus became a most zealous missionary. After his death, Virgilius, again requested by Chitimar to visit Carinthia, sent Latinas, a priest; but he, owing to friction arising out of a disputed succession, was obliged to leave. Virgilius, none the less, kept supplying it with priests until christianity was finally established there.

Towards the close of his life he made a visitation of his vast diocese, administering confirmation, preaching, eradicat-

ing all traces of heresy. During his progress he ordained many priests, consecrated many churches, reformed many abuses, and was received everywhere with the greatest welcome and respect. His visitation comprised Carinthia, where he was entertained by the Duke Watune, the great patron of religion, who succeeded Chitimar; "and he proceeded as far as the frontiers of the Huns, where the Drave joins the Danube." Soon after his return to Saltzburg he was seized with illness, and passed away on the 27th November, 785. He was canonised by Pope Gregory IX in the year 1233.

**Dobda**, who accompanied Virgilius from Ireland, was appointed bishop of Chrempsee, in Upper Bavaria, by Otilo, and there established a famous school, and distinguished himself as a teacher.

**St. Alto**, referred to as another companion of Virgilius, led the life of a hermit for several years in the forest between Augsburg and Munich. The fame of his sanctity having spread through the neighbouring country, Pepin, failing to induce him to leave his solitude, granted him some land in the heart of the forest. Here in 750 he undertook the erection of the monastery of Altmunster which became a fruitful nursery of saints and learned men. He is said to have composed several devotional works. His festival is observed on the 9th February.

**Albain**, apostle of Thuringia, embraced the monastic state in Ireland, and repaired to Germany where he converted numbers to the faith, and in 741 became bishop of Burarburgh near Fritzlar in Hesse. He has been venerated as patron saint of that extensive territory. Though reputed an accomplished writer, the only one of his works extant is a book of meditations addressed to the people of Duringen. His festival is kept on the 26th October.

**Fintan** a native of Leinster, seized by the Danes, was taken to the Orkneys, whence after much privation he escaped to France. With several companions he went on a pilgrimage through Gaul, Alemannia and Lombardy in 840, travelling thence to Rome, and sojourning ultimately for five years in the Irish monastery of Reichenau, founded in Switzerland by Pirminius. Fintan subsequently retired to a cell where for

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<sup>1</sup> Brenan's Ecclesiastical History, 154.



close on a quarter of a century he passed a life of mortification, voluntary penalties and absolute seclusion, and through recourse to prayer was able to resist the cravings of a devouring hunger. He is said to have been favoured with many visions and to have heard celestial voices which contributed much to the renown of the neighbouring monastery. So great was the veneration in which he was held that the community of Rheinau adopted him as patron. He died about 878<sup>1</sup> and is commemorated on the 15th November.

“**Moengal** came from Rome to the Abbey of St. Gall,” writes Ekkhard, historian of the monastery, “in company with his uncle Mark to visit their countryman Grimoald who was elected abbot of that monastery about the year 840.” Zimmer puts it in other words: “About the same time that Johannes Scotus was directing the school at Paris, Sedulius devoting himself to teaching in the Cathedral school of Lugi, and Findan in the monastery of Rheinau, there came to St. Gall on their return from Rome, an Irish bishop Marcus, his nephew Moengal, and a number of compatriots.” The extent of Moengal’s learning becoming known to the fathers of the house, he was prevailed on to settle there, with the result that for many years he delivered theological lectures in the institution. Among his disciples are reckoned Notker Balbulus, Ratpert and Tutilo. He wrote a commentary on the Scriptures, and homilies on the lessons of the Gospel. In 870 he was appointed headmaster of the music school there, and under his rule it became “the wonder and the delight of Europe.” He died on the 30th September, 890.

**Tutilo**, originally Tuathal, became even more famous than his master Moengal. His versatility was a thing unique. He was a poet, orator, painter, goldsmith, builder and sculptor, in addition to being a wonderful musician. “The copying of music<sup>2</sup> became such a feature of the work done at St. Gall’s that the scribes of this monastery,” as Mathew writes in his *History of Music*, “provided all Germany with MS. books of Gregorian chant, all beautifully illuminated. Tutilo was a skilled performer on the *cruit*. He died April 27th, 915.”

“For more than a century after St. Moengal’s time, various

<sup>1</sup> Brenan dates his death at 827.

<sup>2</sup> “History of Irish Music.”—Grattan Flood.



Irish scholars established themselves at St. Gall, as is proved by the records of deaths, which comprise very many genuine Irish names. The tenth century was an unfortunate one for St. Gall, apart from the seizure of the monastery by the Magyars in 925, at the time of their disastrous incursion in the Rhine valley. . . . About the year 1000 began its silver age.”<sup>1</sup>

**Colman** left Ireland about 1022 to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Having visited Mecklin, Saltzburg and other centres, he arrived ultimately at the town of Stockeran in the eastern territory of Norica, now Lower Austria,<sup>2</sup> to find the Austrians and the Moravians engaged in a war so desperate that no quarter was given on either side. Almost immediately he was seized as a Moravian spy ; and, though he was able to account for his presence, and persisted in protesting his innocence, he was cast into prison and finally put to death. Henry, marquis of Austria, had the body removed to Medlicum (Melck) three years later, when it was found entire, and there deposited in St. Peter's church. October 7th, 1025. Colman has been styled the patron of Lower Austria, and his name appears in the Roman Martyrology, October 13.

**Helias**, known in the Irish Annals as Ailill of Mucnamh, having spent some years in Monaghan, reached Rome about the year 1022. He is reputed to have been the first to bring the Roman note or church music from that city to Cologne where he became abbot of St. Martin's. That he was a stern disciplinarian is to be inferred from the fact that on one occasion, when a member of the community in Cologne, without seeking permission, transcribed a copy of the missal for the use of the monastery, Helias consigned it to the flames lest others should follow the example and violate the traditions of the institution. Yet sacred and profane literature in profusion was transcribed there. He was reputed to be a very learned lecturer. After a life of mortification and sanctity, he passed away at Cologne, 1042. Ailill had been preceded in the abbacy of St. Martin's, Cologne, by two Irish missionaries, Killian and Minnborinus who died in 1003 and 986 respectively ; and he was succeeded by Maiobus, who died in 1061, and Foilleanus.

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<sup>1</sup> Zimmer, *Irish Med. Cult.* 80.

<sup>2</sup> Brenan's *Eccl. Hist.*, 220.

**Maelbrighde**, more widely known as **Marianus Scotus** the chronographer, was a native of the north of Ireland, and born in 1028. In 1052 he entered a monastery, the distinction of having attracted him being claimed equally for Clonard and Moville. Expelled, after four years, by the superior, Tighearnach, he became a pilgrim, and arrived on the 1st August, 1056, in Cologne, where he joined the Irish monks of St. Martin.<sup>1</sup> Siegfried, superior of Fulda, having come to St. Martin's in 1058, Maelbhrighde accompanied him on his return. Visiting Paderborn, Westphalia, he prayed on the mattress where another Irish pilgrim Padernus had previously suffered martyrdom. At the burning of Paderborn, this Irish incluse, Padernus, rather than violate the rule of his order against leaving his cell except by command of his superior, refused to come forth to save his life. In 1059, Maelbrighde was raised to the priesthood at Wurzburg in the church containing the body of Saint Killian—there being no bishop-monk at Fulda; and two months later he became a professed incluse in the cell formerly occupied by Anamchadh. He records the death of an incluse of Fulda, who had been a religious of Iniscealltra until banished in 1040 by his superior Corcran for having given a drink of water to some brethren without permission. At Fulda he seems to have collected the material for his Chronicle, the greatest work of its kind of the whole Middle Ages. To complete it he became a recluse for ten years. Apart from the Chronicle, brought down to his own day, and continued to 1200 by the Abbot of St. Disibod, his writings were voluminous and varied beyond comparison. Hence, the fame of his wonderful learning and his virtues spread abroad. Siegfried having been appointed to the See of Mayence, Maelbhrighde was conducted to that city in 1069. After attending the ceremony of the dedication to St. Bartholomew of the inclusory of St. Martin there, he was again enclosed on the 10th July of the same year. He died in 1082, at the age of fifty-four,

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<sup>1</sup> "In Cologne in 975 the monastery of St. Martin was given up to Irish monks," says Zimmer. About the same time Irish monks came into possession of the monastery at Metz where Fingein became abbot, and died in 1003. . . An Irish recluse named Paternus was buried at Paderborn in 1058. . . The Irish savant David directed the Cathedral school at Wurzburg towards the end of the century."



and was interred in the church of St. Martin beyond the walls of the city.

**Muireadach MacRobhartaigh**, known also as **Marianus Scotus**, set out from his native Ulster with two companions, John and Candidus, on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1067. Reaching Bamberg in Bavaria they were admitted, in the monastery of St. Michael, to the Order of St. Benedict. On arrival at Ratisbon in 1068 they were hospitably welcomed in the Obermunster convent, the abbesses of which ranked as princesses of the Empire and occupied seats in the Diet. Here Muireadach was employed by the Abbess Emma in the transcription of books, and so wrote a number of missals and other religious volumes. "With his own hand this holy man wrote from beginning to end the Old and New Testaments with explanatory comments, and not once or twice but over and over again, all the time clad in sorry garb, living on slender fare, attended and aided by the brethren who prepared the parchment for his use. He wrote many smaller books and manuals, psalters for distressed widows and poor clerics of the same city towards the health of his soul without any prospect of earthly gain. Furthermore, through the grace of God, many congregations of the monastic order, which in faith and charity and imitation of the blessed Marianus are derived from the aforesaid Ireland and inhabit Bavaria and Franconia, are sustained by the writings of the Blessed Marianus." A psalter written by him for the Abbess Matilda in 1074 is mentioned by Aventinus, author of the "Annals of Bavaria," as having been seen by him in Ratisbon, while a beautiful copy of the Epistles of St. Paul written also by Marianus between the 23rd March and the 17th May, 1079, is preserved in the Imperial Library, Vienna. Eloquent and learned as he was pious, Marianus obtained from Henry IV, King of Germany, a grant of the church of St. Peter near Ratisbon for himself and his companions. Here he celebrated daily Mass, with his grave open beside him. Until his death on the 9th February, 1088, he continued to govern St. Peter's; and seven of his immediate successors in the Abbacy were natives of the North of Ireland.

St. Peter's was particularly celebrated for the number of works, sacred and profane, transcribed by its monks, notable among whom was another Marianus, teacher of Nicholas



Breakspeare, afterwards Pope Adrian IV. Such was the influx of Irishmen to the monastery that it was found necessary in 1090 to erect another, that of St. James of Ratisbon, the church of which was consecrated in 1111. One of the followers of Marianus went with some merchants of Ratisbon to Kief, whence they returned with costly gifts of skins and furs from the proceeds of which the monastery of St. James was erected and the church, already built, furnished with a new roof. "Now be it known," says an old Bavarian chronicle, "that neither before nor since was there a more noble monastery, such magnificent towers, walls, pillars, roofs, so rapidly erected, so perfectly finished as in this monastery because of the wealth and money sent by the king and princess of Ireland."

This money being exhausted, Gregory, just consecrated Abbot of St. James's, came to Ireland and obtained from Muircheartach O Briain a large sum that had lain for some time in the hands of the Archbishop of Cashel for the church at Ratisbon. So "the old building at Ratisbon was thrown down, and rebuilt anew from top to bottom with square blocks of stone and roofed with lead; the pavement of polished stone, diamond-shaped."<sup>1</sup>

It is significant that Dionysius, a native of the South of Ireland, was first Abbot of St. James's. Zimmer says: "there arose in the twelfth century, more or less inspired by this influential institution, a long list of Irish monasteries including one at Wurzburg, 1134; Nuremburg, 1140; Constance, 1142; Eichstadt, 1183; St. George, Vienna, 1155; and St. Mary, Vienna, 1200." Further, the Abbot of St. James of Ratisbon at the time of its greatest prosperity, in the twelfth century, "controlled the Irish monasteries of Oels in Silesia, Erfurt in Thuringia, Wurzburg, Nuremburg, Eichstadt in Franconia, Memmingen and Constance in Swabia, and Vienna in Austria."<sup>2</sup>

As Ireland sent more than one distinguished Marianus to Germany during this epoch, so do we find more than one John

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<sup>1</sup> Bolland, Feb. 9, and *Early Christian Art in Ireland*, page 38.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the monasteries, "like that of Oels, came to an end through their own inherent weakness; others, like those of Vienna, Wurzburg and Eichstadt, were made over to German monks and in the Reformation lost, like that of Nuremburg, their monastic character. In 1575 the

prominent there also. In Brenan's Ecclesiastical History, we read that John, a native of Ireland, arrived in Germany about 1057. Soon after, he was placed over the See of Mecklenburgh by Adalbert, archbishop of Bremen. In 1062 he went to preach the gospel to the pagan Vandals and Venuli who inhabited the portion of ancient Sclavonia lying between the Elbe and the Vistula. Having traversed the greater portion of that trackless region, and converted multitudes in the principal towns on the way, he was cast into prison by order of a pagan governor and beheaded at Rethre, the capital, about 1065.<sup>1</sup> Alzog refers to him<sup>2</sup> as "John, bishop of Mecklenburgh, martyred on the altar of the idol Radegast at Rhétra." The martyr is honourably mentioned also by Adam of Bremen and other writers, and has always been regarded as the patron and apostle of Sclavonia. Letters written by Irish abbots in Ratisbon in 1090, two years after the death of Marianus, petition King Wratislaw of Bohemia for an escort for their messengers through that country to Poland. Another John, one of the associates of Marianus, went to the celebrated monastery of Gottweich, about forty miles west of Vienna, where he died an anchorite; the other, Candidus, to Jerusalem. John had a cell assigned him by Bishop Altmann, founder of Gottweich, through love of the grace that was in him. Near here, in Lower Austria, was discovered a fine silver chalice of Irish design. Further, an Irish abbot was found governing a monastery at Skribentium by Frederick Barbarossa as he returned from his Crusade in 1189.

Of all the missionaries who laboured in Germany and Austria and beyond their frontiers, singularly but an almost negligible few are recorded in our native annals. They include Donnchadh of Cologne, who died in 813; another "Donnchadh, comharb of Seachnall the most distinguished sage of the Irish, who died at Cologne" in 1027; Ailill of Mucnamh, "head of the Irish monastery of Cologne," in

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mother monastery of St. James of Ratisbon was given by Leo X to the Scotch, who represented it was founded by themselves, and all the Irish monks living there were driven out." In 1860 it was secularised for want of funds to maintain the small number of resident monks and students."—Zimmer, 96.

<sup>1</sup> Brenan's Eccl. Hist., 220.

<sup>2</sup> Alzog, Church Hist., 178, ii.



1043 ; Anamchadh of Iniscealltra, who became a recluse at Fulda, where he died in 1053 ; and Giolla na Naomh Laighean, superior of the monastery of Wurzburg, who died in 1085. Yet, as Ressel<sup>1</sup> admits, these Irish monks brought to the Continent "not only the treasure of the schools, but hospitals, asylums, shelters for the poor, and all similar retreats. In the year 844 . . . a decree was passed at the Council of Meaux . . . ordering hospitals and such foundations to be restored 'such as they had been instituted by the Scots of old.' Every province in Germany," he goes on, "proclaims this race as its benefactor. Austria celebrates St. Colman, St. Virgilius, St. Modestus and others. To whom but to the ancient Scots was due the famous 'Schottenkloster' of Vienna? Salzburg, Ratisbon and all Bavaria honour St. Virgilius as their apostle. Similar honour is paid in different regions to Alto, Marianus, Macarius. Burgundy, Alsace, Helvetia, Suevia, with one voice proclaim the glory of Columbanus, Gall, Fridolin, Arbogast, Florentius, Trudpert, who first preached the true religion amongst them. Who were the founders of the monasteries of St. Thomas of Strasburg and of St. Nicholas at Memmingen but these same Scots? Franconia and the Buchonian forest honour as their apostles Killian and Firmin. . . The land between the Rhine and the Moselle rejoiced in the labours of Wendelin and Disibod. . . The Saxons and the tribes of Northern Germany are indebted to them to an extent which may be judged by the fact that the first ten bishops who occupied the See of Verdun belonged to that race."

Gougaud is, if possible, even more laudatory. "The example of such saints as Columbanus, Fursa, Killian," he writes,<sup>2</sup> "the real vocation for the apostolate ; the appeal for a state more exalted than the ascetic life ; the conversion of the Pagans of France and Germany ; the instruction of the ignorant—are not all these sufficiently worthy motives to legitimise the far-off enterprises of these indefatigable travellers, whose achievements, in spite of the inherent losses attending every long and collective work, remain a title of glory for their country and for religion."

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hogan in *I. E. Record*, 1898. <sup>2</sup> *Les Chrétientés Celtiques*, 160.



## FRANCE

France, from its location, was the scene of the initial labours of many of those Irish missionaries who have won enduring fame for their ardour in evangelising Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Belgium. The intercourse of Irish teachers with Brittany and territories farther afield has been referred to in previous chapters. Of the pioneers of Irish missionary work throughout France Amandus affords one of the earliest examples.

**Amandus**, returning from Rome through Gaul, was granted land by St. Remi and Clovis I, at Beaumont (Pulcher Mons), where he founded a church. Here, at his death, Remi ordered his tomb to be erected, and his oratory to be replaced by a larger stone building.

**Caidoc** and **Fricor** with twelve companions disembarked about the year 589 at the town of Quentovic on the mouth of the Somme. Following the Roman road, they preached the Gospel till they reached Centule, now St. Riquier, where they rested for some days. "Perceiving that the inhabitants were blinded by error and iniquity and subjected to the most cruel slavery, they laboured with all their strength to redeem their souls and wash them in their Saviour's blood." Unable to understand their language, the people rebelled against their teaching, asking what such adventurers from a barbarous island sought and by what right they attempted to impose their laws upon them. They even strove by violence to drive them away. A young man named Riquier appeared in their midst, arrested the more furious of the mob, took the strangers into his house, and protected and entertained them. In return he received spiritual nourishment such as he had never previously experienced. He resigned his high estate with all its splendours; discarded his girdle of gold and precious stones, his mantles and tunics of golden tissue and silken stuffs; cut off his flowing locks, symbol of his nobility. Meat, fish, wine, liquor, even leavened bread and oil, he denied himself, and lived on barley bread, ashes and water. Ultimately he took orders and became the founder of Centule. Within the church he had the two Irishmen, to whom he owed so much, interred. Their neglected tombs were restored in 799 by Agilbert, their shrines magnificently decorated, and

their epitaphs inscribed in gold. Their relics were transferred to the beautiful silver shrine which holds, also, the relics of Mauguille.

**Fursa**, leaving his brothers in England, as already indicated, proceeded to Gaul, whither some of his companions had gone before him. Accompanied by Mauguille, he landed at Mayoc near Le Crotoy in 638, pursued his way up the river and worked at St. Riquier, at Peronne on the Somme, and at Lagny in the Department of Seine et-Marne. For restoring an only child of Duke Haymon, he was offered Mezerolles ; but he preferred to proceed to Austrasia, where he was followed by the people, who kissed his footsteps and implored his benediction. At the village of Auteuil near the river Corbeia in Canton Albert, he was, however, threatened and stripped of his cloak by an evil-minded person, and at Grandis Curtis, or Grandcourt, in the same Canton a wealthy lady named Hermelinda refused him shelter. At Grandcourt he was met, too, by a truly good, peaceful, prudent, courteous, learned and wealthy man, Erchenwald, mayor of the Palace under King Clovis II of Neustria, whose queen Bathilde became a warm friend of Fursa and aided him very much in his work. In thanksgiving for his son's baptism, in the old church of St. Quentin en l'Eau, Erchenwald began to build in the saint's honour another church, which it took thirty years to complete. Here Fursa secured the release of six prisoners, so that his deeds and his miracles were on everybody's lips, as well as the marvellous visions that have earned him the title of " precursor of Dante."

At Lagny-sur-Marne soon afterwards, through the generosity of the king, Fursa began to build with his own hands a monastery and three chapels. Famed for his hospitality, he was visited there by a Roman youth, who afterwards became bishop Hildebert of Meaux. Lagny was close to Chelles about six miles from Paris, where Bathilde founded her long-famed nunnery. While presiding over Lagny he filled the office of Vicar-General to Audobert, bishop of Paris. With the aid of Bobolenus he also built a church at Compans, between Lagny and Gournay-sur-Marne, which was consecrated by Audobert. Feeling his end approach, Fursa chose as his successor a disciple of his youth at Loch Corrib, named Amilian, who with some companions had arrived at Lagny



in search of Fursa. He longed, before his death, to visit his brothers, Foilleán and Ultán, at the monastery of Cnobheresburgh in East Anglia. Accompanied by his faithful companion, Mauguille, he set out, but on reaching the territory of Count Haymon at Mezeroules near Doullens he was seized with a fatal illness, and passed away, as previously foretold to the Count.

There was instant rivalry between the French princes for the possession of the relics of the saint. The remains were borne to Mont des Cignes near Peronne and placed by Erchenwald in a tent in front of the still unfinished church. The body, watched night and day for thirty days, showed no trace of corruption. It was then buried by the rival princes, amid sweet perfumes, where the saint himself had formerly laid the relics of Patrick, Beoan and Meldan, all brought from Ireland. A shrine to which the relics should be transferred was then prepared by Eloi and others, and the body on being laid therein was found as untainted as on the day of the saint's departure on his fatal journey. "Four years later," says Bede, "a more worthy tabernacle being built for the same body, to the east of the altar, it was still found free from corruption and translated thither with due honour, where it is well known that his merits, through the divine operation, have been declared by many miracles."

Peronne grew into a place of considerable importance after the interment of Fursa, so great was the throng of pilgrims to the shrine made for the relics by Eloi. The basilica in which it was preserved "represented all the magnificence of the age," and, century after century, its treasures proved a temptation to the despoiler and the vandal. Yet the memorials of the saint, and of his brothers, continued to multiply not only at Peronne, but at St. Quentin, Frohens, Abbeville, Bernaville, Beausart and adjacent centres. The statues, paintings, banners, scenes from life, representations in stained glass windows, reliquaries, shrines and other emblems by which Fursa has been commemorated in that region from age to age are almost innumerable, and bear testimony to the confidence ever inspired in the people by the hope of his patronage and intercession.

A convent of Irish monks established at Peronne, January, 650, became the collegiate church of St. Fursa, and was



endowed by Erchenwald with forest lands which it enjoyed until despoiled by Herbert II in the beginning of the tenth century. Three missionaries, ordained by St. Fursa, became the patron saints, respectively, of St. Algise, St. Gobain, and Avesnes in France. Peronne is referred to by the Four Masters as Cathair Fhursa. The Annals of Ulster record the death of Moinan, abbot of Peronne, in 778.

**Mauguille** .1. Magdegisile, having discharged all his last duties to his patron, Fursa, doubted whether to proceed on the intended journey to England or return to Lagny. Thinking of Centule, *i.e.* St. Riquier, he presented himself at the gates and was joyously welcomed. Accompanied by some of the monks, he set out after a while and built an oratory at Monstrelet on the Authie banks. The parish church stood there for a thousand years ; and the hermitage was surrounded by the dense forests of Boisle and La Broie. A miry marsh between the river and the cell rendered it difficult to procure pure water ; but in response to the monk's prayers, says Margaret Stokes, " a clear thread of water sprang up through a cleft in the stone, forming a well from which the waters flow into the Authie." Here he lived till his health gave way, when he was visited by the Abbot of St. Riquier and comforted with gentle words and the consolations of his ministry. About this time Wulgan, bishop-elect of Canterbury, desired " to cross the sea and go into the kingdom of the Franks," and in due course found himself before the hermitage of Mauguille. Entering the cell, he laid his hands on the ailing anchorite who, lifting himself up, dropped restored into his visitor's embrace, so that they mutually sustained each other for many years. Then Wulgan took seriously ill and slept in the Lord. Mauguille died in six months, May 30, 685. His body was laid beside that of Wulgan, whence it was translated to St. Riquier in 1003. Long after, Abbot Anschar had a new shrine made for the remains, " very precious, and adorned with plates of silver, sculptures and bas-reliefs, representing events in the saint's life."

**Gobain**, born of a noble family on the shores of Loch Corrib, was dedicated from childhood to the service of God. He received Holy Orders from St. Fursa with whom he came to Burghcastle in England. After Fursa had set out for

France, Gobain and others followed and reached Corbeny, canton of Craonne, some sixteen miles south-west of Laon on the way to Rheims. Parting with his companions here, he proceeded to Laon, where he tarried in the church of St. Vincent, founded by Queen Brunehilde after the death of Sigisbert in 580. Followed by one disciple, he soon penetrated to a place in the forest of Vosage south of Laon, where he found an ancient fortification on the summit of a rock called Le Mont d'Hermitage. King Chlothair II not only permitted him, by royal charter, to erect a monastery there, but placed at his disposal portion of the forest west of Laon, watered by the Oise, and known thenceforth as Forêt de Saint Gobain. There with the aid of king and people a church was founded in honour of St. Peter and named subsequently after St. Gobain himself. He taught and preached, and made war on the pagan traditions and barbarous customs of the people. In course of time fierce hordes from the north overran the country and beheaded the monk as he read the bible at his cell-door. He was buried in the church named after him, and his head was preserved in the sacristy. On the altar his martyrdom is represented in bas-relief. His relics were deposited in a stone there until all disappeared in the course of the Calvinist wars of the sixteenth century. In the neighbourhood were several other memorials of the martyr.

**Gibrian**, who gives its name to the village of St. Gibrien near Chalons-sur-Marne, set out, with six brothers and three sisters, on a pilgrimage, for the love of Christ. On reaching St. Remi, father of pilgrims, they were received with hospitality and kindness. The saint on realising their sacred purpose determined to choose suitable places for their dwelling on the river Marne where they might visit and help one another. St. Gibrian's relics were finally enshrined in the church of St. Remi at Rheims.

**Walbert**, born in France in the beginning of the seventh century, made in early youth at the French Court the acquaintance of Eustace, successor of Columbanus at Luxeuil, and while yet young he had won fame in the army of Dagobert. He possessed great estates, and became Count of Meaux and Ponthieu. Eustace having become head of the monastery of Luxeuil, Walbert became a monk under him,



and laid down his arms which were hung beneath the vaults of the abbey. On completing his novitiate he retired to the hermitage. Two miles from the monastery is a cave under a projecting rock, watered by a spring, issuing from the earth. Here he is said to have made his cell. On the death of Eustace in 625, it was sought to get St. Gall to succeed him. Gall declining, St. Walbert was approached, and he ruled the monastery for forty years. It contained nine hundred monks.

**Fiachra** arrived in France about the year 630. "Most Reverend father—Ireland, the island of the Scots, has given birth to my parents and me," he said to St. Faron, bishop of Meaux, in seeking for some lonely place in which to build a hermitage. The good bishop, who was a devoted friend and admirer of the Irish—some say a relative of Fiachra—immediately gave him the site he sought from his own patrimony, in the wood of Breuil—as much as his spade could mark out in a day. Fiachra erected there, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, a monastery, which became very famous in time, and on the site of which now stands the *Ecole de Saint Fiachre*. The present church of St. Fiachra, composed of stones of various shapes and colours, is said to be built from the material originally used by the Saint for his own church. It contains a reliquary, arm-shaped, which enshrines one of his bones. Henry IV in 1422 threatened to seize the shrine and take it to London in revenge for the aid given to France by Irish soldiers in the French service in opposition to Henry. But he was stricken with *mal de Saint Fiachre* and died on St. Fiachra's festival, exclaiming that not only did the Irish on earth favour the French, but those in heaven equally.

So numerous were the pilgrims who resorted to the monastery during his life and, after his death, visited the shrine, that one of the favourite conveyances of the people has come to be called *Fiacre* on account of its constant use in conveying pilgrims to and fro. He died about the year 661—some accounts say earlier—and was interred in the oratory of Brogillum; but his remains were removed to the Cathedral of Meaux, for protection against the fury of the Calvinists, in 1568. The monastery was destroyed in the course of the Revolution. Many churches and oratories commemorate him in France; and the local French peasantry still regale the



pilgrim to the scenes of his labours with stories of the miraculous cures effected by the Irish saint. In most of the dioceses of France his festival is observed by an office of nine lessons.

**Clemens** and **Albinus**, "two Scots of Ireland," are first met with in France towards the end of the eighth century. They were "incomparably skilled in human learning and in the holy Scriptures." Seeing the people dealing in saleable articles and taking nothing gratuitously, they used to cry out to the crowds flocking to the churches: "If anyone is desirous of wisdom, let him come to us and receive it, for we have it to sell." The fame of their words was spread abroad till it reached the ears of Charlemagne, who ordered them before him without delay, and ascertained they required no remuneration for imparting wisdom to his subjects beyond a convenient situation and ingenious minds, and—being in a foreign country—food and raiment. Charles was filled with joy, and kept them with himself until he was obliged to depart on a military expedition.

Clemens he then ordered to remain in France, "confiding to his care a number of the nobles' children, as well as those of the middle classes and the lower ranks, who, by his orders, were all provided with food and suitable habitations." He was tutor to the future Emperor Lothaire, and continued to teach in the Court seminary after the death of Charlemagne. So great was his fame that the abbot of Fulda sent Modestus and some of the best pupils of the monastery there to study grammar under him. He died in Wurzburg in 826 after having made a pilgrimage to the grave of his countryman St. Killian.

**Albinus** was sent as ambassador from the court of Charlemagne to Pope Hadrian. When Charles later took possession of Pavia he sent Albinus there and assigned to him the monastery of St. Augustine "where all who desired instruction might resort to him for it." He is believed to have taught there until his death. Some of his epistles, Ware tells us, are still extant.

**John Scotus Erigena**, the greatest genius of his age, had completed his education before leaving Ireland, and on reaching France towards the middle of the ninth century, stood unrivalled in classical and philosophical knowledge.

His versatility, wit and erudition at once won him the warm personal friendship of King Charles the Bald, and his exquisite repartee and boundless knowledge made him always a welcome guest at the royal table. Familiar with the Greek tongue when it was little known in Western Europe, he translated into Latin at the request of the king the four books of Dionysius the Areopagite, then a subject of much interest in France. Rector of the Royal School of Paris, his lectures on philosophy attracted vast crowds of students. He was as familiar with Aristotle and Plato as with St. Basil and St. Augustine ; and not only could he write poems in Greek and Latin, and discuss and compare their syntax, but he was able "to expound the Scriptures in the Hebrew, and the Septuagint," and write in the next breath for "the Instruction of Youth." He has been ranked with Chrysostom, St. Thomas Aquinas and Dante for "the beauty and sublimity of his thoughts, the originality, depth and subtlety of his philosophical speculations."

At the request of Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, and peer of France, he wrote a treatise of nineteen chapters on Predestination, which excited much discussion. He is reputed also to have written on the immaculate mysteries of the faith against infidels ; epistles and homilies ; opinions of philosophers ; various translations. Much of his work on theological subjects, on Predestination, *on Natures*, has been condemned ; but, as has been truly said, "he has been censured not only for his real errors but for doctrines which he never held." Even, if he erred, "he was in all things a holy and a humble man filled with the spirit of God." As Archbishop Healy eloquently says : "He sailed through unknown seas where there was no chart to guide him. His daring spirit, soaring on strong pinions, essayed untravelled realms of thought ; and in the quest of truth he often followed wandering fires. Yet, as he himself tells us, in the light of God's revelation and the strength of His grace, the wearied spirit always found its homeward way again. He was in reality the first of the schoolmen, and his very errors, like the wanderings of every explorer of a new country, served to guide those who came after him."

**Helias**, an Irishman, distinguished himself also in France in the reign of Charles the Bald. For many years he was



professor of the sacred Scriptures in the schools of France, and had among his pupils the celebrated Eric of Auxerre. He was a disciple of Theodulf, bishop of Orleans, and became, himself, bishop of Angouleme. In this capacity he assisted in 862 at the Synod of Pistes and, four years later, at that of Soissons. He died September 22, 876.

**Maimbodus** was another Irish missionary who, early in the tenth century, laboured on the Continent, his efforts being centred mainly in Northern Italy and Gaul. Arriving, at length, in Burgundy, he was, like all his class, hospitably entertained by a pious nobleman, and pressed to tarry in that territory. He preferred to proceed ; but stopped again at the village of Domnipetra, eight miles from Besançon. On leaving here he met his death at the hands of robbers. He was buried in the church of St. Peter in the village. Subsequently Berengarius, bishop of Besançon, had his remains translated with great solemnity to Montbelliard, and his memory celebrated in the diocese on the 23rd January.

**Anatolius**, said to have been a bishop in Ireland, journeyed to Rome, where his extensive acquaintance with the Scriptures and the Fathers brought him into early notice, and he was appointed to deliver lectures in some of the principal schools. Desiring to lead a secluded life, he left Rome, and travelling into France, laboured industriously in Burgundy, finally reaching Salins in the diocese of Besançon. Near the city, at the foot of a bleak mountain, was an oratory dedicated to Symphorium, martyr of Autun. Here he prayed for a time, deciding to fix his abode in a lonely hermitage, where he soon passed away with a great reputation for sanctity. Several churches in the diocese have been dedicated to him, including the chief collegiate church of Salins, of which he was chosen patron saint. To this church his body was transferred in the eleventh century. In 1229, it was placed in a silver shrine by Nicholas, bishop of Besançon.

**Cadroc**, educated at Armagh, where he acquired a profound knowledge of theology and the sacred Scriptures, oratory, astronomy and natural science, crossed to Wales with his twelve brethren, and travelled thence by Leeds, York, London, to Winchester, where they visited King Edmond, and were conducted by St. Odo to the port of Hythe, whence they embarked for Boulogne, and so found their way to



Peronne in 942. It being manifest to him that his mission lay not in Peronne, he travelled westward, meeting with the Countess Hersida who, in concert with her husband, Eilbert, gave him not only the site for a monastery, in the forest of Thierache near the Oise, but the means also to erect it. Thus originated the celebrated abbey of St. Michael at Rupes Fortis, now Rochefort in the forest of Thierache. Cadroc ultimately became abbot of St. Clement's at Metz, and died March 6, 975.

**Maelcalain**, who accompanied Cadroc from Ireland, was first abbot of the monastery of Waleiodorus, now Vassor, on the Meuse—between Dinant and Givent—and first bishop of St. Michael in Thierache. "Ignorance and degeneracy of morals had pervaded all classes at the time, but Maelcalain was ever at hand to assist the clergy"; and such was his reputation, indeed, that he was called on to restore the monastic discipline of St. Vincent. In time Cadroc was asked by the king to govern Waleiodorus. Maelcalain returned to the monastery and died there, January 21, 978.

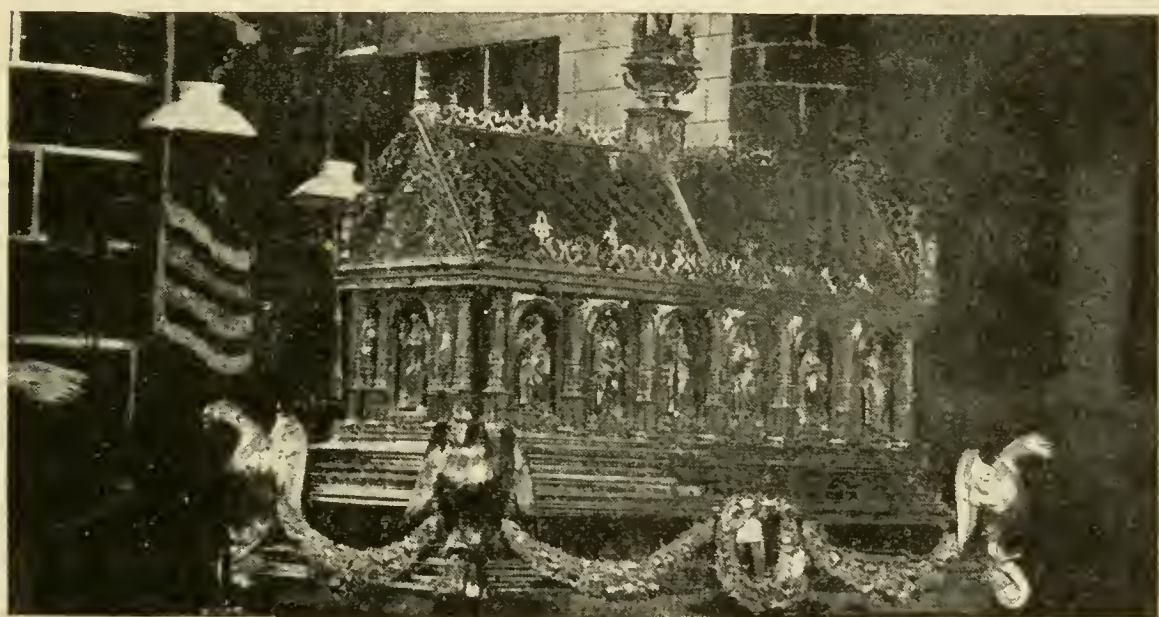
**Fingein**, another native Irishman, succeeded Cadroc at Metz. Under him was placed the abbey of Symphorium, rebuilt by Adalbero II, who steadily encouraged Irish missionaries. He even obtained from Otto III a deed, signed at Frankfort, January 25, 992, confirming the rights and possessions of this establishment on condition that none but Irish monks were admitted to the community. Fingein founded or re-established several monasteries in this territory, notably that of St. Vannes at Verdun, where he had a community of Irish monks under his own direction. Frederick, Count of Verdun, and Richard, dean of the diocese of Rheims, soon sought admission there. Fingein accepted them with reluctance, fearing the discipline would be too rigorous for men of their rank. Contrary to his expectation, they submitted themselves to his instruction and became two of the most eminent men of their time: Richard even succeeded him in the government of the institution at his death in 1004.

Hence does Hieric ask in his biography of St. Germanus: "Need I remind Ireland, who sent troops of philosophers over land and sea to our distant shores, that her most learned sons offered their gifts of wisdom of their own free will in the service of our learned king, our Solomon."

## BELGIUM

Though the Columban Rule was carried into Picardy and beyond it by St. Valery, St. Omer, St. Bertin, St. Mummolin and St. Valdolenus, we find missionary Ireland first represented in Belgium by an Ulster virgin.

**St. Dymphna**, princess of Oriel, "the Irish Lily of stainless purity," won the crown of martyrdom towards the end of the sixth century at Gheel, where she is commemorated by a superb church as well as by three other churches in the neighbourhood. She is patroness not only of the churches but of the township. In some Belgian litanies, she is invoked



THE RELIQUARY OF ST. DYMPHNA, GHEEL

as the patron saint of Brabant, and she is especially venerated as the patroness of the insane. Around her shrine at Gheel has grown up the famous Belgian "colony" for the domestic treatment of persons suffering from mental diseases. The colony has been known to provide for close on 3,000 patients. Three times a year she is commemorated in Gheel, particularly on the 15th May, when her relics are borne along the streets and honoured by pilgrims from various places.

A few years after the death of Valery, the Irish mission in Picardy received its greatest impetus through the arrival of Fursa and his companions at Mayoc at the mouth of the Somme, half a century or so after that of Columbanus. The Irish missionaries who had preceded Fursa and Mau-



guille from England, keeping along the banks of the Authie, Somme, Seine, Oise, Marne, Aisne and Meuse, laboured near Amiens, Celle, Corbei, Vervins, and Laon. And those who had remained behind in England, having soon joined Fursa, laboured at Lagny, St. Gobain, Peronne, afterwards carrying the work into Belgium, to Soignies, Hainault, Nivelles, Fosse.

Meantime Corbican, Rodalgus, and Caribert had settled down at Cellula where they had built a monastery. News hereof having reached Ireland, Enna and several other holy men hastened to France to join them. Working together, they raised a church to St. Peter ; and having established it, Algeis carried the Gospel through Hainault between the Oise and Helpra and banished all traces of idolatry from the district.

**Etto**, or **Eata**, faithful follower of Fursa, having spent some time at Lagny, felt he had a mission to preach the Gospel in the Low Countries, where he had associated with him Maelceadar, Amandus, Humbert, Fredegund, Bertuin, bishop of Maconia in the territory of Liege, and many others. He built an oratory at Maloigne, near Liege, on the Sambre, and sojourned also in a retreat on the little river Corbriol, near Avesnes, where he was harassed and very much interrupted in his labours by a native named Jovinus. He built another oratory, which subsequently became a monastery, at Fiscan—near Avesnes also—where he dwelt towards the end of his life. He died, at the age of sixty-five, in the year 670. His body is preserved in the church of Dompierre. There, also, is a tomb on which he is represented in episcopal vestments, wearing a mitre, and carrying in his hand a cross. And beside the church is a fountain named after him. He is venerated as the patron saint of cow-herds ; and is represented as restoring speech to the dumb by the touch of his staff.

**Foilleán** and **Ultán** on the death of their brother, Fursa, were invited by St. Gertrude of Nivelles to assist her in South Brabant. Gertrude, born in 626, was the daughter of Pepin of Landen, minister of the king and mayor of the Palace. She declined an offer of marriage by the son of king Dagobert who then ruled over Upper Austrasia. Her father having died when she was fourteen, her mother chose St. Amand as Spiritual director, and as a result of his exhortation she took the veil, and built, and endowed with all her wealth, the abbey of Nivelles, between Mons and Brussels.



Fearing Gertrude might be borne away by her persecutors, the mother had the maid's hair cut in the form of a crown. She also had her invested, at the age of twenty-one, with the government of the convent. Like many similar institutions of the time, the convent provided for nuns and monks. Soon Gertrude not only became known as the friend of the poor and the pilgrim, but invited men of piety and learning from distant lands to visit her.

Ultan and Foilleán crossed to Flanders about 633, and reached the monastery of Ghent, then newly founded by St. Amand. Gertrude, who had long known them by repute, resolved to secure them to explain the scriptures to her nuns and preach among the peasantry and the villagers on her estate. On the death of her mother, Ita, in 652, she gave to St. Ultan the land of Fosse between the Meuse and the Sambre, formerly in the diocese of Maestricht, now of Liege. She gave him, further, everything necessary for the erection of a hospital for pilgrims and a monastery of which he was to be the first abbot. St. Foilleán she kept at her side as adviser and as spiritual director of her nuns.

Foilleán desiring, two years later, to visit his brother Ultan at the new monastery of Fosse, set out with three companions. They lost their way in the forest of Charbonnière, and had the misfortune to fall in with robbers who, pretending hospitality, led them into a den and slew them. Having divided the spoils, the robbers hid the bodies of the pilgrims in the dark lairs of wild beasts. But they were discovered by Gertrude—who was directed towards them by miraculous manifestations—and reverently placed in coffins. Bishop Dado of Poitou, and the patrician Grimoald, on a pilgrimage to the holy places, met the funeral and, taking the coffin of Foilleán from those who bore it, carried it on their own shoulders for the glory of God. Thus was it borne into Nivelles, where Gertrude had it interred with due honour. In later years the scene of the martyrdom became the site of a monastery. Foilleán and his three companions are also commemorated in the abbey of Premontre in the town of Rœux in Hainault.

Ultan, in addition to administering the monastery of Fosse, subsequently governed the monastery at Mont St. Quentin, and is believed to have survived his brother Foilleán

about thirty years. "The statue of St. Ultan, with that of his two brothers," says Margaret Stokes, "stood formerly at the porch of the church of St. Fursa, Peronne." The memory of all three is indeed honoured over the whole country of St. Gertrude of Nivelles.

St. Eloi was closely associated all his life with Irish missionaries and their monasteries. As a young goldsmith from Limoge he first appeared in the Court of Dagobert. Eutharius, at the time, was treasurer to the French king; and the treasurer's son Ouen, also called Dadon, whom Eloi "cherished as his soul," had been baptised by Columbanus in his father's house at Eusai on the Marne. When Eloi embraced the religious life, Ouen naturally followed in his footsteps. Eloi, having evangelised Brittany, returned to king Dagobert whom he asked for a grant of the lands of Solignac that he might found there a monastery modelled on that at Luxeuil. His wish was realised, and he had the satisfaction of ruling in the monastery of Solignac "a great company adorned with all the flowers of various graces," whom he placed under the Columban Rule, as well as many artificers skilled in divers arts. To enter more thoroughly into the life of holy men, Eloi paid frequent visits to Luxeuil, and became a great friend of the abbot Eustace. He also came into intimate contact with the Irish mission constituted by Fursa and his companions in Picardy and Flanders; and on the death in 639 of Achaire bishop of Noyon, a disciple of Columbanus, Eloi was named to succeed him, while Ouen became bishop of Rouen. Noyon is within easy reach of Peronne and Lagny where Fursa had been labouring for three years. Thus Foilleán and Ultan and the other followers of Fursa thenceforward carried on their mission simultaneously with that of Eloi in Flanders. It was Eloi, patron saint of jewellers and farriers, who prepared the shrine for the relics of Fursa whom he survived by less than a decade.

**Livinus**, contemporary of St. Fursa, belonged to a noble Irish family. He was born in 564 and educated and instructed in the Holy Scriptures by a priest named Benignus. After the death of his teacher, Livin with three companions, Foilleán, Elias and Killian, retired to a desert place where they spent their time in contemplation and prayer and in transcribing works of devotion. Soon he passed over to England,



where he is said to have spent five years under St. Augustine from whom he received Holy Orders. Subsequently he became bishop of Dublin. Zealous for the conversion of souls, he went, with his companions, to Belgium. Floribert, abbot of two monasteries, received him with great kindness at Ghent, whence he proceeded on his mission through Flanders and Brabant. At Hauthen in the district of Alost he won the respect of two pious sisters, Berna and Crophaildis, with whom he remained preaching for some time. In a letter to Floribert he still complained of the obstinacy and blindness of the Belgians and thanked the abbot for providing for his wants while preaching in the interior. He took occasion to point out that, though poor in Belgium, his circumstances had been otherwise in his native country. Invited to preach at Escha, near Hauthen, he was set upon in his old age by a band of pagans, beaten to death with clubs and stones, and then beheaded, November 12, 656. Crophaildis and her son who accompanied him were also murdered. Their remains were buried at Hauthen.

**Wiro**, another bishop of Dublin, consecrated in Rome, resigned his See after he had obtained a high reputation for sanctity, and proceeded to Gaul, where he was received with honour by Duke Pepin de Heristall. This "mighty ruler and father of kings" chose him for his confessor, and assigned him a suitable place for contemplation, called Mons Petri in the diocese of Liege. Here the Irish pilgrim built an oratory, which he dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and named St. Peter's monastery. He died of a fever on the 8th May at a very advanced age, and was buried in the oratory erected by himself. The collegiate church having been transferred to Ruremond, portion of the saint's remains was also translated thereto, while another portion was "reverentially exhibited at Utrecht."

**Rumold**, also said to have been bishop of Dublin, is referred to in the Lateran Breviary and Chronicle of the church of Mechlin as "of the royal house of Ireland and, by right of succession, heir to a throne." He was baptised and educated by Gualafer, "his predecessor in the See of Dublin," and "forsook his pretensions to his inheritance for the sake of religion." Passing into Britain and thence to Gaul, he traversed the Alps, preaching the Gospel until he reached



Rome, where the Pope signified his approval of his labours. Having spent some time in Rome, he retraced his steps to Gaul, eventually reaching Mechlin. At Mechlin, he was received very cordially by Count Odo and his wife and prevailed on to sojourn there. The Count bestowed on him a place called Ulmus, where he founded a monastery. Mechlin, in time, being erected into an episcopal See, he became its first bishop and Apostle. On the 24th June, 775, two ruffians—one thinking he had money, the other from a motive of revenge—fell upon him and murdered him and, to conceal their crime, threw his body into the river. Count Ado, however, had it removed and honourably interred in St. Stephen's church, whence the remains were subsequently translated to a church dedicated to his memory in Mechlin, and now the Metropolitan church of the Low Countries. Pope Alexander IV, to prevent its clashing with the festival of St. John, fixed the 3rd July for the feast of St. Rumold, which is celebrated as a double festival throughout the whole province of Mechlin.

**Sedulius Scotus** was contemporary with Johannes Scotus. According to one of his poems, he reached the chapter house at Liege one intensely cold day, worn out by hunger and fatigue after a journey through deep snow-drifts. Being a finished Latin scholar, familiar with Greek, and proficient in mythology and ancient history, he was warmly welcomed for his attainments and employed as teacher there from 840 to 860. Besides grammatical treatises and commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, he composed many poems, some of them addressed to Charles the Bald who was attracted to Liege by the literary fame of its monastery. Many of the countrymen of Sedulius were also at Liege, and one of them, Cruindmel, left a grammatical treatise of importance. Sedulius is said to have died at Milan, illustrating, if the example were necessary, the elusiveness of the Irish missionaries' footsteps and the vast areas over which they were met.

Pepin, duke of the Franks, having won portion of Friesland from King Rathbod, sent to Ireland for missionaries to convert Neustria, and Willibrord, born near Ripon and educated for thirteen years in the Irish schools, was, with eleven others, chosen for the mission. Rathbod, desiring to become a convert, asked as the baptismal water was being

poured on his head : " Are the brave Frisons, who are dead, in heaven or in hell ? " On being told that baptism was essential to entry into heaven, he stepped back from the font, exclaiming, on the lines of Oisin's reply to Patrick : " I wish rather to be with my brave Frisons than to be in heaven with strangers."

" St. Vulgarius preached to the Morini," says Brennan. " St. Tressan, with his companions . . . announced the Gospel at Rheims and along the district of Chalons-sur-Marne . . . a host of others . . . penetrating to the north, made the mountains and forests of Germany and Scandinavia resound with the glad tidings of redemption."

Such, in brief outline, is the story of the principal early missionaries of our race, who laboured in Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France, Belgium and the islands of Western Europe. Others not of our kin, but educated in the Irish schools abroad, followed eagerly and loyally in the footsteps of their masters. Of these were Eloi, Ado, Dado, Rado and many others of royal race who founded centres of learning and devotion on the Irish model. Rechanarius, a disciple of Columbanus at Luxeuil, became bishop of Autun, and established the Columban Rule there. The monastery of Solignac, founded by Eloi, was, like that of Annegray, surrounded by a bank and a ditch, after the manner of monasteries at home. Not less earnest were the missionaries of English birth, educated in Ireland, who followed in the wake of the Irish pilgrims. Egbert, when shipwrecked on his voyage to Friesland, direct from Ireland where he was educated, " found other missionaries for the Continent, and thus came Vicbert, Willibrord, Swidbert, and the two Ewalds, all venerated apostles of Germany." Vicbert, it is true, returned to Ireland after two years among the Frisians. He was succeeded by Willibrord, of whom Bede writes : " Britain gave him birth, but Ireland reared and educated him." He established the bishopric of Utrecht. On his way thither he preached in Heligoland and killed there some of the sacred oxen of the god Fosite. The two Ewalds—the white Ewald and the black Ewald—after long residence in Ireland " for the sake of the eternal country," went into the province of the Old Saxons towards the close of the seventh century. Given to constant saying of psalms and prayer,



they were at length martyred, the white Ewald slain outright by the sword, the black Ewald subjected to lingering torture and torn limb from limb, after which their bodies were thrown into the Rhine. Swidbert, who became bishop, ended his days at Kaiserwerth, an island on the Rhine. Alcuin, though a pupil of Bede, and tutor of the children of Charlemagne, referred to Colgu of Clonmacnoise as his most holy father and to himself as Colgu's son. He concludes a letter, concerning the state of religion in France, by sending several presents to Colgu, the bishops of Ireland and the community of Clonmacnoise, commending himself, at the same time, to their earnest prayers.

It is often suggested that such missionary labours as engaged the early Irish pilgrims and their disciples are incompatible with the development of science and of practical industry. The theory is disproved by the records of the period. In truth, no praiseworthy duty, from the highest to the humblest, can be said to have been outside their sphere. To-day it might have been the reclamation of some arid waste, to-morrow the inauguration of a king. Columba shared all the labours of his monks at Iona : his inauguration there of Aedan as king of the British Dalriada affords " the earliest recorded instance of a royal coronation in Great Britain." Doubtless it *was* in the interest of religion mainly that Warinus, Archbishop of Cologne, erected on the Rhine in the tenth century an extensive monastery for the Irish : it *was not* as a tribute to their religious zeal alone Montalembert testified that " to their untiring energy is it due that half of France and of ungrateful Europe has been restored to cultivation."

Let us picture the steady arrival of these selfless monks in Gaul, frequently in companies of twelve,<sup>1</sup> and trace their

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<sup>1</sup> The " twelve Apostles of Ireland," educated by Finnian of Clonard, fasted on Diarmuid mac Cearbhaill; Munna, attended by twelve members of his community, went to meet the King of Leinster; Fursa with twelve companions laboured in the East of England; Meuthai the Irish hermit had twelve ministers in Wales; Mochanna with twelve companions was sent by Columba to the Picts; Columbanus with twelve companions laboured on the Continent; St. Eloi, disciple of Fursa and Columbanus, had a company of twelve in Belgium; Rupert with twelve companions preached in Bavaria; Killian was



tireless footsteps over the broad face of Europe, their tracks studded with hermit haunts and holy wells. We follow the heroic figure of Columbanus, wending his way to Northern Italy, and, as he proceeds, parting, one by one, with the companions precious to him as life. Dicuil's failing limbs give way as he accompanies Columbanus to Besançon after expulsion from Luxeuil: with his master's blessing he settles in a desert waste to lay the foundation of the noble monastery of Lure. Potentian is left behind at Soissons to become abbot eventually of Coutances. Ursicinus bids his superior a fond farewell at Basel, and penetrating into the passes of the Jura founds his great monastery at the foot of Mont Terrible. Ceallach, stricken with fever, abandons the fateful journey at Bregenz to found, soon after, the peerless monastery of St. Gall. Sigisbert turns aside at Coire to lay, in "a place of horror and vast wilderness," the foundation of the abbey of Disentis. Pirminius we find at Reichenau, over which Walafrius Strabo, dean of St. Gall and eulogist of Blathmac of Iona, rules as abbot during the second quarter of the ninth century. Fridoald, one of the last surviving companions of Columbanus, "led a colony of monks into the wild Munstertal and founded the monastery of Granfelden," which, later, became united, under a common abbot, with the hermitage of St. Ursanne and the monastery of Pfermund. The disciples of Fursa repeat the marvels achieved by those who went before them. Their toil and agony and martyr blood hallowed the soil of the Occident. Wherever Fursa went, the people kissed his footsteps; at his death, kings and princes vied for his remains: treasure untold accumulated round his shrine at Peronne, to be

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chief of a company of twelve Irish missionaries who went to Franconia and founded the church of Wurzburg; Barra on his visit to Rome was accompanied by a company of twelve; Twelve canons were placed in the monastery founded by the Irish missionary Disibod at Dysenberg; Willibrord with twelve companions went from Ireland to Friesland. Forannan, Irish abbot of Vassor, preached the Gospel on the Belgian frontier towards the end of the tenth century. Multiples of twelve are also mentioned: Ailbhe with twenty-four men of Munster crossed the sea; twenty-four Scots founded an Irish monastery at Ratisbon; Brendan the Navigator visited a community in a distant island containing an abbot and twenty-four monks. Many further examples could be quoted.

pillaged after the lapse of centuries by the marauding Northmen. Magloire founded a monastery on the island of Jersey. Tuban, an Irish bishop, founded in 720, on an island on the Rhine the monastery of Honau, patronised by Pepin and Charlemagne.

And note the characteristic native modesty of those Irish missionaries withal: Columbanus, friend of Agilulph king of the Lombards and of Chlothair king of Neustria, declined late in life the recall to his well-loved Luxeuil. St. Gall, similarly, declined the proffered government of Luxeuil and the bishopric of Constance. Virgilius, though appointed bishop of Saltzburg by Pope Stephen II and King Pepin, deferred his consecration for two years. Donatus hesitated to accept the offer of the See of Fiesole. Dungal, high in the esteem of Charlemagne, specially desired that he might occupy no higher station in the Church than simple deacon. Ultan, brother of St. Fursa, is represented with a crown at his feet to signify his contempt for the things of earth. Fursa, himself, having completed his monastery at Burghcastle and rescued the countryside from famine desired to withdraw from the world. Cuthbert, when chosen bishop of Lindisfarne at the Conference of Twyford, presided over by Theodore, hesitated from the end of autumn until Easter to accept it. Hence we wonder why others wonder that the Irish missionaries did not continue to direct and dominate the regions by them christianised. Cardinal Moran, in his volume "Irish Saints in Britain," puts the explanation very tersely. It was the sole aim of the Irish missionaries, he says, "to diffuse the sacred light of heavenly truth and to build up the Church of Christ; and if we may select one distinctive feature of their missionary labours, we cannot but be struck by their earnest solicitude to train up a native clergy for the sacred ministry. They had no thought of perpetuating a succession of their own countrymen, except so long as the interests of religion required it; but, having handed on the tradition of faith to fervent priests and religious of the Anglo-Saxon race, they directed their steps to other lands to bring to other people the same glad tidings of redemption." Yet many of the leading monasteries of Central Europe—Cologne, Wurzburg, Ratisbon and others—remained for long periods under their rule.



Not less striking the mortification they willingly underwent. Colm Cille lived on bread and water and on vegetables, as often as not common nettles ; he slept on the cold sand with a stone for pillow, his pallet betimes the naked rock. Adhamhnan lived at Coldingham on two meals a week, and frequently passed the whole night in vigil. St. Kevin's bed was the cold damp ground, his food a meal at even of bread and water ; like the monk Lupician of Condat he lived much in the hollow trunk of a tree. Finnchu slept with corpses and suspended himself from sickles inserted in his armpits. Ultan kept a stone in his mouth throughout Lent. Finian of Clonard while sleeping on the cold ground carried a chain round his body and wore his garments till they fell in shreds from his limbs. Columbanus, unwitting rival of St. Benedict, subsisted for three weeks on grass and bilberries and the bark of trees. His followers, though in many instances of royal birth and upbringing, were scarce less prone to frugal fare. Not St. Gall and Lure alone had princes for abbots : Waldebert, Count of Meaux and Ponthieu, ruled Luxeuil with unparalleled success for forty years. Yet, despite their self-denial, the complaint was made at an early stage, that the monks of Luxeuil, by " their clearances and their cultivation, were destroying the chase in the surrounding woods." Nor was their practical industry relaxed elsewhere : Ursicinus, expelled from Luxeuil, had attached to his own monastery, at St. Ursanne later, a little hospital for the sick poor, with baggage cattle to help travellers over the Alps. Towards the middle of the ninth century the Council of Meaux ordered that the Continental hospitals, asylums and shelters for the poor be restored as founded by the early Irish. " In a capitulary of 845," says Alzog, " Charles the Bald speaks of the *Hospitia Scotorum*, or hospices which Irishmen had founded in France for the convenience of their countrymen." Wandregisel, disciple of Columbanus and founder of the monastery of Fontenelle, is reputed to have planted the first vineyard of Normandy. St. Eata, patron saint of cow-herds, is represented in art as surrounded by calves and oxen. Fiachra is the patron not only of the car-drivers of Paris but of gardeners, herbalists, florists. St. Eloi, disciple alike of Columbanus and of Fursa, is patron of farriers and of silversmiths, as Dunstan, educated by Irish teachers, is



patron saint of goldsmiths. So, too, the most famous bell-founder of the eighth century was Tanko, a monk of St. Gall: at St. Gall we find also a silver book shrine of Irish workmanship; at Schaffhausen the bowl of St. Fintan; at Coire, an Irish reliquary. Nor is that all. Frediano engineered canals in the plains of Lucca. Andrew of Fiesole, who had the reputation of labouring "after the manner of a reasoning bee," helped with his own hands to build there a church of stone and mortar.

As a result of pilgrimages to the shrine of Andrew's saintly sister, Brigid, the surrounding wastes were reclaimed, the forests cleared, the fields planted. Pilgrims from St. Brigid's monastery in Kildare are found resting at Piacenza on their way to Rome. St. Gregory has reference to Maura and Britta, two virgins, obviously Irish, who were buried at Tours, where they had come as pilgrims to the shrine of St. Martin. St. Mingarda, sister of Siadhal, is honoured in Lucca; Sabina, mother of St. Cuthbert, died in Rome where she was held in great repute. St. Remi, father of pilgrims, provided suitable retreats on the banks of the Marne for the three sisters of St. Gibrian, on pilgrimage from Ireland, too, for the love of Christ. Osanne, an Irish saint, had a statue to her memory in the crypt of the monastery of Jouarre; St. Syra, sister of St. Fiachra, laboured at Faremontier; Dymphna, as the reward of her labours, became patron saint not of the insane alone but of all Brabant as well. St. Bega, more familiarly known as St. Bees, assisted with her own hands in erecting at Hartlepool the mother convent of England, as her countryman Aidan erected at Lindisfarne the mother church of Northumbria. An Irish virgin who tended the flocks of Cathmhaol the Wise of Wales was martyred by pagan marauders, and an oratory was erected on the spot "in honour of the Virgin Machuta." St. Melangell, mother of St. Collen, and referred to in the genealogy of her son as the daughter of Eithne the Irishwoman, was the foundress of Pennant Melangell in Montgomeryshire. It is unnecessary to recount the achievements of Irish women in Cornwall, Wales, Scotland.

At Lindisfarne, says Mrs. Green, "the English were taught writing and the letters used among them till the Norman conquest." Aidan familiarised the English of the north

with the solemn melody of the Roman chant, and music and astronomy were among the subjects taught by Irish monks at Glastonbury. Foilleán and Ultán, on crossing from Bamborough to Flanders, were asked by Gertrude of Nivelles to instruct her nuns in psalmody; while the music school of St. Gall under Moengal, was "the wonder and the delight of Europe." St. Gall, itself, was "the intellectual centre of the German world," as Bobbio was long "the light of northern Italy." Baoithin, successor of Colm Cille at Iona, "had no equal this side of the Alps in his knowledge of sacred Scripture and the profundity of his science." Adhamhnan, abbot also of Iona, has left us, in his exquisite life of Colm Cille, "one of the most important pieces of hagiology in existence." "Fursa's marvellous visions," says Ozanam, "inspired Dante"; John Scotus, "the miracle of knowledge," ranked with Dante, Chrysostom and Thomas Aquinas. Not only was he able to write poems in Greek and Latin: "he was competent to discuss and compare their syntax and expound the Scriptures in Hebrew." His contemporary, Sedulius Scotus who taught in Belgium, was a finished Latin and Greek scholar. Writing of the same period, Joubanville tells us the Library of Laon has an Irish manuscript, written between 850 and 900, and containing two glossaries of Greek and Latin, occasional passages in Irish, and a Greek grammar. And Alzog says<sup>1</sup> "Both Greek and Irish monks dwelt in the same monastery in the diocese of Toul and together sang the divine office in the Greek language. Tutilo, of St. Gall, was at once musician, orator, poet, painter, sculptor, builder, goldsmith; Dungal,<sup>2</sup> theologian, controversialist, poet, astronomer; Virgilius, Prince of astronomers, "most learned among the learned." Nor was Dicuil our only great geographer. Duncan, an Irish bishop, teaching in the monastery of Remi at Rheims, where he died about the close of the tenth century, wrote for the use of his students "explanatory observations on the First Book of Pomponius Mela regarding

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<sup>1</sup> Alzog, ii. 279.

<sup>2</sup> "There were several personages of this name in France and Italy under Charlemagne and his successors," says Gougard. "Traube has distinguished five individuals of the name, all Irish."

—Les Chrétiennes Celtiques, 287.

the situation of the earth, as well as a commentary on the Nine Books of Martianus Capella on the liberal arts."

Thus runs the record of men and women of our race before this island was blighted by the rule of a grasping people whose vulgar spokesmen and scribes, in their failure to conceive more offensive names, try to liken us to Hottentots. Ireland can afford to despise the coarse taunts and age-long slanders adopted by her envious neighbours so long as she remains true to her own great past and Continental authors with a respect for truth study the story of her saints and sages.

"These unsubdued Celtic tribes were reserved for a great purpose—to inaugurate the evangelisation of Central Europe," says Zimmer. "They were destined to be pioneers in the missionary history of Europe during the decay of the Roman Empire and while the Teutonic tribes were yet in a state of semi-barbarism." Aye, "they were instructors in every known branch of the science and learning of the time, possessors and bearers of a higher culture than was to be found anywhere on the Continent, and can surely claim to have been the pioneers, to have laid the corner-stone of western culture on the Continent."



## CHAPTER IX

### THE NORSEMEN IN IRELAND



SINCE the earliest times there had been intercourse between the Gael and the Norseman. From the Viking land, we have been told, came the Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny. With the men of Erin at the Hill of Slane, when Conchubhar mac Neasa came to avenge the wounding of Cuchulainn, were the nine chariot-fighters of Norway's warriors. The mother of Conn Ceadchathach was daughter of the king of the Lochlainn; and two sons of the king of the Lochlainn were present at a feast given by Fionn in honour of Cormac. The kindred Fian of Lochlann are also referred to at this time. Baodan, for one year king of Ireland—before the Battle of Cul Dreimhne—was married to Ceacht, daughter of the king of the Fionnghaill. About 680, in the reign of Ceannfhaolaidh, king of Ireland, the foreigners burned the monastery of Bangor.<sup>1</sup> On the Continent, Charlemagne was busy from 777 defending his maritime territory against the Vikings. A decade later, in 787, "came three ships," says the *Saxon Chronicle*, "the first ships of Danish men that sought the land of the English race." And in 793 and 794 these "heathen men" came with larger fleets "and dreadfully destroyed the churches of Christ." They "trod down holy places with their unholy feet, slaughtered priests and Levites and multitudes of monks and nuns, undermined the altars, and carried off all the treasures of Holy Church." Lindisfarne was totally destroyed in 793; "the abbey," says Lingard, "was reduced to ashes, while the bishop and monks fled to the mountains; at Coldingham, the nuns perished in the flames." In 794, after the 'heathen men' had ravaged Northumberland, they destroyed Ecgferth's monastery at

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. 139, iii.

Weremouth." They "fell on all the shores of England from the Forth to the Channel . . . from the Clyde to the Land's End." Steadily "they slew every English king and wiped out every English royal house save that of Wessex, and in their place set up their own." In 795 the Gentiles pillaged the holy isle of Iona. In 795, too, say the *Annals of Innisfallen*, "the Danes were first seen hovering around the coasts of Ireland." That same year, the Four Masters tell us, "Reachra was burned by them, and its shrines broken and plundered." About the same time they ravaged Wales, and three years later the Isle of Man. They soon appeared off the coast of Kerry in one hundred and twenty ships, plundering the islands from Kenmare River to the Shannon until, two years before the death of Charlemagne, they met with a crushing defeat at the hands of the Eoghanacht of Loch Lein, near Killarney, when upwards of four hundred of them were slain. Eginhard, tutor of Charlemagne, bears witness in his well known Annals, to this victory, and writes, A.D. 802 : The fleet of the Northmen having invaded Hibernia, the island of the Scots, basely took to flight and returned home after a battle had been fought with the Scots and no small number of the Norsemen slain.<sup>1</sup>

Five years later another fleet carried off a great prey of women from Howth and pillaged Beigeire and Dairinis in Wexford Harbour. Having, after two years more, plundered Bangor in the north, they again turned their attention to Cork and Sceilg Mhichil in the south and other less known places around the coast, eventually carrying off Eadgall the famous hermit of the Sceilg Rock. The following year, another foreign fleet re-plundered Bangor, broke the shrine of Comhgall, killed the bishop and clergy, and sacked the city. Within twelve months "Blathmac, son of Flann, received the crown of martyrdom, for he was killed by the foreigners at Iona," because he refused to disclose to the marauders the whereabouts of the gold adorned shrine containing the relics of its founder. Walafridus Strabo, a German monk, composed a poem of 180 Latin hexameters on the lofty Christian courage of this Irish monk. The same year, 823, they ravaged successively, Teach Muna, Teach Molaing and

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce S.H. 518, i.

Inistioge, devastating Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny until they were met by the people of Osraighe and routed with a loss of close on two hundred men.

After this reverse, however, we find them ravaging Lismore, burning Ceall Molaise, Dunderrow near Kinsale, Innishannon, Disart Tiobraide and other churches and retreats in the south-west. Dunleer, Duleek, Swords, Glendaloch, and the chief monasteries of Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny were again plundered by them, as were Cloyne in Cork, Ceann Sleibhe in Kerry, Mungret in Limerick: in fact, between 825 and 830, "the greater part of the churches of Erin were attacked by them."

After this came the great royal fleet of Tuirgeis. He at once assumed the sovereignty of the foreigners and occupied the whole of Leath Chuinn. Co-operating with him were powerful fleets at Lough Neagh, Lough Ree, Limerick, Dublin and Dundalk, with the result that in 833 Armagh was plundered three times in the space of a month, "the first plundering of the ancient city by the Gentiles," Soon after, however, the Irish gained three distinct victories, the Cineal Conaill at Assaroe, the Dalcassians at Loch Derg, and the men of Breaghmhagh in North Dublin, where Saxulf the foreign chief was slain by Cianaoth. In return, Turgeis plundered from central forts the monasteries of Clonmacnoise, Glendaloch, Lothra, Clonfert, Terryglass, Iniscealtra, and all the churches of Loch Derg. From a fortress at Linn Duachaill near Castlebellingham the whole country was plundered as far as Sliabh Bladhma in 840, and in 841 Caomhan abbot of Linn Duachaill was slain and his body burned to cinders. This very year Tuirgeis himself usurped the Abbacy of Armagh. Forannan, the abbot and chief *comharb* of Patrick, taking with him St. Patrick's sacred shrine, fled to Imleach Iobhair as did the archbishop and clergy of Cashel also. After four years' sojourn in Munster, Forannan was taken prisoner by the Danes of Limerick, who bore him off to their ships, having first broken the shrine of St. Patrick. Just at this time, the *Chronicum Scotorum* refers to Tuirgeis as having erected a *dun* at Loch Ree from which he plundered Connacht and Meath. And, further to manifest his authority, his wife Ota, in the cloak of the prophetess, gave her oracles from the high altar at Clonmacnoise, while he set up the



worship of Thor at the shrine of Armagh. But the day of reckoning soon overtook him : he was seized by Maelsheachlainn, then king of Westmeath, and cast into Loch Uair near Mullingar.

The very year that Tuirgeis usurped the See of Armagh, the Danish pirates, say the *Annals of Bertin*, made an irruption into the territory of Rouen, gave up the city, the monks and the whole people to pillage and carnage and captivity. They devastated the monasteries and other places along the Seine and, having received much silver, left them filled with terror. In 843 they arrived in the city of Nantes, pillaged the place, killed the bishop, many priests, laymen and others without distinction of sex, and ravaged the lower parts of Aquitaine. "In the year 848," says the *Norman Chronicle*, "the Northmen lay waste and burnt Burdegala, *i.e.* Bordeaux, in Aquitania, captured through the treachery of the Jews, afterwards Metullus which they lay waste and give over to the flames. The Scots breaking in upon the Northmen, by God's help victorious, drive them forth from their borders. Whereupon the king of Scots sends, for sake of peace and friendship, legates to Charles with gifts." For twenty long years, notwithstanding this reverse, they devastated in turn Frisia, Amiens, Nantes, Toulouse, Galicia, the coast of Spain, Pisa and even northern Africa. Peronne, "the city of Fursa," was first invaded by the Northmen in 880. They advanced along the Elbe, the Rhone and the Seine, and from November, 885, to May, 887, laid siege to Paris, their fleet extending over six miles and shutting out the whole face of the river.

Meantime we find immense new fleets arriving in Ireland ; old monasteries re-plundered ; Freshford, Aghaboe, Roscrea, Kildare ravished ; the abbots of Kildare and Terryglass put to death ; sainted Iona pillaged by a mighty fleet on its way to Ireland, and Inisgloire on the Sligo coast on its way out.

Then came the "Black Gentiles" or Danes, to plunder, after great slaughter, the "White Gentiles" or Norwegians. "Thus the Lord took away from the Lochlannachs all the wealth they had wrenched from the churches and sanctuaries and shrines of Erin." At a battle in Louth, and one later at Carlingford, which lasted three days and three nights, the

Danes repeated their successes, so that the Norwegians had to abandon eight score of their best ships. One of their leaders was beheaded, the other escaped by flight, to return re-inforced, and win, and lose again.

At this stage considerable success came the way of the Gael. The combined forces of the South under the kings of Leinster and Munster gained a great victory near Castledermot, where twelve hundred foreigners were slain, including the heir-apparent to the throne. Subsequently seven hundred foreigners were slain by Malachy, Airdri, and five hundred by Tighearnach, lord of Loch Gabhair, near Dunshaughlin. Similar victories attended the arms of the king of Munster and the Eoghanacht in the South, and—four hundred of the Danes were slain by the Norwegians. In two battles near Balrothery and Duleek, the foreigners lost five hundred men, and they met with further reverses at the hands of the Airdri and of the people of Ciarraighe Luachra.

But the tide of fortune soon turned against the Gael. Amhlaoibh son of the king of Lochlainn arrived in Ireland about 853. He signalled his coming by the drowning of Conchubhar a chieftain of Meath, the murder of the son of Ceannfhaolaidh chief of Muscraighe Breoghain in Tipperary, the smothering of Muchdaighean son of Reachtabrat of the Deise. Five years later, in 859, Maolghuala son of Donghaile king of Munster had his back broken with a stone. "Iomhar joined forces in 866 with Amhlaoibh the White who with the Gaill of Ireland had just plundered all Pictland and taken hostages." They both crossed the Humber, slew the kings Osbright and Ella, and remained a year at York.

The Little Book of the Icelanders has the curious entry at this time: "There were then here"—on the arrival of the Norwegians in Iceland about 870—"Christian men whom the Northmen called Papa; but afterwards they went away because they would not be here with heathen men. And they left behind them Irish books and bells and croziers whereby it might be perceived that they were Irishmen."

Then came Oisli, son of the king of the Lochlainn. He succeeded in plundering "the greater part of Ireland"; but his army was eventually cut off by the men of Erin and himself slain. The same year Colphinn with the fleet of Dun Meadhoin was defeated at Ceann Corraigh on the Suir near



Clonmel. The subsequent drowning of Badbarr in Dublin was attributed to the vengeance of Saints Ciaran, Aedh and Seachnall whose monasteries at Clonmacnoise, Ferns and Aghaboe had been besieged by him. Meath and Connacht as far south as Loop Head subsequently came in for attention. Next came Baraid, a Scandinavian chief who with the foreign garrison of Dublin plundered as far as Kerry, over-running Limerick and Cork, and burning Emly and the Deise. They explored the very sepulchral caves in their greed for the relics believed to have been buried with the Irish dead.

Aodh Finnliath the Airdri, who in 864 had defeated the foreigners at Loch Foyle with a loss of twelve thousand men, now gained a second victory over them in Dublin. The son of Sigurd Serpent-Eye who was in command escaped, but was slain soon after in a battle between the Black and the Fair Gentiles. The Black Gentiles, as a result, were driven out of Ireland, and betook themselves to Scotland, where in 877 they gained a battle over the men of Alba in which Constantine and many others were slain. "These fierce heathens of the Northern Sea," says the *Story of Scotland*, "sailed up the creeks wherever there was a town or abbey. Then landing they took the people by surprise. The young were carried off as slaves, the old were slain. The booty was piled on board, and, before the country folk could come together, the pirates were off."

To Ireland came a period of comparative rest for close on forty years. To escape the Vikings, Ruaidhri son of Muir-mhinn, king of Britain, fled to Erin in 877, say the *Annals of Ulster*; and the following year the shrine and relics of Colm Cille were removed hither from Iona for protection. There was endless internal dissension between the foreigners of Dublin. The native Leinster chiefs, taking advantage of the subsequent weakness, attacked the Danes who "escaped half dead across the sea, leaving behind a great many of their ships."

About 913, foreign fleets with the co-operation of their resident brethren at Waterford began again to despoil Munster. They were defeated in four successive battles in Tipperary and Kerry. Then the Northmen of Limerick came to their aid, but were defeated at the Leamhain near Killarney, and later by the men of Connacht. The east of Ireland was next



attacked by another great fleet under Sitric who won a battle over the king of Leinster and proceeded to ravage most of the churches of Ireland. His raids culminated in a great battle at Cill Moseamog near Dublin, September, 15, 919. Niall king of Ireland, a host of the nobles of Ulster and a countless army of the Irish were slain. The disaster was avenged within a year by Donnchadh grandson of Mael-sheachlain on the borders of Dublin where fell vast numbers of the enemy. "Not more than enough to tell what happened escaped of the Danes on this occasion."

Tomar now arrived with an immense fleet, and in the reign of Lorcan, king of Cashel and grandfather of Brian Boirmhe, plundered most of Munster, its churches and chieftainries. There was constant conflict at this time between the men of Munster on the one hand and the Danes of Limerick, Waterford and Dublin on the other. But it was only on the arrival of Oitir Dubh in Waterford with a fleet of a hundred ships that the oppression of the south began in grim earnest. Innumerable hosts came in his train, so that there was not a harbour, a landing place, a dun, a fortress or a fastness in all Munster without fleets of Danes and pirates. They carried captives of both sexes over the dark green sea: and historians of the time thought our chequered story holds little more heart-rending than the enforced separation at that period "of son from father, daughter from mother, brother from brother, and relatives from their race and tribe." Meanwhile the Danes of Dublin harassed and pillaged adjacent districts,—the historic caves and tumuli along the Boyne, Newgrange, Knowth, Dowth, Drogheda being repeatedly plundered between 862 and 934—and in a battle in 942 fought between themselves and the native Irish chieftains, Muircheartach of the Leather Cloaks and many of the nobles of the north were slain, after they had obtained many striking victories over the enemy. Kells was again plundered in 949, and Cinneide, king of Thomond and father of Brian Boirmhe, was slain.

It was about this time the renowned Ceallachan of Cashel pitted his linen-shirted followers against the legions of foreigners clad to a man in mail. Having captured Limerick, Cork and Waterford and driven the Danes out of Munster, Ceallachan was treacherously seized by the Danes of Dublin

under Sitric, son of Tuirgeis, and hurried thence to Armagh. Cinneide, father of Brian Boirmhe, instantly organised land and sea forces to proceed to the rescue of their king. The land forces under Donnchadh, king of the two Féaramaighe, proceeded by Connacht, sending skirmishing parties to Muaidh and Iorrus and Umhall. On the way they were joined by friendly hosts, and reached Armagh to find that Sitric and his followers had fled with Ceallachan and Donn-cuan to Dun Dealgan. Thither they pursued them, and while parleying on the strand a huge fleet was seen to approach the harbour. These were the ships of Munster, from Galway to Kinsale, under the command of Admiral Failbhe Fionn, king of Desmond. Keating thus describes the combat which ensued :

“ Failbhe and his fleet proceeded by direct route to meet the Lochlannaigh, and he made an attack on the ships on which were Sitric and Tor and Maghnus ; and he boarded Sitric’s ship, having a sword in either hand. With the sword that was in his left hand he set to cutting the ropes that bound Ceallachan to the mast and, so setting him free, let him down on the ship’s deck, and then gave him the sword he had held in his left hand. Ceallachan went from Sitric’s ship to that of Failbhe ; and Failbhe himself continued to hew down the Lochlannaigh until they, overpowering him in the end, slew him and cut off his head. Fiaghla a leader of Failbhe’s followers took his place in the conflict and, forcibly seizing Sitric by the breast, cast both of them overboard, so that they went to the bottom and thus were drowned.

“ Two other leaders, Seaghdha and Conall, came on and seized Sitric’s two brothers, Tor and Maghnus, and swept them overboard so that the four were drowned in that manner. In like manner acted every other company of the Gaels : they sprang on the Lochlannaigh and broke them up ; made gaps through them, slew them, threw them into disorder, so that there escaped but a few who were saved by the swiftness of their ships ” :

“ With terror struck, the affrighted Danes at every point  
gave way,  
And few were left to tell the tale of that destructive  
fray.”



After the battle Ceallachan and his host proceeded to Munster. On their setting out from Ath Cliath, Murchadh king of Leinster sought to give them battle, but desisted on realising how brave and valiant were the men of Munster. On reaching Cashel, Ceallachan drove out a colony of Danes that had settled there, and in turn subdued and took hostages from the Danes of Limerick, Cork and Waterford.

Yet the next achievement recorded of the Danes of Dublin was the slaying of Congallach the Airdri. So disorganised was the native government of the period that for seventeen years not a single move was made in retaliation. And when the first battle was fought, at Cill Mona near Dunshaughlin, Domhnall, unworthy son of the murdered monarch, fought in alliance with the Danes against his kinsman Domhnall son of Muircheartach of the Leather Cloaks and legitimate successor of the Viking's victim. Domhnall the treacherous, however, did not realise the object of this alliance, which was nothing less than the sovereignty.

In 973, Muircheartach and Congallach, the two heirs to the throne of Ireland in the Northern and Southern lines were slain by the foreigners. This left the way to the throne on the death of Domhnall unexpectedly clear for Malachy II, whose dethronement by Brian Boirmhe has been so much discussed ever since. Singularly it is on the records of this very year we first meet with Brian's name. It was significant of his subsequent career that he first signalled himself by defeating a combination of the Danes of Limerick and some native chiefs at Cahircon on the Shannon. Brian must have been thoroughly conversant in his youth with the high reputation of the Irish schools which attracted students from all the countries of Europe, as with the glorious record of the Irish missionaries on the Continent. Equally must he have heard full oft of the barbarities of the Norsemen, "bitter in their battle-work," as has been tersely said; of the preys of comely blue-eyed women borne into slavery and exile, of the monks and scholars slain or hunted abroad for refuge with their ornaments and manuscripts, of the cattle-herds on cattle-herds driven shoreward for the strand-hewing, of caves explored and graves despoiled, of outraged homes, and cloisters sacked, and altars rifled, so that the art treasures of



the Northmen must have been enriched beyond their dreams. Moreover, says the *Wars of the Gaedheal and Gall*, "there came after that an immensely great fleet, more wonderful than all the other fleets. . . . Munster was plundered and ravaged on all sides by them. . . . And such was the oppressiveness of the tribute and rent over Erin at large that there was a king from them over every territory, a chief over every chieftainry, an abbot over every church, a steward over every village, and a soldier in every house, so that none of the men of Erin had power to give even the milk of his cow or eggs of one hen in succour or in kindness to an aged man, or to a friend, but preserve them for the foreigner. Though there were but one milking cow in the house she durst not be milked for an infant nor for a sick person, but kept for the foreign steward or bailiff or soldier ; or killed for the meal of one night if necessary. And the most fit person of the family was obliged to take wages the day he embarked on board ship with his lord and be supplied with provision as if at home. An ounce of *fiondruine* had to be paid for every nose, and he who was unable to pay it had to go into slavery."

The existence of this condition of absolute bondage within the realm of his brother Mathghamhain, king of Cashel, coupled with his knowledge of the history already narrated, convinced Brian that the only hope of national emancipation lay in the complete overthrow of the foreigners. He realised moreover that

" It was the privilege of Lughaidh's race  
To lead the battalions of the host of Mumhan  
And afterwards to be in the rere  
In coming from a hostile territory."

So he and Mathghamhain who led the Dal gCais transferred their people and their chattels to the west of the Shannon and instantly engaged the foreigners in desperate warfare amid the woods of Thomond. Mathghamhain in time grew tired of the struggle ; but Brian fought until his followers were reduced to fifteen warriors. Then, coming to Mathghamhain and upbraiding him for his inaction, he had little difficulty in prevailing on the Dalcassian forces, aided by their

hereditary allies, the Eoghanacht of Loch Lein, to try conclusions once more with the foreigners. At Sulchoid in Tipperary, memorable in history as the scene of a Titanic struggle between Cuchulainn and Curoi, Gael and Norseman measured swords in 968. After a terrific battle the foreigners were utterly defeated: the few who escaped alive were pursued to Limerick, and there taken into captivity, while the city was given to the flames by the victorious legions of the royal brothers of Thomond.

Mathghamhain thereafter inflicted seven successive defeats upon the foreigners in various parts of the South. He made a red slaughter of them, and banished their leader, Iomhar, oversea. But Iomhar with a great fleet returned to the western harbour of Limerick. After a considerable time he induced Maolmhuadh and Donnabhan, two native chiefs, to join in a revolt against Mathghamhain who had been ruling at Cashel with signal success. Mathghamhain, as a result, was most treacherously slain. Brian, hero of a hundred fights, succeeded to the leadership of the Dal gCais and the sovereignty of Munster. He smote Iomhar, Donnabhan and Maolmhuadh with their respective followers, native and foreign, subdued the Deise as far as Portlairge, banished Domhnall who had forced a conflict on him, and took hostages of the principal churches of Munster that they should not receive rebels or thieves to sanctuary.

Hereupon there was an expedition of all the men of Munster and Brian into Osraighe. Giolla Padraig was put in fetters and his hostages taken. Brian next proceeded to Magh Ailbe, where the two kings of Laighean, Domhnall Claon and Tuathal king of western Lithfe, "came into his house," and he took their hostages. Thus within eight years after the death of Mathghamhain, Brian was king of Leath Mogha. This was regarded as the alternate right of his royal house since his remote ancestor divided Ireland with Conn Ceadchathach:

"Cashel of the kings of great prosperity,<sup>1</sup>  
Its prince has five prerogatives:  
The cattle of Cruachan when the cuckoo sings,  
The burning of northern Laighean.

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<sup>1</sup> Book of Rights.

“ By fifty attended, over Sliabh gCua to pass  
After the pacification of the South of Eire,  
To pass the plain in goodly mode  
Of Ailbe with light-grey host.”

Such the prerogatives of the king of Cashel according to Cuan O Lochain. So history, tradition, the native code of laws and the march of events all justified Brian's presence in Leinster. Unfortunately Domhnall Claon king of western Lithfe died soon afterwards. He was no sooner laid to rest than all Leinster became unruly and even aggressive. While Brian was engaged in pacifying the tribes in revolt, Mael-sheachlain the high-king—though Brian's junior by decades—had the bad grace and the ill-luck to uproot wantonly in 982 the ancient tree at Maigh Adhair under which the Dalcassian kings for generations had been inaugurated. Here truly was the signal for relentless war. Brian instantly sent three hundred ships up the Shannon. This, according to “ the Book of Rights ” was another of his prerogatives :

“ The three prerogatives of the king of Cashel :  
To have a queen out of Connacht,  
To have a fleet on the ample Shannon,  
And to maintain Cashel.”

But these privileges did not in themselves justify Brian's troops in ravaging Connacht and Breifne and Meath. In seeking to avenge the insults offered at Maigh Adhair, the southern forces met with one reverse at the hands of the people of Connacht and four at the hands of Maelsheachlain whose troops eventually burned Nenagh to the ground. It was then that Brian mustered a great force at Blein Patoige where Maelsheachlain came to meet him, and fortunately a truce was agreed to. Brian now proceeded towards Dublin. At Glenmama on the way he found himself opposed by a powerful combination of the men of Leinster and the Danes of Dublin. One of the fiercest battles recorded in Irish history ensued. Brian was victorious at every point. Upwards of two thousand of his enemies were left dead upon the field. After the battle he continued on his way to Dublin, and took possession of the stolen treasures accumulated there.



On the way home he enslaved every foreigner met with from Binn Eadair near Dublin to Tigh Dhuinn off the Kerry coast.

This crushing overthrow of the foreigners and Maelsheachlain's earlier truce rendered it impossible that Brian could continue to occupy a subordinate position to one incapable of enforcing his own will. So, having made arrangements for the better government of Leinster and Dublin, and returned to Ceann Coradh, Brian sent a great hosting to Tara to demand hostages of Maelsheachlain. The latter, not quite prepared perhaps for such a visit, demanded and was granted a month's respite. He immediately sent his laureate, Giolla Comhghaill O Sleibhin, one of the most fascinating poets of that glorious age of song, to seek the aid of his Northern kinsmen against Brian. No pleading, no offer, no appeal of ties of blood, nothing, not even the sacred duty of defending the Constitution would induce the Ulster chiefs to comply. On the return of his disconsolate agent, Maelsheachlain himself approached them. But even his immediate offer of Tara itself would not tempt them to try conclusions with Brian. Whereupon Maelsheachlain in despair, accompanied by a small escort of twelve score horsemen, sought out Brian, and offered him hostages. Brian chivalrously afforded him a further twelve months' grace. Maelsheachlain had time in his adversity to brood over the wrongs by which he had, himself, estranged and antagonised his people. For, though Maelsheachlain fought valiantly in his early days against the Vikings, we have it on the authority of the Four Masters that in the year 992 he conducted a vast cattle-drive out of Connacht. The Four Masters say also that he murdered Eichneach O Lochlainn in the abbot's house at Domhnach Padraig the very same year, and that he stole the shrine of St. Patrick from Ardee seven years later. The Annals of Ulster tell us, further, that Maelsheachlain devastated Connacht, plundered its islands and slaughtered its chieftains in the year 984; that he killed Donnchadh O Congallaigh, heir to the throne of Tara, in 990; that his forces bore off with them a troop of hostages from Connacht a year later, and that a year still later Sord Cuilm Cille was burned for Maelsheachlain.

And as for Brian having usurped the throne, as we are so often reminded, the truth unfortunately is that more than

once before his time provincial kings not only ignored the authority of the high-king but required him to give hostages whenever circumstances rendered it within their power to compel or overawe him. In the year 709, for example, Cathal king of Munster compelled Cearbhall king of Ireland to give him hostages, and thenceforward until his death in 742 the people recognised Cathal, and Cathal only, as Airdri. Similarly the people of Munster recognised Feidlimidh as Airdri from the day on which Niall the high-king gave him hostages at Clonfert until his death in 840. Domhnall mac Congallaigh, father of the deposed Maelsheachlain, set the bad example at a most inauspicious juncture of fighting in conjunction with the Danes against Domhnall O'Neill the high king at the battle of Cill Mona in 978, just a decade after Brian and his brother Mathghamhain had gained their memorable victory over the Danes of the South at Sulchoid. Moreover, it was not uncommon to witness an unscrupulous scramble between the Northern and Southern Ui Neill for the title of Airdri, as there was for lesser ends between chiefs elsewhere, as instanced by the treacherous slaying of Feargraidh and Mathghamhain in the south and the mutual annihilation of the northern chiefs at the bloody battle of Craobh Tulcha. So the friends and foes of Ireland alike came, for a period, to look on the Airdrioghacht with comparative disregard; and the multitude interested in the preservation of the nation were glad to substitute for a dishonoured tradition the more venerable national principle of selecting for the sovereignty those who were most accomplished and most industrious in promoting the public weal, like Slainghe and Ollamh Fodla, Tighearnmas and Cormac mac Airt.

Thus was Brian called on to govern his country and emancipate its people. Before the year's grace granted to Maelsheachlain had expired, Maelsheachlain and the chieftains of Connacht had sent him hostages. Then he made a great hosting to Dundalk where the two northern kings gave him assurances they would not molest Maelsheachlain for a year. In due time he made another hosting to the North, and got hostages from most of the Ulster chiefs. After the disastrous battle of Carobh Tulcha, where the Cineal Eoghain and the people of East Ulster fairly annihilated each other, he once



more journeyed Ulsterwards and stayed for a whole week at Armagh. It was on this occasion he left twenty ounces of gold on the altar of the church of Armagh and had his *anamchara* make the historic entry in the Book of Armagh subordinating the constitutional to the ecclesiastical power in Ireland. It is to be noted that at that very time his own brother Marcan was head of the clergy of Munster.

“He came back from Ard Macha bringing with him the hostages of Ireland,” so do the Annals of Ulster close their record of 1004. The following year he made “a hosting round Ireland—to Connacht, over Eas Ruaidh into Tir Chonaill, through Cineal Eoghain over Feartas Camsa in Ulidia to Aonach Conaille; and they arrived about Lammas at Bealach Duin when he granted the full demand of Patrick’s congregation and of his successor, *i.e.* Maolmhuire, son of Eochaidh.” In 1006 Brian made a further hosting to Cineal Eoghain, who had resisted him three years earlier, and brought off Ua Crichidhein, successor of Finnein of Magh Bhile, who had been a hostage from the Ulidians with the Cineal Eoghain. Another “hosting by Brian” is recorded in 1009—to Claonloch of Sliabh Fuaid “when he received the hostages of Leath Chuinn,” and yet another the following year “to Magh Corain when he brought with him the king of Cineal Conaill, *i.e.* Maolruanaidh Ua Maoldoraidh, in submission, to Ceann Coradh.” By the close of the year “Brian and Mael-sheachlain were again in camp in Eanach Duibh and two years later Maelsheachlain made a predatory expedition into Conaille Muirtheimne “in revenge of the profanation of the ‘Fionnfuidheach’ of Patrick and of the breaking of Bachall Phadraig by the advice of Maolmhuire and of Brian.”

The supremacy of the See of Armagh having been established, Brian in a spirit of the most exalted patriotism proceeded to promote education and the arts, and develop the institutions and the general resources of the country. From his quiet retreat at Ceann Coradh he directed the affairs of the nation with signal success, sent agents abroad to procure books, and obliterated all trace of the foreign oppression of earlier days. An index of the peace and harmony that resulted from his rule was afforded by the confiding lady

“Whose maiden smile

In safety lighted her round the green isle.”



That was the traditional condition of Irish society restored by Brian after the ravages of the Danes. "King Brian," says a Scandinavian Saga, "thrice forgave all his outlaws the same fault. But if they transgressed oftener, he left them to be judged by the law. From this may be imagined what a king he was." Thus did he conciliate and consolidate the clans of Ireland, and emancipate and ennoble them.

During all this time he evinced every consideration for the feelings of Maelsheachlain. When an unfortunate misunderstanding arose, over a game of chess, at Ceann Coradh between Murchadh son of Brian and Maolmhordha king of Leinster, who had crossed the Shannon to present personally to the Airdri some stately trees from which to make masts for his ships, Maolmhordha deemed it proper and politic on his return home to attack Maelsheachlain by way of retaliation. It was mainly to defend Maelsheachlain against Maolmhordha's attacks that Brian set out on the expedition which culminated in the Battle of Clontarf. There on Good Friday, 1014, he met and vanquished the allied Viking power of Western Europe and shattered for ever the ambition of Sweyn Forkbeard the year after England had become portion of the Danish dominions. The struggle lasted from sunrise, when the whole coast of Clontarf was black with Danish ships, until the shades of night mercifully covered from human gaze the countless hosts of slain and dying. We have many graphic pictures of it in the Irish and the Scandinavian literature. "The battalions were now arranged and drawn up on both sides," says an eye-witness, "in such order and in such manner that a four-horse chariot could run on the heads of the troops on either side from one end of the lines to the other. And each party of them remembered their ancient animosities towards each other and made mutual attack. One of the wonders of the Day of Judgment will be to relate the details of that tremendous onset. I could compare it only to the wonderful firmament, boundless and many-coloured, casting a heavy shower of flaming stars over the earth, or to the startling, fire-darting roar of the clouds and the heavenly orbs confounded and crashed by all the winds in wild contention against each other. . . . It was attested by the foreigners and foreign women who watched from the

battlements of Ath Cliath that they saw flashes of fire from them in the expanse of air on all sides."

"If we attempted to perform any deed of valour," said Malachy, who with his troops watched the battle's progress from a distance, "we were unable to do it because our spears over our heads had become clogged and bound with long locks of hair which the wind forced upon us as they were cut away by well-aimed swords and gleaming axes."

By the men of Connacht was encompassed the final defeat of the retreating Danes. But, only twenty of the "Men of the West" escaped alive.

Murchadh son of Brian performed prodigies of valour, as did Dunlang, Conang, Toirdhealbhach and many others of the Dalcassians and the Eoghanacht. Three times did Murchadh hew his way through the battalions, a sword in his right hand, another in his left.

Brian who prayed in his tent was kept informed of the progress of the battle, in which, owing to his age, he was not permitted to join. On being told towards evening's close of the fall of Murchadh's standard, he exclaimed, "Eire has fallen now indeed," and proceeded to make his will, "My body and my soul to God and to St. Patrick," he said; "and I wish to be buried at Armagh. My blessing to Donnchadh for discharging my last bequests after me, viz.: twelve score cows to be given to the *Comharba* of Patrick and the community of Armagh, and their proper dues to Killaloe and the churches of Munster. And he knows I have neither gold nor silver, but he is to pay them in return for my blessing and the succession to the sovereignty. Go this night to Swords; ask them come to-morrow early, and convey my body there; thence to Duleek, and thence to Louth; and let Maolmhuire and the Community of Armagh come to meet me there."

Then Brodar, hastening from the field, appeared, and dealt the aged king a stroke which cleft his head. But Brian in falling gave the Viking a sword-cut which severed one leg at the knee, the other at the ankle.

Brian's remains were met, as directed, by the clergy of the North, borne to Armagh, and there interred with the remains of Murchadh. His obsequies lasted twelve days and twelve nights.

The Scandinavian and the Irish annals vie in laudation of Brian's character. Ospac, brother of Brodar, so admired him that he came to Kincora to give him warning of the intended Viking attack on him at the instigation of Gormflaith, the Danes of Dublin and their treacherous Leinster allies. He has been likened to Solomon and David and Moses, his son Murchadh to Samson and Hector and Lughaidh Lamhfhada. The mutual comparison might be extended to Philip of Macedonia and his famous son. Surpassed by neither Philip nor Constantine the Great, no man of our race has better deserved to be commemorated with pride. Not alone did he by his gifts of statesmanship emancipate the Irish people, by his foresight and loyalty he helped incalculably to render the native Irish Church impervious to the later Danish designs of subordinating it to Canterbury.

Colonies of Norsemen—mainly in Dublin, Waterford and Limerick—survived the Battle of Clontarf. Some of them ventured on spasmodic raids which may, however, be regarded as negligible until "Magnus king of Lochlann and the Islands, a man who had contemplated the invasion of all Ireland," landed on the Ulster coast in 1103. But Magnus was cut off and slain; and with his death came a fatal check to the imperial prospects of his race, though their bishops were found half-a-century later at Waterford and Limerick. In England their fortunes were different. There, at the death of Alfred, at the very beginning of the tenth century, they had obtained undisputed mastery of two-thirds of the country; and by the date of the Battle of Clontarf "all England had submitted to the rule of Cnut king of Denmark. The ensuing chapter will disclose how it was sought to exploit the Norse communities still tolerated in Ireland to bring our country under ecclesiastical and temporal subjection to England after the Norse adventurers, like the Roman and Germanic hosts of an earlier era, had found it impossible to subdue our sturdy forebears by the sword.



## CHAPTER X

### IRELAND'S GOLDEN AGE :

#### HOW ARRESTED BY PERSISTENT INVASION

“ He is no poet who does not synchronise and adjust together all the stories.”



WE may now resume the interrupted story of Patrick's mission :

In 736 the “ Law of Patrick held Ireland,” say the *Annals of Ulster*. Aodh Ollan king of Ireland, from 733 to 742, and Cathal king of Munster, who died in 741, met at Tir da Ghlas and imposed Patrick's rule and law and tribute on Ireland. We read of “ the proclamation of Patrick's Law in Cruachain by Dubhdalethe arch-

bishop of Armagh and Tipraite mac Taidhg king of Connacht” in 782, and in 805 of “ the Law of Patrick by Aodh son of Niall.” In 810, “ Nuadhat abbot of Armagh went to Connacht with the Law of Patrick and his shrine,” and seven years later Airtre went to Connacht with the shrine of Patrick. Patrick's tribute was again imposed on Munster in 822 by Feidlimidh mac Criomhthainn king and archbishop of Munster and by Airtre son of Conchubhair, *i.e.*, bishop of Armagh: Patrick's tribute was imposed on “ the three divisions of Connacht ” by the same Airtre—in 824. Diarmait, displaced in 834 by Forannan as abbot of Armagh, “ went to Connacht with the Law and ensigns of Patrick ” in 835 ; and Forannan, “ abbot of Armagh,” was violently opposed in Kildare by Feidlimidh mac Criomhthainn, and his congregation imprisoned. Forannan was again replaced by Diarmait in 838, and “ returned from the lands of Munster with the reliquaries of Patrick in 845. Two years later the abbots again changed positions.

These rivalries notwithstanding, evidence of loyalty to

Armagh continues to manifest itself. Cormac mac Cuileannain king-archbishop of Cashel, before setting out for the Battle of Bealach Mughna in 903, left amongst his bequests to the churches of Ireland twenty-four ounces of silver and gold to Ard Macha. In 946 we meet the record: "The full of Patrick's Fionnfheidheach of white silver by the Cineal Eoghain to Patrick"; and in 972: "Dubhdaleithe the comharb of Patrick went on a visitation of Munster and obtained his demand." Muirecan of Both Domhnaigh, comharb of Patrick, on a visitation of Tir Eoghain in 992 conferred the rank of king on Aodh mac Domhnaill in presence of Patrick's congregation and made full visitation of the North of Ireland. The year of Muirecan's death, 1004, Brian Boirmhe returned from Armagh, having left an offering of silver there and instructed his anamchara<sup>1</sup> to make in the Book of Armagh the historic entry elsewhere alluded to. The following year Brian in a circuit of Ireland tarried at Bealach Duin and presented his dues to Maolmhuire mac Eochadha comharb of Patrick; while in 1011 he made a hosting to Magh Muirtheimne and gave full freedom to Patrick's churches.

Amhalgaidh, successor of Maolmhuire, went to Munster, for the first time, in 1021 and made a great visitation. In 1050 Dubhdaleithe, new comharb of Patrick, on a visitation of Cineal Eoghain, brought away 300 cows. Maeliosa comharb

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<sup>1</sup> The *Anamchara*, generally referred to as soulfriend, filled the role of confessor or chaplain. "It is right," says the Rule of the Ceile De, "to refuse the confession of a person who does not perform penance according to the soulfriend, unless there happen to be a soulfriend near whom he considers more learned in the Rules, in the ways of Scripture and in the rules of the saints. Let him heed what he receives from the learned soulfriend whom he first met." Again: "Any bishop who confers noble orders upon anyone who is not able to instruct in religion, reading and soulfriendship and who has not a knowledge of laws and Rules and of the proper remedy for all sin and in general is an enemy of God and man . . . and he shall pay seven cumhals in gold also as a penalty to God." Further: "There should be a chief bishop in each chief territory in Eirinn for ordaining even to Holy Orders, for consecrating churches, for the soulfriendship of princes, erenachs and people in Orders, for sanctifying and blessing their children after baptism, ordering works in every church, and training boys and girls to reading and piety." An illustrious anamchara was Maolsuthain O Cearbhaill of Inis Faithlean, who accompanied Brian

of Patrick made a visitation of Munster and took away full circuit amount of cess and donations in 1068 ; and in 1094 Domhnall comharb of Patrick, instituted into the abbacy on the death of Maeliosa, made his first visitation of Munster, carrying away full circuit dues and offerings. It has been observed that this is not recorded in the Annals of Innisfallen, nor is the circuit of Munster, credited to Ceallach in 1106, when, according to the Annals of Ulster, he brought away from the southern province his full circuit dues, namely, seven cows and seven sheep and a half-ounce for every cantred of land in Munster besides very many valuable gifts. About this time, however, Muircheartach O Briain who in 1101 had bestowed Cashel and the territory around it as an offering to God, in presence of all the nobles and clergy of Leath Mogha, left an offering of silver on the altar of Armagh. Thus Cashel's loyalty to the primatial See was signalised at the opening of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries respectively through royal gifts to the altar of Armagh by Cormac mac Cuileannain, Brian Boirmhe and Muircheartach O Briain, though the view had presented itself at a much earlier period that the Rock of Cashel—referred to in the Foras Feasa as “ the Rock of Patrick ”—seemed destined by nature as the permanent site and centre of the native Irish Church.

Ceallach had made a visitation of the Cineal Eoghain for the first time in 1106, taking away his full demand, namely,

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on his visit to Ard Macha in 1004. The Four Masters have obituary notices of Gormghal of Ardoilean, chief anamchara of Ireland in 1018 ; of anamcharas of Cluain Mic Nois in 1017, 1022, and 1054 ; of Dubhaltaine, chief anamchara of the Gaedhil and priest of Ard Breachain, who died at Cluain Mic Nois, 1024 ; of Dubhthach Albanach, chief anamchara of Ireland and Scotland, who died at Ard Macha in 1064 ; of the chief Senior mac Maoldalua, chief anamchara of all Ireland, who died in 1095, and of others who died of the plague that raged over Europe that year. The following year Domhnall Ua hEinne, chief anamchara and noble bishop, head of the wisdom and piety of the Gael, fountain of the charity of Western Europe, a doctor of both orders, Roman and Irish, completed his life. Aonghus O Domhnallain, chief anamchara and chief senior of the clergy of Colm Cille, died at Ceanannas in 1109 ; Macraith Ua Foirreith, learned historian and anamchara of mildness, died in 1137 ; and, as a final appropriate example of scores that might be quoted, to correspond with our first, “ Flannagan of Inis Faithlean, a distinguished anamchara died in 1144.”



“ a cow for every six, or an in-calf heifer for every three, or a half-ounce of silver for every four, besides many donations. Three years later he went upon circuit for Connacht for the first time, taking away his full demand ; and two years still later upon circuit of Meath for the first time, taking away from there also his full demand. In 1116 we find him making a second visitation of Connacht and taking away full circuit dues. Much treasure belonging to Ceallach was lost in the Foyle while he was on circuit in the North in 1118, and he had, himself, a narrow escape with his life. After two years, he again made a full circuit of Munster, took away his full demand, and left his blessing. Three years previously, in 1117, occurred the death of Maolmhuire O Dunain, archbishop of Cashel, “ head of the clergy of Munster and steward of the almsdeeds of the world.” Ceallach himself died at Ardpatrick, Limerick, April 21, 1129, in the twenty-fourth year of his abbacy and the fiftieth of his age. He was waked at Liosmor and buried on April 4th in the tomb of the bishops.

We next read of the comharb of Patrick in 1162, when he made the circuit of Cineal Eoghain and received record donations. At the Synod of Cloenad this same year the decision was confirmed that the comharb of Patrick should be archbishop of Ireland. A decade later—in 1172—the full circuit cess of Connacht was carried to Armagh for the fourth time by Giolla MacLiach comharb of Patrick and *Primate of Ireland*.

From an early period we find other laws than the Law of Patrick referred to in the Annals : In 696 Adhamhnan came from Iona to Ireland and “ gave the Law of the Innocents to the people.” About a quarter of a century later—in 720—“ Inmeasach the Devout established a Law with the Peace of Christ over the island of Ireland.”

In 743 we meet the record : the Law of Ciaran, son of the Carpenter, and the Law of Brendan at the same time by Feargus son of Ceallach ” ; in 787, “ the Law of Ciaran over the Connachtmen ” ; in 813, “ the Law of Ciaran proclaimed over Cruachain by Muirghis, *king* of Connacht.”

After Ciaran and Brendan come Coman and Aedhan. The year 771 has the record : “ The Law of Coman and of Aedhan a *second* time over the three divisions of Connacht ” ; 779,

“ the *third* Law of Coman and Aedhan begins ” ; 792, “ the Law of Coman by Aildobur ” abbot of Roscommon, “ and Muirghis,” king of *Connacht*, “ over the three divisions of *Connacht*.” This same year, 792, is recorded “ the Law of Ailbe over Munster and the inauguration of Airtre, son of Cathal, to the sovereignty of Munster.”

Meantime, in 786, “ Dubhdabhuirean, abbot of Cluàin Ioraird visited the *parochia* of the territory of Munster.” In 811 there is record of “ the Law of Daire over *Connacht* ” ; in 812, of “ the Law of Daire by the Ui Neill ” ; in 825, “ the Law of Daire proclaimed again to the *Connachtmen*.”

The Law of Colm Cille, however, covers a much longer span. Before proceeding to Iona in 563, the Apostle of Scotland had erected many churches in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> On the saint's return to the Convention of Druimceat in 575, Scannlan king of Osraighe, as a reward for his liberation from bondage, imposed a yearly tax of threepence on every household from Bladhma to the sea, to be paid to the community of Colm Cille at Durrow. About the same time a priest of Tir Chonaill erected a church of precious stones with an altar of glass and images of the sun and moon. He fell into a swoon from which he was rescued by Colm Cille, on whom he bestowed the church as a reward. In 579, on the other hand, the Battle of Coleraine was fought, about the jurisdiction of the neighbouring church of Ros Torathair, between the followers of Columba and those of Comhghall who though “ family friends ” represented different tribes—the Ui Neill and the Dalaradians. Such conflicts, though not very frequent,<sup>2</sup> might naturally be expected from the laws regulating

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<sup>1</sup> His principal Irish churches were at Kells, Skreen and Mornington (Meath); Swords and Lambay (Dublin); Moone (Kildare); Kilcolumb and Gowran (Kilkenny); Ardcoluim (Ferns); Durrow; Glencolmcille (Clare); Cloughmore (Tuam); Granard, Asslyn (Boyle); Emlaghfad (Achonry); Druimcolumb and Drumcliff (Sligo); Kilmacrennan, Gartan, Temple Douglas where Colmcille first walked, Glencolmcille, Ballymagroarty and Raphoe (Donegal), Desertogny and Clanmoney (Inishowen); Tory, Skreen, Ballynaskreen, Ballymagroarty, Eskahen and Desertoghill (Derry); Termon Maguirk (Tyrone); Armagh and Clonmore (Armagh); Knockbreda (Down).

<sup>2</sup> The Annals record serious conflicts, between the “ families ” of Clonmacnoise and Birr in 759; Clonmacnoise and Durrow in 763, wherein fell two hundred of the family of the latter; Clonard and



ecclesiastical property. It is only on reaching the period when the annals have frequent reference to the Law of Patrick, Adhamhnan, Ciaran, Brendan, Coman, Aedhan, Ailbe, Daire and the rest, that we find specific allusion, in 752, to "the Law of Colm Cille by Domhnall of Meath," Domhnall a decade earlier having been raised to the throne as high-king of Ireland.

In 803, after the Danes had raided Iona, we read of "the giving of Kells . . . without battle to Colm Cille the musical." Ten years later, the building of the church of Kells being completed, Ceallach abbot of Iona resigned and was succeeded by Diarmuid who in 828 went to Alba with the reliquaries of Colm Cille, returning with them in 830. Another Ceallach, who was at the same time abbot of Kildare, ruled from 854 to 865. Maelbhrighde, who ruled from 891 to 927 is referred to by the Four Masters as comharb of Patrick, Colmcille and Adhamhnan. Dubhthach, his successor, as "comharb of Colmcille both in Eirinn and Albain"; and Robhartach who comes next in order as "comharb of Colmcille and Adhamhnan." Of subsequent abbots, Mughorn is referred to as "comharb of Colmcille both in Ireland and Alba" and Dunnchadh as "comharb of Colmcille and Adhamhnan." Iona was plundered by the Danes, and the abbot with fifteen seniors killed, Christmas night, 985. In 988 "Dubhdaleithe comharb of Patrick assumed the successorship of Colm Cille with the approval of the men of Ireland and Alba." It would seem from the appointment of Dubhdaleithe that there was a possibility of the comharbas of Colm Cille being definitely merged in that of Patrick; but in 1006 we meet the record: "Muireadach son of Criochan resigned the successorship of Colm Cille for God," *i.e.* to become a recluse. Muireadach, lector of Armagh, must have succeeded, on the death of Dubhdaleithe in 997, and he was, himself, followed

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Donnchadh in 774; Durrow against the Ui Neill in 775; Cork and Clonfert in 792, and numberless ecclesiastics slain; Teach Munna with Cathal against the family of Fearná, and 400 slain, in 816; destructive raids by Feidlimidh on Durrow and Kildare in 832 and 835 respectively; the families of Clonard and Kells in conflict in 1055, and so on. 1170.—Amhlaimh son of the comharb of Finian of Maghbhile expelled, with the aid of the licentious king, chiefs and people of Ulster, the abbot and community of Sabhall because, for just cause, he had himself been deposed from Sabhall by the monks of Mellifont.



immediately by Feardornach "in the successorship of Colm Cille by the counsel of the men of Erin," at the Fair of Tailtean, renewed that year by Maelsheachnaill. Feardornach fell asleep in Christ in 1007; and in 1008 "Maolmhuire, successor of Feardornach in the comharbas of Colm Cille at Kells, died," to be succeeded by Robartach son of Feardornach, comharb of Colm Cille. The lector of Kells with thirty men and reliquaries of Patrick and Colm Cille were drowned on the way from Scotland in 1034; in 1040 Kells was burned. Soon was evidenced a recurrence of serious friction. The battle of Martairtheach was won in 1055 by Dubhdaleithe comharb of Patrick over the comharb of Finnein and Colm Cille, *i.e.* of Clonard and Kells, and very many slain. Robartach, son of the Feardornach already referred to, "slept in the Lord" in 1057, indicating that the hereditary principle was beginning to manifest itself in the comharbas of Colmcille and Adhamnan also; and in 1062 "Giolla Crist Ua Maoldoraidh, comharb of Colm Cille in Ireland and Scotland, slept in Christ." Henceforward the references to the comharbas of Colm Cille are comparatively meagre. The Abbot of Ia, grandson of Baethan, was killed by the son of the Abbot Ua Maoldoraidh in 1070. A quarter of a century later, Kells with its churches, Durrow with its books, Ardshratha and many other ecclesiastical edifices were destroyed by fire. Feardornach Ua Cluain, comharb of Kells, died in 1114; three years later the superior and community of Kells were slaughtered; about forty years still later, the original influence of the comharb of Colm Cille, in the South, as in the North was restored.<sup>1</sup>

At the Synod of Bri Mac Taidhg, assembled by the comharb of Patrick and the clergy of Ireland in 1158, "a chair was appointed for the successor of Colmcille, namely, for Flaithbheartach Ua Brolchain, in the same way as for every bishop, and the arch-abbacy in general of the churches of Colm Cille

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<sup>1</sup> Colmcille when visited in Iona by the sailor-saint, Cormac Ua Liathain, addressed him thus :

Procure for me tribute from thy race,  
O thou descendant of Oileall Olom,  
That I may *not* visit vengeance  
On the virtuous posterity of Liathan.

And Cormac answered : Thou shalt receive a screaball from every city.

throughout all Ireland." Accordingly in 1161, "the circuit of Ossory was made by the successor of Colm Cille .1. Flaithbheartach Ua Brolchain : that is, seven score oxen ; but it is their value was presented, namely, 420 ounces of pure silver, or three ounces for every ox"—recalling the tax gratuitously levied in favour of Colm Cille by King Scannlan close on six hundred years earlier. At an assembly convened by Muircheartach Ua Lochlainn at Ath na Dairbhrighe in Meath the same year, "the churches of Colm Cille in Leinster were freed by . . . Flaithbheartach Ua Brolchain and their tribute and jurisdiction given him, for previously they were subject" to "assessment by the respective temporal lords." The following year "total separation of the houses from the churches of Doire was made by Flaithbheartach, comharb of Colm Cille" and by Muircheartach Ua Lochlainn then claiming to be king of Ireland. Eighty houses or more were demolished, and the stone wall of the Centre was likewise built by the comharb of Colm Cille and malediction pronounced upon him who should ever cross it in violation of its sanctuary." In 1164 select members of the community of Iona, including the archpriest,<sup>1</sup> the lector, the Eremite

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<sup>1</sup> Obituary notices of priests, chief priests, great priests, archpriests, noble priests, and the like, are frequent in the Annals of the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and other centuries. To quote a few typical cases : Cuchongalta, priest of Lann Leire, singer or orator for voice, personal form and choice knowledge, died in 921 ; Mochta, bishop of Ui Neill and priest of Ard Macha in 924 ; Conaingin, abbot of Teach Fethgain, and chief priest of Ard Macha in 936 ; Guaire, a priest of Cluain Mic Nois in 944 ; in 951 Maolmhartain, a priest of Dundaleathglaise. In 1006, Fiachra Ua Focarta, a priest of Cluain Featra, passed away ; in 1024, Fachtna, lector and priest of Cluain Mic Nois, airchinneach of Fionnabhair Abha, and of Indeidhnean, abbot of the Gaedhil on pilgrimage in Rome ; in 1028, Giollachriost, noble priest of Ard Macha, and Cormac, priest of Ceanannas ; in 1041, Maelbhrighde Ua Maelfhinn priest, anchorite and bishop ; in 1081, Flann Ua Lorcaín, noble priest of Louth ; and in 1098, Mac Mairis Cairbreach, a noble priest, doctor, and learned senior of Ireland who died at Gleanndaloch. In 1105, died Aodh Ua Ruadhain and Aileallan Ua Spealain, two priests of Achadhbo ; in 1108, Eochaidh, son of the lector, a noble priest, senior and anamchara of Diséart Caoimhgheín ; in 1109, Flaithbheartach Ua Loingsigh, comharb of Ciarán and great priest of Cluain Mic Nois ; in 1124, Maolcoluim, noble priest and paragon of wisdom and piety of the east of Ireland, who breathed his last at Inis Padraig. The following year Maeltreana, noble priest and learned senior of Cro Caoimhgheín,



and the Head of the Ceile De came in reference to Flaithbheartach O Brolchain's acceptance of the Abbacy of Iona by the advice of Somhairle and the men of Airther Gaedheal and Inse Gall ; but the successor of Patrick and " the king of Ireland " and the nobles of Cineal Eoghain prevented him. That same year " the great church of Doire was built by the comharb of Colmcille, namely Flaithbheartach, son of the bishop Ua Brolchain, and by the community of Colm Cille, and Muircheartach Ua Lochlainn, arch-king of Ireland." It is significant that in 1162, soon after the recognition of the comharb of Colm Cille by the Synod of Bri Mac Taidhg, " a Synod of the clergy of Ireland " was held around Giolla MacLiach, comharb of Patrick at Cloenad, wherein were six-and-twenty bishops with many abbots. " And it was on that occasion the Orders of Archbishop of Ireland were assigned to the successor of Patrick, as it was before "—namely, " that thenceforth no layman be intruded into the Armagh succession "—and " that no one should be a lector<sup>1</sup>

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bosom friend of Ua Dunain and noble senior of Ireland, died.; in 1129, Giolla Colmain Ua Ceallaigh, a noble priest of Durrow ; in 1132, Maelbhrighte Ua Doilgein, noble priest of Ard Macha and senior of the priests of Ireland, in the 52nd year of his priesthood and the 80th of his age ; a decade later, Cathasach Ua Ciorcaereach, lector of Ard Macha, wise aged priest and most learned of the Irish ; in 1144, Giollapadraig Ua Conghail, paragon of the Irish for wisdom, lector of Cluain Ioraird and its priest ; in 1147, Muireadhach Ua Flannagain, a distinguished priest, " died after intense penance." Three noble priests of Ceanannas, Roscommon and Cluain Coirpthe, died in 1147, 1153 and 1155 respectively ; in 1160, Giolla Chriost Ua Maelbhealtain, noble priest and chief master, died at an advanced age ; in 1168, Murchadh Ua Muireadhaigh, a noble priest and chief sage of Connacht, died, as well as great priests of Daimhinis and Cluain Mic Nois ; in 1169, Congalach Ua Tomaltaigh, noble priest and chief lector of Cluain Mic Nois and paragon of wisdom of the Irish. Numberless other examples are met with.

<sup>1</sup> Conchubhar, Fear Leighinn or lector of Cill Dara, died in 965.

In 1004, Aodh, lector of Trefoit, bishop, wise man and pilgrim, died after a good life, at Ard Macha, with great honour and veneration ; in 1022, Cathasach Ua Gormain, lector of Cluain Mic Nois ; in 1024, Fachtna, another lector of Cluain Mic Nois. A decade later, 1034, the lector of Ceanannas was drowned on the way from Iona ; in 1041, Coscrach, chief lector of Cill Dara, died ; and in 1049, the lector of Tuaim Fionnlocha in Clare. In 1054, passed away Guaire Ua Lachtain, lector of Cluain Mic Nois, and Cuileannan Claon, lector of Leithghlinn and Disert Diarmada ; the following year, the lector of Ard



in a church in Ireland except an alumnus of Ard Macha": thus though the Columban houses were declared free, Armagh was obviously held supreme. Significant is it, too, that the Synod of Bri Mac Taidhg, constituted as it was, should recognise as head of the Columban Order a bishop and arch-abbot who was not only married but the son of a bishop.

As men no longer celibate<sup>1</sup> are found at this period, and anterior to it, not only directing the monasteries of the great saints of an earlier age, but as successors of Patrick and Colm Cille, it will be appropriate to say a word here on the much discussed subject of clerical celibacy.

"The Spanish Council of Elvira, held probably in 305 or 306," writes Archbishop Healy, "forbids a bishop or any other cleric to keep in his house any female except his sister or a virgin daughter dedicated to the service of God. . . . Men who had been married might become bishops or priests . . . but, after ordination, they were bound to remain continent. . . . The thirty-seventh Canon enacted that all bishops, priests and deacons, or other clerics placed in the ministry, should entirely abstain from their wives, if married," on pain of exclusion from the ministry. The Greek Church was not so exacting. According to the Council of Ancyra, held in 314, "priests and deacons, married before being ordained, were allowed to live with their wives. But they were not allowed to get married after ordination, except deacons who protested at the time of their ordination that they could not live in a state of celibacy. Bishops, however, were not allowed

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Breacain; in 1088, Cormac Ua Finn, chief lector of the Dail gCais, died two years later, Ingnadan, lector of Cluain Ioraird was killed.

In 1103, Ua Conmhaigh, lector of Inis Mor in Loch Ree, and Ua Cingeadh, lector of Dearmhagh, rested in Christ; in 1104, Coscrach Ua Criadhain, lector of Cill Dara; a decade later, Diarmuid Ua Floinn, comharb of Ailbhe of Imleach Iobhair, a noble bishop and a lector who bestowed jewels, food and alms. MacMaolsuthain, chief lector of the West of Ireland, died at Tamhlacht in 1125; Maolpadraig Ua Drugain, paragon of the wisdom of the Irish, chief lector of Ard Macha, head of the Council of the West of Europe in piety and devotion, died on his pilgrimage at the island of Loch Cre, *i.e.* Moin na hInse, on the 2nd January; in 1162, Cathasach MacComaltain, lector of Doire Cuilm Cille, died: "he was a great scholar."

<sup>1</sup>See notes to pp. 317-321 and Lanigan's Eccl. Hist. of Ireland, 390.

to marry nor to live with wives married before their ordination.<sup>1</sup> . . . Such in substance has been the discipline of the Greek Church." The Synod of Arles, which bishops from Britain attended in 314, "forbids in its twenty-ninth Canon priests and levites, married before ordination, cohabiting with their wives."; And a Synod of Carthage, held in 387 or 390, ordained that "bishops, priests and levites must abstain from all intercourse with their wives, thus exhibiting the discipline of the African Church in the fourth century as exactly similar to that prevailing in the Churches of Gaul and Spain. . . . The discipline in Britain, and afterwards in Ireland, was exactly the same. . . . In many cases, indeed, not only on the Continent, but even in Ireland, it was found desirable to ordain as priests and even as bishops men who had been married and whose wives were, in some cases, still alive, but living in continence. . . . Such was the great Paulinus of Nola, such was Germanus of Auxerre, teacher of St. Patrick, and many other great prelates of the fourth century. . . . but they abstained from all marital intercourse with their wives after their ordination."

"Calphurnus and his father," says Canon Barry, "are instances of married clergy belonging to the period of transition, before the principle of celibacy had been generally recognised. Enjoined by the Spanish Council of Elviro, A.D. 305, this principle had not been universally accepted even in Spain, for it was in answer to an appeal from a Spanish bishop that Pope Siricus wrote his Decretal of A.D. 385, laying down the necessity of celibacy. This ruling expressed the rapidly growing tendency in the Western Churches, yet at a much later time Gallic Councils found

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<sup>1</sup> It may be of some significance that the title bishop and *virgin* occurs pretty frequently in the Annals during this period: A few examples must suffice: In 947 Oenachan, airchinneach of Eaglais Bheag at Cluain Mic Nois, bishop and pure virgin, died; in 1010, Muireadach, comharb of Colm Cille and Adhamhnan, a learned man, bishop, virgin, lector of Ard Macha, and intended successor of Patrick, aged 74; in 1143, Macraith Ua Fuilleachain, bishop and virgin, and the following year, Ua Cathain, bishop and virgin, of the people of Leithghlinn; in 1161, Isaac Ua Cuanain, bishop of Eile and Roscre, a virgin and chief senior of East Munster.

it necessary to legislate against married clergy. There is therefore nothing surprising in finding married deacons and presbyters in Britain in the fourth century." There appears to be evidence that they were there even later: "But if there are any clerks not received into Holy Orders, who cannot live continent," wrote Pope Gregory to Augustine of Canterbury at the close of the sixth century, in a letter quoted by Bede, "they are to take wives, and receive their stipends outside of the community; because we know that it is written concerning the same fathers of whom we have spoken that a distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Care is also to be taken of their stipends, and provision to be made, and they are to be kept under ecclesiastical rule, that they may live orderly, and attend to singing of psalms and, by the help of God, preserve their hearts and tongues and bodies from all that is unlawful."

In Ireland, from the very introduction of Christianity men in a position analogous to that of Paulinus of Nola and Germanus of Auxerre, already referred to, presented themselves. Patrick founded a convent at Aughagower, for Mathua daughter of bishop Senach. Again, in blessing the men of Ireland from the Rick, he ordered seven of his household to guard them, and they included the married couple, *i.e.* an lanamha, from Cluain Ioraird. The parents of Brendan the Navigator furnish one of many examples of husband and wife who decided at that early period to separate, and withdraw from the world, so as entirely to devote themselves to the service of God in the furtherance of the faith. Kindred examples occur all down the ages and are peculiar to no one country.<sup>1</sup> Ceallach and Conall, two sons of Maolcobha the Cleric, are recorded in the Book of Ballymote as having ruled for five and ten years, beginning 654 and 658 respectively. In 731 occurred "the death of Flann Siona descendant of

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Silverius, we read in Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, "was son of Pope Hormisdas who had been engaged in wedlock before he entered the ministry upon the death of St. Agapetus. . . Silverius being then sub-deacon was chosen Pope and ordained on June 8th, 536." Pope Hadrian II before taking orders had been married also. His wife, who was probably living in a convent, and his daughter were forcibly carried off by Eleutherius, who compelled the daughter, though be-



Colla, abbot of Clonmacnoise," These, of course, may be similar to some of the cases quoted. But Alzog refers to Clement an Irish bishop, one of the stoutest adversaries of Boniface on the Continent, who rejected celibacy and was condemned to a life of confinement by order of the Synod of Rome in 745.

Not for a couple of hundred years, however, did any disorders of this nature seriously manifest themselves in Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

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trothed to another, to marry him. Hadrian demanding back wife and daughter, Eleutherius murdered both. The father of Pope Adrian IV retired to a monastery in England while his wife was still living. Examples that bring us nearer our own day are those of Fr. Eoghan O Caoimh the famous eighteenth century Irish poet, whose son died an ecclesiastical student, and Cardinal Manning, who, too, was married in his early manhood.

<sup>1</sup> ARMAGH: 1042—Aodh son of the abbot Maolmhuire died. 1046—Dubhdalethe, son of Maolmhuire, became lector. Condmach, twenty-eighth successor of Patrick, son of Dubhdalethe twenty-fifth successor of Patrick, that is, the son after the father as prophesied by Beag mac De—so runs a record in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick. 1064—Dubhdalethe son of Maolmhuire died, and Maeliosa assumed the abbacy. 1077—Ailbhe daughter of the Abbot, wife of the king of the Airthir and comharb of Monine of Ceall Sleibhe, *i.e.* Killeevy, Newry, died. 1078—Dubhesa daughter of Amhalghaidh comharb of Patrick, and wife of the King of the Airthir died. 1091—Domhnall son of Amhalghaidh instituted and intruded into the Abbacy. 1105—Ceallach son of Aodh son of Maeliosa appointed comharb by the men of Ireland. 1108—Eochaidh son of the lector Ua Fothadain, died. 1130—Muircheartach son of Domhnall son of Amhalghaidh appointed successor of Patrick. 1134—Niall son of Aodh son of Maeliosa succeeded Muircheartach until replaced by St. Malachy with whom he was in conflict until his death in 1139.

CLONMACNOISE: 1022—Joseph anamchara of Clonmacnoise and father of Conn na mBocht, died. 1039—Conn na mBocht, head of the Culdees, died. 1078—Mael sheachlain son of Conn na mBocht died. 1085—Giollachriost son of Conn na mBocht, best ecclesiastical student in Ireland in his time, died. 1089—St. Ciaran's Hospital, Clonmacnoise, was purchased forever by Cormac son of Conn na mBocht, tanist abbot of Clonmacnoise. Both Cormac and his brother Maeliosa died in 1103. In 1106 Maolmhuire grandson of Conn na mBocht was killed at Clonmacnoise. 1134—Ceileachair son of Cormac Ua Cuinn na mBocht, learned senior . . . of Clonmacnoise and Maelchiaran, son of the same Cormac, a noble priest, both died in the Seat of Ciaran. 1172—Giollachriost, son of the comharb of Ciaran of Cluain mic Nois, died.

TIR DA GHLAS: 1007—Ceileachar son of Donnchuan, son of Cinneide Abbot of Tir da Ghlas, died. 1009—Marcán, son of Cinneide, head of the clergy of Munster, died. 1081—Ceileachair Ua Cinneide,

Elsewhere, during the interval—in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries—"the repeated injunctions of Popes and Councils prove that the rule of celibacy had fallen into disfavour": St. Boniface, for instance, brought the charge of having wives against the German clergy. "St. Adabert gave up his bishopric of Prague because he could not endure a clergy which declined to be celibate and a nobility which was polygamous." It is deplorable, wrote Leo VII to Gerard, Archbishop in Bavaria, "that the priests in your country are openly married and ask to have their sons ordained." In the year 860 "the English clergy were openly reproached for keeping concubines," says Alzog; "and so general and notorious did the vice become among them that the Council of London, held A.D. 944 . . . reminded them in emphatic language that they were obliged by their state of life to observe the rule of celibacy."<sup>1</sup>

In 1040, says Bonizo, "it would be hard to find in the Eternal City a priest that was neither illiterate nor simoniacal nor living in disorder." Leo IX, writes Alzog<sup>2</sup>, makes efforts to correct the unchastity of the clergy. A sanguinary contest was occasioned at Milan, 1055-7, by simony and clerical concubinage. Forthwith there was "open war against clerical concubinage." In 1059 "Damiani reproached Annibert of Turin for allowing his clergy to take wives." When Gregory (1073-85) began his reform, says Montalemb-

successor of Colm, son of Criomhthann, died. 1152—Fionn, grandson of Ceileachair Ua Cinneide, successor of Colm of Tir da Ghlas, and previously successor of Bairre, died.

MONASTERBOICE: 1104—Feidlimidh, son of Flann of Monasterboice, died.

IMLEACH IOBHAIR: 1147—Cuilean, son of the lector of Imleach Iobhair, died.

DOIRE: 1163—The comharb of Colm Cille, Flaithbheartach son of Flaithbheartach O Brolchain the bishop and the community built a limekiln sixty feet long on every side in twenty days. 1164—Flaithbheartach son of Flaithbheartach the bishop, the arch-king and the community built the great church of Derry.

GLENDALOECH: 1107—Eochaidh, son of the lector Ua Fothadain a noble priest, senior and anamchara of Diseart Caehmghain, died.

CLONDALKIN: 1076—An army was led by the clergy of Leath Mogha with the son of Maoldalua to Cluain Dolcain to expel Ua Ronain after he had assumed the abbacy in violation of the right of the son of Maoldalua.

<sup>1</sup> Church History, 274, ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 591, ii.



bert, "the whole clergy with the exception of the monks, certain bishops and priests quoted as marvels, lived in permanent and systematic concubinage." Against him, adds Canon Barry, "stood up, rank after rank, the thousands of clergy who would rather forego their livings than their wives." The abuse of the principle of clerical celibacy, and hereditary succession, penetrated even as far as the papal throne. When Theodora, wife of the Roman Consul, led Roman society at the end of the tenth century and her daughter Marozia rose to more unenviable eminence and aimed at the imperial crown "the lay power did as seemed good in its eyes with St. Peter's Chair." The last year of the tenth century a French philosopher became by imperial favour Pope Sylvester II. His three successors John XVII, John XVIII and Sergius IV were all appointed by Crescenzio III, though he lasted but nine years. Alberic, brother of Pope John XIX, made one son Consul Romanum, another, a lad of ten or twelve, Pope. Thus in the words of the author of *the Papal Monarchy* "an hereditary but irregular succession had kept the cross-keys for well nigh 150 years in the hands of Theodora's descendants." When Ard Macha is under censure this contemporary papal atmosphere may appropriately be borne in mind.

By this time, as might be expected, the incursions of the Northmen, aggravated by the evil example of the Continent, with which the Irish Church was in most intimate touch, had produced bitter fruit in Ireland, socially and ecclesiastically; and the Annals bear evidence that for a period of a century and a half, or more, many of the leading monasteries of the land, as already indicated, came to be ruled by persons no longer celibate.<sup>1</sup> Comharb, airchinneach, anamchara, lector, Ceile De,<sup>1</sup> all married; in a few instances, even the

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<sup>1</sup> Judging by a poem referred to by Mr. Petrie, the Ceilidhe nDe were a separate class before the death of Carrthach of Liosmor in 636. Molaing, who died in 697, classed himself according to a story in the Books of Leinster and Lismor, as a Ceile De. "When Christ comes to converse with the Ceile De," he said, "not royal purple are his clothes; but it is in the form of the wretched and the sick and the leprous that he comes." A Rule of the Ceile De is attributed to Maolruain—founder and abbot of the monastery of Tamhlacht—who died in 792. Aonghus Ceile De, of that monastery, was the author of many poems and of the Martyrology of Tamhlacht, in which Comhghan



Cailleach De<sup>1</sup> seems, to have transgressed. One redeeming feature is to be recorded to their credit: they appear to have stopped short at taking orders. "About the year

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Ceile De is commemorated. In 811 the Four Masters say "the Ceile De came over the sea . . . and from a roll given him from heaven preached to the Irish." Maonach Ceile De came over the sea "to establish order in Ireland," say the Four Masters again in 919. In 920, Ard Macha was pillaged by Godfruth and his army who saved the houses of prayer with their people of God, *i.e.* the Ceilidhe nDe and their sick.

From Ard Macha we turn to Cluain Mic Nois, where the Ceile De had a long and eventful record. Joseph, anamchara of Cluain Mic Nois, and father of Conn na mBocht, died in 1022. Reeves says he descended from Torbach an abbot of Ard Macha, who died in 812, and whose father, Gorman abbot of Louth, died on pilgrimage at Cluain Mic Nois in 758. Conn na mBocht is described by the Four Masters as head of the Culdees or Ceilidhe nDe of Cluain Mic Nois, and the first to invite a party of the poor of Cluain at Iseal Chiarain and present it with twenty cows of his own. He died in 1059. At least two sons of Conn are found at Cluain Mic Nois, Maelchiaran and Maolmhuire. In 1072, "forcible refection was taken by Murchadh at Iseal Chiarain and from the Ceilidhe nDe so that the Superintendent of the poor was killed there." In 1106, Maolmhuire, son of Conn, and "intended comharb of Patrick," was killed by plunderers in the daimhliag of Cluain Mic Nois. Ten years later, the airchinneach of Lios Aedheadh, the guest-house of Cluain Mic Nois, died. In 1132, died Uaireirghe Ua Neachtain, head of the Culdees of Cluain Mic Nois and its venerable senior; in 1134, Ceileachar and Maelchiarain, sons of Cormac Ua Cuinn, the latter a noble priest; in 1166, the airchinneach of the guest-house of Cluain Mic Nois; and in 1170, Maolmordha MacUaireirghe, learned charitable senior, prosperity and affluence of Cluain Mic Nois and head of the Ceilidhe nDe.

Meanwhile we find reference to the Ceilidhe nDe in Cluain Dolcain, Ard Macha and I Colm Cille. In 1076, Cluain Dolcain—the abbots of which are mentioned three hundred years earlier—gave a church with its lands to the Ceilidhe nDe for ever, together with twelve cows as a mulct to the son of Maoldalua. O Ronain, airchinneach of Cluain Dolcain, who was in conflict with Maoldalua, died in 1086, and Maoldalua himself, who was chief anamchara of all Ireland, died in 1095. Colm, head of the poor of Ard Macha, had passed away in 1077, and there is record of the death of the airchinneach of the guest-house of Ard Macha in 1155. In 1164 the chiefs of the "family" of Iona, great priest, lector, head of the Ceilidhe nDe, came to meet the comharb of Colm Cille and invite him to accept the abbacy of Iona. It would seem that in the main the function of the Ceile De was to succour the destitute.

<sup>1</sup>In 1084 Donnchadh son of the Cailleach Ua Ruairc was killed. Muircheartach Ua Briain and Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair were sons of Cailleach Dhe, daughter of O Heidhin.

927," writes Alzog,<sup>1</sup> "the metropolitan see of Armagh passed into the hands of a powerful family by whom it was retained for two hundred years. The representatives of this family being temporal princes were called the Lords of Armagh and succeeded each other on the archiepiscopal throne, thus uniting in their several persons the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Of this abuse sprang another and far worse one. These men, though they were married, and had never taken orders or received episcopal consecration, assumed the titles, rights and prerogatives attached to the office of an archbishop in all things except purely spiritual functions which they left to bishops to perform." Malachy began to restore order in Ireland simultaneously with the reforms brought about by his friend St. Bernard on the Continent, and Malachy's spirit survived in St. Laurence O Toole. For a period, Bernard created an atmosphere of devotion perhaps rivalling that which marked St. Patrick's mission in Ireland. Guy, brother of Bernard, and his wife after they had reared two daughters, withdrew from the world: she became a nun, he a monk. Even more significant is it that the illustrious Breton, Abelard, who flourished towards the close of the period with which we deal, like the enterprising Brendan who may be said to have arisen at its dawn, was born of parents who subsequently took the monastic vows. What is more, when the wealthy, handsome and accomplished Abelard "hid his face in the monastery of St. Denis, the equally accomplished and beautiful Heliose, his wife, took the veil at Argenteuil." And twenty-one years after the death of Abelard the mortal remains of Heliose were laid by his side. It was about this year, 1163, the Synod of Cloenad decreed that thenceforward no layman be intruded into the Armagh succession, thus ensuring the observance of the principle of celibacy by its ecclesiastical rulers thenceforward.

**Synods, Councils and Conventions** date from an early period in our history. A Synod was called by Diarmuid at Tailtean after the Battle of Cul Dreimhne between 561 and 563. Colm Cille returned from Iona for the Convention of

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<sup>1</sup> Church History, 276, ii.



Druim Ceat in 575. In his retinue were twenty bishops, forty priests, thirty deacons, fifty youths. The Convention was attended by Aedhan newly-consecrated king of Scottish Dalriada, many minor kings and chiefs of tribes, Dallan chief poet of Ireland, and various others; and it was concerned with the release of King Scannlan of Osraighe, the retaining the poets in Ireland, and peace between Ireland and its Scottish colony. A Synod, held at Magh Lena in 630, sent deputies to Rome in reference to the Paschal dispute then widespread, "as children to their mother," in the words of Cuimin. The delegates "attended the celebration of Easter at St. Peter's on a day, March 24, which differed by a month from the Irish date, April 21."<sup>1</sup> On their return, in 633, the Southern Irish, without scruple, adopted the improved Roman cycle; but in the North and in the churches under Irish influence in Britain the original cycle introduced by Patrick was adhered to for many years afterwards. A collection of the canons of a Council held in Ireland in 684 is found in a manuscript in the Library of Coimbra. Adhamhnan of Iona is said to have attended a Synod in Ireland in 686 on his return with the captives taken by the king of Northumbria two years earlier. In 696, he attended a Synod at Tara which had its Rath of the Synods, and he came again to Ireland in 692 to protest against the remission of the Leinster tribute by Fionnachta at the instance of St. Moling. He attended a Convention at Tara in 697 and had women exempted from military service, an exemption re-enacted on the translation of his remains to Ireland in 727. In 779 was held, again at Tara, a Congress of the Synods of the Ui Neill and the Leinstermen, Duibhlitir (abbot of Finglas) presiding. Many anchorites and scribes attended. An Assembly of the Senators of the Ui Neill was held at Dun Cuair in 800.

At Ard Macha, half a century later, a royal meeting was held between Maelsheachnaill with the nobles of Leath Chuinn; Mathodan king of Ulidia with the nobles of the province of Conchubhar, Diarmuid and Fethgna with the congregation of Patrick, and Suarlach with the clerics of Midhe. In 857 a great Assembly of the men of Ireland was held at Rath Aodha mic Bric under Maelsheachnaill king of

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<sup>1</sup> MacCarthy, *Codex Palatino-Vaticanus*, 368.



Teamhair and Fethgna comharb of Patrick, to make peace between the men of Ireland. There Cearbhall king of Osraighe made submission to the comharb of Patrick; there also Cearbhall king of Osraighe and Maolghuala son of Donnghal, king of Munster, who soon after was stoned to death by the men of Normandy, made peace with Leath Chuinn. To the ravages and the example of the Northmen it is probably to be attributed largely that no Synods seem recorded for the next two centuries and a half until the general assembly of Fiadh mic nAonghusa convened by King Muircheartach Ua Briain in 1106 seventeen years before the First Lateran Council. It is significant that at this period a corresponding, even a longer, lapse is observable in the list of Ecumenical Councils, none having been held between the Fourth Council of Constantinople in 869 and the First Lateran Council held in 1123. Meanwhile the centre of Christendom was defiled by deplorable disorders, a passing reference to which will be essential to the thorough comprehension of the situation in Ireland.

Omitting detailed reference to the Patriarchs of Constantinople, it will suffice to go back to the time of Pope John VIII, said to have been the first pope who fell a victim to assassination. His "enemies tried to poison him," but failing, "one of them beat out his brains with a hammer" in 882. From John we pass to Pope Formosus whose corpse after his death and interment in 896 was taken from the tomb in St. Peter's, set up before a Council presided over by Pope Stephen VI, cynically charged before the assembled fathers with violation of the Canons and—naturally having made no reply—was adjudged guilty, stripped of its vestments, thrust into a nameless tomb, dragged therefrom by the populace, and flung into the Tiber, whence it was casually rescued by fishermen. Then partisans of Formosus seized Stephen VI, "stripped him of his garments, and strangled him in prison."

The opening of the tenth century was marked by the murder in their prisons of Popes Leo V and Christopher at the hands of the "malignant, ferocious and unclean" Sergius III who succeeded them. A decade later, John X was flung into a dungeon and smothered, his brother Peter having previously been slain before his face. The only act recorded of John XI,

says the author of "the Papal Monarchy," was to send four bishops in 933 to consecrate another son of the Imperial family Patriarch of Constantinople at the age of thirteen. John XII, Imperator, Consul, Sovereign Pontiff at the age of sixteen—some say twelve—drank, gambled, sold abbeys and bishoprics; ordained lads for money, mutilated prelates, died suddenly, "by the judgment of Heaven or the dagger of an injured husband." John XIII, like Benedict V, was driven from the Eternal City, but returned. He was succeeded by Benedict VI who was strangled by the brother of John XIII. John XIV died in confinement—it is said, of hunger; while John XV "underwent sufferings which compelled him to retire into Tuscany." His successor Gregory V, "was poisoned, or done to death somehow" in 999. By the end of the century another John, the Antipope Lovegood, elsewhere referred to, had appeared.

The first German Pope, Gregory V, was succeeded on the Papal throne by the first French Pope, the great and learned Silvester II. In his younger days he had received from Otto II "the once edifying but now degenerate Irish-Italian monastery of Bobbio"; but "its corrupt monks and litigious lay usurpers drove him thence to Rome," which, however, he left, to return, after a decade, full of hope and promise.

"The eleventh century was beginning with a group of saints on the throne <sup>1</sup>—Otto, repentant and a pilgrim; Robert of France who lived far more strictly than his own bishops; Henry II a monk in all but name; and the Apostolic Stephen, who converted his Magyars with sword and crucifix." Brian Boirmhe, their Irish contemporary, was worthy to take rank with the greatest of them.

Soon again, "Rome was the dark spot in a brightening sky." Benedict VIII whose election was contrived by gold or intrigue on the eve of the Battle of Clontarf, had to take refuge in time at the Emperor's feet in Germany. John XIX succeeded, to be followed by another Benedict who, without knowing his catechism, had the Papal dignity thrust on him before he reached the age of twelve. As might be expected, he is reputed to have lived "up to his predecessor John's

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<sup>1</sup> The Papal Monarchy, Barry, 182.



example : he was a bandit, not a priest, stained with adulteries, homicides, the vices of his upbringing and his youth " ; and, as he deserved, was driven from Rome in 1044. Silvester III, seven weeks after his election, was obliged to flee to his native mountains. " Benedict was again lord of Rome. . . He sold the Papacy for money down. . . The document was signed and sealed. . . Simony had achieved its masterpiece. A Pope selling the Papacy, a Pope buying it ! " <sup>1</sup> Gregory VI was the purchaser. But Silvester got back to Rome, and it was found for a moment that three Popes simultaneously held court in the Eternal City—not for the last time. Silvester, deposed, retreated however into a monastery ; " Gregory decreed his own deposition." Clement, who succeeded, passed away the following year, victim, it was believed, of a deadly drink, administered by Benedict, who was back in Rome, but fled again after nine months. No wonder we read that " Lower than Benedict IX it was impossible the Papacy should fall ; and higher than Hildebrand . . . it could never soar." <sup>2</sup>

Hildebrand who had been chaplain to Gregory VI, purchaser of the Papacy, ruled as Gregory VII from 1073 to 1085. Of the intervening pontiffs, Damasus II, appointed by the Emperor without as much as an election, was dead in twenty-three days ; Leo IX found himself a prisoner in the hands of the Normans ; Victor II narrowly escaped poisoning at the altar ; Stephen IX is believed to have been poisoned. For eight of the twelve years of his stormy rule, Alexander II had to contend with an Antipope, Honorius II. Another Antipope, Clement III, arose before the death of Gregory VII, and survived to the close of the century. Gregory had the mortification of seeing thousands of Romans sold in open market, when the lustful Normans and rapacious Saxons entered their unhappy city and gave it to the flames. Victor III, who succeeded Gregory, died in 1087. He was followed by Urban II who preached and consecrated the first Crusade, yet was long a wanderer on the face of the earth, and " commanded Europe to enter on a distant hazardous expedition while his capital was in the hands of an Antipope " who, indeed, survived him. Thus hurriedly we come to the close

<sup>1</sup> The Papal Monarchy, 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 190.



of the century. With the opening of the new century comes the restoration of the Irish councils.

About 1106, as already stated, a general assembly of the men of Ireland, prelates and nobles, was held at Fiadh mic nAonghusa under Muirheartach Ua Briain, Maolmhuire Ua Dunain archbishop of Munster, and Ceallach Mac Aodha comharb of Patrick, representing the Primate. Eight bishops, 360 priests, 140 deacons and many clerics attended, and they made regulations, laws and customs for the church and the laity.

A Synod or National Council was convened at Rath Bresail in 1110, Giolla Easbuig bishop of Limerick and Papal Legate presiding. It was there arranged to have six bishops in Ulster, five in Connacht, two in Meath, seven in Munster, and five in Leinster<sup>1</sup>—free for ever from the authority and rent of lay princes. The dioceses, enumerated as a result of this Council, were Ard Macha, Ard Sratha, Clochar, Cuinnire, Doire or Rathbhoth, and Dun Da Leathghlas in the North; Tuaim, Cluain Fearta, Cunga, Ceall Alaidh, and Ard Charna or Ard Achaidh in the West; Daimhliag and Cluain Ioraird in Meath. In Munster were Caiseal, Liosmor or Waterford, Corcach, Rath Maighe Deiscirt, Luimneach, Ceall Dalua, and Imleach Iobhair; and in Leinster, Ceall Chainnigh, Ceall Dara, Leithghlinn, Gleann Da Loch and Fearná or Loch Garman.<sup>2</sup> Dublin is not mentioned, as its bishops, for a brief period, received consecration at the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury until St. Laurence O Toole declined it at his consecration. "In the time of Lanfranc, Ranulph and Anselm," says Keating, scornfully resenting a false plea by Hanmer, "Canterbury had jurisdiction over Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Limerick, owing to a feeling of kinship with the Normans." All present at Rath Breasail bound themselves by very solemn pledges to observe its decrees.

In 1152 was held the Council of Kells, referred to as an Assembly and General Council of the Church in Ireland. It was presided over by Card. John Papiron of St. Laurence in

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<sup>1</sup> Keating thinks there were six bishops in Leinster and six in Munster with the Archbishop of Cashel as Chief Prelate.

<sup>2</sup> See *Foras Feasa*, 303-307, iii. for diocesan boundaries.

Damascus on behalf of the Apostolic Lord Eugenius, and attended by twenty-two bishops, five bishops-elect, and many abbots and priors. Pallia were granted to the Archbishops of Armagh, Cashel, Tuam and Dublin. As was meet, the Archbishop of Armagh was appointed Primate over the other bishops. Simony and usury were entirely rooted out and condemned, and the payment of tithes commanded by apostolic authority. Immediately the Council was over, Card. Papiron took his departure and set sail for Rome. Soon after, Domhnall O Longargain, Archbishop of Munster, died.

The church of Mellifont was consecrated in 1157 by the comharb of Patrick in presence of the legate, bishops, clergy and laity and around Ua Lochlainn king of Ireland, Donnchadh Ua Cearbhaill, and Tighearnan Ua Ruairc. Ua Lochlainn gave eight score cows and three score ounces of gold to the Lord and the clergy as well as a townland at Drochad Atha. Ua Cearbhaill also gave three score ounces of gold, as did the wife of Tighearnan Ua Ruairc.

In 1158 a Synod was held at Bri Mac Taidhg,<sup>1</sup> wherein were twenty-five bishops to enjoin rule and good conduct on every one. They appointed a chair for Flaithbheartach O Brolchain—comharb of Colm Cille—made him, in the opinion of the learned editor of the Annals of Ulster, a mitred abbot, and invested him with the arch-abbacy in general of the churches of Colm Cille. The churches of Meath and Leinster were released by the new comharb in 1161 and, as already stated, their tribute and jurisdiction given him at an assembly of the men of Ireland under Ua Lochlainn at Ath na Dairbhrighe.

In 1162, a Synod of the clergy of Ireland assembled around Giolla MacLiach comharb of Patrick at Cloenad. It was attended by twenty bishops and many abbots. They confirmed the decision that the comharb of Patrick be archbishop of Dublin as was the custom before laymen intruded into the succession. This year it was that Giolla MacLiach,

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<sup>1</sup> The full list of bishops is given by Keating in *Foras Feasa* 317, iii.

<sup>2</sup> Keating has no reference whatever to this Synod. The Annals of Ulster say the Papal Legate was present; the Four Masters do not mention him.



comharb of Patrick, consecrated Lorcan O Tuathail bishop of Dublin and archbishop of Leinster, in succession to bishop Greine who had been present at the Council of Kells a decade earlier and now "rested in Christ." Lorcan O Tuathail refused to acknowledge allegiance to Canterbury and he foiled England's efforts, begun in the days of Wilfrid, to obtain ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Ireland. Herein he proved himself worthy, at a time of transition and crisis, to rank in independence with the great bishops, Ailbhe, Iobhar, Diaghlan and Ciaran who had laboured in Ireland before the coming of Patrick, with Dalgan, Columban and many others of a later day. "There were in Ireland before Patrick came thither," says the Life of Declan, "four holy bishops with their followers who evangelised and sowed the word of God there." Of the four, "who had been in Rome," none save Diaghlan alone was in perfect agreement with Patrick. Ailbhe was elected by them as their superior, and "he therefore came to Patrick . . . Iobhar, however, would on no account consent to be subject to Patrick, for it was displeasing to him that a foreigner should be patron of Ireland." The objection to foreigners in the sphere of ecclesiastical primacy was not peculiar to Iobhar or Lorcan, or to Ireland. Whereas it is notorious that Ireland's missionaries abroad never sought to perpetuate their jurisdiction over the peoples they evangelised, England's ecclesiastics have ever combined a jealousy of strangers within their gates with an eagerness to extend their own jurisdiction beyond their own shores on the most gratuitous plea.

When Wilfrid on his deposition from the See of York, after ten years' rule thereof, appeared before a Council in Rome in 679 he requested that thenceforward bishops amongst whom he might be placed in his native land "should be taken from the clergy of their future dioceses,<sup>1</sup> so that the Church may not be ruled from without and by strangers." Restored to his diocese, he lingered in Rome and was admitted to the Council of 125 bishops, assembled under Pope Agathon to name deputies for the sixth General Council to be held at Constantinople for the condemnation of the Monothelite heresy, "which recognised but one single will in the Son of

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<sup>1</sup> Montalembert 385, II.



God made man ” and had been troubling the Church for half a century. In the synodical letter issued to the Emperor, by this preliminary Council it is pointed out that “ many of our brethren are in the midst of barbarous nations, Lombards, Slavonians, Goths and Britons . . . who would become our enemies if we gave them any subject of scandal.” Wilfrid, though armed with no commission—quite the contrary—signed this letter as “ representative, at the Council, of the British bishops.” Not that alone. With characteristic Anglo-Saxon self-sufficiency and presumption he signed a further undertaking on behalf of Ireland. “ It seems,” says Montalembert,<sup>1</sup> “ that Wilfrid undertook to guarantee not only the faith of the Anglo-Saxon bishops but also of all the Churches scattered in the north of Great Britain and in Ireland, among the Scots and Picts. Thus the Celtic Christians, whom he had so persecuted and opposed as to peculiar rites, inspired him with no doubt as to their unity of belief on all points which related to the faith, and he did not hesitate to answer for them before the Pope and the Universal Church.”

It is not necessary to repeat here the ecclesiastical relations between England and Ireland during the ensuing four centuries. Suffice it to say that by the end of that period, and just a century before the Anglo-Norman Invasion, we find Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury, in 1072, endeavouring to extend his primacy over Ireland and Scotland<sup>2</sup> as well as England. “ After the conquest of England,” writes Thierry, “ the intrigues of the primate Lanfranc—a man devoted to the simultaneous aggrandisement of the Papal

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<sup>1</sup> Monks of the West, 389, ii.

<sup>2</sup> “ The want of a strong centre of church government,” writes Mgr. MacCaffrey, “ afforded the Normans an opportunity of claiming jurisdiction over Scotland. By an agreement concluded between Lanfranc and the Archbishop of York in 1072, Scotland was recognised as forming part of the metropolitan province of York. Later on, however, the successor of St. Anselm, in Canterbury, endeavoured to upset this decision by bringing forward the supposed jurisdiction given by St. Augustine over the British Isles, and claimed to be, himself, the metropolitan of Scotland. . . . Fortunately, it was resisted strongly, and on the request of William the Lion, Pope Clement III declared that the Scottish Church was independent of Canterbury and subject to the Holy See.”—*History of the Catholic Church*, i. 137.

and the Norman dominion—being actively directed upon Ireland, began somewhat to bend the spirit of national liberty in the priests of that island, thanks to the reiterated messages, the persuasive sophisms, and perhaps the money of him who had caused himself to be called primate of England.”

Two years later, in 1074, Patrick was consecrated at his hands in Canterbury as bishop of the Danish colony of Dublin, and then returned to Ireland bearing two characteristic letters. In one, the Manx prince Guthrie, “king of Dublin,” was addressed as “Glorious King of Ireland” by Lanfranc who stated that in consecrating Patrick he followed the custom of his predecessors in the chair of Augustine. The other was addressed to Toirdealbhach O Briain who, in the grand manner of English diplomacy, was referred to as “Magnificent King of Ireland,” and to him Lanfranc had the temerity to suggest that a Council be called for the extirpation of evil customs in Ireland. Later he wrote to Domhnall, comharb of Patrick.

Anselm followed suit. Soon after his consecration, in 1093, he wrote Domhnall and the other bishops of Ireland, begging their prayers and, in the approved insinuating way, suggesting that they consult him in all matters of difficulty. In 1096 Samuel O Hangly was consecrated by him bishop of Dublin. Towards the close of the year, the new bishop, with the endorsement of others, asked Anselm to consecrate Maeliosa Ua hAinmire, who had just been elected bishop by the Danish colony of Waterford. Maeliosa, otherwise known as Malchus, was accordingly consecrated at Canterbury by Anselm, assisted by the bishops of Winchester and Rochester. Samuel O Hangly clearly did not long relish the foreign yoke: about 1100, Anselm wrote Maeliosa of Waterford directing him to rebuke the bishop of Dublin for various irregularities and particularly for carrying his cross before him like an archbishop. The cult of Canterbury though ingeniously fostered, was not having the expected vogue, and such as it had was admittedly based on racial ties or personal interests.

“About the middle of the eleventh century,” writes Alzog,<sup>1</sup> “the bulk of the Danes who had settled in Ireland had been converted to Christianity and, in the year 1040 or thereabouts, obtained a bishop for themselves with his



see in Dublin. The first to occupy this see was Donatus, and the next, Patrick who, though an Irishman, was consecrated in 1074 in England by Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, to whom, as well as to his successor, he promised canonical obedience. . . . It is more than probable that the Danes of Dublin sought the alliance because of the ties of relationship and common descent subsisting between themselves and the Normans who were then supreme in England."

It is important to observe that in spite of the admitted leanings towards Canterbury of the Norse who had embraced the faith in Ireland, their bishops in Dublin, Waterford and Limerick during the period under review were, with a couple of exceptions, native Irishmen who, for the most part, had earlier Norman associations in different ways. Of the bishops of Danish Dublin—all of whom were Irish—Donatus, the first, was succeeded by Patrick, reputed a great scholar who from his boyhood had been nurtured in monastic institutions. His successor Donnchadh O Hangly had been, before his consecration, a monk of Canterbury, while the next, Samuel O Hangly, had been—as was the father of Pope Adrian IV later—a monk of St. Albans. Greine, first archbishop of Dublin, who succeeded, was, in turn, followed by Lorcan Ua Tuathail. Patrick and Donnchadh were consecrated at Canterbury, Samuel O Hangly at Winchester, Gregory at Lambeth. Maeliosa or Malchus of Waterford had been a monk of Walkelin's monastery, Winchester, and, considering Winchester's associations, cannot be regarded as having escaped the wiles of England in its designs on Ireland. Giolla Easbuig or Gilbert of Limerick had sojourned in Normandy, and assisted at the consecration of a bishop at Canterbury. On retiring after thirty-five years' episcopate he was succeeded by Patrick. In all, two bishops of Limerick—Erolph who died in 1151 and Turgeis who succeeded him in 1152—and one of Waterford—Tostius who held office also in 1152—seem to have been of Norse extraction, and they may be presumed, like their kindred in Dublin, to have shared the Norman ambition in reference to Ireland.

It is important, further, to note that during these persistent

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<sup>1</sup> Church History, ii. 266-267.



efforts to extend the jurisdiction of Canterbury to Ireland, Patrick bishop of Dublin sought ordination in Canterbury in 1074, while Samuel O Hangly, supported by other bishops, requested Anselm to consecrate Malchus bishop of Waterford in 1096. Some of these consecrations had the approval of King Toirdealbhach and King Muirheartach O Briain with whom Lanfranc and Anselm found occasion to engage in cordial correspondence. The See of Dublin becoming again vacant in 1121 the burgesses and clergy of the city marked their jealousy of Ceallach comharb of Patrick by writing Ralph archbishop of Canterbury: "We will not obey his command, but desire to be always under your rule. Therefore we beseech you to promote Gregory to the episcopate if you wish to retain any longer the parish we have kept for you so long." And Gregory was duly promoted—ordained deacon and priest by Roger bishop of Salisbury—and consecrated bishop by Ralph at Lambeth with characteristic pomp, Richard bishop of London, Roger of Salisbury, Robert of Lincoln, Everard of Norwich and David of Bangor being present. Reflecting on all the circumstances, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the prime source of these appeals and exhortations to Canterbury was in Canterbury itself, when not in Winchester, and that they were but manifestations of renewed designs to bring Ireland under subjection.

It seems symptomatic, too, of the insinuating methods of the Anglo-Normans—in Scotland as well as in Ireland—that bishops of Limerick and Waterford are found presiding at the historic Councils of Rath Breasail and Kells in the twelfth century. In 1110 Giolla Easbuig bishop of Limerick was the Pope's Legate in Ireland and presided at the National Council of Rath Breasail. Accordingly we read in Keating, who was evidently misled by the bogus donations elsewhere referred to, that "just as twelve bishops were fixed under Canterbury in the South of England and twelve bishops under the city of York, a similar arrangement was made at this Synod, namely, twelve bishops in Leath Mogha, twelve in Leath Chuinn, and two in Midhe." Similarly, Giolla Crist Ua Conairce, bishop of Liosmor and Legate to the Pope, is mentioned in connection with Card. John Papiron as having presided at the Council of Kells in 1152. At this Council

it was that pallia were given the archbishops of Armagh, Cashel, Dublin and Tuam. Armagh and Downpatrick are said to have been jealous of the new dignity conferred on Dublin and Tuam, though the title "Archbishop of Tuam" was not then new in the Annals; but the fruits of the Council were calculated far more to arouse the jealousy of England. Within two years Nicholas Breakspeare, as Pope Adrian IV, ascended the Papal throne, the only Englishman who ever reached that eminence. The same month witnessed the coronation of Henry II as king of England. "Every individual," says Lingard,<sup>1</sup> "felt proud that one of his countrymen had been raised to the first dignity in the Christian world, and three bishops were deputed to offer to the new Pope the congratulations of the king and the nation,"—"the son of Robert Chambers, an obscure clerk, afterwards monk of St. Albans, but who had been rejected by the abbot of that monastery on the grounds of incapacity."

Such an opportunity to acquire authority over Ireland was too good to be lost. So John of Salisbury—afterwards bishop of Chartres, whom Adrian loved "above all mortals" and, after he became Pontiff, "would have drink out of the same cup and eat out of the same dish"—was dispatched to Rome to solicit the Pope's approval. "At my solicitation," wrote John in the *Metalogicus* on which he was engaged at the time of Adrian's death, "he gave and granted Hibernia to Henry II, the illustrious king of England, to hold by hereditary right, as his letter to this day testifies. For all islands, of ancient right, according to the donation of Constantine, are said to belong to the Roman Church, which he founded and endowed, *i.e.* St. Peter's and St. Paul's. He sent also by me a ring of gold, with the best of emeralds set therein, wherewith the investiture<sup>2</sup> might be made for his

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<sup>1</sup> History of England, 91.

<sup>2</sup> Investiture which led to so much friction between the Papacy and the temporal rulers of Europe was never a source of trouble in Ireland where the kings always had prelates at their inauguration; and when Brian voluntarily put the royal subjection to the ecclesiastical power on record in Ard Macha contemporary European rulers were in sharp conflict with the Pope on the question of their respective privileges. Some two hundred years earlier Charlemagne "had received the insignia of royalty from a Pope in the attitude of feudal obeisance," says the author of *The Papal Monarchy*. "For the first



governorship of Ireland, and that same ring was ordained to be, and still is, in the public treasury of the king." The claim is, in a word, that through the intercession of John of Salisbury, Henry II, king of England, obtained from Pope Adrian IV a Bull authorising him to enter Ireland, as Lord or Governor, and do therein, among other things, "what tends to the honour of God and the salvation of the people."

Unfortunately for the veracity of Adrian and John, it is but too patent that generations before either of them afflicted Ireland with their solicitude England's rulers and their pliable instruments contemplated the annexation of Ireland, and not so much for "the honour of God" as for the aggrandisement of the adventurer. "The proximity of Ireland to England," says Lingard, "and the inferiority of the natives in the art of war had suggested the idea of a conquest both to William the Conqueror and the first Henry." Adela,

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time a Pope had crowned an emperor on his knees before St. Peter's." On the death of Charlemagne, Pope Stephen VI crowned Louis at Rheims. Seventy-five years after Charlemagne, his grandson Charles the Bald was crowned at St. Peter's, "elected and confirmed Emperor of the West" by John VIII. But trouble arose, and was not short-lived; nor was the responsibility therefor solely on one side. "The deposition of John XII by Otto I, notwithstanding its being clearly uncanonical, was very generally praised as a measure affording a remedy for the evils of the age, and on this account deserving of the gratitude of mankind. Again, the high-handed interference of Otto's son and grandson and still later of Henry III in Papal elections met with an equally grateful recognition because their conduct was inspired and sustained by Christian sentiments and a feeling of loyalty to the church and was required by the exceptional circumstances of the times."—Alzog, ii. 243.

In 996 the Emperor Otto III when but a lad of sixteen, named his cousin Bruno who was but twenty-three to the chair of Peter as Gregory V. In accordance with the privileges of his grandfather Otto the Great "the Emperor must choose the Pope." Up to the time of Hildebrand the election of Pope was ratified by the king and princes of Germany, says Alzog again. "The leading idea of Hildebrand's life was the establishment of a *universal monarchy, with the Pope at its head* and the kings and princes of the earth doing him homage and service as his vassals. . . . The idea of a universal theocracy, however, did not originate with Gregory. . . . The subordination of the temporal to the spiritual power . . . had already been proclaimed by St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Chrysostom and by the Popes, Gelasius and Gregory the Great." Frederick Barbarossa, on the other hand, wanted a *universal political monarchy under his own rule*. Urban II, organiser of the First Crusade, combined in his own person the temporal and



sister of this Henry, had two sons, another Henry bishop of Winchester, papal legate, "half monk, half soldier," and King Stephen whose savage reign connected the first King, Henry, with the second. On arrival in England, Henry II received the homage of the nobility at Winchester before being crowned at Westminster. During Michaelmas of the year following his inauguration, this second Henry, like his grandfather Henry I and his great-grandfather, William the Conqueror, proposed to his barons the invasion of Ireland—but it was deferred as a result of his mother's opposition<sup>1</sup>—and the gold ring sent him by the Pope "was ordained to be," in the words of the bearer, "in the public treasury of the king" at Winchester. Considering the atmosphere of Winchester, as indicated, its association with Maeliosa of Waterford, Samuel O Hangly of Dublin, and other Irish prelates, Maeliosa's cordial relations with St. Malachy of Armagh and Malachy's intimacy with St. Bernard—considering further the influence of St. Albans as also indicated, the activities

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spiritual sovereignty of the West. At a Synod in Rome in 1059 it was decreed, writes Alzog further, that "upon the death of the Pontiff . . . it shall . . . be the duty of the Cardinal bishops to come together and take the election "of a successor" seriously in hand. They shall next take joint action with the cardinal clerics and finally obtain the consent of the whole clergy as well as of the people to their choice, guarding in advance against whatever may in any way be the occasion of bribery. If a fit person be found in the Roman Church, he is to be taken; if not, one may be sought elsewhere." The Council of Clermont in 1095, "protested against bishops taking the oath of fealty to either king or feudal lord." Urban II, Peter the Hermit and a multitude of bishops, abbots and laymen of every rank and condition were present.

By the Concordat of Worms 1122 an end was put to the contest on Investiture which had lasted fifty years. This was confirmed by the First Council of Lateran, 1123. "The Emperor," it decreed, "shall resign . . . the practice of Investiture with ring and crozier and shall permit all the churches of the Empire to exercise the fullest freedom in the consecration of bishops. The election of German bishops (exclusive of Italian and Burgundian) shall take place in presence of the Emperor. Bishops shall receive investiture of the fiefs and the royal privileges and prerogatives attached to them by the imperial sceptre, if Germans *before*, if Italians *after* consecration. In return for these grants bishops shall promise fidelity to the Empire." But the Concordat was soon violated, and friction was rampant, particularly in England. It reached its climax by the historic Council of Constance.

<sup>1</sup> Lanigan's Eccl. Hist., 167;

of Canterbury and the blandishments of its prelates Lanfranc and Anselm, no great effort of the imagination is required to conceive unsuspecting Irish bishops and others unwittingly lending themselves to the dissemination, even on the Continent, of the insidiously fostered notion that Ireland needed English supervision whether the authority for that supervision came by the sword or alternatively through the weapon of slander issuing in a Papal Bull.

Stripped of redundancy and royal flattery, the historic Bull *Laudabiliter*, attributed to Adrian IV, and kept in cold storage for close on twenty years, sets out that the illustrious king of the English seeks Papal authority "to proclaim the truth of the Christian faith to a rude and untaught people," namely the Irish, "to root out nurseries of vice from the field of the Lord," in Ireland, and plant there "a nursery of the faith and seed pleasing to God, as conscience tells us," and as "we see that this is strictly demanded of us." The Bull proceeds: "Since you intimate to us, well-beloved son in Christ, that you wish to enter the island of Hibernia to subject that people to laws and root out the nurseries of vice from it, and are willing to pay from each house one *denarius* annually as cess to blessed Peter, and to preserve the rights of the Church in that land unimpaired and inviolate, so we . . . are pleased and willing that, to extend the bounds of the Church, prevent the re-growth of vice, amend morals, sow the seeds of virtue, and advance the Christian religion, you shall enter that island and do therein what tends to the honour of God and the salvation of the people. And let *the people* of that land receive you honourably and respect you as *dominus*. . . If, therefore, *you* shall bring to completion what you have planned, strive to discipline that nation in good morals, and act as well by yourself as by those whom you have ascertained to be . . . fit for the task, that the Church may be adorned there, that the religion and faith of Christ may be planted and grow, and that what appertains to the honour of God and the salvation of souls may be so ordered by you that you may merit to obtain from God the abundance of the eternal reward in heaven and . . . a glorious name on earth."



The grant of Ireland to a foreign king—as claimed and accepted for many centuries—the grounds and conditions and declared objects of the grant, and the character of him for whom it is held to have been sought and obtained, call for detailed examination. That the Bull existed from the beginning of Henry's reign no one seriously questions ; that there were legitimate grounds for granting it may be contended still, but cannot be sustained. The alleged "donation of Constantine," brought forward by John of Salisbury, has been proved a forgery,<sup>1</sup> the alleged bequest by Donnchadh, son of Brian, and the nobles of Ireland on Pope Urban would, even if true, be absolutely unauthorised under the Brehon code. The alleged objects for which the Bull was exploited—to proclaim the truths of the Christian faith to a rude and untaught people, root out nurseries of vice and prevent their re-growth, sow the seeds of virtue, amend morals, subject the people to laws, advance the Christian religion, extend the bounds of the Church and preserve its rights in that land unimpaired and inviolate—these necessitate a comparison between the then condition of Ireland and that of the other nations of Western Europe. The conditions of the alleged grant—requiring, among other things, that the grantee bring to completion what he professed to have planned, and by self-discipline edify the multitude and exalt the Church—demand an investigation into the character and conduct of the alien king, even into the antecedents of the Pontiff held to have so invested him with authority. For these things have affected Ireland's history fundamentally.

First, then, let us compare the condition of Ireland with that of the neighbouring nations from the expulsion of the Norsemen by Brian champion of the Church in the beginning of the eleventh century to the invasion by the Normans which it has been sought to justify by a Papal Bull produced towards the end of the twelfth. With the conditions, now to be contrasted, Pope Adrian from his position must be presumed to have been fairly familiar.

"There were eighty Councils held in France during *the eleventh century*," writes Alzog, "and of these there was not a single one at which a protest of the fathers was not

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<sup>1</sup> *The History of Ireland*, Arthur Ua Cleirigh.



directed against the lawlessness and brigandage of the laity and the unchastity and simony of the clergy. But when these disorders were at their height, when bishops presumed to settle the affairs of the church on their daughters, when dukes and counts put on public sale the bishoprics and abbacies lying within their respective territories, when the weak had no right that the strong were bound to respect, a reaction set in, good sprang from an excess of evil, and a new life from the dissolution of the old."<sup>1</sup>

When the laity, clergy and nobility are thus pilloried, royalty must not be shielded. Philip I of France, excommunicated by Urban II, set aside his legitimate wife Bertha, in 1092 and was at the same time living in adultery with Bertrada who had left her lawful husband, the Count of Anjou. Of the condition of *France in the twelfth century* the story of the Sectaries of the period, abridged from the same author's lucid account, speaks eloquently and, for our purpose, adequately:

**Peter de Bruis**, who flourished from 1104 to 1125, became notorious in Southern France, rejected infant baptism, declared against the Mass, forbade the erection of new churches and directed that those already built be pulled down, condemned the practice of praying for the dead, encouraged the marriage of priests. While engaged one day at St. Giles near Arles in committing to the flames a number of images and pictures, he was seized by the mob and cast into the fire he had lighted.

**Janehelm**, "an illiterate and fanatical layman," whose activities reached their zenith in the decade ending 1124, "became the founder of a sect in Brabant, proclaimed himself the Son of God, preached against ecclesiastical organisations, had churches erected in his own honour, repudiated the sacraments of the Church and her hierarchy, forbade the payment of tithes. But though he set up the state of a king, collected around himself a bodyguard of 3,000, and gave himself the title of Divinity, he was slain at Antwerp before the first quarter of the twelfth century had quite expired.

**Eon d'Etoile**, a wealthy nobleman, also proclaimed himself the Son of God and wished to form a new kingdom. He

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<sup>1</sup> Church History, 370, ii.

fancied himself the true Messiah, called upon others to regard him as such; went up and down through Brittany and Gascony, accompanied by a large number of followers and living in sumptuous style and, finally, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment by the Council of Rheims, 1148.

**Henry the Deacon**, formerly a monk of the Abbey of Cluny, and also known as Henry of Lausanne, followed Peter, the deposed priest, and flourished from 1116 to 1148. He was a violent opponent of sacred music and a determined enemy of the clergy. When he arraigned the indolence and immorality of the clergy, indeed, people deserted the churches, flocked to hear him, and threatened violence to those against whom his denunciations were directed. Courtesans, at his bidding, cast their costly robes, jewels and other adornments into the flames and entered upon exemplary lives. Hildebert, bishop of Le Mans, gave him permission to preach throughout his diocese, but contrived a meeting between them both and, after exposing the sectary's utter lack of education to the people, expelled him from the diocese. He then retired to the South of France, and in 1125 fled into Gascony. Having entered the diocese of Arles a few years later, he was taken before Innocent II, then in exile at Pisa, and by him committed to the keeping of St. Bernard. Escaping after some years, he returned to Languedoc where, under the protection of the Count of Toulouse, he soon regained his former influence over the people. St. Bernard, whose aid Pope Eugene III sought in putting down Henry, says of his effect on the Church in southern France: "I have found churches empty of people, people without priests, priests not respected, Christians without Christ, God's holy places profaned, the sacraments no longer held in honour, the holy days without solemnities." He was subsequently arrested by the Archbishop of Toulouse, taken in 1148 to Rheims, where Eugene presided over the historic Council, and cast into prison where he soon died.<sup>1</sup>

**Peter Waldo**, a wealthy merchant, distributing all his property amongst the poor, founded about 1160 "the Poor Men of Lyons." Their activities soon brought upon them the censure of the Church, as "enemies of the Cross, profaners

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<sup>1</sup> Alzog, 471, ii.



of the religion of Christ, and dangerous to both king and State.”<sup>1</sup>

**The Cathari**, while boasting of being the only true followers of Christ and His Apostles, manifested the most determined opposition to the Catholic clergy. “They were more numerous and influential in Upper Italy and Southern France, whence they spread along the banks of the Rhine, particularly to the territory about Treves, in 1121, and into England about 1159. They were variously known as Cutari, Patrini, Mediolanenses, Publicani and, in France, as Bons Hommes.”<sup>2</sup>

Of all the sectaries who opposed the Catholic Church and her hierarchy, however, the Albigenses were the most thorough and radical. Alexander III in 1164 had a crusade preached against these Albigenses—“more wicked than Saracens”—but it was carried on languidly. Subsequently, however, sanguinary struggles were waged against them.<sup>3</sup>

In *Germany*, Henry IV, the despotic debauchee, whose reign embraced the last half of the eleventh century, bestowed on his concubines the precious stones stolen from the Church. He was deserted by his second wife: previously, he had sought in vain the permission of the Pope to abandon his first wife. From the members of the Collegiate Chapter of Goslar where he lived—everyone of them immoral—he made his selection for the bishoprics of Germany and Italy. He even had the great Pope Gregory VII deposed, in 1076, at a Conference of his creatures in the Episcopacy, but he was himself excommunicated in turn—with the result that he ultimately presented himself a penitent at the Castle of Canossa where the Pope had taken refuge. Later he appointed Anti-pope Clement III; and, after the death of Clement in 1100, his partisans appointed successors, of whom there were three within a short interval. Anti-pope Gregory VIII was appointed in 1119,<sup>4</sup> and there was another Anti-pope, Anacletus II from 1130 to 1138 until the trouble was composed by St. Bernard.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alzog, 472-3, ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 476, ii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 477, ii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 376-7, ii.

<sup>5</sup> On the death of Adrian in 1159, a new Anti-pope, Victor IV, was chosen in opposition to Alexander III. In 1162, Alexander fled to France, returning in 1164, on the death of Victor. The next Anti-pope, Paschal III, was got by the Emperor to commission Archbishop Rainald



*Italy* was no better than France or Germany. "The Council of Pavia, presided over by Pope Benedict VIII in 1022, passed a number of decrees against the unchastity of the ecclesiastics but to little purpose. The clergy felt reassured by the evil example of Guido, Archbishop of Milan, and refused," so Alzog<sup>1</sup> writes, "to leave off the practices of simony and their incontinent habits." Half a century later, Hildebrand on his elevation to the papal throne as Gregory VII in 1074, said of those around him at the time:<sup>2</sup> "Those among whom I live—Romans, Lombards and Normans—are, as I have often told them, worse than Jews and Pagans." Paschal II in the beginning of the twelfth century, for consenting to the disendowment of the Church, so that thenceforth the clergy should subsist on tithes and voluntary subscriptions, was treated with indignant contempt by his Cardinals. He, too, experienced imprisonment. Ultimately he had to flee, but returned to Rome to die in 1118. His successor, "Gelasius II was hardly chosen when Frangipani invaded the church, seized the Pope and chained him up like a dog in his citadel below the Palatine." In nearly every bishopric of northern Italy friction arose over contending imperial and papal claims. A third class, equally opposed to both, formed themselves into republics.<sup>3</sup> The short-lived republic proclaimed in Rome about 1146,<sup>4</sup> warned Pope Celestine II that he "must exercise no temporal power but be content with tithes and oblations." As Innocent II had to flee to Pisa, so Eugenius III "a poor unlettered brother" of the convent at Pisa had to flee to Dijon. Three Anti-popes had appeared in the course of the half-century leading up to the advent of Adrian IV.

And what of *England* to which Ireland was subjected by authority of Adrian's Bull? It is too much forgotten that

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of Dassel to perform the ceremony of Charlemagne's canonisation December 29, 1165. Paschal having died at the Vatican, 1168, a Hungarian was selected to succeed him. Friction continued until Frederick, beaten in battle, and stripped of his followers by plague and disease, consented at the Peace of Venice, 1177, to acknowledge Alexander III as the true and lawful Pope. Yet another Anti-pope, Innocent III, succeeded, 1179-1180, the last for an interval of a century and a half.

<sup>1</sup> Church History, 270, 271, ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 348, ii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 393, ii.

<sup>4</sup> *The Papal Monarchy*, 356-9.

the action, of which some modern writers would acquit Pope Adrian, was not without precedent of a kind. Almost a century earlier, "Alexander II, no doubt by Hildebrand's advice, had sent William the Conqueror a consecrated banner and given him leave to invade England."<sup>1</sup> For, "William's intercourse with Gregory VII was on the loftiest terms." Yet, William the Conqueror, Lingard tells us,<sup>2</sup> was "the illegitimate son of Robert II, Duke of Normandy," and William's uncle, Malger, Archbishop of Rouen, "disgraced his dignity by his conduct."

Having attained to power, William, of course, could not rely on English prelates; so, pending the possible rise of episcopal candidates from his own stock, he introduced Normans and foreigners, among them a learned monk of Pavia, Lanfranc, as Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup> His return for Alexander's consecrated banner and gracious permission to invade England was to direct, in due time, that "all letters issued from the Court of Rome should, on their arrival in England, be submitted to the royal inspection"; and, "when summoned by Gregory VII to do temporal homage for his crown,<sup>4</sup> he flatly refused to do so." When called on "to do fealty for his realm," writes Green, he "sternly refused to admit the claim. Fealty! I have never willed to do it, nor do I will to do it now. I have never promised, nor do I find that my predecessors did to yours."<sup>5</sup> Obviously an early example of the conversion of a pledge into 'a scrap of paper.' What followed?

"The profligacy and extravagance of William Rufus, who succeeded," writes Green, "soon exhausted the royal hoard. . . During the vacancy of a See or abbey, all revenues went to the royal treasury, and so steadily did William refuse to appoint successors to the prelates whom death removed that at the close of his reign one archbishopric, four bishoprics and eleven abbeys were found to be without pastors."<sup>6</sup> Once when in imminent danger of death he appointed Anselm primate; but recovering, he tried

<sup>1</sup> *The Papal Monarchy* (Barry), 272.

<sup>2</sup> *History of England*, 52, 53.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 56.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 57.

<sup>5</sup> *Short History of the English People*, Green, 86.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 90.



to have him deposed, and ordered him to be tried for treason. Obtaining a *pallium* from Rome he endeavoured in vain to sell it. At his death in 1100 no religious rites were performed over his grave, so sinful had been his life.

He was succeeded by his brother Henry I, "whose moral character had been equally questionable," says Lingard. Henry married the daughter of Malcolm king of the Scots, Matilda, who had been a nun at Romsey and was on her marriage crowned by Anselm. For the last twelve years of her life she lived at Westminster without the society of her husband to whom she had borne a son and a daughter. On her death in 1118, Henry married the beautiful niece of Pope Calixtus. "His dissimulation was so well known he was distrusted even by his favourites." The Bishop of Lincoln, told that he had been highly praised by him, replied: "I am undone, for I never knew him praise a man whom he did not intend to ruin." *Gaire Sacsanaigh dranntan madraidh!*

Next came Stephen, 1135 to 1154, who received from Innocent II a letter confirming his succession to the Crown.

"Never did England, since the invasion of the Danes, present such a scene of misery as under the government of Stephen. Both parties plundered, and conflagration was frequently added to pillage. Winchester, Worcester and Nottingham, rich and populous cities, were consumed, and most of the inhabitants perished in the flames."<sup>1</sup> So writes Lingard. Thus Green: "No more ghastly picture of a nation's misery has ever been painted than that which closes the *English Chronicle* whose last accents falter out amidst the horrors of the time."<sup>2</sup> There we read of the nobles of England after Stephen came amongst them:

"They took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold or silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable. . . They hung some by their feet<sup>3</sup> and smoked them with foul smoke; some by their thumbs or by the head, and they hung

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<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Short History of the English People*, 103.

<sup>3</sup> Tighearnan Ua Ruairc was so executed in Dublin by them subsequently.



burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string about their heads, and twisted it until it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders and snakes and toads and thus wore them out. Some they put into a . . . chest that was short and narrow and not deep, and they put sharp stones in it, and crushed the man therein so that they broke all his limbs. In many of the castles were hateful and grim things called *rachenteges* which two or three men had enough to carry. The *rachentege* was . . . fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go around a man's throat and neck, so that he might nowise sit nor lie nor sleep but he must bear all the iron. Many thousands they exhausted with hunger. . . At length they spared neither church nor churchyard, but they took all that was valuable therein and then burned the church and all together. Neither did they spare the lands of bishops, of abbots or of priests, but they robbed the monks and the clergy; and every man plundered his neighbour as much as he could."

After Stephen, Henry II and, notwithstanding all the desolation, Stephen's brother, another Henry—bishop of Winchester! By the death of his father, the right of his mother, and the hand of his wife Eleanor, "a third part of France, almost the whole western coast, from the borders of Picardy to the mountains of Navarre, acknowledged the authority" of Henry II. "In his twenty-first year, the death of Stephen added to these extensive territories the kingdom of England." So Lingard,<sup>1</sup> again. "To the Church," says Thomas à Becket, "Henry owed his crown, and England her deliverance." Green uses almost identical words:<sup>2</sup> Henry II, "*placed on the throne by the Church*, whispered and scribbled and looked at picture books during Mass, never confessed, and cursed God in wild frenzies of blasphemy." Canon Barry follows suit:<sup>3</sup> "Henry II accepted from Pope Hadrian the Commission . . . to reduce Ireland beneath his own sway and that of the Christian religion. But Hadrian must have been aware that Henry, his queen Eleanor, and his royal house were tainted with every vice, passion and crime.

<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Short History of the English People*, 105.

<sup>3</sup> *The Papal Monarchy*, 272.

Henry's character is by no means doubtful—furious, cunning, unstable, a compound of lust and cruelty . . . His Normans had all the vices of the Greeks except cowardice."

Such in brief were the concurrent conditions in Europe, such the traits, the antecedents and the ancestry of the alien king to whom Pope Adrian is held to have presented a Bull authorising an invasion of Ireland for her moral, social and religious regeneration, such the *roles* of Lanfranc, "a man devoted to the simultaneous aggrandisement of the Papal and the Norman dominion," Anselm and other kindred instruments. Adrian himself had subjected to the metropolitan authority of Drontheim—when sent there as Papal Legate—not only the other Norwegian Sees but Iceland, Greenland, the Hebrides, Faroe Islands, Western Islands of Scotland, and Isle of Man. And, in conformity with the long tradition of his race regarding Ireland, his success, after his elevation to the Papal dignity, "in restoring peace in Southern Italy and *securing the Norman power as an ally of Rome*" has been deemed worthy of special record. Did the condition of Ireland then call for alien interference or correction? What was *her* record at home and abroad?

We have seen, at the beginning of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, evidence of the loyalty of the Southern throne—as exemplified in Cormac mac Cuileannain, Brian Boirmhe and Muircheartach Ua Briain—to the primatial See of Armagh; native learning generously subsidised by kings down to and including Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair; a grant of a townland to Sabhall in 1165 in thanksgiving for the prosperous reign of Ua Lachlainn; synods and councils frequently held and largely attended from the beginning of the twelfth century with little more serious to concern them than diocesan boundaries, new bishoprics, general regulations, laws and customs for the church and laity, the adjustment of contentions regarding ecclesiastical primacy and privileges, the release of churches and monasteries from lay control, the acceptance of bounteous offerings for the promotion of religion, as evidenced at the consecration of Mellifont. The simony and usury "entirely rooted out and condemned" at the Council of Kells<sup>1</sup> in 1152 must have been less an evil of

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<sup>1</sup> The F.M. say it was held in Drogheda.



national magnitude than a pre-conception of the Legatine imagination. So, too, of concubinage which, with bad morals, robbery and other evils, was put down at the same Council: all these, as has been abundantly shown, were then in the order of things Continental and presumed to constitute an evil in Ireland.

As the years advanced, the honoured Irish practice of pilgrimage showed no decline. Maolruanaidh O Maoldoraidh went on his pilgrimage across the sea in 1026; in 1030 Flaithbheartach O Neill of the Pilgrim's Staff, the warlike king of Aileach went to Rome, returning the following year. Amhlaoibh son of Sitric was killed by Saxons on his way to Rome in 1033; in 1051 Laidhgnean king of the Gaileanga, and his queen, went on pilgrimage to Rome, where he passed away. Another Flaibheartach O Neill went on pilgrimage to Rome in 1073, and about the same time—though the annalists are at variance regarding the exact date—"Donnchadh son of Brian, deposed, died in Rome in his pilgrimage." Meanwhile we read of Ruaidhri king of Southern Breagh who "died on pilgrimage" in 1027, and Flaínnan O Ceallaigh king of Breagh who "died in his pilgrimage" in 1060. Of the others, who passed away at home during this period, there is record of the "death in penance" of Tadhg son of Lorcan king of Ui Cinnsealaigh in the church of St. Caemhghoin at Gleann daloch. Cathal son of Ruaidhri king of West Connacht; Dubhthach Albanach, chief anamchara of Ireland and Scotland, and Muircheartach Ua Briain closed their days in penance in Ard Macha, the latter in 1119. The previous year Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair died in pilgrimage in Cluain mic Nois; Domhnall Mac Lochlainn "arch-king of Oirghialla" at Clochar maic Daimhin "after choice of penance" in 1127; the king of the two Munsters "after victory of penance" at Cill Dalua in 1142. The king of Tara and Meath died at Dearnagh in 1153; Ua Cinneide lord of Thomond at Cill Dalua in 1159; O Conceanainn lord of Ui Dhiarmada "and afterwards in religion" at Cluain mic Nois in 1167. Numberless ecclesiastics, learned men, and noble women<sup>1</sup> passed away similarly.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1063 Gormflaith died on pilgrimage in Ard Macha; ten years later, Beibhinn daughter of Brian died there also. The wife and mother of Muircheartach Ua Briain died in 1098, the latter at Gleann-



The strife and turmoil engendered by the Danish incursions, it is true, outlived the Battle of Clontarf; and the death of Brian, his heir and the heir to his heir on that historic field left the country an easy prey to internal disorders and the designs of ambitious rivals in an age of universal turbulence and greed. Scarce a year during the first half of the twelfth century that has not its record of bloody strife between contending kings and princes in Ireland as elsewhere. The century opens with a hosting by Muircheartach Ua Briain to Aileach, Coleraine and Ulidia. Two years later the hosting is repeated and the Southern forces overthrown. At the close of the first decade Ulster makes its foray into Connacht, carrying off 1,000 prisoners. Later, Connacht and Munster are found in conflict. In time Connacht over-runs the south, and in its exuberance makes a subsequent hosting into Meath. Time and again north-west and eastern Ulster confront each other; fighting, indeed, is general and almost uninterrupted. More than once there is mention of *false peace*. Incidentally, the stone church at Ard Breacain in Meath, with its complement of people, is burned by the men of Munster; and historic Kincora is razed by the men of Connacht. Other outrages are recorded. The generous and benevolent ard-ollamh O Baigheallain with his family and guests are put to death by the men of Lurg and Tuath Ratha; the comharb of Patrick dishonoured by Tighearnan Ua Ruairc, and his retinue waylaid and robbed; St. Brigid's house, Kildare, seized by the Ui Cinnsealaigh. There is occasional violation of sanctuary; the burning of churches is not infrequent; the royal heir of Aileach is killed by the community of Doire. What would seem altogether the most revolting punishment of the time was the blinding<sup>1</sup> of prisoners. It was pretty persistently resorted to, even from a period

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daloch; and in 1137 Mor daughter of Muircheartach Ua Briain and wife of Ua Maelsheachlain died at Dearnagh. Dearbhforghail wife of Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchubhair died on pilgrimage in Ard Macha in 1151; in 1167 Dearbhail daughter of Donnchadh Ua Maelsheachlain died at Cluain mic Nois; in 1168 Dubhchollach daughter of Maolruanaidh of Moylurg and second wife of Domhnall Ua Lochlain, "died on pilgrimage in Ard Macha."

<sup>1</sup>Typical cases are presented by the blinding of Donnchadh Ua hEochadha by Eochadh Ua Mathghamhna and the Ulidians in 1113, and this incapacitated him to reign; Donnchadh Ua Maolruanaidh by

considerably earlier,<sup>1</sup> as were other legacies of the marauders. But as the greatest of the outrages initiated even by the Norsemen in our midst pales into insignificance by comparison with Charlemagne's massacre of 4,500 Saxons at Verdun on the Allier to give emphasis to the choice he had offered of death or baptism,<sup>2</sup> so the blinding of Irish prisoners bears a somewhat less heinous aspect when we reflect on the universal savagery of the time. To take a few examples: Bernard who, early in the ninth century, revolted against Lothair was captured, saved from death by the Emperor Louis, blinded by Hermengard, and died soon after. Carloman referred to as a "monk, abbot, highway robber," though supported against his father Charles the Bald by Pope Adrian II was opposed by Primate Hincmar of Rheims, tried, condemned and deprived of eyesight, as was Hincmar of Laon, nephew of the Primate of Rheims.<sup>3</sup> Antipope Lovegood had his eyes and his tongue plucked out by Pope Gregory's own hands and in this condition was paraded through the streets of Rome. Yet he survived for fifteen years, and died at Fulda in 1013. William the Conqueror, says Green, tore out his prisoners' eyes, cut off their hands and feet, and flung them into the town of Alençon. Of those who greatly offended William's son, Henry I of England, "the usual portion was death or blindness or perpetual imprisonment," says Lingard. Henry thus deprived his own brother Robert, Duke of Normandy, of his sight. Amongst his other victims was the poet Luke de Barré who satirised him and who in his agony burst from his captors and dashed out his brains against the wall. After Henry's death it was discovered that his cousin the Earl of Moretoil, whom he had long kept

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Toirdealbach O Conchubhair in 1139; chieftains of Leinster by Diarmuid MacMurchadha in 1141; Diarmuid MacBranain by Toirdealbach O Conchubhair in 1150; the Lord of Laeghis blinding Diarmuid MacMurchadha previous to release in 1153; Deoradh Ua Floinn by his own son in 1154; and Eochadh Mac Donnsluibhe Mic Eochadha by Muircheartach Ua Lachlainn in 1165. The first year of Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair's reign was besmirched by his blinding of his own brother.

<sup>1</sup> Lorcan king of Midhe was blinded by Aodh king of Tara in 863.

<sup>2</sup> *The Papal Monarchy*, 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 140.



in confinement, had also been deprived of sight. Other typical cases could be quoted.<sup>1</sup>

As the gloom of Europe is relieved at this period by the spirit of the Crusades and the labours of the great St. Bernard, so is Eire's good repute redeemed by the religious fervour, the respect for learning, the unerring sense of restitution and justice, and the constant yearning for peace which emerge from her darkest epochs.<sup>2</sup> Keating points with pride to a partial list of the unique ecclesiastical edifices reared all over the land on the eve of the Normans' coming. Not a year elapses without record of the fame of some native sage. Even when the law seemed most in abeyance Tighearnan Ua Ruairc of Breifne and Ua Cearbhaill of Oirghialla were deposed for dishonouring Patrick's successor. And high above the din is always discernible the inherent national appreciation of harmony. In 1105, Domhnall comharb of Patrick took ill in Dublin while trying to reconcile Muircheartach Ua Brian and MacLachlainn, whose struggles have already been referred to, and died at Duleek, whence his remains were taken to Armagh. Two years later, peace of a year was made by Ceallach, successor of Domhnall, between Muircheartach Ua Briain and Domhnall MacLochlainn king of Aileach, who, like his predecessor, married a daughter of Cinneide Ua Briain: marriages between the royal houses, indeed, were quite frequent. Ceallach effected an agreement between the same contending parties in 1113. After a further thirteen years "a storm of great wars" is recorded "so that it was necessary for the comharb of Patrick to be a month absent

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<sup>1</sup> The maker of the unique clock in the Town Hall, Prague, out of the face of which steps Christ and twelve Apostles when it strikes twelve, was condemned by the town authorities to lose his eyesight lest he might enrich any other city with a similar masterpiece.

<sup>2</sup> In 1098, for example, the Four Masters record the death of a chief poet of Munster; a scribe and philosopher of Munster; an anamchara and doctor of both orders, Irish and Roman; a noble priest, doctor and learned seer of Gleann daloch; two noble ladies, Dubhcobhlaigh and Dearbhfhorghail; the comharbs of Colm Cille, Cianan, Mura, Othra, Finghein of Moville and Feichin, the latter a distinguished moderator. The same year they note considerable conflict, involving the slaying or killing of the Lords of West Connacht, Teathbha, Laeghis; the foster brother of Muircheartach Ua Briain and Diarmuid grandson of Diarmuid, king of Leinster.



from Ard Macha pacifying the men of Ireland and imposing rule and good conduct on every one, laic and cleric." In 1128 he made peace between Munster and Connacht, and died the following year. After a widespread conflict in Ulster the chiefs concerned met at Armagh and there made peace in 1130; while in 1133 peace was made between the kings of Connacht and Munster near Uisneach, chiefs and clergy being present. Five years later the men of Connacht, on the one hand, and the men of Leinster, Meath, and the foreigners on the other, were encamped, face to face, for a week but separated in peace, which was renewed two years later at Athlone. In 1144 there is record of another peace between the kings of Munster and Connacht at a conference, attended by clergy at Tir da Ghlas. After an interval of four years there was a meeting in Armagh between the kings and chiefs of Cineal Eoghain, Oirghialla and Ulidia, and "perfect peace" was made in presence of the comharb of Patrick and the clergy. After a further interval of four years peace was made, near Ballyshannon, between the kings of Aileach and Connacht—in 1152—under the Staff of Jesus, and the relics of Colm Cille. As Domhnall, king of Ireland, re-entered into religion in 738, "the Lord of Teathbha died in religion in 1156. Within the same year, passed away Toirdealbhach Ua Conchubhair, "king of Connacht, Meath, Breifne and Munster and of all Ireland, with opposition," in the words of the Four Masters, "flood of the glory and splendour of Erin, the Augustus of the west of Europe, a man full of charity and mercy, hospitality and chivalry—who died after the sixty-eighth year of his age, and was interred at Cluain mic Nois, beside the altar of Ciaran, having made his will, and distributed gold and silver, cattle and horses among the clergy and churches of Ireland in general." Before his death Toirdhealbhach, who was succeeded by Ireland's last monarch Ruaidhri, bade fair to restore to the west the ancient sovereignty of Ireland. He was enterprising on land and sea. Two years before he passed away, his maritime fleet engaged, vanquished and seized off Inis Eoghain a fleet brought over from Scotland and the Isles by the northern kings. A quarter of a century earlier, in 1130, the same fleet made a demonstration along the western coast from Tory to Valentia. In the interval his inland fleet was equally

active.<sup>1</sup> His ambition manifested itself in other ways. A decade before his naval demonstration on the western coast, during an auspicious interval between the death of Muircheartach O Briain of Cashel and Domhnall MacLochlainn of Aileach, two outstanding kings of that age, he celebrated the historic Fair of Tailtean, having expelled the king of Meath. The celebration of the Fair was regarded as a privilege attaching to the monarchy. The Four Masters, in recording the death of Domhnall Mac Lochlainn in 1121, refer to him as "distinguished for personal form, wisdom, prowess, prosperity, happiness and the bestowal of jewels and food on the mighty as on the needy. After twenty-seven years in the sovereignty and eleven in the kingdom of Aileach he died at Derry in his seventy-third year." The same Annals in 1119 record that "Muircheartach Ua Briain, king of Ireland, prop of the glory and magnificence of the west of the world, died, after the victory of reign and penance, . . . and was interred in the church of Cill Dalua." Muircheartach Ua Briain is a name of international stature, which not only commanded allegiance in Scotland and the Isles, but brings us into direct touch with the spiritual empire of the Gael, at the very zenith of its fame.

When St. Peter's Irish monastery at Ratisbon—erected by a worthy citizen named Bethselinus, on a site gladly granted by the abbess Hezecha to the illustrious Ulster missionary Marianus Scotus, and at her request taken subsequently under the protection of the Emperor Henry IV—was found unequal to the demands on its accommodation, it was decided to erect there another Irish monastery, that of St. James of Ratisbon, the first abbot of which was Dionysius, a native of the South of Ireland. The magnificence of this monastery, to the western side of Ratisbon, has been extolled by a Bavarian chronicler, who says the money for the site was supplied from Ireland and goes on to refer in detail to the gorgeous pillars, towers, roof, unsurpassed in splendour,

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<sup>1</sup> In 1127 a fleet of 190 ships opposed the Munster fleet in Loch Deirg Dheirc; in 1135 they appeared against the fleet of Murchadh Ua Maelsheachlainn of Meath in Loch Ribh; in 1137 twenty ships of Toirdhealbhach's fleet engaged the combined fleets of Breifne and Meath to the number of two hundred.



rapidly erected and perfectly finished because of the wealth and money sent by the king and princes of Ireland. Its church was consecrated in 1111, the very year on which, as recorded by the Four Masters, "a Synod was convened at Fiadh mic Aonghusa by the chiefs of Ireland, with Ceallach comharb of Patrick, Maolmhuire Ua Dunain noble senior of Ireland, 50 bishops, 300 priests, 3,000 students, together with Muircheartach Ua Briain and the chiefs of Leath Mogha to prescribe rules and good morals for all, both laity and clergy." The original Irish contribution proving inadequate to the development of the Ratisbon monastery, Gregory, a new abbot, immediately on his consecration paid a visit to king Muircheartach and obtained a large sum of money that had lain with the Archbishop of Cashel for that special purpose. By means of this new grant, not only was the monastery extended, embellished, and in great part rendered impervious to fires, but the Abbot was enabled to purchase many villages, farms, plots, houses, even sumptuous buildings in the city of Ratisbon. In short, St. James's soon became the mother of a long line of Irish foundations, including those at Wurzburg, Nuremburg, Eichstadt, and Vienna, all erected by the close of the century.<sup>1</sup> Its abbot, moreover, had jurisdiction over the Irish monasteries at Oels in Silesia, Erfurt in Thuringia, Memmingen and Constance in Swabia as over those named. And the architectural activity of Irish missionaries in Germany thus revealed seems a reflex of the ecclesiastical activity then evident in the realm of architecture in all parts of Ireland.

It cannot be held that Adrian IV was oblivious of the influence Ireland thus wielded. Marianus Scotus directed the original Irish monastery of St. Peter's, Ratisbon, until his death in 1088, and his seven immediate successors in the abbacy were natives of Ulster. One of the most notable of the monks of St. Peter's, another Marianus, had been teacher of Nicholas Breakspeare in Paris. "The Irish savant David directed the Cathedral school in Wurzburg," says Zimmer, "and became chaplain and court historian to Henry V whom he accompanied to Rome in 1110, then returning to Ireland to

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<sup>1</sup> Their dates, which in the main synchronise with historic dates in Ireland, will be found in the chapter on Germany.



occupy a bishopric there." In the interval before Nicholas Breakspeare reached the Papal dignity the days of the self-effacing missionaries of the Gael—of Cuthbert and Ceallach and Columbanus and their kind—were recalled by the rise in Ireland of Maolmhaodhog Ua Morgair, better known as St. Malachy. In 1136, "Maolmhaodhog resigned for the sake of God the successorship of Patrick," which he accepted at the request of the clergy in 1132 only under threat of excommunication. Three years after his resignation he paid his first visit to Rome, edifying everybody there and on the way. The main object of the visit was to obtain pallia for the metropolitan Sees at Armagh and Cashel. "Regarding the palls," said the Pontiff, "more formal action must be taken. You must call together the bishops, clergy and magnates of the land and hold a General Council. Thus with the assent and common desire of all, ye shall demand the pall through persons of honest repute, and it shall be given you." Thereupon taking the mitre off his own head, Pope Innocent II affectionately placed it on that of Malachy, appointed him Apostolic Legate and, saluting him with the kiss of peace, dismissed him with his benediction. On his way home, as on the way to Rome, he visited his friend St. Bernard at Clairvaux, whence he returned through Scotland where he was honourably received by King David. Pope Innocent passed to his reward, and the pallia were not forthcoming; so Maolmhaodhog in 1148 convened a Synod at Inis Padraig, by the advice of which he set out on a second journey to Rome. From Down he crossed to Scotland, and there visited a monastery he had been instrumental in founding, to leave in it an abbot and a community of monks. King David came to meet him, and again pressed him to stay; but Malachy hurried to England in the hope of crossing expeditiously to France and overtaking Pope Eugene III in Clairvaux where he happened to be on a visit. King Stephen of England, then in conflict with the Pope, refused, however, to let any bishop leave an English port for France, with the result that Eugene III had returned to Italy when eventually the weary Irish Legate arrived at Clairvaux—to die. But he was welcomed there with veritable transports of joy.

"Oh! how much that irradiating sun increased the brightness of our Clairvaux," writes his biographer and friend, the

illustrious St. Bernard. "On his arrival, what a joyous festive day shone on us—that day which the Lord had made for us to rejoice and be glad. With what a quick and bounding step did I, though trembling and weak, run forward to meet him! with what joy I rushed to his embrace! with what gladsome arms I received that heaven-sent favour which was vouchsafed to me! with what joy in face and heart did I lead thee, my father, into the house of my mother, into the chamber of her who bore me. What festive days did I then pass with thee, but alas, they were too few." Within a week, "in the fifty-fourth year of his age and in the place and time he had selected and predicted," he passed peacefully away with the November twilight of All Saints' Day.

St. Bernard's strictures on the diocese of Connor, from whatever source inspired, are not to be taken too seriously. Ireland's greatest native evils pale into insignificance when contrasted with Continental happenings. In the interval between St. Malachy's principal visits to Clairvaux, Louis VII of France in a war with Theobald, Count of Champagne, set fire to a church in which were 1,300 men, women and children. The contrast, made with sufficient thoroughness already, need not be laboured here. Considering the activities of Ireland in Germany and in Scotland; her well deserved fame in France and Italy; the ecclesiastical reforms effected, where alone they were needed, by Malachy before his resignation in 1136, as St. Bernard assures us; the presentation, after his death, of four pallia at the Council of Kells—reflecting, in a word, on the relatively promising condition of Ireland, in Church and State, and its unfailing loyalty to the Throne of Peter, and contrasting them with England's countless internal disorders and her steady conflict with the Papacy since Alexander II authorised the invasion of Britain by William the Conqueror, the question irresistibly presents itself: Did the unmistakable traditional eagerness of English prelates to get England credit for Ireland's best achievements in the domain of religion determine Adrian IV to authorise the invasion of Ireland by the least tried of England's royal traitors to the Papal throne? Whatever the object, the Bull can in nowise be justified—either in the recorded manner of the grant, or in the manner of its production after the



lapse of years, or, least of all, in its confirmation by Adrian's successor.<sup>1</sup>

In the interval between the issue of the Bull and its production in Ireland Alexander III succeeded to the throne of Peter, and Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair succeeded to the throne of Ireland, both "with opposition," to borrow a striking label from our native annals. Ruaidhri was not free from faults. But a study of his reign leads to the conclusion that, consciously or otherwise, his policy was modelled on that of Ireland's wisest ruler, King Brian Boirmhe. Immediately on Ruaidhri's assumption of the sovereignty in 1156, the king of Thomond left him the hostages of the Dal gCais. The following year he gave half the kingdom of Munster to Toir-dhealbhach Ua Briain and obtained hostages from Diarmuid MacCarrthaigh in respect of the remainder. The next performance to his credit was the appearance of a fleet of unprecedented size in the Shannon. The fourth year of his rule is marked by a meeting between himself and Tighearnan Ua Ruairc of Breifne, when they gave mutual pledges and

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<sup>1</sup> Some modern writers, notably the late Card. Moran and a distinguished French priest the Rev. Louis Chaillot whose essay has been translated into English and published by the Rev. W. McLoughlin, Mount Melleray Abbey, contend that Pope Adrian's Bull is apocryphal, and colour is given to the contention by the fact that "a machine for forging the Papal Seal of such Bulls was found in the ruins of one of the earliest Anglo-Norman monasteries founded by De Courcy." Whether forged or genuine "the English people have relied on it as the title-deed of their rights over Ireland" for long centuries, according to their exigencies. As already stated (p. 347), Adrian subjected to the metropolitan authority of Drontheim not only other Norwegian Sees but Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Isles, Orkneys, Shetlands, Hebrides, Isle of Man—when sent to the North as Legate, before his elevation to the Papal throne—as, after his elevation thereto, he succeeded in "restoring peace to southern Italy and in *securing the Norman power as an ally of Rome.*" Even Adrian's acquittal of the authorship of the Bull would not affect England's culpability; for it was given currency in the twelfth century through John of Salisbury and Giraldus Cambrensis, ecclesiastics favoured by Henry II. Directly or incidentally its genuineness was accepted in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by Popes Innocent III, John XXI and John XXII: Domhnall O'Neill complained to the latter of its violation by the English. Keating accepted it as genuine in the sixteenth century, Lombard in the seventeenth, MacGeoghegan in the eighteenth, Lanigan, Malone, O'Callaghan and others in the nineteenth.



separated in peace. Soon afterwards, with the kings of Thomond and Breifne and their respective forces, he marched into Meath and thence to Ardee where they were engaged and defeated by the king of Oirghialla, aided by the kings and people of the north of Ireland in general. Ua Lochlainn at the head of a composite northern army forthwith carried the fight into Connacht and Meath where they made peace with Ua Ruairc and gave Leinster to MacMurchadha. In 1160 Ruaidhri and Ua Lochlainn accompanied by their forces, met at Eas Ruadh and separated without concluding peace or arranging an armistice. They met again within the year, the North to menace, Ruaidhri to relieve, the kings of Meath and Breifne. "But God separated them without battle or conflict, without peace, without armistice." The ensuing year, Ruaidhri with Ua Ruairc entered Meath, and took the hostages of Ui Faelain and Ui Failghe. But subsequently there was a general re-disposition of territories with the result, the Four Masters say, that "Muircheartach Ua Lochlainn was therefore king of Ireland without opposition on this occasion."

In 1162 Ua Lochlainn, accompanied by an army drawn from the north of Ireland, Meath and Connacht came to Dublin to lay siege to the Foreigners, but returned without battle or hostages. A peace was forthwith concluded between foreigners and Irish. Niall son of Ua Lochlainn next made a feasting tour of Leath Chuinn, marked by numerous excesses; but, entering Connacht with a small force, he was seized, and his followers perished. For some years Ruaidhri had lain low. In 1165, however, he avenged the death of the Tanist of Breifne. By the end of the year he led an army into Desmond and, for the first time, the chiefs of Desmond with their lord "came into his house." He is extolled the following year for having covered the shrine of Manchan of Mohill "in as good style as ever was witnessed in Ireland." That same year Ua Lochlainn, "Monarch of All Ireland," was slain in a fierce battle between the men of Oirghialla and Breifne on the one hand and the Cineal Eoghain on the other. Promptly Ruaidhri with a great army was at Eas Ruadh, where he took the hostages of Cineal Conaill. Thence with the men of Meath and others he marched on Dublin where "he was inaugurated king as honourably as any king

of the Gaedhil ever was." The foreigners thereupon accompanied him to Drogheda, where the king and chieftains of Oirghialla came to give him hostages. He then returned to Leinster, and proceeded southwards, taking the hostages of Ui Cinnsealaigh, Diarmaid MacMurchadha and others. Later he proceeded with another great army through Leinster, into Osraighe, and thence to Munster which he divided into two parts, giving one to Siol Bhriain, the other to Diarmuid son of Cormac MacCarrthaigh. He took the hostages of Leath Mogha, and all its kings "came into his house." Subsequently an army, made up of the men of Breifne and Meath, the Foreigners and the Leinstermen under Ua Ruairc was led against MacMurchadha who, having burned Ferns, fled oversea, to return, the herald of the invader, the following year.

Ruaidhri, now established in the sovereignty, convened in Athboy in 1167, a great Council of the clergy and chiefs of Leath Chuinn and the foreigners. The comharb of Patrick was there, the archbishops of Tuam and Dublin, the kings of Ulidia and Tara, the lords of Breifne and Oirghialla and the foreigners—13,000 horsemen in all. They passed many good resolutions respecting veneration for churches and clergy and control of tribes and territories, so that, as in the days of Brian, "women used to traverse Ireland alone." What a refutation of alleged disorders is here conveyed. "They afterwards separated in peace and amity, without battle or controversy, or anyone complaining of another at the meeting, in consequence of the prosperity of the king who had convened so many chiefs with their forces at that one place." He followed it up with a hosting of the men of Ireland and their chieftains. Thither came the lords of Desmond and Thomond, all the chieftains of Leinster, the king of Meath, the lord of Oirghialla. They arrived afterwards in Tir Eoghain, and Ua Conchubhair divided the territory into two parts giving the northern portion to Ua Lochlainn, the southern to Ua Neill. The men of Ireland returned over Sliabh Fuaid, Tir Eoghain, Tir Conaill, and Eas Ruadh to meet their fleet. Ua Conchubhair escorted southward through Thomond as far as Cnoc Aine the lord of Desmond with his forces, bearing jewels and riches in profusion. Thus promising was the government of Ireland as pictured for us by the Four Masters, the



year that ill-starred Diarmuid MacMurchadha sought the intervention of the invader.

Diarmuid, on his expulsion, went to France where he obtained from Henry II a letter authorising British subjects so disposed to join in an expedition to Ireland. With this, he returned to Wales where he had it read. The first to promise co-operation was Earl Strongbow. Then the Bishop of St. David's and Maurice FitzGerald pleaded for the release from prison of their brother FitzStephen, that he might join the expedition. Diarmuid, having promised his daughter and vast prospects to Strongbow and considerable territory to other leading adventurers, returned to Ireland and was sheltered until summer by the clergy and community of Farna. FitzStephen duly arrived with thirty knights, sixty esquires and three hundred foot. Meanwhile Ruaidhri celebrated the Fair of Tailtean, the assembled cavalry covering a plain measuring almost seven miles in length. Here we find slight but immaterial conflict, regarding dates, between the annals. The next important record is of the chieftains of Cineal Eoghain with the comharb of Derry coming into the house of Ruaidhri: they carried away with them gold raiment and many cattle presented by the king of Ireland. Later he presented cattle to the Lector of Armagh for the benefit of the students of Ireland and Alba, enjoining on his successors to do likewise. Concurrently there is pretty steady movement of troops. Mustering the men of Ireland eventually, the king proceeded to Tara, where the kings of Ulidia and Oirghialla with the chiefs of the north joined him. So reinforced, and joined in turn by the king of Tara and the Lord of Breifne, they went to confer with the foreigners of Dublin and the men of Leinster, Munster and Osraighe, and evidently set at nought "the fleet of the Flemings" that had come with Diarmuid, who subsequently gave his son as hostage to Ruaidhri and promised to introduce no more foreigners.

However, when Maurice FitzGerald with an inconsiderable following landed soon after in Wexford, Diarmuid led their allied forces to Dublin and ravaged Fingal. Strongbow, again invited, and not obtaining the express permission of Henry, dispatched other troops who landed in Waterford and gained a striking victory there. On Strongbow's own



arrival in Waterford subsequently, with knights and bowmen, he was eagerly joined by Diarmuid and his new allies. Waterford taken, the marriage of Strongbow and Diarmuid's daughter Eva was celebrated, and the main body of troops—about 12,000 strong and five-sixths Irish—thereafter proceeded to Dublin. Approaching the city they were met by St. Laurence O Toole, brother-in-law of Diarmuid, and while a parley was in progress, Cogan, at the head of a section of the invaders, broke into the other side, putting to the sword all who came in their way. Dublin having fallen, Breifne was despoiled; and Diarmuid answered Ruaidhri's protest with defiance. Henry II, on the other hand, commanded his lieutenants to desist. Raymond le Gros was sent to Gascony to reassure him. At this exciting stage it was that Thomas à Becket was brutally murdered in England by the agents of the king.

On the death of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England, Henry II had forced his Chancellor and personal friend Thomas à Becket—though then but deacon—to accept the vacant office. The new Primate, though by no means the pliable instrument the king expected and desired, accepted under compulsion Constitutions submitted in 1164 to a Council of the Orders, lay and spiritual, at Clarendon. They provided that the election of a bishop was to take place before royal officers in the king's chapel and with the king's assent; that the prelate-elect do homage for his lands before consecration and hold them as a barony from the king subject to all feudal burdens of taxation and attendance in the king's court; that no bishop might leave the realm without the royal permission, no tenant-in-chief or royal servant be excommunicated save by the king's consent. Further, a royal officer was to be present in all ecclesiastical proceedings to confine the bishop's court within due limits; an appeal was left from the archbishop's court to that of the king for defect of justice; the privilege of sanctuary in churches and churchyards was repealed so far as property, but not persons, was concerned, and so on.<sup>1</sup> Retracting his forced assent to these Constitutions, Becket, against whom unfounded charges were instantly brought in the king's

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<sup>1</sup> Alzog's Church History, 404-5, ii. See note on Investiture, 335-6-7.

court, had to flee, disguised, for his life to France, where Louis VII afforded him protection. For the successful prosecution of his own designs, Henry II—accredited agent of the Vatican for the reform of faith and morals in Ireland!—entered into an anti-papal alliance with Germany.<sup>1</sup> The Pope—Adrian's successor, Alexander—replied by appointing Becket apostolic Legate for England to which the new Legate returned in 1170 and excommunicated or suspended the bishops who had adhered to the king. Henry, then resident in Normandy, burst into fury. "Is there no one who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" he exclaimed. Four knights who were present forthwith crossed the channel and, reaching Canterbury, worthily closed the Christmas festivities by murdering the Primate in the choir of the Cathedral, whither he had retired, December 29, 1170. A retainer, with the point of his sword, scattered the martyr's brains on the ground. Having done so he cried, "Let us be off; this traitor will never rise again." The ensuing Holy Thursday the Pope excommunicated the assassins, their advisers, abettors and protectors, and refused to see the envoys sent thither by Henry. Without waiting for their return the royal instigator of the murder fled in terror to England. By way of diversion, Strongbow was summoned from his congenial labours in Ireland to appear before Henry. When they met in Wales, the king who meantime had collected a powerful army, was assured that the conquests in Ireland were essentially in the royal interest. Alas for human ambitions! While envy already manifested itself between the invading king and his adventurers in their greed to partition the island that had proved impervious to the Norse and Saxon as to the Roman and Germanic yoke, Diarmuid Mac-Murchadha who had invited the Normans hither had passed to his reward. Thus, fleeing from the Papal anger, Henry, on pretence that his presence in Ireland was necessary "to receive the submission of the natives," set out on his mission—making the hypocrite's offering at St. David's where he received the hospitalities of the accommodating bishops, the

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<sup>1</sup> "Frederick Barbarossa and the Plantagenets agreed at Wurzburg, 1165, to join their forces and set up Paschal III the Anti-pope against Alexander."—*The Papal Monarchy*.



recent murder notwithstanding—and in a formidable fleet of transports reached Waterford at the head of 5,000 men at arms.

By this time Ruaidhri, however estimable in some respects, had been proved utterly incapable as a defender of his country's liberty and integrity and was being deserted accordingly. In 1170 the townsmen of Wexford imprisoned FitzStephen in one of their islands, having got possession of his fort at Carrick. Cormac MacCarrthaigh of Desmond retook Waterford, having surprised and defeated the elated English garrison, and he subsequently gained another victory over the foreigner of Limerick. The Norse of Dublin and the chief of Breifne, respectively, made separate unsuccessful attempts to expel the new Norman garrison from the city shepherded by Laurence O Toole who, himself, was untiring in his efforts to rouse and rally the fighting forces of the nation. Ruaidhri also laid siege to Dublin; but an entirely inferior Norman force sallied forth from the city, carried off his horses, armour and provisions, and brought him into deserved contempt. So, one after another, the disheartened chiefs of the South—Wexford, Osraighe, the Deise, Desmond, Thomond—gave pledges to Henry, some at Waterford, more at Cashel. The Lord of Breifne is said to have submitted at Dublin; and Commissioners crossed the Shannon to treat with Ruaidhri. But though Keating says every king in Ireland agreed to acknowledge Henry as his Lord, the North held sternly aloof, and Henry's recognition elsewhere was merely nominal. Early in 1172 a Synod was held at Cashel by his desire, and amongst the decrees passed there were the abolition of the office of *Airchinneach*<sup>1</sup> or lay trustee of Church

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<sup>1</sup> The *airchinneach* or erenagh is generally described as steward of church property, from the fruits of which he was obliged to provide for the maintenance of the clergy and of religious services. Judged by the space the Annals devote to the *airchinneach* he must have been amongst the most notable ecclesiastical functionaries of early Ireland. For whole centuries, scarce a year passes that has not record of one, often of two, sometimes of three or more. Prominent among those thus commemorated are *airchinnigh* of Ard Macha, Cluain Eois, Cul Rathain, Doire, Ardsratha, Druim Cliath, Cunga, Tuaim Da Ghualan, Cluain Mic Nois, Slaine, Mainistir Buithe, Cluain Dolcain, Cill Dara, Cill Chuilinn, Gleann Da Loch, Fearná, Corcaig, Ros Ailithir, Mungraid, Cill Dalua, Cluain Fearta, Dearmhagh and all the leading churches and monasteries. There are frequent references to the vice-*airchin-*



property, and the imposition of tithes. He also held a Court at Lismore and appointed some officers ; but left hurriedly at Easter, on pain of ecclesiastical censure, to meet two Cardinals who had come to England to get an explanation of Archbishop Becket's murder which Henry had instigated, and in atonement for which he now made lavish promises.

What fills us with astonishment is that later this year Alexander III should confirm " the lordship of the kingdom

neach, the tanist-airchinneach, as to airchinneach and scribe ; airchinneach, bishop and virgin ; airchinneach and distinguished bishop ; airchinneach, anchorite and wise man ; airchinneach, ollamh of law, and chief of his territory. The scope of his functions will be gathered from a few typical examples culled casually from the Annals :—

- 817. Airtri, airchinneach of Ard Macha, went to Connacht with the Shrine of Patrick ;
- 948. Flann, airchinneach of Gleann da Locha, head of the dignity of the province, died ;
- 957. The airchinneach of Lothra, died ;
- 1031. Conaing Ua Cearbhaill, airchinneach of Gleann da Locha, head of the piety and charity of the Gaedhil, died ;
- 1042. Eochagan, airchinneach of Slaine, lector of Sord, and a distinguished scribe, died ;
- 1050. Conall, airchinneach of Cill Mocheallog and previously its lector, died ;
- 1055. Odhar Ua Muireadhaigh, airchinneach of Lusca and chief of Ui Colgain, died ;
- 1059. Aneislis, son of Odhar, airchinneach of Lusca, died ;
- 1083. Muircheartaigh Ua Cairill, airchinneach of Dun, most learned judge and historian of Ireland, " hereditary churchwarden of Downpatrick," died ;
- 1100. Flann Ua Cinaeth, airchinneach of Ath Truim and chief poet of Meath, died ;
- 1108. Aedh, son of Dubhdelethe, vice-airchinneach of Ard Macha and intended comharb of Patrick, died ;
- 1115. Airchinneach of the guest-house of Cluain Mic Nois, died ;
- 1134. Beibhinn, female airchinneach of Colm Cille, died ;
- 1137. Another change of Abbots in Ard Macha, *i.e.*, the airchinneach of Doire in place of Niall, son of Aodh ;
- 1140. Domhnall Ua Sealbhaigh, airchinneach of Cork, pillar of the glory and splendour of Munster, died ;
- 1155. Maolmuire Mac Giolla Chiarain, airchinneach of the guest-house of Ard Macha, a venerable cleric who was kind towards the laity and clergy of Ireland, died ;
- 1158. The Brehon O Duileannain, airchinneach of Easdara, ollamh of law, and chief of his own territory, died ;
- 1161. Iomhar Ua hIndreachtaigh, airchinneach of Mucnamh and lord of Ui Meith for a time, died ;

From the airchinneach is the popular surname MacInerney derived.

of Ireland," in the reprobate Henry, "to the end that the barbarous nation, which is qualified with the Christian name, by your diligence may be clothed with loveliness of manners and the church of this land, hitherto in disorder, may be reduced to order and the people may, in future, not only be called but live like professing christians." Assuming the letters attributed to him to be authentic—they have been so regarded by the historians who since have a virtual monopoly of the world's ears—this action of Alexander III, whose own occupancy of the Papal Chair was contested by four successive Anti-popes, betrays on his part colossal indifference to the rights of Ireland, culpable ignorance of her contemporary history, and an evident willingness to invest with a false significance the inspired attitude of a few Norse communities on her coast and the tolerance and courtesy of the O Briain dynasty culminating in the hurried provincial Synod of Cashel. Omitting entirely the glorious Continental story of Ireland's golden age, her first canonised saint, Malachy friend of St. Bernard, had but recently passed away, her second canonised saint, the illustrious Laurence O Toole ruled the Archdiocese of Dublin. In the historic native diocese of Colm Cille was Muireadach O Cobhthaigh, "shining star" and "casket of wisdom," at whose death a year later night was turned into day by the marvellous lights that appeared in the heavens. In the west, the same eventful year of 1172, Archbishop Ua Dubhthaigh and Ruaidhri Ua Conchubhair convened a representative Council; and "the full circuit dues of Connacht were carried to Armagh for the fourth time by Giolla MacLiach successor of Patrick and Primate of Ireland." The proud and dutiful tradition of the South in the domain of religion was well maintained. In the midlands, Dearbhforghaill, widow of Ua Ruairc, whose brief absence from her husband at Breifne has been magnified and misinterpreted with unbridled recklessness, continued to endow abbeys and convents, in accordance with the national custom of the time. Even Diarmuid Mac-Murchadha, then dead, had in his day founded convents for nuns in Dublin, Carlow and Kilkenny, abbeys at Baltin-glass and Ferns; endowed a monastery in Osraighe, besides founding and endowing a Convent for Canons on "the spot where Trinity College now stands." It is alleged against

him that he forcibly took the Abbess of Kildare from her cloister and compelled her to marry one of his people. Atrocity-mongering even then, be it remembered, was no new art, and it is but too obvious that Ireland did not escape the unscrupulous vendors. But did not the immoral Henry I of England, with the approval of Anselm, marry Matilda, daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland, previously a veiled nun of Romsey ; and did not Frederick Barbarossa—to whom Adrian IV by the hands of Alexander, then Papal Chancellor, sent a letter in 1157—have Constance heiress of the Sicilian throne dragged from a convent and married by force to his savage son Henry VI ? True it is that the name of one real native libertine, Maghnus Mac Donnsluibhe Ui Eochadha, appears in the Irish annals to synchronise with Henry's coming ; and it is not to be denied that the then king of Ireland did not command the unquestioning loyalty so eminently to be desired in all his subjects. But neither can it be denied that Henry had to hasten away from Ireland not solely because he had to answer and make atonement for the murder of Becket but because, also, his son and heir, in his absence, had sought to take possession of the realm of England ; and his younger sons, Richard and Geoffry having taken up arms in Aquitaine, he was obliged, further, to go to France in the hope of composing the outbreak against him there and even call away from Ireland one of the leading henchmen he had left to garrison some of the Irish ports. And what were the antecedents of Henry's instruments ? His wife Eleanor had been married to Louis VII of France for fourteen years and borne him four children before she was divorced—to marry Henry six weeks later. The notorious Nesta, daughter of Rhys ap Tudor of Wales, was one of Henry's mistresses and from them came the Fitzhenrys. She was also the wife of Gerald of Windsor, and from this union came the FitzGerald : three sons, the youngest of whom was the bishop of St. Davids already referred to, as entertaining Henry on his way to Ireland, and a daughter who married William de Barri, father of Giraldus Cambrensis the lying historian that accompanied the Normans to Ireland. Nesta was also married to Stephen, Castellan of Abertivy in Cardigan, and to him she bore Robert FitzStephen. Nice agents to amend morals and sow the seeds of virtue in Ireland, in the words of Adrian's



Bull, and, in the words of Alexander III's letter, to save the Blessed Peter and the Holy Roman Church "an annual cess of one *denarius* from each house." No wonder Keating, reflecting on their infamies and hypocrisy, brands as a lie, twice over, the suggestion that the faith had lapsed in Ireland—in an age when the obituary notices of its saints, sages and scholars, abbesses, queens and princesses simply crowded the native annals—and literally gloats over the end that overtook the invaders in turn: Strongbow left by Aoife but one daughter who married Maruscal and bore him five sons and five daughters. The sons died without issue, one after the other; the daughters married Englishmen. Maruscal himself, cursed by the bishop of Ferns and excommunicated, died also in England. Hugh de Lacy was slain by a young nobleman of Meath who came to work for him in the guise of a clown; William FitzAdelmel died of a loathsome disease and was buried in a grange. Hermiont Morti, to expiate his crimes, became a monk. John de Courcy, after terrible sufferings and strange vicissitudes of fortune, ended his days in France. While in Ireland, he had Cardinal Vivianus, papal envoy, arrested, the same Vivianus who after whole days' discussion with Henry II said of him: "Never did I know a man to be such a liar." Henry himself, betrayed by children and friends, called down the vengeance of heaven upon them, flouted his Creator, and died. "There were hardly any people to be found to wrap his body in a shroud, or a carriage and horses to convey it. . . . For want of a crown, his head was dressed in a sort of diadem formed of the fringe of a woman's garment, and in this odd attire," says Thierry, "Henry descended to his last abode." Of his treacherous sons, the elder, Henry, earned for himself the unenviable title of "king of the cowards," the next, Geoffrey, is on record as having said: "it is the right of our family that none of us should love the rest; it is our rightful heritage." Of Richard, the third, Henry himself hissed on his death-bed: "Oh, that God would grant me not to die until I had revenged myself on thee." His younger son John, whom the courtiers were wont to taunt with the name of "Lackland" and "Sans-terre," he had the sublime effrontery to appoint as Lord of Ireland, and even he, after an inglorious rule of nine months, had to be recalled. Others who came left honoured names

and are regarded accordingly. Ireland, however, needed neither their ministrations nor their example. Quite the contrary. The record of her children at home at that period has been abundantly contrasted with that of contemporary neighbouring peoples. Of the later labours of her missionaries on the Continent the testimony of Zimmer is that "the twelfth century was their most flourishing period ; their decline began about the middle of the thirteenth, mainly as a result of the invasion of their native land."

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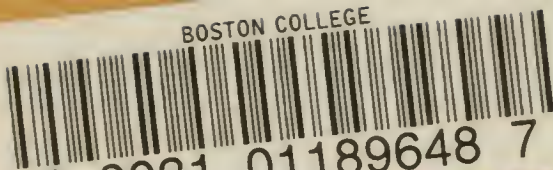
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