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TRACES

OF THE

ELDER FAITHS OF IRELAND

'If any there be which are desirous to be strangers in their owne soile, and forrainers in their owne Citie, they may so continue, and therein flatter themselves. For such like I have not written these lines nor taken these paines.'—CAMDEN.

'TURPE EST IN PATRIÂ PEREGRINARI, ET IN EIS REBUS QUÆ AD PATRIAM PERTINENT HOSPITEM ESSE.'

'IN NOVA PERT ANIMUS MUTATAS DICERE FORMAS  
CORPORA.'

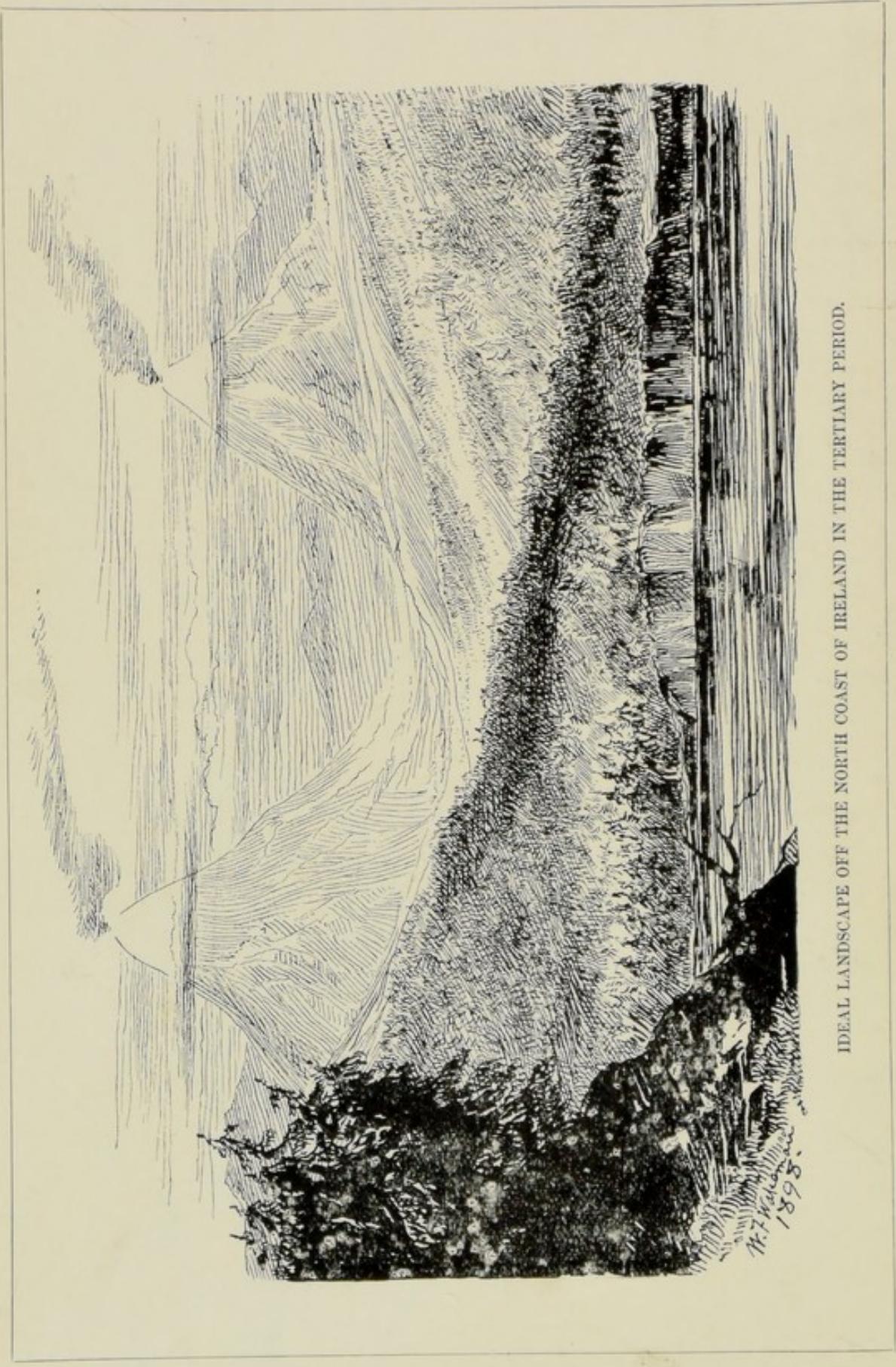
'THOUGH KNEELING NATIONS WATCH AND YEARN,  
DOES THE PRIMORDIAL PURPOSE TURN?'

'ONE ETERNAL AND IMMUTABLE LAW EMBRACES ALL THINGS AND ALL  
TIMES.'



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IDEAL LANDSCAPE OFF THE NORTH COAST OF IRELAND IN THE TERTIARY PERIOD.

H. F. Wilson  
1895.

60055

TRACES  
OF THE  
ELDER FAITHS OF IRELAND

*A FOLKLORE SKETCH*

A Handbook of Irish Pre-Christian Traditions

BY

W. G. WOOD-MARTIN, M.R.I.A.

AUTHOR OF

*Pagan Ireland. The Lake Dwellings of Ireland*  
*The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland (Co. Sligo and the Island of Achill)*  
*History of Sligo, County and Town (3 vols.)*  
*Sligo and the Enniskilleners*  
*&c., &c.*

With Numerous Illustrations

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To the Memory of

My Mother



## FOREWORD.

A SARCASTIC writer lately advised authors treating on Irish subjects not to omit commencing their essays from the starting point of the Biblical Deluge, so that no fact, direct or collateral, in the matter under consideration, might escape notice. Critics do not, as a rule, confine themselves between too narrow limits, but the above recommendation, though good in its way, does not give a wide enough field to work on, at least when Ancient Erin itself is in question. The liberty, therefore, is taken of ignoring the well-meant advice, of exceeding the prescribed limit, and the subject is opened somewhere in the early Glacial, or perhaps in the Tertiary period. The writer has, in fact, placed himself in the unenviable position of the advocate who, opening his speech with the sentence, "Before the birth of the world," was cut short by the Judge who exclaimed, "Do you not think that we might pass on to the Deluge?"

Many Continental writers throw back the origin of man to even geologically distant ages, but evidences of this early existence of our race rest on such fragile proofs that they are, for the present, regarded with scientific scepticism by most English authorities. On this subject the late Professor Huxley observes, that "evidence has been adduced in favour of man's existence in the Pliocene or even in the Miocene epoch. It does not satisfy me; but I have no reason to doubt that the fact may be so, nevertheless."

Speculations on the Great Ice Age would also, at first sight,

seem to have little connection with primitive religion. The consideration of the subject has, nevertheless, an important bearing upon the antiquity of man in the British Isles; for as almost all parts of the world, save these Islands, have been suggested as the cradle of the human race, man must necessarily have been some time in existence, and must have acquired some faint religious ideas, before he found a home on these, at that time, icebound shores. Thus it is sought to conduct the reader through ages so vast that, if they were represented in figures, it would probably only confuse the imagination. All we can say is that it is a tale of progress, slow but sure, which began at the first appearance of life, and will probably continue until time shall be no more.

To work one's way behind the scenes of the prehistoric past is, undoubtedly, most interesting. Not only are the results obtained of great importance, but the mere process of searching for facts, and then putting them together into a consistent whole, is a continual source of pleasure and excitement; so that an attempt to pierce the mist which envelops the past, and to review, to the best of our present knowledge, the primitive faiths of the Eld, needs no excuse, nor preface, for a preface is but a more or less lengthened excuse.

Christianity is generally supposed to have annihilated heathenism in Ireland. In reality it merely smoothed over and swallowed its victim, and the contour of its prey, as in the case of the boa-constrictor, can be distinctly traced under the glistening colours of its beautiful skin. Paganism still exists, it is merely inside instead of outside. In a previous work entitled "Pagan Ireland," the writer attempted to draw a picture of the early civilization of the country, from an archæological standpoint, by analysis of existing material evidence of long-past life; in the present work the same subject is approached from a folklore point of view, by the aid of legend and tradition. These two aspects of the question, viz., those of archæology and folklore, blend the one into the other, so that it is almost unnecessary to

explain that, in many places, the same ground has to be traversed. To avoid repetition, when this occurs, the text has been condensed, re-arranged, and re-written, so that it will doubtless be regarded by readers of "Pagan Ireland," even at these points of junction, as an almost new work.

Like a dissolving view, traditional folklore is passing away before the eyes of the present generation. It was clear and strong in the days of our fathers, and there is hardly a legend or superstition narrated in the following pages for the currency of which, amongst the peasantry, our grandfathers would not have vouched.

The interest taken in Irish folklore is a comparatively new phase of modern inquiry, but so much information has been already garnered, that it is almost an impossible task to compress an outline of the subject within the limits of a book of moderate size. The study of folklore, greeted at first with contempt, has, by the inevitable reaction which its acceptance into the ranks of science occasioned, given birth to numerous extravagant and ill-considered theories, for its study gives great scope to the imagination. But the latitude granted to the imagination should not be based on mere guess-work, but on ascertained facts.

"Im Auslegen seydt frisch und munter!  
Legt ihr's nicht aus, so legt was unter."

A writer should carefully follow Goethe's advice as given in the first line, and as carefully shun adopting that given in the second line. A few of our folklore theories are at present merely tentative, for no very definite assertion can yet be made with regard to some points in the analysis of Irish traditional lore. It has been remarked that, in this branch of investigation, a theory to stand unchallenged must be more than clear; it must be not only in harmony with and explain facts known at the time it is enunciated, but it must also be in harmony with and explain new facts as they are brought, one by one, to the

light of day, or else it must give place to a new theory which fulfils these requirements.

Every new investigation clears some point from obscurity ; it is hoped that this attempt may clear up many. The opinions expressed in the text are the individual views of the writer ; should the reader not agree with them he can form views of his own, and he may, perhaps, in some instances, arrive at more accurate conclusions than those set forth in the following pages. But though minor theories may be subject to modification, it is hoped that the main deductions are sufficiently well founded to make them incontrovertible.

The idea of giving authorities in foot-notes was abandoned for two reasons : it seemed too pedantic, and the work would have expanded into inconvenient bulk ; but a compromise is made, and books and papers consulted are enumerated, in a Bibliography, at the end of the second volume.

Many changes in the arrangements of the subjects treated of, suggested by literary friends who kindly looked over the proofs, have been carried out ; but if every recommendation had been adopted the writer would have found himself in the position of the man in the fable, who listening to and adopting all the advice tendered by onlookers, finally destroyed his property, for, " he labours in vain who tries to please everybody." The writer's object has been simply to discharge the useful but humble *rôle* of presenting to the general reading public, in condensed form and in popular shape, the many sides of a great subject. Such a treatment should interest those who have neither time nor opportunity to study, in more complete archæological and folklore treatises and papers, each special branch of the great whole ; for the fields of Irish archæological research are now so many, of such vast extent, the workers therein are so numerous, and have left behind them such voluminous records of their labours, that a specialist has but little time to afford himself a general view of what is going on around him. And yet all branches of archæo-

logical research are so interdependent, that it is impossible to understand even one branch thoroughly without a sound knowledge of the entire series.

The present work has been also undertaken with the object of showing that a great literary opening lies ready at hand for a writer capable of rising to the occasion, and of doing for Irish archæology what a Prescott and a Motley have done for History at large. The author wishes he could make the story as fascinating to his readers as it is to himself, but he thought it was better to have it told roughly than not told at all. Should therefore the following pages be considered dull reading, the failure must be attributed to want of skill rather than lack of interesting material in the subject under review, which may be designated the Romance of Religion in Ireland. An outline of its development, together with a description of its stereotyped customs and ceremonies—relics of the ancient world, still holding their position amid the din and bustle of modern civilization—is here presented.

The writer cannot conclude without returning thanks to the public in general for the manner in which his previous work—“Pagan Ireland”—was received, as well as to his numerous critics, in particular, for their favourable and friendly criticism. In the general purport of these notices there is indeed but one statement to which he must take exception. Several reviewers appear to consider that archæological remains throw a mere side-light on the history of Ancient Erin. Now the study of Irish Archæology is no mere side-light, and folk-lore is a most important branch of Archæology. Archæology is the light, and the only light, in which so-called “ancient history” must be judged by dispassionate modern criticism. If the archæological theories of the present day are based on well established facts, it follows that the reputed records of Ireland, prior to the date of the introduction of Christianity, must, of necessity, be adjudged to be mere emanations from the inner consciousness of comparatively modern writers.

It should be stated that the greater portion of Chapters I. and II., Volume II., appeared in the pages of the "Ulster Journal of Archæology," and are reprinted by kind permission of the Editor, Mr. F. J. Bigger, M.R.I.A.

CLEVERAGH, SLIGO,

*September, 1901.*

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## ERRATA.

Page 12, line 7, for "of the bulls and of the stags" read "of bulls and of stags".

„ 81, „ 36, for "embued" read "imbued".

„ 107, „ 5, for "World Magazine" read "Wide World Magazine".

„ 132, „ 31, for "have" read "had".

„ 164, „ 2, for "gether" read "together".

„ 322, „ 5, for "it is" read "are".

# TRACES OF THE ELDER FAITHS OF IRELAND.

## CHAPTER I.

### SPECULATIVE GEOLOGICAL ARCHÆOLOGY.

THE unknown impressive and imposing—The Glacial Period—Earliest movement of the Ice Sheet a subject of controversy—The Ice Age divided by some geologists into three distinct epochs, each of prolonged duration: First Ice Age, Inter-Glacial Epoch, Last Ice Age—Quaternary animals—Cave-men, Flint Implements of the gravel—Immense duration of time covered by the Old Stone Age—Quaternary Continent—Its gradual curtailment—Its Forests, Flora, and Fauna—Primeval Race—No recognizable Crania found in Ireland—Later Period—Two distinct Races of Immigrants—One race fair, the other dark—Extreme types of Crania—Abrasion of the Teeth—The entire enigma of the past still invites solution.

THE unknown is always both impressive and imposing. With regard to the past of ancient Erin, no skilful writer yet has arisen to lift the veil and show us the far-off days, and to depict the many hordes of immigrants fighting for and appropriating the country. Whatever they were, let it be hoped that under the influence of patient study they may be made, at least in imagination, to live again, but at present, at the very best, the process represents only a groping after truth.

Although civilized man is, in some respects, different from, and an improvement on, the Rude Stone Age, and even on the Polished Stone Age savage, yet that difference arises, not only from inheritance, but also from the continual impress of his everyday surroundings. Place a present-day infant back in the Rude Stone Age, and his offspring would doubtless grow up little, if

anything, better than their fellows. Merged in their environment, the intellectual enlargement of their descendants would keep pace with, but would not outstrip, at any rate to any appreciable degree, the improvement of the masses which appear ever to attain, slowly but surely, a higher level. Although general appearance and features may, in many instances, bear strong evidence as to parentage, yet constitution of mind and bent of thought are determined and directed by environment. The Khalif Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, is credited with the profoundly philosophical remark that "Men are more like the times they live in than they are like their fathers."

One school of modern evolutionists attributes the existence and continuance of the Universe to some unknowable mystery of which it is impossible to assert that it takes any special heed of the existence of man. According to the other school, the evidence producible almost compels belief in a supreme and intelligent Being, who has created all things with a definite purpose. Some of the Roman poets formed a rough working sketch of evolution; but this classic philosophy was a mere speculative idea, a fancy picture of development, not based upon observation of facts, but wholly evolved out of their author's own inner consciousness. It was a happy guess at the truth, but nothing more. It is not thus that discoveries of the truth are made which revolutionise the train of human thought. He who would build his theory for all time must first make sure of his foundation. Nevertheless we find "the same ideas, the same speculations, the same plays of fancy, reproduced generation after generation, with modifications peculiar to the time, as though they were living descendants of original ideas which were brought into being before the dawn of history."

Unless it be unreservedly accepted that the first human being was created an adult with mature intellect and possessing an innate knowledge of multitudinous subjects, and that his partner originated in an even more remarkable manner, a supposition to which archæology, or indeed any other science lends no confirmation, the inquirer can but begin at the beginning, and draw inferences only from such realistic data as are at present forthcoming. There is much to be learned, even from what are apparently the simplest things, in the study of archæology; and when an outside inquirer asks questions, it is astonishing how little is known on the subject, even by otherwise well informed persons. An account of the correction of mistakes would furnish much amusing matter. Few archæologists, to say nothing of the general public, have any idea of the extent to which opinions, within the last few years, have become almost imperceptibly modified in many important departments of archæological

science ; whilst there have been many recantations of opinions occasioned and enforced by the deductions drawn from great discoveries. The valet of Beau Brummel threw down a bundle of his master's cravats, exclaiming : " These are our failures." An archæological writer may say the same of his fellow-workers' discredited theories.

We are astonished at the magnitude of the results of geological changes in the older epochs of the history of the Earth's crust, and imagine that they were the product of a time when natural causes were far more powerful than they are at present, but in so doing we ignore the fact that those now operating, atmospheric influences, and the wear and tear of rivers and oceans of the present day, are producing, little by little, changes on the Earth's surface, the total sum of which will one day be as great as any which occurred in the past. Although there is irresistible evidence of distinct ages there is, in truth, no real distinction, no line of fixed demarcation, for one period glides into the next as imperceptibly as an old year is followed by the new—

" There rolls the deep where grew the tree,  
O Earth, what changes thou hast seen ?  
There where the long street roars hath been  
The silence of the central sea !"

It is a curious fact that along various parts of the shores of Lough Neagh fragments of fossil wood are frequently found. From its appearance the peasants arrived at the conclusion that the wood was originally holly, and further that the process of petrification took exactly seven years. Not long ago fragments of this fossil-timber were fabricated into whetstones, and vended about with the cry :—

" Lough Neagh hones, Lough Neagh hones !  
You put them in sticks, you take them out stones !"

However, the conversion of these articles from wood into stone must be transferred from modern to far distant geological times, as they are found in Post-Pliocene Clay, to which they have been transferred after silicification, probably by the action of ice, from their original position in older beds. The cypress of which the fossilized remains are found was a tall and stately tree, towering to a great height, conical in outline, and the quantity of these petrified fragments show how largely the Tertiary forests of Antrim were composed of this class of timber. Ireland in those days enjoyed a climate almost tropical in character. Conifera, resembling the immense trees of California, covered the slopes of the Antrim highlands ; as to age, geological

experts differ as to the precise era to which they should be assigned: they go back, at any rate, to days when gigantic and unshapely monsters crashed through the weird forests of the Tertiary Age.

“ Yes, where the huntsman winds his matin horn,  
 And the crouched hare beneath the covert trembles;  
 Where shepherds tend their flocks, and grow their corn;  
 Where fashion in our gay Parade assembles—  
 Wild horses, deer, and elephants have strayed,  
 Treading beneath their feet old Ocean's races.”

In the present day it is difficult to imagine, when surveying a quiet fertile valley or a green undulating ridge, that in the past, when Ireland was above water, its surface was, in places, scarred with volcanoes, or to picture volcanic activity throughout the vast period of geological time down to the middle of the Tertiary Period, when the fissure-like eruptions of the basalt districts of the North poured out intrusive lavas which now form part of the surface of our land, and furnish soil to stimulate vegetation.

A glance at the accompanying map (fig. 1) shows how the North-western Highlands of Scotland, together with an area extending southwards and embracing a portion of Ulster, were a centre from which radiated movements, which, in many instances, appear to have totally changed the south-lying region. When once formed, these highlands have, as a whole, ever after held a relatively elevated position, and in the subsequent sinking of the area, some peaks were never completely submerged.

It requires a great fund of reconstructive imagination to conjure up to the mind's eye, this immense region of volcanic activity, this mass of lofty and probably snow-capped cones towering into the clouds, every cone pouring forth floods of liquid lava, like so many Vesuviuses, over the then land-united Great Britain and Ireland. We speak of the Eternal hills, when many of these ancient mountains have been planed down to mere table-lands, and it is quite within the bounds of possibility that some remote ancestor of man witnessed the transformation scene, saw fire reigning apparently supreme, to be in turn conquered by water.

The succeeding Glacial Period, in the European area, has been divided by some geologists into three distinct epochs each of prolonged duration. The transition from one set of conditions to another was gradual and slow, and at the culminating points of each period climatic conditions and the relative proportions of land and ocean were very dissimilar. The earliest movements of the ice-sheet are a subject of controversy; the later movements

are more or less distinctly marked, but there is still much obscurity over the entire subject. The difficulty is further complicated by observers arriving at different conclusions after a careful study of the same phenomena. A writer on the Ice

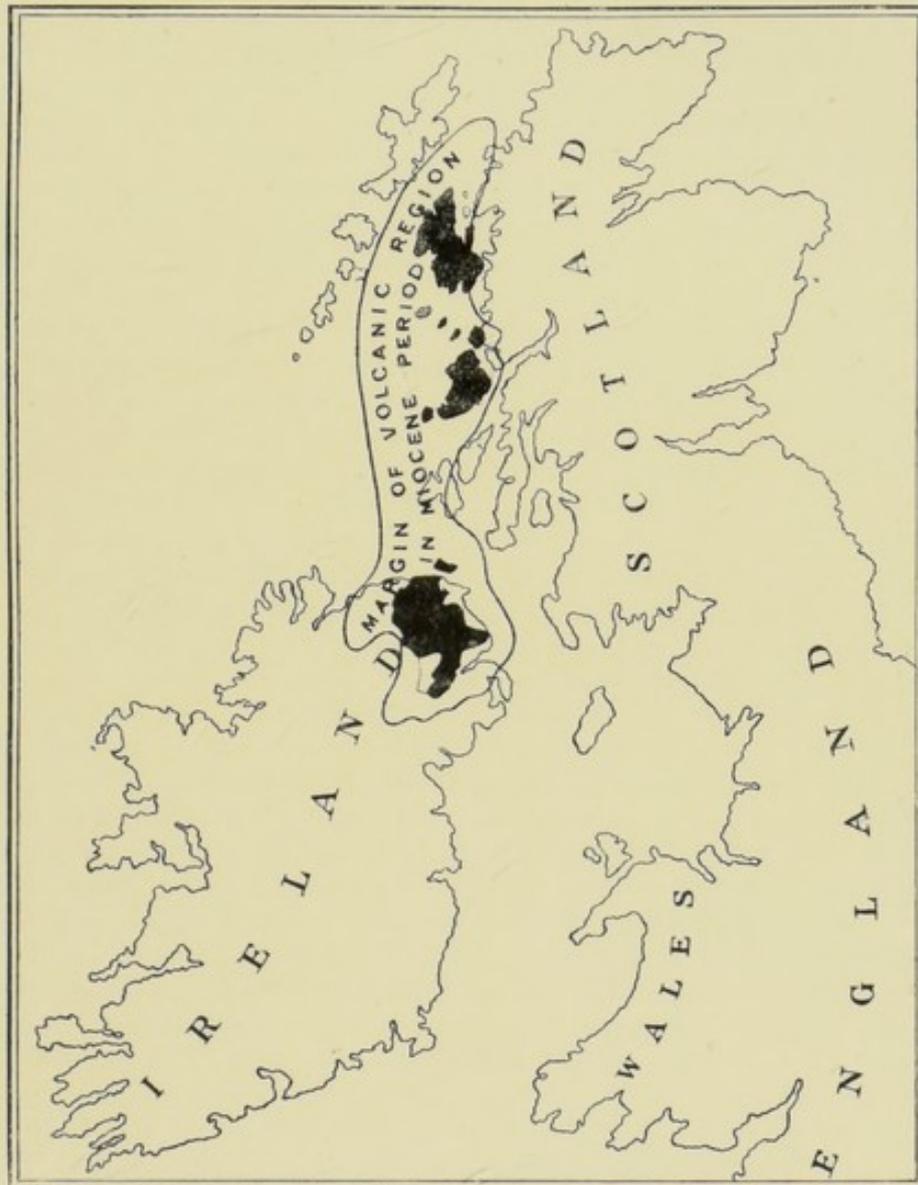


FIG. 1.

Map showing area of volcanic action in Great Britain and Ireland during part of the Tertiary Period. (From Professor Edward Hull's "Physical History of the British Isles.")

Age is, therefore, on very debatable ground; probably no two men would treat the subject from the same standpoint: and a geologist, who good-naturedly looked over the proofs of this

chapter, enigmatically observed: "I think your way is as good as anybody else's, which is all one can aim at!" "I think so" is the whole residuum which can be found after evaporating the "prodigious pretensions" of the present-day school of "the great Ice Age" geology.

In the first epoch, during which the climate was Arctic, the European continent stood at the greatest elevation it ever attained. The land in general, and all the mountain ranges, were much higher than at present, whilst Great Britain and Ireland formed part of the Continent; they were also connected with northern Africa, by low lying land or desert tracts, of which the Sahara now alone remains; the straits of Gibraltar were closed, and an isthmus, of which Sicily and Malta are vestiges, divided the Mediterranean into two lakes or inland seas; further eastward the European area was severed, by water, of which the Caspian is a remnant, from the major portion of Asia, with which it is at present connected. According to the best evidence now procurable man did not appear in Ireland before this great Glacial Age; but it is highly probable that, as the outcome of steady research, man's antiquity will be dated much further back. In this Period, from its normal home at the North Pole, a great sheet of ice spread southward—hundreds, and in places thousands, of feet in thickness—advancing from the highlands of Scandinavia, covering Central Europe, the entire basin of the present German Ocean, the larger portion of Great Britain and Ireland, and shooting its ice-masses into the ocean; for once the edge of the ice-sheet, which fronted the sea, became water-borne, fragments of greater or less dimensions would break away, just as they do from the ice-cliffs of the Arctic and Antarctic regions at the present day, and float off in the form of bergs, drifting with the currents of the ocean into warmer spheres, where they gradually return to their original condition. A thousand feet is a moderate estimate for the thickness of this ice-cap. Greenland is covered to a far greater depth, and the Antarctic sheet exceeds even that of Greenland. Standing on the summit of Knocknarea, near the town of Sligo, one can observe on it boulders carried from the metamorphic ridge some miles inland; this ridge again is covered with limestone blocks from the interior of the country, so that the ice which once desolated Ireland must have had a thickness much in excess of a thousand feet. "Even with this moderate thickness," remarks Sir Robert Ball, "an ice-sheet would form a terrible engine. Every square inch of the floor over which this frozen ocean ploughed its way, would have to sustain a pressure of 400 lbs.; every square foot of the country would, on an average, sustain a load of about thirty tons." This period of intense cold

was partly or wholly brought about by regularly recurring cosmical phenomena, which it would be out of place here to attempt to describe: let it suffice that the alternation of climate at periods of almost incalculable length is a theory held by many distinguished geologists, and which has, it is alleged, been strengthened by recent astronomical discoveries.

A slight lowering of the temperature of the northern hemisphere would cause a sufficient accumulation of snow to create an Arctic condition, as this does not require intense cold to accomplish. In the central parts of Siberia there are frequently registered 100 degrees of frost, yet it possesses but few glaciers; and although the Earth is permanently frozen at a short distance below the surface, the winter snow vanishes quickly every spring. A dry atmosphere will not allow the accumulation of snow or of glaciers, whilst a moderate fall of temperature below freezing-point, joined with a precipitation of moisture, will occasion an enormous accumulation of snow. It will help us to understand this if we remember how uncomfortable a boat is on a rainy day; every drop of water that falls over the area of the skiff is retained, the occupant is surrounded with moisture that possesses no means of escape. Matters are even worse if it snows when the temperature is below freezing-point; for whilst heat dissipates water by carrying it away in vapour, with frost nothing escapes—the greater the cold, the greater the precipitation. Thus with a lower temperature, with mountains to cause precipitation, and with moisture-laden oceanic winds, immense fields of snow and of ice would certainly accumulate in the British Isles.

The slowly forward-creeping northern ice-cap created in its passage a vast amount of stiff, stony mud or clay, called "boulder clay," owing to its characteristic feature being the prevalence of large stones or boulders; but these do not, as a rule, appear to have been transported from any great distance. The question may thus be raised, was there a universal glaciation or merely local glaciers? Can the Ice Age be regarded as but a period when the European area was greatly elevated and greatly extended, when the higher valleys and plateaux bore immense local, as well as some more or less coalescent glaciers: a period when there existed, side by side, a dual flora and a dual fauna; that of the snowfields and glaciers, and that of the warm valleys and plains beneath.

The work accomplished in past ages by ice, or by glaciers, has been of the greatest importance to the present day farmer; but for their action many districts now covered with rich soil, derived from pulverised rock-surfaces, would otherwise be represented by a barren, stony desert. There is scarcely a valley throughout Ireland whose rounded, undulating, encircling hills

do not tell of the plough-like work of the glacier. Our rivers flow through broad valleys, smoothed by ice, and by atmospheric wear and tear. The low lands have been covered with sediment, the transported grindings of the rocks, whilst lakes formed during the Ice Age, are again slowly silting up, and instead of unstable, watery expanses, often present firm and broad meadow-lands. Round the coast line the older geological formations rise in a broken ring of high ground, attaining, in places, the altitude of mountains, as if to protect the great central plain from any further encroachment of the Ocean. This central area consists of a gently undulating sheet of Carboniferous limestone, dotted here and there with isolated hills or hill-groups.

In the inter-Glacial Epoch the greater portion of the present area of Great Britain and Ireland was submerged: the highlands and the summits of the mountains formed an archipelago of islets (see fig. 2). In this time of deep submergence the climate became more temperate, like that of the present day; the middle sands and gravels then deposited contain many shells identical with existing species. Sometimes these deposits rest directly on the Lower Boulder Clay, as at Howth and Killiney, whilst in other places they rest directly on the older rocks, and cover also large tracts in the central plain of Ireland, and are present on the Dublin and Ulster mountains at an elevation of about 1200 feet.

After a prolonged interval the land began again gradually to rise and the climate became severe; this stage is marked by layers of what are termed "Upper Boulder Clay." In the movement of elevation there appear to have been occasionally pauses of very lengthened duration. These pauses can be recognised by lines of old ocean-side caverns, whilst the best known and last line of elevation can be traced around the sea shores at a height of about twenty-five feet above the present sea-level.

The cold was not, however, so intense as during the first Arctic Period, and the snow-fields and glaciers were on a very much smaller scale; the distinguishing mark of this period—the Upper Boulder Clay resting on the marine gravels—has been noticed in many places throughout Ireland. The idea commonly prevalent that land within Arctic influence is always dreary and devoid of life is erroneous; for, in the polar circle, life in the present day is, in the summer season, almost exuberant; birds appear everywhere; flowers, identical with our own in genera, and often in species, flourish as in an Irish meadow in summer time. Even in the period of greatest glaciation oases may have remained in some of the highlands of Ireland, above, and therefore uncovered by, the polar ice-stream. In these oases were probably to be

found an Arctic vegetation supporting the Arctic hare and the reindeer, together with other hardy animals.

Climatic conditions gradually ameliorated; the land slowly rose; the snow dwindled on the mountain tops; the glaciers vanished; Continental plants and animals invaded Great Britain; but Ireland appears to have remained semi-isolated. Standing on the cliffs of Antrim, the probability of the former continuity of



FIG. 2.

Sketch Map showing land about 400 feet above the sea, in black, present area shaded, the 50 and 100 fathom lines by dotted lines.

Ireland with North Britain is very apparent. On a clear day the Paps of Jura float like distant clouds on the horizon; Cantyre stands out clear and prominent; the Isle of Arran, with Goat Fell, appears as lofty, but less distinct, and the outline of Ailsa leads the eye onward along the sweep of the Scottish coast which shows distinct or faint as the sun lights it up or the cloud-shadows rest upon it. If one might speculate on the

past history of this scene, one could imagine these eminences far more lofty than at present, each crowned with its ice-cap and its glaciers lording it over the plains, on which roamed strange animals (see fig. 3), the prey of very primitive men, until the level country was again invaded by the resistless ocean surge. Egypt has been styled "The gift of the Nile"; Ireland may be described as the residuum which the joint effort of water and ice was unable to remove. This was a time when men eked out their scant vocabulary with gestures, and talked together as animals now do, when an estuary, or a broad and sluggish river, expanding at intervals into large marsh-surrounded lakes, flowed through a wide and gently undulating country now covered by the waters of the Irish Channel, when, in southern Britain, cave-bears, lions, sabre-toothed tigers, and wolves lurked in dens in the rocks, when grizzly bears, hyenas and apes frequented the forest, when the mammoth and wild-horse scoured the plain, when beavers erected dams on the lakes and rivers, and shiny black hippopotami sported in their waters. It was probably this land-connexion between Scotland and Ireland which permitted Quaternary mammals, such as the mammoth, Irish big horn, reindeer, and wolf, to migrate into the country, as all living and extinct mammals of Ireland, with the exception of the grizzly bear, have been found also in Scotland, but a considerable number of English extinct animals are absent from Ireland as well as from Scotland. In this theory—that of the late Professor Leith Adams—Professor R. F. Scharff appears to agree, for he says that the results obtained from inquiries instituted into a portion of the Irish fauna are as follows:—"Ireland was in later Tertiary times connected with Wales in the south, and Scotland in the north, whilst a freshwater lake occupied the present central area of the Irish Sea. The southern connexion broke down at the beginning of the Pleistocene Period, the northern connexion following soon after. There is no evidence of any subsequent land-connexion between Great Britain and Ireland." The Irish Sea and St. George's Channel were represented by a series of lagoons and a large broad connecting channel which joined the ocean some hundreds of miles from Land's End. The eastern streams of England formed tributaries of a gigantic river which, joining others from the Continent, discharged its waters into the North Sea. This was the time of the great fauna of England. The greater number of the largest mammals are now either extinct, or no longer found on English soil, but their osseous remains have occurred in association with objects of human manufacture. The principal mammalia are as follows—(animals whose remains are most commonly found are denoted by an asterisk):—The brown-, cave-,\* and grizzly bear\*; cave hyæna,\* cave lion,\* sabre-toothed

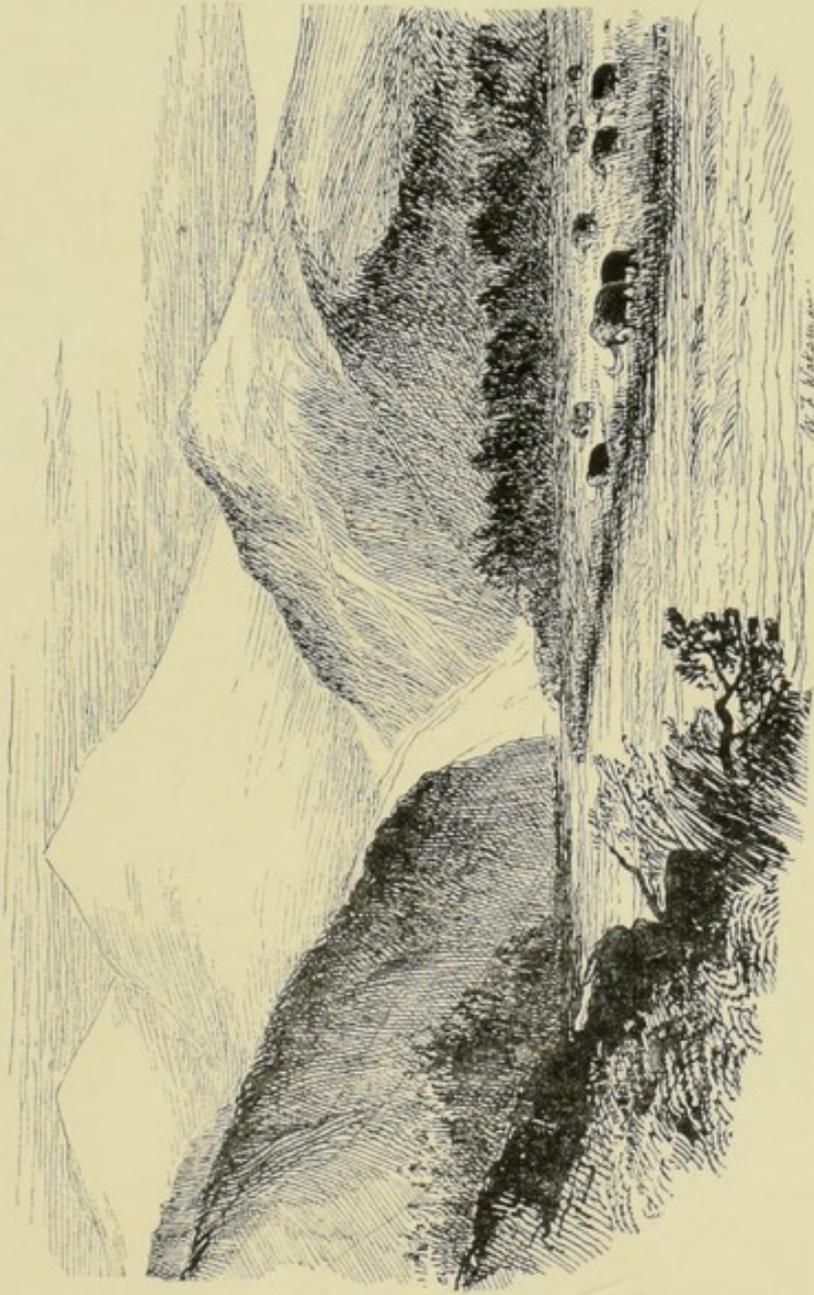


FIG. 3.

Ideal Irish Landscape in the Rude Stone Age.

tiger; the Great Irish Deer, or *Megaceros*, reindeer, urus, bison, woolly-haired rhinoceros,\* mammoth, wild-horse, wolf, glutton, large fox, and beaver. Comparatively few of the foregoing have been identified as present in Ireland; yet even with a restricted number the nocturnal sounds would, in comparison with those now heard, be strange and startling. We should have the bellowing of the bulls and of the stags, the growling of bears, the neighing of wild horses, and the howling of wolves.

There is a vast difference between the Mammalian fauna of the Palæolithic or Older Stone Age and that of the Neolithic or Polished-stone Period; the gap between the two eras represents an immense period of time during which the fauna of the country were undergoing transformation by the migration of some forms and the extinction of others, for the continued existence of all animal and vegetable life is an individual struggle. All are exposed to the attacks of enemies, and, except under special conditions none but the strong and healthy arrive at maturity and continue to propagate their species.

Examination of deposits filling deep basins of ancient lakes affords a most reliable record of climatic changes from the close of the first great Ice Age to the comparatively modern period when these silted-up hollows were clothed with dense forests, buried in their turn under a vast accumulation of peat. The Bog of Ballybetagh, Co. Dublin, which covers the site of two ancient lake-beds, may be taken as a typical example. Its historian, Mr. W. Williams, is a good authority on the subject, as he spent ten weeks in making scientific excavations in the locality. Ballybetagh Bog, nine miles from Dublin, lies in a small valley 800 feet above sea level. Its elevation precluded the basin from receiving the drainage of any extensive sweep of country; hence the clays with which this hollow is filled could not have been transported from a distance, but were swept into it from the surrounding hills.

The underlying stratum of Boulder Clay, of unknown thickness, deposited in the great Ice Age, rests on the granite. Next to it is a fine reconstructed Boulder Clay without stones. The next deposit, yellowish-grey in colour, almost entirely composed of vegetable matter, has been subjected to great pressure. The succeeding layer has all the appearance of lake sediment, and bears witness to a time during which the gigantic deer, the Irish Big-horn or *Megaceros*, appeared, leaving its skeletons in this deposit. These animals may have been drowned after having mired and stuck fast in the thick tenacious re-arranged Boulder Clay. The next deposit consists of *débris* from the hills brought down by frost and rain, filling the lake beds, and preparing the surface for the growth of peat of no great thickness, its

accumulation retarded by the elevation of the district. It contains trunks of oak and alder, but the Fir-forest Age is not represented. According to the evidence afforded by these successive deposits, the Gigantic Deer lived in Ireland during the period of the great English fauna, wandering over immense grass-covered prairies, through which it was free to roam safely, as the largest predatory animal was the wolf. It might be thought that such a huge animal would require a greater expanse of pasturage than would be afforded by the present land area, but Ireland was then of far greater extent, protruding northward, westward, and southward into the present ocean.

Observe the circling ripples made by a stone thrown into tranquil water; close at hand they seem to crowd and jostle each other, but as they expand, and spread further and further from their origin, they become less defined and more feeble until they finally die away. Osseous remains of animals are, in the same way, always discovered in greatest abundance in the immediate vicinity of their former habitat, and, as the distance from it increases, signs of their former presence constantly diminish until all traces disappear. Thus, the great number of the skeletons and immense horns of this gigantic deer that are found, points to Ireland having formed at one period its chosen home.

In the rock-shelters and caves of the Continent, especially in France, the deposits encrusted in stalagmite, covered to a greater or less depth with accumulated *débris*, are almost exclusively refuse heaps, containing fractured and unfractured bones of animals which served for the food of their former inhabitants, mixed with human osseous remains, lost or injured tools, utensils, and weapons, generally lying near or around the cooking-hearth. The object in resorting to rock-shelters and caves was doubtless to gain protection from the weather. Who these people were, at what date they existed, or whether they have any descendants now on Earth, is at present impossible to decide. If the objects shown as specimens of their skill be really the product of their hands, with them indeed the artistic faculty was abnormally developed. Artistic taste appears to be entirely wanting among men of the succeeding Polished Stone Period. There was, as far as archæological research at present extends, no earlier race from which these cave-dwellers were derived, and they left no successors. When the glaciers retreated, this picture-making race disappeared, probably following northward the reindeer and other animals on which it subsisted. Centuries upon centuries glided by; upon the same soil, tribe succeeded tribe, but there was no re-appearance or even approximation to the skill and artistic feeling displayed by these

mysterious cave-dwellers, who, ignorant of the use of bronze, of pottery, of agriculture, and having domesticated neither the reindeer nor the dog, were yet endowed with a faculty of depicting animal life, with a few skilful strokes, that would do credit to a nineteenth-century artist in a Parisian atelier.

The question may naturally be asked, at what period were the rude flint implements, found in Ireland, deposited in the gravels in which they are discovered embedded, often in great quantities? Accustomed to reckon terrestrial affairs by brief historical periods, we may well hesitate in fixing a very definite date; suffice it that the era of deposit goes back to a time when Great Britain, and probably also Ireland, formed part of the European continent. The Glacial Period had been succeeded by one comparatively genial; the face of the continent was at a great altitude; the beds of rivers were at a higher level than formerly, and the extended land-surface made them subject to floods which gradually excavated the wide hollows of the valleys. Take one example: a salient feature in the geology of Sligo is the enormous denudation of the Carboniferous beds in the north-east of the county. It may assist in conveying an idea of this general denudation if we try to estimate the quantity of material that would be requisite to fill up even one of the excavated valleys—say Glencar. A mass adequate for that purpose would need to be nine miles long, a breadth of two miles at each end, and one in the centre, with a vertical thickness ranging from 400 to 1100 feet; yet the gap, large as it is, forms but a small part of the total excavation that has left the adjacent mountains standing out in conspicuous relief. What a lengthened period this, and other similar excavations have been estimated to occupy, has been calculated from observations made in the valleys of well-known rivers. The weak part of the argument is, that it is taken for granted that the rate of erosion was always the same, and no account appears to be taken of a probably much accelerated denuding action, aided by ice or other powerful agents. It may therefore be suggested that the transformation in the Irish, as well as in the European landscape, might have taken place in a much shorter, or in a much greater space of time than has been calculated by eminent geologists. G. H. Kinahan, in his *Geology of Ireland*, draws attention to the fact that “when ice first invades a country it effects great denudation, rapidly wearing away and removing, except in protected places, all loose and soft portions of the surface; but when the solid rocks are reached the work goes on more slowly, till eventually the surface becomes so rearranged, even, and polished, that the ice has very little power of denudation.” With regard also to the slowness of erosion, it has been estimated that the Thames lowers its basin at the

rate of about one foot in 12,000 years! Another calculation estimates the average erosion of English valleys at about one foot in 1200 years.

Sir John Lubbock has accepted 200,000 years as an approximation in regard to the time when the European rivers, fed by a much greater expanse of land, and a heavier rainfall than at present, first began to hollow out the valleys of our existing streams, now but tiny rills when compared to their splendid predecessors. Again, it is often asserted that palæolithic implements were in use as far back as the Tertiary Period, which it is calculated extended to some 300,000 years. Between this age—which was thousands of years before the great Ice Age—and that of neolithic man, there was a gap of some quarter of a million years. Then we have the age during which man was contemporary, in Ireland, with the gigantic big-horn and with the reindeer, only some 50,000 odd years ago. It requires an effort to grasp calculations so stupendous. The subject should be treated broadly, by means of comparison and analogy, without reference to dates. Let it be modestly suggested that modern geologists are, in these matters, making sweeping assertions upon little certain foundation, and are, probably quite unintentionally, copying the example of those ecclesiastics who placed a chronology of the Old Testament, drawn up by themselves, in the margin, and expected every one to interpret the text by their calculations. In the same way geologists are placing their chronology on the book of nature, and attempting to mark out the period of time in which the all-ruling power accomplished the work. Let us be content, while we have only the information at present at our disposal, to believe that the periods under review took an immeasurable time, and that geologists have in this matter probably made a mistake in proportion even greater than the discrepancy between Archbishop Ussher's chronology and known geological data. It must, however, be acknowledged that, as a rule, geologists are very reticent with regard to dates; but in the matter of the glacial epoch, geologically a comparatively late, and indeed almost historical event, they have broken through their reserve and have given an almost stereotyped numerical determination: accordingly, when even distinguished geologists give dates for things geological, it behoves the uninitiated to receive (with caution) whatever these specialists decree. Some writers state that it is not fifteen thousand years since the last ice melted off the Highlands of Ireland, and one of the many objections marshalled against the ingenious theory of the Ice Age is that the lingering effects of the last great eccentricity of the Earth's orbit continued down to forty thousand years ago, which period is insufficient to account for the recentness

of the close of the Glacial Period. In fact "the unknown elements of the problem are so numerous," remarks Professor G. F. Wright, "and so far-reaching is their possible scope, that a cautious attitude of agnosticism, with respect to the cause of the Glacial Period, is most scientific and becoming."

Archbishop Ussher was diffident when compared with the early prelates of the Church who posed as philosophers as well as bishops. "The first congress of ecclesiastical savants that ever dealt with and fixed the beginning of all things to their own entire satisfaction, met at Jerusalem in the beginning of the third century." Their avowed object was to settle the exact day on which the Earth sprang from Chaos, in order that something salutary might be ordained respecting the observation of Easter. The process by which they arrived at the desired conclusion is told at considerable length by Bede, which Dr. Doran thus amusingly summarizes:—"The world was made on Sunday, in the spring time, at the equinox, on the eighth of the Kalends of April, when the moon was at the full! The course of the argument which sustained this very definite conclusion was this:—God rested on the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, or Saturday, after making the world in six days. He must, therefore, have begun on the first, which was Sunday; then, as the Earth brought forth grass and herb-yielding seed, and trees yielding fruit, the not very logical conclusion was, that the world started on its career in fair spring time. As God divided the light and the darkness, the day and night which He had created, into equal parts, there scarcely required further proof to show that this must have been the equinox—in other words and for greater accuracy, the eighth of the Kalends of April; and finally, the moon must have been full at the time, seeing that God made the two great luminaries, that 'they might give light upon the earth, the greater luminary in the beginning of the day, the lesser one in the beginning of the night. It could not have been thus,' said the bishops, 'unless the moon were at full.' By this sort of reasoning the prelates established an error that was long accepted for truth; and probably no vulgar fallacy was ever conceived, fashioned, forged, and beat into shape with such circumstance and ceremony as this which dated the Creation on a spring Sunday in March when the moon was at the full!" Does it not afford food for profound reflection that, a few hundred years ago, if anyone had been so independent as to doubt this absurd teaching, and had openly expressed dissent, he would have run a good chance of being burnt, as an example to others, to believe, without demur, what was ecclesiastically decreed. No wonder that science is continually engaged in a grim warfare of aggression against the forces of obscurantism.

To the credit of theologians, it must be admitted that they have now generally recognised that the Scriptures were not intended to serve the purpose of a scientific hand-book; though, while religious writers generally have given up the attempt to fix the date of the beginning of the world, some few, with more zeal than discretion, and in spite of a warning they at any rate might be expected to respect, still busy themselves in fixing an exact date for the end of the world. A late writer gives the very day and hour for the end. One might imagine that the innumerable recorded failures of such predictions ought to have suggested caution. But it is not after all upon any supposed system of natural science that such persons found their calculations, but on the method of giving mystical value to numbers. The "seventy weeks" and the "little horn," which occupy so important a place in their works, can, by a little scientific manipulation, be made suit almost any date and any name that may be desired.

As a rule, however, theologians rush in where laymen fear to tread; it has been the same from the early centuries of Christianity to the present day; from the first Council of the Church to the nineteenth-century curate, who (from the pulpit) lays down the law to his own satisfaction on subjects that his master, the parson, would probably decline to discuss.

Clerical attempts to explain away traces of the former presence of the mammoth and other great beasts, its contemporaries, in the British Isles, do not call for refutation, but may be mentioned on account of their unintentionally amusing character. According to one of these theories, the mammoth and its congeners were brought over to the British Isles by the Phœnicians, who sailed the seas with a kind of travelling circus in order to amuse and astonish the natives with whom they traded. In an address to the British Association in 1883, a speaker quoted from a religious journal an amusing instance of the promulgation of this theory. Writing on the subject of British bone caves and the discoveries made in them, the author of the article in question states, that he desires to present to the public his own views with regard to these caves and the phenomena connected with them. According to this authority, "a great many of the old mines in Europe were opened by Phœnician colonists and metal workers a thousand years before the Romans had set foot in Britain, which accounts for the various floors of stalagmite found in most caves, and also for the variety of groups of bones embedded in them. The animals represented by them when living were not running wild about the hills devouring each other, as science men suppose, but were the useful auxiliaries and trained drudges of the miners in their work. Some of them, as the bear, had simply been

hunted and used for food, and others of a fierce character, as the hyena, to frighten and keep in awe the native Britons. The larger species of Mammalia, as the elephant, the rhinoceros, and hippopotamus, and beasts foreign to the country, the Romans, no less than the Phœnicians, had every facility in bringing with them in their ships of commerce from Carthage or other of the African ports. These, with the native horse, ox, and stag, which are always found in larger numbers in the caves than the remains of foreign animals, all worked peacefully together in the various occupations of the mines. . . . The hippopotamus, although amphibious, is a grand beast for heavy work, such as mining, quarrying, and road-making, and his keeper would take care that he was comfortably lodged in a tank of water during the night."

The discoveries of geology, archæology, and of folk-lore have so completely swept away the old dogmatic chronology, and so extended the known period of man's presence on the Earth, that it becomes necessary to construct, at any rate provisionally, some scheme to account for his origin and history more in accordance with the facts of science, than the present existing and deeply engrained quasi-historical and religious traditions and beliefs on the subject. This is what is here attempted—as regards Ireland—as a small contribution to the literature on the origin of civilization throughout the world. The endeavour to find a theory, and to keep on the right track, is beset with difficulties; the path is not only intricate and ill-defined, but is crowned with obstacles, and beset, on either side, with gins and pitfalls. It is hard to decide whether the exploration of an unknown region, or a proper description of the discoveries so made, is the more difficult task to accomplish in a satisfactory manner.

We see that there were great changes, but they were very gradual, both in their incomings and their outgoings:—

“ Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.”

Nowhere in the history of the Earth's crust, not even in Ireland—whose historians appear to imagine that the Green Isle was created an exception to the general laws as well of nature as of history—do we find evidence of an abrupt termination of one order of things, and an equally abrupt introduction of another. Few, scanty, and disconnected as are the records of the Ice Age, they all appear to point to the continuous action and reaction of natural forces, not to capricious changes, or to widely ranged catastrophes.

After all the apparently immense geological periods are in reality but a mere fraction of the time required to account for the

beginning of life and the development of vegetables and animals from a common ancestor. The geological estimate rests mainly on the gross deposit in the stratified rocks, and, allowing for the possible action of more rapid causes of change in former times, it suggests a period of approximately one hundred million years since the cooling of the Earth's surface permitted the earliest "life form" or "organised life" to appear. Physicists basing their calculations on the origin and age of the Sun's heat, the rate of the Earth's cooling, and other data, arrive at about the same conclusion.

"The seasons run their round—the Sun fulfils  
His annual course—and heaven and Earth remain  
Still changing, yet unchanged—still doomed to feel  
Endless mutation in perpetual rest.

Oh! who can strive  
To comprehend the vast, the awful truth  
Of the eternity that hath gone by,  
And not recoil from the dismaying sense  
Of human impotence?"

As the British Islands stand nearly upon the edge of the great European plateau, which a little over 200 miles to the west plunges down into the abysses of the Atlantic, it is certain that although the continental area was prolonged westward beyond its present limits, it yet could never have exceeded the 100 fathom line, but on the other extremity of the British area, even at the present day, an elevation of 600 feet would convert the entire of the North Sea into dry land, and bones of the extinct fauna of other days have been dredged up by fishermen from the surface of the Dogger bank; off Dunkirk the sea-bottom is so covered with Mammalian remains, that the sailors call it "the Burying-ground." It therefore seems probable that these animals must have roved in herds across the plains over which the waters of the North Sea now roll.

The outline of the old Quaternary Continental coast-line (fig. 4) can still, it is thought, be roughly traced from Scandinavia, the Shetland and Hebrides, to Rockall and the vanished isle of Hy Brasil, and from that on southward of Ireland and Land's End. In strange corroboration of the former existence of Hy Brasil, it is laid down on a chart by the French Geographer Royal, in the year 1634, very much in the position of the Porcupine Bank, situated near the edge of the great plateau, which stretches into the Atlantic, and of greater width off Galway Bay than anywhere else on the Irish coast. The bank is only sixty fathoms below sea-level; from this landward the water gradually

deepens; then again gradually becomes shallower as the Bay of Galway is approached. It is alleged that discovery has also been made, by dredging on this bank, of the common periwinkle, a shell that is inhabited by a mollusk requiring exposure, at regular intervals, to air as well as to water; in fact only living where the sea rises and falls on rocks.

The wear of the Atlantic billows during late centuries can be vaguely traced. On the map of 1634 before mentioned, Rockall is shown as consisting of two adjacent islands, one considerably



FIG. 4.

Ideal Sketch Map, showing approximate old Quaternary Continent at its maximum extent. Present land area represented black.

larger than the other; at the present day these are represented by two banks or shoals, one of considerable extent, the other a small rock, still above the waters, and surrounded by an extensive bank, as forty miles from this last pinnacle of a sunken land there are but 150 fathoms over it. This extremely dangerous speck in mid-ocean is probably the remains of the "lost" or "sunken land" passed by one of Frobisher's ships, and described as a long, low-lying, wooded island.

In numerous localities, especially around the western and southern coasts, there are often to be seen, at unusually low tides, extensive tracts of submerged bogs, full of stumps and roots of former forest timber, which point to the time when the now sunken forests must have been considerably above the ocean level. In no other way save in the assumed existence of a vastly increased continental area can the presence of submerged forests and immense tracts of peat with the roots of trees be accounted for, more especially "in such isolated islands as those of Orkney and Shetland, now swept by ocean blasts, and where no vestige of a tree has grown for at least 2000 years, when a Roman author described them as 'Carentes Sylva.'" This last subsidence is most likely synchronous with the final separation of Great Britain from the European continent, for, after attaining a considerable elevation, the land of the European area appears to have slightly subsided, and from this period we enter into times comparatively modern. The isolation of Ireland took place long before Britain had been separated from the European area. This may be inferred from a comparison of the distribution of present-day plants and animals. The interval which has elapsed since the submergences and the ice-caps of the Glacial Period must, if measured by ordinary human standards, have been of enormous duration; yet even this prodigious period was too short to enable the plants and animals of Central Europe completely to possess themselves of the British area. Professor A. Geikie, F.R.S.I., remarks that—"Generation after generation they were moving westward; but long before they could all reach the north-western seaboard, Ireland had become an island, so that their further march in that direction was arrested; and before the subsequent advancing bands had come as far as Britain, it too had been separated by a sea channel which finally barred their progress. Comparing the total land Mammals of the west of Europe, we find that, while Germany has ninety species, Britain has forty, and Ireland only twenty-two. The Reptiles and Amphibia of Germany number twenty-two, those of Britain thirteen, and those of Ireland four. Again, even among the winged tribes, where the capacity for dispersal is so much greater, Britain possesses twelve species of bats, while Ireland has no more than seven, and 130 landbirds to 110 in Ireland. The same discrepancy is traceable in the flora, for while the total number of species of flowering plants and ferns found in Britain amounts to 1425, those of Ireland number 970—about two-thirds of the British flora. Such facts as these are not explicable by any difference of climate rendering Ireland less fit for the reception of more varied vegetation and animal life; for the climate of Ireland is really more equable and genial than that of the

regions lying to the east of it. They receive a natural and consistent interpretation on the assumption of the gradual separation of the British Islands during a continuous north-western migration of the present flora and fauna from Central Europe."

Regarded merely as a physical event, apart from other considerations, the first appearance and development of man must have, slowly but surely, effected a change in the fauna. It is an advent the date of which we may ultimately become cognizant of, and marks the boundary or dividing line between two great periods, the present and the Tertiary. A primeval race appeared in Europe at a remote period, Interglacial at latest, and filled with a scanty population a vast extent of territory. As regards the British Isles and Ireland, it may be safely stated that, though Palæolithic or rude-flint-using man arrived on foot, Neolithic or polished-flint-using man probably arrived by water; only in the Later Stone Age do the sheep, goat, long-faced ox, and dog make their appearance on the scene as domesticated animals.

As on the ocean of time successive waves of types and species have risen and fallen, have come and gone, so primitive man has here appeared, lived, and disappeared. Even without being able to describe him from his osseous frame-work, a good idea of what he was like can be formed. He was short in stature, with large belly and small calves to the legs, the females considerably shorter than the males. Both sexes went almost naked, or only partially protected from the inclemency of the weather by the skins of animals killed in the chase. They were covered with hair like wild animals; their heads were long and flat with receding foreheads; the features animal-like and repulsive, for the lower jaws with projecting teeth were massive. Not a pleasing description, but primitive man was not handsome. Even then, however, he was not degraded, for he had never risen higher; and although we may now-a-days regard him as bestial, he nevertheless represented in his day the highest stage of development in the animal kingdom; yet, in this age, which is perpetually occupied in proclaiming itself the age of enlightenment and of progress, the majority of people still prefer to look upon themselves as inferior to their original ancestors. The idea that man has risen is considered not only to be degrading, but positively irreligious; whilst the idea that he has fallen from a higher estate is regarded as ennobling, as strictly religious, and therefore orthodox.

The idea of the gradual advance of man from a state but little removed from the mere animal was, like the vast æons of geology, dimly perceived by the ancients; for both Greek and Roman philosophers and poets depict, in vague but nevertheless striking periods, the lowly origin of the human race. Thus Horace states

that "when animals first crept forth from this new-formed Earth, a dumb and filthy herd, they fought for acorns and lurking-places with their nails and fists, then with clubs, and at last with arms, which, taught by experience, they had forged. They then invented names for things, and words to express their thoughts."

Races in a state of barbarism either die out at once in presence of a stronger and more civilized people, or their lower characteristics are effaced by assimilating intermixture with the intruding community. Man cannot be considered as an isolated being, he is but one link in the great chain of animal creation. It has been remarked that the brains of most savages, and the skulls of most primitive races are larger than—in theory—they ought to be; often rather larger than the brains and skulls of the average of the masses inhabiting the great cities of the present day. "But this need not cause surprise if the life of intelligent interest passed by the savage child be taken into consideration. From the tenderest age he was observant of all the devices practised by his parents for procuring clothing, food, means of defence, in short, all the essentials of existence; the natural result of his wild life was health and strength"; indeed on the principle of the survival of the fittest, it could only be the robust who lived through the hardships and climatic exposure incidental to a savage life.\* The greatest incentives to exertion, on the part of primitive man, are hunger and thirst, heat and cold; without such spurs to original sloth we should still probably be eating acorns, chipping flints, and "making ourselves as comfortable as might be in the company of other species."

Climate undoubtedly stamps well-marked characteristics on the human frame in regard to both physical and mental development. Extremes of cold or of heat deteriorate body and mind alike, whilst a temperate climate stimulates both. The theory has arisen that man came into existence in a warm climate, whilst

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\* On this subject S. Baring Gould, M.A., remarks that "intellectual development necessarily leads to a deterioration of the *physique* of the species; high civilization introduces a multitude of disorders unknown to savage life; and such deterioration must end in the extinction of the race. In a simple and barbarous state of society, the weak and deformed die as children. Civilization tends to accumulate and propagate disease and malformation; for science and the attention which in a cultivated race can be bestowed on its infirm, keep the diseased and deformed alive, and suffer them to breed and spread their disorder and malformation through generations of children. In savage life the process of natural selection tends to raise the type of man, the inferior types dying out; but civilized life prevents the operation of the natural law, and therefore tends to the deterioration of the race."

civilization commenced in a temperate climate. The discovery of a semi-tropical fauna and flora having formerly flourished within the Arctic Circle has given birth to the idea that man's origin was at the North Pole. But unless distinct traces of primitive man's presence in these latitudes are brought to light of more ancient date than those which have been discovered in other and more likely parts of the globe, the theory can only be regarded as a fantastic speculation.

Almost everywhere, throughout Europe, there are traces of a later and numerous people, also unknown to history, who have left very material traces of their occupancy of the land, and tradition points to an early race of diminutive folk who inhabited Ireland. No recognizable crania have been found, and but scanty osseous remains. They probably hunted the reindeer and the Gigantic Deer, and were exterminated—driven out of the country, or perhaps partly absorbed by succeeding tribes of immigrants. The engineer and the agriculturist are, from time to time, bringing to light unlooked for ancient interments, and though some have been carefully noted by competent observers, yet, in several instances, through ignorance of their value, many crania—which of course are to be met with whole only in carnal interments—have either been destroyed or lost.

Sir John Browne, when discoursing on urn-burial some two centuries ago, quaintly observes that “the dimensions of the head measure the whole body, and the figure thereof gives conjecture of the principal faculties; physiognomy outlives ourselves, and ends not in the grave.” That the cranium constitutes an element of paramount importance in studying the natural history of man, is now universally admitted, but it is a science in itself, and one who has not been trained as a surgeon ought to make confession in the words of Cicero: “Nor am I ashamed, like those men, to acknowledge that I do not know the things which I do not know.”

Anthropologists assure us that at least two distinct races of immigrants—each of very marked characteristic type—landed on our shores. These can now (it is alleged) be classed and identified by the configuration of their crania; for as the brain is the seat of the intellectual capacities, the structure of the skull is of primordial importance. The relation of the length of the cranium to its breadth is regarded as one of the most characteristic marks of distinction between different races. If the extreme breadth of the skull, when compared with its extreme length from front to back, does not exceed 75 per cent. of the length, the skull is said to be dolichocephalic or long-headed; if it equals or exceeds 83 per cent. it is called brachycephalic, *i.e.* short or broad-headed. Intermediate indices are called sub-

dolichocephalic or sub-brachycephalic, according as they approach one or the other of these extremes, but are of less importance, as they probably are the result of inter-crossing.

There is a charming simplicity in the study of ethnology as taught by some Anglican divines. One learned canon gravely alleges that all the European dolichocephalic, or long-headed races, are, nowadays, Protestant; all the brachycephalic, or round-headed races, Catholic, or Greek Church, with, however, certain exceptions which but prove the rule. Unless a learned divine had led the way, an ignorant layman would not have ventured to follow on this curious recently discovered bypath of ethnology; but, in future, when one inquires of oneself why one is a Catholic or a Protestant, the reason will obviously be afforded by referring to a careful measurement of the cephalic index.

The form of skull attributed to the first known inhabitants of Ireland is distinguished by great length from the front to the back of the head, and comparative narrowness of the skull; it is alleged that the specimens presented are too numerous and have been found over too wide an area to permit of their being considered mere varieties, especially as a similar form of skull is to be met with amongst the aboriginal remains found in England, and over a large proportion of the continent of Europe. Explorers who have not made the physical conformation of the human frame their study possess, however, no standpoint from which to test their own ideas. Often, when opening a "Giant's Grave," workmen have drawn attention to the great size of the human bones which they disinterred, when in reality the bones had formed the framework of a man of but medium stature. The minds of the searchers were imbued with the idea that the bones must of necessity be of superhuman size, for were they not found in a "Giant's Grave"? In the same way the judgment of an antiquary may, insensibly to himself, be biassed by his own imagination regarding some preconceived theory. A distinguished writer on archæology has observed: "There is no failing to which antiquarian observers seem more liable than seeing too much."

There are also slight varieties in the form of the crania of the long-headed or primitive race, for the progenitors of the early inhabitants of Ireland probably arrived in detached groups and at considerable intervals of time, doubtless representing successive immigrations.

The second type of Irish crania is, by some, also divided into two classes—both, however, belonging to what scientists have named a brachycephalic or round-headed race. The skull is of medium size, well-shaped, but with projecting upper jaw; the chin not massive; the nose short and wide.

The second subdivision of the crania of the round-headed race is regular, the nose long and aquiline, the face narrow, the forehead straight and of medium height; a long oval outline in the vertical aspect of the skull, whilst the lower jaw is distinguished by its square outline and massive structure—giving a distinctive character to the face.

Variety of shape in crania, within certain limits, appears to be the law of nature—not the exception—and each race exhibits countless variations of mental combinations. This is suggestive and calculated to impress the necessity of great caution and extensive observation of facts, before venturing to draw general conclusions. Classification of crania into distinct types, and then making that type the badge of a race, is a system of doubtful value. At any public meeting how many varying types of crania may be observed. Open an old pagan “Caltragh,” and the same result becomes apparent; skulls of every size and form may be unearthed, though all the remains are referable to about the same period of time, and probably all may have belonged to one sept; yet had these skulls been found disassociated, they might have been viewed as representatives of totally different races. Professor T. H. Huxley is of opinion that the greatest and most strongly-marked differences in skulls is not a proof that they are of different races. In his examination of the two celebrated crania found in the caves of Engis and Neanderthal, presumed to be amongst the oldest remains of man, he says:—“It would be difficult to find any two which differ from each other more strongly, but I am not willing to draw any definite conclusion as to their specific variety from that fact. . . . Are not the variations amongst the skulls of a pure race to the full as extensive?”

The Neanderthal skull was found, in the year 1857, in the Valley of Düssel, near Düsseldorf, in a cave about sixty feet above the stream, in the face of the precipitous winding ravine through which the river runs. The thickness of the bones of the skull is extraordinary, and the ridges and depressions, corresponding to the attachment of the muscles, are very strongly marked. The forehead is very low, very ape-like, indicating small cerebral development, and great strength of corporeal frame. Professor Huxley further remarks:—

“Let it be supposed that the human remains from the caves of the Neanderthal and of Spy, represent the race, or one of the races, of men who inhabited Europe in the Quaternary Epoch, can any connexion be traced between it and existing races? That is to say, do any of them exhibit characters approximating those of the Spy men, or other examples of the Neanderthaloid race? Put in the latter form, I think that the question may be safely

answered in the affirmative. Skulls do occasionally approach the Neanderthaloid type, among both the brunette and the blonde long-headed races. For the former I pointed out the resemblance long ago in some of the Irish river-bed skulls. For the latter evidence of various kinds may be adduced."

Professor T. H. Huxley formulated certain propositions, which appeared to him to rest on a secure foundation, relative to the physical characters of the inhabitants of Britain and their neighbours, together with other propositions concerning the languages spoken by them.

#### PHYSICAL CHARACTERS OF THE PEOPLE.

I. "Eighteen hundred years ago the population of Britain comprised people of two types of complexion—the one fair, the other dark. The dark people resembled the Aquitain and the Iberians; the fair people were like the Belgic Gauls."

II. "The people termed Gauls, and those called Germans, by the Romans, did not differ in any important physical character."

III. "In none of the invasions of Britain which have taken place since the Roman dominion, has any other type of man been introduced than one or other of the two which existed during that dominion."

IV. "The Xanthochroi (*fair whites*) and the Melanochroi (*dark whites*) of Britain are, speaking broadly, distributed, at present, as they were in the time of Tacitus; and their representatives on the Continent of Europe have the same general distribution as at the earliest period of which we have any record."

#### LANGUAGES SPOKEN.

I. "At the time of the Roman Conquest one language, the Celtic, under two principal dialectical divisions, the Cymric and the Gaelic, was spoken throughout the British Islands. Cymric was spoken in Britain, Gaelic in Ireland." (*Professor Huxley subsequently considered the terms Cymric and Gaelic as antiquated and improper, and substituted for them "Celtic dialect A" and "Celtic dialect B."*)

II. "The Belgæ and the Celtæ, with the offshoots of the latter in Asia Minor, spoke dialects of the Cymric division of Celtic."

III. "There is no record of Gaelic being spoken anywhere save in Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man."

IV. "When the Teutonic languages first became known, they were spoken only (*since modified to something like "principally"*) by Xanthochroi (*fair whites*), that is to say, by the Germans, and Scandinavians, and Goths; and they were imported by Xanthochroi (*fair whites*) into Gaul and Britain."

V. "The Celtic and the Teutonic dialects are members of the same great Aryan family of languages; but there is evidence to show that a non-Aryan language was at one time spoken over a large extent of the area occupied by Melanochroi (*dark whites*) in Europe."

Thus Ireland was inhabited, at the earliest period of which we have any knowledge, by "fair-white" and "dark-white" races, which there is every reason to believe were identical with the white and dark people of Britain.

It is worthy of observation that extreme types of crania are represented in two specimens discovered in the well-known "find," within the tumulus in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, demonstrating that the commonly received theory of cranial forms being more and more stereotyped the further back we penetrate into the obscurity of the past, is not always corroborated by accurate observation. The occupancy of a common tomb would imply that they were contemporaneously interred, and that they belonged to members of the same family or tribe, and as only bone and flint implements—together with a shell necklace—were found, it may be considered that the period of interment was that of a barbarous state of society.

The continuous damp of thousands of years reduces even the densest crania to fragile ruins, unless its effects be counteracted by other influences, among which a more than ordinary density of bone is a phenomenon usually observable in prehistoric skulls, certainly in such as were disinterred, in mere fragments, by the writer, from the Carrowmore series of Rude Stone Monuments, near Sligo. In old persons increased density of bone appears to occur; the more perfectly it becomes consolidated, the less permeable does it become to moisture, and the more tenaciously does it retain animal matter essential to its integrity. For example, in the sepulchral mound at Mount Wilson, which contained about fifty skeletons, the greatest diversity of appearance was exhibited among the crania, some being scarcely touched by decay, whilst others were reduced to pulp, which rendered it impossible to remove them, even in moderate-sized fragments, yet none of them had apparently ever had any other covering, or protection, than the soil in which they were embedded. The chances are therefore that any really ancient crania which may be found, will be referable—except under special circumstances—to individuals who had passed their fortieth year.

A large brain generally indicates intellectual power; this is borne out by many facts, but there does not appear to be any absolute law yet defined connecting great brain with great intellect. A madman, for example, may have a great brain, but has not great intellect. All that can at present be advanced is that a man with a weighty brain is likely to be more intelligent than a man with a small one. There is also another point beyond which we cannot at present penetrate. The late Professor Huxley was of opinion that, as the evidence stands, it would appear that "the sort of brain which characterises the highest Mammals,

and which, so far as we know, is the indispensable condition of the highest sensibility did not come into existence before the Tertiary Period"; and further, that it is a conclusion "fully justified by analogy, that, sooner or later, we shall discover the remains of our less specialised primitive ancestors in the strata which have yielded the less specialised equine and canine quadrupeds. At present fossil remains of men do not take us back further than the later part of the Quaternary Epoch; and, as was to be expected, they do not differ more from existing men than Quaternary horses differ from existing horses."

In most instances of the discovery of perfect crania—even those of children—the teeth appear to be much worn, as if by attrition of some very hard kind of food, the process of degradation keeping pace with the age of the individual; the teeth, nevertheless, although they may be much worn, are, with few exceptions, found to be in a sound and healthy condition. The gradual abrasion of the teeth is materially influenced by the nature of the food used. This is proved by the fact that the teeth of sailors, who, during the greater part of their lives, live upon hard biscuits, are often found to be much worn down by the constant friction produced by this diet. Among the wild tribes of Patagonia, it is by no means rare to see the upper teeth worn to the gums, though they are almost never decayed. This characteristic is common to nearly all races of indigenous Americans, and the like trait has been observed in collections of prehistoric crania from the same continent. All that can with any certainty be said about primitive man in Ireland is that he was present in the country in times very remote, and that he hunted the big horn and reindeer, as well as other animals still present with us. It has been suggested that the gigantic Irish deer, or big horn, and reindeer migrated, at stated seasons, from Britain to Ireland, across the frozen sea, during the Glacial Period, and the primitive flint-using folk advanced and retired with the icy mantle, either following the animals on which they subsisted, or driven backward by a superior race or races. Enough has been said to show that man's existence on Earth is to be reckoned by a lapse of time marked by geological epochs instead of by years or even by centuries. How long these various stages lasted, or by what steps man passed from the infancy of intelligence through the various gradations of culture of which we find traces, to his present condition, which may, in comparison with the preceding, be described as a condition of uniform progress—these are questions which, as yet, we possess no means of determining.

This brief review of long past ages hovers on the border-line of many sciences; and if it belongs to any one in particular,

it pertains rather to the domain of the geologist than to that of the archæologist. Good results, however, often follow from what appear to be small beginnings, and science may receive a fresh impetus from workers whose first efforts are looked upon by scientists as useless. It is difficult to confine research on any great subject to very strict lines : the picture requires a background ; the largeness and complexity of the problem, its manifold ramifications, are very apparent, and insensibly lift the inquirer out of a narrow groove. Out of the alphabet of stone that lies around, one may form words, arrange them into sentences, and make them yield up the secrets of countless centuries ; confusion may be changed into order, and a new page of primitive history deciphered. The succession of races in Ireland and their kinship with the tribes that traversed the shores of the Mediterranean, the great Continental waterways, and the Baltic littoral, are subjects that should excite interest, whilst the most interesting possibility is the insight which attentive research may give as to the real nature of things in the past. The basis of all science is the gathering of facts, and in this inquiry they have accumulated at a rate, in numbers, and in an importance quite unprecedented, so that we may soon see some far-reaching generalization appearing, which will extend our knowledge in a way we now hardly dare hope for. From modern exhaustive research we have learned much, yet problems arise on every side which give constant exercise to the speculative faculties, for up to the present a haze has shrouded the past history of the world, which, though now gradually but surely dispersing, still permits us to see but very indistinctly.

## CHAPTER II.

### ANCIENT FAUNA AND THEIR EXTERMINATOR.

Description of remains of ancient times should be written in a simple manner—

The first discovery of the art of producing fire—Climate of Ireland formerly more severe than at present—Wooded nature of the country—Great progress of Archaeological Research—Early Settlers—Their Primitive Weapons—The Cave-Dwellers—The Caves of Ireland, not explored—Extinct Mammalia: The Mammoth, the Gigantic Irish Deer, the Reindeer, the Grizzly Bear, the Common Bear, the Wild Horse, the Wild Boar, the Wolf, the Wolf-Dog—Extinct Birds.

It is a rule of all writing that the author should express himself to the understanding of his readers, presupposing, however, in them a certain degree of familiarity with the subject under consideration, but not the possession of encyclopedic knowledge. "Forgotten generations live again, assume the bodily shapes they wore of old"—so sings the poet, but neither with this sentiment, nor with the foregoing rule, does the Irish archæologist agree; on the contrary, descriptions of ancient remains, whether those of weapons and implements, of stone or earthen forts, of graves and cemeteries, are clothed in a dialect of archæological jargon, only to be comprehended by the initiated, and certainly not to be understood by the average class of readers. An axe of stone, or of bronze, is styled a celt or a palstave; brooches are designated fibulæ or mammillary fibulæ; rings, armillæ; bells, crotals; gold ornaments are called lunulæ, minds, and bullæ; a rude stone monument is known as a megalith; a cairn is a microlith, and an alignment of stones is a parallelitha; dwellers in caves are called troglodytes—in fact, a spade is never called a spade, its being even styled an agricultural implement would be simplicity itself, in comparison with the existing use.

The Irish aborigines lived a simple life, to use the mildest expression; and to describe this, little, if any, technical phraseology is needed. Their requirements were few; in fact, food may be said to have been their only necessity, with, perhaps, something in the way of skins for clothing, in addition to the hematite (an ore of iron of a red colour) or other pigment,

with which they daubed themselves; for man, for his mere existence, needs no more, civilization being a superfluity of unnecessary surroundings. It requires no very exalted or learned language to attempt a description of the countless generations which have lived, and passed away, without having had awakened in them any practical aspirations toward bettering their condition; they must, however, have possessed, to a great degree, two important characteristics, the cunning necessary to acquire, and the courage necessary to hold what had been acquired, for in those days it was neither the reign of the classes, nor of the masses, but that of the individual, the days of the initiation of

“ . . . . the good old plan,  
That he should take who has the power,  
And he should keep who can.”

In a rude state of society in Ireland every man thought for himself and acted on his own judgment, but modern society destroys individuality. It is a common dogma of the age that all men are equal: we are taught it six days in the press, the seventh day from the pulpit; but it is an inaccurate statement, for men are intellectually unequal, and will remain so until time shall be no more. These times in which liberty of thought is most loudly proclaimed, are precisely the times when least originality is manifested. The thoughts of the majority become the law for all, and an infringement of the customary ideal is resented by the majority who consider themselves insulted by anyone differing from them. The great difference between the Englishman and the native Irishman is that the former is an individualist, the latter a socialist. The Englishman manages his own business in his own way—and there is no better training than a state of society which obliges every unit to rely on himself alone—the Englishman works: the Irishman trusts to chance and eventualities.

Life, even in the earliest days, was lived much as it is now; there were its cares, its pleasures, its solemn and its ludicrous aspects, its rivalries and its friendships, and it is apparent that the aborigines, with no requirements beyond mere food and shelter, passed, to their ideas, quite as enjoyable an existence as we do. However, to appreciate antiquity is one thing, to wish to have lived in those days is quite another, for no one who has led a luxurious life desires to descend to what, for him, would be severe hardship, squalor, and appalling wretchedness.

It is thought by many archæologists that the use of skins, as clothing, preceded the knowledge of fire, either as a means of

comfort, or for the cooking of food. Burke defined man as "an animal that cooks his victuals," but in the first ages of the world's history this definition would have been inaccurate. The mystery of fire seems to have held a firm hold on the wonder of the infant-like mind of early man, and no matter how far we go back we generally find him in possession of fire, for very early in human life man, by means of a drill or of a flint, became the Prometheus to his own small heap of collected dried leaves and twigs.

The fable of Prometheus is, it is alleged, but an adaptation of the Vedic myth, which depicts the god as a celestial flame, hid in a casket, from which he is compelled, by a superior power, to come forth. Even the name, Prometheus, is stated to be of Vedic origin, and recalls the process employed by early man to obtain fire. The kindling stick or *paramantha*—hence, it is alleged, Prometheus—supplied with a twisted cord rolled round the superior portion, imparts a rotary motion to the stick alternatively from left to right, and contrariwise. The stick revolves in a little hollow, formed at the point of intersection of two pieces of wood placed one above the other so as to form a cross, of which the extremities, bent at right angles, are firmly fixed. The entire apparatus was styled *Swastica*. The Egyptians worshipped Ptah, a fire-god who twisted the polar axes, as the savage twists his fire-stick (fig. 5).

Captain Cook thus describes the Australian way of producing fire :—

"Their method of producing fire is curious; they work one end of a stick into an obtuse point, and placing this upon a piece of dry wood, they turn the upright stick backwards and forwards very rapidly between their hands, till the fire is produced."

The Irish peasantry even still regard fire as the great preservative against witchcraft, for evil spirits have no power except in the dark, so the careful housewife places a live coal under the churn if the butter does not rise: she waves fire over an animal's head if the beast seems sickly: when she lights a candle after dark, she crosses herself to ward off the evil spirits who are jostling against each other, and struggling to get out of the house in dread of the fire. The land steward of a country gentleman would not return home on a dark night without having a lighted sod of turf stuck on the end of his walking-stick for the purpose of warding off the "good people." In similar manner, Keppel states that a native of North Australia will not willingly go near the graves of the dead at night by himself; when obliged to pass them, he carries a "fire stick" to keep off the spirits of darkness.

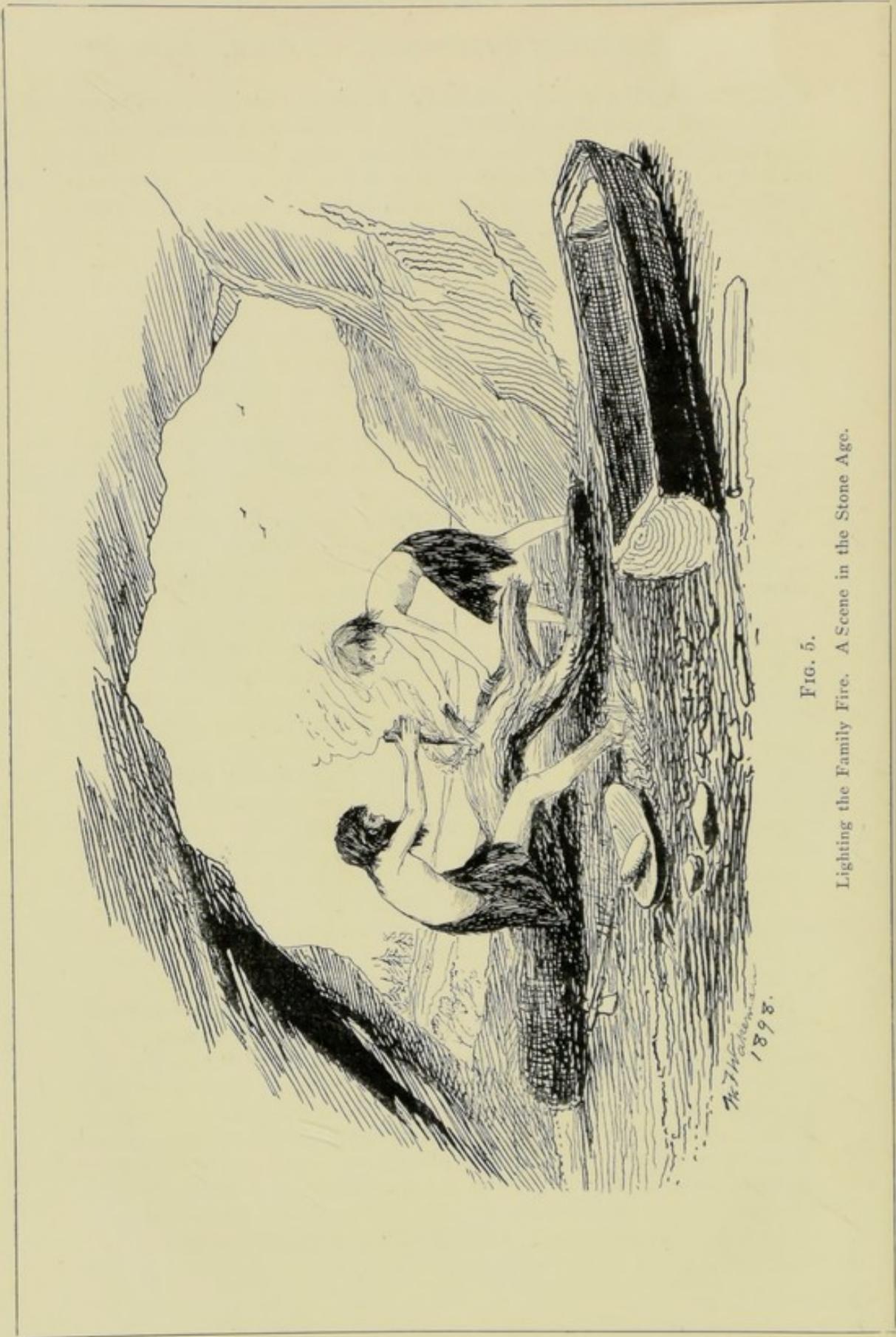


FIG. 5.

Lighting the Family Fire. A Scene in the Stone Age.

W. H. W. 1898.



FIG. 6.

Lighting the "Need-Fire." A Scene in the Nineteenth Century.

The practice of producing kindling by friction was in existence quite recently amongst the peasantry in the form of a charm or preventive against disease in cattle. When a swelling of the head or disease amongst cattle, called "big-head," appeared, every fire was extinguished in the townland on which it had broken out. The inhabitants then assembled at the affected farm to kindle what was called a "need-fire," which was done as follows:—Two men commenced to rub two sticks together till the friction produced a flame. It was hard work, each man rubbing in turn (fig. 6). When the sticks had ignited, they collected dry "scraws" (sods) covered with soot from the roofs of the dwelling-houses, to produce a great smoke. The affected cattle then had pieces of wood inserted in their mouths to keep them open, and the head was held over the smoke till water ran plentifully from mouth and nostrils, when the cure was completed. Every fire that had been extinguished was then re-kindled from the "need-fire." This plan of producing fire was more effective than the hand-twisting process. The entire proceedings were described by Mr. Bernard Bannon, of Cavan-carragh, near Enniskillen. When he died, about the year 1892, he was, it is stated, 100 years old.

A piece of iron pyrites, in form a perfect cube, about the size of the ordinary die used in games of chance, was found, amongst calcined bones, and other remains, in a sepulchral cist, at Broughderg, county Tyrone, and proved, on trial, to be well adapted for the production of sparks from a flint. Objects of pyrites have sometimes been discovered in prehistoric sepulchres in Great Britain, in juxtaposition to pieces of flint, and are supposed, by some antiquarians, to have been employed by their former owners, as fire-producers.

Primitive culinary utensils, in the form of rude stone griddles for baking purposes, were used, lately, in some mountainous parts of Kerry. They were flat, circular-shaped stones, about one foot in diameter and an inch in thickness, with a projection to serve as a handle; the shape seems to have been dependent on the natural form of the stone selected, which was then moulded by a little dressing. This is one small link in the existing evidence of how long many of the most interesting usages of antiquity lingered on unnoticed amongst us.

If reliance can be placed on the accounts of some ancient writers, it would appear that, so late as about 2000 years ago, an excessive degree of cold prevailed in the climate of Europe. The great number and extent of forests, lakes, and morasses, which, according to these authors, existed in those times, must have rendered the climate cold and moist. The forests have nearly all been felled and the stagnant water drained, thus

producing a very considerable difference between the temperature described as existing in these latitudes 2000 years ago, and that of the present day. What occurred on the Continent occurred also in Ireland, which, shaded with forests and abounding in marshes, must have had an atmosphere more frigid than if its soil were then, as now, freely exposed to solar influence. Owing to the disappearance of Erin's former leafy mantle, and the absence of pestilential exhalations from stagnant fens, its summers have become colder and its winters warmer than in those remote times.

Although Ireland, in the Polished Stone Age, and in much later and even in Elizabethan times, was well wooded, there must have always been districts naturally bleak and bare, such as the barony of Burren, described by Ludlow, in 1652, as a country "where there is not water enough to drown a man, wood enough to hang one, nor earth enough to bury him; which last is so scarce that the inhabitants steal it from one another."

What a world of change we live in. Is it not an astonishing transformation to find that a tree is a strange and rare object in the landscape where formerly impenetrable brakes and woods existed? So rare, in fact, in some localities, that an anecdote, told in 1776, by Young, in his travels through Ireland, of parts of the county Mayo, is still applicable to many districts, and to many islands off the western coast. A countryman living in Erris, in which district not a single tree grew, left the place with his young son to go to Killala. On approaching the village, the youth saw a tree for the first time, and exclaimed:—"Oh, Lord! Father, what is that!"

At the commencement of the century the inhabitants of Tory Island had a superstitious objection to visit Ireland. Even when they approached its coasts while fishing, or when returning from piloting vessels, which, before the erection of the lighthouse, was a frequent occurrence, they never landed if it were possible to avoid doing so. The Rev. Cæsar Otway gives some interesting particulars of the behaviour of a boat's crew which were driven ashore near Ards, where "they were seen putting some leaves and small branches of trees in their pockets to show on their return."

If the population and cattle were withdrawn from the country, and only sufficient numbers left to represent those of early days, the land would be, in a generation, covered with a sylvan mantle. No one whose opportunities have allowed him to make the necessary observations can doubt that this would be the case: given the above conditions and the entire kingdom would be again covered with woods down to the water edge. There might be

exceptions, with respect to particular or unfavourable localities, for it is a curious fact, that in the American forests vacant spaces are occasionally found, upon which, to all appearance, no trees have ever grown. Ireland remained well wooded until Elizabethan times, when large quantities of timber were felled for military exigencies, and the remainder was consumed in iron works, erected by enterprising English settlers. On the subject of this denudation of timber there is an ancient Irish saw:—

“ Ireland was thrice beneath the ploughshare,  
Thrice it was wood, and thrice it was bare.”

It would be of little utility to give even a synopsis of the various legends related of the peopling of Ireland before the flood. In later and more authentic authorities the boundaries of the territories occupied by the elder arrivals in the country are, as a rule, apparently undefined in the inland regions; from this it may be inferred that, for a lengthened period, the central portion of Ireland was but sparsely inhabited owing to its dense forests.

The Irish Annals being the favourite authority with Irish antiquarians, readers ought to have the benefit of the startling information that Cæsar—not Julius Cæsar, but an alleged granddaughter of Noah—landed in Ireland forty days before the Deluge with a colony of antediluvian Mormons, namely fifty girls and three men, who appear to have escaped the fate which overtook the rest of mankind; thus was Erin peopled. An old Bishop of Ferns is reputed to have shut up “Gulliver’s Travels” with the sage remark, “Amusing, but I can’t believe half the fellow says.” A puzzled antiquarian might fairly arrive at a similar conclusion after perusing the narrative of the Irish chroniclers.

The early depredators on the Irish coasts are, in Bardic tales, described as swarming throughout the German Ocean, their headquarters being the Shetland Isles and the Hebrides. This external force represented many tribes of Northern Europe, and appears to have made itself felt from a very remote period. To these rovers Erin presented many of the advantages that America, on its first discovery, displayed to European eyes—a sparse population, a good climate, a fertile soil, a seemingly boundless range of pasture lands, separated from each other, and sheltered by dense forests. There is an ancient genealogical table, or tree, preserved in an old Irish MS. in the Bodleian Library, in which the descent of some of the leaders of these early invaders is most minutely traced back to Noah. O’Curry gravely designates this MS. a unique genealogical table. Most people will doubtless concur with his opinion.

The remains of man, of his arts and industries, enable us to trace out, to some degree, the general nature of his everyday

life by showing, not in a theoretical, but in a practical manner, the state of the people who occupied Erin before the beginning of authentic history; they enable us to lift the veil that hitherto has concealed the Eld, and to realize, to a great extent, the physical past of the inhabitants. By a comparison of waifs of antiquity with kindred objects from other countries throughout the globe, conjectures can be formed as to the social state of Ireland during the pre-Christian period. Thus it becomes possible to realize to ourselves the conditions of society through which the previous inhabitants of the land passed in long gone by ages, a condition of society more primitive than any of which we have at present an actual example in any portion of the globe; in fact, in these relics and in archaic folklore we possess, to a great extent, a reliable record of the infancy of mankind.

In the earliest ages of man's existence on the earth, weapons and implements were formed of the rudest materials, for only such were accessible; wood, bone, horn, stone, and flint were employed before man was able to use metal for these purposes. The discovery of the principle of projecting a missile by the bow was one of the greatest advances made by primitive man, for cunning then supplied a weapon by which he made himself the undisputed master of animal life. We cannot even guess at the period of time during which the successive steps of this invention were accomplished, yet the art of shooting with the bow became at length almost universal; though the use of the bow is unknown to some present-day savage tribes; for instance, to the aborigines of Australia (who, however, possess the boomerang), and to the Maories of New Zealand. Although the use of the bow throughout Europe seems to date back to a very remote period, yet nothing that can be identified positively as an arrow-head has, it is believed, been found in the gravels. As a rule, the older a flint implement, the larger it is, *i.e.*, rude stone weapons of the Drift are of greater size than those of the Polished Stone Age. Reasoning on these lines we conclude that some Irish arrow-heads are probably older than those of Great Britain, for the former are, as a general rule, of larger size than the latter; they are also found in greater abundance, particularly in the northern province; yet how far this is owing to the use of the older and larger heads having come down to later times, and how far to the character of the flints produced in the country, it is difficult to decide. There is also greater relative abundance of some particular forms in Ireland, more especially of the barbed triangular arrow-heads without central stem; of the elongated form with stem and barbs, as well as of the lozenge-shaped arrow-heads which present rare varieties. Owing to the fragility of

the material, barbed arrow-heads of bone are rare. Figs. 7, 8, 9 were found by the writer. Such articles ought to be common enough, as, in olden days, there were probably quite as many arrow-tips made of bone as of flint. Fig. 7, formed of the split bone of a large mammal, was discovered in a rude stone monument, near Sligo; the convex and concave sides of its medullary canal were very observable, and it is evident that the head was fastened to the shaft by a rivet, as the rivet-hole remains. Fig. 8 was found on the site of one of the crannogs or lake-dwellings in Lough Talt, and fig. 9 on the site of a lake-dwelling in Lough Gill in the same county; all three were originally barbed. A considerable number of objects of the class designated "bur-nishers" by Sir William Wilde, "wrist-guards" by Canon Greenwell, and "bracers" by Sir John Evans, have been found in Ireland. One example, five inches long, has a hole in each

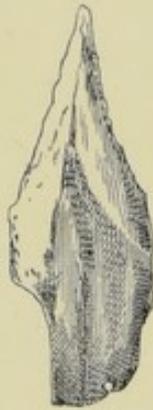


FIG. 7.



FIG. 8.



FIG. 9.

Bone Arrow-heads. (Real size.)

end, and a raised edge round the ends on the upper surface; others have two holes at each extremity. Though these articles belong to the later period of the Stone Age, or even to a time late in the Bronze Age, and are often found in prehistoric interments in England, their use is by no means certain. The most likely theory, that which at present holds the field, is, that they were used as "bracers," or "guards," to protect the left arm of the archer from the blow of the string, and they certainly bear a strong family resemblance to those worn by archers of the present day for a similar purpose.

The art of projecting stones from a sling appears to be of early origin, and continued in Ireland to a very late period; for instance, in the year 1848, the Claddagh fishermen of Galway routed a considerable force of dragoons with showers of stones

from slings. Casting pebbles from the sling was an amusement, and a mode of mob warfare almost peculiar at that time to the Claddagh men; but since the famine the use of the sling has with them fallen into desuetude. They had long been celebrated for their skill in this ancient exercise, and were accustomed to hold regular competitions or slinging matches, and when a slinger was certain of hitting a shilling as far as it could be distinguished, he was held to be a "marksman."

The missile, which, when launched by the hand, is not of necessity expected to be recovered by its owner, is made of less valuable material than that which the owner looks upon as connected with his person; thus the arrow-head of flint is often contemporaneous with the period of iron; the slight value of the material made it especially applicable for the manufacture of articles, which, when used, were not likely to be recovered.

In collecting implements of flint an unlooked-for difficulty often occurs, owing to a superstition prevalent amongst the peasantry. Many of them believe that, when the flints have been boiled in water, the liquid is a certain cure of, and is a preservative against, sickness in human beings as well as in cattle, and that it restores to health those that are ailing, or, as they term it, "elf-shot."

Mr. W. J. Knowles, M.R.I.A., secretary for county Antrim to the Council of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, states that he knew instances where the possessor of a few flint implements refused to part with them, as he found it more profitable to hire them out to neighbours, for the purpose of curing cattle, than it would be to sell them. This writer also remarks that, in reference to the employment of flint arrow-heads and spear-heads in curing cattle, he received recently an account from an aged man, who lives not far from Ballymena, of how the ceremony of cattle-curing was carried on in his young days:—

"He had a neighbour, a very respectable farmer, who was a cow-doctor, and who had a considerable number of beautiful flint arrow-heads, by means of which he effected cures in the case of cattle which were ill. This cow-doctor invariably found that the animal was either 'elf-shot' or 'dinted,' or it might be suffering from both troubles. When 'elf-shot,' I suspect the arrow had pierced the hide; and when 'dinted,' I imagine there was only an indentation, which the doctor could feel as easily as the holes. When he was called in to see a cow which was ill, he would feel the hide all over, and find, or pretend to find, holes or indentations, and would call on anyone present to feel them. He would then assure the owner that he would very soon cure the cow. My informant told me that the man's usual expression when he found the holes was, in his own local language, 'Begor,

we hae found the boy noo,' meaning that he had found the cause of the beast's ailment. Some gruel would now have to be prepared, into which he would put a few of his arrow-heads, a piece of silver, usually a sixpence, and he would also add some sooty matter which he had previously scraped from the bottom of the pot. When all had been boiled well together, and was ready for use, he would take a mouthful and blow it into the animal's ears, another mouthful and blow it over her back, and then he would give the remainder to the cow to drink, and would go away, assuring the owner that she would soon be better. I understand he was generally successful in effecting cures, and was held in high estimation as a cow-doctor. My informant said he was often sent for by Lord Mountcashel's agent, when he lived in Galgorm Castle, to prescribe for cattle which were ill. There must, however, have been sceptics in those days, as I am told that the poor cow-doctor was often jocularly asked to examine a cow that was in perfectly good health, and that there was considerable merriment when he pronounced her to be both 'elf-shot' and 'dinted.'

The number and wealth of English collectors have caused the trade of forging antiquities to flourish. It is a time-worn adage, very applicable to the case of collectors of antiquities and objects of vertu, that "demand creates supply." As soon as any class of objects is inquired for, in a short time they are forthcoming in almost any quantity. It is even said, by some ill-natured antiquarians, that when excavations are going on in London, and collectors are standing by on the watch for discoveries, that coins, encaustic tiles, and bronzes are exhumed under their very eyes, which, purchased from a neighbouring old-curiosity shop, had actually been so placed for the purpose of being thus found.

Counterfeit flint "antiques" are by no means uncommon; it is stated that the Benn collection in Belfast is full of them. The most celebrated forger was, undoubtedly, the well-known character, "Flint-Jack." Born in the year 1816, of humble parentage, he, in after-life, went by a hundred *aliases*. The skill he displayed was such that, it is said, he included on his list of dupes the then curator of the British Museum. Jack, however, never succeeded in discovering the art of surface-chipping, which he declared was a "barbarous art" that had died with the flint-using folk. This well-known worked-flint forger conceived the idea of visiting Ireland, thinking that his English beats required a rest. He, accordingly, started heavily laden with antiquities for "the sons of Erin." He says he did well, but the sons of Erin were not his only victims, for on being asked if he had sold flints and other antiquities to the officials of museums, Jack

indignantly replied, "Why, of course I did; they have lots of my things, and good things they are, too."

In the year 1886 Mr. Knowles reported that a large number of counterfeit flint arrow-heads and other similar antiquities were for sale. Within three months several small collections were offered to him. In order to extract information from the person who exhibited them, Mr. Knowles looked over his wares, and, after a careful examination, pronounced them to be forgeries. This the dealer admitted, but excused himself by saying that he was not asking for them the market price of genuine arrow-heads, and spoke hopefully of being able to dispose of all he had. He stated that a dealer in Ballymena had sent to England within twelve months upwards of twenty pounds worth, and that another had been able to purchase a set of harness for his horse with the money received for forged flint implements. A dealer being remonstrated with for buying forged objects, replied that they "passed"—that is, they were purchased without question when they went to England, and as long as they sold, that was all he cared for. At that time almost every guide to the Giant's Causeway had for sale a small quantity of these forged objects, sometimes cleverly executed. Other forgeries consist of spurious oval tool-stones. Rolled boulders from the sea-shore, about three or four pounds in weight, are abraded at the ends, in imitation of genuine hammer stones, and are then pierced with a carpenter's "boring bit," so as to make them figure as hammers. A few small flint chisel-like objects, ground at the edge only, are also on the market, as well as a few very handsome and beautifully polished flint spear-heads, so cleverly worked that it is to be feared that, if the forger continues to receive support from England, he will make startling progress in his deceitful art. In fact, not long ago there occurred a keen debate over a forged spear-head, purchased by the secretary of an antiquarian society, as to whether the object was genuine or spurious. On many occasions of late years the attention of the public has been drawn to forgeries offered for sale, but till recently purchasers have not had much reason to complain, for though the cases in which spurious articles were exposed for sale were quite as plentiful as at present, everything was so unskilfully executed that the forgery was easily detected, even by the uninitiated, but now greater skill is being gradually brought to the work, though even now a forged object is rarely met with that would escape detection from a skilled observer.

Fig. 10 is from a photograph of a modern maker of flint arrow-heads in the very act of fabricating his goods. "Very much depends upon the character of the flint selected for manipulation. As the finished article must have an aged look, a

fresh unaltered flint would not answer the maker's purpose; therefore he carefully selects some of the indurated flints that occur where the chalk is in contact with the trap; such flints are discoloured, and may be found of every shade from white to red, and objects made from them have the looked-for 'patina' of age. If an ancient flint implement is broken, the 'patina' will be found to coat the implement in lines parallel with the surface, but if a reproduction is broken, the colour of the material



FIG. 10.

A modern maker of Flint Arrow-heads, in the act of fabricating his goods.

From a photograph by William Gray, M.R.I.A.

is the same all through. The modern maker of arrow-heads selects a suitable flake of indurated flint, and holds it in a fold of cloth, his coat-collar or any other cloth, and with a sharp rough splinter of hard trap he presses against the edge of the flint and skilfully removes the material chip by chip, first from one side, then the other, until he forms his outline, and thus with marvellous rapidity he can turn out a scraper or arrow-head of any form or size."

Fig. 11 is a collection of recent reproductions of the ancient

forms of arrow-heads and flint axes made to meet the demand for Irish Antiquities. "This trade may be justified so long as the manufactured article is sold as a reproduction, and not as a genuine ancient Irish weapon; but, unfortunately, the ignorance of collectors is such that they are left too often under the impression that the reproduction they have secured by purchase is really a genuine ancient weapon."

Our public and private collections represent numerous and well-authenticated exhibits of antiquities; here we have the rude flint implements used by the earliest arrivals on our shores; next evidence of the metallurgic skill developed at a later period in the fabrication of copper or bronze axes, swords, and various weapons; finally, personal ornaments formed of precious or other

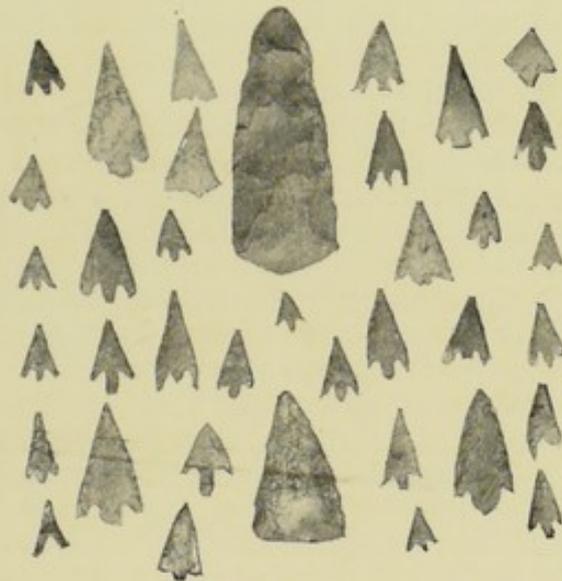


FIG. 11.

Recent reproductions of ancient forms of Flint Arrow-heads and Axes. About one-quarter real size. From a photograph by William Gray, M.R.I.A.

metal, which attest the increased skill of the inhabitants. All these represent an unerring exposition of the manners and arts of an early race.

The interest manifested during recent years in the prosecution of antiquarian research is very remarkable. Towards the close of the last and the commencement of the present century, studies of this nature were confined to a very limited circle. The records, however, which have been handed down to us are increasing in scientific estimation, and we begin to value the importance of these labours. Every attempt to depict the social and mental condition of early man must necessarily be largely

conjectural, but great benefits have been conferred by the investigations of the old school of antiquarians; for although their deductions may have been in many instances fallacious, yet the facts which they have recorded are of the greatest importance. The traces left by the former inhabitants of the country resemble the pages of an old manuscript: some are easily decipherable, whilst others are very indistinct; however, when read as a whole, enough remains to enable us to form an outline of ancient manners, customs, and superstitions. Archæological writers have left behind them ineffaceable monuments in their works, in which they will always, in one sense, survive; it is good, therefore, to follow their example, and carry on their labours, gathering in, no matter in what diminutive quantities, stores of fresh knowledge; for, if truth be eternal, we shall, so long as archæological truth is recorded, have the very remote chance of being reckoned amongst these immortals also!

Many readers may have read works treating of some one or more epochs included in the past, of which Ireland has been the scene, but up to the present this lengthened period has not been treated of as a whole. During a portion of the early periods passed by man on Earth, caves or rock-shelters formed his dwelling-places, and from excavations in them we can draw some inferences as to his condition. In Ireland, as elsewhere, there is, it is thought by some, a link missing in the gradual development of man. The gap is between the Old and the New Stone Age, between the rough coarse implements from the gravel-drift, and those of the smaller, finer chipped, and subsequently polished newer Stone Age. This missing link may, in Ireland, be revealed by a systematic exploration of caves and of the traces left in them by their former inhabitants. Many Continental archæologists, however, deny that there is, in a general way, any great gap between the Rude Stone Age and the Polished Stone Age period.

At the commencement of a new science, eager votaries build up work which has to be undone as soon as systematic effort is commenced; not only has the student to undo the futile work that obstructs scientific inquiry, but, after pulling down the edifice, he has to attempt its rebuilding. Within the last few years local antiquarian societies, placed upon a practical working basis, have arisen, it may almost be said, all over the kingdom, their members embracing men of all classes, professions, and creeds. In Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, Kildare, Dublin, and Belfast, as well as other places of less importance, wherever, in fact, the thoughtful reading public are in numbers, explorations, the outcome of individual and collective efforts, have been instituted, and archæological literature has been enriched by many

interesting and instructive papers. The trend of all modern scientific effort is to discover from the drift, from caves, and middens, and other sites frequented by primitive man, more precise acquaintance with the manners and customs of long past ages, and on every side investigation has proved fruitful. There are many secrets of the past belonging to our land, which are yet unravelled, because traces of them are so faint as to be scarcely perceptible; it is to the examination of these we should direct our attention. Day by day our feet unconsciously tread the silent relics of time, and from the very dust we ought to be able to conjure up visions of the past, and so commune with the inhabitants of bygone ages. Careful study begets knowledge, and knowledge increases knowledge. Much, which to the uninitiated appears unaccountable, gradually assumes its right place in archæological sequence, new trains of reasoning are created, connecting links are discovered where all before was in apparent disorder, and a sound basis of facts is obtained upon which a new and exact science can be built.

It has been established, on incontrovertible evidence, that worked flints have been discovered under a considerable depth of undisturbed alluvial gravel in France, Britain, and the north of Ireland; also that implements of flint and stone have been found in the earthen or stalagmitic floors of caverns, in conjunction with the bones of animals long extinct in those latitudes—such as the lion, tiger, bear, hyena, rhinoceros, elephant, hippopotamus, mammoth, reindeer, and the megaceros, which may be better described as the big-horn, or gigantic Irish deer. Now, if the handiwork of man is found associated with the remains of these extinct Mammalia, it follows, as a simple inference, that he existed contemporaneously with them, and most probably migrated, as they did, over land which then formed a portion of the European continent, but which has since been eroded by the sea. This tends to suggest the theory that a very primitive race had overspread the continent of Europe long before the advent of the tribes and mixed peoples that now inhabit it, a race which must have at last reached Ireland, where they may have carved those rude devices on the face of natural rocks, that still form an enigma to the antiquary, who may also have reared, at a later date, the earliest of our rude stone monuments, and the most primitive of our lake-dwellings. While admitting that implements found in the drift are the rude hatchets and knives of men who inhabited Europe towards the end of the Glacial Period, many writers of the old school argue that it would be as unsafe to draw from these weapons inferences as to the condition of man in the different countries of the Continent, at the time of their deposition, as it would be nowadays to draw conclusions

from the habits and arts of savage tribes, as to the present civilization of the United Kingdom. But at the time under review there existed a dead level of savagery; for it may be said, that there is not a district of the Earth that can be pointed to, which does not show, by rude flint implements buried in its soil, the savage status of its first inhabitants. If, as is asserted by some, these savages were the degenerated descendants of civilized tribes or nations, the burden of proof lies on those making the assertion. Almost all the countries famed in ancient history as seats of civilization, show, like other and less celebrated regions, traces of an archaic Stone Age; even Egypt has, at last, been brought into line with the rest, and furnishes evidences demonstrating the former prevalence of a condition of primitive society analogous to the state of modern savage tribes.

Some races have indeed retrograded, and have returned to a comparatively degraded and degenerate state, but scarcely to a state of savagery. It has been alleged by many writers that, on attaining the culminating point of culture, the destiny of all races is to decline and decay; that, like individuals, races in their old age return to the early condition of childhood. But the simile is not apposite. The catastrophe which alters or terminates the upward career of nations, generally comes from without, not from within, from a stronger race, or from contact with a superior civilization, as, for example, was the case with the Greeks, the Romans, the Fellaheen of Egypt in the Old World, the Mexicans and Peruvians in the New World, and, the latest example, the Chinese in the East. In all these nations, although their culture, at the time of their overthrow, is alleged by modern writers to have been corrupt, the shock under which they sank came not from within, but from without.

The absence of very primitive human remains in Ireland furnishes a problem capable of an easy solution. In early times savage man had probably no more idea of the sanctity which nowadays surrounds the dead, than had the wild beasts by which he was environed. We can only expect to meet with his osseous remains under exceptional circumstances at least, until the period is reached when his body was placed in a sepulchre protected overhead (as in the dolmen or cromleac, *i.e.*, a rude stone monument) from the effects of weather, and by the side stones from the ravages of beasts of prey. No discoveries of osseous human remains have as yet been recorded as made in the gravel-drift in Ireland; and it is extremely unlikely that, if found, they will be met with except in some very exceptional case, for relic-bearing gravel beds do not contain traces of any animal so diminutive as man, since the smaller the animal is the more likely it is that the skeleton will be obliterated. With the exception of rude flint drift

implements, it may be said that pre-historic remains in Ireland, as at present known, commence with the later Stone Period, when man hunted the great Irish big-horn and the reindeer.

Although many people, from actual observation or reading, are well acquainted with the caves of America, the Continent, and England, few are well informed as to the existence of large and picturesque caves in Ireland. In the southern and central counties, there are the extensive caverns of Mitchelstown, county Cork; those in the county Waterford, remarkable for the discoveries of bones of extinct Irish animals, and of stone implements, and the cave of Dunmore, in Kilkenny, which demands attention, both from its size and from its mention in Irish history. In the North of Ireland, there are caverns which have yielded traces of pre-historic man, as have also the limestone caves of Fermanagh; these latter, however, contain implements showing a merging of the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages. All these caves occur in limestone rock—either in the newer, or in the older Carboniferous limestone, usually known as mountain limestone—more especially in the uppermost beds. It might therefore be confidently expected that we should meet with many caves in the West of Ireland, where the Upper limestone is a considerable and important geological formation.

In the Sligo district, the majestic Benbulbin, the rugged valley of Gleniff, and the beautiful vales of Glencar and Glenade are carved out of this material, while stretching southward, on both sides of the northern continuation of the Ox Mountains, is a low undulating plain of the lower beds of limestone, rarely rising to any considerable elevation except at Kesh and Knocknashee, where the uppermost beds again are found. Limestone, being easily dissolved by rain water, contains numerous cavities and fissures, which, enlarging in the course of time, develop into caves; and the explorer often meets with a nature-carving of rare beauty, a shelter-cave, or a gigantic cleft, once roofed in, but now broken down, and hollowed out by the constant dropping that will wear away even stone. Hardly a valley can be explored, hardly a cliff can be climbed, where such cavities are not met; along the coasts they frequently occur, but are there generally devoid of antiquarian interest. Many of the inland caves have been explored by archæologists, but the greater number still invite inspection.

The most important caves of this limestone district are those of Kesh; Killasnet, at the head of the valley of Glencar; and Gleniff, on the north side of Benbulbin, near Ballintrellick.

The caves of Kesh, half way up the mountain of that name, lie to the south-east of Ballymote. A steep ascent of about 500

feet leads to a perpendicular face of rock which presents no bad resemblance to the side of some ancient fortification, time-worn and encrusted with ivy. This precipice rises some sixty feet, and in it, a little above the junction of the Middle and the Upper limestone, are numerous openings. Explorations, up to the present, have been devoid of archæological interest; still some of the cavities may, on closer examination, yield important results. None of them are particularly large; the most important cave, at least twenty feet high, has a small chamber to the left; and to the right one can penetrate for a considerable distance along a low corridor; there are also many small low lateral passages very difficult to explore to their termination. These caves will well repay a visit, but fine dry weather should be chosen, as the clayey deposit forming the floor, when saturated by the dripping from the roof, is not a pleasant substance to crawl over.

A cavern, be it ever so small, is, in Ireland, fabled to extend an immense distance into the bowels of the Earth, and the caves of Kesh are no exception to the rule. A guide recently recounted the legend attached to the locality, in almost the identical words of Beranger, written more than a century ago, namely, that the cavern communicated with another, some twenty-five miles distant, called "the Hell-Mouth Door of Ireland." The wife of a farmer, near this entrance to the nether regions, possessed an unruly calf, which she could never drive home unless by holding it by the tail. One day it tried to escape, and dragged the woman into "the Hell-Mouth Door." Unable to hold back the calf, she ran after it without relaxing her grasp, until she emerged again, in the light of day, at the entrance of the caves of Kesh.

The caves of Gleniff, the finest in the Sligo district, occur near the summit of the northern edge of the Benbulbin range, overshadowing the deep valley of Gleniff, and are only reached after a toilsome climb of some 1200 feet, up a steep grassy slope, followed by a talus of loose stones; then comes a precipitous face of rock, some forty feet high; overcoming this, and a highly inclined steep above the entrance, an immense natural arch, about forty feet high and sixty wide, is reached. On the Ordnance Map the cavity is marked as "Dermod and Grania's Bed," and it is one of the few examples in which the legend of the runaway couple is connected with any object save a rude stone monument.

The guide recounted the story, which differs from that usually current amongst the peasantry in representing the cavern as the permanent residence of Finn MacCool and his faithless wife, and not the mere shelter for the night utilised by Dermod and Grania whilst the fugitive couple were flying from the pursuit of the justly enraged Finn. Grania, according to this legend, possessed

not only the witchery of beauty, but the practical gift of witchcraft, and at such times as she desired to enjoy the society of Dermod, she could lay a spell upon her husband, compelling him, at one time, to gather seaweed, and burn kelp on the seashore, at another to cut rushes in the valley to make mats; and again often sending him to distant pasturages after supposititious strayed cattle. The guide expressed himself uncertain as to the final result of this intrigue; he only knew that it ended in there being "a terrible row entirely" in the mountain cavern.

The candles and lamps, of which a good supply should be taken, being lighted, the exploration may be commenced. An opening to the left leads from the outer cavern, which is large, but of no great beauty, into a chamber of immense proportions; sometimes a light flashed through the gloom on a piece of jutting rock fully fifty feet above, and still higher were patches of blacker darkness indicating further heights; whilst underfoot, as the lights flitted round, great depths and abysses were revealed, demonstrating the need of a good supply of ropes for their exploration. Stalactites hung like huge petrified bunches of grapes from the roof, and the walls and overhanging ledges exhibited stone icicles and massive coatings of stalagmite in every fantastic form that nature can devise. The accumulation of immense blocks of rock fallen from the roof renders a thorough archaeological exploration out of the question.

To the right is a narrow but lofty chamber. Entering this presently the walls contract and lower, and a gallery is formed; close to the entrance is a curious mass of stalagmite, somewhat resembling a colossal-shaped female figure, from this point the gallery contracts still more, becoming in places very precipitous and difficult of passage, and leading again into the entrance-cave.

To the left of the entrance arch, a gallery, some eight feet wide and 100 feet long, with a winding and well-gravelled pathway of natural formation, opens out on the face of the cliff, and affords a magnificent panorama of the country. Far away on the horizon, the amphitheatre of the great cliffs of the Donegal coast is, on a clear day, distinctly visible. Close to the opening a steeple-shaped pinnacle rears itself in solitary grandeur over a precipice of about 200 feet.

These caves of Gleniff were certainly inhabited in former times. Some rude flint flakes and a bronze axe, now in the Science and Art Museum, Dublin, were found here under a mass of stalagmite, and, under the present floor of the cavern, bones of recent animals were dug up. It may, however, be said that in Ireland no startling discovery of cave-remains has as yet been made; but the most important inferences drawn by Ussher, Adams,

and Kinahan, from the facts discovered by them in the explorations of the cavern of Ballynamindra (figs. 12 and 13), near Dungarvan, are as follows:—

The history of the cave is divided into five distinct periods. During the first, the cavern was excavated by aqueous agency. In the second, the flow of water ceased, the cave became comparatively dry, was inhabited by bears, and a stalagmite floor was deposited—by infiltration from above—over the gravel which had been washed in by the stream. During the third period, the stalagmite floor was, from some cause, partially broken up, and in places a pale sandy earth was intruded, enveloping the broken stalagmite, and the animal remains. In the fourth period there was an accumulation of earth, and other deposits, and the cave was inhabited by men who were contemporaneous with the Great

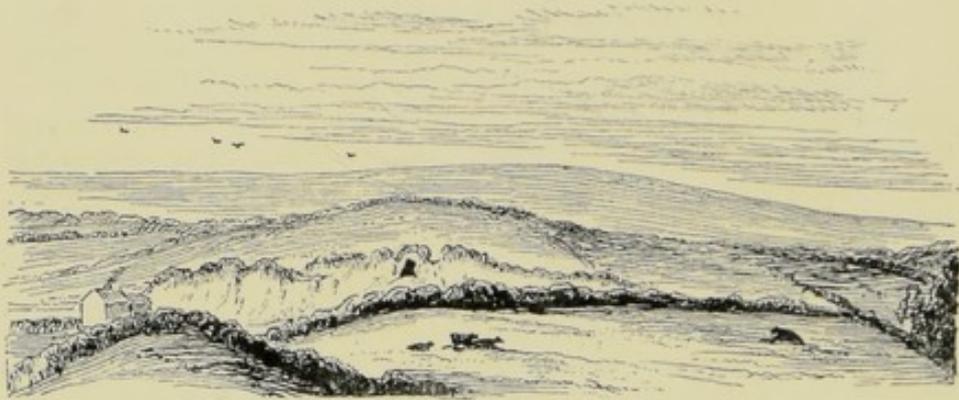


FIG. 12.

General View of the Entrance to the Cave of Ballynamindra, from near the Cappagh Railway Station. After a sketch by G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., in the Transactions, Royal Dublin Society.

Irish Deer. In the fifth period of the history of the cave, its inhabitants used carved bone implements and polished stone hatchets, traces of the Great Deer and Bear disappear, giving place to those of domesticated animals.

That the deposition of the two upper earthen strata was gradual and successive is clearly shown by the layers, formed one above the other. This is corroborated by the sequence of the animal remains, as well as by the dissimilar colouring of the bones—the great Irish deer being the characteristic animal of the former stratum, whilst domesticated animals were most plentiful in the latter. These facts show that the human remains, implements, and charcoal-bed, found with the remains of the extinct deer, were deposited there contemporaneously with them. The charcoal and calcareous seams mark successive

floors during the slow accumulation of a refuse-heap, when man was the chief occupant of the cave. The condition of the larger bones, especially those of the great deer, is an additional proof of the human occupation of the cave at the time when those animals lived; and the chipped hammer-stones found in the same stratum were, in all probability, the very implements with which the bones were broken and split along their length. How the fragments of human bones were mixed with the stone implements and animal remains, the explorers did not venture to explain.

The caves of Knockmore, county Fermanagh (fig 14), were explored by Mr. T. Plunkett, who has given a long enumeration of the Mammalia and other relics found in them; some authorities, however, believe that the remains are quite recent. With regard



FIG. 13.

General View of the Country around the Ballynamindra Cave, showing flat ground margined with scarps, representing an ancient river bed or estuary. Houses, fences, and plantings omitted.

to these deposits, Mr. Plunkett is, however, of opinion that there is strong geological and other evidence, bearing witness to the presence and operation of ice in the surrounding district since the cave-remains were deposited. If this opinion be correct, it would appear that the ancient cave-dwellers of Fermanagh were a race passing an every-day existence somewhat similar to that of the inhabitants of the Arctic regions of the present day, and that they lived in the summer season in places which, in the winter months, were enveloped in a thick mantle of ice.

Dr. Joyce states that all our recent native animals have been commemorated in names of places, and that by a study of these local names we can tell what animals formerly abounded, and that we are able thus to identify the very spots resorted to by each particular kind. We now, however, live in a zoologically

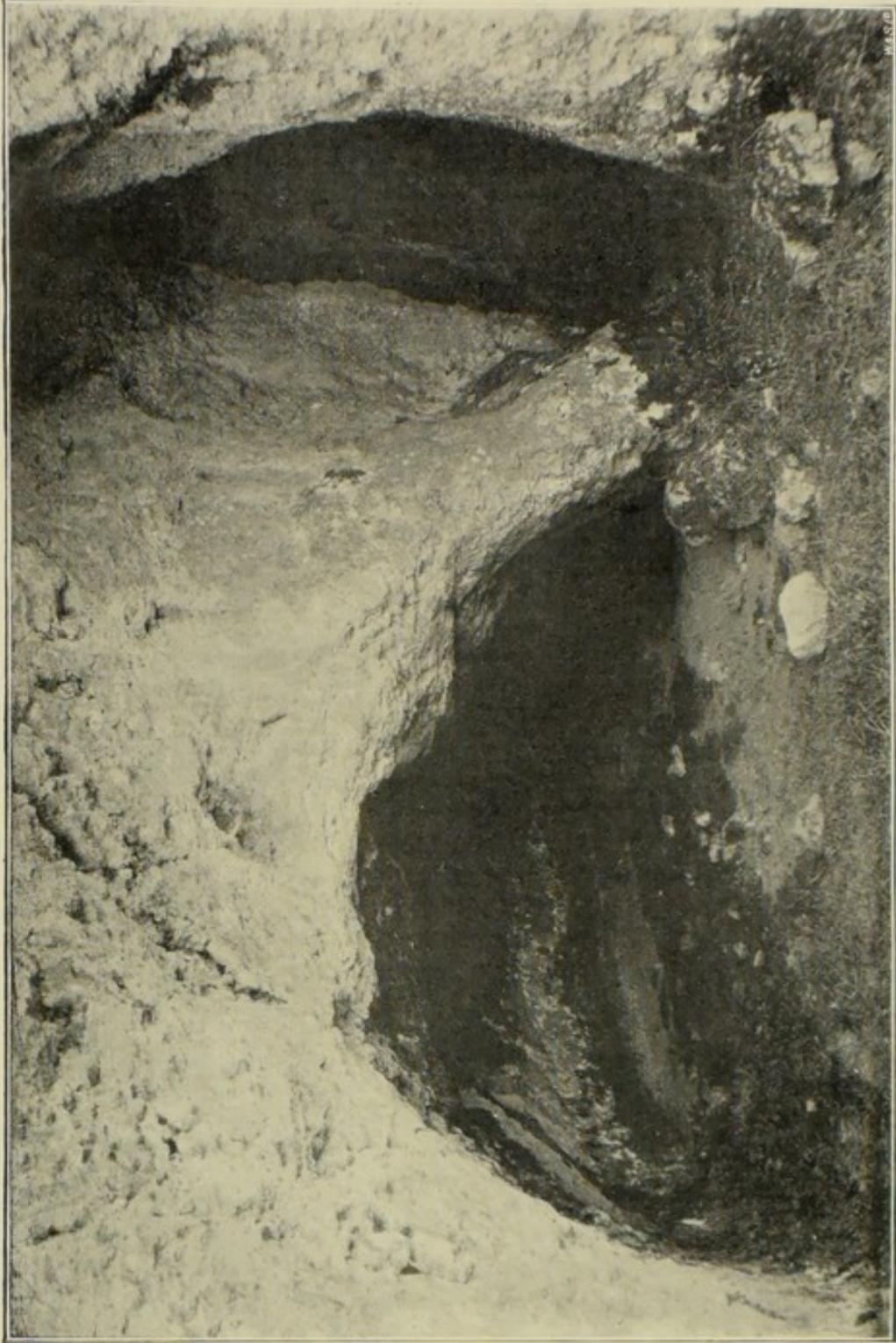


FIG. 14.  
The Prehistoric Caves of Knockmore. Welch's Irish Views.

impoverished age, from which many of the largest and finest animals, such as the mammoth and gigantic deer, have but recently disappeared. In a much smaller sphere of animal life a slight difference in size has had an effect quite beyond anything that might have been anticipated in the disparity in physical powers. The extinction of the indigenous black rat in Ireland has usually been ascribed to the superior strength and aggressive character of the invading and foreign rat, but it can with more probability be accounted for by the inferior intelligence possessed by the extirpated animal.

The dominance of man over the Animal Kingdom may mark the beginning of a new geological period, but there is no gap in time, only a slight change in life to announce the mastery of man, and to earmark his reign from earlier epochs in the world's life-history.

The present era is also characterised by the disappearance or removal of those animals least ministering to the necessities and uses of man, as well as by the progressive melioration and sporadic increase of animals specially adapted to his service and support. The law of nature extends even to the occasional displacement of indigenous flora by introduced plants. Improvement and exaltation of type seem essential conditions of continuity, for wherever improvement is arrested or undeveloped then extinction looms in the distance.

A huge, formless, and chameleon-like monster is believed by the peasantry of Ireland, and of the Highlands of Scotland, to frequent the lonely glens and morasses of wild and mountainous districts. May not this strange superstition be a lingering reminiscence of the former presence of the mammoth in these latitudes? This indistinctness of form is very well exemplified in the legend recounted of the Pooka that dwells in a natural cave at the base of a hill on which stands the Dun of Clochanpooka. This eccentric Kilkenny spirit frequently assumes the strange shape of an enormous fleece of wool, and issuing from the cavern rolls over the ground with astonishing speed, uttering a mysterious buzzing sound which inspires terror in all who hear it. A venerable peasant of the district declared that he had witnessed this apparition, and noticed the terror, in both man and beast, which its approach excited. Indistinctness, like that of an imperfectly remembered dream, seems to constitute the chief characteristic of the Pooka, it being variously described as a gigantic bull with very long horns, a horse, a goat, a bird, and it is sometimes styled the *Gruagach*, or hairy spirit. Spenser cautions his readers not to allow

“ . . . the Pouke, nor other evill sprights

Fray us with things that be not.”

The Pooka is also described as a frisky mischievous being, a sturdy pony, and in places he even passes as a donkey having a great turn for humour and practical joking. He lies in wait for the belated traveller, returning home, by wild unfrequented mountain paths, or across bogs, for the Pooka is especially connected with bogs, marshes, and water, and is in general represented as shaking the dripping ooze from his hairy hide. The Pooka crouches in the path of his victim, and rising suddenly between his legs he hoists the unlucky pedestrian on his back, and carries him away at railway speed (fig 15). The first crowing of the cock frees the involuntary rider who is flung from

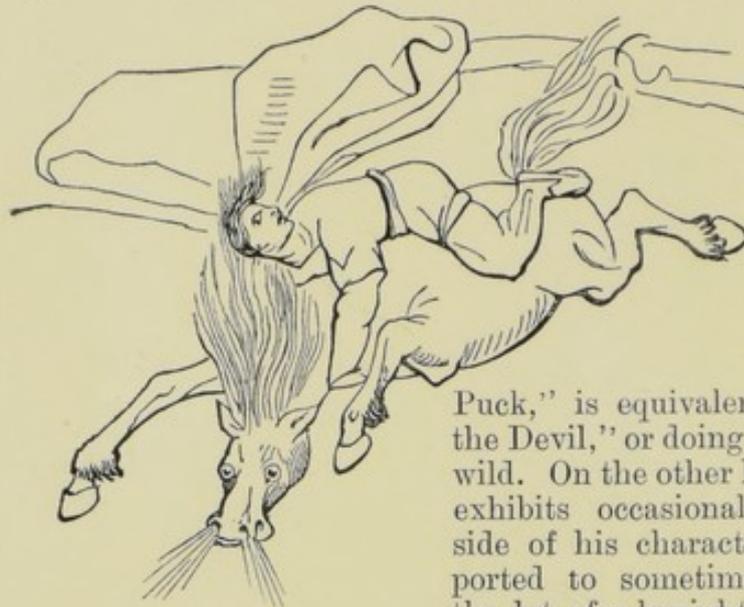


FIG. 15.

The Pooka and its involuntary rider.  
From Mr. and Mrs. Hall's "Ireland."

the Pooka's back into some deep muddy pond. The Pooka is often considered as identical with the modern devil, and the expression "playing old

Puck," is equivalent to "playing the Devil," or doing something very wild. On the other hand, the Pooka exhibits occasionally an amiable side of his character. He is reported to sometimes commiserate the lot of a benighted wayfarer, to hoist him on his back, and safely convey him many a mile to his cabin. An odd notion amongst the

peasantry, connected with the Pooka, causes them to tell their children, after Michaelmas Day, not to eat blackberries, as they attribute the decay in them, which commences about that time, to the spleen of the Pooka.

The disappearance of all recollections of a Stone Age is paralleled by the oblivion of the origin of the remains of the great extinct animals which were contemporary with man. Everywhere fossil bones of elephants and rhinoceros are both in the ancient and modern worlds attributed to monsters and giants. The fossil bones strewn over some of the lower ranges of the Himalayas are believed by the natives to have belonged to the gigantic Rakshasas of Indian mythology killed by Indra. Just in the same way, North American Indians regard the great bones of Tertiary mammals, occasionally disclosed to view

on the precipitous sides of gullies, as those of their ancestors. Augustine, in his chapter on "The Lives and Sizes of the Antediluvians" (De Civitate Dei, xv. 9), says:—

"Concerning the magnitude of their bodies, the graves laid bare by age or the force of rivers and various accidents, especially convict the incredulous where they have come to light, or where the bones of the dead of incredible magnitude have fallen. I have seen, and not I alone, on the shore of Utica, so huge a molar tooth of a man, that were it cut up into small models of teeth like ours, it would seem enough to make a hundred of them. But this I should think had belonged to some giant, for beside that the bodies of all men were then much larger than ours, the giants again far exceeding the rest."

Kirby, in his *Wonderful and Eccentric Museum*, published in 1820, devotes a chapter to a description of "Gigantic Remains," and states that "all the public prints make mention of an extraordinary monument of gigantic human stature, found by two labourers in Leixlip Churchyard, on the 10th July, 1812. It appeared to have belonged to a man of not less than ten feet in height, and is believed to be the same mentioned by Keating—Phelim O'Tool, buried in Leixlip Churchyard, near the Salmon Leap, one thousand two hundred and fifty years ago. In the place was found a large finger-ring of pure gold. There was no inscriptions or characters of any kind upon it. One of the teeth is said to have been as large as an ordinary forefinger." This was probably another discovery of mammoth bones.

The following is an extract from the *Strand Magazine* for December, 1895: let the reader judge as to the genuineness of the fossilized Irish giant, which is thus described:—

"Pre-eminent among the most extraordinary articles ever held by a railway company is the fossilized Irish giant, which is at this moment lying at the London and North-Western Railway Company's Broad-street goods depôt, and a photograph of which is reproduced here (fig. 16). This monstrous figure is reputed to have been dug up by a Mr. Dyer whilst prospecting for iron ore in Co. Antrim. The principal measurements are:—Entire length, 12ft. 2in.; girth of chest, 6ft. 6½in.; and length of arms, 4ft. 6in. There are six toes on the right foot. The gross weight is 2 tons 15 cwt.; so that it took half a dozen men and a powerful crane to place this article of lost property in position for the *Strand Magazine* artist. Dyer, after showing the giant in Dublin, came to England with his queer find and exhibited it in Liverpool and Manchester at sixpence a head, attracting scientific men as well as gaping sightseers. Business increased and the showman induced a man named Kershaw to purchase a share in the concern. In 1876, Dyer sent this giant from Manchester to

London by rail; the sum of £4 2s. 6d. being charged for carriage by the company, but never paid. Evidently Kershaw knew nothing of the removal of the 'show,' for when he discovered it he followed in hot haste, and, through a firm of London solicitors, moved the Court of Chancery to issue an order restraining the



FIG. 16.

"Fossilized Irish Giant." Photograph from *Strand Magazine*.

company from parting with the giant, until the action between Dyer and himself to determine the ownership was disposed of. The action was never brought to an issue."

Proofs of the existence of the mammoth in Ireland, possibly in both Pre- and Post-Glacial times, while most complete, point, as far as they go, to the presumption that it did not occur in great

numbers, not for instance in such quantities as in a clay deposit near the sea of Azof, 50 feet in thickness, which is full of mammoth bones, nor in the alluvial deposits of clay and mud, spread largely over the northern portions of Siberia. Mammoth remains occur in greatest quantity along the banks of the great rivers which drain this area, and the bones become more numerous the further the rivers are followed towards their mouth, until completely frozen carcasses are found. The well-known preservative properties of ice were strikingly illustrated by the discovery, on the shores of Lake Oncoul, in Siberia, of a carcass of the mammoth in a perfect state, and so well refrigerated that, when thawed, the dogs of the neighbourhood devoured its flesh. Again, in 1846, the summer in Siberia had been unusually hot, the frozen marshes which extend along each side of the river Indigirka were thawed, and a perfectly preserved carcass of a mammoth floated down the stream. This monster had most probably met his death during a blizzard some thousands of years ago, by sinking into the deep snow and mud of the morasses; the body was then frozen over, and thus remained until the exceptional summer's heat melted its icy prison (fig. 17). This discovery solved the question as to how this huge creature existed in such an inhospitable country, for the presence in its stomach of young shoots of fir and pine and fir cones, all in a chewed state, proved that it fed on vegetation such as is yet found in the woods of northern Siberia. From the effects of the climate, the mammoth was protected by his thick woolly coat. The structure of its teeth resembles those of the reindeer and musk ox.

The specimen, represented by fig. 18, from an old engraving, is stated to be an animal that probably attained an immense age, as its tusks are so curved as to be of little use. "The hair that still remains on the skin of the St. Petersburg specimen is of the colour of the camel, very thick set, and curled in locks. Bristles of a dark colour are interspersed, some reddish and some nearly black. The colour of the skin is a dull black, as in living elephants." With regard to this interesting and important discovery, the Rev. H. N. Hutchinson remarks that "truly there is nothing new under the sun, and the present highly useful method of freezing meat, and bringing it over from America or New Zealand, to add to our insufficient home supplies, is but a resort to a process employed by nature long before the age of steamships, and perhaps even before the appearance of man on Earth."

To students of folklore, legends regarding the mammoth are of great interest, and to some extent this interest must extend to men of science, for, as pointed out by the writer already quoted, one of the many points of interest in the study of this animal is that palæontology may be said to have been founded on the

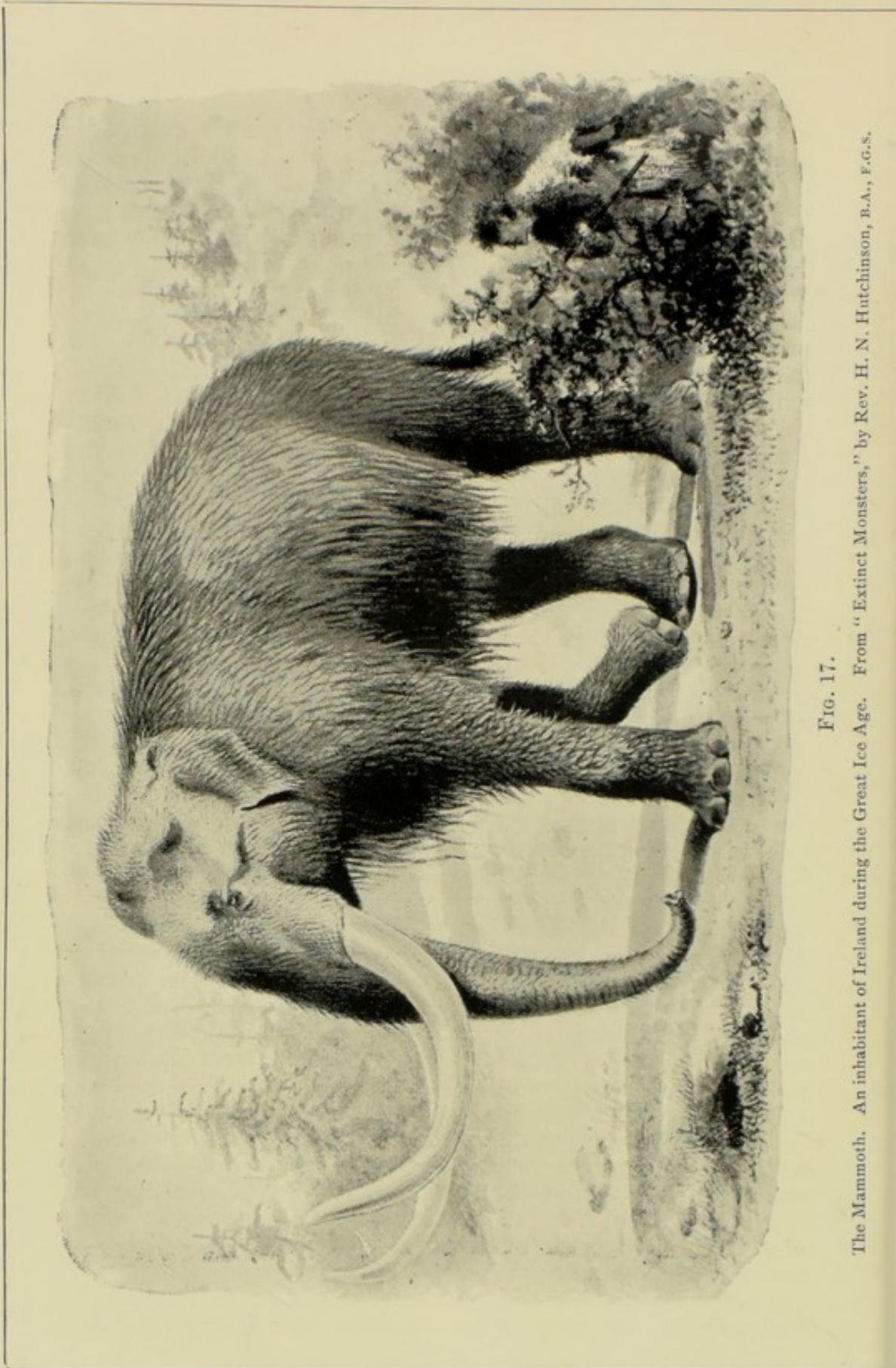


FIG. 17.

The Mammoth. An inhabitant of Ireland during the Great Ice Age. From "Extinct Monsters," by Rev. H. N. Hutchinson, B.A., F.G.S.

mammoth. "Cuvier, the illustrious founder of the science of organic remains, was enabled by his accurate and minute knowledge of the structure of living animals, to prove to his astonished contemporaries that the mammoth bones and teeth, so plentifully discovered in Europe, were not such as could have belonged to any living elephant, and consequently that there must have existed, at some previous period of the world's history, an elephant of a different kind and quite unknown to naturalists."

The most important discovery of mammoth remains in Ireland was made in a limestone breccia, in the Shandon Cave, near Dungarvan, county Waterford, associated with bones of the grizzly bear, wolf, reindeer, wild horse, and other animals; from

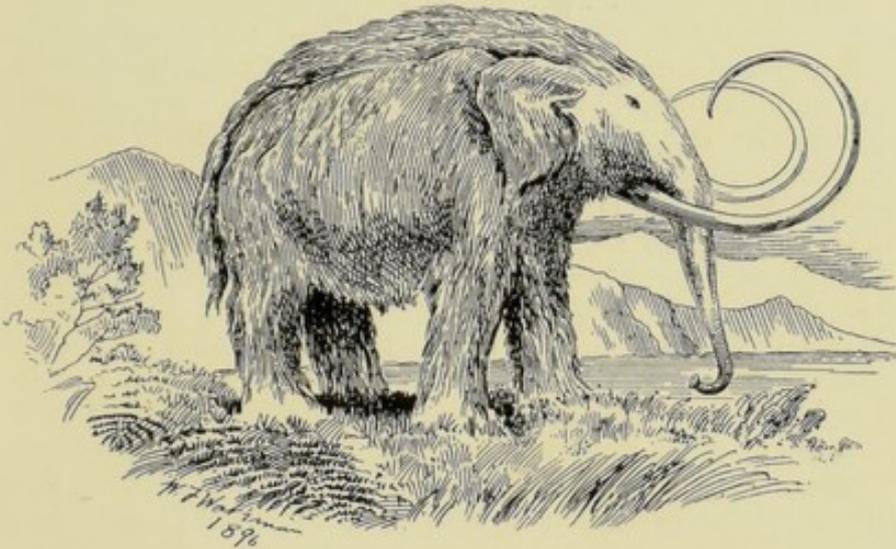


FIG. 18.

Mammoth with curved tusks. From an old engraving.

the completeness of one of the mammoth skeletons, the animal must have made its way into the cave to die. Besides these remains, others have been found in the counties of Cavan, Galway, and Antrim. The discovery in Cavan is recorded in the *Philosophical Transactions* for the year 1715, and is one of the first well-authenticated discoveries of mammoth remains in the British Isles; the teeth were figured and described by Dr. Thomas Molyneux. The Galway specimen consists of a nearly perfect humerus dredged up in Galway Bay. The Antrim specimens consist of teeth obtained at Ballyrudder, and also at Corncastle, in a stratum of gravel, containing marine shells of Post-Tertiary species.

The great Irish deer (fig. 19) is, after the mammoth, one of the noblest representatives of the extinct Mammalia of Ireland. The largest stags were about seven feet in height, whilst the expanse of their antlers, in some cases, attained to upwards of twelve feet. The Rev. H. N. Hutchinson is of opinion that, "like all existing deer, the animal shed its antlers periodically, and such shed antlers have been found. When it is recollected that all the osseous matter of which they are composed must have been drawn from the blood carried along certain arteries to the head in the course of a few months, our wonder may well be excited at the vigorous circulation that took place in these parts. In the red deer, the antlers, weighing about 24 lbs., are developed in the course of about ten weeks; but what is that compared to the growth of over 80 lbs. weight in some three or four months?"

Although the bones of this gigantic deer are found in recent deposits, both in England and on the Continent; yet, judging by the number of specimens discovered, Ireland would appear to have been its favourite habitat. Their plentifulness in Ireland may, perhaps, be attributable to the comparative scarcity of its natural enemies, the larger carnivora.

Its remains are also found in the Isle of Man. The fact that the huge creature was formerly a member of the fauna of this small island, and the most patriotic Manxman will hardly deny that it is small, is very interesting, for large animals need a wide expanse of country to roam over. We can only conclude that, at the period the deer existed, the Isle of Man formed part of the continent of Europe, was connected with both Great Britain and Ireland, and that the Channel and the Irish Sea were either partly or wholly dry land; but on the other hand, if this be so, how are we to account for the absence in Ireland of the larger carnivora?

One of the evidences that this animal was contemporary with man rests on the discovery of its bones in a very broken state, in the cave of Ballynamintra, and in company with stone implements and human remains. The bones of this deer and other mammals, when recovered from subterranean deposits and exposed to the air, are apt to crack in the direction of the long axis, but the "sun cracks" as they are termed, rarely penetrate the entire thickness, nor is there a splintering into fragments which cave-bones generally exhibit. R. J. Ussher, the explorer of the Ballynamintra cavern, states that the most remarkable feature was the number of long bones, "split longitudinally, with evidence of violent blows of percussion, as evidenced by longitudinal fractures, such as the femur, tibia, and humerus, for there is not a long bone of the Irish elk which has not been split lengthways, or reduced to angular splinters. To have

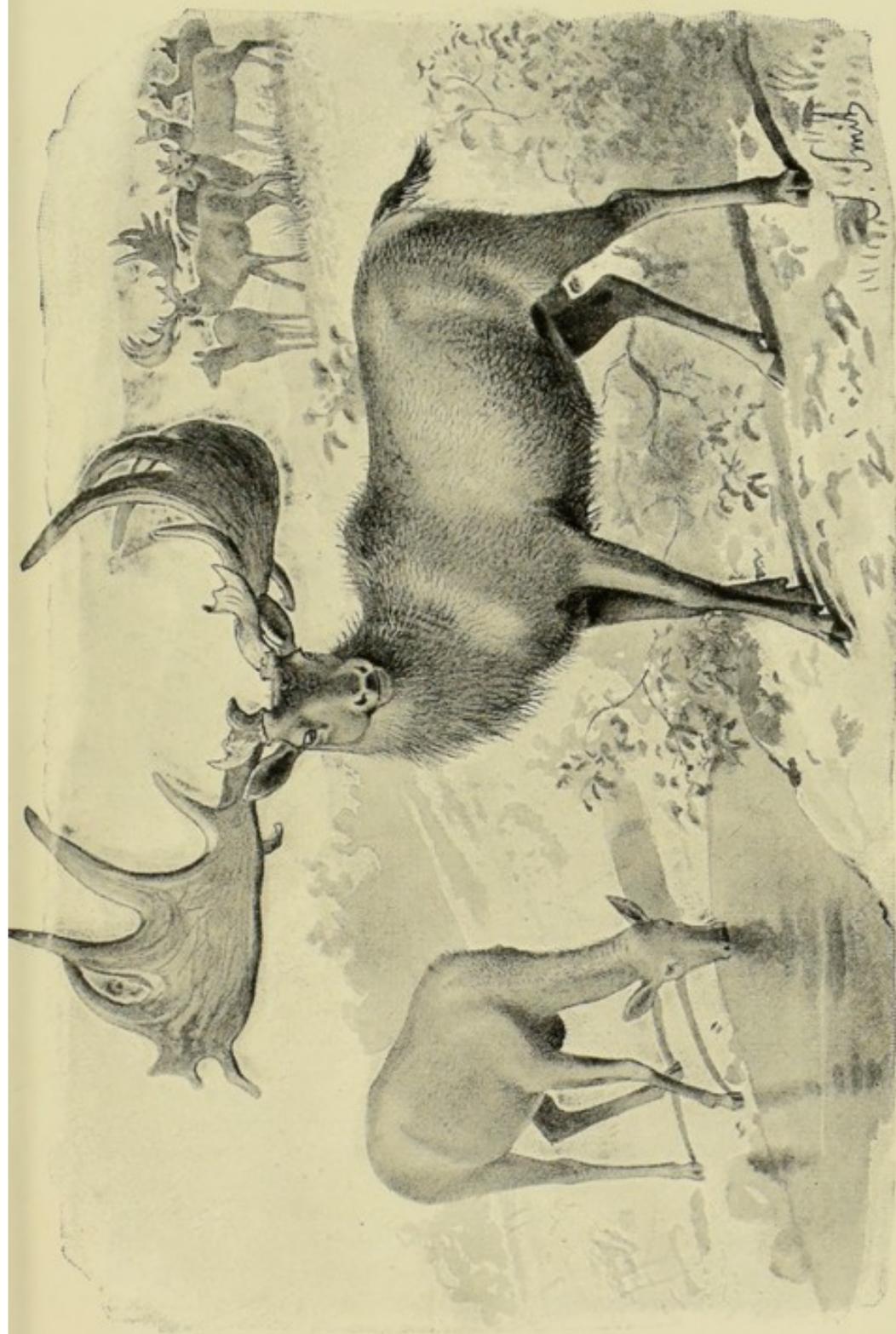


FIG. 19.

The Gigantic Irish Deer, or *Cervus Megaceros*. Height to the summit of antlers, about 10 feet; Spread of antlers, 12 feet.  
From "Extinct Monsters," by the Rev. H. N. Hutchinson, B.A., F.G.S.

accomplished this, great force was required, and that force must have been exerted along the long axis of the shaft. The absence of the lion and hyena, leaving the bear and wolf as the only large members of the order hitherto identified from Irish deposits, renders it unlikely that they could have split the long bones so regularly. The few small cuspidated premolars of the bear, coupled with the succeeding broad crowns of the molars, are not suited for that continuous penetration and pressure along a surface for which the narrow crowns of the teeth of the felidæ and hyena are so eminently adapted. As regards the wolf, it may be fairly doubted if that animal possessed the requisite strength of jaw for the accomplishment of such a feat, at all events as regards the femur, humerus, and tibia. Taking, therefore, into consideration the oblong and rounded stones, battered and chipped at their ends by blows, also other stone tools bearing traces of man's handiwork, and strewn about among the Irish elk's remains, one can scarcely doubt but that the regularity in the mode of fracture was the result of his ingenuity for the extraction of the marrow, and possibly also for other objects." In the lake-dwelling of Cloonfinlough, the bones of the gigantic Irish deer were also discovered in a fractured condition. Among the abundant Mammalian *débris*, raised from the kitchen-midden or refuse-heap of one of the lake-dwellings in Lough Rea, was the head of a gigantic Irish deer, measuring about thirteen feet from tip to tip of the antlers; and a writer states that stone hatchets and fragments of pottery have been found with the bones of this creature under circumstances that leave no doubt of a contemporaneous deposition.

In the refuse-heap of the lake-dwelling of Breagho, portion of an antler was discovered, sawn and perforated with holes. It does not, however, necessarily follow that this relic had belonged to an animal killed and utilized by the lake-dwellers; the horn may have been found by them on some spot where it had rested for ages. The same explanation may be applied to the discovery of portion of the gigantic Irish deer (one of its teeth) in a prehistoric cist.

We need not feel surprised at the disappearance of the gigantic deer, when we see that the American buffalo has, within about two hundred years, been almost exterminated through the greed of hunters; and were it not that a few herds are kept in "reservations," under conditions which it is hoped will lead to their increase, it would, in a short time, be as extinct as the Irish big-horn. Both the Irish deer and the mammoth were probably exterminated by man, for we know that primitive man was a mighty hunter, and as the human race increased, its wants developed proportionally, and more animals were of

necessity destroyed. If this be the truth, it is an easy solution of the problem of the extinction of the mammoth and great deer, and does not necessitate an Ice Age, or any great change in climatic conditions.

Of the fact that the reindeer (fig. 20) was contemporary with man in Ireland, the evidence is more meagre than is the case with the great deer, although both roamed together amidst the plains of ancient Erin. Of the several existing varieties of reindeer, the one to which the Irish examples may be referred is the Arctic cariboo, in which the antlers are slender and rounded, as contrasted with the more massive and flattened beam of the horns of the woodland cariboo found in Eastern Canada and the Rocky Mountains. Bones of the reindeer were found in the cave of Ballynamintra in conjunction with traces of its occupation by man.

That the bear existed contemporaneously with man in Ireland rests—strange to relate—upon more deficient evidence than that with regard to the reindeer, although in Scotland the bear survived until the middle of the eleventh century. The Celtic name for bear frequently occurs in old Irish MSS., and legends amongst the peasantry still recount its pursuit and capture by the heroes of antiquity. The skulls of this bear that have been discovered demonstrate that the animal was of rather small size, but, in the cave of Ballynamintra, remains of the *ursus ferox*, which some writers have identified with the grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains (fig. 21), have been found in the same strata as the remains of man, together with other of the huge Mammalia which existed in this epoch.

There can be no doubt that the wild horse lived in Ireland as a contemporary of several animals which are now extinct. In the Shandon cave at Dungarvan, the remains of several horses occurred with those of reindeer, red-deer, bear, and wolf. In the Ballynamintra cave, horses' teeth were found with the bones of great deer, bear, and wolf. It is possible that these horses had been used as food by the men of the period, but the character of the associated remains, and the circumstances of their position, afford the principal evidence as to whether the bones should be referred to wild or domesticated varieties of the horse.

There are several well-authenticated instances of horses' skulls having been found in caves at Ballintoy, county Antrim, and near the shores of Lough Erne. It is not improbable that the wild horse may have survived up to a time considerably later than the disappearance of the animals mentioned above.

The eating of horseflesh is characteristic of many prehistoric and of many savage races. Numerous traces of the bones of horses, the largest having been fractured, evidently for extraction

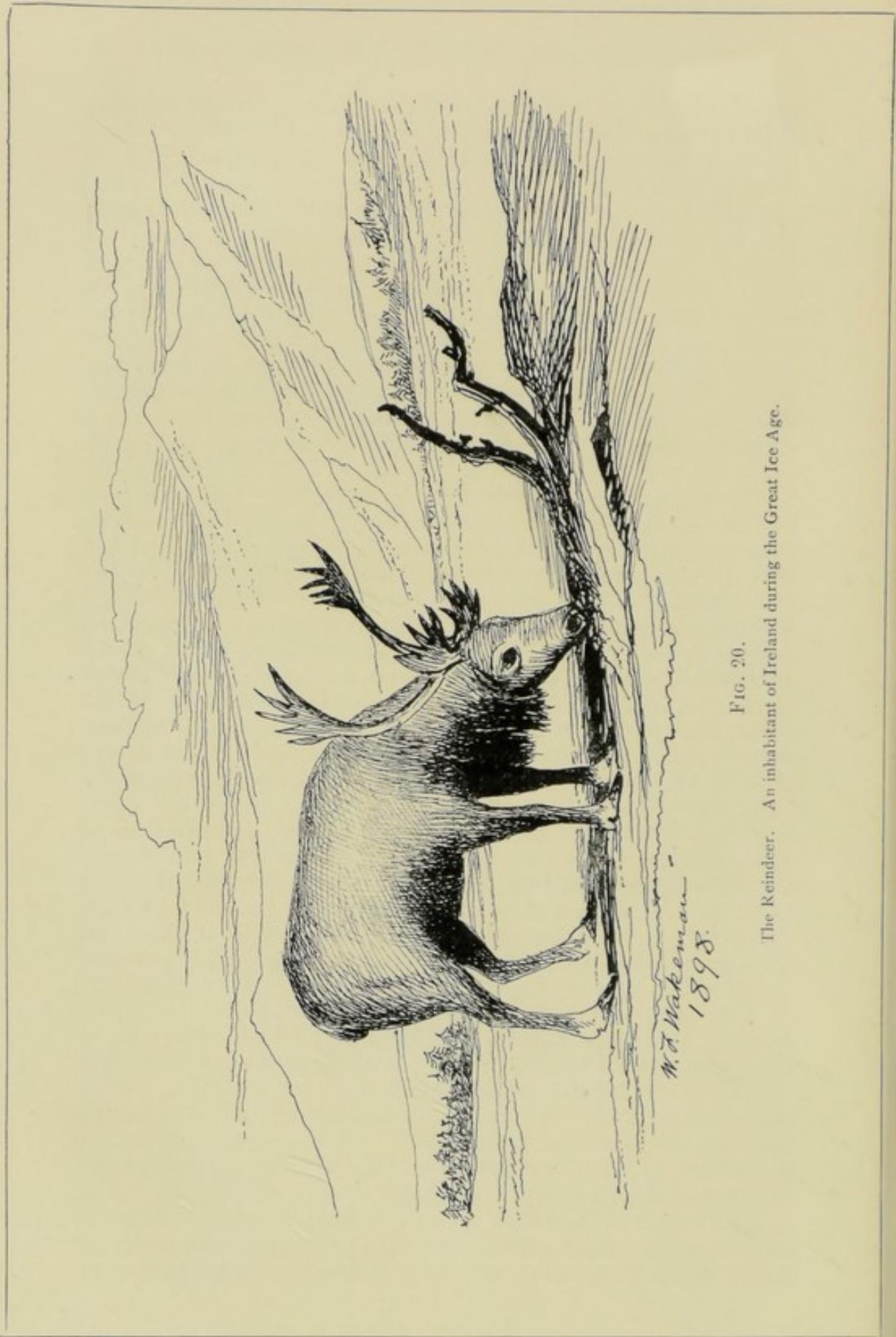


FIG. 20.

The Reindeer. An inhabitant of Ireland during the Great Ice Age.

of the marrow, occur among the remains of funeral feasts which appear to have taken place during the erection of certain cairns. On the introduction of Christianity into Northern Europe, the earliest ordinances of the Church were directed against the use of horseflesh, as the horse was, by the heathen, considered emblematic of their gods, particularly of the god Odin.



FIG. 21.

The Death of the Grizzly Bear. A scene in the Stone Age.

The "historian" Keating waxes very wrathful on the subject of Giraldus Cambrensis having stated that one of the ceremonies at the inauguration of the chief of the O'Donnells consisted in the tribe assembling on a high hill where they killed a white mare, whose flesh was then boiled in a large caldron from which the chief had to drink some of the broth, and eat some of the meat, animal-like, without the assistance of any implement,

after which he bathed himself in the liquid. This ceremony, according to Keating, "was inconsistent with the religion they professed, and savoured strongly of Pagan superstition."

The red-deer (fig. 22), although now restricted to a small area in Kerry, appears, judging from the widespread abundance of its remains, to have been formerly plentifully distributed all over the kingdom. Discoveries in the cave of Shandon prove that it co-existed with the mammoth, and its bones abound in the marl underlying the peat formation, where those of the great deer have been found. When O'Flaherty wrote, they were very

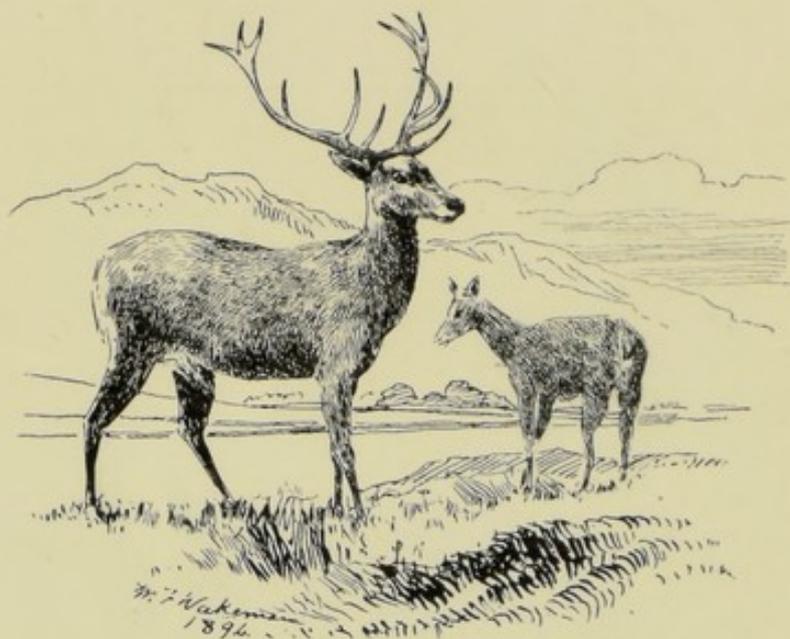


FIG. 22.—Red Deer.

numerous. Dr. Thomas Molyneux, his friend and contemporary, states that in his day the red-deer were much more rare in Ireland than formerly. So late as 1752, they abounded in the barony of Erris, county Mayo; and the celebrated Irish scholar, O'Donovan, about the year 1848, heard from an old native that in his youth red deer were common, and that he had frequently seen them grazing among the black cattle on the mountains.

Rudely-formed enclosures, surrounded by staked fences, have often been found under a considerable depth of bog. They are, by some, considered to be traps into which the deer were driven. This class of structure consists of a long lane, formed of staked lines of pallisading, gradually narrowing, but at the end expanding into a circle, where the deer could be killed at leisure. This cul-de-sac is supposed sometimes to have terminated in a

quagmire, for many of the skulls of the deer appear to have been broken in the forehead, which could be easily effected when the animal was embedded in mud or in a pitfall. Among circumstances corroborative of the large numbers of red deer that existed in former times may be mentioned the discovery of quantities of tips of stags' horns in the refuse-heaps of lake-dwellings, and in many other localities. These pieces of bone, from three to five inches in length, were apparently cut off from the remainder of the horn, which was probably manufactured into various implements; whilst pins, brooches, weapons, tools, and ornaments formed of those tips of horn abound in collections of antiquities.

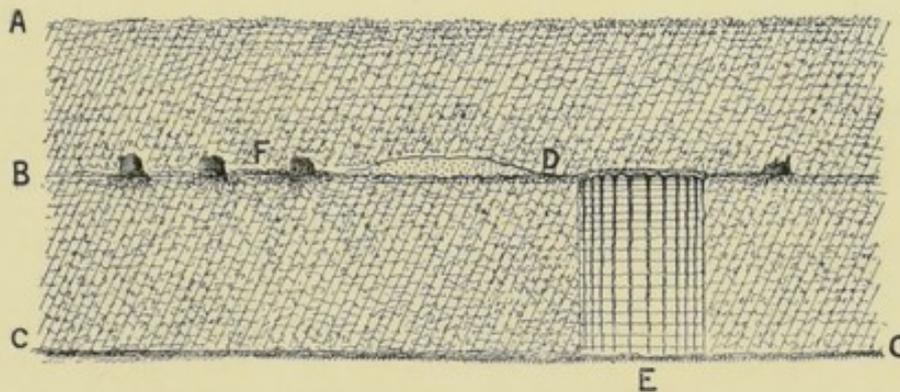


FIG. 23.

Supposed Pitfall for catching Deer or other wild animals.  
 A. Present surface. B, F. Former surface and forest. C. Rock.  
 D. Heap of clay. E. Pitfall.

In the neighbourhood of Blessington lies a turf bog some twelve feet deep, in which, about the middle of the century, a circular wooden structure was discovered, some six feet deep, five feet in diameter, and lined with upright posts of birch (fig. 23). At the time of its construction, the then surface of the bog was only slightly above the tops of the birch posts. The interior was empty, though the entrance was covered with branches, heath, and sods; since its abandonment the bog had grown over it to the height of upwards of six feet.

Even the rudest tribes visited by modern travellers have been found acquainted with the art of digging pitfalls on the customary tracks of wild beasts, for the capture of animals which they are unable otherwise to kill, or which they do not care to openly face. A pitfall, or deep excavation lightly covered with branches, and then made to simulate, in outward appearance, the surrounding solid ground, gives way beneath the animal, which is thus rendered powerless to escape, and is at the mercy of its captors.

Despite numerous legends, and folklore, relative to the hunts of giants of ancient days after magical boars, prosaic investigation suggests that the herds of wild pigs, which infested the forests, were all derived from an introduced breed. Skulls of the pig are very commonly found in the refuse-heaps of lake-dwellings. The discovery of remains of the pig in Ballynamindra cave, however, renders it, at least, not improbable that there may have been a wild pig, despite the fact that all recorded skulls belong to the long-faced Irish pig, which, even as a domesticated breed, is now nearly, if not altogether, extinct, its place having been taken by others more suitable for fattening purposes, for, except in a very few remote and isolated districts in Connaught, the old Irish pig is now extinct (figs. 24, 25). It is described by Mr. and Mrs. Hall, in their *Tour through Ireland*,

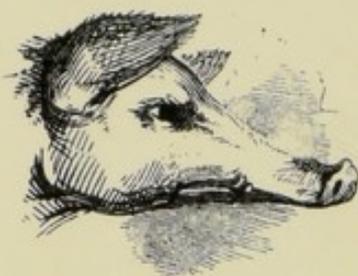


FIG. 24.

Head of long-faced Irish Pig.  
From Mr. and Mrs. Hall's  
"Ireland."

as a long, tall, and unusually lean animal, with singularly sharp physiognomy, and remarkably keen eyes. The breed was formerly much preferred by the peasantry to introduced kinds, as it would "feed upon anything." The writers continue thus:—"Ugly and un-serviceable as are the Connaught pigs, they are the most intelligent of their species. An acquaintance of ours taught one to 'point,' and the animal found game as correctly as a pointer.

He 'gave tongue,' too, after his own fashion, by grunting in a sonorous tone; and understood when he was to take the field as well as any dog. The Connaught pigs used to prefer their food (potatoes) raw to boiled, and would live well and comfortably where other pigs would starve. They perforate hedges, scramble over walls, and run up mountains like goats, performing these feats with a flourish of their tails, and a grunt of exultation that are highly amusing to those whose observations have been previously confined to the 'swinish multitude' of clean, white, deliberate, unwieldy hogs that are to be seen in English farmyards."

The refuse heaps of lake-dwellings afford evidence of the presence of sheep and goats; but though the latter appear to have been first introduced, there is evidence that sheep were in Ireland before the Christian era. Some of the best authorities are of opinion that both races were brought into the country, and domesticated by man. Several crania of sheep, found on the site of the lake-dwelling at Dunshaughlin, indicate the existence of four-horned varieties, and one of them has five distinct horn cores.

The mention of wild cattle by early Irish writers, though not infrequent, does not tend to materially modify the conclusion arrived at from a full consideration of the evidence, which is, that the original stock from whence they were derived was first introduced from the continent of Europe to the British Isles by pre-historic man. The skulls obtained in ancient Irish lake-dwellings, as well as in caves, bogs, and river deposits, indicate the existence of well-marked races—the broad-faced ox, the shorthorn, with small, drooping horns, and its ally, the crumpled horn, and another altogether unprovided with horns, like modern “polled breeds.”

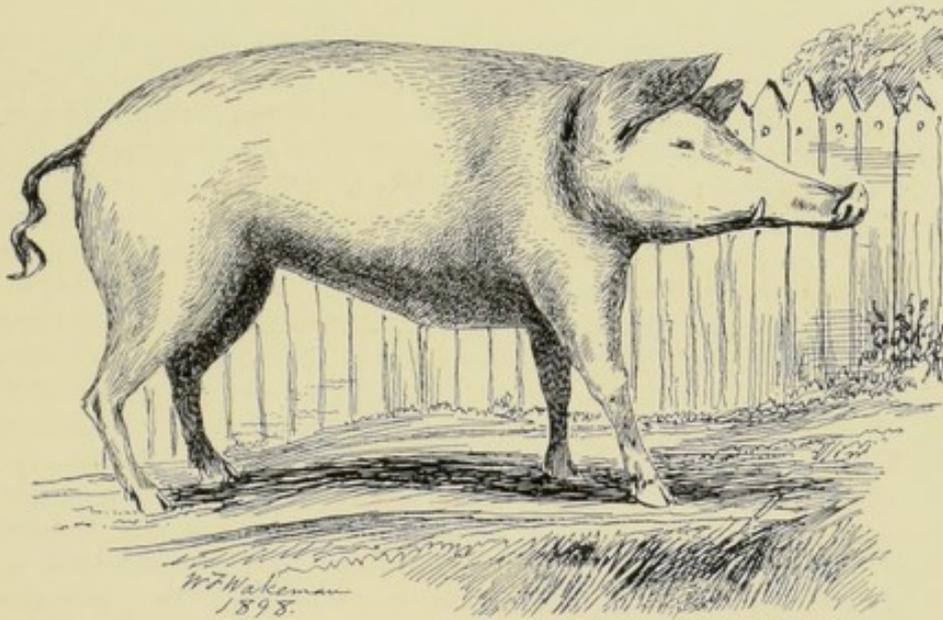


FIG. 25.

Ancient breed of long-faced Irish Pig.

The wolf existed in Ireland up to the commencement of the eighteenth century, when the last of these animals is recorded to have been killed in county Kerry. Dr. Dive Downes, Bishop of Cork and Ross, when visiting his united diocese in the year 1699, kept a journal of his tour (preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin), and the Bishop, a keen observer and chronicler of everything of interest, states that wolves were at the time very numerous in the vicinity of Bantry.

An order made by James I. for the destruction of wolves is curious, as showing the probable cause of the end of wolf-life in Ireland. It recites that the king being informed of the great loss and hindrance to agriculture occasioned by the ravages of

wolves, directed a grant to be made in 1614, to Henry Tuttesham, who had offered to exterminate the wolves, providing traps, engines, and four men and twelve couple of hounds in every county in Ireland, and requiring only four nobles sterling for the head of every wolf or wolf cub.

The bones of the wolf are not easily distinguishable from those of the dog. Bones believed to belong to the wolf have been found in association with those of the fox, horse, reindeer, red-deer, bear, hare, and mammoth in Shandon cave, county Waterford, and together with the remains of the great deer, in the cave of Ballynamindra, but, after all, traces of wolf bones are very rare, and this is most singular when historical references to the animal are considered.

Other wild animals which then existed, and are yet present, are the Alpine hare, otter, marten, badger, and fox; whilst the following, known to have existed in Britain, appear not to have been present in Ireland in pre-historic times, namely, the beaver, roebuck, moose, and the urus or wild ox.

The Irish hare is considered to differ from that of Great Britain, and exhibits, in several respects, characteristics intermediate between the two descriptions of British hare. The difference in the fur of the British and Irish species is very observable, the colour of the latter being much lighter; the most obvious divergence is in the tail, the upper surface of which is black in the English, and white tinged with grey towards the base in the Irish hare. Professor R. F. Scharff, when treating of the origin of the European fauna, points out that:—"Sportsmen have for many years tried to permanently establish the English hare, *Lepus europæus*, in Ireland. Lord Powerscourt tells me that he imported a number of them thirty years ago, and that they at first increased, but that latterly they have decreased considerably. They have never spread during all this time, but remained in close proximity to the house, where they were originally turned out. From Southern Sweden we hear of similar experiences. Now it cannot be said that a species which thrives so well in England from north to south could not stand the Irish climate, or that of Southern Sweden which is not unlike that of Northern Germany, where this hare is common. It is therefore manifest that the difficulty of establishing the English hare permanently in these countries is altogether unconnected with climate or food."

The *Lepus variabilis*, or Arctic hare, is the only one inhabiting Ireland. In Great Britain it is confined to the mountains of Scotland, whilst the plain is inhabited by the European hare. During the Glacial Period, the Arctic hare is supposed to have been driven south; "and its occurrence," again remarks Professor

Scharff, "in the Caucasus, the Alps, and the Pyrenees is looked upon as a standing testimony to the extreme refrigeration of the climate, for, when the cold passed away, the plain is believed not to have suited the hare any more, and it returned to the more congenial atmosphere of the mountain tops. This view, first promulgated, I think, by Edward Forbes, has been almost universally adopted. Certainly, as Darwin has remarked, it explains the presence of Arctic forms on the Alps and other mountains in a most satisfactory manner. Still, I venture to think the Glacial Period did not play so important a rôle in the present distribution of the Arctic hare." The smaller or Arctic hare is undoubtedly the more ancient species and must have arrived in Europe before the larger animal, for, had they arrived simultaneously from the East, there is no reason why both should not now be present in Ireland. The curious fact that in Ireland the Arctic hare and stoat generally change their fur to white in winter, although there may be no snow on the ground, is very suggestive of a Northern origin, for instance, in the winter of 1896-7, when the fields were almost as green as in summer time, some of these animals were observed with almost snow-white coats.

The Irish stoat differs essentially from the ordinary English and Continental form, so much so that some writers have raised it to the rank of a distinct species. The stoat is certainly of Northern origin, and it is one of the few mammals which still inhabit the Arctic regions, so that, provided a land passage existed, it could easily have entered Europe direct from the North.

The fauna and flora of Ireland both include an Arctic element, generally confined, however, to the northern and western parts of Ireland, "as if some barrier had prevented their migration along the east coast, or to the central plain, or as if they had been exterminated there in more recent times."

Mr. Ussher has been so fortunate, in his researches among the kitchen-middens of the Waterford sand-hills, as to have collected, on that part of the coast, no fewer than seventeen bones of the celebrated extinct Auk; while in Antrim, around the shores of Whitepark Bay, Mr. Knowles has found as many as twenty-four, associated with flint implements, and with remains of sundry animals characteristic of an early period in the story of human civilization. "That more than forty great Auks' bones should, within a short period, thus have fallen into the hands of two explorers in the north and south of Ireland, respectively, is a fact of considerable scientific value, as cannot but be recognised. . . . It is at least highly curious that two Irish counties should have contributed so large a proportion of the

known relics of a bird which, plentiful as it was a century ago on other north Atlantic isles, has been practically unrecognised as Irish during historic times. All that had, until recently, been ascertained of the great Auk, as a member of our fauna, was the fact of a solitary specimen having been captured alive near Waterford Harbour in 1834—a casual straggler, as was then supposed, although in the light of recent discovery it is now naturally suggested by Professor Newton that the lonely bird was impelled by some spark of a long latent instinct to revisit the home of its forefathers. . . . That its Irish remains have hitherto been detected only in the kitchen-middens of our Neolithic ancestors is a circumstance but too well in keeping with the tragical tenour of the bird's story in all parts of its ascertained range. In fact, the great Auk's remarkable helplessness on land, combined with its edible qualities, unfitted it to coexist with man for more than a brief period, and perhaps the real wonder is that it survived so late. On the Icelandic coast, where it last lingered, its extermination was not complete until nearly the middle of the present century. Less sensational than the tale of the Garefowl, yet full of interest both by reason of the facts which it reveals and of the problems which they suggest, is the account given by Mr. G. E. H. Barrett-Hamilton of the 'Bird-bones from Irish caves' which he has lately examined. These prove, beyond doubt, that both black grouse and Ptarmigan formerly inhabited county Waterford, although, with the exception of a generally discredited statement as to the Black Grouse in Smith's 'Antient and Present state of Cork,' no historical evidence exists of either bird having ever been found in our island." We have thus three instances of birds of northerly range in Europe, all unexpectedly shown to have inhabited the south of Ireland in olden times; a fact of high importance for the light it throws on former climatic conditions.

The pre-historic mammals domesticated by man were, if judged by the traces they have left, not numerous. Foremost stands the Irish wolf-dog, generally considered to have resembled, but to have been considerably larger than, the present rough-haired deer-hound of Scotland; the formidable character of this dog is the subject both of history and tradition; and these accounts, it is now fairly ascertained, do not much exaggerate the power and strength of the faithful companion, not only of the hunter, but also of the warrior, in far remote pre-historic, as well as in recent times. There is also very positive evidence that there were in Ireland, formerly, two races of wolf-dogs, one approaching the greyhound, the other the mastiff type. The discovery of several specimens of the crania of this kind of dog in the refuse-heaps of lake-dwellings has afforded a good oppor-

tunity of making comparative examinations. The measurement of one of these crania, found on the site of a lake-dwelling, was compared with that of an average modern German boar-hound, and the Irish skull was in every way the more capacious. In the Ballynamindra cave, besides the bones belonging to the wolf, other specimens belong to a dog even taller than the wolf. This animal may have been domesticated by the hunters, who are believed to have split the bones of the gigantic Irish deer for extraction of the marrow, and who manufactured the stone implements found in the cave.

The dog is the greatest conquest ever made by man, for the taming of the dog is the first element in human progress. "Without the dog, man would have been condemned to vegetate eternally in the swaddling clothes of savagery. It was the dog which effected the passage of human society from the savage to the patriarchal state, in making possible the guardianship of the flock. Without the dog, there could be no flock and herds; without the flock there is no assured livelihood, no leg of mutton, no roast beef, no wool, no blanket, no time to spare; and, consequently, no astronomical observations, no science, no industry." It is to the dog man owes his hours of leisure.

"The poor dog is in life the firmest friend,  
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,  
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,  
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,"

and as a French writer sarcastically observes, "Plus je vois les hommes, plus j'admire les chiens." However, as far as archaeological research at present extends, it appears that the dog was not domesticated by man in Ireland until well on in the Bronze Age. Apart from the comparatively few supposed canine remains found in company with traces of man, prior to that epoch, the canine-like bones do not appear to be those of the domesticated dog, in our acceptance of the term, for they have been found split, evidently for extraction of the marrow, in the same way as are those of other animals, showing that, to whatever animal they belonged, whether to the wolf or to the dog, they had been eaten by the hunters, which would scarcely have been the case were they those of their own domesticated dogs.

The earliest mention of the Irish wolf-dog appears to be that quoted by the Rev. Edmund Hogan, S.J., and occurs in a letter from Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, Roman consul in the year 391, to his brother Flavius to the following effect:—"In order to win the favour of the Roman people for our quæstor, you have been a generous and diligent provider of novel contributions to our solemn shows and games, as is proved by your gift of seven

Irish dogs. All Rome viewed them with wonder, and fancied they must have been brought hither in iron cages. For such a gift I tender you the greatest possible thanks."

In the Saga of *Burnt Njal*, Olaf, a Norwegian, son of an Irish princess, says to his friend Gunnar:—"I will give thee a hound that was given me in Ireland; he is big, and no worse than a stout man. Besides, it is part of his nature that he has man's wit, and that he will bay at every man whom he knows to be thy foe, but never at thy friends. He can see, too, in any man's face whether he means thee well or ill; and he will lay down his life to be true to thee. This hound's name is Sam." He ordered the hound to "follow Gunnar, and do him all the service thou canst." The dog then walked up to Gunnar, and lay down at his feet; subsequently his enemies, when plotting against his life, were obliged to first kill his Irish canine protector.

At the comparatively late period of the Scandinavian inroads, many of the Irish possessed a well-known breed of shepherd and watch dog. In *Olaf Tryggvason's Saga*, it is related that when Olaf was in Ireland he ran short of provisions, went ashore on a "coast raid," and collected a large number of cattle, which he drove towards his ships. A poor peasant came up to Olaf, and implored him to give him back his cows. Olaf replied that he might have them if he could recognise them, and not delay him. The peasant had a large sheep dog with him, to whom he pointed out the herd of cattle, which numbered many hundreds. "The dog ran through all the herds, and took away as many cows as the Bondi (peasant) said belonged to him; and they were all marked with the same mark. Then they acknowledged that the dog had found out the right cattle." The Norsemen thought it "a wonderfully wise dog," and have even recorded its name, which was *Vigi*.

In the year 1652, a proclamation was issued against the exportation of wolf-dogs. At the conclusion of the war, many of the Irish who "had liberty to go beyond sea," attempted "to carry away several great dogs as are commonly called wolf-dogs, whereby the breed of them, which is useful for destroying wolves, would, if not prevented, speedily decay. These are, therefore, to prohibit all persons from exporting any of the said dogs out of the kingdom."

In a letter preserved in the Evidence Chamber, Kilkenny Castle, the secretary of the Earl of Ossory reminds the secretary of the Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, of the promise made by the Duke of "two wolf-dogs, and a bitch which his Lordship wrote to you about the King of Spain, . . . and that two dogs and a bitch be also gotten for the King of Sweden." It is thus seen to what a recent period these wolf-

hounds were in requisition, and that they can only have become extinct in the latter part of the eighteenth century, at earliest, for it is extremely doubtful whether the present race of so-called Irish wolf-hounds, bred of late years, principally for purposes of exhibition, are true representatives of this ancient stock.

It must be sorrowfully admitted that, as remarked by the Rev. Edmund Hogan, S.J., the subject seems to have a greater attraction for Englishmen than for Irishmen, "as is evidenced by the establishment in Britain of the Irish Wolfhound Club, and by the space devoted to Irish wolfhounds in the works on dogs which are continually issuing from the press."

In maintaining her vital balance, it oftens happens that nature appears to allow animals that have ceased to be obviously useful in taking part in the general economy to die out; thus, "whilst wolves and elks roamed over Ireland, the magnificent Irish wolf-dog was common. With the disappearance of wolves, this breed of wolf-dogs languished, and has ultimately become extinct. As a matter of zoological curiosity, many an Irish gentleman would have desired to perpetuate this gigantic and interesting race of dogs; but the operation—the tendency to vital equilibrium—has been over-strong to be contravened; this race of Irish wolf-dogs has fled away."

## CHAPTER III.

### EARLY MAN.

Superstitions regarding Flint Implements—These superstitions sometimes transferred to those of Bronze and of Iron—Traffic in Flint the most ancient trade in the world—Gravels and Raised Beaches full of artificially-formed Flint Implements—Their manufacture carried on all along the littoral—Weapons of the Old and New Stone Age—Introduction of the use of Copper—Ancient Settlements on the sea-shore—Their first occupiers probably cannibals—Their habit of roving from place to place—Their food—Their manner of life—Their clothing—Their existence compared with that of present-day tribes of savages living on the littoral—Refuse-heaps and Kitchen-middens—Cooking-places—Bones used as fuel for roasting meat.

It has been already stated, in the previous Chapter, that in collecting implements of flint, the antiquary often meets with great difficulty, owing to a superstition prevalent, not only in Ireland, but throughout Great Britain and the European Continent. It may be observed parenthetically that the people who thus buy for a hobby are the forger's best customers. A sound archæologist is a scant source of profit, for, in the first place, he can generally detect the real from the false article; and, in the second place, he will not pay exorbitant prices. Cattle that commence to fail are looked upon by the country people as "elf-shot" or "fairy-struck," *i. e.* have been subjected to the projectiles of the "good people." Collins, in his ode on the superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, thus describes this fanciful idea:—

" There every herd by sad experience knows  
How winged with fate their elf-shot arrows fly ;  
Where the sick ewe her summer food foregoes,  
Or, stretched on earth, the heart-smit heifers lie."

Bulls and bullocks, however, possess immunity from fairy assaults.

If a beast is "elf-shot," the first proceeding of a fairy doctor, if called in, is to measure the animal, when if one leg, or one side of the body, or one side of the head is shorter than the other—or rather if the "fairy doctor" states this to be the case—

the beast is pronounced to have been overlooked by the "good people," or wounded by an elf-dart. For a headache in human beings, the first act of "the doctor" is also to measure the patient's skull, as the origin of the pain is believed to be the opening of the head of the sufferer, by the fairies, by separating the bones. The cure is simplicity itself. The doctor passes a cord round the patient's head, and marks the length; then several charms are used; the head is re-measured; the circumference of the skull is now demonstrated to have returned to its normal condition. A bandage is kept tightly around the brows, for some time, to prevent a re-occurrence of the pain through the re-opening of the cranium. On this subject attention may be drawn to the fact that a tight bandage round the head is often used at the present day for the relief of headache; either it may be connected with the old superstition, or both the ancient and the modern customs may be accounted for by natural causes. Persons suffering from severe headache often obtain temporary relief by pressing the head tightly with the hands. What medical science may have to say about this, the writer does not know, but that there is some benefit seems undeniable. This would naturally be observed, and then the fairy theory adopted to account for it.

Another curious instance of the superstition regarding "elf-shot" cattle may be also noticed. A gentleman, some short time away from home, had, on his return, inquired after his cattle, and was informed by his steward that they were then all well, but that during his absence one had been "elf-shot," and would have died had he not called in a "doctor," who prescribed remedies of the usual kind, and also gave a drink to the sick beast from a bucket in which lay a stone axe.

W. H. Maxwell, in his "Wild Sports of the West of Ireland," thus described a "cow charmer" whom he met at the commencement of the century while staying at a gentleman's house:—

"I heard, when passing the porter's lodge, that the gate-keeper's cow was ill. As she was a fine animal, the loss would have been a serious one to the family, and hence I became interested in her recovery. For several days, however, the report to my inquiry was more unfavourable, and at last the case was considered hopeless.

"The following morning as I rode past, I found the family in deep distress; and the gate-keeper had gone off to fetch 'the charmer,' who lived some ten miles distant. I really sympathised with the good woman. The loss of eight or nine guineas to one in humble life is a serious calamity; and from the appearance of the cow I concluded, though not particularly skilful, that the animal would not survive. That evening I

strolled out after dinner. It was sweet moonlight, and I bent my steps to the gate-house to inquire if the cow still lived.

"The family were in great tribulation. The charmer had arrived—had seen the cow—had prepared herbs and nostrums, and was performing some solitary ceremony at an adjacent spring-well from which he had excluded every member of the family in assisting. I was most curious to observe the incantation, but was dissuaded by the gate-keeper, who implored me 'to give the conjurer fair play.'

"In five minutes the charmer joined us—he said the case was a bad one, but that he thought he could bring round the cow. He then administered the 'unhallowed potion,' and I left the lodge, expecting to hear next morning that the animal was defunct. Next day the bulletin was favourable; and the charmer was in the act of receiving his reward. I looked at him: he was as squalid and heart-broken a wretch in appearance as ever trod the Earth. The cow still seemed weak, but the charmer spoke confidently of her recovery. When he left the lodge, and turned his steps homewards, I pulled up my horse and waited for him. He would rather have avoided an interview, but could not. 'Well, fellow, you have humbugged that poor family, and persuaded them that the cow will recover?' 'I have told the truth,' said the charmer, coldly. 'And will your prophecy prove true?' I asked, in a tone of scornful incredulity. 'It will,' said he; 'but, God help me! this night I'll pay dearly for it!' I looked at him—his face was agonised, and, terror-stricken, he crossed the fence and disappeared.

"When I passed the gate-house on my return, the cow was evidently convalescent, and in a few days she was perfectly well.

"I leave the solution of the mystery to the learned; for in such matters, as they say in Connaught—*Neil an skeil a gau maun.*"

The Rev. P. Moore, when presenting a stone amulet to the Kilkenny Museum, in the year 1851, stated the curious fact that the peasantry, when obliged to sleep in the open air, believe that they are safe from fairy influence if they carry a small flint arrow-head about them, for mortals are very liable to invisible fairy assaults. O'Donovan relates how, in company with a namesake, he examined the impressions made by St. Patrick's knees in the solid rock. They were always filled with water, and considered to possess remarkable curative properties. His companion was afflicted with a sore knee, the supposed result of "a shot" received from the fairies, whose road, or pass, was believed to extend across his father's farm-yard. The boy washed his knee in the water of Glun Padraig, and though it did him no good, he firmly believed that it was entirely owing to his own unworthiness, and not to any want of efficacy in the

holy water. He had recourse afterwards to many sacred fountains, but the effects produced by the elfin bolt remained.

In an Irish MS. St. Patrick is represented as inquiring the history of the burying-mound upon which he was standing at the time. His companion replied that a son of a king of Munster was interred within it, that he had been slain "by elfin shots or arrows, and his thirty hounds and thirty followers, who attended him, were also killed there by the fairies," and that the green mound on which they then stood was raised over them.

Sir John Evans, in his *Ancient Stone Implements of Great Britain*, states that the superstitious beliefs held with regard to stone implements are much the same amongst the Germans as amongst the Irish. They "are held to preserve from lightning the houses in which they are kept; they perspire when a storm is approaching; they are good for diseases of man and beast; they increase the milk of cows; they assist the birth of children; and powder scraped from them may be taken, with advantage, for various childish diseases."

Worked flints, when used as amulets, are further accredited with the power of preserving the wearers from danger, and from the influence of malign spirits. In Italy they are still in common use as preservatives against evil; and even within our own land, it is only within the present century that they have ceased to be commonly carried as charms. A flint arrow-head mounted in silver is engraved by Douglas. He states that the Irish peasantry wore them on their necks as amulets against the *Aithadh*, or attacks of the fairies. There is a strange story of an Irish bishop who was wounded with an "elf-shot" by an evil spirit. Several "elf-darts" are engraved in *Philosophical Transactions* and in Gough's *Camden's Britannia*.

It is strange that, as soon as bronze and iron had superseded flint, implements formed of the latter substance came to be regarded as sacred and supernatural objects, and that such common and utilitarian implements of savage life should be looked on as preserving virtues "as wonderful as they are incredible."

Even the Jews are imbued with this superstition, and still perform the rite of circumcision with flint knives. In Joshua xxiv. 30 (LXX) we read that, when Joshua was buried, "They put with him into the tomb in which they buried him, the knives of stone with which he circumcised the children of Israel in Galgala." Flint knives were employed by the Egyptians in embalming their dead; flint knives were also used by the Romans, in the early period of their history, for sacrificial purposes, especially in religious ceremonies attending the ratification of a solemn covenant with a neighbouring people. The use of the stone knife gave a title to Jupiter, who, in this relation, was appealed

to by the name of Jupiter Lapis, as the guardian of treaties and avenger of their infraction; and to the close of the second Punic war, the use of the stone knife was considered so essential to the ceremony, that "the Fetiales, who went to Carthage to conclude the peace, each took with him, from the temple, a sacred flint, in order that the religious rites might be duly performed. Sacred flints appear to have been known also to the Greeks, and though no longer employed for directly religious purposes, to have retained something of their original character, in being used as charms, amulets and talismans."

In some countries the sacred character of stone implements continues on, and is finally transferred to those formed of bronze. In Japan and other parts of the East, a wide-spread belief exists that antique bronze objects are of celestial origin, and like the flint elfin bolts of European superstition, fell from heaven. The natural inference to be drawn from this weird notion is, that the use of bronze in Japan, and other parts of the East, dates back to remote times, and to a past so dim as to be totally unknown to the present population, even in vaguest legend.

Again, iron is considered to act as a charm against malign influence. Can it be that the conquered race held in awe the metal by means of which they were overcome? The Irish peasantry generally considered iron as a sacred metal, but could not assign any reason for so doing; thieves were even averse to steal it; on the other hand, Arthur Young, in his *Tour in Ireland*, in 1776, states that the larceny of iron shoes from off the hoofs of horses, turned out to graze, was of common occurrence. Of all the metals, the Irish name for iron most closely resembles that of their own country, Erin; the similarity probably gave origin to a story which recounts that long ago the Emerald Isle was covered by the ocean, except when it emerged for a brief period once in every seven years. Many had attempted to land on it, but failed; at last one adventurer, seeing the shore recede as he rowed towards it, was so enraged that he hurled his iron sword towards the land, on which it alighted. This broke the spell, and the island has since remained above water; for iron or fire appears to be able to make phantom lands assume solid proportions.

Even now-a-days, to make a present of an iron knife, a pair of scissors, or any such-like cutting implement is ominous of ill to the recipient. To counteract the malign effects, the person receiving the gift should tender the donor a penny, or in fact any piece of money. Belief in the ill-luck attendant on the present of a knife is thus alluded to by Gay:—

"But woe is me! such presents luckless prove,  
For knives, they tell me, always sever love."

In Ireland, flint is found in great quantity in the northern parts, more especially in the counties of Antrim, Down, and Derry, and from this quarter the vast majority of the specimens exhibited in our museums have been procured. The geological features of the district in which worked flints are found in greatest abundance are very remarkable. The white cliffs of Antrim (fig. 26), like the white cliffs of Albion, were doubtless objects of great interest to the early colonists, who, after establishing themselves on the littoral, discovered the abundance of its flints, and guided by local advantages, selected the sites of those flint-factories lately discovered by Irish archæologists, and thence carried on a trade in worked flints with other parts of the island; indeed it has been surmised that the raw material itself was carried long distances by the "commercial travellers" of the day, for the purpose of manufacture, hoards of flint objects being occasionally found in districts to which natural flint is foreign.

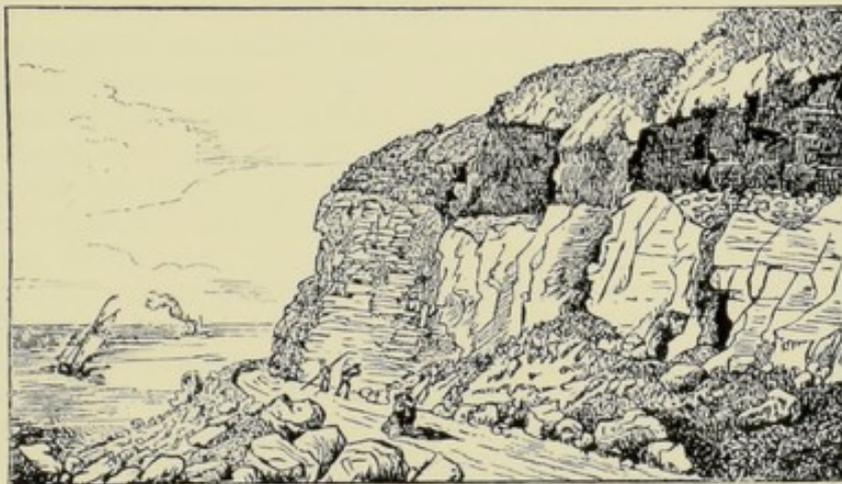


FIG. 26.

Chalk Cliffs, Antrim Coast Road, near Glenarm, showing basalt covering the flint-bearing chalk. From a drawing by Willim Gray, M.R.I.A. From the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

It is startling, but yet true, that a large trade in flint implements is carried on, even in the present day, so that this branch of commerce may be safely designated the oldest existing trade in the world. The flint beds, a short distance from the village of Brandon, about ninety miles north of London, have been worked from the very earliest times, and are still the chief seat of flint-knapping in England. It is almost certain that, both in the Old and New Stone Ages, they supplied material for the chief implements then in use, and were, therefore, worked

before the formation of the German Ocean, and when, as yet, Great Britain was a portion of the European continent.

Appearances have, in many places, been observed suggestive of different ages being represented by the primitive folk who worked flint on the Irish coasts. The flint-flakes are in general small, and it is evident that larger and older flakes or cores had been, at a later date, utilized by workmen, and their former surface considerably changed. The interval, between the original and the newer manufacture, must have lasted for a period sufficient to allow a weathered crust to coat over the markings of the early work, of which traces were perceptible where the old surface had not been removed. These flints, it is alleged, belong originally to the Palæolithic, or Ancient Stone Period; and the men who hunted the mammoth and the gigantic Irish deer may have used similar implements as spear-heads, when, with knives of flint, they skinned and cut up their quarry, converted its sinews into thread, its skin into coverings for the body, and its bones into tools, weapons, and ornaments.

A thorough and exhaustive examination of the gravels or raised beach at Larne was made by a Committee of the Belfast Naturalists Field Club in the year 1886. This careful investigation demonstrated the fact that the gravels are of marine origin, and contain numerous shells which, by their character, indicate that the temperature of the sea during the deposition of the material in which they were embedded, was much as it is now. The gravels were found to contain worked flints all through their depth; the flints are not numerous in the lower beds, yet they are in sufficient numbers to demonstrate that man lived in the locality during the period when the gravels were in process of being deposited. Examples of river-gravel Palæolithic implements from England closely resemble those from the Larne gravels; and the Irish Palæolithic flints, like the English, are very rough. They present probably the oldest traces of rudely worked flints which primitive man has left in Ireland. Many cores are so weathered and rounded that only an expert can detect them, yet the greater number are so well and clearly marked as to satisfy an ordinary observer. They are of all sizes, some very large, some very small. The original core usually shows the rough outside crust of the flint nodule on one side, but many specimens witness to the manipulator having struck off flakes from every side. These rude, imperfectly worked flints prove the existence of man in Ireland in times so remote as, at first glance, to appear incredible, as assuredly as would the ruins of Christ Church or St. Patrick's Cathedral prove, to some future antiquary, that, before his day, generations upon generations trod the land; for as yet, so far as relic-bearing

strata have been archæologically examined, traces of man's presence in the far-off past are to be seen in his handiwork, not in traces of his skeleton. It is impossible for any person, with the most rudimentary knowledge of archæology, to deny that, since his first appearance, man has steadily progressed, for deposits of the Old Stone Age show everywhere an improvement, which, although extremely slow, is uniformly upward. In the countless instances in which Old Stone Age implements have been found, the rudest implements are ever in the under-deposits, and the improvements in their manufacture, slight indeed, but still improvements, can be followed, in an ascending scale, with the ascending strata.

Weapons of flint must have been amongst the daily necessities of ancient savage life. Their abundance in the gravels is by no means surprising, especially as the material of which they are formed is practically indestructible; and rough and rude as appear to be some of them, they constituted the germs of more finished forms. Some were cast aside as failures; others were mere waste flakes and splinters. It is therefore not to be wondered at that these relics of ancient times are met with in astonishing quantities. They are the earliest relics at present known to us of prehistoric times. Possibly we may yet recognise relics of still greater antiquity, for, as in star-land, the astronomer is ever piercing further and further forward into the realms of space, so in terrestrial matters the archæologist in burrowing downward, is ever unearthing traces of earlier races.

Every new discovery, throwing further backward the proved antiquity of man in Ireland, is at first combated by a host of writers, anxious to uphold the old school of archæology and of orthodoxy—and of Archbishop Ussher's chronology. The discussion is carried on with great earnestness, but, on the whole, it must be admitted that the disputants are actuated by the same spirit as that expressed by "truthful James":—

“ Now I hold it is not decent for a scientific gent  
To say another is an ass—at least to all intent:  
Nor should the individual, who happens to be meant,  
Reply by heaving rocks at him—to any great extent.”

An important discovery is generally preceded by partial discoveries which foreshadow its approach. As the poet says, "Coming events cast their shadows before," as heralds and harbingers of truths. "Some fact attracts the attention of an observant mind," observes M. Joly; "another similar fact appears, perhaps simultaneously, perhaps after an interval of greater or less duration; other phenomena, of like nature, group themselves around the first; and this assemblage of scattered gleams

produce a ray of light which at length strikes the eyes of all beholders. But the new idea which shines out brilliantly from the surrounding obscurity is nearly always opposed to the reigning opinion which has become, so to speak, an article of scientific, often even of religious faith. Hence arises a strenuous opposition, a more or less passionate strife, until at last the human mind can enjoy its new conquest in peace."

Over and over again the presence of worked flints had been recorded by numerous explorers. G. V. Du Noyer stated that worked flints were found in the raised beach at Ballyholme, six to eight feet from the surface; G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., stated that he found a flake at a depth of over twelve feet at Larne; J. H. Staples, in 1869, said that worked flints were found in the gravels of the raised beach at Hollywood; whilst Mr. F. Archer and other writers could be quoted. Yet, against this mass of positive evidence, mere assertion and contradiction were advanced, until the subject was finally put to rest by an impartial and searching inquiry. Not only are flakes and cores, or the remains of the original body from which they have been struck, found embedded at all depths in the gravel, but there are good grounds for supposing them to be foreign to the gravels, for there is evidence that the flakes had become weathered and covered with a thick, whitish, porcellaneous, glazed crust, before being entombed in the gravels. Specimens found at various depths showed that, before being so embedded, the exposed edges of the glaze had been worn off, just as, at the present day, glaze is worn off pieces of crockery rolled about by the waves on the sea-shore.

All along the coast from the north as far as Dublin, Neolithic or Late Stone Age flint-workers, manufacturers of scrapers and arrow-heads, had little other material than these old, thickly-crusted cores to utilize (fig. 27), and many specimens, so rewrought, have been found along the littoral. It appears probable that the older flakes and cores from the direction of Larne and Belfast were drifted by currents along the coast, and that the flint-workers of a later date rewrought the old material. The flakes and cores of the older series, as they were rolled along, appear to have become reduced in bulk the farther they travelled away from their source: consequently the implements made from them become smaller than those of the same class in the north in proportion as the locality of their discovery is distant from the north. Though, at first sight, some of these chips might be taken for fragments detached by natural causes, yet, if closely examined, it will be perceived that the fractures have been effected by human agency. They possess distinct characteristics; one side displays a smooth surface, on which, however, there is a protuberance, or "bulb"

(styled by archæologists the *bulb of percussion*), while the reverse surface exhibits corresponding depression.

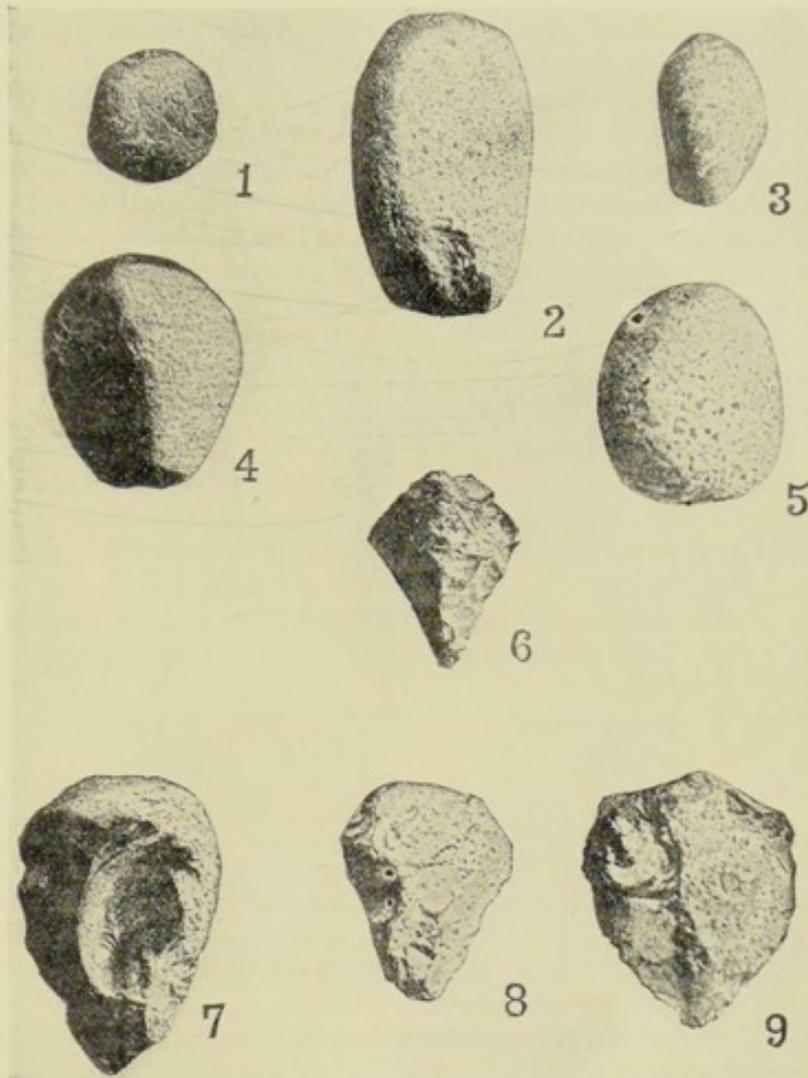


FIG. 27.

Hammer Stones and Rude Flint Implements of the Palæolithic type. One-third full size. By William Gray, M.R.I.A. From the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

As the bulb of percussion (see fig. 28) is a principal test for determining the artificial workmanship of flint flakes, it may be well to state that experiments in fracturing flint demonstrate that the bulb can only be produced by a blow; for when a blow is struck on the surface of an homogenous substance, such as flint,

a series of waves, all radiating from the point of impact, are produced through the body of the object struck, the fracture being determined by the course of these waves, and an imparted downward force. The cone, or bulb, which is sometimes steplike in character, is caused by these waves proceeding in concentric circles and the downward force. The bulb of percussion is not an accompaniment of natural fracture, for if flint splits through atmospheric influences, it breaks, like any other stone, into bulbless pieces of irregular form, whilst any smooth-grained stone, as well as flint, will, if fractured by a blow, show a bulb.

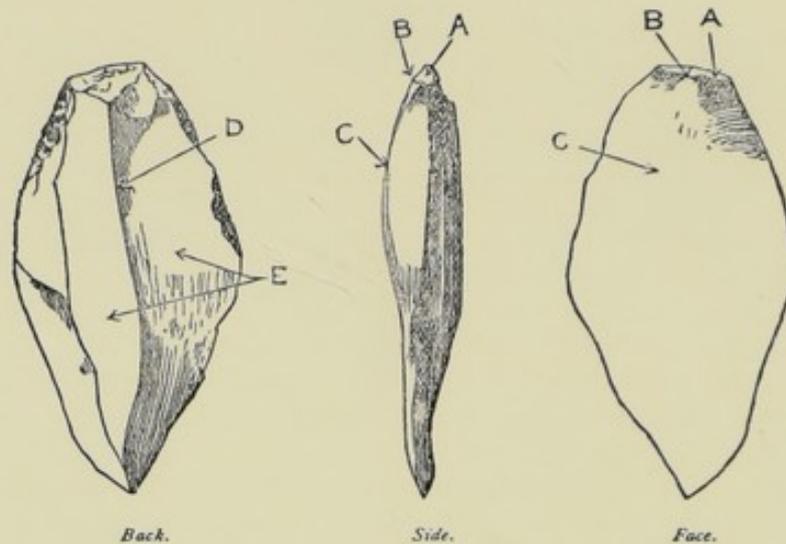


FIG. 28.

Typical Flint Flake. Half real size.

A. Flat end. B. Bulb of percussion, *i.e.* the point on which the blow is delivered.  
C. Conchoidal face, the result of the blow. D. Ridges. E. The surfaces or facets.

By William Gray, M.R.I.A. From the *Journal* of the present  
Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

To overturn this theory it has been argued that man—leaving anthropoid apes out of the question—is not the only agent which can produce a blow. For instance, a stone dropping from a precipice might fall upon another stone and fracture it, thus producing a bulb; or the ocean billows might hurl one stone against another and create a flake with a bulb. The theory of stones falling from a height would not, under the most favourable circumstances, produce a supply sufficient to permeate the entire of the gravels, and if the littoral, where flint is most abundant, were carefully examined, very few fresh flakes, knocked off by the agency of the waves, would be discovered. Even after a storm it is extremely improbable that a single newly-formed flake would be observed, though undoubtedly some, generally of very

diminutive size, are occasionally knocked off, for the tendency of the action of the waves is not to scale off large but minute flakes, and by rolling the stones one against the other, to round them into the form of ordinary seaside shingle.

It has been urged that the rudeness of flints from the gravels militates against their artificial character; but it must be remembered that a true Rude Stone or Palæolithic implement is really, of its kind, an object of very perfect workmanship. It is also self-evidently not the most primitive implement produced by man, for, if we are ever able to identify the embryos of which rude flint weapons are the developed products, we shall have penetrated very far back into the records of the dim past.

The difference between the implements of the older and newer Stone Periods is very marked, for the weapons of attack used by the earliest race of men at present known to us were necessarily heavier and more formidable when they had to overcome the mammoth and other like animals, than when the hunters had to strike down the deer and wild ox. The general use of light spear-heads and arrow-heads indicates conclusively change in the mode of attack, and also a difference in the kind of quarry to be attacked; it proclaims unmistakably that the old food supply was extinct, and that the new food supply was of lesser size than when ponderous spear-heads were an absolute necessity.

Even in the apparently simple subdivision of flint implements, archæologists are likely to be deceived, for unground implements with sharp points and thick, truncated butt have been found, together with polished implements, on the shores of Lough Neagh. Although analogous in form they differ in the character of workmanship and also in their proportions from flints found in the gravel. The difference, though slight, is such that whilst a solitary specimen might be taken as belonging to the Old Stone Age, yet if several were placed together they would at once impress an experienced observer as presenting later characteristics.

The uses to which some of these rude implements were put is almost self-apparent (fig. 29), but as regards the majority it is at present almost useless to speculate on the purpose to which they were applied. "Almost as well might we ask to what they would not be applied," remarks Sir John Lubbock. "Infinite as are our instruments, who would attempt, even at present, to say what was the use of a knife? But the primitive savage had no such choice of tools; we see before us, perhaps, the whole contents of his workshop, and with these weapons, rude as they seem to us, he may have cut down trees, scooped them out into canoes, grubbed up roots, killed animals and enemies, cut up his food,

made holes in winter through the ice, prepared firewood, built huts, and in some cases, at least, they may have served as sling-

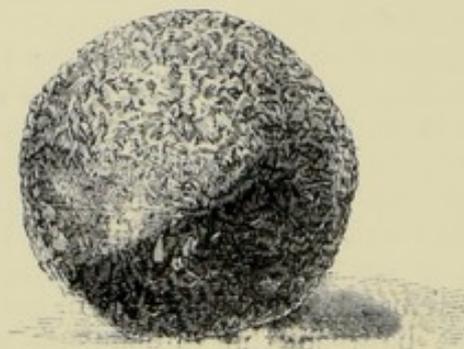


FIG. 29.

Hammer Stone, found with its surface battered all over, evidently by constant use as a pounder. Half-size. From Sir John Evans' "Rude Stone Implements."

stones. In fact they served all the uses which it nowadays takes a carpenter's kit to accomplish."\* (Fig. 30.)

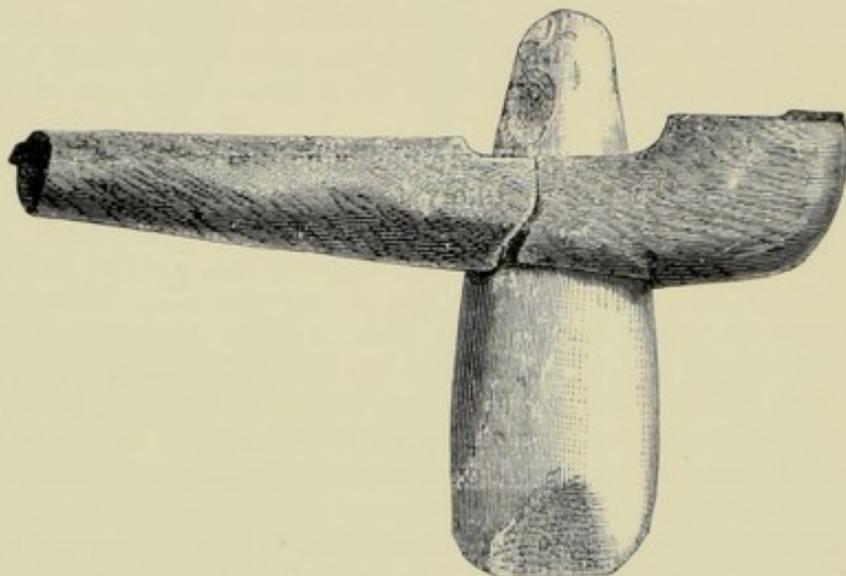


FIG. 30.

Stone Axe, retaining its wooden handle, found in peat, which had formed the bed of a small lake in Cumberland. Quarter real size. From Sir John Evans' "Rude Stone Implements."

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\* A curious discovery was made in the year 1880, of a small whinstone hatchet embedded in the heart of a trunk of ash. The girth of the tree at the place where the axe was cut out was ten feet; and its age, as calculated by the concentric rings, upwards of one hundred and twenty years: thus, though the discovery is curious, the deposition of the implement was far too recent to be of any practical archaeological value. In case of the future discovery of a stone

The archæologist is asked to fix a date to this period, which modern discovery has unrolled before our eyes; all he can say is that it is impossible not to sympathise with the yearning after knowledge, but so far as present data go it is impossible to frame a satisfactory answer; we are unable to see clearly so far back into the dim past, or to, as yet, describe the genesis of the human race.

In the Rude Stone Age, agriculture must have been almost unknown, the forest remained unfelled, hunting and fishing were the sole, or at any rate the principal, means of human livelihood; it was the discovery of copper that first enabled man to make clearings in the woods on any large scale, and to sow the land thus prepared with grain. If copper ore occurred anywhere in great abundance, it could not well have escaped attracting the attention of the early inhabitants of the country; they might, at first, have regarded it merely as a stone of peculiarly heavy material, and on commencing to chip and work it into shape would immediately notice that it yielded to the blow instead of splitting. It would not take a lengthened period before the savage would avail himself of the malleable nature of the stone, and would soon hammer out implements from the ore. A piece of copper falling into the fire would at once indicate its fusible characteristics, so that from hammering to casting implements there is not such a hiatus as a mere casual observer might imagine, for the whole history of human civilization has been one of slow but constantly accelerated progress.

The Older Stone Age, when men knew only how to rudely chip flint implements, was, as we have seen, one of immense and incalculable duration, to be reckoned, bold chronologists aver, by hundreds of thousands of years. There was improvement during all this long epoch, but the improvement was almost imperceptible; the rude chipped weapons of the drift gave way, at last, to the more shapely lance and arrow-heads of skin-clad cave men; even then vast epochs elapsed before the discovery of some prehistoric inventor of the art of grinding his weapons to an edge, instead of chipping them, and so the Neolithic or Polished Stone Period was entered on. Jade has been described as "an old world mineral," and objects found in Europe formed of this material are ascribed to an oriental source. The presence, in

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hatchet retaining its original handle it may be well to point out that the process of preserving wood, when in the sodden and brittle condition in which it is found after long burial in boggy matter is extremely simple. The danger to be guarded against, is that the objects becoming dry will split and contract, and so lose their original form. They must therefore be kept moist until they have been steeped, or boiled, in a strong solution of alum, after which process, if allowed to dry gradually, they retain their original shape.

small numbers, in Ireland, of axes formed of jade is unquestionable, but the manner and period of their transport thither, and their connexion with the place of their discovery, are questions yet to be determined. If the Continental, British, and Irish jadite axes be of Eastern origin, it undubitably points to a well-defined prehistoric trade existing between Asia and Europe. If commercial intercourse gives the true explanation of the presence of jade in Western Europe, how are we to account for the fact that bronze was not introduced to the West at the same time and by the same means?

At first a great many hard, tenaceous, and dense rocks, whose mineralogical natures were not well established, were classed together under the name of nephrite, and it is quite possible that some of the supposed oriental jade or nephrite axes may fall under the above category. Amongst so many conflicting and completely contradictory opinions it is impossible, with the knowledge at present at our disposal, to arrive at any final decision. It is alleged by some, denied by others, that veins of jade, which might have served to make these axes, have been found in certain localities, but satisfactory proofs of the identity of oriental jade, with that of the axes found in the European area, and of the absence of this stone therein, can alone definitely settle the question.

The Neolithic or Late Stone Age, although immeasurably long, as compared with the Bronze Age which follows, was very short when compared with the Older Stone Period that preceded it.

With the entry of copper on the scene, came enormous changes faster and faster, until the use of iron still further accelerated the rate of progress, yet the discovery of copper and the invention of bronze formed, in reality, the greatest epoch in civilization, the distinct turning point in the history of the human race. Of a pure Copper Age, in Ireland, or indeed in Europe in general, there are little certain traces, and many archæologists hold theories involving the Asiatic origin of bronze, and aver that when the use of copper was introduced into Europe it was also known that it was rendered harder and more serviceable when alloyed with tin.

The revolution effected by the introduction of metal in the early world has been compared with the revolution effected by railways and electricity in our own times, only the world of the Stone Age was so simply constructed that the change in it was, though much less sudden, probably even more marvellous in its comprehensiveness. The term "Stone Age," with its sub-titles, are correct descriptions, for during the entire period comprised in the Age of Stone, primitive man possessed no knowledge of metals; but the term "Bronze Age" is a misnomer, for it did not

succeed the Stone Age, it ran concomitantly, and even struggled on until finally extinguished by the introduction of iron.

Although the Bronze Age covered the shortest period of time, when compared either to that of stone or even to that of iron, it was, nevertheless, far the most important period, as it embraced the transition epoch, formed the connecting link, and furnished the transformation scene between savagery and civilization. It was the period when "The old order changes, giving place to new."

The North of Ireland has, for many years past, yielded a rich archaeological harvest in the exploration of the sites of primitive villages, huts, and refuse-heaps in their vicinity. The question has been discussed at some length as to whether the people who lived in these huts and raised these shell mounds along the beaches, lived permanently on the sea-shore, or only visited it at certain seasons of the year.

In primitive times families were purely nomadic, and, though in the Late Neolithic Period each tribe probably claimed and held a certain extent of territory, they were nomadic within its limit. Their chief means of livelihood must have been hunting, but at certain seasons of the year they gravitated towards the sea-shore for change to a fish diet, and as long as the fishing localities remained productive they would return, year after year, to the same place, leaving traces of their sojourn in the shell mounds, which in time will yet yield to us the complete story of this period of the past. The Irish peasant of the present day still delights in spending a few weeks of the summer at the seaside, and his prehistoric ancestors were evidently inspired by the same feeling. Of this, undoubted evidence has been left in the artificial hillocks which dot the littoral. Many of those that have been inspected lie only just above high-water mark, and are composed principally of the shells of crustacea and fractured bones, both of animals and fish; they may, in fact, be described as the remains of primitive man's summer picnic at the seaside. Scattered amongst them are hammer-stones abraded at the extremities, evidently used for breaking bones and shells; fragments of coarse earthenware and masses of charcoal are intermingled in the *débris* of past festivities. In the townland of Keele West, in the island of Achill, were three ancient shell-mounds, just above high-water mark, and in close proximity to each other (fig. 31). When examined it was found that the remains left by these primitive toilers of the sea had been almost entirely removed by the peasantry, who burned the shells for the purpose of reducing them to lime for whitening their homesteads; this process has been going on for years, so that the original size of the refuse-heaps must have been very great. Two of them,

however, had not been quite so much exploited as the first one noticed. Here were found hammer-stones and bones of wild pig, traces of charcoal, and shells of various marine crustaceæ.



FIG. 31.

Shell-Mound, Island of Achill.

There are a number of kitchen-middens on some small islands in the estuary forming Cork harbour. Two of the largest heaps, about 300 feet long, and from three to five feet in thickness, consisted principally of oyster-shells, with thin



FIG. 32.

Ancient Shell-Mound, Brown Island, Cork Harbour. From a drawing by G. M. Atkinson, reproduced from the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

layers of charcoal; sections, exposed through denudation by the sea, or by farmers carting away the deposit for agricultural purposes, afforded evidence of different periods of occupation of these sites (figs. 32, 33). With the exception of charcoal and some hammer-stones, no other evidence of artificial formation was noticed. Thus we see that primitive man, living on the littoral

had, at any rate, one very marked advantage over his nineteenth-century descendant, in that he had abundance of oysters and swallowed them freely without the qualifying dread that he was likewise swallowing the germs of typhoid fever.



FIG. 33.

Ancient Shell-Mound, Brick Island, Cork Harbour. From a drawing by G. M. Atkinson, reproduced from the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

As the season changed so did the home of these seaside folk. In summer they aired themselves in tents and wattled huts, in winter they returned inland and burrowed like the rabbits. These winter dens were entered by a hole in the roof, whilst to many of the larger retreats there was a subterranean passage, along which they crawled on hands and knees. Several families must have inhabited the larger class of dwellings, where fumes of oil lamps, stores of raw meat, and naked bodies smeared with grease and unguents combined to make an atmosphere which to our modern ideas would have been difficult to tolerate (fig. 34).

From the following passage in an Icelandic legend in the *Landnama* it appears that these underground retreats were used in Ireland in the ninth century:—"Leif went on warfare in the West. He made war in Ireland, and there found a large underground house; he went down into it, and it was dark until light shone from a sword in the hands of a man. Leif killed the man, and took the sword and much property. Therefore he was called Hjörleif (Sword-Leif). He made war widely in Ireland, and got much property."

The following tenth-century story, a Saga of Thorgils', quoted by MacRitchie in *Underground Life*, describes another raid on one of these souterrains. Thorgils and Gyrd, joint leaders of a band of Northern freebooters, "harried during summer with much gain, and exterminated many robbers and

evil-doers, but leaving genuine farmers and traders in peace. Towards summer they came to Ireland (to a place) where in front of them they discovered a forest. Just after entering the forest they came to a spot where they saw a tree whose leaves had fallen off. They pulled up the tree (evidently a sapling) and beneath it they found an underground chamber, wherein they saw men with weapons. Thorgils proposed to his people that whoever should be the first to go into the earth-house should become entitled to the three objects of booty which he desired, to which all agreed, except Gyrð. Then Thorgils sprang down



FIG. 34.

Ideal scene in an underground dwelling. From a sketch by W. F. Wakeman.

into the chamber, and encountered no opposition; and there were two women there, one of whom was young and beautiful, and the other old, yet not without good looks. Thorgils went about the chamber, whose roof rested upon upward-bent beams; he had a mace in his hand, wherewith he smote about him on either side, so that all fled before him. Thorstein went with him, and then they came out of the earth-house, and took the women, the young one as well as the elder, with them to the

ships. The people of the place now set out in pursuit of them, and Thorgils getting on board, they steered out from the shore. Now a man of the host which was pursuing them, stepped forward and harangued them, but they understood not his speech. Then the captured woman interpreted his story to them in Norse, and said: 'He will resign his claim to the goods you have taken, if only you will let us go. This man is an earl, and my son; but my mother's kindred are from Vik, in Norway. Follow my counsel, then will you best derive benefit from this rich booty, for trouble comes with the sword. My son is named Hugh, and he has proffered to thee, O Thorgils, other goods, rather than that you should carry me away, which could not be of any profit to you.' Thorgils agrees to their request, and brings them to land. The earl went joyfully towards Thorgils, and presented him with a gold ring; his mother gave him another, and the maiden gave him a third. Thereafter they bade each other a friendly farewell."

The habit of roving from place to place for the purpose of hunting, or for fresh pastures for cattle, continued in Ireland so late as the time of Queen Elizabeth, Spenser relates that the Irish in his time "kept their cattle and lived themselves, the most part of the year, in boolies (cow-houses), pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild plains, removing still to fresh land as they have depastured the former." Many laws were passed to prevent indiscriminate grazings but without avail. The late Sir William Wilde, in the year 1835, described this custom as in full force on the island of Achill, that during the spring the entire population of several of the villages on the island "close their winter dwellings, tie their infant-children on their backs, carry them with their loys (spades) and some corn and potatoes, with a few pots and cooking utensils, drive their cattle before them, and migrate into the hills, where they find fresh pasture for the flocks; and where they could build rude huts, or summer-houses of rods and wattles, called boolies, and then cultivate and sow with corn a few fertile spots in the neighbouring valleys. They thus remain for about two months of the spring and early summer, till the corn is sown. Their stock of provisions being exhausted, and the pasture consumed by the cattle, they return to the shore, and eke out a miserable and precarious existence by fishing. In the autumn they again return to the mountains, where they remain while the corn is being reaped."

Probably the most primitive dwellings in Ireland are the huts or boolies on the Island of Inishgloria. Rudely built, without mortar, roofed with sods, they are still inhabited, for about three months during the lobster fishing season. The height inside, from ground to rafters, does not permit of the occupants

assuming an upright position. The furniture consists of a rude bunk filled with straw, for sleeping in; large stones do duty for chairs: the cooking is done out of doors.

Fynes Moryson and Spenser describe the Irish of their day as sleeping in rude wattled shelters roofed with sods of turf or under the canopy of heaven, men and women together, in a circle round the camp fire, their feet towards it, their heads and the upward parts of their bodies wrapped in woollen mantles steeped in water, as experience had shown them that wetted woollen cloth retained heat, when the temperature of the bodies had warmed the cloth. The herds of cattle which these wanderers possessed were described as "multitudinous"; the aggregate of families that, in one body followed a herd, was called a "creaght," and so late as Elizabethan times almost the entire population of Ulster lived this wild and nomadic life. The cattle are described as very diminutive; even when almost starving the men would not kill a cow, they would open a vein and drink the blood.

A Fellow of Cambridge, who travelled in Ireland in 1670, notes the extremely meagre diet of the Irish of his time; he says:—"The Irish feed much upon herbs, watercresses, shamrocks, mushrooms, and roots. They also take beef broth, and flesh, sometimes raw, from which they have pressed out the blood. They do not care much for bread; but they give the corn to their horses, of whom they are very careful. They also bleed their kine, and as the blood stiffens to a jelly, they stew it with butter and eat it with great relish, washing it down with huge draughts of usquebaugh."

Unwholesome diet fosters disease. Dr. Boat in his *Natural History of Ireland* attributes the miserable state of leprosy, that in his day prevailed throughout Ireland to "the foul gluttony of the inhabitants in the devouring of unwholesome salmon." Other writers ascribed this affection to the raw state in which the natives were accustomed to devour animal food—

" 'Twas blood-raw meat  
Which they for constant food did eat,  
Affirming that all meat was spoil'd,  
That either roasted was, or boil'd."

W. J. Knowles seems to have been one of the most active and painstaking investigators of the sites of the more ancient settlements along the littoral. From the remains found, it is probable that their first occupiers were cannibals, for human and animal bones are strangely commingled. They appear to have been in an extremely rude state; no metal of any kind was found; there is scarcely a trace of polishing on their flint implements; and the pottery was coarse and sun dried. The print of his naked foot,

or those of wild animals in the soft earth, a clod hardened in the sunshine, or baked clay occurring in the ashes on the hearth, may have first suggested to primitive man the idea of forming vessels to hold liquids, wild seeds, fruits, or roots. Fragments of pottery have been rightly styled the cornucopia of archæological science, for generally abundant, pottery possesses two excellent

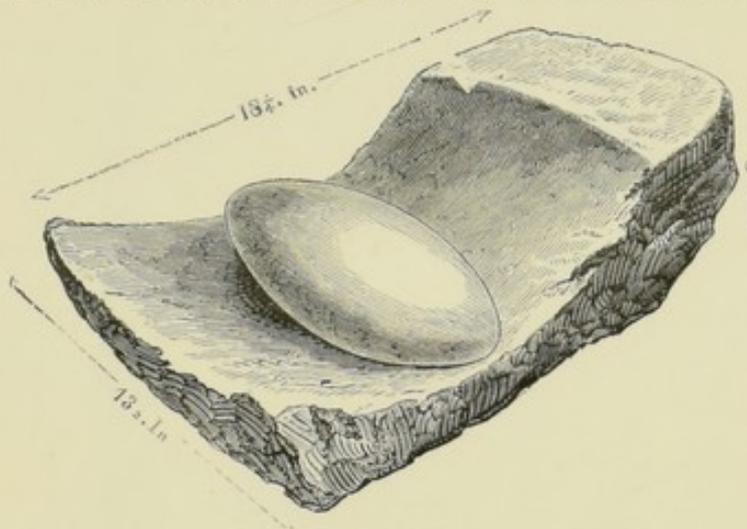


FIG. 35.

Grain-rubber. From Sir John Evans' "Rude Stone Implements."

qualities, being easy to break and yet difficult to destroy, rendering it very valuable in an archæological point of view, and investigation has shown that in some early settlements these primitive inhabitants of Erin had in use a distinctly characteristic style of rude pottery.

Grain rubbers, or mealing stones, found on sea-side sites do not



FIG. 36.

Grain-Grinder still used in the Aran Islands. From a sketch by W. F. Wakeman.

by any means presuppose an even rudimentary process of agriculture (fig. 35). Grain is but one of the many products which may be ground into a kind of flour; for most grasses produce very small edible kernels, as do also many trees and bushes, whilst nuts, acorns, dried roots of plants, and fruit, can all be reduced to a rough species of flour. Amongst some of the tribes of North America the roots of the common fern, or bracken, are, in everyday use,

either simply boiled, or crushed with a stone muller, and then roasted (fig. 36).



FIG. 37.

A Gift from the Ocean. A scene in the Stone Age.



FIG. 38.

Capture of a Basking Shark, Island of Achill. A scene in the 19th century.

The oldest Irish sea-side population at present known to us do not seem to have possessed domesticated animals; they, in fact, belonged to the Neolithic or Late Stone Age in Ireland, and to its earliest period. There was, however, in one locality evidence of a still older Stone Age. Along the shore, a short distance from some hut-sites, heavy and massive flint-flakes, covered with a thick crust, and glazed on the outside, were noticed. This crust is observable only on flints exposed to atmospheric influences; for flints buried in the ground, protected from air and moisture, do not weather. Several blocks of flint which had been used by the hut-building folk, thus crusted, when carefully examined, afforded evidence that they had been previously wrought in long distant times. This is a good example of an older and a newer Stone Age: a people dwelling in huts along the northern littoral, found rude and large cores, flakes and implements, which would appear to have been of a more archaic type than those they were in the habit of manufacturing, weathered, and deeply-crusted, when they picked them up. These they brought to their dwellings, and rewrought and finished them after their manner. A similar instance was noticed by the writer in some flint implements discovered in sepulchral cists of apparently the Late Neolithic Age at Carrowmore, near Sligo.

On the sites of prehistoric settlements, at Portnafeadog on the Connemara littoral, F. J. Bigger, M.R.I.A., the energetic editor of *The Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, found a large heap of methodically fractured shells of the dog-whelk (*purpura lapillus*). Anyone who broke a sufficient number of these shells, merely to satisfy his hunger, would have an arduous task, and the discoverer suggests that they were crushed to obtain the rich purple dye they afford. The colouring matter is of easy extraction if the shell be broken in a similar manner to the specimens found in the shell-mound of Portnafeadog. The settlement was of the Neolithic Age, at earliest, as broken bones of the horse, cow, sheep, pig and dog or wolf were found; no flint, metallic implement, or fragment of pottery was observed, but it is quite possible an Atlantic storm may, some day, by sweeping away the overlying sand, do good archaeological service.

In some sepulchral cists on the littoral the flat scales or plates of the sturgeon occur; weapons made of cetaceous bone are also not infrequent, and the sea-side population may have often received the gift from the ocean of a dead whale, a dead basking shark, or other great marine monster, on which they could gorge, and could afterwards utilize its skeleton in the formation of weapons (fig. 37). On the western coast the whale and the basking shark, or sunfish, are even yet a not uncommon capture, particularly off the island of Achill (fig. 38).

Whitepark Bay (fig. 39), on the north coast of Antrim, bordered by a broad sweep of white sand, backed by low chalk cliffs, shut in on one side by Bengore Head and on the other by the rocks which fringe the shore near Ballintoy, is well known for the abundant prehistoric objects which it yields, and which show that it was an important settlement of earlier races. Rude flint implements, bones, fragments of pottery and charcoal, occur in certain definite layers, which represent the ancient land surface. This is now buried below many feet of blown-sand; yet the sand constantly shifts, under the influence of the wind, exposing the old surface, and thus traces of the former inhabitants are again exposed to the light of day.

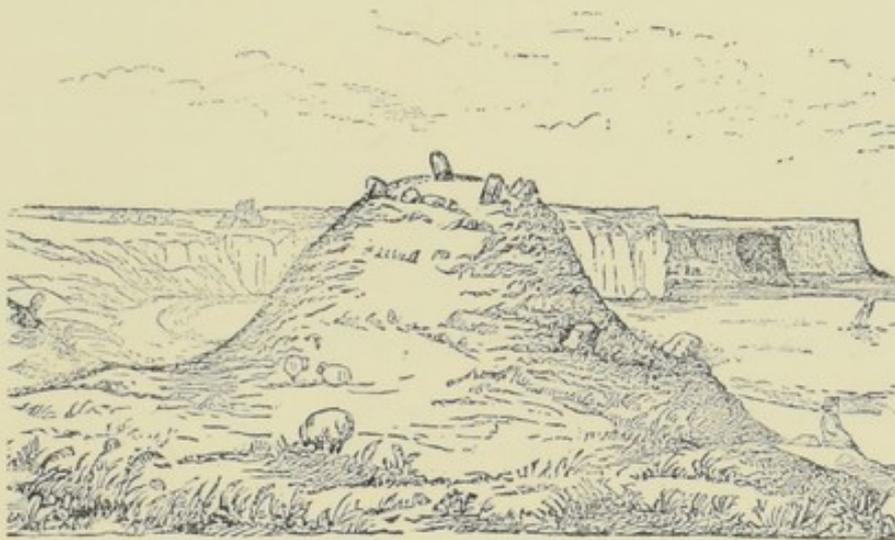


FIG. 39.

Whitepark Bay, looking West. A typical site of an Ancient Sea-side Settlement. From a sketch by William Gray, M.R.I.A., reproduced from the *Journal of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*.

A site examined and described by W. J. Knowles, at Ballyned, county Donegal, may be taken as a good illustration of these seaside remains. The beach, where the various objects used by these primitive folk had been found, was, not many years ago, covered with sand hills, thirty feet in height. It has now been swept bare through the action of the wind, and is in places studded with old hut-sites, and their hearths with black matter underneath, full of shells; a few hammered stones and rounded and broken quartzite pebbles, some cracked from heat, others evidently split into sharp-edged pieces by hammering. Those quartzite flakes and spalls must have been intentionally made, though there was no evidence of dressing, such as is found on flint implements.

Articles of bronze and iron, glass and porcelain beads, and even coins have been found in several of these sandhills; for instance, a coin of Queen Elizabeth at Dundrum, and a halfpenny of Queen Victoria at Portstewart. "Such finds," writes W. G. Knowles, "have caused some of my archæological friends to look on flint implements as belonging to a comparatively late period, so late as to be at least contemporary with iron objects. But as yet there is no evidence that metal of any kind was used conjointly with the flint tools (*i.e.* in the ancient seaside settlements). The old surface is the test for contemporaneousness. Whatever is dug out of it must have been in use at the same time, and any implements lying loose on the surface, similar to those contained in the old surface, must be classed with them. But there have also been found, lying on the present surface among the worked flints, grains of shot, cartridge cases, scraps of iron, such as nails, broken bottles, portions of old shoes, and stray coins of late date." It is not surprising that modern articles have been trampled into the old surface where it is exposed, and thus become stumbling blocks to archæologists. Although some of these sea-side settlements belong exclusively to a flint-using folk, many apparently lingered on to the time when bronze was in use, and possibly to the period of the introduction of iron, and even to comparatively recent times. The Neolithic Age in Ireland may, in some places, reach back to the same period as in England; but, on the other hand, it may in other places be advanced to times comparatively modern.

Blown sand is an excellent preserver of prehistoric remains. This is best exemplified in places where the sand is not over deep or too much exposed to strong winds, for in exposed places the old surface has been broken up and obliterated, and in such cases it is only in parts some distance inland that undisturbed remains are found. Some portion of the old surfaces after having been denuded of their sandy covering, become covered with a grassy sward, and acquire another sandy covering, which leads to the belief that these may be cases of an old surface having had its covering blown away, and another formed repeatedly since the sandhills were occupied by a prehistoric folk. If the Neolithic inhabitants came here on foot with the other recent fauna of the country, many of the earliest remains near the coast have probably been destroyed by denudations, but those now remaining show the old culture of some of our earliest settlers. Apparently they first occupied the littoral, and spread inland along the various waterways (fig. 40). On the shores of the Bann, implements are found similar to those from the sandhills, which favours the opinion that these people knew little, if anything, of agriculture. They appear to have been hunters, living on the great Irish deer (one

bone only has been found), ox, pig, sheep or goat, and red deer ; there are also remains of horse, and dog or wolf, but whether these three latter were domesticated or were hunted and used for food, like the other animals, remains to be proved. Among the birds are traces of goose, gull, duck, and great auk ; from the number of bones of the latter bird, it must have been very abundant in the North of Ireland at the time the people of the Stone Age occupied the coast line.

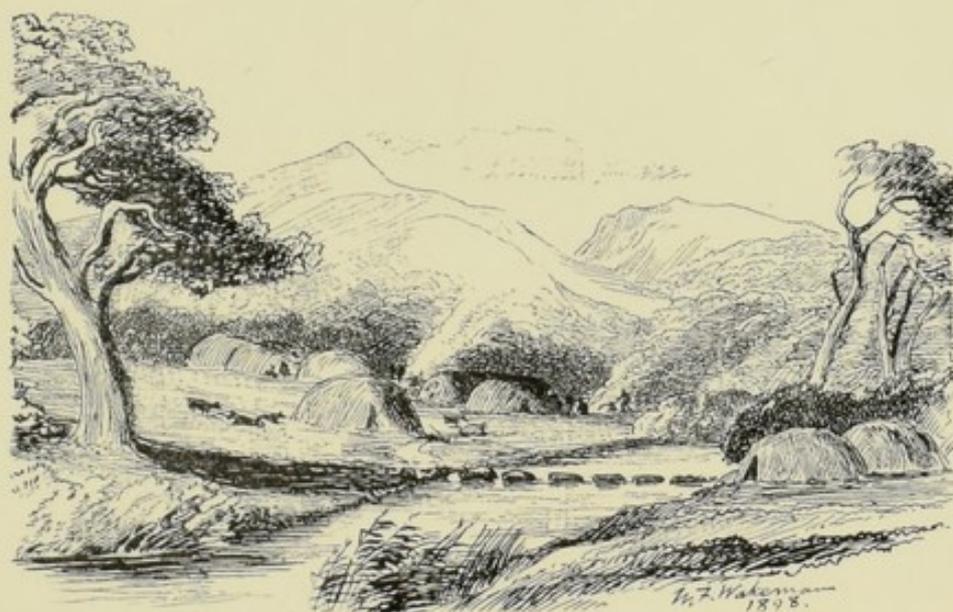


FIG. 40.

Ideal scene. Inland settlement of the Stone Age.

Among present-day savages the men undertake no physical exertion, save such as is incurred in the chase, in the supply of meat or fish for the family ; beyond this, the males decline all manual labour, and relegate it to the women folk, who gather wood, light and keep up the fires, cook, fabricate culinary utensils and pottery, scrape, fashion and sew skins for clothing, and like beasts of burden carry about the household goods, from camp to camp, as the locality is changed, for the purpose of seeking a better area for food-supply. This must also have been the manner of life of a family in Ireland in the olden times.

The accompanying illustration (fig. 41) represents an imaginary scene of old sea-side life. To the left are a couple of natives engaged in the erection of a hut ; traces of such frail "boodies" are still observable on many points on the coast. In plan they were usually circular, or more or less oval. There can be little or no doubt that the roof was composed of bent boughs

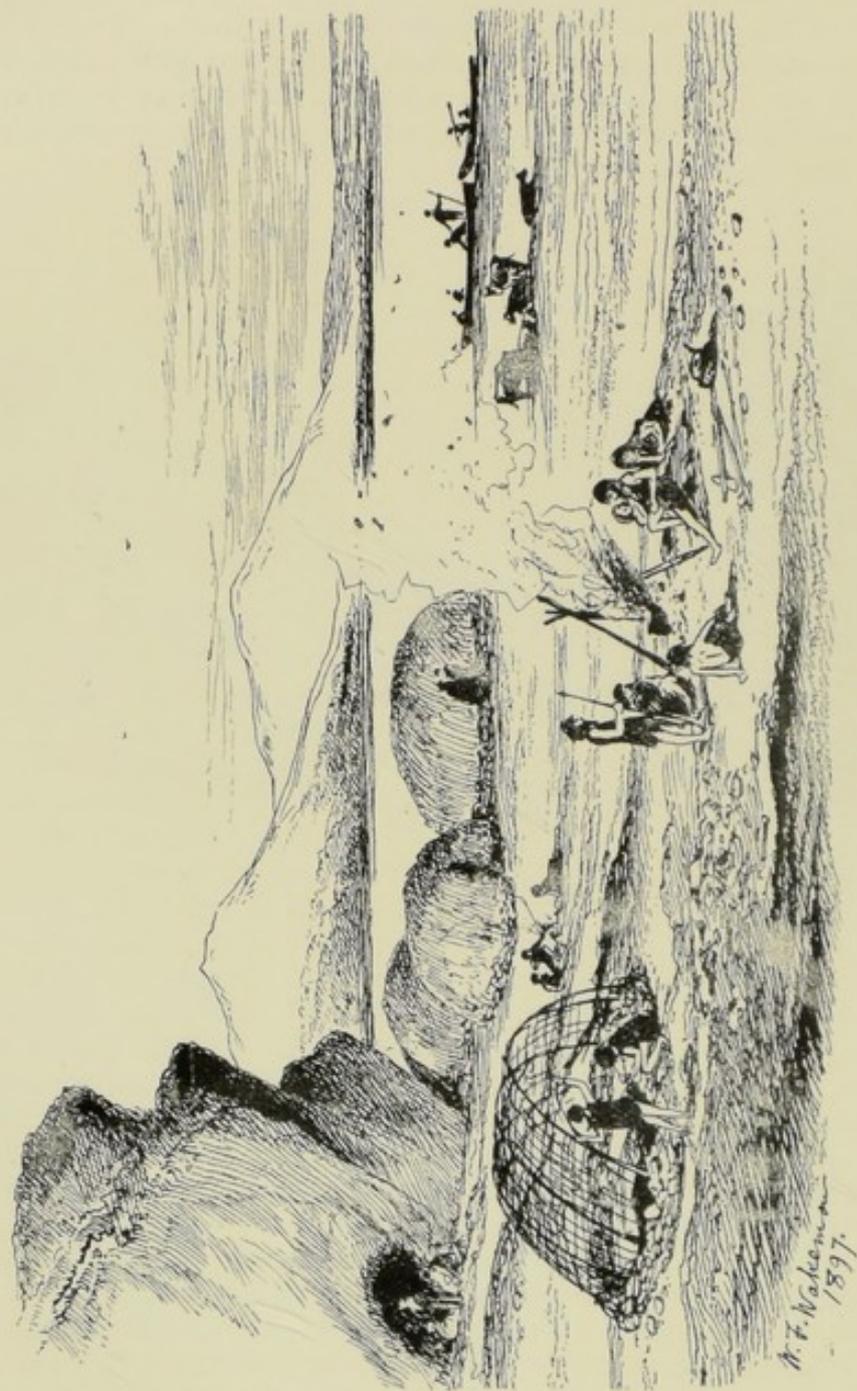


FIG. 41.

Imaginary scene of old sea-side life in the Stone Age.

or saplings, forming a kind of basket-work (fig. 42), covered with *scraws*, or thin strips of the surface of grassy land. The ends of the saplings would appear to have been inserted in the sand or soil of

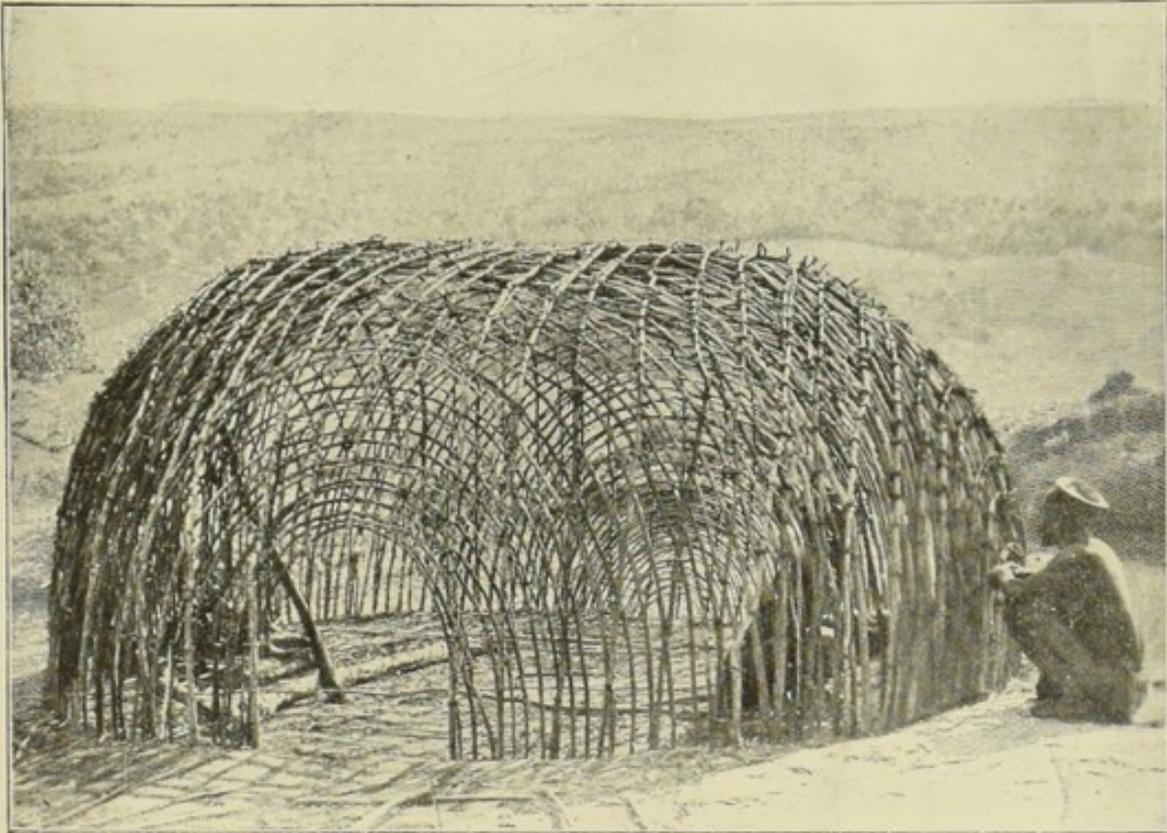


FIG. 42.

Skeleton framework of Kaffir Hut, South Africa, showing roof and side-walls composed of bent bough. Photo, *World Magazine*.

the sea-shore, at a little distance above high-water mark, and to have been secured in their position by an uncemented stone wall of slight elevation (fig. 43). In the foreground is present a party of the natives seated round a cooking-place. Quantities of broken pottery, of rude description, are found round many of these hearths. Judging by the remains, some of the larger cooking pots were furnished with ears by which they might be suspended over a fire. In the middle distance is a group of the small aboriginal cattle which formed the herds of Ireland in remote ages. On the margin of the sea are shown boats, formed out of a single piece of timber, such as were used by these people, and, probably, for centuries later, by their descendants.

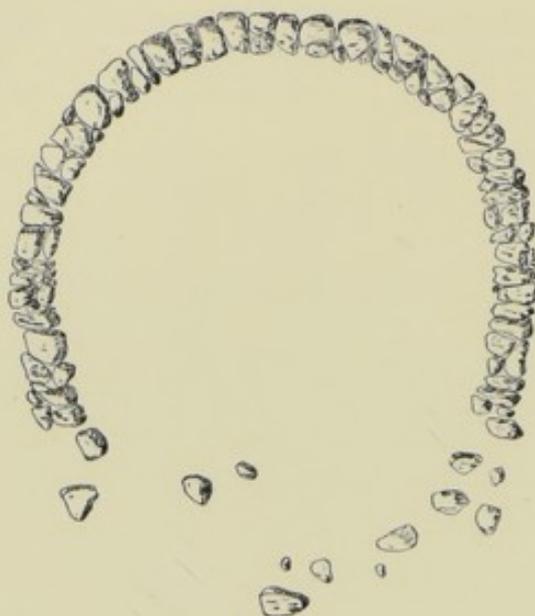


FIG. 43.

Sketch-plan of uncemented Stone Wall in an Irish prehistoric sea-side settlement : the saplings thus secured in position, forming the framework of side-walls and roof. From a sketch by W. J. Knowles, in the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

Although probably very diminutive folk, popular tradition depicts some of these primitive fishermen as beings of gigantic stature. Great Man's Bay, in Iar Connaught, took its name from one of these supposed giants, and the country people show a large hollow rock, which they call his churn, and three other rocks, which supported the caldron wherein he boiled the whales which he caught with :

‘ His angle-rod, made of a sturdy oak ;  
His line a cable, which in storms ne'er broke.’

The inhabitants of these sea-side settlements probably daubed themselves with pigments, but in this fashion they were not a whit more barbarous than the primitive inhabitants of Great Britain ; for there can be little doubt that the Palæolithic and Neolithic inhabitants of Britain used a red pigment as a substitute for clothing, and its use was continued for personal decoration to a comparatively late period. The use of pigments of various descriptions dates back to a very early period ; pieces of hematite, with the surfaces scraped, apparently by means of flint-flakes, have been found in the Continental caves of the Reindeer Period, so that this red pigment appears to have been in early favour with savage man.

Irish cave-dwellers have also left behind them flints, bearing unmistakable marks of attrition ; from remains found

near them, one of the uses to which they were put is believed to have been the production of a red pigment by scraping pieces of hard hematite iron ore. In cold countries the use of pigments may have arisen as a protection against the inclemency of the weather; in warm countries as a protection against heat and stinging insects. From these beginnings the custom might easily become crystallized into habit. In many localities, in the present day, fishermen and sportsmen frequenting marshy places, smear their faces and hands with certain kinds of thick ointment, to make themselves proof against the stings of insects with which the air is filled. Among many wild tribes of Patagonia both men and women paint their faces and their arms with ochre, and other coloured daub; this process is said to protect the skin from the solar rays and from the dryness of the atmosphere.

Lumps of colouring matter, of various hues, but principally red, have been found on the sites of Irish lake dwellings. The red pigment may, however, have been employed for the purpose of coating the exterior of earthenware crocks. The practice of placing paint beside the dead is yet observed among the North-American Indians:—

“The paints that warriors love to use  
Place here within his hand,  
That he may shine with ruddy hues  
Amidst the Spirit Band.”

We are not left to conjecture, or forced to draw analogies from the habits of present day savages as to the manner in which late flint or bronze-using man, in Ireland, clothed himself.

The uniform pressure, together with the soft and yielding nature of peat, as a general rule, preserves fragile objects embedded in it from injury, whilst the peculiar antiseptic property of bog water—impregnated with the tannin of the innumerable roots and fibres which constitute peaty matter—preserves objects formed of animal material, of wood, iron, and other destructible substances deposited in it.

During the last century several human bodies, still retaining their clothing, are recorded as having been discovered in bogs, but they were so archæologically neglected as to afford little information on the subject of ancient costumes.

In a bog, in the parish of Derryreighan, county Antrim, a skin cape was found in the year 1861 at a considerable depth below the surface. It measures 24 inches in length; its width at one edge is 36, and at the other 50 inches. The material used in the sewing consists of two strands twisted together to form one thread, and judging by their length, they are probably the sinews

of some large animal. The holes made by the needle are small, the sewing regular, the top and bottom of the cloak bordered by a double thong stitched in a most elaborate manner. From the small size of all the pieces of skin employed in the formation of the cape, it is highly probable that the animals which furnished the fur were diminutive; the joining is executed so skilfully as to present, externally, a uniform appearance. The skins have been completely tanned, either intentionally, or by the long continued action of bog water (fig. 44).



FIG. 44.

Sketch showing manner in which the cape was probably worn. Reproduced from the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*.

So late as quasi-historical times, the charioteer of the hero Cuchullin is described as clothed in a mantle of deer-skin; leather cloaks are mentioned as worn by the followers of the Ulster Chief, Murtoch MacNeill, when, in the year 942, he marched around Ireland (figs. 45, 46).

In the year 1821 a human body completely clad in a deer-skin garment was found, ten feet below the then surface of a bog, at Gallagher, near Castle Blakeney, county Galway. The head, legs, and feet were bare; the body was clad in a tunic of deer-skin which reached to the knees and elbows, and was laced in front with leather thongs. The seams present good specimens of early needlework, each stitch of fine gut, knotted, so that it was almost impossible for it to rip. When first dug up, dress and

body were quite perfect ; the corpse was that of a man, at least six feet in height, of middle age, with long dark hair and partially grown beard. The body was at once re-interred, but it was dug



FIG. 45.

Seven figures on the Cross of Kilkispeen, showing hoods to cloaks.  
From a drawing by O'Neil.

up, on various occasions, for inspection by the curious ; consequently, body and clothing were much injured ; had they been preserved in their state as first discovered, no museum could have boasted of a more valuable example of early man and of his



FIG. 46.

Three figures on the Cross at Tuam, showing hoods to cloaks.  
From a drawing by O'Neil.

clothing. This "Irish Mummy," though covered with a glass case, has, since its removal from the damp crypt of the Royal Irish Academy to the dry, but equally dark and gloomy room in the

Science and Art Museum, been rapidly drying and shrivelling, and is now little more than tattered ligaments and bones. The gloom surrounding it renders a sketch most difficult, in fact, the want of light and want of methodical arrangement in the National Collection of Antiquities would disgrace a mere provincial Museum. (Fig. 47.)

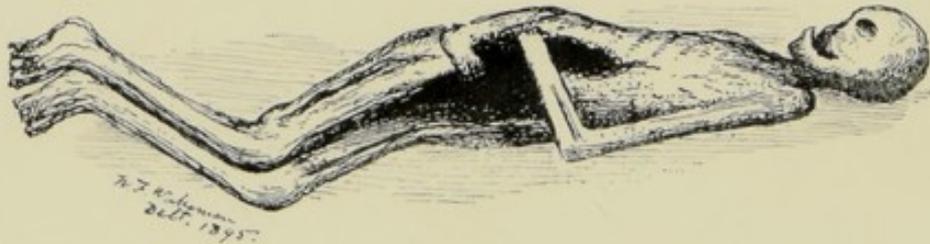


FIG. 47.

"The Irish Mummy." In the Collection of Antiquities of the R.I.A.

Captain Cuellar's graphic description of the Irish, with whom he spent seven months after his escape from the wreck of one of the vessels of the Spanish Armada, cast away on the Irish coast, is as follows:—"They live in huts made of straw. The men have big bodies, their features and limbs are well made, and they are as agile as deer. They eat but one meal a day, and their ordinary food is oaten bread and butter. They drink sour milk, as they have no other beverage, but no water, although it is the best in the world. They dress in tight breeches and goatskin jackets, cut short, but very big, and wear their hair down to their eyes."

In a sessions of Parliament, held in Dublin in the year 1295, an Act was passed minutely describing this "Coulin" or "Glibbe" for its more effectual prohibition. A few of the Irish chieftains, who lived near the Pale, cut off their "Glibbes"—a memorial of the event was made in writing, but it may be observed that, until the commencement of the present century, these glibbes, or long locks of hair, and the old Irish mantle were to be seen in some of the most western parts of Ireland. This mode of wearing the hair may be studied by reference to fig. 48, drawn by a native artist about the year 1400. It represents the uncovered head and flowing locks of an archer of the period, in the Knockmoy fresco, and accords with the description of O'Neill's Gallowglasses, who accompanied their chief to the Court of Elizabeth.



FIG. 48.

Glibb fashion of wearing the hair. Reproduced from the Catalogue R.I.A.

A curious entry in a MS. Survey of the County Sligo, (Strafford's Inquisition) of 1633-6, calls for notice. When making mention of the townland of "Carowtampull," in the Parish of Emlaghfad, Barony of Corran, that denomination of land is described as having "a great scope of bogge and drown-ing places," which latter term is supposed to designate the holes and quagmires left when cutting away the peat for fuel. Several bodies have, from time to time, been dug up from considerably below the surface, the persons having evidently met their death through inability to extricate themselves from the treacherous depths. The corpse of "a lady," clad in antique costume, is stated to have been discovered, many years ago, on the summit of Benbulbin; and so late as the year 1824, the body of a man, completely clad in woollen garments of antique fashion, was found, six feet beneath the surface of a bog, in the parish of

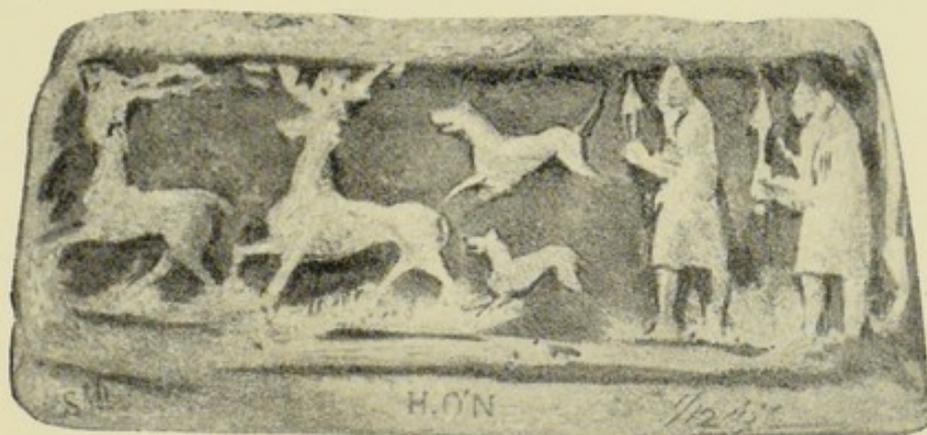


FIG. 49.

Two hunters on the North Cross of Clonmacnoise, with conical caps.  
From a drawing by O'Neil.

Killery. No weapon was discovered near the corpse, but a long staff lay under it. The head dress, which soon fell into pieces, is said to have been a conical cap of sheepskin (fig. 49). So perfect was the body, when first discovered, that a magistrate was called to hold an inquiry about it. Fig. 50, drawn from a person clad in this antique suit (except the shoes, which are very small), found on the body of a man discovered in a bog in Killery, Co. Sligo, furnishes a representation of the costume of the native Irish about the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The cloak or mantle was of soft closely-woven brown cloth, the coat was also of a coarse brown woollen cloth. The trousers, or trews, of coarser material than the coat, consisted of two distinct parts differing both in colour

and texture. The legs must have fitted the limbs tightly, and these close fitting trousers are evidently the ancient



FIG. 50.

Ancient costume. Reproduced from the Catalogue R.I.A.



FIG. 51.

"Wild Irishman." From Speed's Map of the Year, 1610.

Irish chequered or many coloured lower garments, explaining, by the way they were attached to the sacculated portion above, and the shoes below, an obscure expression in Giraldus Cambrensis, when he says "The Irish wear breeches ending in shoes, or shoes ending in breeches." This suit, one of the most ancient specimens of native

manufacture which has come down to modern times, is woven with a twill, and, when carefully examined the warp is found to be composed of three plies, twisted together, while the weft consists of the untwisted woollen staple. This peculiarity of the twill resembles that figured in the cloak of the "Wild Irishman," engraved in Speed's map of 1610 (figure 51 and figure 52 that of a "Wild Irishwoman"). The male figure also shows the "glibbe" fashion of wearing the hair, as well as the kind of leggings, or long boots, used by the peasantry at that time.

In fig. 53, No. 1, taken from a rare engraving, purporting to be "*drawn after the Quicke,*" preserved in the Bodleian library, although of a comparatively modern date, exhibits an Irish warrior grasping an iron sword of the peculiar form of the ancient leaf-shaped blade of bronze, and clad in garments of probably a pattern quite as antique. In No. 2 we see the Irish "skene"; No. 3 represents the Irish Chief, O'More, in



FIG. 52.

"Wild Irishwoman." From Speed's Map of the Year, 1610.

the year 1600; No. 4 is an Irish agent employed by the Government to treat with the insurgent chiefs; No. 5 is a "kern" of the period, with mantle, and armed with an Irish axe; No. 6 is a Scottish Highlander wearing the plaid.



FIG. 53.

Irish and Highland costumes, from MSS. and early printed books.  
Reproduced from the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*.

Spenser's description of the Irish cloak has been often quoted "a fit house for an outlaw, a meet bed for a rebel, and an apt cloak for a thief." He further observed that the cloak, being the simplest costume, constitutes the early dress of most uncivilized nations.

Le Gouz, a Frenchman—and therefore considered to be an impartial witness—who traversed a great portion of Ireland in

the year 1644, gives a minute description of the costume of the Irish, not omitting the mantle, so characteristic of the national costume: "The Irish, whom the English call 'wild,' have for their head-dress a little blue cap, raised two fingers breadth in front and behind, covering their head and ears. Their doublet has a long body and four skirts, and their breeches are a pantaloon of white frize, which they call trowsers. Their shoes, which are pointed, with a single sole, they call brogues. For cloaks they have five or six yards of frize, drawn round the neck, the body, and over the head, and they never quit this mantle, either sleeping, working, or eating. . . . The girls of Ireland, even those living in towns, have for their head-dress only a ribbon, and if married they have a napkin on the head, in the manner of the Egyptians. The body of their gowns comes only to their breasts, and when they are engaged in work they gird their petticoat, with their sash above the abdomen. They wear a hat and mantle, very large, of brown colour, of which the cape is of coarse woollen frize, in the fashion of the women of Lower Normandy."

Octavian de Palatio, a Florentine, Primate of Ireland in 1480, is reputed to be the author of this curious Latin satire on the inhabitants of Armagh:—

"Civitas Armachana  
Civitas Vana,  
Absque bonis moribus:  
Mulieres nudae  
Carnes crude  
Paupertas, in Aedibus."

Which Harris thus translates:—

"Armagh is notorious,  
For being vain-glorious,  
The men void of manners; their spouses  
Go naked; they eat  
Raw flesh for their meat,  
And poverty dwells in their houses."

An even more startling picture is drawn by a Bohemian nobleman of the nakedness of the Ulster population. He was met at the door of the residence of the Irish Chief, O'Kane, by sixteen women, all naked, except their loose mantles. Even the chief had nothing on except the same kind of cloak and shoes; these he took off as soon as he entered the house, turned to his guest, and "desired him to put off his apparel, which he thought to be a burden to him."

Maories wear blankets, Esquimaux skin dresses; but directly they enter their huts every article of clothing is cast aside. This

is essential to health, for the skin does not perspire freely in a confined space, especially when garments of hide are worn, and the human system imperatively demands periods of whole or partial nudity. As is usual with purblind enthusiasts, Christian missionaries, not content with essaying to change an old religion for a new one, have laboured to induce the natives to abandon their ancient and wholesome custom, the outcome of long centuries of experience, and in the ratio in which missionaries succeed they kill off their converts by pulmonary consumption. It is the same all the world over, where civilization and the missionaries come in contact with savage races. A writer describing South Africa says, that "On this subject the bulk of authority is to the effect that civilization at present harms the negro by exposing him to diseases he never knew before. In his savage state the black man goes naked, and becomes strong by a constant contact with the fresh air. The first thing done for the happy black heathen is to make him wear uncomfortable clothing, in which he sweats and breeds poisonous microbes with horrible fluency. He never changes his clothing, and when he gets wet he knows no better than to dry them by sitting close to the fire. In this way he contracts fever, and undermines an otherwise robust constitution."

One can thus readily understand how travellers in the Middle Ages, and even in Elizabethan times, were startled by the apparent nakedness of the Irish, who, on entering their low, heated and stifling habitations conformed to ancient custom and threw off their clothing. At the same time, it must be admitted that habit is everything, for Pillontier describes how little some savages regard exposure to cold. A savage lying down naked was asked if he was not cold. "Is your face cold?" answered the man. The inquirer, of course, replied in the negative. "Neither do I feel cold," retorted the savage, "for I am all face."

In a recent work on ancient Egypt, there is a representation of a statuette from Gizah, of a woman crushing corn on a saddle-quern, and in the same state of nature in which Fynes Moryson describes Irish "young maidens stark naked, grinding corn with certain stones, to make cakes thereof." Captain Cuellar, before quoted, an officer belonging to the Spanish Armada, states that women, when at work indoors, were in a state of nature. On an island off the coast of Ireland a monastery was founded by St. Fechin in the seventh century, for the conversion of the inhabitants, who were then pagan. Cambrensis afterwards describes them as "homines nudi, qui non sciverunt nisi carnes et pisces; qui non fuerant Christiani, nec audiverunt nunquam de Christo." Two "wild" Irish, picked up at sea in their currach, are thus described by the same writer: "Habebant etiam,

Hibernico more, comas perlongas et flavas trans humeros deorsum corpus ex magna parte tegentes."

In trying to picture to ourselves the life led by ancient Irish dwellers on the littoral, we are helped by accounts descriptive of savages placed under similar circumstances in the present day.

Tribes of Chukshes dwell in tents formed of skins on sand-dunes near the coast. These dunes are bestrewn with their broken implements and refuse of the chase. Although from trading with civilized nations the more important weapons of the natives are now made of metal, yet they still employ stone and bone implements.

A shipwrecked sailor, who lived some time amongst the Fuegians, describes the men as expert at making flint arrow- and spear-heads. The women really do all the work, as the men, except when hunting, lie about the huts. If a dead seal were cast ashore, they gorged themselves on the raw, and sometimes putrid flesh and blubber. When they killed an animal in hunting, they fell upon it, cut it in pieces, and ate it raw. Sometimes the tribe, with which the sailor was for a time domesticated, would be on the move for days; then perhaps would settle down for weeks. Occasionally they lived on the sea-shore, subsisting chiefly on raw shell-fish.

Darwin gives a graphic account of some wretched tribes, eking out a miserable existence on the sea-shore of Tierra del Fuego, who supported themselves principally on shellfish, and who were totally ignorant of agriculture. His word-painting will enable us more faithfully to picture to ourselves the state of the population which once lived in a very similar manner on the Irish littoral: "The inhabitants, living chiefly upon shell-fish, are obliged constantly to change their place of residence; but they return, at intervals, to the same spots, as is evident from the piles of old shells. . . . The Fuegian wigwam resembles in size and dimensions a haycock. It merely consists of a few broken branches stuck in the ground, and very imperfectly thatched on one side with a few tufts of grass and rushes. The whole cannot be so much as the work of an hour, and it is only used for a few days. . . . Whenever it is low water, they must rise to pick shell-fish from the rocks; and the women, summer and winter . . . sit patiently in their canoes, and, with a baited hairline, jerk out small fish. If a seal is killed, or the floating carcass of a putrid whale discovered, it is a feast; such miserable food is assisted by a few tasteless berries and fungi. Nor are they exempt from famine; and, as a consequence, cannibalism is accompanied by parricide."

If it be thought that this picture is overdrawn, it may be well to quote another description, by Darwin, of such of the inhabi-

tants of Wollaston Island as came under his notice. The climate of the coast of Tierra del Fuego is certainly not milder than that of the western littoral of Ireland. While rowing to shore the party pulled alongside a canoe in which were six Fuegians, the most abject and miserable creatures Darwin ever beheld. "On the east coast the natives have guanaco cloaks, and on the west they possess sealskins. Amongst the central tribes the men generally possess an otter skin, or some small scrap about as large as a pocket handkerchief, which is barely sufficient to cover their backs as low down as their loins. It is laced across the breast by strings, and, according as the wind blows, it is shifted from side to side. But these Fuegians in the canoe were quite naked, and even one full-grown woman was absolutely so. These poor wretches were stunted in their growth, their hideous faces bedaubed with white paint, their skin filthy and greasy, their hair entangled, their voices discordant, their gestures violent and without dignity. Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe they are fellow-creatures and inhabitants of the same world. . . . At night, five or six human beings, naked, and scarcely protected from the wind and rain of this tempestuous climate, sleep on the wet ground coiled up like animals."

Accounts like these may perhaps help us to form an idea of the life led by the sea-shore dwellers of ancient Erin.

With regard to these degraded savages, Darwin, at the time, expressed the opinion that he considered them utterly incapable of being either civilized or Christianized; but many years afterwards he was so struck with the success of the missionaries in that part of the world, that he thereupon contributed annually to the mission funds. The failure of Christian missionaries in some tropical regions has been before alluded to; so that this striking success in an almost antarctic region deserves the same prominent notice.

We have seen that a wide scope for investigation is opened up by examination of the refuse-heaps of the primitive inhabitants, whether occurring near the sites of settlements along the sea-shore, in caves, near earthen or stone forts, or lake-dwellings. Up to the present these latter have afforded most information, and proved most prolific in traces of the past life of their inhabitants. If careful examination be made of a kitchen-midden exposed to view by the simple drainage of water from the site of a lake-dwelling, the antiquities discovered afford tolerably correct and safe data from which to calculate the age of the structure. The most usual site of the refuse thrown out of the lake-dwelling is at the entrance to the stockade of the lake dwelling, where was formerly the landing stage or gangway leading to the shore. These refuse-heaps form a perfect mine of antiquities, for every

fractured or useless article of household gear was thrown into them. Hence, the objects, though numerous, are generally in an imperfect condition. The accumulated mass of bones—invariably found in a broken state for extraction of the marrow—is, in some instances immense. It is estimated that at Lagore, in Meath, about two hundred tons were sold for manure; three hundred tons were exhumed from the kitchen-midden of one of the lake-dwellings in Loughrea, county Galway; and fifty tons from that of Ardakillen, county Roscommon.

In the course of demolishing Dumbell Rath, County Kilkenny, many objects of antiquarian interest were turned up together with an enormous quantity of animal bones, consisting chiefly of the remains of oxen, horses, deer, and swine; in fact, such a mine of osseous remains was opened, that two labourers contracted with the tenant to perform the work of trenching the rath, receiving for remuneration only the bones they met with, and they earned, for a considerable period, from two to three shillings a-day, by the sale of bones at the rate of eightpence per stone. The majority of the bones were those of cattle, evidently slaughtered by the rath-dwellers for food; the greatest quantity occurred at the bottom of the inner fosse, having been thrown in there apparently in order the more readily to dispose of them. The cooking-places, in which the flesh of these animals was dressed, consisted of ten small circular-shaped pits, not exceeding one foot and a-half in diameter, by two feet in depth; they were not faced with stones, but had been simply dug out in the floor of the rath, and were full of charcoal, burned or calcined stones, and charred bones; some of the deposits of ashes were almost white, whilst in others the wood-remains were not entirely consumed.

It was evident, however, that the ancient occupants of Dumbell Rath did not subsist entirely on animal food, for their granivorous propensities were sufficiently testified by the discovery of a number of querns or handmills of various sizes, for grinding corn. A considerable quantity of other rude domestic utensils were also brought to light.

The result of the investigation of this rath-site furnished a not uninteresting glimpse of the past domestic economy of the inhabitants. We should now-a-days esteem their condition as very barbarous, notwithstanding that the ornamental work of their combs, brooches, and other articles of personal adornment proves them to have been acquainted with ideas of art, yet, their notions of comfort or of sanitary arrangements were limited in the extreme. It was evidently their habit to squat upon the ground around their rude hearths, and the area within the rath must have been in an indescribable, soaked, muddy, and trampled

condition. Their meals concluded, they flung away the bones they had been gnawing, which were afterwards trampled into the muddy ground, or accumulated in immense heaps in the bottom of the ditch surrounding the dwelling, decomposing and emitting noxious effluvia.

The discovery of articles of flint, stone, bone, bronze, and iron shows that the rath was used as a place of habitation not only in primitive, but also in medieval and even modern, times.

Localities that had been at one time devoted to culinary purposes are occasionally discovered, sometimes in arable land, but more frequently covered by a considerable depth of bog. They are designated *Falachda na Feine*, i.e. the cooking places of the Fians or warriors. The country people relate that these places were, in ancient days, frequented by the Feni or military forces of Erin, who spent part of every year in the pursuit of wild animals, forming camps in favourable positions.

Edward Fitzgerald, in *Vestiges and Relics of the Primeval Period*, gives a description of ancient cooking-places observed by him in the vicinity of Youghal:—

“Identified with Fionn and the Fenians—relics of our primeval hunters, to be met with in numbers throughout the country, on uncultivated moors and mountain-lands—are the Fenian hearths or cooking-places known to our peasantry as ‘Fullocht Fionns.’ These are mounds of broken stones, usually covered with the old Irish furze or heath; and are always found near rivulets or springs, and in the neighbourhood of raths. The fullochts usually present the appearance of a horse-shoe in plan; heaped all round an irregular circle, hollowed in the centre, and open at one side. Several of them have been excavated, and in them an oaken cistern or vat has invariably been discovered. About two years and a-half ago, in company with Mr. William Hackett, of Midleton, we opened a fullocht, back of Bilberry Hill, on the lands of Ballysimon, near Midleton; and after clearing to about three feet under the surface, we discovered an oaken cistern seven feet six inches long, four feet wide, and twelve inches in depth. The timbers were about three inches in thickness, but instead of being composed of sawn planks, as usual, had all the appearance of being cleft; the sides were grooved and the ends slipped down; the bottom boards projected beyond the ends, and were also grooved to receive them; all were fastened together with wooden brunnels. The cistern lay on a compact bed of marl, and its sides were surrounded with the same material. Some have given it as their opinion, that these cisterns were used by the Fenians for boiling or cooking, and that the stones were heated red hot, and thrown into them for that purpose; but it seems to me far more probable that those

heaps of burnt stones—Fullocht Fionns or Fenian Hearths, as the peasantry name them—were used in the same manner as in what are called ‘Griosachs,’ in which, when properly heated, they covered up and roasted their roots and spoils of the chase.”

In Waterford these cooking-places are called *Fullogh Fea*, which, it is stated, means the “boiling-place or fireplace of the deer.” When describing these cooking-places in the county Waterford, Mr. John Quinlan remarks that, wherever a well or spring develops into a good sized rivulet, you will not walk far before coming on an hemispherical mound having an opening towards the stream. In their perfect state these cooking-places present, in shape, the appearance of the sole of a horse’s foot with the shoe on; the shoe represented by the protecting wall; the sole by the flagged floor of the hearth, formed of heavy sandstone blocks where the small stones were heated; the heel by the opening in the protecting wall, with the descending step overlapping the trough, composed of an oak tree hollowed out, into which the meat was thrown. Both steps and trough have a decline towards the water. The theory which suggests itself is, that a great fire having been lighted, the round stones thus heated were easily rolled down the incline into the trough holding water from the stream; that the stones, when cooled, were taken out, and replaced around the fireplace, to be again heated and returned to the trough until the water boiled, when the meat was put in and kept at boiling point by a continuance of the process.

At the present time many tribes of savages cook their food in a very similar manner. In New Zealand the Maories, when proceeding to cook, heat in the fire the hardest stones they can find. On these the food is laid, covered with leaves and earth, an opening being left through which water is poured. This, on coming in contact with the heated stones, causes the formation of steam, by which means the food is cooked.

On the land of Mr. James Ryan, of Foulksrath Castle, county Kilkenny, a primitive cooking place was discovered, in which the early inhabitants of the country baked or roasted their food, in a pit lined and covered with small heated stones, over which, during the cooking, clay was heaped. In England, also, in some of the swamps in Essex and elsewhere, heaps of burnt clay are of frequent occurrence. In several places in Ireland, near the edge of bogs, piles of burnt stones are observable, more especially near the lake dwelling in Moynagh Lake, county Meath, a peculiarity noticed also near the sites of lake dwellings at Drumkeery and other localities. Similar discoveries have been made in connexion with some lacustrine settlements in the Swiss lakes. There are, or were, eight such sites near Moynagh Lake. Remains of this class are common enough, as

there is hardly an extensive moor in Ireland on which may not be seen, at least, one heap.

The name of the ancient Irish war-goddess, Morrigan, is found connected with many of these fire-places, particularly those of great size. One historical site was situated at Tara; another, near a fairy mound in Tipperary, is mentioned in an Irish tract, styled the "Little Dialogue," contained in the "Book of Lismore," and is of interest, as it demonstrates the fact that these cooking-places were always made within easy distance of a good supply of water. Two heroes, having erected a hut and made a cooking-place, went to a neighbouring stream to wash their hands. "Here is the site of a fulacht," said one. "True," replied the other, "and this is a *fulacht-na-Morrigna* (*i.e.* Morrigan's Hearth), which is not to be made without water," *i.e.* there should be a supply of water near at hand.

In the summer of 1887, when a road was being formed through a bog in the townland of Knockaunbaun, in the county Sligo, traces of numerous fire-places were discovered at from five to seven feet beneath the present surface. There was a pavement of small stones for the purpose of forming the hearth; six inches of black mould lay between the paving and red clay. The labourers cut across the track of a group of small fires, and also disclosed a large one, the hearth in the latter being semicircular in shape, and thirty feet in diameter. Under the latter lay three cartloads of paving stones, but from the combined action of fire and water they all crumbled in pieces when shovelled up to the surface. In sinking a drain the site of another large fireplace, forty feet in length, became exposed. It was paved with stones of the same kind, covered with a quantity of charcoal and ashes.

Keating, in his fabulous History, thus describes the ancient custom of the Irish:—"The method of dressing their meat was very particular, for when they had success in hunting it was their custom in the forenoon to send their huntsman, with what they had killed, to a proper place where there was plenty of wood and water; there they kindled great fires, into which their way was to throw a number of large stones, where they were to continue till they were red hot; then they applied themselves to dig great pits in the earth, into one of which, upon the bottom, they used to lay some of these hot stones as a pavement, upon them they would place the raw flesh, bound up hard in green sedge and bullrushes. Over these bundles were fixed another layer of hot stones, then a quantity of flesh, and this method was observed until the pit was full. In this manner their flesh was sodden or stewed till it was fit to eat, then they uncovered it, and when the hole was emptied they began their meal."

In the year 1864, when a farmer at Ardnahue, county Carlow,

was sinking a pit for gravel, he observed that in one place the subsoil was mixed with bones in a fragmentary condition, and was also of a darker, richer, and softer description than the surrounding earth. So struck was he with its apparent richness that he utilized the earth as manure to the extent of some seven hundred cart-loads. A sample was sent to a chemist, who gave it as his opinion that it was worth nine shillings a ton. This stratum of rich earth filled what had evidently been a trench of irregular curved shape, with occasional offshoots of minor extent, the whole being interspersed with animal bones consisting of the remains of oxen, horses, dogs, sheep, pigs, goats and fowl, together with portions of several crania; in many instances a fractured depression in the centre of the forehead indicating that death had been caused by a blow from some heavy blunt instrument. There was nothing on the surface, or in the appearance of the field, to indicate the existence of this "midden." The trench, made in following the layer of rich earth, was, in some places, at least ten feet deep, and measured from two to six feet in breadth. At the bottom of the trench, in several spots, stones disposed in a circular form were found, evidently constituting hearths; the centre was filled with charcoal, in which were "clinkers." Several stone-hatchets, portions of a quern, bone-pins, fragments of combs, of rude pottery, and pieces of iron, together with the prevalence of the before-mentioned clinkers, showed that the deposit belonged to a comparatively recent period.

Ordinary bones of animals burn freely; one-third of their constituents is combustible; and there is oil and marrow in the interior of the larger bones. Bones long buried may, as has been already shown, still retain a large proportion of animal matter. In an article published in 1825, Dr. Hart describes a bonfire of a heap of bones of the extinct Irish deer, lighted in celebration of the battle of Waterloo. The remains of the long extinct gigantic deer gave out as good a blaze as the bones of horses, then usually employed on such occasions. The remarks of the French traveller, Latoenaye, in his "*Promenade en Irlande*," published in 1797, regarding fires of bones made by children on certain holidays, is corroborated by a passage in a Latin MS. in the Harleian Collection, of which the following is the purport:—"On St. John's Eve the boys in some districts collect bones and other refuse, which they burn together, and thence great smoke is produced in the air." This refers to the custom as then prevailing in parts of England; it is stated that similar fires are still made on St. John's Day in some of the most remote districts in France.

It is quite possible that the masses of half calcined bones found in the sites of ancient funeral pyres, in the kitchen-middens of raths, cashels, lake dwellings, and seaside settlements, are the

remains of fuel so employed in the cooking of primitive times. Fires made of bones are still used by savage tribes. Even Darwin expresses surprise at the skill with which his guide in the Falkland Islands substituted the skeleton of a bullock recently killed, for ordinary brushwood, of which there was a scarcity, and mentions the hot fire made by the bones. He was also informed that, in winter, beasts killed by the natives were often roasted by means of burning the bones belonging to them.

The following passage from Herodotus describes this custom as being practised in most remote times:—"As Scythia is very barren of wood, they (*i.e.* the Scythians) have the following contrivance to dress the flesh of the victim. Having flayed the animal, they strip the flesh from the bones, and, if they have them at hand, they throw it into certain pots made in Scythia, and resembling the Lesbian caldrons, though somewhat larger; under these a fire is made with the bones. If these pots cannot be procured, they enclose the flesh with a certain quantity of water in the paunch of the victim, and make fire with the bones as before. The bones being very inflammable, and the paunch without difficulty being made to contain the flesh separated from the bone, the ox is thus made to dress itself, which is also the case with other victims. When the whole is ready, he who sacrifices, throws before him with some solemnity the entrails, and the more choice pieces. They sacrifice different animals, but horses in particular."

Resources equally extraordinary are employed in eastern and other countries where there is great scarcity of fuel. In Arabia, in parts of Persia, India, and the west of Ireland, dried cowdung is utilized. The prophet Ezekiel was, according to his own account, ordered to cook his food in a most extraordinary manner (chap. iv., *v.* 12 and 15); and from chap. xxiv., *v.* 5, the inference may be fairly drawn that the burning of bones, in lieu of better fuel, was not a very unusual circumstance in Judæa, as the prophet is directed to take the choice of the flock, and burn the bones under it, and to boil it well. Of a truth "that which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

## CHAPTER IV.

### MAN AS AUTHOR, ARTIST, SCULPTOR.

Period during which Christianity has reigned—insignificant when compared with that occupied by pre-Christian religion—Invention of writing. Is the Irish Ogham alphabet ancient or modern?—Irish literature a mere literary protoplasm—Bears undoubted marks of Christian Adaptors, Redactors and Tamperers—Legend of Lough Neagh—St. Fahan—the Táin Bó Cualnge—Ossian and St. Patrick—Value of stories best judged by the Archæologist—Myths and Tales invented to point a moral—The Baker and artificial rain—The Children of Lir—Borrowed Tales—The Hare and the Oyster—The Irish Chief and King Midas—Thersites and Conan—Balor and Perseus—Hercules and Coolin—Enumeration of Wild Legends—All divide into two periods, one early, one late, and were clerically pruned—Art of Early Man confined to linear decorative patterns—Exception, the extraordinary life-like pictures of the Cavemen of Gaul—Otherwise Irish and Continental Ornamentation the same—Mistakes and Forgeries—Description of various Rock-Scribings—The most curious being Cup-and-Ring Markings—Their probable significance.

THE Irish reading, as well as the non-reading, public are moved by impulse rather than by reason, and in nothing is this more strikingly exemplified than when the genuineness of so-called ancient Irish history is, for a moment, called in question. In this trait they do not stand alone, for have we not the episode of the hot-headed Welshman, who nearly killed a well-known archæologist because he had the temerity to doubt, and even to dispute, the allegation, that Adam and Eve spoke Welsh in the Garden of Eden. Every savage race (and, as a matter of fact, every civilized race) considers itself the highest and the best, just as, in religion, each sect regards itself as the elect of mankind and of Heaven; even the most amiably disposed individuals are not above this weakness. Some few might even feel inclined to sing, with approval, the following verse, which has, however, not yet found its way into a Christian hymnal:—

“ We are the Sweet Elected few,  
May all the rest be damned,  
There’s room enough in Hell for you;  
We won’t have Heaven crammed.”

From this it is certain that—

“Hell were too small if man were judged by man.”

Thus, to attempt to stem the strong current of Irish popular opinion, even in matters so academical as archæological theories, is by no means a pleasant task, for although, in general, everyone is most anxious to assert, and often succeeds in convincing himself, that he is only anxious to learn the truth; yet, when the truth is disclosed, if it be contrary to his preconceived impressions, a spirit, not of receptivity, but of impatience and intolerance is displayed. Although the object may be simply to put forward the correct aspect of the matter, the views of other writers are thereby necessarily controverted; for it is impossible to demonstrate the fallacy of certain popular ideas without, at the same time, demonstrating that their professors were deluded, and no one, thus situated, likes to be told, much less to be convinced, that he is in error.

We have been given very sound advice as to the kind of foundation we ought to select, when we desire to erect a building able to resist both the ravages of time, and the violent assaults of floods and of storms. In a material building we seek to lay the foundations upon a rock, so in constructing a theory we ought to seek a firm foundation of ascertained fact. Further, the best evidence that our theory is true is, that new facts, as they arise, easily find their place in it, and are at home in it. If the theory is false, new facts are with difficulty forced into relation with it, and in time, as they become more numerous, they disintegrate, and finally completely overthrow the theory. If, on the other hand, the original theory is true, it expands and grows naturally and easily by the assimilation of new facts. For instance, Petrie's theory of the origin of the Round Towers still flourishes, but it has adapted itself, in several minor particulars, to more recent observations. Since the publication of Petrie's Essay, the progress of archæological investigation has been almost at a standstill; and until the huge mass of undigested matter, now accumulated in the pages of the Proceedings of learned societies, has been assimilated, the mere recording of discoveries has perhaps, for the time, gone far enough. Archæology is suffering from a plethora of “finds,” the relative importance and age of which, with regard to the date of the earliest of the round towers, have not yet been determined. The proper standpoint and method of investigation have been lost sight of; one part of the puzzle should first be arranged in proper order, and the remainder must in due time drop into the right position. Practical experience in actual exploration is necessary to form a good archæologist; no amount of head

knowledge can make up for deficiency of spade knowledge, for as in the quarry the pick of the workman brings to light remains of animals and plants long since passed away, so on prehistoric sites the spade of the archæologist turns up traces of the works of early man and of his primitive surroundings. Examination of articles is preferable to mere book knowledge, and careful study of any large collection of antiquities will impart more insight into the manufacturing skill of the ancient inhabitants of the land than can be otherwise obtained.

As the writer has elsewhere observed, the period during which Christianity has reigned in Ireland is comparatively insignificant when compared with that occupied by pre-Christian religion or religions. It is strange that of this aspect of the prehistoric past we know so little. Our knowledge of it may be compared to a rivulet, our ignorance to the ocean. How long the prehistoric period may have lasted, or how long it may have taken to develop the state of things apparent when Erin first comes under authentic historical notice is matter for conjecture; all that can be inferred is that it must have covered a long period of time, immeasurably longer than from the introduction of Christianity to the present day. Archæologists may wrangle as to whether iron was introduced before or after the commencement of the Christian era; the exact century of its introduction is, for practical purposes, unimportant; let it suffice that its appearance belongs to historic times as regards the British Isles. There can be no more conclusive test of the exact state of prehistoric civilization than that which is afforded by the general knowledge and use of metals.

Pride in ourselves and pride in our ancestors are common foibles of human nature; occurrences which redound to the glory either of the individual or of the community are amplified and dwelt upon, whilst incidents derogatory to our prestige are glossed over or ignored. O'Donovan relates how some of his former most intimate friends became his most bitter enemies on his expressing grave doubts regarding the authenticity of ancient Irish history.

Many ideas, of which we can just trace the existence now-a-days, were prevalent in times more ancient, and especially on that border-line where the old creeds of Paganism had not ceased to be the superstitions of the newer Christianity. The bards and chroniclers of Erin doubtless possessed accounts of some of the comparatively later settlements, probably more or less founded on tradition, and having more or less a substratum of truth; but on the arrival of the Christian missionaries, and their acquisition of the literary (if any) and traditional sources of information, the ancient heathen vernacular histories, tales, and

poems became embedded in a mosaic of miracle-stories and classic legends, so that it is now extremely difficult to separate the chaff from the grain. This amalgam of Pagan and Christian thought, amongst other absurdities, traces the pedigree of the first settlers in Ireland up to Adam. The assertion that Adam was the first man is open to question; there must also, to put it in the mildest form, be grave doubts regarding the authenticity of the numerous connecting-links in the alleged chain of unbroken descent from our putative parent; besides the question as to whether the whole race is to be traced to a single pair, or whether several examples appeared contemporaneously, remains still open to scientific investigation. At present the weight of opinion undoubtedly favours a monogenetic theory, and many of the best scientists are as strongly monogenists, as are the most ardent upholders of a literal interpretation of Biblical phraseology.

There is no credible tradition, no authentic history, to tell when man first inhabited the land. Like the mature man, who retains no recollection of his earliest infantine days, so the aggregate of men, which now constitutes the nation, has retained no remembrances of its earliest years, and but little of the successive stages through which it has passed before "casting off the swaddling clothes of ignorance and barbarism," if it has even yet done so. How could it be otherwise, when late discoveries have proved that man inhabited Europe before the occurrence of many of those great physical changes which have given the Continent its present aspect? And as the same evidence demonstrates that man was the contemporary of animals which are now extinct, it is not too much to assume that his existence dates back at least as far as, or even before, the epoch of the Drift.

The invention of writing gave durability to the record of impressions; that which was hitherto the sole possession of the brain of a single individual, could not only be imparted to the whole human race, but could be stereotyped for ever; or, as Carlyle tersely puts it, "in books lies the soul of the whole past time: the articulate audible voice of the past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. . . . All that mankind has done, thought, gained, or been, is lying, as in magic preservation, in the pages of books."

The first attempts at writing, amongst all nations, and in all ages, are of the ideographic or pictorial type; this primitive system became phonetic, then syllabic, and finally alphabetical. Even the characters which we use now-a-days when writing are easily discerned to be of pictorial origin; and the designation by which we describe the complete collection of characters is composed by

the words Aleph and Beth, the former had originally the form of an ox's head, the latter that of a tent.

In early days, all arts, and in later times that of writing, were surrounded with mystery by their professors, were prosecuted amid conjurations and supposed magic, and looked on with awe by the superstitious mass of the people, even as, in the present day, information reduced to writing is regarded by uncultured savages, who cannot comprehend that what has been spoken may be transmitted, retained, and repeated, again and again, for an indefinite period.

Ogham, the earliest written character known to have been used in Ireland, is certainly not pictorial. It must candidly be admitted that the Ogham alphabet strikes the unbiassed observer as a rearrangement and adaption of an older type of alphabet divided into groups of vowels and consonants, each letter consisting of a line, or lines, variously placed, with regard to a single stem line, or the edge of the substance on which it is cut.

Ogham inscriptions generally begin at the bottom of the stone on which they are incised, and read from left to right. Looking at an upright Ogham inscribed monument, one will, in general, observe groups of incised strokes, which naturally divide themselves into four different groups:—

1. Groups of lines to the left of the edge or stem line.
2. Groups of lines to the right of the edge or stem line.
3. Groups of lines of longer strokes than in groups (i) and (ii) crossing the edge or stem line obliquely.
4. Groups of short strokes or notches upon the edge or stem line.

The characters comprised in—

1. Stand for the letters *B, L, F, S, N*, according as they number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 strokes.
2. Stand for *H, D, T, C, Q* or *CU*, according as they number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 strokes.
3. Stand for *M, G, NG, ST, ZR*, according as they number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 strokes.
4. Stand for the vowels *A, O, U, E, I*, according as they number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 notches.

Besides these twenty characters, there are a few used to denote diphthongs, and rarely employed, as also signs for the letters *P, X,* and *Y*.

Whether before the introduction of Christianity the Irish possessed an alphabet, differing thus from that in use in Europe, is a question which has been debated with acrimony by students of Irish Archæology, for with this early knowledge, or want of knowledge, of letters, is involved, to a great degree, the genuine-

ness or untrustworthiness of ancient Irish history. Those who maintain that the Irish were in ante-Christian times really in possession of such a unique alphabet appeal to the authority of Irish MSS. which state that this alphabet was introduced into the kingdom some thirteen centuries before the birth of Christ. They also refer to the MS. Irish Romances, which contain allusions to Ogham, described in them as employed either for the purpose of conveying intelligence, or for sepulchral inscriptions;\* they point to existing monuments presenting Ogham characters, and assert that they belong to a very remote and Pagan period. On the other hand those Irish archæologists who dissent from all this, allege that the accounts of the invention and introduction of Ogham into Ireland bear the most transparent marks of badly invented fiction, and contend that its very systematic arrangement demonstrates that its inventors possessed advanced grammatical knowledge, and were evidently acquainted with alphabets of the ordinary kind from which they drew the idea of the Ogham alphabet. With regard to the testimony of the Irish romances, they deny their antiquity, and assert that a very considerable number of still existing Ogham monuments indubitably belong—judging by internal evidences and the emblems and inscriptions which they bear—to Christian times.

In late Irish MSS., accounts of the erection of Ogham-inscribed stones over the bodies of the dead are by no means uncommon. In one of the MSS. it is recounted that on the arrival of St. Mochaomhog in Ireland, the children of Lir, who, centuries before, had been metamorphosed into swans, were disenchanting, and when dying, were baptised by the Saint. "Their tombstone was raised over their tomb, and their Ogham names were written, their lamentation rites were performed, and Heaven was obtained for their souls through the prayers of St. Mochaomhog." The Saint was, however, not always so prayerfully inclined. He "cursed fervently" the King, who had tried to take possession of "The Sons of Lir," and "he bestowed

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\* For instance, on one occasion, the mythical hero Cuchullin (Coolin), when traversing a forest, saw an inscribed pillar-stone, and hung round it a verse in Ogham character carved by him upon a withe. The same hero is elsewhere represented as sending information to Maeve, Queen of Connaught, by means of cutting or scribing on wands.

The son of a Scottish chief is described as cutting Ogham characters on the handle of a spear. In A.D. 408, Core, son of the King of Munster, was driven by his father into exile. He fled to the court of a Scottish chief, but before appearing in the king's presence, an Ogham inscription on his shield was discovered, and deciphered by a friend, who thus saved the prince's life; the inscription being to the effect that, should he arrive at the Scottish court by day, his head was to be cut off before evening; and if by night, it was to be cut off before morning.

reproaches and maledictions" on him, whilst "shortness of life and Hell" were the portion he allotted to the King's wife. Needless to say both the excommunicated died shortly after.

Ogham-writing has been found principally in the form of tomb-inscriptions, and does not seem capable of being adapted to chronicle elaborate and detailed histories, or long flowing poetic compositions. Despite the tract in the *Book of Ballymote*, well-known to antiquaries, elucidatory of the Ogham alphabet, early essayists, in attempting to read these inscriptions could make no progress. The ordinary modern method of deciphering, which assumes that the letters to be unravelled, are divided into words, is inapplicable to the Ogham character, which is written continuously, like uncial characters, beginning, as already stated, in general from the bottom, and is read upwards from left to right. Yet a key was discovered, for, in course of investigation, the strokes of a group which occurred in almost every inscription were identified as reading *Maqi*, the ancient genitive form of *Mac*, a son. This conclusion was afterwards corroborated from a source not then known to be in existence, the monumental stones of Wales, inscribed in Roman characters, with corresponding Oghams.

In Irish Ogham inscriptions there is, in general, only the dry formula, ". . . . . the son of . . . . ." ; the first name being usually in the genitive, the word "stone" understood. The brevity of these mortuary notices is well illustrated by the account of the death and burial of a celebrated warrior alleged to have been slain about A.D. 300, which concludes thus:—"There is a pillar-stone on the carn and an Ogham is inscribed on the end of the pillar-stone which is in the earth, and what is on it is, *Eochaid Airgthech here.*"

Though more or less distributed over the kingdom, the greater number of inscriptions, as yet discovered, have been found in the south, principally in the counties of Kerry and Cork ; the stones appear to be, for the most part, sepulchral, or commemorative ; yet, though several proper names occurring on Ogham monuments are to be met in the Irish Annals, it is doubtful whether many have been so identified as to give the exact date of the period in which the individual lived whose memory it was intended thus to perpetuate.

The absorbing interest which Ogham inscriptions at one time excited is now on the decline. At first it was thought that the method of writing which they displayed was of great antiquity. Indeed some believed there were present in these inscriptions traces of a very primitive form of Celtic, but the tendency of recent research has been to bring their date down to more recent years, whilst the growing belief that they are often designedly obscure, or cryptic, has latterly discouraged inquiry. It is obvious that

if purposes of secrecy were desired, this cipher might be made more abstruse by varying the number of strokes, as by commencing with two or more at the commencement of each series or groups (see p. 130). A great number of cryptic specimens of this class are given in the tract on Ogham, in the *Book of Ballymote*, but they are all resolvable into the original key cipher, in which each set of five commences with a single stroke.

At the end of the tract on Ogham before mentioned, there are about eighty different forms of the alphabet, exhibiting thus the various modifications to which it had been subjected. It is useless to assert that Irish grammarians, who used and wrote about Ogham, were unacquainted with Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon runes; for amongst these Ogam alphabets are two Runic alphabets, one styled "The Ogham of the men of Lochan," the other "The Ogham of the foreigners." Thus Ogham was framed by persons acquainted with the later and developed Runic alphabet. A few antiquaries were imbued with a violent prejudice against the genuineness of Ogham texts, engendered by the fanciful and absurd speculations which passed muster as antiquarian learning. Petrie would probably have been glad to have recalled his challenge to the Munster archaeologists to prove that the Ardmore inscription was alphabetic writing of any kind, whilst O'Donovan bore candid testimony to the authenticity of some inscriptions which he had previously impugned.

Many Ogham-inscribed monumental stones are, in general, of a material foreign to the district in which they have been discovered, and are usually formed of sandstone; this occurring so frequently would tend to show that a block of sandstone was sought elsewhere and brought to the required place, as being deemed more convenient for working upon. The old sculptors and architects appear to have possessed some knowledge of the chemical constituents of the materials with which they worked, for cashels and the sustaining walls of passages and chambers—whether in tumuli, carns, or souterrains—may be formed of limestone, or of the nearest description of stone available, but when the wish was to decorate a flagstone, careful selection was made not only of a durable, but also of an easily-worked material.

The stones upon which Ogham inscriptions have been found embedded in the walls of churches demonstrate that they were merely utilised as building material, for some of them were placed in positions which prevented their inscriptions being read, and other stones were hammer-dressed on the angles, portions of the inscriptions having been knocked off in order to produce an angle suitable for the new purpose to which it was devoted.

Thus it is alleged that at a period when knowledge of Ogham had been lost, or when the memorials had ceased to command

the veneration of succeeding generations, these monuments were sometimes appropriated by Christians. A cross is reputed to have been carved on the uninscribed end of one stone, which had been originally fastened in the earth, and the stone was then turned upside down, the original top with its Ogham inscription being buried in the ground. A writer holding other views, alleges that he found a cross-inscribed monument, and into the sacred symbol some of the Ogham scores had been sunk, thus demonstrating that the latter had been cut subsequent to the sculpturing of the cross. If the question be asked why these monuments do not all bear the sign of the cross, supposing that they all belong to Christian times, the suggestion may be hazarded that, in early times, such may not have been the custom, whilst it is quite possible, even very probable, that some of them may be the monuments of Pagans, as Paganism survived in Ireland for centuries after the advent of St. Patrick.

Of the many Ogham-inscribed stones which have been discovered in the souterrains of raths, few bear the sacred symbol of the Christian faith. These stones were merely used as materials by the rath-builders, as were their companions by church-builders, perhaps so late as the tenth or eleventh century—and were drawn from more ancient monuments, probably from old disused graves or graveyards, and utilised by architects who felt no reverence for such memorials.

There is also a class of irregular rock-scorings, some of which, as at Loughcrew, Dowth, Carrowmore, and New Grange, may be genuine Ogham, although roughly and irregularly executed, whilst others are of a character which precludes their classification under this heading.

Oghamic scribings have been found on bone-pins and other ornaments from the lake-dwellings of Ballinderry and Strokes-town; the scorings seem to resemble runic characters, but it could not be authoritatively decided that they were actually runes; and no archæologist has been able, as yet, to interpret the seemingly well-marked scorings. A stone axe, on which is incised an Ogham inscription, was also discovered in another locality.

Vallancey makes mention of a silver brooch, bearing on it an inscription in Ogham character, discovered in the year 1806, by a peasant turning up the ground on the hill of Ballyspellan, in the barony of Galmoy, county Kilkenny. The front of the brooch is ornamented by a device of entwined serpents; the back presents four lines in Ogham character; all the words, with one exception, are proper names; the brooch is identified as belonging to the latter part of the eleventh or commencement of the twelfth century.

In the present state of knowledge on the subject, it is rash to

hazard an opinion as to the age in which Irish Ogham mortuary inscriptions were incised; it may, however, be suggested that the period of their employment extends from probably the fifth century A.D., to the eighth century, and likely much later; for Romano-British Ogham bilingual inscriptions appear, judging by the Latin lettering, to date certainly not earlier than from A.D. 400 to 500.

Even in modern days, we find that savage peoples use a character which conveys the meaning intended, although it cannot be called writing. A friend of the writer's, when on the Geological Survey of Western Australia, about the year 1886, had a message conveyed several hundred miles, from the interior to the coast, by means of various shaped notches and other devices cut on a stick by a native. These Australian message or "talking sticks" are very curious, for they belong to a people devoid of what we look upon as alphabetical knowledge, and yet the notches, lines, and devices are interpreted by the recipient in the sense intended by the sender. In any case, even to the initiated, it must have been a task of no small difficulty to read them; to commence with, the deciphering was probably accompanied with an oral explanation as to what special fact or record was referred to, and what the different symbols represented, and, unless thus explained, could not be read by the uninitiated. This given, the rest must have been comparatively easy. One rudimentary Australian letter, described in the *Saturday Review*, consisted of a piece of wood, five inches long by one broad, painted red with blood and ochre, with a neck round which a string was fastened. At the very head is incised what resembles a capital T; beneath this is a symbol like a large figure seven, with a crescent moon on each side, and below there is a broad arrow. On the left-hand side beneath is a row of figures of seven. On the back are many slanting notches, two straight lines, and the field below is filled with a herring-bone pattern.

This piece of wood is a message-stick of the Wootka tribe, who live in the northern territory of South Australia, and was carried by one of the tribe on a commercial mission to a distant tribe called Nookas. The meaning of the hieroglyphics is as follows:—The markings on the back are the messenger's credentials, *i.e.* the tribal totems; for if he bore a stick whose meaning he could not interpret, he would be speared by the tribe to whom he went. Beside the heraldic marks on the back are two straight lines which denote that the messenger is carrying two long and heavy spears as objects of barter. The figure seven stands for a fighting weapon, a kind of wooden axe. The crescents denote war boomerangs; the T and the broad

arrow mean that the messenger is to stop at the station of a squatter who uses this mark as a brand for his stock, where he is to leave the heavy boomerangs and spears. The crowd of sevens means that he is to get as many wooden axes from the other tribe as he can. Triangular marks represent the number of days during which he may be absent. Thus, the whole message on the stick reads:—"The Wootka tribe to the Nootka tribe. The bearer carries boomerangs and spears. These he is to barter with the Nootkas for wooden axes. His leave of absence is for a week. He is to find the Nootkas near Thompson's station."

The following elucidatory anecdote was forwarded by a correspondent interested in the subject. He states that, so late as the year 1860, a gentleman living near Canterbury had an illiterate bailiff, who kept the general as well as the harvest accounts of a farm, consisting of about 250 acres, by means of squared hazel wands, about four feet in length, on which he cut notches and other devices. At the end of harvest he gave an account to his master of the number and size of the loads on carts which left the fields, the money which was drawn and paid from time to time, together with the balance remaining due. An incident during the hop-picking season in the south of England, in the middle of the century, shows to what a late date tallies were employed. A farmer is described as "girdled with long bits of narrow wood, like so many skewers: he was stopping before one group after another, and cutting notches on these tallies, and corresponding ones on that each hop-picker presented to him." The notches on the tallies were by way of a memorandum of the number of baskets filled by each individual.

Among the Fijians, men sent with messages used certain mnemonic aids; and the New Zealanders conveyed information to distant tribes, during times of war, by marks on gourds. Amongst savages, twigs bent or broken on trees, or bushes beside the path, or broken off and left in certain conventional positions on or beside the track, convey messages and warnings easily interpreted by others following those who left these symbols, placed so as to impart information, as to the direction to be followed, contingencies to be expected, dangers to be guarded against, the numbers of friends or of enemies, or other incidents and intelligence. Is not this the genesis of writing?

In the present day we can hardly realize the condition of the many past generations who obtained any information or education they possessed without the aid of books, by mere oral instruction and traditional stories, through the medium of a tongue, if not now extinct, yet in a moribund condition, and

which possesses very little, either ancient or modern, published literature in the ordinary acceptance of the term—

“ 'Tis fading, oh, 'tis fading, like the leaves upon the trees,  
 In murmuring tone 'tis dying, like the wail upon the breeze,  
 'Tis swiftly disappearing, as footprints on the shore,  
 Where the Barrow, and the Erne, and Loch Swilly's waters roar,  
 Where the parting sunbeam kisses Loch Corrib in the West,  
 And Ocean, like a mother, clasps the Shannon to her breast.”

Spasmodic efforts have been made to arrest its decline, and its study has been introduced by the Intermediate Education Commissioners into their examinations, a mere waste of time for ordinary schoolboys, for it may be asked whether Irish is extensively used, or whether its literature has any real value in the current of every-day life. The most ardent enthusiast for the study of the Irish language can hardly maintain that it is spoken by a large or important section of the population, but the question of its literature stands on a different footing. The language of Athens or of Rome may be well worth attention long after it has ceased to be spoken; but in the case of Irish literature a distinction must be drawn between the Latin MSS. produced in the Irish monasteries which spread the fame of their scribes over Europe, and Gaelic MSS. of a later date. There are, no doubt, old writings, *i.e.* occasional meagre insertions of the Gaelic language, short treatises introduced into Latin MSS., as well as inscriptions in Ogham character. These however, cannot be classed under the head of literature. Putting on one side early Latin MSS., religious treatises and Ogham inscriptions, it is difficult to discover an Irish MS. (those at present translated are, it is to be presumed, done into English as being samples) that, to the ordinary nineteenth-century reader, does not appear extremely childish. Irish literature is mere protoplasm. If it had a history, its record would show an arrested development. Under favourable circumstances it might have become vertebrate, or at any rate more life-like, but various causes appear to have worked in unison in opposition to its growth; and in regard to Irish poetry, it is related to literature, properly so called, as a nebula is to a star. The most that can be said in its praise is that it is a rudimentary effort towards a maturity never attained. Far the most valuable part of Irish literature is that portion that throws light upon the earlier history of the country, and to extract the true from the false is a complicated and difficult task; but the race of Irish scholars, who alone can deal with these questions, is not likely to become extinct, even should the language cease to be spoken.

With respect to this study of early Irish history, as extracted

from the annalists and biographers, what is most required is, an increased application of the critical spirit. Dr. J. K. Ingram remarks that :—“ We have often in the past too readily assumed the truth of any statement found (as the phrase is) in one of our old books without examining the trustworthiness and the sources of knowledge of each authority. To take an example, in O’Curry’s *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, there is abundant learning, a wealth of quotation from the Chronicles, but in criticism it falls, I think, far short of the works of the recent Scottish historians. Criticism, I am aware, is not popular.” Yet old books, sacred books, even the Bible itself, have had to submit to the searching analysis of modern criticism, with the result that, with regard to the latter, advanced and liberal-minded German theologians have, in the New Testament, resigned belief in miracles ; whilst in the Old Testament, they have given up the authenticity and authority of most of the Pentateuch. With the yielding of all this, there is little for modern criticism to attack. Even the more “ orthodox ” English school do not hold that the destruction of the swine was “ a miracle,” look on Genesis as a composite work, and do not treat the earlier part as strict history.

When their characters are subjected to analysis, the heroes and heroines of the earliest Irish traditions are certainly not Christian, whilst in the prevalent narratives, the varnish of Christianity is but thinly applied. Most of the tales, at least those that have been at present translated, are but clumsily patched together, so that the junction of the Pagan and Christian portions is quite apparent. Take, for example, the legend of the formation of the present Lough Neagh. The scene is laid in the first century of the Christian era : consequently before the introduction of Christianity into Ireland. In the King’s palace, which stood in the centre of the plain now occupied by the lake, was an enchanted well (its origin was, to say the least, very peculiar) ; when not in use it was kept covered, as, owing to its magical properties, it would otherwise burst forth in a raging flood. Through neglect of the “ person in charge,” it was left one morning uncovered ; it overflowed, and all the members of the King’s household, with the exception of three, were drowned, and the present sheet of water was formed. One of the persons thus preserved was a woman styled Liban, who, together with her lap-dog, was, by magic, permitted to live in safety beneath the waters. Liban soon became tired of her inactive life, and beholding with envy the lively tenants of the lake darting about and around her, expressed the wish of being changed into a salmon. Instantly, with the exception of her head, she was thus transformed, whilst her lap-dog became an otter, and

in this manner she continued to roam for the space of three hundred years, until—and here the Christianising of the old story visibly appears—she is caught in the net of an Irish saint, is brought ashore, resumes her human form, sings her story in melancholy verse, receives the rites of the Church, dies immediately, and is buried in all the odour of sanctity.

A result similar to the overflowing of Lough Neagh, from neglecting or disobeying the forms prescribed when procuring a supernatural supply of water, occurs when what may be termed the "rush enchantment" is practised. It is as follows:—In certain localities (needless to say, on low-lying ground) there grow magical tufts of rushes. If the postulant finds one of these tufts, and pulls up a rush, a most refreshing supply of water will exude from the cavity thus occasioned in the soil. He may now allay his thirst, but the rush must be replanted when he has finished, or otherwise subterranean waters will pour with ungovernable fury from the orifice whence the water has been drawn, and overwhelm, not only the delinquent, but also the entire neighbourhood. This incident occurs in numerous Irish tales, the scenes of which are laid in various parts of the kingdom.

There appears to be very little originality in Irish myths. Some legends of the saints were moulded on the Old Testament model. For instance, St. Fahan, pursued by Pagan enemies, arrived at the edge of a lake which barred his further progress. He struck the water with his crozier, when it divided, offering him a means of escape. On arriving at the further side of the lake, he turned and struck the dried ground, when it instantly became covered with water as before, drowning his pursuers who were half way across.

Robert Atkinson, LL.D., remarks that there are not wanting hints that the early clerics pruned, with no sparing hand, the tales that formed the amusement of the people, and which must have been handed down from ancient times. Nothing can be more significant than the circumstances of the early history of the once famous tale of the Táin Bó Cualnge. "About the year 600, the poet Senchan assembled the poets of Ireland to ascertain if any of these remembered the whole of the story, but received as answer that they only knew fragments of it. He then asked his pupils which of them would take his blessing and go into the country of Letha, to learn the Táin, which a certain *Saoi* had taken to the east after the (book called) *Cuilmenn* had been carried away. Now Letha was the ancient name for that part of Italy in which Rome is situated; so that there can be little doubt what had become of the tale. But a yet more significant element is introduced; for according to one account,

the story was recovered by the intervention of St. Ciaran and the Saints of Ireland, who fasted and prayed at the grave of the famous legendary chief Fergus mac Roig, in order that God might send them that chieftain to relate to them the history of the Táin. The relation of the poets to the clergy is here set forth in hardly mistakable terms; the latter were willing that the poets should again resume their functions as narrators of the old stories, after these had been sufficiently purged of offence by their journey to Rome, and the long forgetfulness that had so overtaken them."

The Christianising of Pagan legend is almost everywhere apparent. For instance, on the alleged landing of the Milesians only some 1300 years B.C., they were met by Bamba, one of the numerous queens of Ireland, accompanied by her female attendants and by Druids. She appears to have been "interviewed" by an invader, who questioned her regarding her family and relations, somewhat in the style of a modern newspaper reporter seeking for "copy." "I am come," said she, in reply to his inquiry, "of the sons of Adam." "Which of the sons of Noah are you descended from?" inquired the invader, who although a Gentile, must have been well acquainted with Jewish genealogies. "I am older than Noah," replied Bamba, "and I have resided on this mountain since the Deluge." The idea of Rider Haggard's Queen She was thus forestalled by the monastic historian.

St. Patrick is dragged into the legend of Cuchullin (Coolin), Ossian into that of St. Patrick. The latter tale is a good specimen of a connecting link between Pagan and Christian thought. It is recounted that Ossian survived the famous battle of Gabhra,\* in which all his comrades perished, and was conveyed to the Elysium of the Pagan Irish, whence, after a long lapse of years, and many urgent entreaties to the then ruling powers, he was permitted to visit once again the scenes of his youth and manhood. He was given a magnificent white steed on which to return, but was warned that if he allowed his own feet to touch the earth, he would never re-enter Tirnanoge. On arrival in Erin, Ossian found that Finn MacCool and his warriors were but dimly remembered; his fortress was a mere mound overgrown with weeds and bushwood; moss and lichens

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\* Moore, in his *History of Ireland*, remarks with great candour that—"The fame of this fatal battle of Gabhra, and the brave warriors who fell in it, continued long to be a favourite theme of the Irish bards and romancers, and upon no other foundation than the old songs respecting the heroes of this combat, mixed up with others relating to chieftains of a still more ancient date, has been raised that splendid fabric of imposture, which under the assumed name of Ossian, has, for so long a period, dazzled and deceived the world."

covered the huge casting stones of the Feni; prayers and hymns were sung where, in his days, bards recited the prowess of warriors, and the sickle was in men's hands instead of spear and buckler.

As with sorrowful heart he rode up his native valley, a crowd of men striving to raise a huge stone, asked his assistance. Stooping from the horse he, unaided, heaved the mass into position, but the exertion caused him to overbalance himself, the magic steed flew neighing away, and the last of the race of heroes lay on the hillside, a white-haired blind old man, weighed down by the infirmities of upwards of two centuries.

Shortly after this as he was reciting a poem, in which he extolled the greatness and strength of his contemporaries and forefathers, the profuse feasts of their hunting days, when they cut up their quarry and baked it with heated stones in the huge cooking places on the wild moors or mountain sides, and described the tall gigantic deer hunted by them, his listeners laughed incredulously. The old man rose in anger, and going to a neighbouring heap, where were piled the relics of bygone hunts, he selected therefrom a shank-bone, and returning to the banquet took from the table one of the shank-bones of the deer on which the guests were then feasting and dropped it through the hollow of the deer bone he had brought in. This happened at the period of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland, and meeting Ossian in his missionary tour, the saint, actuated by feelings of compassion, took him under his protection. St. Patrick made many attempts to convert him to Christianity, the conferences generally ending with Ossian's lament for his lost comrades. The saint, pitying the misery of the brave old man, would introduce some remark on past events which drew from the bard a narrative of a battle, a hunt, or some enchantment worked on the Feni by magicians, which as usual terminated in a fresh lament over his desolate state and the half forgotten deeds of his companions.

The old warrior did not also relish the fasting fare, the rigorous austerity of the saint and of his household; he was angry at being aroused at night by the clanging of the bells and at daylight by the chanting of matins, preferring the melody of the birds and the music of the hounds to these innovations.

Men, animals, plants and fruit were of larger proportions in the days when Ossian was in his prime, than were the degenerated specimens which existed on his return to Erin. A free translation of the Irish proverbial saying on this subject, formerly often quoted by the country people, is as follows:—

“Smaller each succeeding race and more to falsehood prone,  
And wetter each season, while later its fruits are grown.”

It is therefore not surprising that the meal of an ordinary man should appear a mere trifle to the old warrior-bard, and St. Patrick's kitchen resounded daily with the angry quarrels of Ossian and the saint's housekeeper, who being of a niggardly disposition, doled out for each meal no more than whetted the appetite of the blind man. One day the fight terminated by the scolding housekeeper declaring that what she had given ought to be more than enough even for Ossian's enormous appetite. Her voice was drowned in the wrathful roar of the enraged old warrior, as he vociferated: "I often saw a berry of the mountain ash as large as your miserable pat (*misgawn*) of butter; an ivy leaf as large as your barley cake; and a quarter of a black-bird as large as your quarter of mutton."

The retort of the virulently tongued housekeeper "you lie," sank deeply into Ossian's proud heart, but though he bore her affront in recollection, and had planned the vindication of his veracity, he henceforth, to the astonishment of the shrew, received his meals without a murmur, for adherence to truth was one of the most pleasing characteristics of the Feni. In another part of the legend, Ossian is represented as again very indignant with St. Patrick, for implying that he had coloured his narratives of other days with fiction. The old warrior-bard exclaims:—

"We, the Fians, would tell no lie,  
Falsehood's cup is sour;  
Truth and strength e'er brought us safe,  
In peril's darkest hour."

The Feni are in Ireland "what the race who fought at Thebes and Troy were in Greece; Sigurd and his companions in Scandinavia; Dietrich and his warriors in Germany; Arthur and his Knights in Britain; and Charlemagne and the Paladins in France; that is, mythic heroes, conceived to have far exceeded in strength and prowess the puny beings who now occupy their place."

Ossian possessed a favourite bitch with young at the time, and the blind bard instructed the intelligent boy selected by St. Patrick to be his guide and attendant—who was devotedly attached to his charge, and always listened with ecstasy to the tales of the prowess of the warriors of other days—to acquaint him as soon as the puppies were born. When informed, that there were ten, he told the boy to procure a freshly-skinned horse hide, nail it with the fleshy side out to a board on the side of the house, and then, facing the puppies towards it, throw them against the hide, one by one, and inform him of the result. A laugh from the lad attracted Ossian's attention, who inquired

the cause. The boy explained that the puppies had all fallen to the ground, except one, who clung tenaciously to the hide. Ossian told him to rear that one, and drown the other nine.

One summer morning Ossian announced to the boy his intention of going a journey, bringing with him the dog, which he had in the meantime carefully reared and trained. Arriving at the foot of Slievenamon, they turned eastward into the long winding valley of Glanasmole, and Ossian asked the lad whether he observed anything remarkable. The boy replied that he only saw a large tree bearing fruit, which, but for its enormous size, he thought might be berries of the quickbeam or mountain ash; Ossian told him to pluck one of the berries. Turning towards the rocky side of the glen, the boy's attention was attracted by ivy growing on the cliff, the leaves of which were so large that their shadow overspread and darkened the glen; one of these immense leaves was also gathered. They retraced their steps towards the mountain which they ascended, and proceeding to the rude stone monument which crowns its summit, Ossian told his young guide to lift the covering slab of the tomb. The boy essayed the task, but soon convinced of its impracticability declared that nothing less than the strength of a giant could raise so ponderous a stone. The old blind warrior lifting it with ease, exposed to view in the cavity beneath three instruments of war and of the chase, which had been in use in the days of his youth; a great trumpet, a bronze ball employed as a missile, and a keen edged sword. These, by his direction, his guide took out and proceeded to clean. Ossian then told the lad to blow the trumpet, and asked whether anything strange was to be seen. The boy answered in the negative. Ossian ordered him to blow again and again, as loud as he could, but nothing was observed. Ossian then seized the trumpet, and placing it to his lips blew a blast, the reverberations of which were heard far and wide; he blew a blast still louder, and again a third even more loud and far-echoing. Soon a dense cloud overspread the horizon, and the sky was darkened by flights of birds which alighted in the valley. They came in three distinct flocks, the size of the birds increasing in each succeeding flight, the last consisting of enormous birds of the blackest plumage. Ossian then ordered the lad to unslip the dog, and send him down into the valley amongst the birds, where he was soon fiercely engaged in slaughtering them. At length, they were all killed except one jet black bird, larger than all the rest, which sat perched on a rock overhanging the valley. Ossian informed the youth that this bird was the object of their search, and the hound was soon engaged in a furious contest with it; after a long and fearful struggle, the dog killed it and drank its blood. But the bird

before it died had infused a quantity of virus into the dog which rendered him suddenly mad, and he rushed back towards his master, with wide-opened mouth, exposing its bloody fangs, as if he would devour him. The boy in hurried accents described the situation. "Courage," exclaimed Ossian, "the dog has tasted blood for the first time, cast the bronze ball into his gaping mouth; be firm, for if you miss, he will destroy us." The youth lost courage and trembled, but Ossian snatched the implement from his shaking hand and said, "direct my hand." Ossian, under this supervision, hurled the ball into the hound's gaping jaws, so that he was at once choked.

After surveying with wonder the vale filled with the slaughtered birds, the lad was directed by Ossian to cut off one of the quarters of the enormous black bird with the sword, and they returned, in triumph, carrying with them also the mountain-ash berry and the ivy-leaf. Laying the three trophies on the kitchen table, Ossian called for St. Patrick and his housekeeper, narrated the whole affair, concluding with emphasis, "now do I lie?" and forthwith proceeded to cuff the woman. The national saint interposed, soothed the acerbity of the old warrior's temper, expressed astonishment at his adventures, which afforded such unequivocal evidence of the strictness of his veracity, and gave orders that he was never, on any pretence, to be stinted in his meals.

In their more ancient MS. form these old tales and poems, so called, are so bald and disjointed, that the style, parodied in the inimitable scene between the irate Highlander, Hector M'Intire, and Oldbuck, the Antiquary, is not in the least overdrawn. A very much toned down and very free translation of the commencement of the poem, which opens with a dialogue between Ossian and St. Patrick, ridiculed by Sir Walter Scott in his novel of *The Antiquary*, is as follows:—

OSSIAN.

"I care not for thee, senseless clerk,  
Nor all thy psalming throng;  
Whose stupid souls, unwisely dark,  
Reject the light of song.

"Unheeding while it pours the strain  
With Fenian glory swell'd;  
Such as thy thought can scarce contain,  
Thine eye has ne'er beheld."

PATRICK.

"O Son of Finn, the Fenii's fame,  
Thou gloriest to prolong;  
While I my heav'nly King proclaim  
In psalm's diviner song."

OSSIAN.

“ Dost thou insult me to my face?  
 Does thy presumption dare  
 With the bright glories of my race,  
 Thy wretched psalms compare? ”

In another of these unedifying discussions between the Holy man and the Poet, St. Patrick, to try and demonstrate the all-prevailing power of the Almighty, declared that a fly could not buzz in Heaven without God's knowledge. The old heathen, whom he was trying to convert, made a good point, when he retorted that at Finn's Camp, a thousand men might enter, eat, drink, and depart, without the Chief's knowledge.

In popular, as well as in written tales, St. Patrick is also dragged into the legend of Cuchullin [Coolin]. Sometimes, though in rare instances, Druids appear on the scene, but how are they depicted? Not as dignified priests, the guardians of then existing religion and science, but such as they are afterwards described by their opponents, the Christian missionaries, as mere jugglers. It seems to be now admitted that the Iron Age did not really commence in Ireland much before the introduction of Christianity, and yet these heroes of romance are represented as hewing at each other with swords of iron like the Vikings of later date.

Another way, in which the more ancient texts have been tampered with, has been pointed out by the late J. O'Beirne Crow:—"There is nothing more painful to the Irish student, than to see the way in which our transcribers of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth century have corrupted our ancient tracts. When they met a difficult form or phrase their invariable habit was to put it into another form somewhat resembling the original in sound, or to substitute what they thought a synonym, or to omit it altogether." The same Irish scholar was even of opinion that the idea of a military force, or Militia, having existed in ancient Erin, arose from a verbal change in the text, simply because the title, "Royal Champion of Erin," like "Royal poet of Erin," was, in later transcriptions of the older text, turned into "King of the Feni of Erin," and he adds, "that such a body, however, has never had a being in Erin, I hope to be able to show."

The original and terse expressions of early Irish prose were no longer appreciated by the more modern school of writers. An elaborate description of the most trifling incidents, a piling together of superfluous adjectives, a constant repetition of standing phrases became the fashion, in addition to which the copyist was often tempted by his own ideas as to the correctness

of style, to venture on an even further expansion of the already unnecessarily loaded text.

The real value of the tales and romances is best judged by the archæologist, for the writers usually depicted the state of things as they existed in their own time, and not in the remoter period which they are supposed to describe. Such compositions shed tolerably true side-lights on ancient manners and customs, but to do this, the date of their last redaction must be approximately settled. When this has been done, it will be found that, although ancient, they are, for the true elucidation of pre-Christian times, of comparatively little importance.

However poor the survivals as a whole, may appear to us, we must nevertheless assume that what has been preserved belongs to the best productions of these early ages, that they were works on which the literary critics of the period, as well as subsequent generations, placed a high value. Taken as a whole, this class of literature may be compared to a stream, the character of which varies in all the different stages of its progress, clear at the source, foul at the mouth; to ascertain its real value, we must trace it back, through all its channels and feeders, to its birth.

That a great number of Irish MSS. must have perished at an early period is evident from the frequent destruction by fire of the most celebrated monasteries. The very titles of the books so lost are often enumerated. In later times, in the dedication of his translation of the Annals of Clonmacnoise, Connell Mageoghegan describes the destruction of MSS. as then going on, and states that tailors were in the habit of cutting up, with their scissors, the leaves of books once held in great repute, and that they sliced them into long strips for measures.

Myths, and tales invented to teach a moral, remain at the base of all thought and of all creeds, for legends endowed with apparent ever-enduring vitality, shadowy traditions of old-world life, echoes which vibrate in the folk-lore of every people, are embedded in scattered fragments in present-day faiths.

In former times the peasantry, imbued with many apparently Eastern ideas, were confirmed fatalists; what the gods or saints decreed could not, or should not, be altered. It was, to use an Eastern expression, "kismet," and ought not to be averted. Thus rain is sent down by permission of God, or of the saints, in proportion to the deserts of men; therefore, it is sinful in the extreme to irrigate fields or water gardens, for if the powers above wished them to flourish they would send rain to moisten them. In illustration of this, a traditional story, which passed as gospel among the sages of national lore, is found with slight variations, in many districts of Ireland.

A rich master baker, possessed of new-fangled ideas about insuring the growth of vegetables, contrary to the will of heaven, was engaged, on a hot summer's day, in watering them, when he was accosted by a stranger, who inquired what he was doing. The baker answered that he was watering plants suffering from long drought. The stranger replied that he should have left that work to God, who knew the time for watering better than man, and that if God had wished them to flourish He would have poured down rain upon them. The stranger then suddenly vanished. The baker, who noticed something superhuman in his visitor, felt the force of his observations, abandoned the watering, and, full of anxiety, returned to where he had left a batch of bread baking under the charge of his men whom he found fast asleep. Opening the strongly-heated oven, he saw all the loaves shot out into luxuriant ears of green wheat. From this the baker inferred that the stranger was a heavenly messenger sent to reprove him for his impious act in producing artificial rain. This story was quoted by the peasantry as proof that man has no right to attempt to supply, by labour or any artificial means, what God, in His bounty, is wont to send in His good time. O'Donovan was of opinion that the story was not invented by any knave for the purpose of encouraging idleness, but that it originated in the idiosyncrasy of the people.

There is considerable similarity between folk-lore current in the East and that still existing amongst a large portion of the population of Ireland, more especially in remote localities. The Celtic mind is essentially Eastern in character, and legends still current illustrate this. A few present a beautiful fancy; for instance, we have the ancient Irish romance of "the Children of Lir" metamorphosed into swans; and anyone acquainted with many of the large lakes of Ireland, more especially Lough Erne, cannot have failed to note the swans which at almost every season of the year are seen upon the bays and inlets. They come and go scathless, for, in the minds of the Celtic peasantry, they represent the souls of holy women, victims of the fire and sword of the Northmen who swept over Lough Erne again and again. This is a good example of a pagan legend being Christianised, not in oral tradition alone, but also in manuscript form, for the Irish delight to give a local colour and habitation to mythic and traditional characters as well as to incidents that take hold of the fancy, whether with regard to the exploits of the comparatively modern but ubiquitous Northmen, or to the actions of the far older mythological Druid-gods of the Dedanann. "The Children of Lir" are, as a matter of course, freed from their enchantment by the intervention of a Christian bishop, are converted from paganism to Christianity, and, on their departure

to realms above, sing their death-song, thus paraphrased by P. W. Joyce in *Celtic Romances* :—

“ Come, holy priest, with book and prayer ;  
Baptise and shrive us here :  
Haste, cleric, haste, for the hour has come,  
And death at last is near.

“ Dig our grave—a deep deep grave,  
Near the church we loved so well ;  
The little church where first we heard  
The voice of the Christian bell.”

In the armorial bearings of the Borough of Sligo, a hare is depicted as being held fast by an oyster. According to local tradition the hare trod accidentally on an open oyster, and the bivalve resenting this intrusion at once closed on the foot of poor puss. A Cork boatman recounted a similar anecdote of a rat going to feed on an oyster, whose shell lay invitingly open, at low water ; but the oyster, closing its shell, held him fast until he was drowned by the returning tide ; this tale agrees with one of La Fontaine's fables. The same incident, but in connexion with a fox, was narrated, some centuries ago, to one of the earliest western travellers, as being then current in India. Thus, a story may be traced from land to land, and from age to age ; and this agreement is very interesting, as tending to point out the common sources from which our traditions were derived.

There is great similarity between the Persian story of Rustam and the Bardic tale of Conloch. An Irish chief with an unpronounceable name,

“ A terrible man, with a terrible name,  
A name which you all know by sight very well,  
But which no one can speak and no one can spell.”

and King Midas were both afflicted with animals' ears. The resemblance of the Irish to the classic story is too close to admit of being accidental. The Irish chief, desirous of concealing his deformity, caused every barber who dressed his hair to be put to death. It happened that once the lot fell on a young man, the only son of a poor widow, and the importunities of the mother prevailed on the king to spare his life, on condition that he kept the Royal secret. The necessity of secrecy so preyed upon the youth's mind that he sickened, and an eminent Druid told him that if he did not divulge the secret, he would never recover his health. The youth, thinking he could effect this without anyone being the wiser, dug a hole into the ground, into which he whispered the awful secret. The King's harper having broken

his instrument, went in search of wood to mend it, and selected a willow which grew close to where the hairdresser had imparted his secret to mother earth. The harp was repaired, but when strung could sound but one refrain, "The King has two horse's ears."

A King of Macedon and a King of Erin effected the destruction of their enemies by apparelling a number of young men to represent women.

According to the Bardic tale, Turgesius, the great Norwegian conqueror of Ireland, had established himself on Lough Ree where he commanded the water-ways of Ireland. Here he fell in love with the beautiful daughter of Melaghlin, King of Westmeath, and demanded her from her father. Fearing to refuse, Melaghlin pretended to consent, but sent in his daughter's stead twelve beardless youths, dressed up as maidens, to personate his daughter and her attendants. After Tergesius and his boon companions had laid aside their arms and armour and had drunk to excess, they were assassinated by the disguised young warriors.

The Greek Thersites and Conan the Irish warrior were both bald, were great boasters, and great cowards. The following is the Homeric description of the scene between Ulysses and Thersites :—

"Peace, factious monster, born to vex the state,  
With wrangling talents form'd for foul debate;  
Curb that impetuous tongue, nor rashly vain,  
And singly mad, asperse the sovereign reign.  
Have we not known thee, slave of all our host,  
The man that acts the least, upbraids the most."

Compare the above with the poem of "The Chase," where Oscar thus addresses Conan :—

"Cease thy vain babbling, senseless fool,  
Bald boaster, stain to arms,  
Still forward to promote misrule,  
But shrinks at war's alarms.

"My son high raised his threatening blade,  
To give his fury sway,  
But the pale Conan shrunk dismayed,  
And sprang with fear away."

According to P. W. Joyce, Conan is "the best-marked and best-sustained character of the Ossianic romances; large-bodied, a great boaster, a great coward and a great glutton. He had a venomous tongue, and hardly ever spoke a good word of anyone. He was the butt for the gibes and mockery of the Feni, but

they dreaded his foul tongue. The story-tellers never lose an opportunity of having a fling at Conan, and of turning him into ridicule, for his cowardice, his big talk, and his gluttony."

The Formorian giant Balor and Perseus, in some respects, resemble each other; in both stories the precautions taken are almost identical, precautions that were defeated by supernatural means, and in both instances the decree of destiny is fulfilled by the murder of the grandfather, whilst the peculiar property of Balor's eye, has its parallel in classic myth. Probably the oldest written account of the superstition regarding the Evil Eye in Ireland, is that related of Balor. He became possessed of the power as a child, when one day, he happened to pass a sacred building in which Druids were busy brewing a magic decoction. Overcome with curiosity, he peeped in through a crevice to observe what was going on. At that moment the "medicine men" lifted the lid of the caldron, and the vapour, which escaped, passed into one of Balor's eyes, carrying with it all the deadly venom of the brew. Balor thus could strike whole armies dead with the terrible power of his gaze.

After the Pagan giant Balor, one of the few ancient instances of the fatal effects of the malific eye is narrated of a St. Silan, probably a "verted" Pagan who possessed the unenviable property of a poisonous hair in his eyebrow that killed whoever in the morning first looked on him. The sequel is thus told by Lady Wilde. "All persons, therefore, who, from long sickness, or sorrow, or the weariness that comes with years, were tired of life, used to try and come in the saint's way, that so their sufferings might be ended by a quick and easy death. But another saint, the holy Molaise, hearing that St. Silan was coming to visit his church, resolved that no more deaths should happen by means of the poisoned hair. So he arose early in the morning, before anyone was up, and went forth alone to meet St. Silan, and when he saw him coming along the path, he went boldly up, and plucked out the fatal hair from his eyebrow, but in doing so, he himself was struck by the venom, and immediately fell down dead."

The infant Hercules when yet in his cradle strangles a serpent; the great Irish hero Cuchullin (Coolin) when a child strangles a huge watch-dog, the terror of the country side. The Greek Adonis and the brave and gay Dermot, are each killed by a boar. This last-mentioned legend was certainly the most popular and wide-spread tale current amongst the Irish-speaking population, and it is, of all the legends which have descended to our days, the one which has been least Christianised. The tale as recounted in the county Sligo, is given in chapter xiii.

In the oldest bardic legends which have descended to our time, there are, here and there, glimpses of past phases of thought and character calculated to arrest attention. This literature comprises a number of prose tales of warlike adventures. Amongst them there is a class known by the designation of "Caves"; these are stories respecting various occurrences in souterrains or underground dwellings, such as the capture of a "cave" used as a place of refuge or habitation, or the narrative of some adventure in, or plunder of one of these artificial underground dwellings. There is the tale of the hiding of Dermot and Grania in a cave on the Hill of Howth; the tale of the Cave of Croghan; and the adventure of a chief named Cuglass who disappeared in the cave at Baltinglass since called after him. A list of these wild legends is given by O'Curry in his *MS. Materials of Ancient Irish History*. There are also accounts of maritime voyages and adventures, tragic occurrences, visions and dreams; of these some have been translated in a most literal manner, whilst others have been paraphrased, so that an English reader can form an approximate idea of their merit. But, as a rule, the translations we at present possess are about the dreariest reading that can well be chosen; as one turns page after page of slavishly literal rendering, absurdities and inanities jostle one another, so that we ought to feel a deep debt of gratitude to the few translators who have attempted the task of producing some kind of more polished version. The best essay, as yet, is probably Dr. Joyce's *Celtic Romances* in which the original expressions are paraphrased, and no strictly literal rendering is placed before the reader. The paraphrase enables the modern reader to trace the ancient ideas and train of thought, better than he could with a more literal translation before him. "Even seven hundred and fifty years ago," writes the Rev. E. Hogan, s.j., in his translation of *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, "such things were looked on as 'l'histoire véritable des temps fabuleux,' as the scribe of the Táin Bó Cuailnge in the *Book of Leinster* writes at fol. 104 b: 'A blessing on everyone who shall faithfully memorize the Táin in this form and shall not put it into any other form. But I, who have transcribed this history, or rather fable, do not believe some things in this history or fable. For some things in it are delusions of demons, some are poetic figments, some seem true (similia), and some not; some are written to amuse fools.'"

As to the merit of these stories, the most opposite opinions have been expressed. "Some have represented them as devoid of all value or interest," remarks Dr. J. K. Ingram, "others have spoken of them as a literature of the first order, and have almost implied that the Irish intellect of the present day would find its

best possible culture in their study. The truth, as usual, lies between these extreme views. We possess, in Irish, no work of genius comparable to the Nibelungen Lied, or the Song of Roland. To speak of the Táin-Bó-Cuailnge as a Gaelic Iliad seems, to say the least, an imprudent comparison. But without any great continuous composition there are in the remains which have come down to us, passages of much beauty and tenderness; some of the tales are impressively and touchingly told, and there is one singular relic 'the Vision of MacConglinne' which is instinct with genuine humour of the Rabelaisian type," but this tract is apparently of comparatively late date.

There is also the humorous story of "The pursuit of the Gilla Dacker and his Horse," a narration of a practical joke played by an enchanter on sixteen of the most renowned of the Feni, whom he carried off on the back of an enormous horse, to "the Land of Promise." The story, in modern version, is shortly as follows: Finn MacCool was one day in camp at Knockainy in Limerick, most of his companions being away hunting, when a look-out apprised him of the advent of a huge unwieldy man, leading or rather dragging an immense skeleton-like horse after him. On emerging from his tent Finn beheld this extraordinary being approaching in a most lazy fashion, each step achieved as if by a painful effort. Finn demanded his name, his birthplace, and what he wanted. "Gilla Dacker (Slothful Fellow) is the name I am called. The spot I come from is not worthy of a place in your memory. No one will employ me, I am so lazy, and so I seek service with the hospitable chief of the Feni of Erin." Finn laughed, and told him that he might stay with his grooms. The giant thanked him, saying, "May the King of the North live in fear of you. Go my poor horse, and graze with the noble beasts on the meadow, the great Finn gives you permission." Finn had, however, scarcely entered his tent, when he heard such a squealing and galloping from the pasture that he rushed out and beheld the bony steed of the lazy fellow, biting and kicking the other horses, and scattering them in all directions. "Dog of a sluggard," shouted the irate Finn, "run to the pasture, secure your cursed beast, and let me not set eyes on either of you again." "Chief of the warriors of Erin," replied the Sluggard, "the slowest of your men would be in Dublin before your servant could reach the meadow. But let Conan catch him by the mane and I will be warrant for his quietness." Conan seized the brute's mane, and the weird steed at once stood still as if changed into stone; in vain did stick and leathern thong resound on his ribs; he remained with set feet as if planted in the ground. At the suggestion of its owner Conan then jumped on its back and

plied stick and thong afresh, but without avail. "Ah, where is my memory fled," said the Slothful One, "he will not move without feeling the weight of sixteen men such as Conan." Fifteen of Conan's companions clambered, one by one, on to the back of the ill-conditioned steed, who thereupon, at a touch of his master's magical rod, galloped away followed by his owner, but at such a pace as made pursuit vain. The men tried to throw themselves off, but failed, as they found that they were firmly fastened to the back of the magical horse.

For the adventures of Finn and of his companions in the pursuit and recovery of their captive comrades there is not space.

For the most part these tales bear internal evidence of their origin and composition belonging to no very remote period, and they have, in many instances, been interpolated or amended by modern transcribers. Whilst illustrating a very rude state of society, they often present interesting evidences of inventive power, and many of these humorous and lengthened compositions were recited from memory, and thus transmitted through many successive generations in the mountainous districts of Munster, in the plains of Leinster, in the glens of Ulster, or throughout the wilds of Connaught.

According to modern criticism, these stories naturally divide themselves into two epochs, one comparatively ancient, the other modern. The older series is that of which Cuchullin is the centre, and is supposed, by some, to have first been reduced to writing in the ninth century, when monastic chroniclers converted mythical tradition into pseudo-history, and the after-descent of these stories belongs to written literature rather than to oral tradition. In fact, as already stated, each fresh transcriber adapted them to the times in which he wrote.

The reader who is not acquainted with Irish may be warned parenthetically that Cuchullin is pronounced somewhat like Coolin, according to the orthographic fancy of Celtic ideas, which invariably supplies a superabundance of consonants. We should, however, remember that one of the greatest defects in the English language is its extraordinary spelling, but nevertheless in this it is completely outdone by the Irish Gaelic, which, as pointed out by William Larminie in *West Irish Folk Tales*, "is troubled in an aggravated form with every evil that afflicts English. Different sounds are written in the same way. Identical sounds are written in different ways. Silent letters attain to a tropical forestine luxuriance, through which the tongue of the learner despairs of hewing a way. There are, moreover, cases in which there is no indication in writing of single sounds, and even syllables which are actually pronounced; and there is at least one case of a word being written

as if it began with a vowel while it really begins with a consonant."

Cuchullin combined in his person the bravery of Achilles with the beauty of Paris. Tighernach (Teernah) calls him "the bravest hero of all the Scots"; and Irish writers delight to dwell on his exploits. According to these chroniclers he had, however, three faults—he was too young, too bold, and too handsome. Regarded from another standpoint Cuchullin is, to a certain extent, a mythical and mythological being, as the account of his life given in written records has apparently been remodelled on that of Christ. Cuchullin's age at death is thirty-three. He has an immortal father and a mortal mother of the royal line; he is born in a district remote from Emania, the Irish Jerusalem; when a child of ten he steals away from his mother with his little wooden shield and sword of lath to contend with the hero-youths of Emania, as the boy Jesus went into the Temple to argue with the Jewish Doctors; in fact, his deeds, as a youth, are a mere adaptation of the recorded early life of Christ in the Apocryphal Gospels. He is brought up by Culand the artificer, as Christ is brought up by Joseph the carpenter; he is employed defending the weak against aggression; the last three years of his life are full of trouble and misery; he dies, after being pierced by a dart, after taking a drink, exclaiming, "The Gods of Erin have deserted us," standing erect with his back to a pillar-stone to which he had tied himself: other coincidences might be given.

The legends of the second epoch cluster around Finn MacCool, who is placed in the third century of the Christian era. It would appear as if most writers on the subject have accepted the date; but there is nevertheless a pleasing divergence of opinion. Some hold that Finn was really a very ancient semi-mythical personage, dragged down, so to speak, by the monks to almost Christian times; while some of the German school turn Finn into a ninth-century leader of the Irish against the Danes of Dublin, by whom he was slain.

Even by the most pronounced champions of Irish legendary lore, popular stories, still recounted in the vernacular, are allowed to be provokingly incomplete. They are, in general, incoherent; more like remembered fragments of ancient stories than a complete composition.

In the written semi-historical tales and legends it is singular how comparatively rare are the references to the ancient gods of Erin, and although the early Fathers tell us less of heathendom than they knew, still it is difficult to understand how the clerical pruning knife was able, so scientifically, to cut off the principal characters from the scene, and leave it even readable; yet,

“however interesting to scholars in their original form,” remarks Dr. Ingram, “I do not think these tales will ever win their way to general esteem among cultivated readers, except as transmuted into shapes better adapted to our ideas, and with a certain breadth of modern thought and feelings subtly mingled with their substance.”

As a rule, the attempts at art of early man, especially in Ireland, were confined to rude linear decorative patterns, an exception being the extraordinary and lifelike representation of the cavemen of Gaul, who incised on bone delineations of men, animals, and fishes. A suspicion may be entertained that these articles are possibly modern forgeries. Why should such astonishing and faithful animal-designers be confined to one relatively small district? Nowhere else have traces of such skilled artists been unearthed. If these sketches be authentic, we are indebted to them for the oldest pictures in the world. What up to the present have been regarded, by us, as “old masters,” are, indeed, superseded. The study of the nude, of “the altogether,” is of primeval antiquity, for in these primitive studies in nature the human form is depicted perfectly naked, in company with the mastodon, a huge-winged reptile resembling the pterosaurian, the mylodon, reindeer, cave-bear, fox (or, perhaps, but very unlikely, dog), together with reptiles and fishes.

The remaining period of the Stone Age shows no trace of pictorial designs. If further proof were required of the paucity of ancient figure drawing, it may be pointed out that in collecting specimens for exhibition illustrative of the immense period covered by the Stone Age, not more than sixty articles could be procured showing any germ of pictorial design. This is emphasized by the fact that up to the middle, or even latter end of the Bronze Age, ornamentation was still linear in character.

Perhaps, in the dim future, some Irish cave-explorer may bring to light an etching on bone, or stone, similar to those discovered on the Continent, but until that day arrives we must rest content with the singular fact that the sculptor's art, as applied to representations of the human or animal form, appears to have been rarely, if, indeed, ever, practised in Ireland prior to the introduction of Christianity. Even then the devices consisted almost entirely in ornamentation of an arabesque character, sometimes combined with grotesque animals and serpents; if human figures were introduced, they were subsidiary to the scroll work in which they were entwined. From the tenacity with which the Pagan-Christian school of artists adhered to an almost stereotyped form of decoration, it is difficult to assign even an approximate date to many of the best specimens of

elaborately decorated remains. It may be, however, fairly surmised that any object of Irish art upon which interlacing tracery is displayed should not be referred to a period antecedent to Christianity. Strange to say, interlaced serpents are among the principal subjects treated in this stage of Irish ornamentation, Ireland being itself serpentless.

As the writer has elsewhere observed, the style of ornamentation of which traces have been left by the Pagan Irish on gold, bronze, stone, and earthenware has survived to our day. It is thought that it will eventually be proved that this style is of such a nature as will establish the fact that the decoration was executed by one race and one school of craftsmen, and that it is identical with Continental prehistoric work. It eventuates that Irish Pagan art was of an exotic style, which, though developed in a more or less characteristic manner, was not an original or national style, any more than the interlaced ornamentation, which, introduced by the intrusion of Christianity from the Continent, was idealised and beautified, so that it is with difficulty many people can be persuaded that it is but an improvement on classic ideas of decoration.

Give to a skilful modern sculptor the flint chisel and hammer stone of a prehistoric workman, and he would probably declare that it was impossible to do anything with such tools, and yet with similar implements the primitive workman wrought ornamental and sometimes elaborate designs.

In no field of investigation are there a greater number of enigmas than in the study of the origin of prehistoric designs, and to their solution the Irish antiquary has brought every literary quality to bear, in addition to a credulity capable of believing anything. When he shall have finally discarded fanciful theories, and brought to light all that can be discovered of the story of the human past, a clearer idea may be obtained of the purport of the designs found sculptured in comparative profusion on the interior of carns and on the face of natural rocks; they represent the infancy of art, and present many attributes which form some of the most interesting traits of man's childhood, simplicity being their chief characteristic.

We may readily expect a high degree of attention to be paid by savage man to the manufacture of his weapons, so as to render them the best that could be produced. To him they were the most valuable thing he possessed, as they not only afforded him security, but provided him with food. When superfluous labour, in the form of ornamentation, has been bestowed upon implements, which did not, in any way, increase their efficiency, a new and higher standard, the genesis of art, is reached, for ornamentation is not mere utilitarian labour, providing for an

absolute requirement, but the origination of a new standard of value.

To the savage, time was of no account. Sir John Evans describes how some members of Indian tribes on the Rio Negro spend years in perforating cylinders of rock-crystal by twirling a flexible leaf-shoot of wild plantain between the hands, and thus grinding out the hole with the aid of sand and water. A pendant, formed of a natural quartz prism, clear as glass, through the amorphous end of which a hole had been pierced for suspension, was found by the writer in a primitive interment in a rude stone monument near the town of Sligo. The hole in the pendant was, on both sides, considerably wider externally than in the centre, showing that it had been bored with rude appliances; and as the remains with which the ornament was associated apparently belonged to the Neolithic Period, the time taken to pierce the quartz must have been immense.

In estimating the antiquity of an object, or in dealing with the style of decoration, the past history of the country in which it is found, or with which it is connected, has to be taken into account. In Ireland powder-horns may be seen with designs which look as if they ought to belong to the eighth or ninth century. In Iceland many of the native art-products are in appearance of the twelfth century, yet date only from the seventeenth or eighteenth century; so we should be quite prepared to find primitive ornamentation lingering in Ireland long after it had been discarded elsewhere.

The patterns presented in Moko or Maori tattooing—a clever combination of scrolls, spirals, line-groupings, and curves—are similar to those displayed on walls of early Irish sepulchral chambers, on natural rock surfaces, and on fictile ware. Thus, at the Antipodes, we have anthropophagous savages evolving a native form of art, resembling Irish pre-Christian effort, which has only to be recognised to be fully appreciated. The study of Maori art raises the problem by which we are confronted when studying early and mediæval Irish Christian art—namely, how was it that both these peoples, each equally endowed with an exquisite taste for linear patterns and designs, could perpetrate the ghastly hideosities they produced when they attempted to picture the human form. By the designs in the tattooing on a Maori chief the initiated could tell his tribe and pedigree; yet there is, in a certain sense, no more resemblance between Maori ornamentation or Irish rock-scribings and the ancient inscriptions of Egypt and Assyria, than there is between the unintelligible scrawl made by a child and the printed pages of a closely reasoned out book, except that in each instance there is a meaning intended to be conveyed.

Each great Maori chief had formerly imprinted on his face marks peculiar to his family and to his tribe. Those tattooed on



FIG. 54.

Head of a Maori Chief, showing tattooed patterns. Reproduced from *Polynesian Researches*, by William Ellis.

the faces of his dependents, although simpler and fewer in number, were the same in form as those by which the chief was distinguished; in fact, tattooing may be regarded as the armorial bearings of the ancient New Zealand aristocracy. Fig. 54 is a representation of the head of Houghli, a celebrated New Zealand warrior, who lived about the year 1830, and conveys an idea of the effect of this singular practice. The tattooing on the face of a New Zealander answered the purpose of the particular stripe or colour of the Highlander's plaid (some allege that the coloured plaid is but a modern innovation), and marked the class or tribe to which he belonged. It was considered highly ornamental, as well as useful, as the patterns

thus permanently marked on the face were a means by which they were enabled to distinguish their friends from their enemies in battle.

In Ireland many of the irregular scorings on the faces of cliffs or on detached boulders should be regarded with archaeological suspicion. For example, those on the pillar-stone at Kilnasaggart, county Armagh, though long held to be Oghamic, are now generally considered to have been worn by persons using the pillar-stone for the very prosaic purpose of sharpening knives, hatchets, or such-like implements. Scorings and scratches which appear on another large pillar-stone standing close to the railway station of Kesh, county Fermanagh, were caused in like manner, as well as very similar markings observable in numerous localities. Killowen, county Cork, may be instanced, where they occur on a block significantly designated in Irish, "the (sharpening) Stone of the Weapons."

There is an "inscribed cromlech," or sepulchral monument, in the townland of Scrahanard, on a hillside about three miles west of Macroom, county Cork. On the underside of the table-stone are a series of artificial marks, which must have been incised before the stone was placed in its present position, consisting of straight and oblique lines, numerous crosses (or, rather, lines intersecting at right angles), and other curious forms. But

they do not appear to have been designed to convey a meaning to be arrived at through the medium of phonetic exponents.

There are incised scorings on the walls of a natural cavern known as "the Lettered Cave," on Knockmore Mountain, near the village of Derrygonnelly, county Fermanagh (see fig. 55), some of which resemble runes; others seem to be cognate with the incised ornamentation on the stones of the great chambers at New Grange; but mixed with the ancient are many modern markings, known to be the work of recent visitors to the cave, so that much caution is required to distinguish the genuine ancient carvings. These latter scribings were, as a whole, pronounced to be runes, evidently intended as writing, and could be read even now did we but know one or more of the then well-known formula. But until this key is discovered we shall be unable to decipher them, more especially as later hands have, as already noticed, added to the original designs knots and intertwined ornaments of very late Irish types, not to mention the very modern scribings.

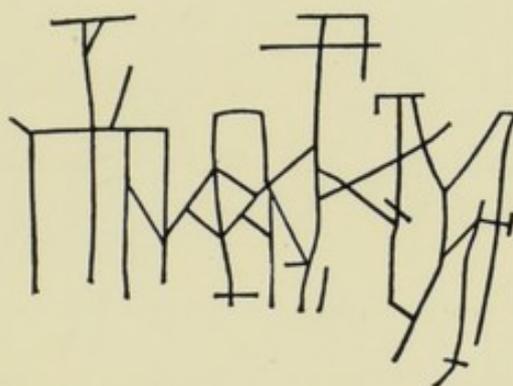


FIG. 55.

"Scribbles," or "Wild Runes," in the Lettered Cave at Knockmore, County Fermanagh. From the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

We can all call to mind Mr. Pickwick's great antiquarian discovery, as also the scene between Oldbuck the Antiquary and Edie Ochiltree the Bluegown, in Scott's novel, *The Antiquary*, in which a dispute arises relative to the Antiquary's discovery of a Roman entrenchment and a stone with the letters A.D.L.L. This the Antiquary interpreted, AGRICOLA DECAVIT LIBENS LUBENS, and the Bluegown, AIKEN DRUM'S LANG LADLE.

The English and Scottish stories are, however, quite paralleled by the controversy which arose relative to the discovery and meaning of an inscription carved on a slab of rock formerly situated on the summit of Tory Hill, near Mullinavat, and which Tighe, in *Statistical Observations on the County Kilkenny*, regards

as Phœnician, and reads it BELI DINOSE (see fig. 56). The archæologists Vallency and Wood relied on this inscription as the sole basis of their theory respecting the Phœnician origin of the early colonisation of Ireland. Even Lanigan gravely cites this monument as one among many ancient remains in Ireland which serve to show that the god Bel was identical with the sun.

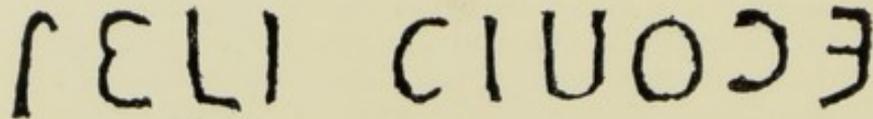


FIG. 56.

Inscription as given by Tighe in "Statistical Observations on the Co. Kilkenny."

The true origin of this monument and its inscription is as follows:—A millstone cutter went one morning to work at a millstone he was fashioning on the top of Tory Hill, but his fellow-labourers, without whose assistance he could not commence operations, did not join him. So, to wile away time, he amused himself by cutting his name (E. CONIC) and the date (1731) on a stone on the summit of the hill (see fig. 57).

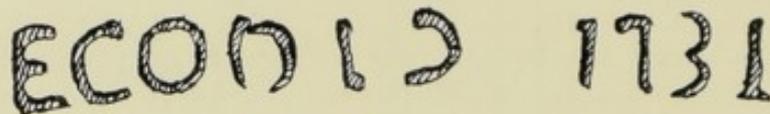


FIG. 57.

Inscription as originally cut by E. Conic in A.D. 1731.

He was a very indifferent scholar, and reversed, as children constantly do, one of the letters, the last c of his surname. The stone was at this time lying flat on the surface of the ground, and remained so for many years after his death, until one day, when a number of young men repaired to the hill, and to amuse themselves competed as to who amongst them could jump the furthest. Finding this inscribed stone ready at hand to answer



FIG. 58.

Same Inscription reversed.

their purpose, they raised it on others to the height required for a "running leap," but placed it in such a position that the letters of the inscription appeared reversed (figs. 58, 59). After the contest

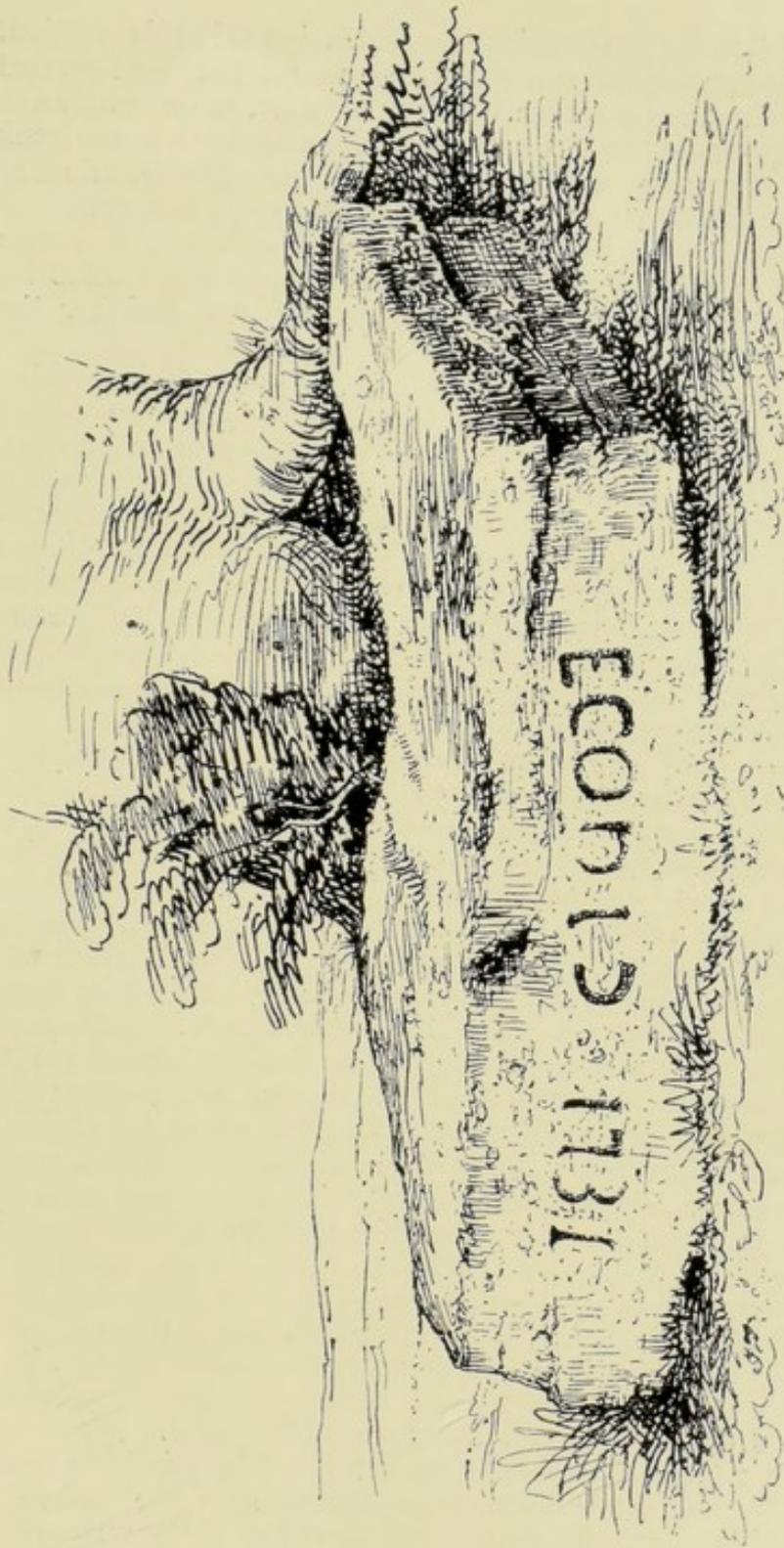


FIG. 59.

Reversed Inscription on the Tory Hill Stone. Drawn by the late Rev. James Graves from the original slab then preserved at Woodstock, County Kilkenny. Reproduced from the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

they departed to their respective homes, leaving it in this position, little imagining that anyone would dream that they had erected an altar to a god. Shortly after this, however, some gentlemen happened to ascend the hill, and, observing the stone, were struck with the strange appearance of the letters. One of them, thinking that he had discovered an ancient inscription, made a sketch of the stone and the letters in their inverted position, and, having exhibited it to some Waterford archæologists, created a celebrity for the locality which induced many to try and decipher the wonderful inscription.

Mistakes like this are laughed at, but attempts at imposition cannot be too severely reprobated. Towards the close of last century a writer described a remarkable rude stone monument, situated on Callan Mountain, in Clare, bearing an Ogham inscription. The translation purported to set forth that the celebrated Conan was there buried. To support this reading it is alleged that an Irish quatrain was forged and cited as part of an ancient poem, to the effect that the above-mentioned warrior had, before engaging in battle, prayed to the sun on this spot, that he was slain, and there interred under a flagstone, which bore his name carved in Ogham characters.

The rock-markings in the passages and chambers of New Grange and Dowth, on the River Boyne, present characteristics distinguishing them from the rock-markings of the north of England and Scotland, one of the chief of which is, that whilst the circular incised figures which form the bulk of the latter are concentric, with a central cup-like hollow, and a channel passing through the concentric circles, the carvings at New Grange and Dowth are, as a rule, spirals, without the central hollow or intersecting channel, and are associated with fern-leaf patterns—this fern-leaf pattern is now thought to be doubtful, as there is no median line—and also with lozenge, zigzag, and chevron-like markings, which are analogous to the ornamentation of Irish fictile sepulchral vessels. Many of the markings of New Grange and Dowth were evidently carved before the stones were used for their present purpose. If we find carvings on a boulder—evidently placed in position by the hand of nature, and not by the hand of man—not in any way connected with Christian use, even should these carvings not be strictly analogous to those at New Grange and Dowth, still we have grounds to conclude that it is an example of an ancient custom which placed to the hand of the builders of these tumuli ready carved material. There are many such natural boulders, thus decorated by primitive man, scattered throughout the country. Several stud the surface of the green hills surrounding the Seven Churches of Clonmacnoise. Close to one boulder is a cairn, called in Irish, “the Monument of

the Dead." When a funeral approaches the famed burial ground of Clonmacnoise the coffin is laid down and stones thrown on the carn. It is stated that no Christian rite was ever performed at the boulder. On the contrary, the name by which it is known, "The Fairy's Stone," points to its Pagan origin.

The most singular markings on this rock are representations apparently of the ancient Irish ring-brooch; some with a knob on top of the acus, as frequently occurs in extant specimens, others being flat at top, and seeming to represent the looping of the acus over the flat bar of a half-moon ring. The carvings appear to have been formed by a rude-pointed tool or pick, and are, on an average, about an inch deep. Other boulders occurring on the hill are studded over with cup-like hollows, evidently caused by the solvent property of rain-water, retained in certain natural irregularities, which were thereby deepened, and assumed the artificial aspect which they now present.

There is an incised stone, near Cranna, county Galway, called in Irish by the very peculiar designation, "The Stone of the Fruitful Fairy." It is a boulder of very irregular form, measuring forty-six inches by thirty-two inches, and presents, with other ornamentation, the water-worn hollows already described.

About a quarter of a mile from Parsonstown, on the road to Dublin, there stood, many years ago, a globular-shaped limestone boulder, five or six feet in diameter, and inscribed with V-shaped marks, like the stone at Cranna, county Galway, and other places; also various depressions or cavities, traditionally said to be the marks of Finn MacCool's thumb and fingers. It was called in Irish, Finn's Seat. This stone has been removed from its ancient site. The giants, as noticed, left marks of their person, their fingers, and of their feet on rocks. The saints did the same. Two examples will suffice. In the townland of Bellanascaddan, in the county Donegal, there is a monolith on which are two cup-marks. To account for these the country people narrate that a giant, who lived in a neighbouring fort, used it as his "finger-stone," and that the cups on the stone are the marks of his fingers. Within the demesne of Sheestown, in Ossory, there exists a rock marked with peculiar indentations, which were believed by the people to have been traces or marks of St. Patrick's footsteps. The rock was called in Irish, "St. Patrick's Footprints."

A good example of carvings occurs on an inclined bed of rock near the summit of Ryefield Hill, in the townland of Ballydorrageh, county Cavan. The markings are described as produced apparently by simple scraping with a saw-like motion. The figures most commonly represented are detached straight-armed

crosses, but not unfrequently these are so grouped or clustered together as to form a network of lines crossing in every direction ; in two instances these crosses are enclosed in an oblong rectangular figure. About a quarter of a mile north-west of "Calliagh Dirra's House," in the parish of Monasterboice, county Louth, are rock-markings on a natural rock-surface, produced by a combined method of scraping and punching. Some of the devices differ from those at Ryefield, for many are of quite a Runic character. This may, however, be accidental, just as some of the carving on rocks in Sweden closely resembles a pair of spectacles ; yet, no one could imagine that they had such a significance.

When forming the new line of road leading from Ballydehob to Bantry in the county Cork, the workmen cleared away a considerable depth of earth from the face of a rock of red sandstone of the district, and so exposed its sculptured surface. The designs consist of circles, cup-shaped cavities, penannular rings, and V-shaped markings ; there are two perfectly-formed circles, and three imperfect or penannular circles, together with other curious markings.

What Irish rock scribings represent is a question still awaiting solution, though numerous conjectures have been hazarded. Cup-markings, incomplete rings, a series of circles round a central cup, sometimes with a radial groove through the circles ; these are the commonest types. These emblems are stated to be almost identical in Hittite, Cypriote, Cuneiform, and Egyptian ; thus, to solve the enigma of these scribings we must go afield. For instance, what does this style of ornamentation represent to present-day primitive peoples, to the aborigines of Australia, or to the natives of the islands of the Pacific ?

It should also be pointed out that, in many instances, dot-and-circle patterns occur in triplets. Can they have reference to three deities, or to a triune God ? No doubt, these conjoined figures, when placed on the tomb of the deceased, as found occasionally in Ireland, had some symbolical meaning, as has the Christian Cross when used as an ornament, or when placed over a grave. It may be repugnant to the feelings of many people to be informed that their notion that the symbolic use of the Cross is of purely Christian origin is a mistaken one. It was common, perhaps more common, in Pagan than in present times. They may, however, console themselves with the fact that its real beginning was further back still in the world's history ; that with Paganism it was, as it is with Christianity, simply an adopted and favourite symbol, brought in from an even lower form of worship. In like manner, many things formerly supposed to be of comparatively modern origin, can nowadays be

traced back to the remotest prehistoric ages ; hence, as a mere matter of induction, it follows that the modern meaning, or application given to many things, is often one developed in recent times, and not that which was originally intended. The original meaning may have been very different to what it subsequently became, so that the interpretation belonging to the epoch in which we are first enabled to trace a definite meaning, is not necessarily to be regarded as that which gave birth to the symbol, but is, probably, only an intermediate link in the chain of symbolic development.

The religious systems of many heathen nations contained the germ, in a more or less developed state, of the idea of three equally powerful deities, or of a triune God ; suffice it to instance the modern Hindoos and the old Norsemen. The formulary of one of the oaths of the latter demonstrates this. It was as follows :—“ So help me Frey, Njord, and the Almighty As.” It may be well to state that the assinine-like name is but an *alias* of Odin, the great Northern God.

All the cup-like excavations met with on rock surfaces, pillar stones, cromlechs, and other monuments in Ireland and in Great Britain are not by any means the work of man. Many are the result of weathering and disintegration of the stone from long exposure to atmospheric influences. Cuplike excavations may be noticed on the surface of primary sandstone and other softer rocks, as well as on the surface of far denser stone. Occasionally they are the result of the mineralogical constitution of the rock, or of softer portions, weathering out, or of the enucleation of fossilized organic remains, or of embedded stone nodules.

As a proof of the caution requisite before attaching importance to such objects, an incident, observed when the discussion amongst British archæologists about cup-markings was at its height, deserves to be recorded. An Irish antiquary chanced to walk towards the Mumbles, near Oystermouth, South Wales, where quarrying operations were being carried on. The stone that was being worked lay in vertical strata, and as each layer was removed the face of the next exhibited cupped depressions in considerable numbers, irregularly distributed over the surface, and the antiquary immediately recognised as a fact that which he had previously surmised—namely, that three-fourths of the cup-markings that had been occupying the attention of learned societies, and filling the pages of their publications had no archæological significance whatever, and were merely due to natural causes.

Various excavations on stones, especially on the covering stones, and on the flagging in cists, in chambered tumuli and on cromlechs,

are frequently noticed; but an examination of their smooth surfaces and expanding interiors demonstrates that the excavations are unmistakably the work of marine life at a time when the stones formed a part of a sea-beach. This refers, of course, not to cup-and-ring markings, which are clearly due to man's industry, but to mere depressions resembling cups, or segments of eggs, which are sometimes two and a half inches across.

It is extremely probable that the formation of some of these hollows is due to the *Echinus lividus*, or purple sea-urchin, which hollowed out the depressions for residence where exposed to the ocean surf. Many good examples may be observed on rocks along the littoral. "The investigation of this subject raises an interesting point," remarks R. Lloyd Praeger, "one which has been frequently discussed, and can by no means be settled offhand. In the *Irish Naturalist* for 1892 the cause of the cuplike indentations in limestone is gone into. Dr. Scharff disposes pretty conclusively of the suggestion that these were made by marine organisms, and points out the strong evidence of their having been made by snails, notably the large *Helix aspersa*. These perforations were in limestone, which the acid secretions of the snail is capable of eroding. Some perforations, stated to be made in sandstone, the snail could not dissolve, and they are larger and shallower than the snail-holes. They are certainly in size and shape similar to those which the purple urchin makes, as may be seen at Bundoran and elsewhere. This subject should be handled with caution, some habitat of the purple urchin visited, its burrows carefully examined, measured, and compared with cup-marked stones, and they would probably throw light on the subject."

In *Polynesian Researches* Ellis attempts to interpret the meaning of the "dot-and-circle" designs of the Pacific Islanders, the exact pattern of those carved by the ancient inhabitants of Ireland. He recounts that in the course of a tour round one of the islands he met with a few specimens of what may be termed the first efforts of an uncivilized people towards the construction of a language of symbols. "Along the southern coast, both on the east and west sides, we frequently saw a number of straight lines, semi-circles, or concentric rings, with some rude imitation of the human figure, cut or carved in the compact rocks of lava. They did not appear to have been cut with an iron instrument, but with a stone hatchet or a stone less frangible than the rock on which they were portrayed." It has often been advanced that similar incisions in hard rock in Ireland could only have been produced without metallic implements; but an antiquary, experimenting with only the assistance of a flint chisel and a wooden mallet, cut in the space of two hours nearly an entire circle on a block of granite which bore archaic devices.

On inquiry Ellis was informed that the Pacific cup-marking had been made from a motive similar to that which induces a person to carve his initials on a rock or tree, or to record his name in an album. Their significations were interpreted to him by the natives, as follows:—"When there were a number of concentric circles with a dot or mark in the centre, the dot signified a man, and the number of rings denoted the number in the party who had circumambulated the island. When there was a ring and a number of marks it denoted the same, the number of marks showing of how many the party consisted, and the ring that they had travelled completely round the island; but when there was a semi-circle it denoted that they had returned after reaching the place where it was made. In some of the islands we have seen the outline of a fish portrayed in the same manner, to denote that one of that species or size had been taken near the spot; sometimes the dimensions of an exceedingly large fruit, &c., are marked in the same way. With this slight exception, if such it can be called, the natives of the Sandwich and other islands had no signs for sounds or ideas, nor any pictorial representation of events."

It is to be feared that the missionary was, in this instance, the recipient of erroneous information from his converts, who were, doubtless, unwilling to impart to their new spiritual adviser the true meaning of the symbols.

W. F. Wakeman thus depicts the general aspect in which these rock carvings may be regarded:—"Many men of ancient and modern times, confined by necessity to a listless existence in an inhospitable region, might very naturally have beguiled their hours by carving with a stone or metallic instrument such figures as their fancy prompted upon the nearest object which happened to present a surface more or less smooth. Scorings or designs made under such circumstances would be in character as various as the skill or humours of their authors. Now, when in many districts of the country, and some of them widely apart, we find upon the sides of caves and rocks, and within the enclosure of Pagan sepulchral tumuli, a certain well-defined class of engravings, often arranged in groups, and, with few exceptions, presenting what may be styled a family type, we can hardly imagine them to be the result of caprice."

It is evident that there is at present no archaeological explanation offered relative to the origin of Irish rock-sculpturings authoritative enough to carry conviction to the mind that the real solution of the problem has been ascertained. The following conclusions can, however, be safely drawn, viz.: that all these designs were not made without some meaning being attached to them at the time they were in use, that they were

carved by a race which occupied Ireland, and also Great Britain, many centuries before the introduction of Christianity, and that the figures are in many cases symbolical, for, otherwise, what could have induced tribes hundreds of miles apart, and in many instances separated by the ocean, to use precisely the same designs, unless it were to express some idea, or to aid in the elucidation of some superstitious rite common to all, whilst the position and circumstances in which the markings are generally placed render it extremely probable that they were, in some way, connected with the thoughts, religious or otherwise, of those who carved them.

Cup-and-ring markings being probably the most primitive of all prehistoric designs, as well as those most widely spread, deserve more special notice than they appear to have as yet attracted. They are found, as already stated, in the most widely separated localities, and in the most unlooked-for places: on natural rock surfaces, on isolated boulders, on standing stones, near, and in the chambers of, cairns, on rude stone monuments, on the covering and other slabs of cists, and on early gravestones in Christian churchyards.

From cup-markings being directly associated in many instances with sepulchral remains, both Pagan and early Christian, it may fairly be inferred that they are connected, in some way, with funeral rites as sacred emblems; however, the fact of their being found on natural rock-surfaces militates somewhat against the theory.

When of any size, the formation of cup-markings has often been attributed to their employment as mortars for pounding roots, seeds, nuts, or grain, but as accounting for the marks in general, an objection may be pointed out which is fatal to the theory. To serve these purposes, the rocks on which they occur should be in a horizontal position, but in the majority of cases, all the world over, these cups are on shelving rocks, or on the faces of perpendicular crags.

These round cuplike marks are also, it is alleged, suggestive of the sun, moon, and stars; but, as against this, it is to be observed that in them the moon is always represented at the full, never in phases. If even an occasional figure were found representing what, by any ingenuity, could be regarded as a constellation, some colour might be held to be given to the idea, for there can be but little doubt that, in ancient Ireland, some tribes worshipped the moon. The custom of paying reverence to, and in some cases of praying to, the new moon, the first time that luminary was seen after its changes, survived in folk-lore and folk history into the present century, and is mentioned by several Irish writers, as well as by a French author, who says of the

inhabitants of Ireland that they, "se mettant à genoux en voyant la lune nouvelle, et disant, en parlant à la lune; 'laisse nous aussi sains qui tu nous a trouvé.'"

Nor does the suggestion that these ubiquitous cup-markings were used as dials, for marking time by the light of the sun, find any favour, as they occur in places which neither sun nor shadow could reach, as, for example, in the interior of stone sepulchres in cairns.

They can hardly be regarded as altogether the outcome of the leisure time of idle warriors, nor as the exercises of incipient engineers, for their wide distribution and their family resemblance, notwithstanding small differences in detail, prove that they possess a common origin, and indicate a symbolical meaning, representing popular thought at the time they were inscribed. A Swiss archæologist believed that he had recognised in the sculpturings which came under his observation maps of the surrounding district, the cups and dots, in his idea, indicating the mountain peaks. This theory is very similar to that held by some Irish antiquarians, of which the late Right Reverend Charles Graves, Bishop of Limerick, was the exponent, viz. :— "That these markings were maps, or rude plans, pointing out the locality and characteristics of the old circular forts in the neighbourhood of the sculpturings." The conjecture that these Irish carvings were primitive maps appeared to be a fanciful one; however, the Bishop having examined and re-examined the subject, came to the conclusion that his theory was correct, that the centre of the circles and the neighbouring cups and dots arranged themselves, generally three by three, in straight lines, or approximately so, and that the ancient raths marked on the Ordnance Survey maps appear, to some extent, to be also arranged, three by three, in straight lines.

It has also been suggested that these circles were intended to represent shields. This seems inconsistent with the fact that the same rock surface presents so many circular symbols of different sizes, varying from the small shallow cup of an inch or two in diameter to the group of concentric circles two feet across.

It has also been advanced that these circles were intended to serve as moulds in which metal rings might be cast, or for the purpose of playing some game, but the first theory is decisively negatived by the fact that circles occur on rock surfaces which are not, and never have been, horizontal, and in the second place, the objection to the first theory holds good as to the second theory, and combined with the great dissimilarity which exists between the figures on the same and on different stones renders the explanation untenable.

Some have hazarded the opinion that these markings indicated places for Druidical sacrifices, or for the practice of magic or necromancy, or that they were emblems of the philosophical views of the Druids, or symbolic enumeration of tribes or families, or a species of archaic writing. Against all these theories, there is the objection that the markings have never been found in connexion with characters that we, nowadays, could, by any possibility, construe as any form of writing, alphabetical, pictorial, or otherwise.

It is impossible to view these markings, so strangely similar and so mysterious, spread over almost the entire globe, without again and again repeating the questions, by whom were they made, and what is their significance? If they were merely ornamental, and some of them, no doubt, may be fairly so described, they are interesting on account of their catholicity and of their family likeness, but there is probably a meaning attached to them which is not so easily deciphered. Whoever their carvers were, and wherever they lived, it is beyond question that for considerable periods they must have inhabited almost every known country in the world. The absence of any definite arrangement in the position of the cups, and the recurrence of the same monotonous figures, cups, dots, rings, and grooves, repeated again and again, with hardly any variation in detail, or tendency to develop into more ornamental forms, have been accounted for by the supposition that they were executed one by one, at different times, most probably by different individuals. With regard to no advance being made beyond the cup, dot, ring, and groove, it may be further suggested that they were well recognised and stereotyped symbols, frequently repeated, and specially adapted to some ceremonial rite. The idea that circles were connected with nature-worship has been dismissed by some on account of the apparent absence of much well-marked resemblance, but conventional figurings still employed in the east, especially in India, for nature-worship, bear, in many cases, but the faintest traces of what they are intended to represent.

## CHAPTER V.

### SOME ARCHÆOLOGICAL PROBLEMS.

The problems of the Ice Age—The Rude Stone Monuments—Of an ancient Pagan Literature—Was Early Man a Musician?—Whence came Amber Ornaments?—Whence came Jet Ornaments?—Whence came Glass Ornaments?—The ancient Pearl Fisheries—The origin of Gold Ornaments—The date of the Introduction of Iron—The true Origin of certain Antiques—The date of the first Foundation of a Central Authority in Ireland.

As we have already seen, the surface of Ireland has been again and again subjected to the grinding action of land ice, as well as to the destructive agency of sea ice and of the sea. It is possible, therefore, that the great southern fauna of Britain and rude flint-using man may have been contemporaries in Ireland, but if so, glaciers, sea ice, and the waves and currents of the ocean have, as far as we know, obliterated the evidence of their presence. If at a later date the climate again became Glacial, the great Irish Big Horn and the reindeer could, at certain periods, migrate from North Britain to Ireland across the land connexion or the frozen sea. Terminal glaciers and floating ice were depositing, on the bed of the shallow sea, rocks and boulders, many of which were utilized long ages afterwards by flint-using man in the construction of rude stone receptacles for the dead, and rivers of ice were scooping out the valleys and moulding those features in the landscape with which we are so familiar. We seem to view the fall and hear the loud resounding crash of avalanches from the mountain heights; we gaze on a landscape enveloped in an icy shroud; we behold enormous glaciers with unseen, but nevertheless irresistible motion, creeping down the mountain flanks beneath a dimmed sunlight flickering on the surface of the pallid snow, and we perceive that we are in the presence of a frozen death enthroned triumphant on the frost-bound land.

The majority of persons who are whirled through the little valley or gap in the range of the Ox mountains at Carricknagat, six miles from the town of Sligo, comfortably seated in a railway carriage, would receive, with a smile of incredulity, the information that the heights on either hand owe their present appearance

to the action of ice. The valley is covered with verdure, two considerable villages nestle in its embrace, cows and sheep graze on the fertile soil, yet there is not a square foot of the area but was formerly buried beneath an incalculable depth of ice. Look at the metamorphic rock-masses which form the flank of the mountains. Their ridges are not sharp and covered with asperities, but, on the contrary, they are rounded and smoothed in an extraordinary manner, so that the polished surfaces they present resemble the appearance presented by the backs of a closely packed flock of sheep. This planing has been carried out by an immense glacier or ice sheet which filled the valley, took possession of the entire country between Ballysodare and Sligo, and pushed its enormous ice masses westward into the Atlantic (fig. 60). This was the huge engine which rounded the rocks; this was the mighty ploughshare which cut the deep furrows in the solid rock of the mountain side, for this powerful tool could not act continuously, during the incalculable period occupied by the Great Ice Age, without profoundly modifying the structure of the prominences against which it pressed.

We must picture to ourselves Ireland in general, and the west coast in particular, as another Greenland, its sea-loughs filled with icebergs, derived from the glaciers that occupied the adjacent valleys, those in turn supplied from the great ice sheet that covered the island—ice not at rest, but slowly and surely grinding its way onwards towards the sea through the pressure of its ever moving mass. In this manner the metamorphic rocks, found scattered over the Carrowmore district near Sligo, have been carried several miles towards the north-west, for such is the direction in which the ice-markings trend in this part of the country. These rocks had fallen at intervals from the cliffs of the Ox mountains, on to the then existing glaciers, which bore them onward, depositing them where they are now found resting on the Carboniferous Limestone, erratic specimens of this "metamorphic ridge," as the Ox range of mountains is termed by geologists. The huge "travelled blocks" of limestone found at Moytirra, an elevated district also in the county Sligo, did not journey far from the parent rock, and since reaching their present position have weathered into masses more or less irregular, fewer in number, but, in general, of vastly greater size than the more travelled and harder, yet rounder boulders of Carrowmore. Few places in the British Isles exhibit the extreme effects of glaciation better than parts of the county Sligo.

The stratum of stiff clay in which polished or striated boulders lie embedded, beds of stratified sands and gravels associated with this stiff clay, smoothed, rounded and polished old rock surfaces like those at Carricknagat just noticed, ancient



excavated lake basins, as at Lough Gill, near Sligo, banks of boulders and *débris* blocking up the ends of valleys, erratic boulders perched on mountain sides or scattered over plains (fig. 61), all bear corroborative and cumulative evidence to the intensity and vast duration of a Great Ice Age, be it of Polar ice or of enormously extended local glaciers. The Glacial Age, however, did not, as we have seen, comprise only one period of continuous and intense cold, but a prolonged time, during which there were several alterations in temperature, the ice at one period increasing and advancing over the surface of the land, at another retiring as the climate ameliorated; yet, after each advance, contracting beyond its original base, and retreating at length to the highest mountains; then finally disappearing. Thus a change, considerably for the better, came over the scene of desolation, and the flora and fauna of more temperate climes overspread the country. With this change of climate polished flint-using man makes his entry.

Very gradually, but surely, we are bringing to light evidence which will ultimately form the basis of the true history of the land. At present the work is but at its inception, but in a few years we shall be able to realise and recall this hoary past almost in its entirety. The fragmentary facts which we at present possess have been slowly and painfully accumulated. They supply us, however, with a foundation upon which future scholars may build a theory, possibly one of greater accuracy and detail than we now dare hope for. More clear and undisputed facts must be collected, the evidence of geology and archæology given each its due weight, the opinions of individual scholars and investigators examined and tested, and finally a theory elaborated such as will account for the facts, framing from all a consistent whole. For a long time there must doubtless be many competing theories, but one and another will succumb to the attacks of objectors, and finally, by a kind of "survival of the fittest," we may hope to gain a fair approximation of the truth.

Of the history of the far-back past, few pages have been so little read, and yet not one is as full of important and deeply interesting lore as that which describes the sepulchres of the dead. The tombs have been rudely torn open by the hands of the spoiler or of the idly curious; but how seldom have they been scientifically examined? It reflects but little credit on archæologists that no systematic attempt has ever yet been made to read this page of Ireland's prehistoric annals. "Why have we not a society established with such an object for its aim? Why not have a club of delvers, an exploration society, with its corps of engineers, draughtsmen, and scientific observers, whose business it should be to examine the primeval sepulchres of the

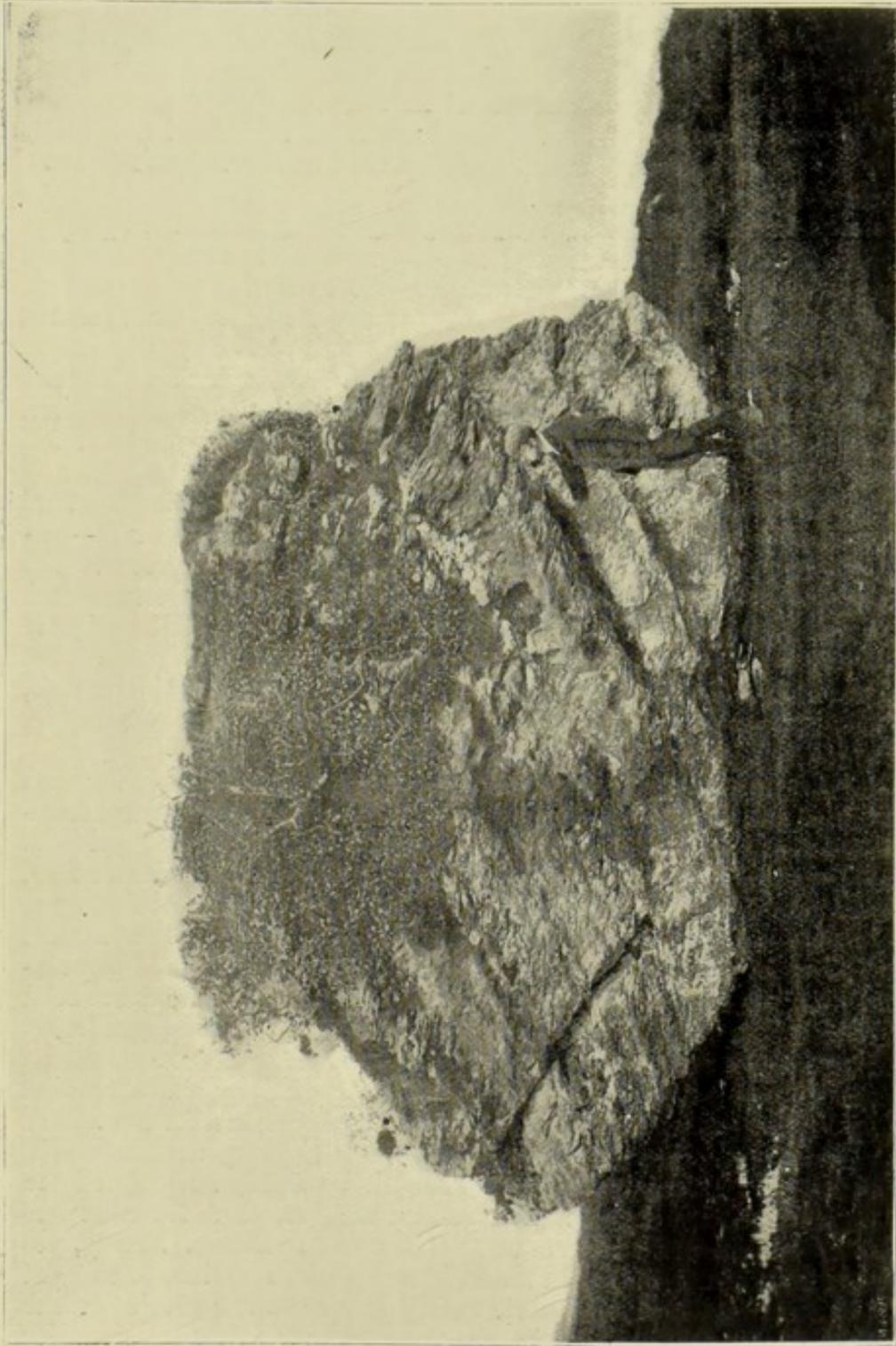


FIG. 61.—A Relic of the Glacial Period: an Erratic. Cloghvorra, or the Giant's Stone, from Welch's Irish Views.  
(For description see *The Causes of an Ice Age*, by Sir Robert Ball, LL.D.)

country, not idly, not irreverently, not as desultory diggers, but, with due care, circumspection, and caution, noting down every peculiarity, making accurate measured drawings, and depositing in a central museum the crania, the arms, the implements, and ornaments sure to be discovered in abundance? Here is work for energetic men to do, ay, good work, too!" Half a century has passed since this was penned by the late Rev. James Graves. How little has been done!

The anatomist endeavours to extract from death the secret of life; the archæologist essays to extract from the long entombed the secret of the past. If many relics of antiquity are silent, others are eloquent of the history of bygone times, and recount, in unmistakeable language, the customs and ideas of the race to which they belonged. For instance, the erection of rude-stone monuments demonstrates that, at the time of their formation, the aborigines had, in certain localities, if not throughout the entire country, acquired the habit of working in concert, and that they were under strict discipline, which is the basis of all regulated society. Massive rude-stone monuments erected—not over every member of the tribe or family, but—to preserve the memory of noted persons, demonstrate that their architects had an established standard of pre-eminence. A clue to the dignity of the deceased, as well as to the numerical strength of the assembly by which the table-stone was raised, is, to some extent, but qualified by geological surrounding conditions, afforded by the magnitude of the blocks forming the monument.

What Ireland was it will never be again. Once it was the scene of cannibalism, of fetish worship, and of slavery; for, however humiliating the avowal may be to our national pride, it must be admitted that in the earliest period of his existence man in Ireland (as elsewhere) was scarcely distinguishable from the brute creation; and from the evidence producible it is almost impossible not to accuse large portions of the aboriginal population of habitual cannibalism. The Augean stable has been cleansed, the relics of the barbarous past are being gradually removed, not suddenly, as by the pent-up waters of the Alpheus, not by the teachings of Christianity alone, but by the spread of knowledge, and by the order of ever-increasing civilization.

While it is true that the designs on cinerary urns and gold ornaments which have been brought to light, and which are classified as belonging to the Pre-historic Age, prove the existence of a genuine, though somewhat elementary, sense of beauty, yet there is nothing, either in material or literary remains, to support the assertion of the monastic chroniclers as to the glories of the Green Isle of the West at the time when the first missionaries began their attempt to convert the people to Christianity. But

the recognition of the true state of things in ancient Ireland is very far from detracting anything from the solid worth of St. Patrick's (or the three St. Patricks') achievements, or from the honour due to those Irishmen who developed a special school of sacred sculpture, furnished missionaries for the evangelization of Britain, and for the propagation of the faith on the Continent. The description of the ancient glories of Erin, as given by the school of enthusiastic historians, may be compared to the mirage of the desert, the mere reflection of distant scenes, and the phantasmagoria of Roman and Eastern civilization, which the writers, imagining it ought to have existed, finally depicted as if actually existing, but now,

“ . . . like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
 The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
 The solemn temples . . . shall dissolve,  
 . . . shall dissolve,  
 And like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
 Leave not a rack behind.”

Historical and archæological sentiment is a fairy-like lichen, which grows so luxuriously in the works of Irish writers as to completely veil the real structure on which it flourishes. Admitting even that these rhapsodies were true, they would only be descriptive of a small and polished portion of the population, not of the vast bulk of the inhabitants.

It is, indeed, of little use to argue regarding the probability or improbability of the former existence of a state of high civilization in Ireland such as is presupposed by these amiably disposed writers. At present there is not a scintilla of evidence in favour of such a high and ancient civilization. As there is no evidence for it, or at best it is most absurdly insufficient, we should reject the theory. If evidence be at any future time produced, it is easy to again advance the theory on its merits. As the writer has elsewhere observed, we should strive to be honest and unbiassed. Supposing that we did not possess the fanciful Irish Annals, how would the story of Irish archæology, history, religion, and folklore have been written? Where are the inscriptions engraven in bronze, marble, or the solid rock, setting forth the acts of kings and their conquests with all the pomposity of barbaric pride, such as have been left by the rulers of the Eastern and Western Empires? Where are there traces of the temples of the gods?

The civilization of a nation may, to a certain extent, be gauged by the architectural outcome of its religion; up to the present time no authenticated remains of any temples or religious edifices of the ancient Irish can be pointed to. A fierce and warlike race, who raised huge rude stone monuments to the

honour of their chiefs, appear to have erected these memorials to commemorate their dead, and the worship of a deity or deities in nowise entered the imagination of their builders, though in after times, the dead became, to a certain extent, deified. Although the ancient inhabitants, at this stage of human existence in Erin, were doubtless somewhat removed from what we would regard as mere savagery; yet, the architectural remains which they have left do not exhibit traces of the high culture and civilization claimed for them by many enthusiastic writers.

Where are their remains of ancient cities? Where are their relics of a highly refined domestic life? We possess many assertions as to the past glories of the land, but these assertions are not supported by discoveries of material remains. It is clear that when the East was at the height of its civilization our ancestors were mere savages, and were but little better in later times when Rome was at the zenith of her glory.

Why make ourselves ridiculous to present-day culture by seeking to place the past of ancient Erin on an eminence which existed merely in the imagination of early Monkish chroniclers. The late Professor T. H. Huxley, who certainly cannot be accused of partiality on such a subject, *i.e.*, that of "Monkish chroniclers," observes that:—"We follow the evil example set us, not only by Bacon, but by almost all the men of the Renaissance, in pouring scorn upon the work of our immediate spiritual forefathers, the school-men of the Middle Ages. It is accepted as a truth which is indisputable that for seven or eight centuries a long succession of able men—some of them of transcendent acuteness and encyclopædic knowledge—devoted lives to the grave discussion of mere frivolities, and to the arduous pursuit of intellectual will-o'-the-wisps."

The term "Monkish chroniclers" is therefore to be understood as used in no invidious sense; it is merely employed to describe a special school of writers, and it is not intended that any *odium theologicum* should be implied. At the same time it must be acknowledged that, if the Pagans possessed a literature, it would have been better, for present-day students, had that literature come down to our days intact. A general assertion, continually made by ecclesiastical, and indeed by many lay writers, is that, but for the monks, there would not have been any history of ancient times handed down to our day. If, however, it be granted, according to the standpoint of these writers, that the country possessed a literature prior to the arrival of the Christian missionaries, surely the Pagan priesthood were quite capable of continuing its custody and attending to its accretions; but they were disestablished and disendowed, and the pen was

torn from their grasp by the propagators of the new faith. If, on the other hand, literature and writing were only introduced into the kingdom along with Christianity, it must be at once admitted that the monks were the true and only custodians of literature. The admission, however, dissolves the basis on which rests the alleged glories of ancient Erin.

Let us bring simple common sense into play, and not acquiesce in statements solely because they appear in Irish mss. of a by no means ancient date—records such as that of the peopling of Ireland before the Flood, of the total extinction of this race who yet left behind them a record of the event, and the thousand and one other absurdities which it is considered unpatriotic not to believe. In treating of the past of ancient Erin a writer must neither care for nor be influenced by public opinion, and must be a thoroughgoing “hunter after truth.” He must follow the advice given by Cicero to the historian:—“Let him not dare to say anything that is false, nor fear to say what is true.” And again:—“The day will come when time and the diligence of later ages will bring to light things which now lie concealed; the day will come when our posterity will wonder that we were ignorant of things so evident.”

Many writers seem to have perceived, at any rate in part, the origin of civilization in Ireland, but although vague allusions to the real facts are, here and there, dropped by them, they appear to have been restrained from plainly expressing their opinions by the dread of incurring the odium of a supposed national historical heterodoxy.

Some problems it is impossible to investigate too minutely; and among these, few are of more general interest than those which relate to the origin and development of civilization. Could we catch a glimpse of the remote past, we should probably find that many primitive progressive advancements were the outcome of accident. Primitive man stumbled upon a discovery and had wisdom enough to profit by it; modern man, on the other hand, starts with a definite idea in view, and carefully experiments for its realisation. This is the secret of the slow advances of culture in ancient days, and of its cumulative progress when resulting, not from mere accident, but from well-directed brain-work. The rate of progress increasing thus at ever accelerating speed, the day when all attainable knowledge shall have been acquired by man may not be so very remote, unless the present unsolved problems of science are practically infinite. The unceasing toil of life is a perpetual grim struggle, in which, with each success, something is being continually gained for future generations. Whether we will or not, we must, for our own sakes, improve the world for succeeding generations; the

difference is that the ancients did this unwittingly, we do it wittingly. When we look back upon the millions of years that have elapsed since life began on this globe, we can faintly realise that, as time rolls by and the rate of human development increases, the future will assuredly reveal untold wonders that will make our present life appear as rude to those who follow after us, as does the existence passed by our prehistoric ancestors appear to us. Yet it is but a very superficial observer who regards the past with contempt. It filled its sphere; in its way it did its appointed work quite as effectively as does the present. The initiation of any operation is most difficult, and instead of blaming the slow but steady workers of the past, we should, on the contrary, thank the men of the Eld who laid the foundation of all that has since been built; for the man who first chipped a flint must be regarded as the first of all sculptors; the man who first scratched the rude picture of a mammoth on the bones of his quarry was the first of all artists; the man who first piled stones together to form a rude carn over the corpse of one of his family was the first of all builders; and the man who first bored a hole in a reindeer's bone to make a whistle, or twanged the stretched sinews of his bow-string, was the first of all musicians.

We know that primitive man chipped flints, carved designs on bone, and erected carns, but whether or not he was acquainted with music is a question to which the reply might be thought to rest only on surmise, for no relics of stone have as yet come to light that could by any ingenuity be construed as forming either part or the whole of a musical instrument. Not only, however, has there been one Orpheus, but many Orpheuses in the world's history; musical mythology teems with legends of musical geniuses, so that their multiplicity may be said to present an effectual bar to a successful attempt at scientific explanation. Whistles formed of the phalanges of reindeer have been found in the caves of the Dordogne in France, in company with bones of the rhinoceros and elephant, and other relics of times in which only rude flint implements were used; yet of musical instruments, made of either stone or of bone, none of any antiquity have, as yet, been found in Ireland.

It should be mentioned that the origin of the harp, as given in an old Irish ms., differs from that forming the subject of Moore's song, *i.e.*:—

“ 'Tis believed that this harp, which I wake now for thee,  
Was a siren of old who sung under the sea;  
And who often at eve through the bright billows roved,  
To meet, on the green shore, a youth whom she loved.

But she loved him in vain, for he left her to weep,  
 And in tears, all the night, her gold ringlets to steep,  
 Till heaven looked with pity on true love so warm,  
 And changed to this soft harp the sea-maiden's form.

Still her bosom rose fair, still her cheek smiled the same,  
 While her sea-beauties gracefully curled round the frame,  
 And her hair shedding tear-drops from all its bright rings,  
 Fell over her white arms to make the gold strings."

In his celebrated picture Maclise depicts the siren with her long tresses thrown over her arm, which rests on a straight fragment of rock, so that her attitude represents the exact form of the ancient Irish harp.

The other old Irish legend, before referred to, states that a certain fair lady, overcome with aversion to her husband, fled from him to the woods. Attracted one day by the murmur of the wind as it sighed through the fins and skeleton of a sea-monster which lay on the beach, she listened so long that she was lulled to sleep by the weird music. Her husband found her, and, noting the cause of her slumber, he formed the framework of a harp from the branches of a neighbouring tree, to which he attached strings made from the fins of the stranded whale. This was the origin of the first harp. The tale is borrowed, with but little disguise, from the classics.

Combs, formed of bone, are found amongst the earliest relics of primitive civilization; for, on a remote day in the world's unwritten history, it struck some prehistoric beauty, as she contemplated her reflection in the waters of some tranquil tarn, that her tangled hair required more orderly arrangement, and the passage of her fingers through her matted locks was the initiatory stage in the invention of the comb (figs. 62, 63). In the history of inventions, woman has been almost invariably the originator of all the peaceful arts of life, whilst man has been the initiator in devising the means of killing his fellow-man, the inventor in every murderous art.

In Ireland weapons, whether of flint or bronze, were, in general, of home manufacture. Gold was a product of the Wicklow mountains. Silver in smaller quantities, and at a much later period, appears to have been extracted from native ores; but Irish silver articles are not relics of Pagan times; it will probably be yet found that amber, jet, and glass ornaments were all made in our island. Professor Huxley was of the same opinion with regard to the Continent, and believed that every raw material "employed in Europe up to the Palæo-metallic stage, is to be found within the limits of Europe."

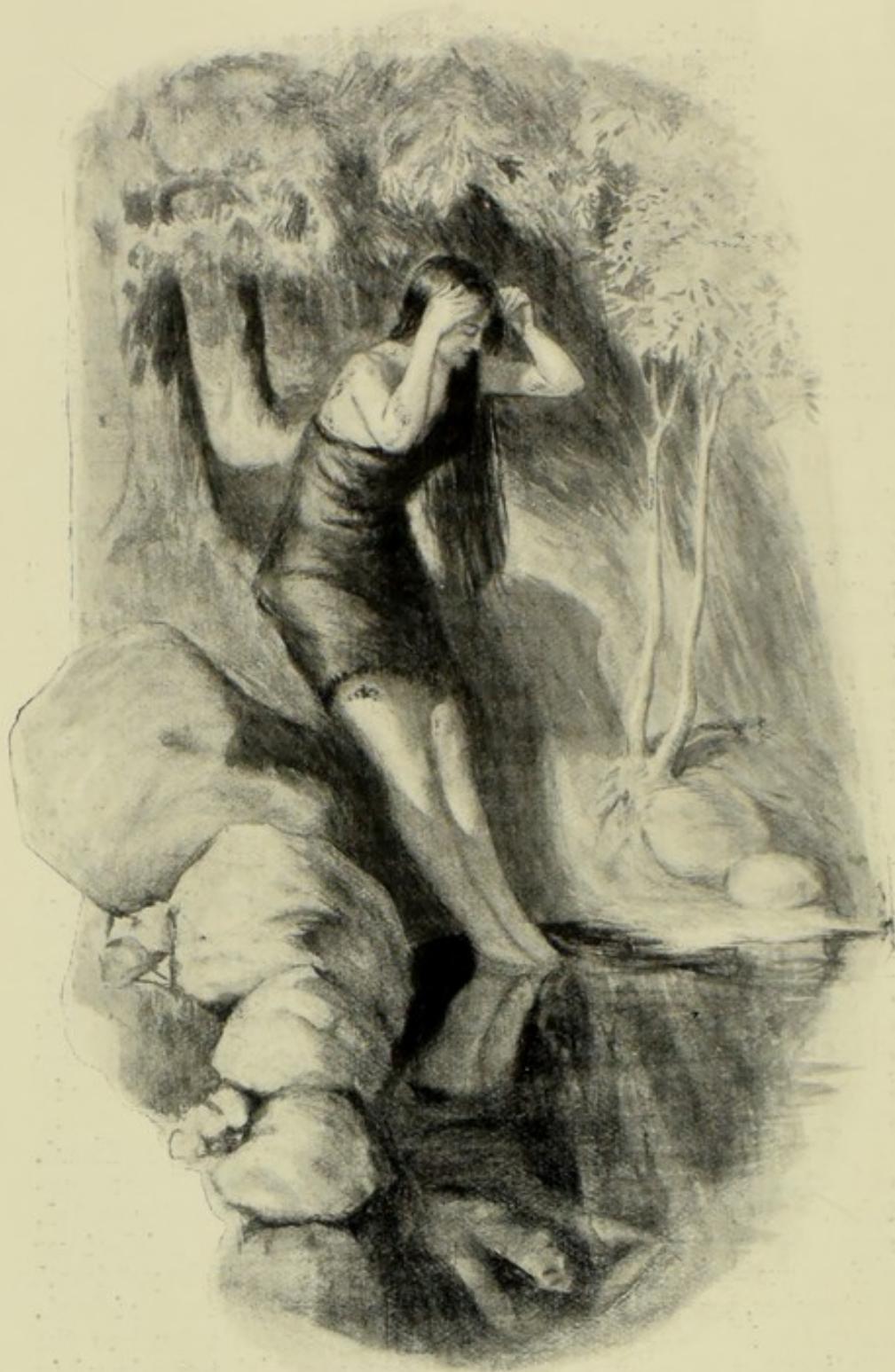


FIG. 62.

The Initiatory Stage in the Invention of the Comb.

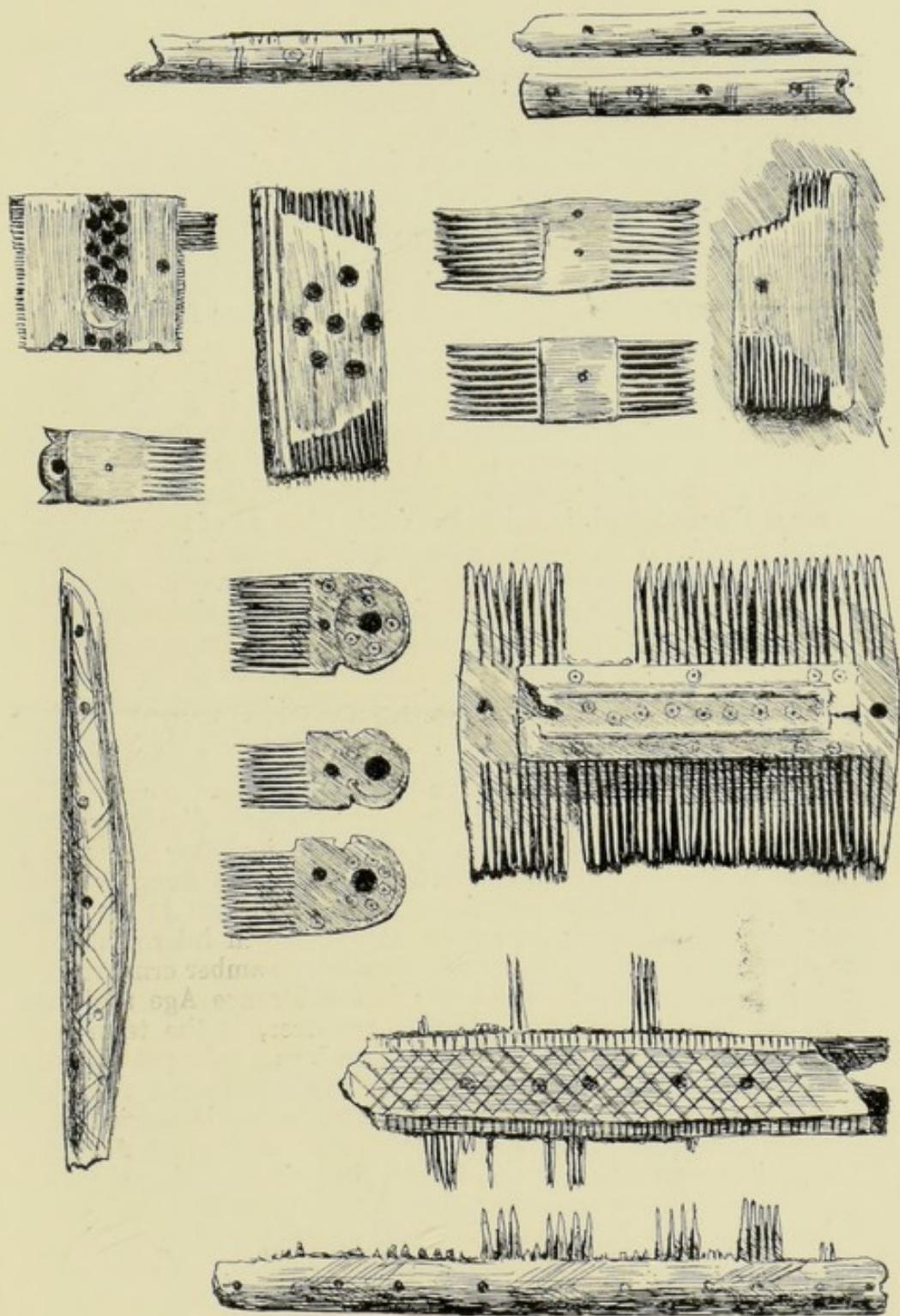


FIG. 63.

Combs from the Sites of Lake Dwellings in the West of Ireland. Half real size.

Amber was employed in the formation of ornaments, such as beads, dress-fasteners, rings, and bracelets; the beads vary greatly in size, from diminutive objects to those nearly three inches in length. Many writers allege that amber was not found in Ireland. It is present in a series of deposits only to be found in Ireland near Lough Neagh. Both amber and jet are present in quantities about the southern shores of the Baltic, and some writers are of opinion that ancient Irish objects of amber came from thence. There also appears to be a small but continual drift of this amber into the North Sea; and amber found on the east coast of England is considered to be of an extremely good quality, as it must have been, to have survived its long journey. From the evidence of numerous discoveries, it is thought that there was, in prehistoric times, an amber trade from the north of Europe to the Mediterranean. Also that the Greek tale of the Heliades had its origin in northern latitudes, and that the Vistula, where amber is found, is pointed to in the legend of the weeping daughters of the sun, whose tears are transformed into amber. In Central Russia there is an earth amber, and a salt sea must have been there in very remote times, as tiny bubbles of salt water have been discovered on cutting it open for purposes of manufacture. In it the scent of the brine has been hermetically sealed up for vast geological æons, in the same way that the scent of the pine-forest remains a permanent characteristic of amber in general. However this may be, it is highly probable that, from remote antiquity, a trade in amber existed between the shores of the Baltic and other parts of Europe. Its first discovery by savage man was, in all likelihood, owing to its being loosened from its native bed in the sands of the seashore and flung by the waves upon the beach. Primitive man soon learnt to smooth and polish these lumps; for on the Continent, in interments of the Stone Age, some instances are found where amber ornaments are laid in the grave with the dead; in the Bronze Age the use of amber became common. Early commerce, if the term be applicable to such primitive traffic, is based, as a rule, not on the interchange of useful products but on barbaric geegaws, much in the same way as, in the present day, barter is carried on between European traders and wild tribes of Central Africa. Everything seems to point out that, in primeval times, man possessed rudimentary commercial instincts, and collected objects which possessed to him what to us would be designated a pecuniary value, and hoarded them most probably for purposes of exchange.

The subject of ancient commerce in amber is of great interest; for, if the extent of that commerce and its routes could be well defined, much that is at present obscure in the early unwritten history of the inhabitants of the British Isles would

become clear. An amber bead, with an ogham inscription, was for many generations in the possession of a family named

O'Connor in the county Clare. It was used as an amulet for the cure of sore eyes, and was also believed to insure safety to pregnant women in their hour of trial. After many vicissitudes it came into the possession of Lord Londesborough. The following is one of the readings of this curious inscription, but it must, in all candour, be stated that it does not appear to be the true translation: *A Taladh mna*, i. e. "At a woman's delivery" (fig. 64).

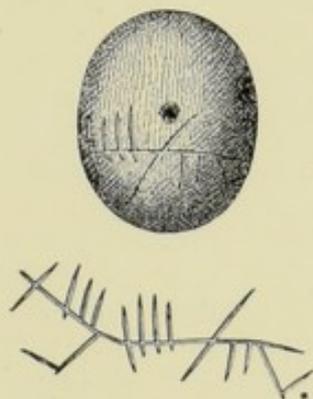


FIG. 64.

Amber Bead, with Ogham Inscription. Full size. Reproduced from the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

Prior to the year 1848 very handsome rosaries, composed of amber beads, were not uncommon in West Galway and the barony of Burren, county Clare. During the years of the famine many of these rosaries were sold to collectors, but a few still remain in use.

The attractive or electric properties of amber early invited attention (Ezekiel i. 4); and the rubbing of a piece of amber evoked, to use Faraday's words, "an invisible agent which has done for mankind far more wonderful things than the genii of Aladdin did or could have done for him." Worn round the neck in the shape of beads, amber was thought to ward off disease, it was also dissolved and used as a medicine. Many other superstitions relating to it could be given. The Finns and Lapps believe, like the Irish peasantry, that amber cures rheumatism, neuralgia, and other ailments.

Jet appears to have been extensively employed in the manufacture of decorative objects, principally necklace-beads, dress-fasteners, large rings, and bracelets. In the year 1260 Bartholomew Angelicus, an English Franciscan, states that jet was found in Ireland. Jet may occur in other places in the kingdom, but it certainly was obtained from the coal-measures of Ballycastle, county Antrim. A sample of an early specimen from this locality is in the Dublin Museum. In the year 1770 miners in the Ballycastle collieries broke into an old working, and on entering they were astonished to find a complete gallery, supported by pillars, branching into various chambers. Here lay the remains of baskets and other appliances of the ancient workmen, but all, on being touched, crumbled to dust.

With the ancients, jet was held in peculiar value, as it was supposed by them, according to Pliny, to possess the power of

banishing noxious serpents. Bede also describes jet as having the power, when burnt, of driving away snakes, and that when warmed by friction it possessed the attractive properties of amber. It should, however, be pointed out that Bede's account is evidently merely copied from that of Solinus.

If not a variety of coal, jet presents a strange affinity to it. It has the appearance of having been, long ages ago, a gummy semi-liquid mass; for as insects of remote geological æons are seen in amber, so foreign substances are found embedded in pieces of jet, and crevices in the rock are often filled with it, as though it had poured into them when in a liquid state.

There is a description of natural glass, generally found in volcanic centres, called obsidian, usually of a black colour and opaque, except in thin splinters. This material was used by the Egyptians and Romans in the formation of small artistic vessels. The art of fabricating the glass of commerce reaches back to such an early date that its origin is absolutely lost. Pliny recounts the tale, known to all schoolboys, how a ship returning from Egypt with a cargo of soda was cast away on the coasts of Palestine, and how the shipwrecked crew, when cooking their food over a fire made on the shore, found afterwards, under the cinders, glass formed by the action of the heat upon the alkali and the sand. As far as present information tends, it seems to have been in Egypt or Assyria that the earliest glass was manufactured. In the British Museum there is a bead bearing hieroglyphics by which it is computed that it was made about 2400 B.C.

There is one form of glass ornament which is found chiefly, if not, indeed, exclusively, in Ireland, made of green vitrified porcelain or opaque glass, in shape somewhat like a dumbbell. Though, doubtless, glass beads were first introduced from the Continent, or from Great Britain, as a means of barter, yet traces of continental influence are not so very perceptible as might be imagined; the trade of making them probably spread quickly over the country, and thus originated varieties of the introduced patterns.

Tacitus mentions that pearls were found on the coast of Britain. Bede, quoting apparently from Solinus, says that excellent specimens were found in the British seas, varying in colour, though principally white. In Ireland pearls seem to have been formerly plentiful, and many rivers were celebrated for the quantities found in them. A writer of the seventeenth century states that the pearls of the river Slaney, "though not abundant, are yet excellent." Sir Robert Reading, in the year 1688, drew attention to the structure and colour of Irish pearls, and records that the river Bann was famous for its pearl fishery. The common method then in practice of procuring fresh-water

mussels, in shape and colour like sea mussels, was very simple. In the warm summer months, when the river was low and the water clear, the county people waded in the stream and gathered the shells, of such size that they were used, by the poor, as a substitute for spoons. In two works published at the close of the eighteenth century, this pearl fishery is again mentioned. In Smith's "History of Cork," pearls are stated to have been found in one of its rivers. O'Connor, in his "Prolegomena," mentions that Gilbert, Bishop of Limerick, writing to St. Anselm, who had consecrated him, says that "he had sent him pearls as a slight token of respect." Pearls are still found, in small quantities, in fresh-water mussels, in a few of the Galway rivers, in various streams in Tyrone and Donegal, as well as in several other localities. Should these pearl fisheries of Ireland be again started, to the mussel-gatherers may be addressed the Kelpie's refrain, which so perturbed the sacristan of St. Mary's as he took with her his moonlight swim:—

" Good luck to your fishing."

Gold antiquities, rightly considered, are historical documents of the most valuable description, for, with proper study, they will help to elucidate and extend our knowledge of the arts, crafts, and general state of civilization of what is, at present, a very obscure period in the history of ancient Erin. With regard to gold, it is stated that there is no European country in which such a number of ancient personal ornaments of this precious metal have been found as in Ireland. Hoards of broken and fractured bronze implements bear witness to interrupted preparations for re-casting, and collections of secreted gold ornaments, twisted and contorted, suggest a like purpose. Scattered broadcast over the country, it would also appear that, in many instances, gold articles were hidden in haste, possibly at a time when the foe pressed hotly at the heels of the vanquished. In ancient days mother earth was the only bank to which owners confided their gold. Even now-a-days we know that the best bank is a bank of earth, as it rarely refuses to discount honest labour, and the best share is the ploughshare, on which dividends are generally liberal. It would be impossible to say how much wealth lies hid in primitive man's ancient bank, for all kinds of ornaments still remain concealed, and that, most probably, in the strangest and most unobtrusive spots. One discovery of an antique occurred on the site of a long-used dunghill which had been scraped rather more deeply than usual. *Aurum e stercore*. Other objects have been occasionally brought to light under almost equally strange circumstances, for a beautiful torque was scratched out of the soil by a fox in making a fresh earth.

Belief in buried treasure is universal throughout Ireland. Until lately the majority of old pagan funeral urns were broken into fragments by the irate discoverers; irate for this reason:—it was, and still is, in some parts of the country, a popular belief amongst the peasantry that the bones and charcoal contained in the vessels were in reality golden coin and ornaments belonging to the “good people,” or fairies, and that they returned to gold during the night, but if watched with proper precautions and ceremonies, the fairy gold at daybreak would still remain gold. On failure of the incantations, the disappointment of the finder generally found expression in the fracture of the vase, and the scattering of its contents. The proverb, *ἄνθρακες ὁ θησαυρὸς πέφηνεν*, *i.e.* “our treasure turned out to be charcoal,” appears to demonstrate that the deceitfulness of “fairy gold” was a current delusion amongst the ancient Greeks. The superstition is of undoubted Eastern origin. In a description of the excavations carried on in the mound of Tell-el-Hesy, supposed to be the site of the ancient city of Lackish, the explorer recounts how he was waited upon by a deputation from the workmen, consisting of Arabs and Fellaheen, and begged not to any further bewitch the “tell” or hill. “You come to a ‘tell’ that is full of gold and treasure, and bewitch them into the form of potsherds. Then you dig out the potsherds, take them to your own country, undo the spell, and they turn back to gold and treasure.” The Bedouin also believe that immense treasures were concealed by King Solomon beneath the foundation of the city of Palmyra, in the subterranean passages under Jerusalem—in fact, almost everywhere, committed to the care of evil spirits, which still watch over them. When the Arabs, therefore, see Europeans exploring among ruins, they believe them to be in search of these hidden riches, and, if employed as labourers, claim beforehand their share in the find. T. Crofton Croker gives an amusing account of having, in the year 1814, come upon nearly a hundred peasants at work on the side of a hill called “Castle Treasure,” so named from pieces of wrought gold having from time to time been found there. The exertions of the gang, employed in uprooting and turning over the rocks and boulders with which the surface of the ground was covered, were under supervision of a tall female wrapped in a ragged cloak, who with a long pole pointed now here, now there, and whose motions were implicitly obeyed by the movement of the labourers towards the spot indicated. This witch said she had dreamed, three nights in succession, of a great treasure which lay beneath the surface of the field, and for a given quantity of tobacco and whiskey had engaged to point it out to her neighbours, being afraid to undertake the search without plenty of company, for the treasure was guarded by a fiery dragon. The

country people had worked under the guidance of the woman for three days, but had found nothing to reward their exertions. Mr. Croker's companion, greatly diverted by the scene, advised one of the labourers, instead of searching for gold, to clear and manure the ground, as under this treatment it would yield results as good as if the crock of gold for which they were searching had been discovered. The strange part of the story is that this man, taking him at his word, rented the farm, and suddenly became rich; subsequently he gave his adviser a circular piece of gold, artistically ornamented, evidently of great antiquity. Several other articles, formed of precious metal, were traced to his hands, and it is therefore evident that it was not entirely owing to the returns of agricultural outlay that the farmer became a man of wealth and importance in the district.

At the foot of Cope's Mountain, near Sligo, to the west of the road leading from the town to Glencar, and in the townland of Drum, there are the remains of a rude stone sepulchral monument, which not many years ago narrowly escaped total obliteration. A countryman having dreamed twice successively that a crock of gold was buried under the monument waited impatiently for the dream to be repeated a third time, as this would have completed the charm; however, it never did recur, and consequently the tomb escaped destruction. Another monument closely adjoining was less fortunate. Owing to a legend, prevalent among the peasantry, that a chief of the O'Rorkes had many centuries ago concealed his treasures in this "Giant Grave" previous to a great battle—in which both he and his favourite henchman, who alone knew of the hoard, were killed—some country people nearly demolished the monument. It is needless to add no treasures were discovered. Avaricious gold dreamers, by this means converted into gold seekers, have probably inflicted more irreparable archæological damage, particularly on these interesting monuments, than the desecrating foreign enemy. The burial of personal ornaments with people of distinction was conformable to a usage of ancient times, both as regards Erin as well as other countries. Traditions abound everywhere of buried treasure, and the truth of these tales is sometimes apparently corroborated by the discoveries of ornaments worn during life by the occupants of the grave.

Near the village of Cliffoney are the remains of a "Giant's Grave," presenting no feature of interest. No inducement could prevail on the tenant to allow of an excavation. He and his father before him, he stated, refused to do so, although "untold gold" had been offered. However, some few days afterwards, having occasion to verify the compass bearings of the monument, a return to the spot was necessitated, when it became evident

that, in the interval, the grave had been dug out to a great depth. In short, the suspicious yokel, imagining that the contemplated search was for a crock of gold, had determined to retain the treasure for himself.

In "Vestiges and Relics of Youghal," Edward Fitzgerald recounts a very similar instance of vandalism. Writing in the year 1858, he states that:—"Of sepulchral mounds or cairns I lately counted up eight in the neighbourhood of Castlemartyr, four of which have been destroyed within a few years. One at Clasharinka, about a mile north of Castlemartyr, was lately destroyed by persons coming from a distance, hunting for money in it. The farmer on the land told me that he thought, if there was money to be got in it, he had the best right to it, and when the last party who came there left off their operations, he continued the work until a large massive stone was discovered of about ten feet diameter, oval-shaped, and about thirteen inches thick. This stopped the digging for the time, but beneath the great stone he was sure he had the gold. On getting some gunpowder this was soon blown to fragments, revealing a stone cist or chest of about seven feet by three, within which was a perfect human skeleton in good preservation. This did not deter the money-hunter, for the bones and chest were also dug out. But it was all to no purpose, so the opening was again filled up, and is still to be seen furze-grown and untilled. The farmer did not seem too well pleased on being told that he had, in this way, been desecrating the remains of one of his Celtic forefathers. Pointing across the road, he said that three similar relics were destroyed there on the lands of Ballyvourisheen, and lots of human remains found in them."

The same writer states that scores of wild legends are told of a Formorian giant who died in the neighbourhood of Youghal and had his treasure buried in his fort. He caused it to be so guarded, that no person who dreamed of his hidden gold was ever able to get at it. Many attempted it, but the adventurers were generally frightened away by the appearance of a huge cock that came flying into their faces, crowing and flapping its wings in a wonderful manner. Others, more daring, held their ground on sight of this apparition, but decamped on the advent on the scene of a monstrous bull. Other still more doughty delvers persisted, until they were in the act of lifting the huge flagstone which covered the giant's treasure, when out rushed the owner, using language which must not be repeated in polite society, and followed by a fiery blast that so scorched the diggers that they beat a hasty and very undignified retreat. One time, however, a party more adventurous than usual held their ground, whereupon the cock and the

bull came to the giant's assistance, and drove away the gang of treasure seekers in ignominious rout, and so ends this "Cock and Bull Story."

At the time of St. Patrick's mission to the Pagan Irish the ladies of the period wore numerous gold ornaments, and a great number were presented by the early converts as offerings to the Church. St. Patrick, in his "Confessio," thus alludes to the custom:—"I have endeavoured to be on my guard, even with Christian brethren and virgins of Christ and religious women who, of their own accord, used to bestow gifts upon me, and to place their ornaments on the altar; but I returned them again to them."

Many Eastern women, of various nationalities, still wear their entire fortune on their persons, in the shape of gold coins and ornaments. This is probably caused by the sense of security in an unsettled state of society, imparted by palpable possession. It has the additional advantage of enabling suitors to reckon up the value, as well as to admire the objects of their affection. The same idea also may, in olden days, have induced the ladies of ancient Erin to carry about their fortunes on their persons, though it is open to doubt if the poet Moore's lines correctly portray the civilization then existing, and the honesty of the entire population when a young woman's

" . . . . . maiden smile  
In safety lighted her round the green Isle."

If, however, the lines depict the only clothing worn by her, the picture drawn by the poet may probably be correct.

From the earliest period of mythical history witness is borne to the abundance of gold in the country. One celebrated artificer, it is stated, prosecuted his smelting labours in a locality generally identified as one on the banks of the Liffey, on the borders of Wicklow and Wexford, where native gold is still found. For many years prior to 1795 gold had been found by the neighbouring peasantry in the Ballinvally stream, a tributary of the Avoca, and in two months preceding the occupation of the place by the Government in 1796 no less than 2500 ounces of gold had been washed. Besides the Wicklow district, there are other localities in which gold in small quantities is stated to be present, namely, in Wexford, Kildare, Tyrone, Antrim, and Derry. Gold was found in a stream in the county Derry which falls into the north-west corner of Lough Neagh. The country people who live in the vicinity have a tradition corroborating this, but it has not been ascertained if any gold has recently been found in the river-bed.

Mr. J. W. Mallet, in the year 1853, published the results of the chemical examination of several ancient Irish gold ornaments,

undertaken in the expectation that the information thus obtained might be found of value in determining whether they were manufactured from native gold or from alloys artificially produced. From the results obtained by the analysis it was concluded that the probabilities were somewhat in favour of the articles having been made with artificially produced alloys, but it is evident that before anything very definite on the subject can be written more numerous experiments are requisite. Those recently made coincide, to a great extent, with the assays of Mr. Mallet. It was apparent, however, that, in the more modern articles, comparatively large quantities of silver and copper occurred. It is known that there are some natural alloys, and also that electrum was much used for ornaments and coins by the Romans, and afterwards by the nations which imitated their arts. An artificial as well as a natural electrum was also used by them.

The view taken by the late W. Frazer, F.R.C.S.I., respecting the source of early gold ornaments found in Ireland was that they are made of imported gold; that the idea that gold was ever found in Ireland is incorrect. He was of opinion that the theory of its being native of the soil is chimerical—

“ . . . . . like our Lagenian mine,  
Where sparkles of golden splendour  
All over the surface shine?  
But, if in pursuit we go deeper  
Allured by the gleam that shone,  
Ah! false as the dream of the sleeper,  
Like Love, the bright ore is gone.”

Dr. Frazer considered that the fabrication of early Irish ornaments implies considerable metallurgic skill, and the possession of means for smelting gold in ample quantity, and subsequently manufacturing ornaments from it. He was of opinion that the primitive inhabitants of these lands—before the advent of the Romans, and Roman gold workers in Britain—had not the necessary skill, and he asserted that Ireland is not a gold producing land, its auriferous district a limited corner of the county Wicklow, where it was accidentally found about one hundred years ago and soon worked out. The great central limestone plain, the extensive bogs, the gneissose rocks of Donegal, the chalk measures of Antrim, the coal districts about Kilkenny, and the sandstones of the south and west are incapable of yielding gold, nor have other granite districts (except Wicklow) shown traces of it. Thus almost the entire geologic formations of Ireland are hopeless as gold fields. No one as yet has sought for it in the quartz rocks, and it is doubtful if they contain even the slightest trace of gold. But if it is present, all the skilled

appliances of modern civilization would be needful to pulverize the rock and seek after the metal.

Again, according to the above authority, Wicklow gold differs in composition and density from the gold found in Irish ornaments, being of inferior purity and specific gravity, whilst these ornaments have a certain composition and gravity which approximates to that of Roman aurei coined by Diocletian and subsequently. Gold workers have found it convenient, when making ornaments to melt down coin; it is an easily available source of metal, of known weight and recognised purity, and when remelting it, the addition of a small amount of alloy, difficult to detect, compensates for possible loss and augments the profit. From the uniformity of the gold in Irish ornaments there is reason to believe it was so obtained. Furthermore, Dr. Frazer believed it is evident from the weights of these Irish gold ornaments that they were fabricated from coins weighing 72 to 70 grains, and such is the weight of Roman aurei from the time of Diocletian to the fall of the Roman Empire. Amidst the vicissitudes of coinage of silver and copper, gold was maintained at its recognised standard and full weight. Any apparent exceptions amongst the ornaments are explained by the recognised practice of employing a variable number of coins, one, two, or more for making two, three, five articles, and so on.

Great quantities of gold circulated in Roman Britain for paying the Legionaries and for purposes of commerce. So long as Rome was supreme, invasions from Scotia and Caledonia were repelled; but from the time of Diocletian repeated devastations reduced it to barbarism, and Celtic kingdoms were founded in Cornwall, in Wales, and in North Britain. Britain was thoroughly drained of its gold by these Celtic invaders, who, as coin was useless to them, had it converted into personal decorations. The presence of gold ornaments in Scandinavia, a land unproductive of gold, has been accounted for by their being made out of gold brought in coin from Rome or from Byzantium.

To bring before the mind's eye of the reader the ordinary processes used in the manufacture of gold ornaments, we must take a look into the workshop of a craftsman of this early period. The first operation of the workman was to try to melt the metal. Coal was unknown, but charcoal, especially birchwood charcoal, generates a greater heat than coal, and birch being then plentiful, it is almost certain that it was the fuel used in ancient, as it is often in modern, times. A small furnace with an orifice at the bottom, and some means of producing a draught, would develop the necessary heat, and the pot or crucible containing the gold would be buried in the centre of the glowing mass of charcoal. A mould cut in stone, or the impression of a model of the

required form in soft blue clay, for that material stands the greatest degree of heat, would, when baked, answer the purpose of casting the ingot, and into this mould the gold would be poured. The craftsman would now have a piece of gold somewhat near the required shape. But mere castings would not answer, as in this condition gold is of a porous and spongy nature, and requires hammering, and it has been remarked that most ancient gold ornaments are very close in the grain. Thus the only tools and appliances necessary for the production of gold ornaments were a furnace, crucible, mould, flux, hammers, anvils, and tools for producing concentric rings.

It is well to note that no really ancient coin has as yet been conclusively proved to have been discovered in Ireland. Sir William Betham alleged that Etruscan silver money had been found, but this assertion has never been authenticated. The majority of coins are from Roman mints, and bear date about the time of the break up of imperial rule in Great Britain. It is certain that the Irish possessed no coined money, and there can be little doubt but that, at a very late period, the precious metals were amongst them, valued by weight as a circulating medium, sometimes as ingots, possibly also in the form of rings; hence, probably, the frequent employment of the epithet "extractors of rings," as applied to the northern invaders by native historians. These northmen were the first to issue silver money in Ireland, for at no period of her history had Ireland a gold coinage. In its origin and to its end the currency was silver. The first silver coins were struck by the Danish kings of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick. Although the Danish and Norse invaders carried off great quantities of Irish gold, they utilised it, not for coinage purposes, but for personal decoration, inlaying with it, amongst other articles, the handles of their swords. Hence Irish gold ornaments gradually disappeared in the North, and many Scandinavian weapons, and personal ornaments now exhibited in museums are doubtless inlaid or formed of these stolen treasures which supplemented the spoils of Rome and of Byzantium.

When these freebooters had beaten their swords into ploughshares, or had developed into honest merchants, and their piratical barques had been converted into peaceful traders, their silver money became, on account of its purity, the standard coinage of the then trading world. From it is derived the designation of "sterling," applied to our currency or legal tender. "Easterling" was, according to Hollinshed, the popular term employed to describe "merchants of Norwaie, Denmark, and of other those parties called Ostomanni, or as, in our vulgar language, we terme easterling, because they lie east in respect of

us"; and coin of the realm, "since that time," says Camden, "was called of them sterling for Easterling."

Iron and Christianity were introduced into the country within an approximately short period of each other, for although iron may, in small quantities, have found its way into Ireland through the ordinary channels of commerce open at, or just before, the commencement of the Christian era, yet iron ingots or iron articles so acquired would be comparatively few in number. The approximate date of the introduction of iron into the southern portion of Britain has been estimated, by various authorities, at about 200 B.C., some writers leaning to a later period. From this part it spread slowly northward. In the Scotch Highlands the Bronze Age lasted for a considerable time—in fact, down to a period considerably later than that of the Roman conquest of Britain; yet iron was nevertheless known, but to a very limited extent, to the Caledonians north of the Roman wall, who were otherwise but little affected by the introduced civilization to the south of the Roman barrier. To the Romanized Briton the rude Caledonian was what the African savage is to the Englishman of to-day, or what the Highlander of the seventeenth century appeared to the Englishman of that period.

The position of Ireland marked it out, more so even than the Caledonian mountain fastnesses, as the extreme point of European civilization. The relics of the past which it has yielded from its soil can be properly classified only when studied in the light of those found in Great Britain and on the Continent. Thus, every early iron antique which is unearthed may be regarded as a record of the history of metallic transition, and it is by comparing these waifs of time, and subjecting them to the assay of science, that we shall force them to tell their true story. Ireland was the last resort of the earlier, as of the later, races who peopled western Europe. Thus, its prehistoric age could not have commenced, as already pointed out, till after that of the rest of Europe. Indeed, it is extremely probable that, in the earliest Palæolithic or rude Stone Age period, it was too frigid for habitation, and its area may for a brief period, from a geological point of view, have been bereft of human life. It may thus be said that throughout the ages the inhabitants of Ireland were, by no fault of their own, but by geological conditions, chronically behind the times. It is probable therefore that the knowledge of iron reached Ireland at a much later date than it reached England; so that, allowing a considerable interval for an overlap, it is possible that iron had not advanced into universal use in Ireland, at the very earliest, much before the close of the fourth century of the Christian Era. According to some other authorities the introduction of iron

occurred at an even much later period, long after it was well known on the Continent and in England. Some writers assign a date of about two thousand years past for its introduction, yet it does not appear to have obtained absolute supremacy over bronze until after the arrival of the colonies of Danish settlers and of northern piratical fleets, about, at the earliest, the sixth and seventh centuries. The transition from bronze to iron in a country of such extent as Ireland, divided into hostile populations, must have occupied a period which may be reckoned by centuries,

for there must have been an epoch when, in each of these small independent communities, the new metal was being introduced and the old conditions of civilization had been entirely changed.



FIG. 65.

Fine Golden-coloured Bronze Bell of the class styled "Crotals," found at Dowris, near Birr, in a large bronze caldron, together with other antiques. Half size.

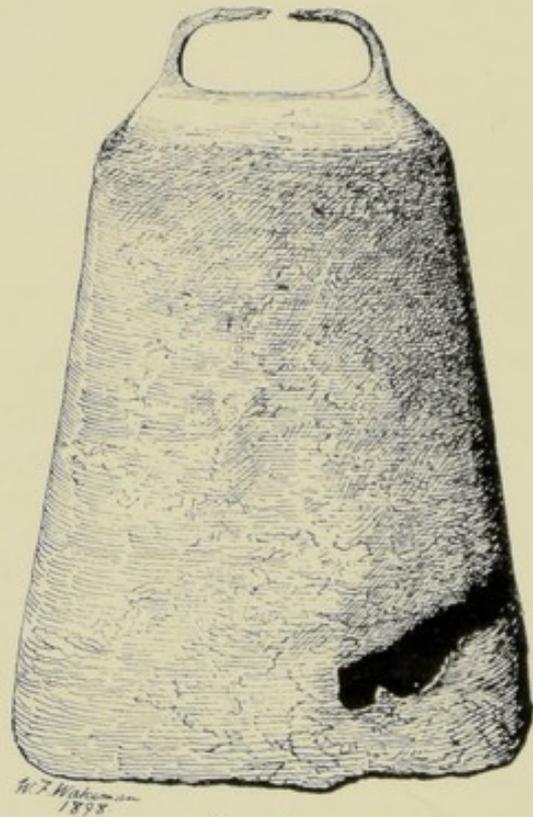


FIG. 66.

Ecclesiastical Bell, made of iron, the tongue is missing. Found in a bog at Tybrochan, near Mullingar. One quarter real size.

The rectangular bells of the early missionaries—examples, it is alleged, of primitive Christian metal work—are of rude and unfinished manufacture. It was evidently a trade at which they

were novices, though their work in bronze and gold had been brought to great perfection. The fine bells of the late bronze period, as witnessed by the Dowris find (fig. 65), are in finish and design indefinitely superior to the wretched productions alleged to have belonged to the early Irish saints (fig. 66). The iron bell, as shown in fig. 66, resembles articles very frequently found on the sites of Roman villas in England. The *tintinnabulum*, or small handbell, was probably used to summon the slaves and attendants when their services were required. These bells are as frequently square as round, and are usually made of bronze. The development of Irish art after the introduction of Christianity was the outcome of the mixture of the two styles of ornamentation, the Irish or Pagan, and the Continental or Christian. In Britain Roman Art appears to have almost entirely supplanted Celtic Art, but in Ireland the native style of ornamentation was conserved intact until the introduction of Christianity. During the period that followed, a new religion and a fresh civilization rose suddenly into eminence, and then slowly sank into decrepitude.

Hitherto when any peculiar antique, composed either of metal or other material, has been for the first time discovered, Irish archæologists assign to it a foreign, frequently a Roman origin; yet these waifs of time are, in general, ultimately identified as of home manufacture. Every archæological relic has its history: it has either already told its tale, or its story has to be read, and we thus learn how and when it was made, what it was used for, and how it came to be lying where it was found.

“ . . . . . They are the  
Registers, the chronicles of the age  
They were made in, and speak the truths of history  
Better than a hundred of your printed communications.”

In systematic research, close and accurate observation is absolutely necessary, the imperfection of our present knowledge, and the limitation of our experience involve uncertainty as to special classification of some works of art. By patient analysis we can alone hope to accomplish solid results, and arrive at clear, broad, and thoroughly correct deductions. Exceptional specimens should therefore be temporarily adjudged, until the contrary is demonstrated, as being of native workmanship, and not imported articles. If the numerous articles belonging to the ordinary usage of everyday life which have been found on pre-historic sites in different parts of the kingdom were collected together and arranged, they would, no doubt, go far towards giving us a perfect picture of the civilization of the population of early times. Unfortunately, great numbers have been lost or destroyed; many of those which remain are scattered about in

private collections, from the want of a really national and scientifically arranged collection in which to deposit them.

Ireland, until a time well advanced in the Christian Era, appears to have been peopled by an aggregation of tribes, isolated from the European continent and developing their civilization in a manner more or less peculiarly their own. When Irish society became known to the classic world—and Latin authors are by no means complimentary as to its manners and customs—it was already well advanced in this the tribal state. It is interesting to reflect that these writers, when applying the terms “barbarians” and “savages” to the inhabitants of Iernè and of the Britannic Isles, little dreamed that the despised islanders, recruited, however, by the subsequent accession of much northern and truly “barbarian” blood, would found an empire far surpassing that of Rome, and extend their sway over regions and continents then unheard of. A number of tribes are enumerated by classic authors, but no mention is made of a monarch exercising universal sway as described by later native writers. The Irish were merely in the intermediate stage of the development of a nation; they had passed the limits of the family, and were in the tribal stage. From a variety of causes, this mass was never welded together into a really compact body. General and chronic warfare proved fatal to the advancement of the community, and this state of things, prolonged through endless centuries, kept the population divided into numerous hostile septs, and stereotyped disunion.

Moore, in his *History of Ireland*, writing on this subject, remarks that “the sanguinary broils of a nation armed against itself have no one elevating principle to redeem them, and are inglorious alike in victory and defeat. Whatever gives dignity to other warfare was wanting in these personal factious feuds. The peculiar bitterness attributed to family quarrels marks also the course of civil strife; and that flow of generous feeling which so often succeeds to fierce hostility between strangers, has rarely, if ever, been felt by parties of the same state who have been once arrayed in arms against each other.”

The earliest heads of Irish septs exercised their authority solely through the consent of the collected unit; and the chief thus elected was bound by certain obligations which, if he disregarded, his authority was withdrawn, or if his followers tired of his rule they left him, and his chieftainship ended. When there was practically no such thing as private property, there was no basis for authority except by the delegation of power willingly conceded. When the chiefs were able to consolidate their power, the liberties of the members of the tribe diminished in proportion to this consolidation, for the chief was no longer bound by obli-

gations. Then, for mutual protection, the chiefs themselves united and elected one of their number head chief, or first amongst the chiefs, but not as an absolute ruler, nor even possessed of so much power over the whole as each chief exercised over his own tribe.

Even such an enthusiastic believer in the ancient glories of Erin as Standish O'Grady seems to coincide in this opinion. He says:—"Like every country upon which imperial Rome did not leave the impress of her genius, Ireland in these ethnic times attained only a partial unity. The Chief King, indeed, presided at Tara, and enjoyed the reputation and emoluments flowing to him on that account, but, upon the whole, no Irish king exercised more than a local sovereignty; they were all *reguli*, petty kings, and their direct authority was small."

The late Professor T. H. Huxley drew attention to the published collection of the Brehon laws of ancient Ireland, and how the original communal land ownership of the sept became modified. The chief, at first, received his share of land as an ordinary member of the tribe as well as an extra portion of pasture as a payment for his services. An increase of his power was the natural result of his being able to have more cattle than others of his sept. Then "he became a lender of cattle at a high rate of interest to his more needy sept-fellows, who, when they borrowed, became bound to do him service in other ways, and lost status by falling into the position of his debtors. . . . Again, the status of the original commoners of the sept was steadily altered for the worse by the privilege which the chief possessed, and of which he freely availed himself, of settling on the waste lands of the commune such broken vagabonds of other tribes as sought his patronage and protection, and who became absolutely dependent on him. Thus, without war, and without any necessity for force or fraud (though, doubtless, there was an adventitious abundance of both), the communal system was bound to go to pieces, and to be replaced by individual ownership, in consequence of the operation of purely industrial causes. That is to say, in consequence of the many commercial advantages of individual ownership over communal ownership, which became more and more marked exactly in proportion as territory became more fully occupied, security of possession increased, and the chances of the success of individual enterprise and skill as against routine, in an industrial occupation, became greater and greater."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BORDERLAND OF HISTORY.

Difficulty of fixing the point where real Irish History commences—Early Narratives a mixture of truth, exaggeration, allegory, and downright fiction—Tighernach, the most reliable Irish scribe—Evidence of the steady growth of a healthy Current of Thought now very apparent.—No statement should be advanced merely on the authority of Irish MSS.—Should be corroborated by Archæological Research—Ethnology and Philology uncertain guides in exploring the past—Archæology reliable—The present school of Archæology very practical—The Spade a conclusive solver of Problems—Phantom Lands—Phantom Cities—Phantom Ships—Phantom Bees—Ireland as known to the Ancients—References in Greek and Roman Writers—Ptolemy's description of the Country—Its Coasts, Rivers, Territories, Tribes, Cities—Agricola's alleged Conquest of the Kingdom—Probable influx of Roman Traders from Britain—Traces of Roman Culture—Roman Medicine Stamps—Roman Relics, Ornaments, and Coins—Roman Coins buried with the Dead—Roman Relics few in number—Of an unimportant character—The result of Traffic, or forgotten Deposits of Irish Freebooters—Romans made no Settlements in Ireland—The few local Roman Names of Ecclesiastical Origin.

THIS and the following Chapter must be prefaced by an apology for traversing the same ground as has already been attempted by the author in *Pagan Ireland*, so that some repetition must be excused, for when treating of the Faiths professed by the inhabitants of Erin, to omit a description of their religious ideas, of the effects of the Roman Conquest of Britain, of the introduction of Christianity and of the advent of St. Patrick, would be like placing the play of *Hamlet* on the stage and omitting the part of the unlucky Prince of Denmark. In the subject here under examination; it is impossible that any writer can rely only on his own researches and resources. If he appropriates the thoughts of his predecessors and contemporaries he is accused of being a plagiarist, yet if he be a good adapter he treats each author as the bee treats the flower, steals sweets from it without injuring it, and essays to improve and transform them into more appetising food. It has been sought to make the text readable, but at the

same time in no sense perfunctory, so that if another writer follows on, in the same track, he may be able to devote himself to a complete analysis of the subject, and may find this attempt of use to him in his literary labours; for a good antiquary should not only chronicle what other writers have often forgotten, but he should also ignore many things on which the superficial observer reposes a misplaced confidence.

According to Robert Atkinson, LL.D., amongst the many difficulties which beset the path of the Irish historian "not the least is that of fixing upon any point where real information begins. The narrative, such as it is, is carried on with so plausible an evenness of apparently circumstantial detail of name and place, that the reader is in danger of being hurried up the stream of time to a period long before the Homeric epoch. In these shaking bogs of bardic history, where may we set firm foot?"

Tighernach, pronounced Teernah, the most reliable of early Irish scribes, died, it is stated, about A.D. 1088, and if he be accepted as an authority, Irish History might be considered to open about two centuries before Christ; his words, "omnia monumenta Scotorum usque Cimbeath incerta erant," must, as O'Donovan remarks, inspire a feeling of confidence in the writer; but while his details of foreign history, relating to remarkable events at and preceding the Christian Era, are ample, his enumeration of Irish events down to the third and fourth century is exceedingly meagre. He only mentions a few kings whose reigns are, by later scribes, filled with fabulous performances; he barely notices the fact of the great hero Cuchullin's (Coolin's) existence, and gives but a passing notice to "the Cattle Prey of Cooley." "The poor honest man was evidently troubled with a conscience rather above his business," remarks John M. Dickson, "and he felt that he must really draw the line somewhere, . . . yet this limit did not long confine the less scrupulous annalists who followed him. They boldly undertook to carry back Irish history to the arrival of 'Miledh,' said to have sailed for Spain, *via* Scythia and Egypt, some thousand years earlier still; and to give names and dates to all the kings of Ireland during the intervening time, filling in the pictures of most of them with details of unnatural villainy, too gross for the latitude of Dahomy, and yet all the while implying that their country had enjoyed a happy, and heroic past. . . . The compilers of these various annals were, no doubt, most of them, honest and painstaking men who would not willingly have falsified facts within their own knowledge; but they were too ambitious, they attempted the impossible, and when their own necessarily limited knowledge failed them, they fell back on a fund of credulity that was apparently inexhaustible. To realize how great was the credulity, let anyone read for himself the

earlier portions of the *Annals of the Four Masters* (the latest and most authoritative of them all), whose office it should have been to purge the works of previous writers of crudeness and inaccuracy, and yet we find them gravely repeating as facts the most childish observations"; and all this, be it observed, so lately as the commencement of the seventeenth century.

According to Tighernach (Teernah) the starting point of Irish history was the erection of the Palace of Emania, and a wild legend states its origin to be as follows:—Three kings who had been fighting amongst themselves finally agreed to reign for seven years, each in succession. They had each enjoyed the sovereignty for one of these periods, when the first king died, and his daughter claimed the right to reign when her father's term of sovereignty came round; she was opposed, but vanquished all opposition. Her subjects suggested that she should put her prisoners to death; this she refused to do, but condemned them to slavery, and employed them in building a huge rath or fortress, and "she marked for them the *dun* with her brooch of gold from her neck," so that the palace was called *Eomuin*, from *eo*, a brooch, and *muin*, the neck.

The early history of Ireland, whether given by ancient or modern writers, is a strange mixture of truth, exaggeration, allegory, and downright fiction; however, the fact of incredible exploits being ascribed to dim historic personages is not sufficient ground for denying the existence of those individuals. In the early history of almost every country, the appearance of mythical beings is reported, and formerly it was usual to deny that these persons had ever existed, but present-day historians rather incline to the opinion that they may have been real individuals, remarkable for some great quality, or for heroic deeds, around whom tradition gradually wove an accumulation of supernatural glory. The statements presented by many writers as true history are, as is remarked by O'Donovan, "after all no more than their own inferences, drawn, in many instances, from the half historical, half fabulous works of the ancients. In the Middle Ages no story was acceptable to the taste of the day without the assistance of some marvellous or miraculous incidents which, in those all-believing times, formed the life and soul of every narrative."

Early Greek writers possessed the gift of throwing a veil of graceful fiction over stern reality; on the other hand, the historians of Ireland presented as sober facts, the wildest and most extravagant fictions, and as nature imperceptibly, but, none the less surely, planes and rounds off the rocks, covering them with ever increasing masses of verdure, so are actual facts of the elder days of Erin, planed, rounded, and covered by the accretions of

successive generations of so-called historians, until they are carpeted with a luxuriant crop of beautiful, but comparatively valueless legends. These legends, however, while without value as history, are of the very highest value as guides to popular thought at the time of their composition, and in some instances may contain a germ of fact which it requires the most delicate literary acumen of the historian to discern.

There is a strange kind of excitement in endeavouring to unravel a complicated problem; and certainly ample room is afforded to a student desirous of analysing and investigating the so-called history and description of ancient Erin, which have been handed down to us and repeated by writer after writer. The mythical stories of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and other scribes of that school, relative to the colonization and history of England, have long been consigned to the literary waste-paper basket; and why should the extravagant legends related of Ireland be treated with more leniency? To transmit, by oral tradition, a chain of events, extending back, in an unbroken order to the Creation, would be an impossibility; we possess also good authority for not giving "heed to fables and endless genealogies," or to "profane and old wives' fables." Writers of the olden school usually commenced their histories with fables, the length and extravagance of which was in proportion to their estimate of the importance of the theme; and nothing has tended so much to bring discredit on the proper study of Irish history and Irish antiquities as this exaggeration. In this characteristic Irish writers do not, by any means, occupy a unique position, for the early historians of all nations appear to have possessed an innate tendency to magnify the antiquity of the origin of the race whose deeds they recorded. The Arcadians alleged that they existed before the creation of the moon, and, according to Ovid, the inhabitants of Attica, not to be outdone, boasted that they were a nation before the sun shone:—

" Ante Jovem genitum terras habuisse feruntur  
Arcades, et luna gens prior illa fuit."

Nations pride themselves on their antiquity, individuals on their ancestry; but as antiquity, or remote ancestry, is in itself nothing, that in which is their pride is in reality their humiliation; for "if an individual is worthy of his ancestors, why extol those with whom he is on a level? And if he is unworthy of them, to laud them is to libel himself. And nations also, when they boast of their antiquity, only tell us, in other words, that they are standing on the ruins of so many generations. But if their view of things is limited and their prospect of the sciences narrow and confined, if other nations, who stand upon no such

eminence, see farther than they do, is not the very antiquity of which they boast a proof that their forefathers were not giants in knowledge ; or, if they were, that their children have degenerated ?”

“ From yon blue heavens above us bent,  
The Gardener Adam and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.  
Howe'er it be it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.”

Beranger, towards the close of the last century, wrote on this subject of historical exaggeration ; and one would almost imagine that the cautious old artist-antiquary had been inditing a prospectus for the origination of an Archæological Society when he states, that “ no traces remain of the grandeur of the ancient Irish, which we are pressed to believe without proofs, except some manuscripts, which very few can read, and out of which the Irish historian picks what suits him, and hides what is fabulous and absurd.” Even, now-a-days, the stories translated from the Irish, for popular reading, are eclectically selected, and many portions of the text are suppressed.

No statement should be advanced on the mere authority of native Irish annals and manuscripts, unless corroborated by outside and disinterested evidence, such as is afforded by classic or foreign writers, or archæological and material evidences of sepulchral remains, dwellings, implements, ornaments, and other traces left by the primitive and early inhabitants of the land.

If material objects be accepted as proofs of the pagan ideas and customs of the aborigines, surely the evidence of still existing superstitious observances of the peasantry, which can be traced to a pre-Christian source, ought to be received with, at least, the same authority ; and we should look upon all these subjects as mere links in one great chain which binds together many separate periods of semi-culture. The past can always be found in the present ; for it is easy to bring some custom or superstition of the present into connexion with the past, and to use it to bring out distinctly what was believed in and acted upon in by-gone centuries.

It is to be hoped that research into the past, on these lines, may contribute to the re-construction of early history, a work which can only be finally accomplished by many united efforts ; for our discoveries are founded on those of our predecessors, and we merely utilize the ascending steps formed by an innumerable army of fellow-workers. We stand on a better basis than those that went before. It is certain that those who follow after will be better placed than ourselves ; for even “ a dwarf on a giant's shoulders sees further of the two.” Thus the science of

archæology is gradually evolving out of apparent chaos ; it has become vertebrate, and possesses a solid framework which can be gradually clothed correctly with details. Evidence of this steady growth of healthy archæological thought is very apparent ; yet we have made but little progress in higher and scientific archæology, and the ancient antiquities of Ireland still remain in an unclassified condition. For a lengthened period archæology was not recognised as a science, although it treats of the arts, manners, customs, and entire past of primitive man, whilst, now-a-days, it must be acknowledged as an able assistant to ethnology and philology. It is evident that philology, as a guide, must give place to, or rest its evidence on, the material proofs produced by archæology or ethnology. Indeed, a student seeking to discover the origin of a people, through analysis of the spoken language, may be led to conclusions of the most erroneous description. For instance, in Ireland, a stranger ignorant of its early history, and finding the vast majority of the population speaking English, might come to the conclusion that they were of English descent. A good example occurred not long ago, when an English-speaking writer lamented that he could not give vent to his feelings in the Gaelic tongue, of which he was quite ignorant—English being, in his opinion, totally inadequate to express his indignation at being called an Anglo-Saxon. And, from his point of view, he was perfectly right ; for he was no more an Anglo-Saxon, because he spoke English only, than he would have been a horse had he been born in a stable.

Grant Allen illustrates, with the following personal anecdote, the facility with which the ethnological generaliser may be precipitated into unexpected pitfalls :—“It happened to me once, many years since, to be taking a class in logic in a West Indian college. The author of our text-book had just learnedly explained to us that personal names had no real connotation. ‘Nevertheless,’ he went on, ‘they may sometimes enable us to draw certain true inferences. For example, if we meet a man of the name of John Smith, we shall at least be justified in concluding that he is a Teuton.’ Now, as it happened, that class contained a John Smith ; and as I read those words aloud, he looked up in my face with the expressive smile of no Teutonic forefathers ; for *this* John Smith was a pure-blooded negro.”

It is difficult to define limits to this species of investigation ; for ethnologists are of opinion that even the so-called Irish race is really a compound one, containing in addition to the true Celtic or Aryan element at least two others that are non-Aryan, probably a Mongolian or Finnish element and an Iberian element. “Very little attempt,” remarks William Larminie, “has hitherto been made to settle in what parts of the country

these elements respectively preponderate; but that there must be some preponderance of different races in different localities is shown clearly enough by the varying physical types. It is beyond question that Donegal differs from Connaught, and that both differ from Munster; and when we find that, in spite of a co-existence of at least two thousand years in the same island, and the possession of a common language, different districts have a different folklore, is it extravagant to surmise that these different bodies are due to varying racial deposits?" The creeds of their faith, namely, the myths, legends, and superstitions of a people, are far truer guides to their origin than is their spoken dialect. The tongue of the aborigines is usually either extinguished or forced on one side by the stronger and dominant race, but the bent of mind of the subjected people becomes more or less stereotyped, and forms the distinguishing feature of their character.

The inhabitants of Cornwall, though largely of Celtic blood, speak English; the Romans imposed their language upon the conquered races inhabiting France and Spain. The late Professor Huxley, writing on this subject, remarked that:—"At the present day the physical characters of the people of Belgic Gaul remain distinct from those of the people of Aquitaine, notwithstanding the immense changes which have taken place since Cæsar's time; but Belgæ, Celtæ, and Aquitani (all but a mere fraction of the last two, represented by the Basques and the Bretons) are fused into one nationality, 'le peuple Français.' But they have adopted the language of one set of invaders and the name of another; their original names and languages having almost disappeared. Suppose that the French language remained as the sole evidence of the existence of the population of Gaul, would the keenest philologer arrive at any other conclusion than that this population was essentially and fundamentally a 'Latin' race which had some communication with Celts and Teutons? Would he so much as suspect the former existence of the Aquitani?"

Thus language is no absolute or even approximate test of race; it is merely evidence of a contact having taken place between races. Language may explain much; it cannot explain everything, and may, as we have seen, in fact, in some instances, prove actually detrimental to research. Although the English language is mainly of Saxon origin, yet it is by no means so certain that the blood of Englishmen—taken as a whole nation—is as fully Saxon as their tongue; the Celtic strain, though to a great extent absent from our tongue, exists no doubt to a large extent in the blood. Anglo-Celtic is probably a truer description of British nationality than Anglo-Saxon; for all are not Celtic

that speak with a brogue, and all are not Saxon that are guileless of the letter *h*. On the other hand there is more Saxon and Norse blood flowing in the veins of Irishmen than is generally supposed. As already noticed, Ireland at the very earliest period contained a dark and a fair race, which there is every reason to believe are identical with the dark and the fair races of Britain. When the Irish first became known to history they spoke a Gaelic dialect; and though for many centuries Scandinavians made continual incursions upon and settlements among them, the Teutonic languages took no more root among the Irish than they did among the French. "How much Scandinavian blood was introduced there is no evidence to show. But, after the conquest of Ireland by Henry II., the English people, consisting in part of the descendants of Cymric speakers, and in part of the descendants of Teutonic speakers, made good their footing in the eastern half of the island, as the Saxons and Danes made good theirs in England; and they did their best to complete the parallel by attempting the extirpation of the Gaelic-speaking Irish, and they succeeded to a considerable extent. A large part of eastern Ireland is now peopled by men who are substantially English by descent, and the English language has spread over the land far beyond the limits of English blood. . . . What, then, is the value of the ethnological difference between the Englishman of the western half of England and the Irishman of the eastern half of Ireland? For what reason does the one deserve the name of 'Celt' and not the other? And, further, if we turn to the inhabitants of the western half of Ireland, why should the term 'Celts' be applied to them more than to the inhabitants of Cornwall? And if the name is applicable to the one as justly as to the other, why should not intelligence, perseverance, thrift, industry, sobriety, respect for law, be admitted to be Celtic virtues? And why should we not seek for the cause of their absence in something else than the idle pretext of 'Celtic blood'? I have been unable to meet with any answers to these questions," concludes the late Professor T. H. Huxley.

There is scarcely any branch of knowledge of the past with which archæology may not claim to concern itself; and even if the term be taken in its narrower sense, as the study only of the history of the outward and material life of man in past ages, and especially of the extant works of human ingenuity, yet even the historical limits of the subject are only bounded by the first appearance of man on the earth. Until a comparatively recent period the study of Irish archæology was in a deplorable state; travellers along the road to antiquarian knowledge were beguiled at every step from the true track by false guides who, like "Will-o'-the-wisp," led them aimlessly about; yet the old school of

writers, whom it is the custom to sneer at, should be judged, like other men in similar circumstances, according to the light of their time. Thus while we need pay but little heed to their arguments, deductions, and assumption of learning, we must acknowledge that we are indebted to them for many most useful and explanatory facts that might otherwise have escaped being recorded. Of all the writers of the old school, General Vallancey is the one most to be admired and the least to be blamed. He wrote as he believed, and in all sincerity, as a sympathetic writer exclaims:—"Good, worthy, brave, old antiquarian: peace be to his ashes. He had an Irish heart, although he chanced to be born on the wrong side of St. George's Channel; and an Irish head, too, if the making of a blunder, now and then, be deemed a true characteristic of our country; but antiquarians in England can make blunders, too, only their blunders are not blunders, they are 'erroneous conclusions.'"

Almost always, at the birth of a new study, zealous votaries undertake much laborious research, which has to be gone over afresh as soon as systematized work is commenced. Not only has the student proper to undo the futile work that obstructs scientific inquiry, but he has, after pulling down the edifice, to attempt a reconstruction. The very fact of great errors having been committed should make us proceed with the more caution, especially in forming our own judgment. The unweighed theories of the old school of archæologists hardly require refutation, nevertheless the emotional basis on which they rested must be demolished with a firm but, it must be admitted, reluctant hand; and though the path be strewn, like that of the iconoclasts of old, with shattered fragments of broken idols, the remains will be found not worth the trouble of an attempted restoration. A new structure must be erected; for an attempt to utilise too much of the old material would but mar the archæological harmony of the rising edifice.

Dr. Petrie's essay on the origin of Irish Round Towers, a model for archæological writers, created a literary revolution, yet, as is the case with too many other Irish writers, the amount of published matter which he has left represents most inadequately his great knowledge of archæology. To the overthrow of romantic theories and fanciful speculations he marshalled solid arguments and a bristling array of facts, and conclusively proved that the Round Towers of Ireland, instead of being Pagan temples of the remotest antiquity, were erected by Christian ecclesiastics, in comparatively modern times, for various purposes, but certainly for keeps, or places of protection, against sudden attacks from predatory foes.

The present school of archæology is before all things practi-

cal, and is pre-eminently that of the spade. The spade is a great solver of problems and destroyer of fantastical theories; it must ultimately unfold, in its entirety, primitive man's ideas regarding the dead, of the future state, of burial customs, ceremonies, and the institutions to which they gave rise. It is precisely at this early stage that the spade has much to tell; for where historical and legendary traditions are absent, the ultimate appeal must be to it. The trend of all modern science is to essay to recover from caves, middens, and other such like sites, precise acquaintance with the manners and methods of life of the men of long past ages. Need it be stated that, as far as it has gone, investigation on every side has proved fruitful. We have, to some extent, solved the secret of the Eld. The knowledge that to-day we possess, and at which we have long ceased to wonder, would, a few years ago, have been deemed a mere dream; but there are many more secrets of the past belonging to our land yet unravelled because traces of them are very faint, and it is to the examination of these that we should direct our attention.

The mass of literature which has appeared on the subject of the name and meaning of the ancient designation of Ireland would fill a goodly sized volume: in some of the earliest manuscripts the name is written Eriu. One legend, which on the face of it appears to bear the impress of truthfulness, alleges that, at some period either prior to or after the Deluge, Ireland was discovered by fishermen who had been blown out to sea in their skiff; this was at least a natural and not improbable manner of discovering a new island.

Whether or not Ireland was known to the Phœnicians is a subject of controversy amongst antiquarians. Even had these energetic traders been acquainted with the island, it is more than probable that they would have tried to conceal their knowledge, as they would have been unwilling to allow other maritime nations to discover the sources from which they drew their riches. We have the well-known and hackneyed story of the wily Phœnician shipmaster who, observing that, on his voyage to Britain, he was followed by a Roman galley which watched his course, deliberately ran his vessel on a shoal, on which his pursuer also struck; the Phœnician, either a better or more fortunate seaman, floated off his craft, but the Roman galley went to pieces.

The earliest writers of Greece and Rome who are supposed to refer to Ireland, have spoken of it in a manner so vague, that very little can be learned from their words; even if Ireland may be identified as Thule, as the "sacred Island," or the poetic "Island of the Blest," in which the golden age of innocence and purity still continued to flourish, after all the rest of the world had become corrupt: but the following lines from Claudian are

conclusive as to the designation of Thule, at any rate in the poet's time—not being applicable to Ireland:—"The Orkneys dripped (with blood) when the Saxons were put to flight; Thule grew warm with the gore of the Picts; icy Ireland bewailed the heaps of (slain) Scoti."\*

Rufus Festus Avienus, a poetical writer of the fourth century, A.D., in his *De Oris Maritim.*, professes to have derived his information from a Carthaginian source; and he is, it is alleged, the only ancient author as yet known, who specially applied the epithet of "The Sacred Island" to Ireland. His account is curious; he states that at a distance of two days' sail from the *Æstrumnides* (the *Cassiterides* of the Greeks, supposed to be the present Scilly Islands) lay an extensive land called "The Sacred Island," inhabited by the nation of the Hibernians. The text may be thus translated:—

"This isle is sacred nam'd, by all the ancients,  
From times remotest in the womb of Chronos.  
This isle, which rises o'er the waves of ocean,  
Is covered with a sod of rich luxuriance,  
And peopled, far and wide, by the Hiberni."†

"It would be a very melancholy consideration," remarks O'Donovan, "if this sacred island of the Hesperides, the abode of the Pious, and the Elysian Fields of the Blest, should turn out, when the reality became known, to have been the abode of incestuous cannibals."

Although we may be inclined to smile at the small amount of geographical knowledge possessed by the ancients, yet they were, perhaps, on the whole, better informed than were the ordinary run of Irish peasantry at the close of the last, and the commencement of the present century. O'Donovan relates how his uncle was unable to make his listeners comprehend the theories respecting the laws of motion, attraction, and gravitation, or understand that it was the earth that moved, and that the sun was comparatively stationary. The generality of mankind, for a long time, supposed that the earth was a flat plain, surrounded by the sea, and that the sky was a kind of roof from which heavenly bodies were suspended as lamps. Tyler, in his

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\* " . . . Maduerunt Saxone fuso  
Orcades, incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule,  
Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne."

† "Ast hinc duobus in Sacram, sic Insulam  
Dixere prisci, solibus cursus rati est.  
Hæc inter undas multum cespitem jacit,  
Eamque latè gens Hibernorum colit."

*Early History of Mankind*, states that the Polynesians thought, like so many other peoples ancient and modern, that the sky descended at the horizon and enclosed the earth. They called foreigners "heaven-bursters," as having broken in from another and outside world. The sky is to most savages merely the earth on high. "There are holes or windows through the roof, or firmament, where the rain comes through, and if you climb high enough you can get through and visit the dwellers above, who look, and talk, and live very much in the same way as the people upon earth. As above the flat earth, so below it, there are regions inhabited by men, or man-like creatures, who sometimes come up to the surface and sometimes are visited by the inhabitants of the upper earth. We live as it were upon the ground floor of a great house, with upper stories rising one over another above us, and cellars down below."

The gravest objection made by the Irish peasantry to the "new learning" of the eighteenth century was the late date of its discovery, and the improbability that the Almighty would have permitted such great truths to remain so long unrevealed to mankind. The peasantry asserted that the new science was but the dream of visionary and irreligious madmen; they stoutly maintained that the earth was not a globe, but was flat, and in all probability extended to a distance simply immeasurable. With regard to Commodore Anson's discoveries,\* the peasantry argued that he did not sail round the earth, but only up and down the various oceans, and returned to England after having described a circle, not in girth round the earth—for that was impossible—but on its flat surface, in the same way that an animal might walk round the flat surface of a field, but cannot pass under it. This they contended was the way Commodore Anson sailed round the earth. They also firmly believed that, under ground, there were oceans of fresh water extending in various directions as the seas do on the surface, that the upper crust of the earth was of various degrees of thickness, but that it was very thin in some places, and has been frequently broken through by the action of the water, as also by the spells of sorcerers; that there are oceans of fresh water in the sky which would assuredly inundate the earth were they not kept suspended by God, who occasionally permits them to descend in the form of rain to fertilize the earth, and that God deigns to pour it down gently or violently, or withholds it altogether for a season, according to man's deserts.

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\* It is surprising how, occasionally, the span of two lives bridges an almost incredible space. A lady of the county Sligo, who died in the year 1897, was acquainted with one of the officers who sailed with Captain Cook in his voyage of discovery, 1768-1771.

The legend of an island or of a continent submerged by one of these great catastrophes is still preserved in the folk lore of almost every European nation ; for legends of the Eld and modern scientific speculation alike abound in suggestions regarding great islands and even continents once teeming with terrestrial life, but now covered with ocean billows. It has been remarked that whereas the Pacific Ocean is of great geological antiquity, it is now one of the most unquestioned facts of the world's history, that large parts of the Atlantic are geologically quite modern. "What lands may have been thickly populated for untold ages, and subsequently have disappeared and left no sign above the waters it is of course impossible for us to say ; but unless we are to make the wholly unjustifiable assumption that no dry land rose elsewhere when our present dry land sank, there must be half-a-dozen Atalantis beneath the waves of the various oceans of the world," observes Professor Huxley. Some hold the belief that this submerged continent was the cradle of the human race. That there some tribe allied to but not identical with the present anthropoid species of apes, gradually developed into men—at first but a step removed from the brutes : then slowly advancing in the arts which characterize man. "Ancient traditions, when tested by the severe processes of modern investigation, commonly enough fade away into mere dreams ; but it is singular how often the dream turns out to have been a half-waking one, pre-saging a reality. Ovid foreshadowed the discoveries of the geologist ; the Atalantis was an imagination, but Columbus found a Western World."

The primitive inhabitants of the Canary Islands are said to be the remnant of the ancient race who peopled the drowned land of Atalantis. It was not until the fifteenth century that these isolated and forgotten remnants of a supposed lost continent were rediscovered. Their inhabitants were then living in a Stone Age ; they had no implements but hatchets made of obsidian, and wooden darts with the points hardened in the fire.

O'Flaherty states that the phantom island of Hy-Brasil—marked on many old charts near the west coast of Ireland—was, in his time, "often visible." The subject has inspired several poets with beautiful fancies which have been woven into pathetic ballads. Gerald Griffin describes it thus :—

"On the ocean that hollows the rocks where ye dwell  
A shadowy land has appeared, as they tell ;  
Men thought it a region of sunshine and rest,  
And they called it Hy-Brasil, the isle of the Blest.  
From year unto year on the ocean's blue rim,  
The beautiful spectre showed lovely and dim ;  
The golden clouds curtained the deep where it lay,  
And it looked like an Eden away, far away !

“ A peasant, who heard of the wonderful tale,  
 In the breeze of the Orient loosened his sail ;  
 From Ara, the holy, he turned to the west,  
 For though Ara was holy, Hy-Brasil was blest.  
 He heard not the voices that called from the shore—  
 He heard not the rising wind's menacing roar ;  
 Home, kindred, and safety he left on that day,  
 And he sped to Hy-Brasil, away, far away !

“ Morn rose on the deep, and that Shadowy Isle,  
 O'er the faint rim of distance, reflected its smile ;  
 Noon burned on the wave, and that shadowy shore  
 Seemed lovelily distant and faint as before ;  
 Lone evening came down on the wanderer's track,  
 And to Ara again he looked timidly back ;  
 Oh ! far on the verge of the ocean it lay,  
 Yet the isle of the blest was away, far away !

“ Rash dreamer return ! O, ye winds of the main,  
 Bear him back to his own peaceful Ara again.  
 Rash fool ! for a vision of fanciful bliss,  
 To barter thy calm life of labour and peace.  
 The warning of reason was spoken in vain ;  
 He never re-visited Ara again !  
 Night fell on the deep amidst tempest and spray,  
 And he died on the waters, away, far away !

Many attempts were made to discover this fabled island. Leslie, of Glaslough, described as a “ wise man and a great scholar,” was so imbued with belief in its real existence that he solicited a grant of the isle from Charles I. Edmond Ludlow, the celebrated republican, escaped to the Continent in a vessel chartered at Limerick, to sail in search of Hy-Brasil; and so firm then was belief in the actual existence of this enchanted island, that the captain of the ship was allowed to depart unquestioned.

A rare work entitled *La Navigation l'Inde Orientale*, printed at Amsterdam in the year 1609, contains a map on which two islands, styled Brasil and Brandon, are marked as actually existing off the Irish coast. Fig. 67 is a reproduction of that portion of the plate above referred to. Fig. 68 is a chart by the French Geographer Royal made in the year 1634, on which the island of Hy Brasil is also distinctly marked. Fig. 69 shows the approximate position of the Porcupine and Rockall Banks with regard to Ireland. Rockall is still, in part, above the waters, and the rocky pinnacle it presents is a great danger to navigation. It is probably the last fragment of the island of Brandon, and the Porcupine Bank may represent the site of the now phantom land of Hy-Brasil.

On the 2nd March, 1674 (it is well to be very particular as to the exact date), a Captain Nesbett discovered, disenchanted, and

actually landed on Hy-Brasil, which he also partially explored. The disenchantment was effected by lighting a fire upon it. "Since then," says the writer, "several godly ministers and others are gone to visit and discover them" (*i.e.*, the inhabitants), but as the author had heard no news of their return, he says he awaits with becoming patience further particulars. We are left in ignorance as to whether these were ever given, but from a silence of upwards of two centuries the probability is, that the

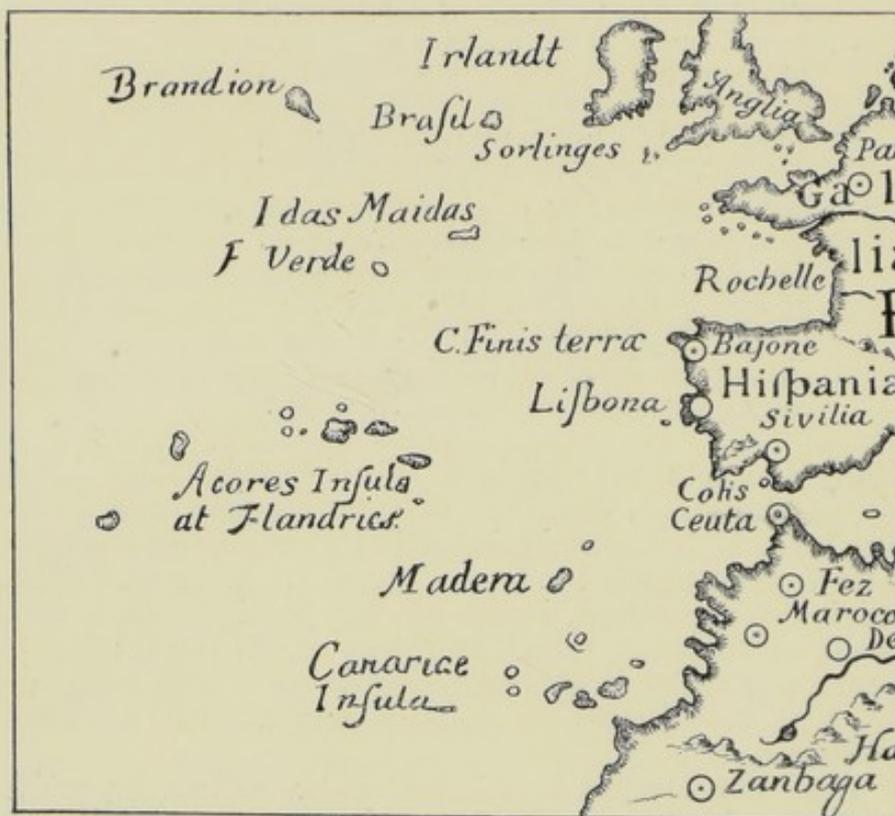


FIG. 67.

Chart from *La Navigation l'Inde Oriental*, 1609, on which the two Islands of Brasil and Brandon are marked.

disenchantment wrought by the lighting of the fire was but temporary; that the "godly ministers and others" have met with the fate of Ossian of old, but doubtless when the day of their release arrives we shall hear of strange discoveries. The pamphlet, purporting to give an account of the discovery of Hy-Brasil, obtained a good circulation in London in 1675.

The existence of a land which would restore the aged to the full vigour of youth was of world-wide belief, but all attempts to discover this land necessarily ended in disappointment; nevertheless, the strange spirit of adventure thus engendered, laid open to



the "New World," it was apparently known to those ancient rovers of the sea.

O'Flaherty mentions the appearance, in 1161, of "fantastical ships" in the harbour of Galway sailing against the wind; and Hardiman, editor of the above work, remembered having seen a well-defined aerial phenomenon of the same kind from a hill near Croaghpatrick in Mayo, on a serene evening in the autumn

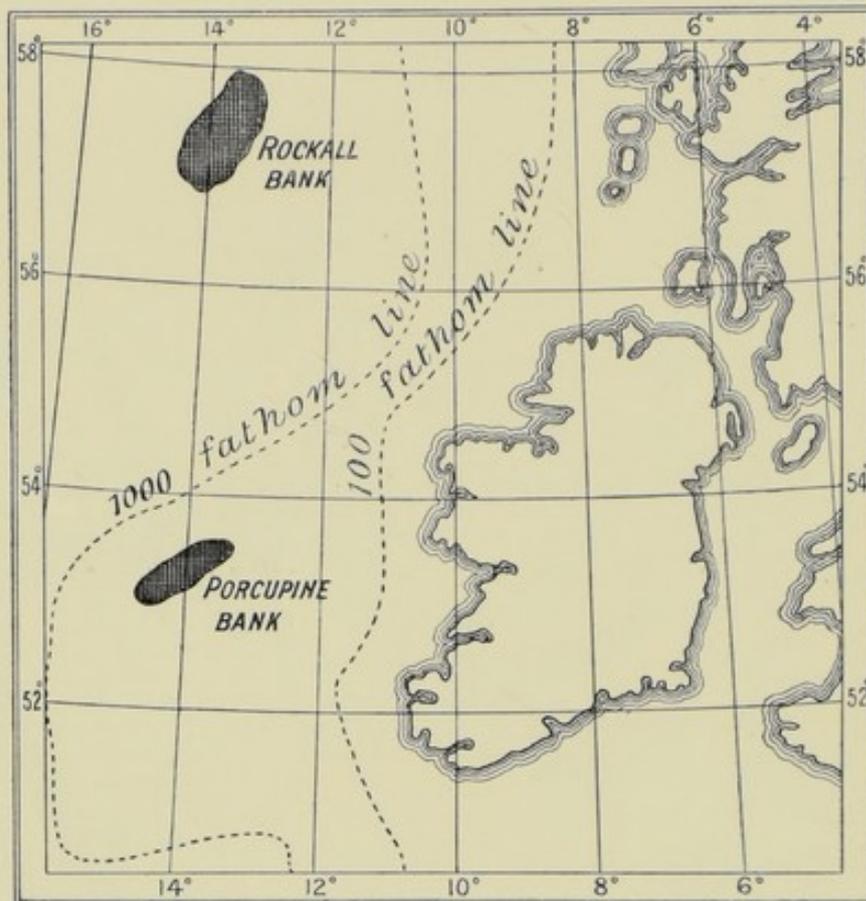


FIG. 69.

Sketch Map, showing the approximate position of the Porcupine and Rockall Banks with regard to Ireland.

of 1798. Hundreds who also witnessed the scene looked upon it as supernatural, but soon afterwards it was ascertained that the illusion had been produced by the reflection of the fleet of Admiral Warren which was then in pursuit of a French squadron off the west coast of Ireland. In like manner may not the optical illusion noted in the Irish annals as occurring in the year 1161, in the harbour of Galway, have been produced by the reflection of a distant fleet of Northern war-galleys.

Belief in the existence of Hy-Brasil doubtless gave rise to the traditional transatlantic voyage of St. Brendan (spelled Brandion on the map, fig. 67), an adventurous ecclesiastic, styled "the Navigator," who passed seven years away from Ireland on a distant island. St. Brendan has been styled "the Sindbad of clerical romance"; and so firm a hold of men's minds had the exploits of this Christian Ulysses at one time acquired, that islands, supposed to have been discovered by him, became subjects of treaty. It is not improbable that, at a later period, his adventures stimulated navigators to attempt discoveries across the western ocean. St. Brendan sailed about on a huge rock, which he finally abandoned on the coast of Donegal. St. Declan's rock may still be seen on the strand in Ardmore bay. This "boat" is computed to weigh about three tons. It navigated itself, on the surface of the sea, from Rome, carrying, by way of cargo, nine bells, and the curious ship reached land with its load most opportunely, just as St. Declan was in dire want of a bell to celebrate Mass.

There is a curious ms. on medical subjects in the Royal Irish Academy, traditionally believed to have been originally obtained by a native of Connemara, transported by supernatural means to the enchanted isle of Hy-Brasil, where he received full instructions with regard to all diseases, their treatment and cure, and was presented, on leaving, with the ms. to guide him in his medical practice. So late as the year 1753, there is in *The Ulster Miscellany* a curious satire entitled "A voyage to O'Brazal, a submarine island lying off the coast of Ireland."

O'Flaherty, writing in 1684, states that: "From the isles of Aran and the west continent often appears visible that enchanted island called O'Brasil, and in Irish Beg-Ara, or the Lesser Aran, set down in cards of navigation; whether it be real and firm land, kept hidden by special ordinance of God, as the terrestrial paradise, or else some illusion of airy clouds appearing on the surface of the sea, or the craft of evil spirits—is more than our judgments can sound out."

The Rev. Luke Connolly, writing in 1816, states that he received minute descriptions of extraordinary *Fata Morgana* which appeared along the sea-coast near the Giant's Causeway, from those who saw the beautiful illusions on various summer evenings:—"Shadows resembling castles, ruins, and tall spires darted rapidly across the surface of the sea, which were instantly succeeded by appearances of trees, lengthened into considerable height; these shadows moved to the eastern part of the horizon, and at sunset totally disappeared. These phenomena have given rise to various romantic stories. A book still extant, printed in 1748, and written by a person who resided near the Giant's Causeway, gives a long account of an enchanted island, annually

seen floating along the county of Antrim coast, which he fancifully calls the 'Old Brazils.' It is supposed by the peasants that a sod from the Irish *terra firma*, thrown on this island, would give it stability; but though several fishing boats have gone out, at different times, provided with this article, it has hitherto eluded their vigilance."

Belief in the existence of the island of Hy-Brasil may have arisen through these optical illusions, which are not so very infrequent as is generally supposed. A correspondent writes—"I myself, upwards of half a century ago, saw a wonderful mirage resembling that lately described as having been visible off our Tireragh coast (county of Sligo); and had I been looking on the bay for the first time, nothing could have persuaded me but that I was gazing at a veritable city—a large handsome one too, trees, houses, spires, castellated buildings, &c." The enchanted island of Hy-Brasil was again seen off the coast of Sligo (as above alluded to) in the year 1885; the vision forebodes—so it is alleged—national trouble.

There is also another consideration with regard to this phenomenon which has not been sufficiently taken into consideration. We cannot see objects below the horizon, but sometimes, owing to the peculiar state of the atmosphere, the rays of light are so bent that, when they reach the eye, they make distant objects visible. For instance, place a coin in a saucer, so as to be hidden from observation, pour water into the vessel, and though the coin is below the horizon it becomes at once visible. This reflection, usually seen across water, is among sailors known as "looming"; the objects that "loom" are magnified vertically, and seem unnaturally near. Snowdon, in Wales, is thus occasionally seen by pilots in Dublin Bay, though it is over one hundred miles distant.

P. W. Joyce says that "the Gaelic tales abound in allusions to a beautiful country situated under the sea—an enchanted land sunk at some remote time and still held under spell. In some romantic writings it is called Tir-fa-tonn, 'the land beneath the wave'; and occasionally one or more of the heroes find their way to it. . . . The island of Fincara and the beautiful country seen beneath the waves by Maidun are remnants of the same superstition." This romantic delusion is not confined to Ireland. Belief in it is found in the mythology of almost every race; and "although all evidence points in an opposite direction, and rather to an evolution from lower to higher conditions everywhere, the idea that a paradise lies behind us will probably remain in the chronic fiction of humanity so long, at least, as to the individual bygone troubles appear small comparatively when dwarfed by distance in the retrospect, and while the

memory of age continues to dwell regretfully on long vanished scenes that may have owed their brightness chiefly to the summer atmosphere of youth."

The concord of classic and Irish tradition is remarkable; in both cases, somewhere far away in the western ocean, there was a country which passed under various names; and that this was one of the elysiums of the primitive Irish, as well as of classic writers, is very clear. It appears to have corresponded to the "Land of the Saints" of early Irish Christianity, where the souls of the blessed await the Day of Judgment, even as the "Land of the Living" was to the Pagan Irish their happy "Spirit Home." The general traditions of pagan peoples place the point of departure from this world, and entrance to the next, always to the west, and the journey lay westward. For instance, in the mythological legend of the adventures of Condla Ruad the hero embarks in a currach made of pearl, and glides away on the boundless ocean, watched by his friends with straining and streaming eyes until the skiff disappears in the glow of the great "white sun," on its voyage westward to the "Island of the Blessed," to

"A land of youth, a land of rest,  
A land from sorrow free;  
It lies far off in the golden West,  
On the verge of the azure sea."

The poet Longfellow makes even his Indian hero, Hiawatha, take his departure westward, into the fiery sunset—

"To the island of the Blessed,  
To the kingdom of Ponemah,  
To the land of the Hereafter."

There are also numerous legends of the overwhelming, not of continents and islands alone, but also of particular towns and cities by the sudden rising of the waters.

The sites of many lacustrine settlements, or villages built in the water, called in Irish crannogs, are often designated by the peasantry "drowned islands"; for *bawtha*, signifying "drowned," is applied, by the country people to places or objects submerged in water. When the Irish Annalists recount how the sacred books of the Christian Irish were destroyed by the invading Danes, who threw them into the water, they use the expression "the books were drowned," thus showing that the application of the term is not modern. Shakespeare, in *The Tempest* and also in *All's Well that Ends Well*, also applies the epithet "drown" to inanimate objects:—

. . . "Deeper than ever plummet sound  
I'll drown my book."

And again—

. . . “To drown my clothing, and say I was stripped.”

If till lately people, otherwise well informed, were totally ignorant on the subject of these “drowned” dwellings, it is the less surprising that the simple Irish fisherman, gliding in his skiff over the placid surface of the waters, and peering into their clear depths, should have failed to recognize that the mouldering piles projecting from the oozy bottom were traces of the love of security of his predecessors in the country; and that in the mud of the ever-accumulating lacustrine deposit are preserved material evidences of a state of primitive society long since passed away: indeed, few discoveries are more interesting than the spectacle of the ghosts of this long-forgotten population rising from the waters of oblivion.

This tradition of “drowned” islands is clearly traceable to lingering remembrances of these lacustrine habitations; for Giraldus Cambrensis, writing in the twelfth century, described the tradition that then prevailed in the North of Ireland, of waters having overwhelmed the plain now occupied by Lough Neagh—a locality thickly studded with these “drowned” remains; and the legend has been immortalised by Moore, who thus alludes to it:—

“On Lough Neagh’s banks as the fisherman strays,  
When the clear cold eve’s declining,  
He sees the round towers of other days  
In the waves beneath him shining.”

It would appear as if shadowy tradition prevails also in the East; at any rate the same poet makes the Peri say:—

“I know where the Isles of Perfume are,  
Many a fathom down in the sea,  
To the south of sun-bright Araby.”

There is a tradition that the original town of Sligo, in the west of Ireland, stood on a plain now overspread by the waters of Lough Gill, and that the islets studding the bosom of the lake are the crests of verdant knolls which formerly adorned its green expanse. There are certainly traces of lacustrine settlements still plainly to be observed above water; but as proof of the alleged submergence of the ancient town, the remains of houses and buildings are said to be visible at the bottom of the lake on a sunshiny day. An English tourist asked a Sligo boatman, who had rowed him from the town to the lake, if he had ever seen “the round towers of other days,” or any buildings of past

ages, gleaming under the waters. "In troth, I have," was the ready answer; "and shure, on a still summer's day, won't you see the smoke from the chimneys rising straight up in the air from the surface of the lake."

Within the town of Sligo, in the townland of Knocknaganny, is the celebrated well of Tobernashelmida, or the Snail's Well. Its name is derived from an enchanted or metamorphosed being, supposed to be seen every seventh year emerging from its waters in the form of a huge snail, and which possesses the power of effecting, at some future period which, it is to be hoped, may always remain in futurity, an overflowing of the well, and a second submergence of the metropolis of the west of Ireland.

A curious tradition is connected with a rude stone monument in Mayo, to the effect that should the giant's grave be ever dug into, the wild mountain side would at once be transformed into a fertile plain; that the gate of a beautiful city, which lies enchanted at the bottom of a little lake close by, could then be opened by a key buried with the warrior in the tomb, and that a great golden treasure would be at the disposal of the discoverer.

The tradition of towns buried beneath the waters is not merely confined to the lakes of Ireland; there is the beautiful fable of the City of Gold, hid beneath the angry ocean, sometimes seen, but ever in different localities:—

"Years onward have swept,  
Ay! long ages have rolled—  
Since the billows first slept  
O'er the City of Gold!

"'Neath its eddy of white  
Where the green wave is swelling,  
In their halls of delight,  
Are the fairy tribes dwelling.

"And but seldom the eye  
Of a mortal can scan,  
Where those palaces high  
Rise unaided by man.

"Yet at times the waves sever,  
And then you may view  
The yellow walls ever,  
'Neath the ocean's deep blue."

A similar legend lingers amongst the peasantry on both banks of the estuary of the River Shannon. They believe that a beautiful city lies buried beneath the waters, the flow of the current being ruffled and disturbed by its sunken towers, spires, and turrets. Once in seven years the glittering pile, they tell

us, is to be seen gleaming beneath the translucent wave, but it is considered a sure omen of approaching death to the beholder of the wonderful spectacle.

M. Chantry was induced to explore Lake Paladru in Isère, from hearing the recital of a local tradition that the ruins of an ancient city, destroyed by Divine vengeance, were still to be seen at the bottom of the lake. Researches led to the discovery of a lacustrine settlement occupying the spot indicated by the legend. In the Bay of Douarnenez, near the Pointe de Raz, on the Brittany coast, the fisherman still believes he sees, under the green waves, "the ruined streets and monuments of the Breton Sodom," or the mythical City of Is.

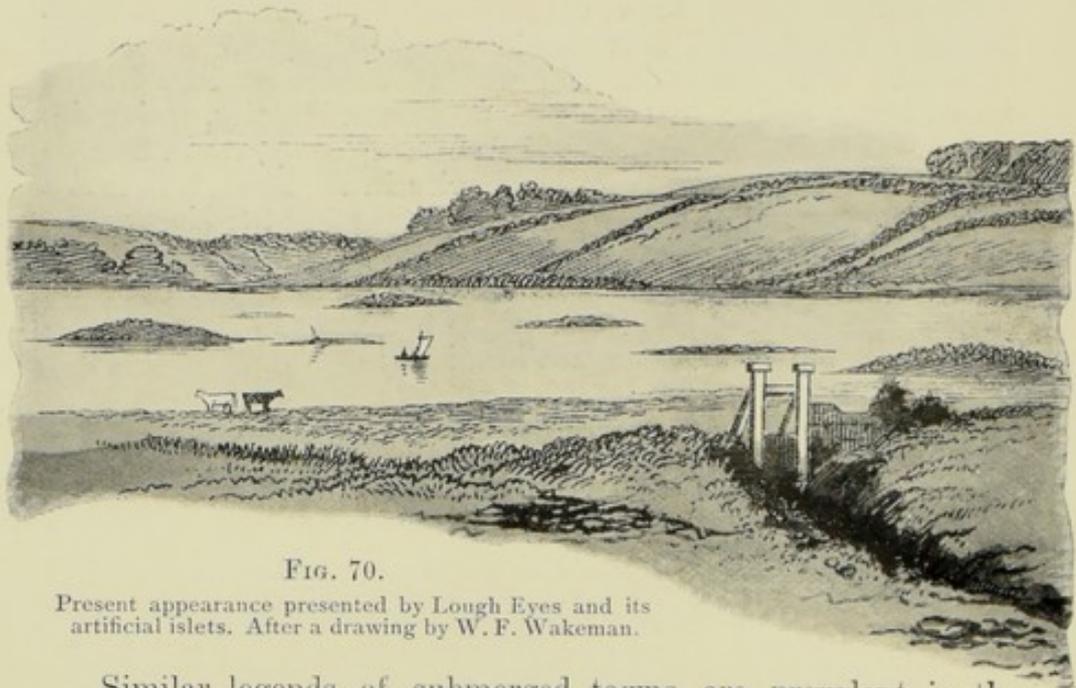


FIG. 70.

Present appearance presented by Lough Eyes and its artificial islets. After a drawing by W. F. Wakeman.

Similar legends of submerged towns are prevalent in the south of Scotland, on the littoral facing the Irish coast; while amongst other points of coincidence between Scotch and Irish lake settlements may be noticed a tradition connected with some of them, and common to both countries, which seems to have had its origin in the submergence of the settlements by the continual rising of the water level of the lakes, or the sinking of the littoral. The same idea is held by the natives of Central India, who imagine that the sound of fairy music is heard, and panoramic views of buried cities may, from the surrounding hill tops, be seen beneath the waters of their lakes. John Balak, who had taken up his residence on the river Osella, wrote to Gerard Mercator, the famous cosmographer, an account of the river on which was "the great lake of Kittay, on the shores of

which have been heard sweet harmony of bells, and that stately and large buildings had been seen therein."

The cluster of artificial islands and shoals in Lough Eyes, near Lisbellaw, county Fermanagh, is perhaps one of the most remarkable remains of a large lacustrine settlement to be seen in Ireland. The country people have a tradition that, in ancient times, a road or roads, leading from island to island, passed through the lake. When the water level is very low, traces of these "roads" may be discerned consisting of peaty ridges, leading from dwelling to dwelling, probably composed to a great extent of the fallen platforms or gangways. Two rows of stakes extending along the sides of the ridges, placed about 4 feet asunder, mark the width of the causeways, which were probably



FIG. 71.

Former appearance presented by Lough Eyes and its artificial islets. An attempted restoration of the ancient settlement. By W. F. Wakeman.

supported on piles. Fig. 70 is a view of the present appearance presented by Lough Eyes and its islets. Fig. 71 is an attempted restoration of the ancient settlement. Attention must be drawn to the quaint boats used by their inhabitants. Fig. 72 is a restoration of the huge single-piece canoe, now in the Science and Art Museum. Judging by its great size it was most probably used for purposes of warfare. Originally 43 feet over all, it was capable of carrying a crew of thirty-five fighting men, and, propelled by twenty paddles, would have attained a good head of speed. Fig. 72 represents a common incident in ancient times, a raid on, and the pillaging and burning of, a cluster of lake-dwellings; many of the sites bear signs which denote that the villages had been often demolished, burnt, and rebuilt; the native clinging

to his watery home with as much pertinacity as, in latter days, his descendant clings to his cottage on *terra firma*. In the progress of many centuries this state of society in Ireland gradually

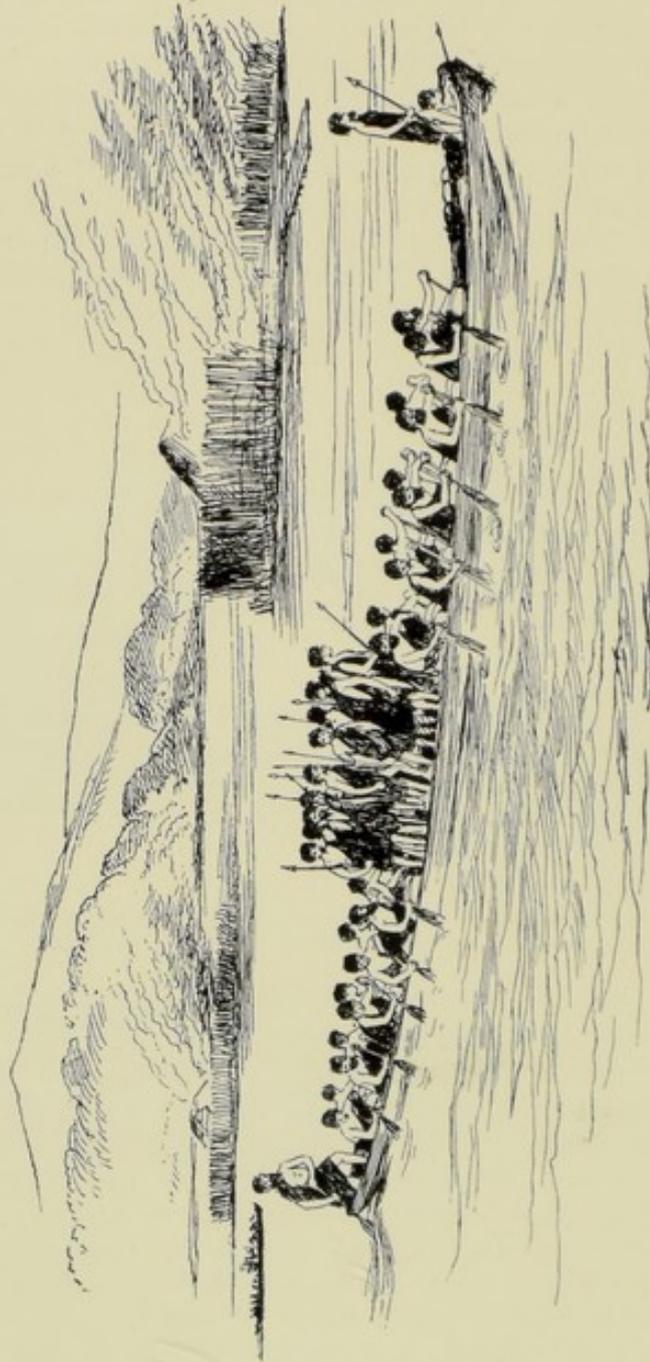


FIG. 72.—The burning of a cluster of Lake-Dwellings. Restoration of the ancient single-piece War Canoe in the Science and Art Museum, Dublin. By W. F. Wakeman.

changed. Forests were cleared, pasturage became more ample, wild animals diminished, whilst sheep and oxen increased, and population became more generally spread over the country.

Remains of very similar structures have been observed in the waters of the western Pacific; the most remarkable occur at a place called Metalainne where some sixty artificial islets, bearing a certain resemblance to Irish and British lake-dwellings, rise from the waters of a lagoon. This Venice of the Carolines covers an area of about nine square miles. The few natives frequenting the locality give the islets a wide berth, as they believe them to be haunted. They also recount a tradition that there was here formerly a great city, but one day a large fleet of canoes, filled with a horde of fierce barbarians, attacked the place, captured the city, and slaughtered or sacrificed its defenders.

The gradual development of what is now the kingdom of Holland can be traced back to a race of wretched fish-eaters who dwelt upon mounds which they raised like beavers above the almost fluid soil. Venice, the once proud Queen of the Adriatic, with her marble palaces rising vision-like from her watery bed, was, in origin, but a cluster of fisher-huts perched on piles in the shallow lagoons at the mouth of the Po. When the Spaniards captured Mexico, the city was then a second Venice. London has risen to its present eminence from a nucleus of rude pile-dwellings. In the case of this great city, traces of these structures have been found both near London Wall and at Southwark, for the Thames was formerly a less deep but a wider river than at present, and appears to have had a pile-dwelling population established on its shallows.

In a romantic Greek poem on Jason's Colchian expedition, Onomacritus takes his heroes over almost every part of the then known world, and in the course of their adventures in the Atlantic they pass an island named Iernè, *i.e.*, Ireland. The passage, however, in Aristotle (B.C. 384-322), in which he notices Iernè, bears, it is alleged, "the unquestionable stamp of a much more advanced stage of geographical knowledge than that of his age." Perhaps the earliest notice on which dependence can be placed is that by Eratosthenes (B.C. 276-196). Most of his works have been lost; some, however, of his references to Ireland have been preserved by Strabo, who maintains that he was so well acquainted with the western parts of Europe that he had determined the distance of Ireland from Gaul. Strabo (born B.C. 70), in describing the extent of the habitable world, considered that it commenced to the north of the mouth of the Borysthenes. This parallel, at the other extremity, passed to the north of Iernè. Little was known of the inhabitants of Iernè; they were reputed to be mere savages, addicted to cannibalism, and having no marriage ties. Solinus—who is mentioned by Servius, Macrobius, and Priscianus, as well as by Jerome, Ambrose, and

Augustin, enters into more details than any previous geographer. He wrote before the birth of our Lord :—

“Hibernia approaches to Britain in size; it is inhuman in the rough manners of its inhabitants; it is so luxuriant in its grass, that unless its cattle are now and again removed from their pasturage, satiety may cause danger to them. There is there no snake, and few birds; an inhospitable and warlike nation, the conquerors among them having first drunk the blood of their enemies, afterwards besmear their faces therewith; they regard right and wrong alike. Whenever a woman brings forth a male child, she puts his first food on the sword of her husband, and she lightly introduces the first *auspicium* of nourishment into his little mouth with the point of the sword; and with gentle vows she expresses a wish that he may never meet death otherwise than in war and amid wars. Those who attend to military costume ornament the hilts of their swords with the teeth of sea-monsters, which are as white as ivory, for the men glory in their weapons. No bee has been brought thither, and if anyone scatters dust, or pebbles brought from thence, among the hives in other countries, the swarms desert their combs. The sea that lies between this island and Britain is stormy and tempestuous during the whole year, nor is it navigable except for a few days in the summer season. They sail in wicker vessels, which they cover all round with ox-hides, and as long as the voyage continues, the navigators abstain from food. The breadth of the island is uncertain; that it extends twenty miles is the opinion of those who have calculated nearest the truth.”

The story about the bees, and the supposed breadth of Ireland excepted, Solinus is comparatively free from errors in this brief description, for it can readily be imagined that, to the coracle-voyaging native, the Irish Channel might well be regarded as “stormy and tempestuous during the whole year.” In the emblematic title-page of Sir James Ware’s second edition of “*De Hibernia et Antiquitatibus ejus Disquisitiones*,” published as late as the middle of the seventeenth century (1658), Hibernia is represented as a kind of Diana surrounded with the principal products of the kingdom, and in the foreground stands a large tree, swarming with bees, to indicate that the land was celebrated for the abundance of its wild honey (fig. 73). In popular belief, it is still considered extremely lucky to dream of these little emblems of industry and frugality, for their appearance implies good luck, prosperity, and happiness to the dreamer :—

“No more of fortune’s frown afraid,  
For everything in love and trade,  
Henceforth shall with him thrive.”



FIG. 73.—Hibernia surrounded with the principal products of the Kingdom. Title page of Sir James Ware's *De Hibernia et Antiquitatibus ejus Disquisitiones*. Second Ed., 1658.

When a swarm of bees suddenly quits a hive, it is a sign that death is hovering over the house, but the impending evil may be averted by the exorcism of the fairy doctor. It is not generally known that not only the sweet product of the insect, but the actual body of the bee itself, was formerly employed in therapeutics. Bees drowned in honey were recommended for strengthening the eyesight, for curing deafness, and for staying vomiting. The remedy was, however, deemed so violent in its workings that the curious injunction was laid on the practitioner that he should bind the patient, as otherwise he could not endure it. The following remedy is given by Celsus :—“ The bodies of bees taken newly from the comb and powdered and drunk with diarrhetic wine powerfully cures dropsy.”

A remarkable tradition, which depicts St. Gobnate as the patron of bees, was at one time current near Macroom, county Cork. A chief, on the morning of a battle, perceiving with dismay the inferiority in number of his followers compared with those of his adversaries, prayed to St. Gobnate for assistance. The good saint granted his request by turning a swarm of bees, close at hand, into armed soldiers, who issued from the hive in military array, ranged themselves in ranks, and followed their leader to victory. After the battle the victorious chief visited the spot from whence he had received such miraculous assistance, and found the rush-formed hive metamorphosed into a brass utensil. This article was formerly in the possession of the O'Hierlyhie family, and was held in great veneration by the peasantry of the district.

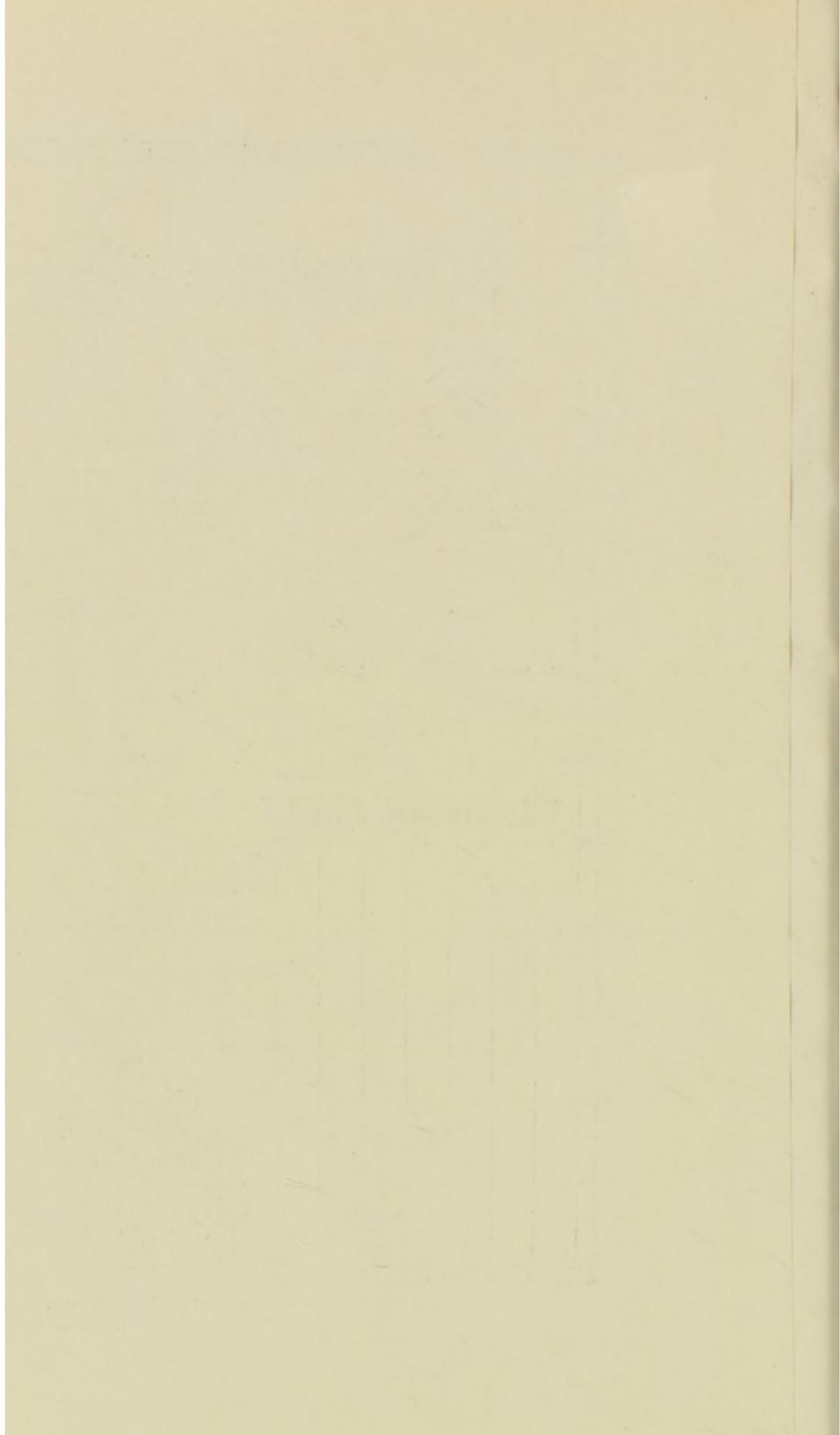
Pomponius Mela, who flourished in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, A.D. 41-54, appears to have extracted some of his information with regard to Ireland from Solinus, but he corrects his errors relative to the size of the island :—“ Beyond Britain lies Juverna, an island of nearly equal size, but oblong, with a coast at each side of equal extent, having a climate unfavourable for ripening grain, but so luxuriant in grasses, not merely palatable but even sweet, that the cattle in a very short time take sufficient feeding for the day, and if allowed to feed too long they would burst. Its inhabitants are wanting in every virtue, and totally destitute of piety.”

Pliny, who wrote about the same time as Pomponius Mela, stated that Ireland was about the same breadth as Britain, but two hundred miles shorter, and that it was distant thirty miles from the territory of the Silures.

Diodorus, who lived in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, writes that the most ferocious of the northern Gauls were stated to be “ cannibals, like the Britons who inhabit Erin.”

From an allusion in Pliny, it has been surmised that the





Romans possessed a map, or topography of Ireland. After their conquest of Britain, Ireland became better known to them. Intercourse of a more or less restricted character must have sprung up, for commerce, in olden as well as in modern days, was "the parent of geography." Whether commerce followed "the eagles," as trade now, it is alleged, follows "the flag," is a question open to abundant discussion; but Tacitus, in his life of Agricola, specially states that Ireland possessed a commerce superior to that of Britain, and that its harbours and estuaries were more frequented and better known to traders; also that there was very little difference between the soil and climate of Ireland and that of Britain.

Claudius Ptolemy who, in the second century, compiled his work on geography, which remained a standard text-book until the fifteenth century, is the only writer who has described the ports and inland places of Ireland with any exactitude. He essayed to systematize the result of ancient research, and although, at first sight, his map may appear grotesque, yet, if the feeble appliances which he had at his disposal be considered, the ingenuity displayed in overcoming their deficiencies should excite admiration. His information consists essentially of a table of latitudes and longitudes, evidently intended to serve as a sufficient guide for the construction of a map, without referring to any then existing charts.

It is strange that the designation Ivernia, as Ptolemy styles Ireland, differs more widely than that of Iernè, by which the island was first known to the Greeks, from the native name, Erin. Ireland, in Ptolemaic geography, is placed too much to the north, while Scotland has been made to bend towards the east, instead of to the north. The map is not far wrong as regards the length and breadth of Ireland, but it depicts the island as lying north-east and south-west, instead of north and south (fig. 74), whilst the outlines of the coast depart, in places, so far from the reality as to render the identification of many of the headlands very problematic. Had Ireland, however, been placed in its proper position, and Scotland given the proper direction, the approximate outline of Great Britain and Ireland would have been fairly represented. This bears out the hypothesis that Ptolemy's information was drawn from three separate maps which afforded to him no guide as to their mutual relations.

The eastern coast of Ireland must have been that best known to foreign merchants sailing for the port of Dublin, which, even at this period, appears to have been a place of importance. The first headland sighted would be Howth, of which the ancient Irish name was Ben-Edair. Opposite a town styled Eblana there is marked, on Ptolemy's map, an uninhabited island styled Edrus

(fig. 75), and connected as Howth (Ben-Edair) is to the mainland by low-lying ground, it is easy to understand how the geographer's informants mistook Howth for an island. Another adjoining island, designated Limnus, is probably Lambay. Eblana is clearly Dublin (Deblana) with the *d* softened or omitted. To the south

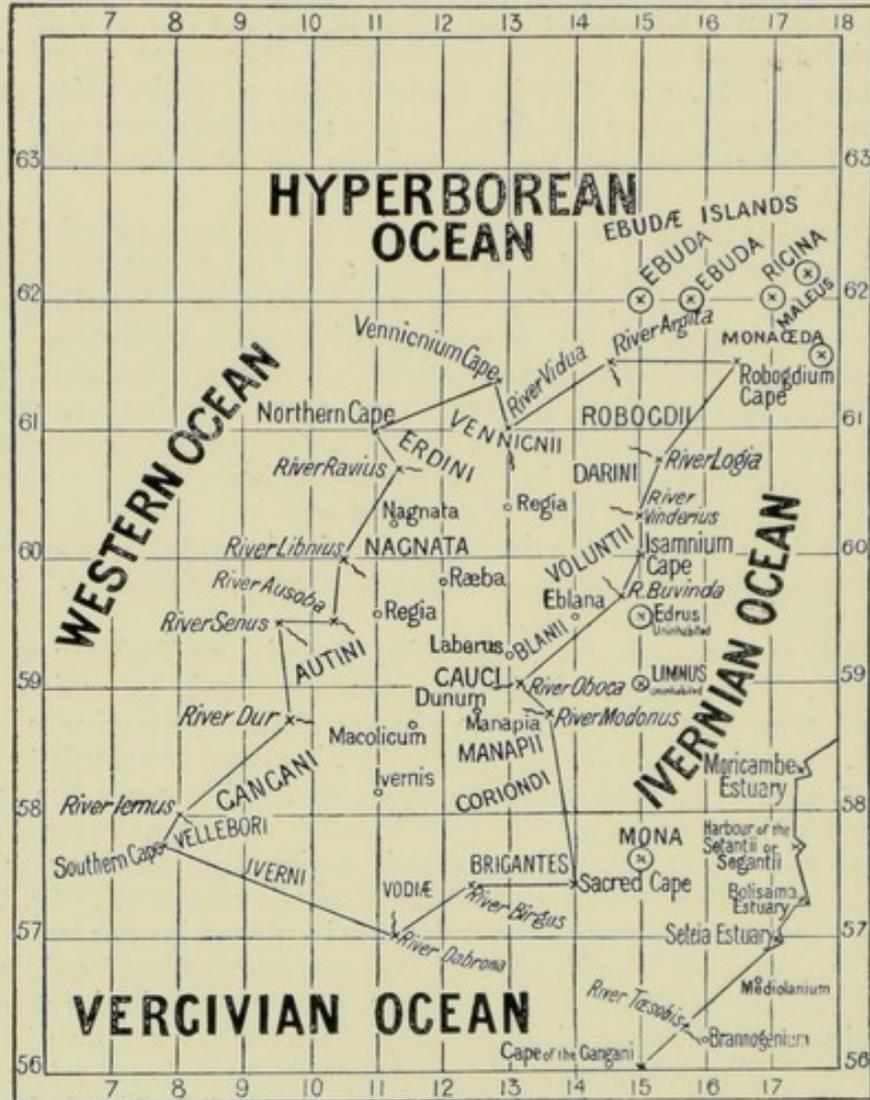


FIG. 75.

Ireland according to Ptolemaic Geography. Drawn by Henry Bradley, and reproduced from *The Archaeologia*, vol. xlviii.

of this city of Eblana, there appears the river Aboca, which points to its being the Avonmore in Wicklow; but not content with its identification, the stream has been recently named the Avoca. Ptolemy places a town called Dunum on or near this river. The locality has not been identified, but the name is

evidently derived from the Celtic designation of a fortress, *i.e.*, *doun*. The river Buvinda, to the north of Dublin, is clearly the Boyne. The Vinderius, from its position, appears to be Strangford Lough, whilst the Logia may be identified with the river Lagan at Belfast.

The northern coast of Ireland is the one most accurately represented, and its localities are the most easily recognizable. Robogdium appears to be Fair Head; the river Argita, the Bann; the Vidua, the Foyle; Vennicium, Malin Head; and the Northern Cape may be the Bloody Foreland.

On the west coast the identification of localities is surrounded with greater difficulties. The river Ravius may be the Erne; the Libnius the river of Sligo, and Nagnata, either Sligo or Drumcliff; the Ausoba, the river Moy; the Senus corresponds in name, though scarcely in position, with the Shannon; whilst the Southern Cape is doubtless one of the headlands of Kerry.

On the southern coast the localities are almost as clearly defined as on the northern. The Dabrona answers in position to the Blackwater; the Birgus, both in position and name, to the Barrow; the Sacred Cape appears to be Carnsore Point.

O'Donovan alludes to the ancient names of Irish rivers, and his opinion on the subject is here given, not alone as bearing upon the identification of the names, but as showing in what light this celebrated Irish scholar regarded some of the old Irish writers. Quoting a poem preserved in several mss., he states that in it we are given the interesting information that there were ten rivers in Erin at the time of Partholon's arrival. "Now," he continues, "though we know that this poem is undoubtedly a fabrication, still it is very ancient; while therefore we reject that absurd part which would give us to understand that the river Liffey is more ancient than the Shannon, we retain it as the testimony of an Irish bard, that such were the names of ten considerable and well-known rivers in Ireland at the time he flourished; and when he either fabricated the story, or drew it from other historical monuments then existing, or founded it upon foolish traditions, the like of which are to be found among every nation, and upon which the commencement of the history of most nations is founded." O'Donovan then proceeds to identify them, and states by what names they are now known. *Laoui* is, he points out, the Lee. *Banna* and *Bearbha* are anglicised Bann and Barrow. *Saimer* is now styled the Erne. *Sligeach*, *Modhom*, *Muadh* are anglicised Sligo, Mourne, and Moy. *Fionn*, now properly written Finn, is in the County of Donegal. *Liffe* is "the Liffey." The identification of one river, the *Buas*, alone remains doubtful.

The towns situated in the interior of the country, as given

by Ptolemy, as well as his enumeration of tribal territories, need be but briefly noticed, as they have not been identified, at least with any unanimous assent. Places situated far inland, and probably never visited by foreign traffickers, would be by them, pronounced in a more incorrect form than those at which they had landed. This would fully account for the fairly successful identification of localities along the littoral. But even with regard to this identification it must be admitted that the conclusions of recent authorities of eminence are by no means unanimous.

Three at least of the tribes who held the eastern coast, the Brigantes, the Manapii, and the Voluntii, were undoubtedly colonies from the opposite shores of Britain. There were also territories inhabited by the Coriondi, the Cauci, and the Darini.

On the northern coast dwelt the Robogdii in Antrim and Derry, and the Venniconii in the present county Donegal.

Westward were the Erdini; next to them the Nagnatæ, probably in the county Sligo; farther south came the Autini, the Gangani and the Vellebori.

The south-western littoral, together with a great portion of the interior of the country, was inhabited by the Iverni, who gave their name to the entire island.

Now it is almost self-evident that these various tribes, governed by different chiefs and belonging to distinct races, must have differed widely in manners and comparative civilization. Thus we should not be justified in applying to them, individually, the uncomplimentary notices of these inhabitants of Ireland, in general, which are to be found in ancient Latin and Greek writers.

The information collected and tabulated by Ptolemy was probably known, before his time, to traders belonging to, or frequenting, the western coasts of Caledonia and of Britain; yet it is strange that no mention is made of Tara, although two cities named Regia and about eight other towns are enumerated. It is alleged that all vestiges of buildings, or earthworks, now or formerly existing on the Hill of Tara, may be classed under two distinct periods, both being within the limits of the Christian era. The most important period, and that to which, it is thought, all the remains now observable belong, is in the third century. Hence it has been concluded that, before this date, Tara was not distinguished as a regal seat, or city, and therefore was omitted from the map of Ptolemy. From traces of ancient remains at Tara it would appear that the original structures were altogether composed of earth and wood, and judging from their uniform character, they were probably erected about the same time, and by the same people.

In the year A.D. 82 the Roman general Agricola encamped on a portion of the Scottish littoral which faced Ireland. He appears to have entertained the idea of the conquest of Ireland, on account of its supposed strategic importance; for the Romans, according to Tacitus, erroneously considered it to be equi-distant from Britain, Gaul and Spain. It was therefore important as a connecting link in the consolidation of these provinces. From merchants well acquainted with the coasts and harbours, Agricola obtained information respecting the country he intended to invade, and like a very old edition of an old story, a fugitive Irish chief sought an asylum in the Roman camp. Under a show of friendship the politic general detained him to be used, as a fitting tool, when occasion served. Agricola was confident of success; he declared that a single legion, with auxiliaries, would suffice for the conquest, a conquest that would, according to the Roman commander, greatly contribute to bridle the stubborn spirit of the Britons, who then would see, with dismay, the Roman arms universally triumphant and liberty totally extinguished around their coasts.

It is useless now to speculate as to whether Agricola's estimate of the small force requisite to subdue Ireland was, or was not, correct, nor need national pride be wounded at the low estimate he made of Irish valour, for there can be little doubt that had the Romans landed they would have erected fortified camps and have constructed roads as they advanced; they would have made friends of some tribes, have employed them as auxiliaries, and used them against their fellow-countrymen. By pursuing this, their usual policy, the Romans would have subdued the island in a much shorter period even than that spent by the Anglo-Normans in their conquest; for although the first Anglo-Norman invasion took place in 1169, and general submission was given by the Irish chiefs to Henry II. in 1172, the subjugation was merely nominal, and not a reality.

Agricola, however, was unable to bring his plans for the conquest of Ireland to maturity, owing to an invasion of the Romano-British provinces by the northern tribes, which compelled him to turn his arms in a different direction. Some few writers have challenged the almost universally received opinion that Agricola did not invade Ireland, and assert that Tacitus, in his life of Agricola, clearly alludes to it. The passage cited by them is as follows:—"In the fifth year of his conquests Agricola crossed in the first ship and subdued in a series of victories, tribes hitherto unknown." The contention is that the sea which Agricola crossed was the Irish Channel, and the unknown tribes he subdued were Irishmen. Of course all depends upon the identity of the sea crossed by the Roman general and his position at the

time. A correct view of this demonstrates, however, the utter improbability of the invasion of Ireland.

Towards the close of his fourth year's campaign (A.D. 81), Agricola decided to secure, by a chain of forts, the portion of north Britain which he had subdued. Tacitus tells us that the place he selected for that purpose was where the waters of the Clyde and Forth are only hindered from meeting by a comparatively narrow neck of land. On the south side of this isthmus the entire country had been evacuated by the enemy, who were driven, as it were, into another island. Agricola's base of operations for his fifth campaign (A.D. 82) was thus evidently the chain of forts between the Clyde and Forth. The Irish having made frequent incursions into Britain, it became necessary as he advanced to secure his rear from their attack which, if successful, even only on one point, would cause the British tribes in his rear to revolt and cut him off from southern Britain.

Advancing on the western side of Britain, Agricola had, in person, examined all the firths and estuaries. From this it is evident that he had no fleet accompanying his army. This is further confirmed by his invasion of Anglesea where his troops swam the Menai Straits, taking the Britons completely by surprise as they had "expected the arrival of a fleet and a formal invasion by sea." This occurred in A.D. 78, and Tacitus does not refer to the fleet during the years 79, 80, or 81; it seems, during the above period, to have been stationed at its usual headquarters, on the south-east coast of England. An invasion of Ireland would have required a large fleet; and it is not until Agricola's sixth campaign in A.D. 83, on the eastern side of Caledonia, that Tacitus mentions the fleet, when he says:—"Agricola ordered his ships to sail across the gulf (Bodotria, the Forth) and gain some knowledge of these new regions. The fleet, now acting for the first time in concert with the land forces, proceeded in sight of the army." Tacitus then states that, at the sight of the Roman fleet, the Britons were utterly confounded, and were at length convinced that every resource was cut off, since the sea, which had always been their refuge, was now commanded by their invaders. And from his stand-point Tacitus was right; for, from this out, Britain became completely subjected to the power of Imperial Rome. With their independence the populations lost their nationality. The various nations who had fought so bravely for their freedom, robbed now of their individuality, were gradually transformed into Roman subjects; the vast majority into mere Roman slaves.

Thus it is apparent that the Britons had seen nothing of Agricola's fleet in his fifth campaign. This could hardly have

been the case had he embarked a large force for the invasion of Ireland. There still, however, remains the statement by Tacitus that Agricola, although his fleet did not act with his army, crossed over from somewhere to somewhere in "the first ship." The generally accepted and most likely explanation as to this is, that Agricola crossed the Firth of Clyde in the first Roman ship that had ever performed such a voyage, the troops probably marching round by land, or crossing the firth on small rafts or extemporised vessels.

A few writers go so far as to assert that the Romans, profiting by the after-tranquillity in Britain, crossed the channel and subdued Ireland in part. It appears as if the statements of this alleged conquest were based upon a claim of nominal sovereignty, perhaps through the submission of the fugitive Irish chieftain before mentioned, whom the politic Agricola kept in his camp, as well as on a passage in one of Juvenal's satires, written about A.D. 97, wherein the poet describes the conquests of his countrymen:—"We have indeed carried our arms beyond the shores of Ireland, and the lately subdued Orkneys and the Britons contented with a short night."\* Juvenal speaks, however, not of the conquest of Ireland, but of the manner in which the Roman eagles were pushed beyond Ireland northward into the island regions where, in summer, the night time was of comparatively short duration. There is, at any rate, no notice of such an expedition in any classic writer, nor has proof of their occupation of the country ever been brought to light. Everything tends to show that no military occupation of Ireland by Rome ever took place; nearly all Roman antiques yet discovered are of late date, small, of intrinsic value, and just such articles as a piratical band would carry off on account of their portability. If Agricola had invaded Ireland and failed, would not Domitian have been the first to have had him disgraced, and probably put to death? Had Agricola on the other hand successfully effected such an invasion would it not have been recorded, and would it not have added a new title to the emperor?

The close of the second and the commencement of the third century was the palmy period of Roman sway in Britain, then the richest and most flourishing province of the empire, for the abundance of its mineral wealth, the luxuriant crops produced by a virgin soil, and the discovery of clays suitable to the manufacture of pottery, attracted numbers of artisans from the Continent, and temples, palaces, villas, baths, and theatres arose all

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\* " . . . Arma quidem ultra  
Littora Juvernae promovimus, et modo captas  
Orcadas ac minimâ contentos nocte, Britannos."

over the face of the country.\* It is but reasonable to suppose that this wealthy and mercantile population maintained a traffic with Ireland, and that some of its inhabitants visited our country as traders, handicraftsmen, or physicians, seeking an opening in a new land. The interesting discovery, in the year 1842, of a Roman medicine stamp, on the rising ground above the village of Golden Bridge in the county Tipperary, is somewhat in favour of this theory. It is alleged, by some antiquarians, that stamps of this class were not employed by regular practitioners, but by empiric medicine vendors to impress their wares, which may be styled the "patent medicines" of the Romans. If this be a correct view of the case, the discovery of the stamp implies the probable compounding of the medicament in Ireland, and the Romano-Hibernian patent medicine seller, Marcus Iuventius Tutianus, probably made a living in Tipperary by the manufacture and sale of his salve "*ad veteres cicatrices.*" Numerous medicine stamps have been found on the Continent and in Great Britain, and have been the subject of much literary comment. It is remarkable that in all, or nearly all, the examples that have as yet been brought to light, the diseases, for which they are the specific, are uniformly those of the eyes; hence some writers designate them "oculist's stamps." Disease of the eyes appears to have been extremely prevalent amongst the Romans, and throughout the Western Provinces, probably attributable to some circumstances connected with the then diet or manner of living of the population. For these ailments of the eyes an immense number of *collyria*, or ointments, composed of a great number of ingredients were compounded. These collyria were sometimes named from their original inventors, from the characteristics of the mixture, from their colour, their smell, or some distinguishing feature. Horace thus alludes to his use of a black (or dark-coloured) eye ointment:

"Hic oculis ego nigra meis collyria lippus  
Illinere."†

The medicine stamp found near the village of Golden Bridge, county of Tipperary, here reproduced full size (fig. 76), is formed of smooth, hard, fine-grained, light-grey slate. The inscription indicates the name of the empiric with the quality of the remedy:—

MARCI IVVENTII TUTIANI  
DIAMYSUS AD VETERES CICATRICES.

\* Much interesting information concerning this period is contained in a work entitled *The Celt, The Roman, and The Saxon*, by T. Wright, M.A., 2nd ed., London, 1860.

† "Here I, blear-eyed, (began) to daub black collyrium on my eyes."

A little indistinct mark at the close of the first line resembles a diminutive *c*. If regarded as a letter it may signify the word *collyrium*. These quack drugs were doubtless moulded in the form of paste with white of egg, or some adhesive compound, and kept thus in a solid form to be liquefied when required for use, the stamp being impressed upon



FIG. 76.

Roman Medicine Stamp found near the village of Golden Hill, Co. Tipperary; letters in intaglio and inverted. Full size From *The Archaeological Journal*.

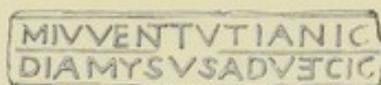


FIG. 77.

Impression produced by Roman Medicine Stamp. Full size. From *The Archaeological Journal*.

the medicine just before it had attained the last stage of solidification, and the stamp being engraved in intaglio, with the letters inverted, as shown in the wood-cut (fig. 76), a durable and good impression was doubtless readily produced (fig. 77).

That many Romano-British visited Ireland is extremely probable, that a few made their home and died in the island is equally so, but we cannot expect, nor indeed do we find, any traces of even an insignificant Roman colonization. The discovery of Roman coins in Ireland is comparatively exceptional, although they are found in abundance in Britain, more especially in the vicinity of the sites of Roman towns, military stations, and villas. In Ireland the only really important find was made near Coleraine; it consisted of 1506 silver coins and upwards of 200 ounces of silver fragments and ingots, stamped with the names of Roman mint-masters, about 2000 articles in all. The money presented specimens of coinage from A.D. 363 to 410, so that it must have been committed to the earth after that date; probably about the time of the evacuation of Britain by the Romans. A few of the fragments deserve notice. Fig. 78, No. 1, formed portion of the ornamented silver lid of a small box, and bears traces of gilding. No. 2 is a narrow plate of silver, also gilt. No. 3 is another fragment carefully engraved. No. 4 is one of two hammered and inscribed portions of ingots, and bears the lettering—

EXOPATRICII,

i.e. *ex officinâ Patricii*, "from the manufactory of Patricius." (It is left open for some enthusiastic writer to enunciate the theory that this relic may have emanated from the silver workshop of the national saint.) Other inscribed ingots of the same shape,

but larger, only retain a small portion of the lettering. No. 5, evidently part of the lid of a flagon, bears a human head in profile, with ornaments, the style of which shows the workmanship to have been influenced by Egyptian ideas. No. 6 was, like the foregoing, originally gilt.

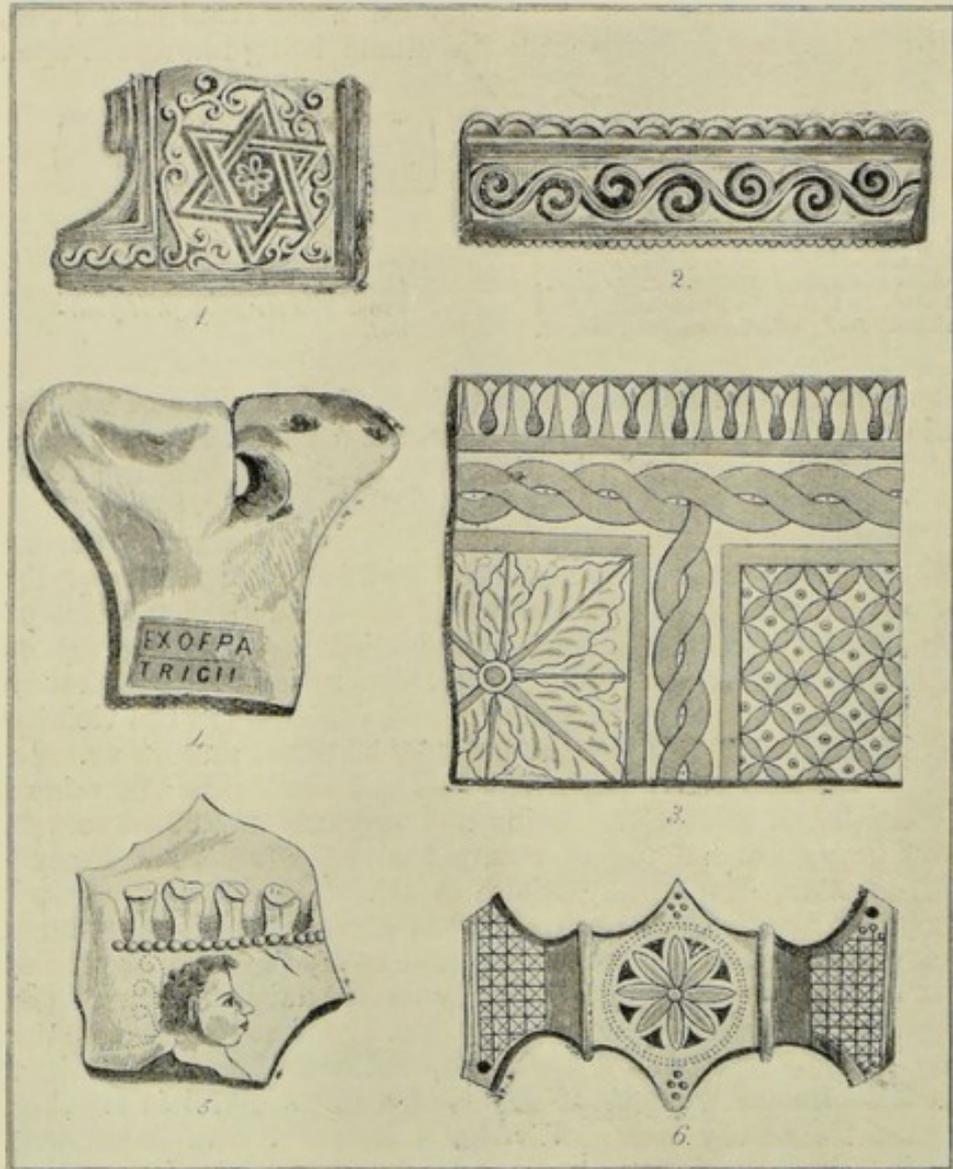


FIG. 78.

Roman Antiques found near Coleraine. About half real size. Reproduced from the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*.

From the character of this treasure it would appear to have been a forgotten deposit of some Irish freebooters. The coins that came under the writer's observation appear to have never

been in circulation, the impressions being as distinct as on newly-minted sixpences.

The poet Claudian thus extols the success of Stilicho in repelling the conjoint Irish and Caledonian attacks on the Roman settlements in Britain:—"By him," says the poet, speaking in the person of Britannia, "was I protected when the Scot moved all Iernè against me, and the sea foamed with hostile oars."\*

And again: "Nor did he (Stilicho) under a false name, conquer the Picts, and having followed the Scoti (Irish) with his roving sword, he cleft the northern waves with daring oars."†

From another of the poet's eulogies, it would appear that the fame acquired by a Roman legion, which guarded the northern frontier of Britain, against the inroads of the Picts and their Irish allies, procured for it the distinction of being summoned, by Stilicho, to the defence of Rome against the Goths:—

"There arrived also the legion spread over the furthestmost Briton,  
Which bridles the ferocious Scot and examines on the dying Pict  
The hideous figures punctured by the steel."‡

Other Roman antiques, which have been found from time to time in Ireland, are few in number, and of an unimportant character, such as might have been the result of traffic with the Romans. In the same way, the discovery of small hoards of Saxon coins is of by no means rare occurrence, being the result of barter, or of marauding expeditions to the English coast.

The Saxons also seem not to have been backward in pillaging their neighbours; for, in an Irish MS. entitled *Chronicon Scotorum*, their first descent on the Irish littoral is noted as having occurred in the year 434. This early date may be accounted for by expeditions made from temporary settlements on the islands of the north-west of Scotland. In the "Annals of Ulster" we learn that, in 471, "Ireland was plundered a second time by the Saxons."

The fact of the discovery of a Roman coin is of little importance in itself, as a single coin might be accidentally dropped and

\* "Totam cum Scotus Iernen,  
Movit et infesto spumavit remige Tethys,"  
which Camden thus freely translates:—

"When Scots came thundering from the Irish shores,  
And th' ocean trembled, struck with hostile oars."

† "Nec falso nomine Pictos  
Edomuit, Scotumque vago mucrone secutus,  
Fregit Hyperboreas remis audacibus undas."

‡ "Venit et extremis Legio prætenta Britannis,  
Quæ Scoto dat fræna truci, ferroque notatas  
Perlegit exanimis Picto moriente figuras."

*De Bello Getico.*

lost by some collector ; but large deposits cannot thus be accounted for ; probably in times of turbulence they may have been placed for safety where they were long afterwards discovered.

James Carruthers describes the discovery of a cist, containing a skeleton, accompanied, as he thought, with Roman antiques ; but these appear to have been all of purely native manufacture (see fig. 79). A Roman coin is stated to have been found in the grave, but was not seen by an antiquary. There is nothing distinctively Roman in the remains (except the alleged discovery of the coin), nothing but what has been commonly found in Irish, British, as well as in Saxon sepulchres. About the year 1835, workmen employed on the north side of Bray Head met with several human skeletons placed in graves side by side, and one or more Roman copper coins lay on or beside the breast, of each skeleton. Of these coins, some bore the image and superscription of Adrian, and others those of Trajan ; several of them were greatly corroded, and altogether illegible.

As the Romans never, it is believed, formed a settlement in Ireland, the question arises, how came the coins found in this locality, and under such circumstances ? It has been suggested that the bodies may have been portion of the crew of a Roman galley lost on the shores of Wicklow. Some of the survivors performed the funeral rites of their shipmates ; for amongst the Romans it was deemed an act of great impiety to leave a corpse unburied. The coins, it is presumed, were the fee (the *oblatus*) designed to propitiate Charon, the grim ferryman, as the shades of those who had not the proper toll, as well as those whose bodies remained unburied, were condemned to wander a hundred years on the banks of the Styx.

Roman coins are not unfrequently found in Anglo-Saxon interments in England. In some instances only a single coin occurs, as though the deceased or his relatives had retained the old Roman custom.

It is a curious fact that small coins are even yet, in some localities in Ireland, cast into the new-made grave when the coffin is lowered. In the year 1870, at the funeral of a fisherman from the Isle of Skye, buried in the cemetery of the old Collegiate Church at Howth, his countrymen carried out this custom. The following quaint Irish proverb is a relic of paganism, analogous to the Roman custom of placing a small coin with the corpse to pay Charon his toll :—“ No man ever went to hell without sixpence at the time of his death.” A humorous and mock imprecation, the employment of which is generally confined to the fair sex, appears to be derived from this ancient custom, when a country lass exclaims : “ May the devil go with you and sixpence, and then you will want neither money nor company.”

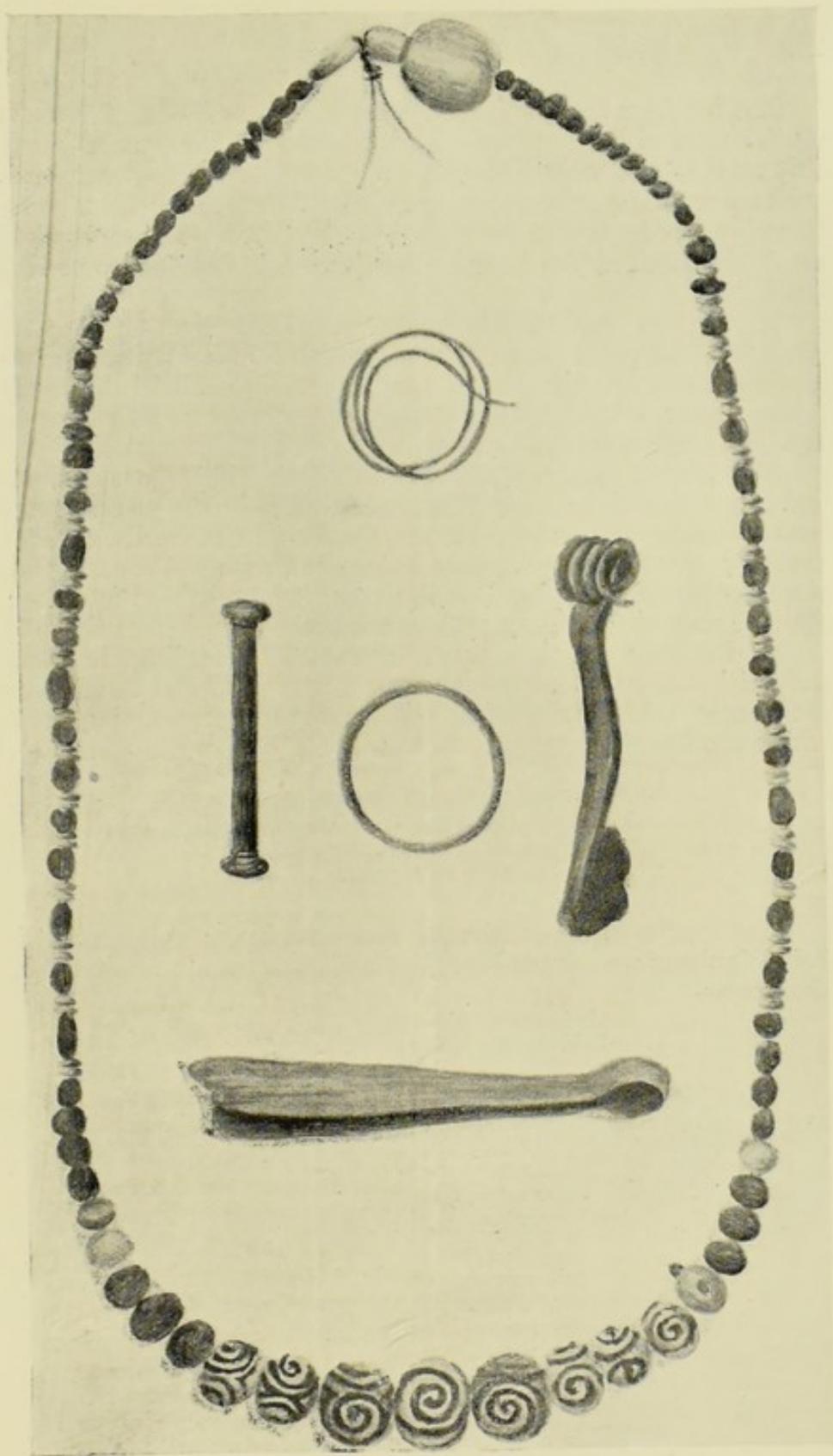


FIG. 79.—Alleged Roman Antiques found near Donaghadee, Co. Down, about the year 1850. Slightly less than real size. (*The remains appear to be of purely native manufacture.*)

Not far from the Pointe Du Raz, in the Baie des Trepasses on the coast of Brittany, so wild is the sea that there are many shipwrecks, and unburied ghosts, "weeping in great anguish, walk up and down the shores of this bay." It must be a gruesome locality to live in, for "often the skeletons of these wrecked creatures knock at the doors of the fishermen's cabins, to beg for burial."

Horace, in one of his odes, represents the philosopher Archytos, the pupil of Plato, who perished in a shipwreck, imploring the compassion of the passing sailor to consign his body to the earth:—"But, sailor, do not unkindly refuse to bestow on my bones and unburied head a particle of the shifting sand."\*

Then, as nowadays, there were unbelievers in popular customs and popular religion, for Virgil exclaims:—"Do you suppose that the ashes of the dead or the shades of the buried care for that?"† Or again, "Whether corruption dissolve the carcase or whether the funeral pile, it matters not";‡ and there is quite a catholic ring in "he is covered by the heavens who has no urn."§

In the *Rig Veda*, a work composed, according to some authorities, about B.C. 2400, there is a hymn of great beauty and tenderness, still employed at Hindoo funeral ceremonies, from which the following verse is taken:—

"Open thyself, O Earth, and press not heavily;  
Be easy of access and of approach to him,  
As mother with her robe, her child,  
So do thou cover him, O Earth."

The reverse of the sentiment expressed in an epitaph to Sir John Vanbrugh, celebrated for the massiveness of his architectural designs:—

"Lie heavy on him, Earth, for he  
Laid many a heavy load on thee."

When we consider the various modes in which Roman coins and antiques may have found their way into Ireland, the wonder is, not that so many, but that so few have been dug up. Records of their discovery are, nevertheless, so exceptional as to demand a strict investigation into each fresh instance of their

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\* "At tu, nauta, vagae ne parce malignus arenae  
Ossibus et capiti inhumato  
Particulam dare."

† "Id cinerem aut manes credis curare sepultos?"

‡ "Tabesne cadavera solvat  
An rogos, haud refert."

§ "Coelo tegitur qui non habet urnam."

alleged occurrence. Should the story be told by a dealer in Irish antiquities, it will probably originate in his desire to enhance the market value of the coins he has for sale in the eyes of the credulous purchaser. One hundred Roman coins were stated to have been unearthed in a rath close to the Church of Killanummery, in the County Leitrim. On investigation, the specimens produced, but seven in number, were small-sized third-brass Roman coins, a collection such as a tyro in numismatics might have purchased for a trifling sum in any English dealer's shop.

Although the Romans made no settlements, yet, in early Christian times, many of them came to Ireland, and they have left their impress in a few local names still in existence: all these, however, are apparently of ecclesiastical origin.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ADVENT OF ST. PATRICK—SIDE-LIGHTS ON PAGANISM.

Emigration from Ireland to Scotland—The Countries change name—Religion of the Ancient Irish—Slight difference between the Religious Worship of the inhabitants of Ireland and that of Britain and of Gaul—The Druids—Great spiritual and temporal Power wielded by them—Their Teaching—Their Doctrines—Their Gods and Goddesses—An opposing Religion—Deified Mortals—A species of Ancestor Worship—The Fairies—Originally of human, now of diminutive Stature—Druidism never thoroughly established in Ireland—Trade in Slaves—St Patrick's Mission due to this Commerce—He lands in Ireland—Goes to the residence of his former master—His appearance at Tara—Lights the Pascal Fire—Incurs the Penalty of Death by so doing—Is summoned before the King—Expounds the new Religion—Contest between Christianity and Druidism—St. Patrick makes at first but few Converts—Wild Legends relating to his Mission—St. Patrick's belief in the efficacy of the Incantations and Magic of the Druids—His alleged employment of the Shamrock as a Symbol of the Trinity—Serpent banishing by Pagans—By St. Patrick and other Saints—Incredible accounts of St. Patrick's Miracles—Importation of Pagan Ideas and Observances into Christianity—Centres of Druidical Cult survived into Christian Times—Druidical Rites of Purification—By Fire—By Water.

OROSIUS, writing about the commencement of the fifth century, describes Ireland as inhabited by the Scoti, or Scots; and if a conclusion can be drawn from St. Patrick's authentic writings, the designation was confined to the ruling class, the bulk of the people being styled Hiberionaces or Hiberneginæ.

Bede mentions the migration from Ireland into Caledonia that occasioned the subsequent change in name of the latter country, and states that the Scots issuing from Hibernia, took possession, "either by friendship or by the sword," of the districts which they still retained in Bede's time. The descendants of the Caledonian Scots knew of and acknowledged this fact long ages after. "There is a double cause why I should be careful of the welfare of that people" (*i.e.* the Irish), said James I. to the agents from the Irish, who waited on him in 1614, "first as King of England, by reason of the long possession the crown of

England hath had in that land, and also as King of Scotland, for the ancient Kings of Scotland are descended from the Kings of Ireland; so as I have an old title as King of Scotland, therefore you shall not doubt to be relieved when you complain."

Aidan, King of Dalriada, a descendant of Niall of the Nine Hostages, was consecrated, according to tradition, upon the Stone of Fate, long afterwards transferred to Westminster Abbey, where it now serves as the coronation stone. Queen Victoria is descended from this Scottic or Hibernian Prince Aidan, and through him from Niall, head King of Ireland, about the year A.D. 400. Aidan's descendants continued to reign over Dalriada till the middle of the ninth century, when a prince of this line united many discordant elements under one rule. The male line of this dynasty ended with Alexander III. It was, however, succeeded by the dynasties of Bruce and Stuart descended in the female line. From these branches, the blood of Aidan and of Niall was transmitted to the royal family which now rules over Great Britain and Ireland.

With regard to the first introduction of Christianity into Ireland, there can be little doubt but that there existed two or three Patricks, whose lives have been worked into a strange *olla-podrida*. References by Tacitus, by Cæsar, and by St. Patrick (or one of the St. Patricks) may be quoted as descriptive of the religion, or of the religious system the St. Patricks overthrew.

Tacitus, in his life of Agricola, says that "the manners and genius of the inhabitants (of Ireland) differ little from those of Britain." This sentence seems to imply or connote that the religion of the two countries was identical, an assumption which is corroborated by references to Druids and Druidical worship in some existing Irish mss.

Cæsar states that the institution of the Druids in Gaul "is supposed to have come originally from Britain, whence it passed into Gaul; and even at this day, such as are desirous of being perfect in it, travel thither (*i.e.* to Britain) for instruction." Thus we arrive at an approximate idea of the religious opinions of the Irish some centuries or so before the introduction of Christianity, and the heathen cult could have changed but little in the interval.

The Druids (so Cæsar states) taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of the metempsychosis. The early Fathers of the Church testify to the extensive prevalence of this latter belief in the then current Christianity, for they frequently condemned it as a heresy. Origen, in his *De Principiis*, plainly departs from the then orthodox faith in this particular, for he holds that the souls of men existed in a previous state, and that

their imprisonment, in material bodies, was a punishment for sins which they had formerly committed. He, however, holds those to be in error who quoted the speaking of Balaam's ass as a proof that the soul which inhabited the donkey was human, for he thinks that human souls cannot fall so as to become animals:—"Angels may sink to be men or demons, and the latter may rise to be men or angels." Origen, who lived in the third century, is, in a general way, regarded as orthodox (*i.e.* believing as you believe), his defence of Christianity having probably condoned his heterodoxy (believing as your opponent believes) upon this point. His belief certainly seems to approximate to that attributed to Buddha in the East, and Plato in the West. He quotes Scriptural authority for his contention; he was a man of talent and learning, and quite as competent to form an opinion on the subject as other Fathers of the Church.

Expressions in his *De Principiis* exposed him to much criticism and many anathemas from his contemporaries. The points in which it is alleged that he "plainly departed from the orthodox faith" are as follows:—That the souls of men had existed in a previous state; that the human soul of Christ had previously existed; that our material bodies shall be transformed into ethereal ones at the resurrection; that all men, and even devils shall be finally restored. In fact he was a too tolerant Father for the age in which he lived. There are analogies and coincidences in all religions; thus the first missionaries in the East saw in the Buddhist ritual a replica of their own; whilst the Spanish conquerors of Central American civilization observed in it many things which they considered to be devilish imitations of Christian rites.

In Gaul the Druids offered various kinds of sacrifices to the gods whom Cæsar unfortunately clothes in classic names. The natives of Gaul worshipped Mercury as their chief God, the inventor of all the arts, and the promoter of mercantile affairs, who appears to equate with the Irish god, Manannan Mac Lir; next came Apollo, who cured diseases—he is the Irish god, Dianket; Mars presided over war—probably the Irish god, Neit, Ned, or Nudd, to whom was offered what they took by arms. "To this last (*i.e.* Mars), when they resolve upon a battle, they (so Cæsar states) commonly devote the spoil." Minerva presided over art—probably the Irish Aynia. According to Cæsar, the Druids taught the people in Gaul pretty much the same notions about the attributes of the gods as were prevalent amongst other nations at the time. In the Irish Pantheon, however, as is now known to us, all appears to be confusion, there is no Jupiter as in the Gaulish system; there is apparently,

as in early Irish political history, no acknowledged ruler, but "gods meet gods and jostle in the dark."

It is best to give *verbatim* Cæsar's account of the power of the Druids, and the manner in which they imparted instruction; this will make clear how great was the power claimed and exercised by the pagan priesthood:—

"The Druids preside in matters of religion, have the care of public and private sacrifices, and interpret the will of the gods. They have the direction and education of the youth, by whom they are held in great honour. In almost all controversies, whether public or private, the decision is left to them; and if any crime is committed, any murder perpetrated, if any dispute arises touching an inheritance, or the limits of adjoining estates, in all such cases they are the supreme judges. They decree rewards and punishments; and if anyone refuses to submit to their sentence, whether magistrate or private man, they interdict him the sacrifices. This is the greatest punishment that can be inflicted among the Gauls, because such as are under this prohibition are considered as impious and wicked; all men shun them, and decline their conversation and fellowship, lest they should suffer from the contagion of their misfortunes. They can neither have recourse to the law for justice, nor are capable of any public office."

In the eyes of any man of reflection, excommunication is as palpably absurd as it is wicked, but to ignorant and superstitious people it is no mere *brutum fulmen*; even at the present day it holds the first and most formidable place with the uneducated, and thus what was customary 2000 years ago with the Druidical priesthood is customary nowadays. A feeling of amusement is occasioned by the daring presumption in each religious persuasion of a small clique of mere mortals attempting to arrogate to themselves the attributes of the Deity, and assuming the position of arbitrators of the fate of any particular individual, or of any number of people collectively who, according to their good will, shall, or shall not, enjoy happiness or reward beyond the grave.

Cæsar states that "the Druids are all under one chief, who possesses the supreme authority in that body. Upon his death if anyone remarkably excels the rest he succeeds; but if there are several candidates of equal merit, the affair is determined by plurality of suffrages, sometimes they even have recourse to arms before the election can be brought to an issue. . . . *The Druids never go to war, are exempted from taxes and military services, and enjoy all manner of immunities. These mighty encouragements induce multitudes of their own accord to follow that profession; and many are sent by their parents and relations. They are taught to repeat a*

great many verses by heart, and often spend twenty years upon this institution; for it is unlawful to commit their statutes to writing, though in other matters, whether public or private, they make use of Greek characters. They seem to follow this method for two reasons: (1) to hide their mysteries from the knowledge of the vulgar; and (2) to exercise the memory of their scholars, which would be apt to lie neglected had they letters to trust to, as we find is often the case. . . . They teach likewise many things relating to the stars and their motions, the magnitude of the world and our earth; the nature of things, and the power and prerogatives of the immortal gods. . . . In threatening distempers and the eminent dangers of war, they make no scruple to sacrifice men, or engage themselves by vow to such sacrifices, in which they make use of the ministry of the Druids; for it is a prevalent opinion among them that nothing but the life of a man can atone for the life of a man, insomuch that they have established even public sacrifices of this kind. Some prepare huge colossuses of osier-twigs into which they put men alive, and setting fire to them, those within expire amidst the flames. They prefer for victims such as have been convicted of theft, robbery, or other crimes, believing them the most acceptable to the gods; but when real criminals are wanting, the innocent are often made to suffer."

The Celtic word for Druid, *i.e.*, *druí* (*dree*), takes a "d" in the end of its oblique cases (gen., *druad*). Both Greek and Latin borrowed this word from the Celtic, and through them it has found its way into English in the oblique form, Druid. "Notwithstanding the long lapse of time since the extinction of Druidism, the word 'Druid' is still a living word in the Irish language. Even in some places where the language is lost the word is remembered, for I," remarks Dr. Joyce, "have repeatedly heard the English-speaking people of the south apply the term *shoundhree* (*scan-druí*, old 'Druid') to any crabbed, cunning, old-fashioned looking fellow."

The term "Druid" is perpetuated in the names of several localities—Loughnashandree, "the lake of the old Druids," lies near the head of the harbour of Ardgroom; the ancient name of Red Hill, near Skreen, county Sligo, was Knocknadrooa, the "hill of the Druids." A well, not far from the village of Freshford, county Kilkenny, is styled Tobernadree, "the well of the Druids." Loughnadrooa, three miles west of Lough Derg in Donegal, signifies "the lake of the Druids." In the parish of Clogherny, in Tyrone, there is a townland called Killadroy, "the Druid's wood." A point of land in the Island of Achill is named Gobnadruy, "the Druid's point"; whilst Derrydruel, near Dunglow in Donegal, means "the Druid's oak-wood."

The "Druid Stone," at Killeen Cormac, near the entrance to the cemetery, measures upwards of six feet in length, and is a foot square (fig. 80). On the upper surface of this monument an inscription is engraved, in large uncial letters, which reads, according to the late Rev. J. F. Shearman, *IVVEREDRVVIDES*. Under this, on the arris, are Ogham scores. The reading given by Ferguson is *IV. VERE. DRUIDES*, "the four true Druids." This discovery of a bilingual inscription in Ireland is, it is believed, the first on record. It is, as the above writer observes, "as regards the use of the word 'Druid' in its Latinised form, a unique example in the inscripational records of the British Isles."



FIG. 80.

Bilingual inscribed stone at Killeen Cormac. Reproduced from the *Journal of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*.

There is comparatively little trace of the religion of the Druids now discoverable, save in the folklore of the peasantry, and the references relative to it that occur in ancient and authentic Irish manuscripts are, as far as present appearances go, meagre and insufficient to support anything like a sound theory for full development of the ancient religion. However, if careful examination be made of all the traditions bearing on this subject, and they be compared with the strange customs still in many places prevalent, much light may be thrown upon many at present incomprehensible passages in Irish manuscripts, as also upon early Irish religious history in all its branches. We must, therefore, of necessity, return to references to Druidism in classic writers, and the inquiry, after wandering in different channels, returns for solution to the apparently simple, yet really difficult, problem—was Irish Druidism the same as that of Gaul and Britain, and are we entitled to apply to it the description of Cæsar and others?

The peculiar character of the Druidic organization precluded the existence of any very abnormal difference in the Druidism of Gaul, Britain, and Erin; nay, further, if we assume, as Cæsar states, that Druidism not only had its origin, but even its chief seat, in Britain, we cannot but conclude that, at whatever period

we may fix on for its first introduction into Ireland, there could have been but little difference between it and the Druidism of Gaul. There is, therefore, little in Cæsar that might not be applied to Irish Druidism, as that religion is faintly depicted in alleged early Irish manuscripts. Cæsar styles the priests by the general name of Druids. Strabo divides them into three classes, Bards, Vates, and Druids, and he makes the Vates the sacrificing priesthood and instructors of the schools; thus, according to this authority, the Druids were the ministers or priests, the Vates were the sacrificers, and the Bards were the makers of song and of history.

Under Christianity the bards in Ireland appear to have been the representatives of the old Pagan Druids. Before and long after the introduction of the new creed they were a very influential class. They may have been countenanced by the Druids—they certainly were by the new priesthood—and, when superadded to the clergy, they, from their numbers, became very oppressive. Often threatened with expulsion from the kingdom, they, on one occasion, would certainly have been expelled had it not been for the exertions of St. Columbkille.

In the present day we can hardly estimate the full strength of superstitious sanctity that was attached, even in Christian times, to the person, property, or estates of the bards. To plunder this sacred caste was, in the belief of the Irish, sure to draw down supernatural punishment, so that they were bold men indeed who ventured to touch their person, to reap where a bard had sown, or to graze their herds where the bards were wont to pasture theirs. Regarded as a power to be propitiated at any cost, the bard descended, almost imperceptibly, in the scale of importance, until he was looked on as a merely dangerous person, a fall in dignity which, little by little, ushered in the period when the minstrel,

“No longer courted and caressed,  
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,”

degenerated into

“A wandering harper, scorned and poor,  
Who begged his bread from door to door.”

The Irish appear, if any reliance can be placed on their early traditions, to have had, like the Gauls, an Arch-Druid, whose abode was in Meath, and there the entire body of the priesthood assembled annually.\* Like the Gaulish Druids, it was the duty of

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\* “That all the Druids of Ireland assembl’d there on the first of November, as several authors injudiciously write, is not only a thing improbable, but also false in fact; nor were they otherwise there at that time, nor all at any time

Irish bards to commit a number of verses to memory, and Cæsar's statement that they committed none of their tenets to writing, although the art was by them known and practised in all other branches, makes it probable that the Irish Druids also may have been acquainted with the use of letters.

A very curious and hitherto but little noticed passage from the works of a Greek traveller named Æthicus deserves attention. One writer asserts that Æthicus was born at the commencement of the second century; another, that he only saw the light at the end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth; in fact, it would seem at present impossible to define, with any exactness, the period at which he lived. The only certain fact is that he does not appear to have had an exalted opinion of Irish literature. The passage is from a work entitled *Cosmographiam Æthici Istrii*, translated from Greek into Latin by a presbyter named Hieronymus. The author seems to aim at extreme brevity, using in one part very elliptical phraseology:—

“He hastened to Ireland and made some stay there, examining their volumes, and he called them *ideomochos*, or *ideo histas*, that is unskilled workers, or uneducated teachers. For, setting them down as worthless, he says:—To end one's travels with the end of the world and to come to Ireland is a heavy labour. But no opportunity (of gaining knowledge by painful travels) excites disgust too great (for encountering the pain), yet it profits not in point of utility. It (Ireland) has unskilled occupants and inhabitants destitute of instructors.”\*

Cæsar states that the Gaulish Druids taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, *i.e.* that the soul does not die, but after the death of the body passes to another body. The Druids also believed that the souls of men existed in a prior state, and that after the dissolution of the body they passed into other bodies: the body was a mere prison for the soul, which could be purified and exalted by the mortification of its corporeal envelope. It may be said that, in all this there is a great amount

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together in one place, but as now all the clergy of England are said to be present in their convocations—that is, by their representatives and delegates. Thus Cæsar is likewise to be understood when, after speaking of the Archdruid of Gaule, he says that *the Druids, at a certain time of the year, assembl'd in a consecrated grove in the country of the Carnutes, which is reckon'd the middle region of all Gaule.*—*Toland's History of the Druids*, new edition, 1814, p. 118.

\* “*Hiberniam properavit et in ea aliquandiu commoratus est eorum volumina volvens. Apellavitque eos ideomochos, vel ideo histas, id est imperitos laboratores vel incultos doctores. Namque pro nihilo eos ducens ait; mundi finibus terminare et Hiberniam prevenire onerosus est labor, sed nulla facultas horrorem nimium incutit, sed ad utilitatem non proficit. In peritos habet cultores et instructoribus habet destitutos habitatores.*”

of conjecture ; the evidence, however, on which it is founded is derived from a number of independent sources, and is not easily gainsayed. Druidism seems to have been, wherever it existed, pretty much the same ; although similar situations may lead to similar sentiments and corresponding practices, yet, in this case, the similarity is too great and extends to too many particulars to be thus accounted for. The Irish appear to have believed, not merely in the transmigration of one human soul into the body of another human being, but in the transformation of one body into another—a relic, probably, of the religion or religions supplanted by Druidism. Thus the soul of a man might pass into a deer, a boar, a wolf, a fox, &c., a state which may be described as a continuous existence of metamorphosis. A curious example of the survival of this superstition may be cited from the county Galway, where, in former times, if a fisherman of the Claddagh happened to see a fox, or even hear its name mentioned, he would not on that day venture to sea. A butcher took a humorous and mischievous as well as a pecuniary advantage of the simplicity of his neighbours, who never went to fish on Saturday, for fear of breaking in on the Sunday. Friday was one of their most favoured fishing days, and a successful “take” on that day had the effect of reducing the price of meat in the ensuing Saturday’s market. The butcher, whose calling was thus injured, contrived to prevent them starting by parading a fox every Friday morning through the village.

By superior intelligence, the result of long and, as regards their age, profound study, the Druids acquired an undisputed authority. They certainly studied the book of nature, the properties of plants and herbs, together with such knowledge of subtle poisons and drugs, as enabled them to either kill or cure. The Druids must also have possessed quick powers of penetration and decision, and utilized their knowledge to enhance their reputation for possession of necromantic powers. In short, the marvels of natural magic may have been practised under the Druidical cult ; for magic—which may be defined as “a childish attempt to control the invisible forces which regulate the phenomena of nature”—is probably coeval with the first germs of religious thought.

Whether there really exists amongst races, which we regard as inferior, a certain power lost by those more highly developed, appears to be a subject well worthy of investigation. Many of the lower animals are gifted with instincts, or faculties, much keener than those now possessed by man, although some of these are shared to a great extent by savages. It may well be that those nearly allied to the earlier races may retain many more of

those occult instincts or faculties of the lower animals than highly civilized man ; for, after making every allowance for the effects of imagination, of religious excitement, and of trickery, there yet remains a substratum of as yet unexplained facts which has never been satisfactorily accounted for, particularly in regard to that supposed influence sometimes styled hypnotism.

In the religious feelings of the peasant there continued to dwell, from generation to generation, a firm belief in the power of the modern representatives of the priesthood of the past ; charms were relied on and practised by the most zealous followers of the new religion, and all the centuries which passed were unable to obliterate the dark superstitions of the Eld. It is true that in late times the half-educated peasants publicly profess to be ashamed of such practices ; but none the less do they cling tenaciously, in secret, to the mysteries which their fathers and mothers taught them to dread, and the deep-rooted belief of the people in this kind of witchcraft still meets one at every turn. Unreasoning credulity and superstition are more deeply rooted, both by hereditary tendency and direct tradition, in the southern than in the northern races ; and it is by no means improbable that there existed in some districts of Mediterranean Europe, until very recent times, an almost open worship of the ancient pagan deities. It required, as a matter of course, to be semi-veiled ; for all vanquished religions, no matter how pure they might be—though no one can allege that Roman paganism was pure—are accused, by the conquering creed, as early Christianity was accused by moribund paganism, of teaching indecent rites and organized immorality. When Christianity was triumphing, it made similar accusations against paganism, and, when enabled to use the secular arm, it invariably proceeded from mere vituperation to deeds of stern repression and even of the grossest barbarity. It is clear, therefore, that the biased testimony of the Fathers must be taken with a considerable degree of caution with regard to their allegations regarding paganism.

According to the best authorities many of the original deities of the Irish appear to have been *sidhe* (pronounced *shee*), that is deified mortals ; for they dwelt in the places where the dead had been deposited, and in and around them assembled for worship the family or clan of the deified persons. Hence it might be termed a species of ancestral worship, and probably took its origin in that nameless fear of the dead which, in most savage peoples, finds expression in innumerable ways. *Sidhe* also signifies the habitations supposed to belong to these beings in the hollows of the hills and mountains. Originally applied to a fairy palace, it was afterwards gradually transferred to the hill upon which a fairy palace was supposed to have formerly stood,

and ultimately to the fairies themselves. At the present day the word generally signifies a fairy.

Mr. W. B. Yeats has written at large upon traces of the fairy faith still remaining amongst the Irish peasantry. He is a poet and a mystic; and it is, therefore, not easy for the mere modern Philistine always to grasp his meaning—so if the writer has not quite mastered it, he begs to be excused.

Mr. Yeats is of opinion that the peasants still believe in their ancient gods, who gather in the raths or forts, and about the twisted thorn trees, and appear in many shapes—"now little and grotesque, now tall, fair-haired, and noble, and seem busy and real in the world, like the people in the markets or at the cross-roads . . . and they believe . . . that the most and the best of their dead are among them." The writer then relates a number of stories illustrating these ideas, which he has himself heard from Irish peasants. The following are the salient points to be noticed in this collection:—

The ancient gods, or spirits, styled by the peasantry "the others," take most children who die. They prefer the young, because they have a longer time before them, which may be spent in their service; but they take the old also. They prefer the good and pious, and do not like idle or cross people. The living often meet "the others," and recognise among them former friends and neighbours. Persons "taken" have like "the others" the power of assuming various shapes. Those who have been "taken" sometimes return for a short time, and may perform kindly offices about their old homes. "The others" often take a good hurler or dancer, or cows and horses. About food there seems some difference of opinion, as "the others" can come into a house, use what they like, and what is consumed will not be missed in the morning.

A general theory propounded in these tales seems to be that men, animals, and plants are endowed with a certain power and length of life. This may be expended either all here under ordinary conditions, or all among and in the service of "the others," or the first portion of life amongst mortals, and the balance with "the others." "Taken" is therefore a better word for the change than "die." At the end of the allotted period some further undefined transformation takes place.

The principal root idea of all this seems to be, according to Mr. Yeats, that once upon a time the gods of light and of good fought against those of darkness and of evil. The good gods won, and got possession of the world. After a time, however, the race of mortals fought against these good gods ("the others"), overcame them, and forced them to live in raths and other hiding places. Though defeated, the gods still carry on a kind of

mild guerilla warfare. They are on the whole kindly, and treat their captives well. This appears to be a mere adaptation of the theory of M. Jubainville. Nothing is more detrimental to the progress of archæological research than that indolence of reasoning power which seduces poetical imagination to place an apparently unswerving faith in opinions expressed primarily as mere provisional conjectures—and not only to blindly accept these tentative speculations, but to essay to enduce careless readers to accept them as irrefutable canons of archæological orthodoxy.

It would seem to have taken a lengthened period before the inhabitants of the raths and sepulchral mounds assumed, in popular imagination, their present diminutive size. In a mediæval "Life of St. Patrick" it is narrated that, at one time in his travels, he repaired to a fountain about sunrise, where he stood surrounded by his clergy. Two daughters of the king came, at an early hour, to the fountain to wash, as was their custom, and encountering the assembly of the clergy at the well, in their white vestments, with their books, they wondered much at their appearance, and thought that they were fairies or phantoms. They questioned St. Patrick on the subject, and asked, "Whence have you come? Whither do ye go? Are ye men of the *sidhe* or are ye gods?" Thus it appears that, when this story was composed, the *sidhe* population was, in popular imagination, of ordinary or human stature. It is clear that this *sidhe*-worship had no affinity to Druidism; in fact was quite opposed to it; was of altogether a lower standard; and therefore most likely preceded it in Ireland; and it appears probable that, at the time of the arrival of the first Christian missionaries, the two religions had not amalgamated. When, owing to the presence and pressure of Christianity, the two systems were, as seems likely, driven to coalesce, by opposition and persecution, the ceremonies of the different worships, and the various systems of primitive thought were, in general, retained. It results that to this very day seeming contradictions abound when folklore, as a whole, is carefully examined.

O'Curry points out the strange medley of Druidism and fairyism. He quotes from a ms. that "the demoniac power was great before the introduction of the Christian faith, and so great was it that they (i.e. the *aes sidhe*, or dwellers in the hills) used to tempt the people in human bodies, and that they used to show them secrets, and places of happiness where they should be immortal; and it was in that way they were believed; and it was these phantoms that the unlearned people called *sidhe*, or fairies, and *aes sidhe*, or fairy people."

In some old tales the Druid and the fairy, then of full mortal

stature and of either sex, appear in direct antagonism. In the story of "Connla of the Golden Hair and the Fairy Maiden," the king calls his Druid to his assistance to prevent a fairy from bewitching and carrying off his son to the "Land of the Living." The sympathies of the listeners are all enlisted on the side of the fairy as against the Druid, whose incantations are finally of no avail against her power. These *sidhe* deities, fairies, or demi-gods, like those of other nations, not unfrequently intermarried with the daughters of men, and their offspring were either demi-gods, or became the heroes of Irish romance; they married, multiplied, warred, murdered, and thieved like their worshippers on earth. It is unjust, therefore, to recount as sober facts the records of these purely mythical tales. In the older stories heroes live, without scruple, with the fair ladies of the hills, as Ulysses with Calypso; but in later tradition, when the Christian bard redacted these occurrences, the poor hero, by the illicit union, forfeits his salvation: and the ghastly superstition of the *lianhanshee* is probably the best surviving relic of this belief. Carleton has made it the subject of one of his Irish stories. The spirit appears in the shape of a young and beautiful female, who forms a peculiar attachment for a certain mortal. If he falls under the spell of the fairy he can never marry: for, although invisible to ordinary sight, she is always visible to, and never leaves the presence of, the person to whom she is attached. According as he reciprocates her affection she rewards him by teaching him unearthly music, the art of healing, and other invaluable secrets of Fairydom. The haunted man does not retain his reason for long, and generally commits suicide.

The alleged late introduction of Druidism into Ireland cannot be refuted by pointing to the appearance, in Irish manuscripts, of Druids from the days of Noah (or even earlier) to those of St. Patrick. In late writings, Druidism is certainly sometimes rampant; but examine pieces, which bear intrinsic marks of comparatively ancient compilation, and observe what a small part is played by the Druid. In the hymn of St. Patrick, whilst idolatry occupies a prominent position, the Druid is barely mentioned. In St. Fiacc's life of the national Saint, the author, instead of depicting him as overcoming druidic magic, describes the various tribes as adoring *sidhe*, a worship opposed to druidism; and in most ancient mss. the Druid does not appear. We may infer from this that Druidism was never thoroughly established in the kingdom; that the Druids, whom Roman persecution in Gaul and Britain drove over to Ireland, were regarded as magicians, and were taken under the protection of the various petty kings and chiefs. Irish Druidism was in the act of spreading and organizing itself, but had not time for universal development before the

arrival of St. Patrick. In one of the tracts of the Book of Armagh, the Druids of Tara are brought out in bold relief, but as a mere foil for the sole purpose of exalting the Christian hero who was to destroy their power.

If, at the advent of Christian missionaries, there was still an unhealed feud between the Druids, or priests of the recently introduced spiritual religion—which appears to have been that held by the chiefs and upper classes—and the majority of the people, who were *sidhe* or ancestor worshippers, pagans pure and simple, this would quite account for the easy conversion of Ireland to Christianity. Kings and Druids going over, with comparative ease, to Christianity, would bring in their train some portion of their followers, and would place entire power, political and ecclesiastical, in the hands of the converted Druidical priesthood; but the mass of the people would drag in and implant in the Christian Church organization their ancestor worship, and the numerous traces of paganism still distinctly to be observed throughout the land. The bent of mind in human nature seems ever to have run in the same groove. Erasmus points out how, on the Continent, in his time, each trouble, each disease, had its patron and a prescribed formula for its cure. “This cures the toothache; that assists women in childbed; a third restores what a thief has stolen; a fourth preserves you in shipwreck; and a fifth preserves your flock.”

After a lengthened period the public worship of heathen deities ceased among the mass of the population, but many privately practised it with tenacity. Whilst the memory of the greater divinities of the Irish Pantheon appears to have died out, belief in the minor powers, the *genii locorum*, and fairies, firmly maintained its hold. In the same way, as already mentioned, that in parts of southern Europe Christianity did not completely obliterate the ancient religion, but was coexistent with it. It is not the major, but the minor deities which still retain—to a great extent, but under other names—their hold on the imagination of the peasantry; and in like manner, if Christianity were supplanted in Ireland by some other religion, it is probable that, though the name and attributes of the Deity might, in time, be forgotten, yet some of the tales and legends regarding the numerous army of saints would linger on.

Trade in slaves undoubtedly formed a portion of early Irish commerce, and in the early and late political institutions of Ireland, it is alleged that slavery formed an important part. The mass of the lower class of the community were born in a state of serfdom, and individuals—and even tribes—for crimes real or alleged, were frequently, according to the authority of some writers, reduced to the condition of slaves. Foreigners captured

in war were subjected to the same fate; and the captivity of St. Patrick, to which circumstance Ireland is said to be indebted for the Christian faith, was occasioned by a marauding expedition of an Irish chief—to an unidentified locality either in Caledonia, Albion, or Gaul—seeking for plunder, as well as desiring to recruit the number of his slaves. Captives were made, not so much in the hope of ransom, as for marketable property. At a later period Giraldus Cambrensis states that the Irish were accustomed to purchase Englishmen and boys from merchants and marauders.

Probably for some time antecedent to the generally recorded date of the introduction of Christianity into Ireland, small and scattered Christian communities may have secretly existed in the country. They may have been founded through the ordinary channels of commerce; by the zeal of missionaries; by captives carried off by the Irish, who, at this period, harried the coasts of Britain and of Gaul; by Christians, who had fled from the Roman dominions to avoid persecution, or from the swords of the northern hordes already harassing the seaboard.

According to the *Tripartite Life*, it would appear that St. Patrick, when on one of his missionary tours, after ordaining a presbyter named Ailbe, informed him of the existence of a stone altar, in an underground chamber, in the mountains of Tirerrill, in county Sligo. This, though only a legend of the twelfth century, points to the previous existence of a tradition that there had been missionaries in the land before St. Patrick, otherwise whence came the buried altar? If any conclusion can be drawn from the ancient records, it is that the whole of Ireland did not submit to St. Patrick's influence. When he wrote his *Confessio*, he tells us that he looked daily for a violent death, or to be brought again into slavery. St. Patrick no more made Ireland a Christian land than Luther made the German, Knox the Scottish, or Henry VIII. the English Reformation. His phenomenal success almost conclusively demonstrates this. Many had worked the ground before him; many contemporaries helped to work the ground with him, and diffused and confirmed his teachings; whilst many laboured in the field after him. Lanigan, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, states that:—"It is universally admitted that there were Christian congregations in Ireland before the mission of Palladius, which took place in A.D. 431, of which, were there no other proof, the testimony of Prosper forms sufficient evidence; for in his chronicle of that year he says that Palladius was sent to the Scots believing in Christ, that is, as he informs us elsewhere, to the Scots in Ireland. But how, or by whom, the Christian faith was first introduced it is impossible to determine."

Tertullian boasted that, in his day, Christianity had penetrated to parts of the British Isles inaccessible to the Romans, yet the

few allusions to the supposed establishment, on a large scale, of Christianity in Great Britain and Ireland, in early Christian writers, such as the above quoted, and Origen or Jerome, may evidently be regarded, to a great degree, as rhetorical flourishes. Thus, when zealous fathers wish to impress the widely extended area of the Gospel field, they describe it as extending from India to Britain, without considering whether they were literally correct in thus indirectly implying that there then were Christian communities in either of the two extremes of territory. Amongst the immense number of Roman interments and mortuary inscriptions, found in Great Britain, we do not discern traces of the religion of Christ. We are driven back, by this want of material evidence, to the inevitable conclusion that Christianity was not, either openly or surreptitiously, established in Roman Britain, a conclusion totally at variance with the preconceived ideas into which we have been led by the school of both early and mediæval ecclesiastical historians. However, among the Roman soldiery, strangers, mechanics, and settlers who visited Albion there may, doubtless, have been a fair sprinkling of secretly professing Christians. Christianity had evidently been to some extent established in Britain when we read of the mission of Roman ecclesiastics to put down "the heresy of Pelagianism." The great supporters of this heresy were, it is stated, two Irishmen, Pelagius, alleged to be a native of Bangor, county Down, and Celestius, both celebrated as theologians, against whom St. Augustine and St. Jerome entered the lists of controversy, the first in a spirit of Christian toleration, the latter with all the coarseness and violence for which he was distinguished as a polemic, and which earned for him the title of "the foul-mouthed." The fact that these Irishmen had left their native land as missionaries is another proof, if further be necessary, that Christianity had taken some root in Ireland before the mission of St. Patrick. However, on the other hand, it is alleged that Pelagius was a mere layman, and that Celestius was a lawyer, that there is very little known about them, and it is not clearly proved that they ever left their native land. St. Jerome, in his usual polished style, calls his adversary Celestius "a blockhead swollen with Irish stirabout (*Scotorum pulitibus praegravatus*), a great corpulent barking dog, fitter to kick with his heels than to bite with his teeth; a Cerberus who, with his master Pluto (so Jerome designated Pelagius), deserved to be knocked on the head and so put to eternal silence." In other words, St. Jerome suggested in very broad terms that the "heretic" who did not agree with him ought to be "removed." A baffled controversialist frequently gives vent to his resentment by anathematising the opponent he is unable to refute; if a point in an argument be too strong to be directly met, a

side-issue may be raised by consigning the successful logician to eternal damnation.

It is immaterial to fix the exact date of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland, first as a slave, secondly as a missionary. Let it suffice that it was some time in the fifth century, and that he be acknowledged as the author of the composition styled "St. Patrick's Hymn," the St. Patrick who spent six years of his life in slavery in Ireland, the captive of an Irish chieftain, who lived near Slemish, in the county Antrim. Escaping from captivity, he resolved to preach Christianity to the heathen Irish. It has been remarked that nearly all his companions were either from Ulster or were descended from Ultonian families. This may be accounted for by the fact that his residence as a slave in the northern portion of the kingdom made him better acquainted with that race than with those in other parts. This connexion with "the Scotie Princes," of whom he makes mention in his *Confessio*, and of which he was justly proud, may account for his change of name. A slave in Ulster, known there under his baptismal name of Sucat, it was important, in the prosecution of his missionary work, to make clear, at any rate to his princely adherents, that, although formerly in servitude, he was not of ignoble birth. Hence his recital of his pedigree—son of the deacon Calpornius, grandson of the presbyter Potitus. In the general collapse of the fabric of the Roman Empire many of the lowest of the populace "assumed the illustrious name of Patricius, which, by the conversion of Ireland, has been communicated to a whole nation." Although this title at the time, had, with the Roman and semi-Romanized population, lost its peculiar meaning and had become merely a personal cognomen, yet, amongst the "barbarous" or non-Romanized tribes of Ireland, it would most probably carry some of its original importance, and would, doubtless, impress "the Scotie Princes," who would have turned with disdain from the teaching of a mere slave, with a sense of the missionary's dignity.

St. Patrick probably landed near Downpatrick, for a chief named Dichu, who ruled over a district in this neighbourhood, having entertained St. Patrick and his companions, became his first convert to Christianity, and granted his barn to be used as a church, "which place," writes Ussher, "from the name of that church, is called in Scotie to this day *Sabhall Patric*," i.e., "Patrick's Barn," represented by the modern name "Saul."

A very likely story relates that, soon after his landing, he made his way towards the house of his former master, Melchu, hoping to convert him and his household to Christianity. The chieftain, hearing of his approach, as well as rumours of the fame and power of his former slave, dreaded his advent, feeling certain

that St. Patrick would enslave him in turn, so when the missionary ascended the slopes of Slemish he found that his late master had gathered all his goods together in a huge funeral pyre, had mounted it, and then caused it to be set on fire, perishing in the flames like a grand old heathen. In later times a cross was raised on the spot, from which, tradition averred, St. Patrick first looked down the Braid Valley on Melchu's burning homestead. Melchu's residence was probably the Cashel, still in a fair state of preservation, in the parish of Racavan. A writer who knows the neighbourhood is of opinion that the traditional locality lay in St. Patrick's direct course to the Cashel, and although no trace of the cross is now to be found, the site can be identified with comparative certainty, as a half-demolished earn in a small plantation is still styled in Irish "the place of St. Patrick's cross."

Arriving in the neighbourhood of Tara, the then Irish capital, or residence of the chief king, St. Patrick made preparations for celebrating the Christian festival. Denis Florence M'Carthy thus describes the lighting of the first Paschal fire in Ireland:—

“ On Tara's hill the daylight dies—  
 On Tara's plain 'tis dead :  
 'Til Baal's unkindled fires shall rise,  
 No fire must flame instead,  
 “ 'Tis thus the king commanding speaks,  
 Commands and speaks in vain—  
 For lo! a fire defiant breaks  
 From out the woods of Slane.

“ ‘What means this flame that through the night  
 Illumines all the vale ?  
 What rebel hand a fire dare light  
 Before the fire of Baal?’ ”

No sooner did this light appear than the Druids recognised a rival power, as this very time happened to be a great Pagan festival, one of the inaugurating ceremonies of which commenced by the extinguishing of every fire throughout the country, and whoever kindled one before the Druids had re-kindled theirs on the hill of Tara was liable to be put to death.\*

Despite the triumph of Christianity, a relic of this ancient custom still exists amongst the peasantry. On the morning of the first day of May it is customary, in remote districts, to

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\* The Romans also extinguished the domestic altar-fire annually. It had to be re-kindled by pieces of wood rubbed together until they broke into a flame. Alcestis, about to sacrifice her life for her husband, addresses a touching prayer to the domestic altar-fire. Agamemnon, returning from Troy, does not return thanks in a temple, but before the altar-fire of his home. This fire represented the common life of the family, its entire past and future existence.

abstain from lighting fires until the sun is at its meridian, or until less cautious neighbours have lighted theirs, as then the disaster would fall on those first so offending. An exception to the rule is made when smoke is seen ascending from the chimney of the priest's house, for, to present-day peasants, this represents the first signal from the pyre of old, which notified to their pagan forefathers the advent of the yearly new-born fire. On May Day embers may not be taken outside the house to kindle anything. A stranger will not be permitted even to light his pipe at the household fire, as transgression of the rule is believed to be followed by heavy penalties to the family.

These relics of the past, embalmed in present-day folklore, enable us to understand the action of the Druids, who, as soon as they noticed the fire lighted by St. Patrick, dreading, like the Ephesian artificers, a loss of their livelihood, at once came before the Head King at Tara, and requested him to have the fire extinguished, "lest it would get the mastery of their fire and bring the downfall of the kingdom." This is the first recorded instance of open conflict between Christianity and Druidism in Ireland.

Among the many wild legends relating to this event it is stated that the Irish king had been advised by his magicians not to enter the circuit of St. Patrick's fires lest he should be overcome by their magical influence, and to avoid this the saint was summoned to the king's presence, where a discussion ensued. One magician, who made himself prominent in opposition, was miraculously caught up in the air and dashed to pieces on the ground. The king then ordered his attendants to seize St. Patrick, but a strange darkness overspread the land, and they turned their weapons against each other. A little later, being in danger, St. Patrick escaped by turning himself and his companions into stags. The more prosaic and probably more accurate account narrates that, ordered to appear before the king, the opportunity was afforded to St. Patrick of expounding the new religion to a distinguished audience. It was on this memorable occasion, it is alleged, that he composed the hymn which he sang as he approached the royal presence, and thus gave the king to understand the foundation on which his courage rested, but his explanations and exhortations failed to convince his hearers. On the *supposed* anniversary of the death (or birth) of the saint, a modern paraphrase of this hymn (in which some allusions to ancient beliefs are most discreetly omitted) is sung in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin,

"Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."

The writer has been taken to task for the statement that the date of both St. Patrick's birth and death are doubtful, but nevertheless he is of opinion that neither the year nor the day of St. Patrick's birth nor the year or day of his death are known. What Irishman, also, is unaware of the fact that, in olden times, *two* birthdays of the saint were kept, until Father Mulcahy settled the question?—

“ On the eighth of March, it was, some people say,  
That St. Patrick, at midnight, he first saw the day.  
While others declare 'twas the ninth he was born,  
And 'twas all a mistake between midnight and morn.

At last both the factions so positive grew,  
That each kept a birthday—so Pat then had *two*,  
Till Father Mulcahy, who showed them their sins,  
Said ‘ No one could have two birthdays but a twins.’  
Says he, ‘ Boys, don't be fighting for eight or for nine,  
Don't be always dividing—but sometimes combine.  
Combine eight with nine, and seventeen is the mark,  
So let that be his birthday.’ ‘ Amen,’ said the clerk,  
‘ If he wasn't a twins, sure our history will show,  
That, at least, he 's worth any two saints that we know.’ ”

A very suitable monument has at long last been placed over the reputed grave of the national saint at Downpatrick (fig. 81). The memorial, an unchiselled weather-beaten boulder of granite from the Mourne mountains, weighs seven tons, and completely covers the site. The name  $\text{D}\alpha\tau\text{p}\text{r}\text{i}\text{c}$  and an early Irish cross are the only records on the rock. This simple treatment of a memorial to a great man is regarded as the nearest approach to the ideas on sepulture prevalent in Ireland in the fifth century.\*

The literal rendering of the sixth paragraph of St. Patrick's hymn, as translated by the Rev. Thomas Olden, B.A, and as it is *not* sung in St. Patrick's Cathedral, is here given. In it occur the only allusions made by the saint to the religion he was about to overthrow :—

“ So have I invoked all these virtues between me, (and these)  
Against every cruel merciless power which may come against my body  
and my soul,  
Against incantations of false prophets,  
Against black laws of heathenry,  
Against false laws of heretics,  
Against craft of idolatry,  
Against spells of women and smiths and Druids,  
Against every knowledge that defiles men's souls.”

\* The movement for the erection of the monument was initiated by F. J. Pigger, the energetic editor of the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, and the supervision of the work was undertaken by W. F. Fennell, Architect, of Belfast.

In this hymn St. Patrick, after first "binding" to himself many Christian virtues, which may be taken as confession of his belief in certain Christian doctrines, goes on "binding" to himself the elements, claiming thus, that not alone were all the powers of Christianity on his side, but also the very elements worshipped by his opponents.

" I bind myself to-day to the virtue of Heaven,  
 In light of Sun,  
 In brightness of Snow,  
 In splendour of Fire,  
 In speed of Lightning,  
 In swiftness of Wind,  
 In depth of Sea,  
 In stability of Earth,  
 In compactness of Rock."

It may be inferred, from this portion of St. Patrick's hymn, that the Pagan Irish both adored and invoked the personified powers of nature, and this is corroborated by passages from Irish mss. One Chief King of Ireland received as pledges that the sovereignty should for ever rest in his family, "the sun and moon, the sea, the dew and colours, and all the elements visible and invisible, and every element which is in heaven and on earth." Another, having broken his oath perished "from sun and from wind and from the rest of the pledges; for transgressing them, in that time, used not to be dared." Again, in one of the poems of the heroic age, it is related that when Queen Medb and the Connaughtmen were pressing hard on Cuchullin, the sole champion of the Ulster men, he called on the waters, on heaven, earth, and the rivers to protect him, and the elements answered his appeal. Even St. Paul appears to have been afraid that the early converts to Christianity among the Galatians might return to their former worship of the elements, and he thus upbraids them:—"How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage; ye observe days and months and times and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

St. Patrick evidently believed that the incantations and assumed magic of the Druids were not without some real foundation, that witches were still powerful for evil, and that "smiths" (*cairds*) or cunning metal workers, the forgers of weapons and of ornaments, were necromancers; all these, in alliance with the evil spirit of his belief, were arrayed against him, for the demons of a strange nation or tribe are always looked upon—especially by the conquerors—with a certain dread. Even a good Mussulman is not exempt from an unaccountable awe of the fetishes of the heathen. An Englishman having asked a Mahometan to handle

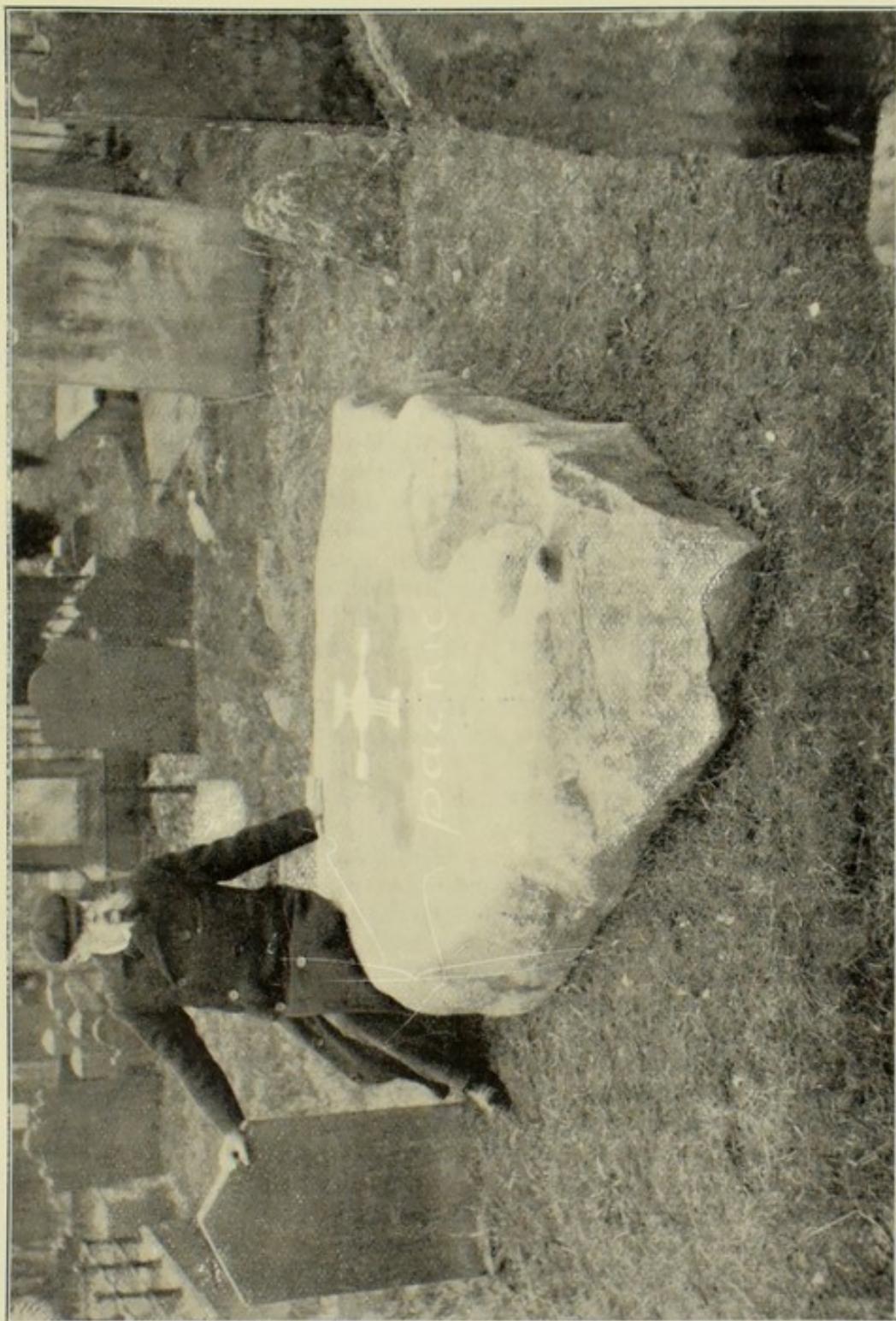


FIG. 81.—The Traditional Grave of St. Patrick at Downpatrick. From a photograph by W. F. Fennell.

a fetish, he drew back, and when reminded that he was a true believer and ought not to be afraid of the devils of the idolaters, quaintly replied, "True, sahib, these are idolatrous pigs, and their Shaitans (devils) are accursed, but this Shaitan is most spiteful—something bad might happen!" This incident shows how the superstitious ideas of an idolatrous tribe infect the minds of a superior, most strictly monotheistic, and vehemently antagonistic race and creed.

Sorcerers are not always, or of necessity, impostors, as they sometimes appear to believe thoroughly in themselves. Even in the present day some missionaries credit Polynesian wizards with supernatural powers, and believe them to be possessed of evil spirits; others, not quite so credulous, admit that the idea is not improbable. If Christian missionaries believe, even now, in such things, it is not surprising that the first apostle to the Irish, some 1400 years ago, should have been equally superstitious.

The smiths, cairds, or workers in metals, mentioned in St. Patrick's hymn, were held in great estimation by the pagan Irish.\* They had their *Gobhan Saor*, i.e. Goban, the artificer, who may be said to answer to the Scandinavian "Wayland Smith," or the Greek Vulcan. In Christian times architecture appears to have been added to his skill in metallurgy, and to this day primitive churches, round towers, and other buildings of antiquity, are, by the peasantry, attributed to the "Gobhan Saor," and their folk-lore is full of the wondrous myths of this strange personage.

This superstitious reverence for the skilful artisan seems to be of world-wide occurrence. In parts of Africa, the smith is still looked upon as a magician, and we need but turn to the pages of *Kenilworth* to see in what light—according to Sir Walter Scott—he was regarded in England so late as Elizabethan times. Smithcraft, witchcraft, and priestcraft alike attempt to constitute themselves a distinct and separate caste; they surround the most trivial matters with an air of mystery, and essay in every way to enhance the importance of their art. Charlatanism is the same whether practised in the beginning of man's existence on the earth, or in the nineteenth century—in the East or in the West. The sword-maker, who forged the fine blades of old Japan, was no mere blacksmith, but ranked first of all craftsmen in the land, and was often vice-lord of a province. He did not

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\* Dr. Joyce points out that in Scotland the term "caird" still holds its place as a living word, even among speakers of English, but has lost its original signification (i.e. a skilful artificer of any kind), and is now usurped by tinkers. Burns, in one of his poems, so applies it:—

"Her charms had struck a sturdy caird."

enter on his grave duties lightly; for when he had a blade to make for a great noble, the sword-maker abstained from all animal food and strong drink, and lived strictly alone. When the forge was prepared, to which no woman might approach, and when the steel was selected, he repaired to the temple, and prayed. Only after many ceremonies, when the five elements, "fire, water, wood, metal, and earth," were all conciliated, would the pious artizan take hammer in hand.

Ceremonies connected with the forging of weapons or implements, when accompanied with singing and chanting, by which means it was thought the spells, so sung, were incorporated with the article in course of fabrication, are mere relics of the customs of the Stone Age. The Apache Indians, of Mexico, sing whilst working their flint implements, the strokes of the mallet being kept in time with the music, which they declare is "great medicine."

There is a comparatively modern notion, devoid of historical foundation, that St. Patrick, during his interview with the pagan ruler, used the shamrock to illustrate the exposition of the mysteries of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The origin of the myth is probably to be found in the early respect for the trefoil as a sacred plant. The Greek word comprehends the numerous family of plants which have triple or ternate leaves. In a passage in Pliny there is a curious reference to the supposed efficacy of the trefoil in curing those suffering from the bites of noxious beasts. St. Patrick and the trefoil are in popular legend indissolubly connected; so that the tale of his banishing venomous snakes from Ireland may have had its origin in some superstition, such as is described by Pliny. If a farmer carries home a shamrock, it will go well with his cattle on May day; if a maiden puts it in the shoe of her lover, without his knowledge, when he is starting on a journey, he will be sure to return; anyone who carries it about on his person will be able to detect the presence of evil spirits; gathered with gloved hand, and brought into a house in which there is a lunatic, without anyone save the bringer knowing, it will cure madness; and finally, it may be added, that the four-leaved shamrock has been immortalized in Lover's beautiful song as a safeguard against every imaginable sorrow and misfortune:—

"I'll seek a four-leaved shamrock in all the fairy dells,  
And if I find its charmed leaves, oh, how I'll weave my spells!  
I would not waste my magic might on diamond, pearl, or gold,  
For treasure tires the weary sense—such triumph is but cold!"

Widely divergent views prevail in various parts of Ireland as to which is the true shamrock. The claim of the wood-sorrel to

the distinction is now by many ignored, and opinions appear to be somewhat equally divided between two species of clover, the *Trifolium minus* and the *Trifolium repens*; others again uphold the title of the black-medick to be perfect as regards its claim to be accounted the true shamrock.

The exact species of the National emblems of Great Britain and of Wales are quite as difficult to define. Which is the rose of England? Which is the thistle of Scotland? Which is the leek of Wales?

In the peculiarity of serpent-destruction, or serpent-vanquishing, St. Patrick by no means stands alone; saints in the calendar, credited with the destruction of serpents, form a numerous body; and it is, by many writers, considered that these stories owe their origin to the discovery of fossil remains of large extinct saurians, whilst others gravely assert that these relic-bearing rocks are memorials of the serpents whose descendants lived in the Holy Island until expelled by the national saint. This is again but an adaptation of pre-Christian legends of the destruction of fabulous monsters by the heroes of pagan days. A tale recounted by the peasantry may be taken as typical of the class, especially as the hero was, to some extent, the originator as well as destroyer of the monster; but St. Patrick is of course brought in to award it its final punishment.

One day a warrior of the Feni, named Conan, hunting in the mountains, came to the spot where lay unburied the skeleton of a witch killed by his father many years previously. A red-haired woman suddenly appeared beside him, and cautioned him against touching the skeleton; for in the thigh-bone of the sorceress lay imprisoned a worm which, if it escaped and could procure enough water to drink, was capable of destroying every living thing in Erin. Disregarding the advice, the fool-hardy Conan fractured the bone, from which wriggled a long hairy worm, and the reckless warrior lifting it upon the point of his spear hurled it into the neighbouring lake, where it quickly developed into a furious serpent-like monster, devouring flocks, herds, human beings, and even houses, as voraciously as ever did the renowned dragon of Wantley. In a very short time it had eaten most of the cattle in Erin; and such general indignation arose against Conan that he was condemned to either kill the serpent or to be devoured by the monster whom he had so recklessly called into existence. Disguised in the hide of a cow, and armed only with a dagger, the unhappy Conan was driven with the herd to the shore of the lake where the tribute-cattle were delivered, and was there swallowed by the monster. He found the interior of the serpent more vulnerable than its exterior, which was encased in impenetrable scales, and succeeded with his dagger

in cutting his way out; yet the monster was not killed, but lay on the shore of the lake bleeding and bellowing with pain. The noise attracted the attention of St. Patrick, who effectually secured and banished the serpent to the bottom of the lake, the water of which, discoloured by its blood, has in consequence ever since been styled Lough Derg, or the Red Lake.

According to Irish mss. the spirit of paganism seems to have descended on the Irish saints. Curses flowed from their lips with greater frequency than blessings; any who opposed, or did not at once conform to their expressed or implied wishes, were immediately anathematized; they were lucky if their descendants escaped inclusion in the curse.

We also get side-lights on the relations in which the Christian clergy stood to some of the Irish chiefs in the early days of Christianity in Ireland. St. Ruadan granted sanctuary to the murderer of a messenger of Dermot MacCarroll, and as the cleric refused to give him up, the king seized him by force. This aroused Saints Ruadan and Brendan, who made the circuit of the Hill of Tara, "ringing their bells and cursing it, and prophesying that no king of Ireland should ever again reside there." As a matter of fact, Tara was deserted from that date, and the writer depicts, in very forcible manner, the danger of dealing with these powerful "horsemen of the Canon," again, "ill for him who enters into strife with the clerics." "Tara without fire, without a house." Another poem, on the same subject, paints the danger of interfering with the Church, "to strive with her is not good sense," and "it is an evil plight to be challenging the clerics of the crooked staves,"—the cleric having now assumed the role of the Druid.

Men who know to a certainty what will happen may indulge in prophetic expressions of this nature. A king of the east Saxons, who had good-naturedly dined with an excommunicated person, was told by Saint Cedd that he would soon die in the house in which he had sinned, and when the well-meaning but unfortunate king was murdered, as foretold, the prophetic foresight of the saint was highly praised. We possess also the prediction of St. Aidan, with regard to a king who had put in practice the maxim, that discretion was the better part of valour; a king so meek, the saint feared, was not likely to be long-lived, and that fear was speedily realised.

Tuathal, King of Ireland, had banished his rival, Diarmaid, from his Court. Diarmaid was one day strolling along the banks of the Shannon, where he found St. Ciaran planting the first pole of a wooden church. "Plant the pole with me," said the saint to him, "and let my hand be above your hand on it, and your sovereign sway shall be over the men of Erin before long."

Diarmaid had a foster-brother in his train who, on hearing the prophetic words of the saint, formed the resolution of fulfilling them. He immediately sprang on horseback, then gained access to the presence of the king, and slew him. It is needless to recount how, on Tuathal's death, Diarmaid's friends immediately proclaimed him King of Ireland, or that in Diarmaid St. Ciaran found a munificent patron.

If one were to judge by these legends, Christianity seems not to have moderated, but rather to have added zest to the combativeness of the saints and Irish chiefs; yet if the accretions could be separated from the truth, and the ornamentations in the narratives of the early Irish saints removed, the morals intended to be conveyed might become apparent. One must concede a certain amount of respect to this attempt to paganize Christianity; the pagans had at any rate antiquity on their side, and their gods and goddesses were certainly more life-like than the saints and saintesses, the anchorites and stylites of monastic Christianity:—

“ . . . Great God! I'd rather be  
 A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
 So might I standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,  
 And hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.”

Popular writers generally represent St. Patrick as “a worker of miracles, most of them of a childish and absurd character. There may be some who believe them,” remarks the Rev. Thomas Olden, “or rather think they believe them; but the effect in most cases is to cause the rejection of his entire history.” Even O'Donovan, in a note in his translation of the *Annals of the Four Masters*, observes on this subject:—“The absurdity of the miracles attributed to St. Patrick, by all his biographers, on every frivolous occasion, without number, measure, or use, has created a doubt in modern times of the truth of everything they relate.” Thus, continues Olden:—“He curses rivers, territories, families, and individuals for most trivial causes; and, for the same reasons, prophesies evil to people, though fortunately the fulfilment does not often follow.”

St. Patrick makes the kid bleat in the stomach of the man who had stolen and eaten it, and afterwards returns it to its owner uninjured: he lights a fire with icicles, instead of sticks, whilst water congeals in the kettle despite the fire around it. These stories are, however, quite paralleled by that recounted of St. Bridget's bacon, which in great charity she gave to a hungry dog, and which was, after the dog had eaten it, restored again

to the pot; by that of St. Dunstan who held the devil by the nose with a heated tongs till he made him roar; of Dominicus who made him hold a candle till he burnt his fingers; and of Lopus who imprisoned him in a pot all night.

In the mediæval lives of St. Patrick, the national saint is depicted as cursing and anathematising all and singular who did not do exactly what he wanted; but one can yet catch, through this modern religious mask, glimpses of the good-humoured character of the missionary; for, although his history has been written with the best intentions, St. Patrick has had to suffer much at the hands of his biographers. Many violent and vindictive deeds are laid to his charge, but he certainly would never have had the credit, at any rate, of turning such numbers into the ways of Christianity, as well as of filling such an important niche in Church history, had he been the hot-headed, passionate man painted by his legendary biographers. The anecdote which demonstrates that he could, like St. Paul, forgive his hearers falling asleep under the flow of his rhetoric demonstrates this; for what cleric can forgive the peaceful slumber of his parishioner? what author the admission of a friend that he is ignorant of his latest work? St. Patrick, however, surpassed St. Paul's record, for he, on one occasion, delivered a sermon to a devout Irish congregation, which lasted four days and four nights. Among his hearers was "that mother of religious activity and thorough woman of business, St. Bridget. Among his hearers? Yes; but only as Eutychus was among those of Paul. Before the sun had gone down once on the preacher, Bridget, worn out by her virtuous activity, was fast asleep, and a compassionate miracle kept her so, till the sermon came to its conclusion. When the devout maid awoke, she looked up at Patrick and blushed. The Scoto-Irish apostle looked down on Bridget and smiled. She excused herself by a hint that she had yielded only to supernatural influences, for she had an allegorical dream which was as good as a sermon, and which she described at a length almost equal to that of the discourse under which she had succumbed." Whether St. Patrick compared her dream with his oration, or her freshness with the prostration of his congregation, is not narrated, but he confessed that the sleeper had known a greater enjoyment than his listeners.

Another story, illustrative of the Saint's good nature, may be given. The Mayo peasantry account for the excellent feeding properties of some of the bogs and wastes of various descriptions with which their country is almost entirely covered, and which present a brown and desolate appearance, by the legend that St. Patrick, viewing them from afar, when on one of his missionary tours, struck by their forlorn look, exclaimed,

“I’ll bless you any way, but sorrah a foot ever I’ll set upon you.”

This, of course, is only popular tradition, so it may be well to give an extract from the *Septima Vita*, lib. ii., Colgan, *Trias. Thaum.*, p. 140, xcvi, in which it is gravely narrated that St. Patrick blessed a river on account of the good dinner he had procured from it.

“Going on his journey by the seashore of northern Connaught, Patrick came to a river called Sligo. There he wished to refresh his wearied body. He asked the fishermen to spread their nets wherever they pleased, and by the aid of their art, to provide some fish for a meal, by which he might relieve the present need of his body. They answered that although it seemed difficult in winter, yet in return for the favour of having such a guest, they would like to try it. They cast their net and caught a large salmon, which with great joy they brought to the man of God. He thanked them for their kind attention. He prayed for a blessing on them, and he blessed the river praying, and whilst praying foretelling that fish would never fail in the river. The actual state of affairs has always afforded proof of his prophecy, for ever since that time the river so abounds in salmon, that in every time of the year fresh salmon are found in it.” As a matter of fact, salmon run all the year round in the Sligo river. This evidently gave rise to the story of the saint’s blessing.

Events regarded by our ancestors as miracles were often but very ordinary displays of nature. Thus, when the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe died in the year 1173, it is stated that “a great miracle was performed on the night of his death, viz., the dark night became bright from dusk till morning, and it appeared to the inhabitants that the adjacent parts of the globe were illuminated, and a large body of fire moved over the town and remained in the south-east; all the people rose from their beds, for they thought it was day, it (the light) continued so eastward along the sea.” This so-called “miracle” was evidently a very fine effect produced by the aurora borealis or northern lights. Numerous other miraculous or alleged miraculous occurrences are recounted in the *Irish Annals*.

We feel less charitably inclined towards those who believe but half what we believe, than towards those that deny all that we profess. Enthusiasts with zeal without knowledge, and devotion without discretion, who gravely defend these invented—and very badly invented—miracles, have injured the cause of Christianity as much as, if not indeed more than, the attack of modern scientific writers.

It is traditionally recounted that St. Patrick met St. Kieran

for the first time, in A.D. 439, at the Church of Rath-Kieran, in Iverk, county Kilkenny. St. Kieran did not acknowledge St. Patrick's superiority, and refused to be dictated to by him in ecclesiastical matters. St. Patrick displeased, predicted that the inhabitants of Iverk should always remain *Durnauns*, and be called by this name. A similar story is told of St. Ibar, at Beggery, in the harbour of Wexford.

St. Patrick, travelling through the plains of Ossory, to see what progress St. Kieran had made in the conversion of the inhabitants, remarks O'Donovan, "came to a remarkable hill, then called *Cnoc-na-radhare*, i.e. hill of the sights or views, which commanded a prospect, wide and varied, of the adjacent rivers, harbours, and mountains; and being struck with the beauty of the situation, he resolved upon building a church there, or, as some say, a town. He set to work, and collected a number of labourers and artisans to the place. While the work was progressing, a woman who lived in the adjacent village of Ballinorea, sent St. Patrick a present of an animal cooked in a dish for his dinner. After the saint had viewed the animal for some time, he formed an idea in his mind that it was an unclean beast, and did not wish to taste of its flesh; and, moreover, as he found some of the inhabitants of the district but ill instructed in Christianity, and others stubborn pagans, he conceived the idea that this present was sent with a view to insult him. So, laying down the dish upon a large stone, he knelt down upon the same stone, and prayed to God to restore to life whatever animal was there cooked. His prayer was heard, and to the astonishment of the workmen, a coin *buíöe* (yellow hound) sprang from the dish, and ran in the direction of the conflux of the Three Waters. St. Patrick, horrified at the sight, desired the workmen to go in pursuit of it, and kill it, for that it would blast the fruits of the earth and injure all living things in its course. The workmen, obeying the saint's orders, followed the yellow hound with spades, pick-axes, shovels and crowbars, and overtook it exactly a mile to the east of the place from whence it started, and succeeded in killing it. They buried its body on the roadside, and over its grave sprang up a stunted white thorn, called *Sgeiçín-na-con* (the little thorn of the hound), which remains to the present day; and, in perpetual memorial of the miracle, all the stones for one mile exhibit the tracks of the hound's feet; and that on which St. Patrick knelt contains a hollow, which is believed to be the impression of his knee, and is called *Glín Phadraig*. This hollow is usually filled with water, which is considered sacred."

"The saint maledicted the wicked woman and her progeny,

and prayed that the village of Ballinorea should never, throughout all time, be without a lame, or a dumb, or a deaf person. His prayer was granted, and the tradition is, that its effects remain to the present day, for the inhabitants are remarkable for indocility and viciousness, and for a total incapability of civilization !”

“Nothing but the absence of the sacred muse from the locality prevented this story from getting into the ‘Tripartite Life of St. Patrick,’ for I firmly believe,” remarks O’Donovan, “that it is as old, and perhaps as true as many others which Colgan has adjudged as interpolations into that celebrated work.” In very similar manner the name of St. Patrick is connected in popular legend with Coney Island, not far from the town of Sligo. St. Patrick, when on one of his missionary tours, resided for some time on the island, and observing the need of a safe communication with the mainland, commenced a causeway, which was to connect it with Strand Hill. He sent a messenger to his hostess, a woman named Stoney, *i.e.* Mulclohy (hence the ancient name of Coney Island, *i.e.* Inismulclohy), to cook a rabbit for his dinner. When, however, the saint sat down, pronouncing a blessing on the food, a gigantic cat jumped up off the platter set before him. It would seem that his hostess, not having a rabbit in readiness, substituted a fine specimen of the feline tribe. St. Patrick was so disgusted at this treatment, that he never resumed his work, and his ante-dinner labour is now represented by the small island styled Doonanpatrick. On taking his departure, instead of leaving a blessing on the islanders, he prayed that there might never be four of the name of Stoney alive at the same time to carry the remains of one of their relations to the grave. “The story of Boher-na-mias, in the county of Clare, is not unlike it; but a legend exactly similar is told of St. Patrick in the uncultivated mountains of Sliabh-Chairbre, in the townland of Aughnacon, parish of Killoe, barony of Granard, and county of Longford, where the saint’s preaching was opposed by the impious Carbry, the brother of the monarch Laeghaire, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages. The saint’s awful curse against the district and the people is preserved in the following lines (here translated by O’Donovan from the Irish) obtained at Granard and at Ballynamuck, in the year 1836 :—

“Accursed be Carbry’s rugged mountains,  
Wherein this hound was served to me,  
Accursed its heaths, its streams and fountains,  
As long as man and time shall be.  
Accursed its glens ; may no kind showers  
Descend into them from the skies ;

May neither grass, nor herbs, nor flowers,  
 Be ever seen in them to rise !  
 Accursed the people, now I strike them  
 With my red bolt, and seal their doom ;  
 May all good men for e'er dislike them,  
 May they sink in murkiest gloom."

"The 'Tripartite Life' is very meagre in its details of the transactions of the Irish Apostle in the ancient Ossory, but I have been long of opinion that the want might be supplied, to some extent, from oral traditions. Take another story of St. Patrick, which was very current when I was a boy living in Ida, and fond of all sorts of ghost stories and fairy scenes, which had no foundation except in the imaginations of old men and women. St. Patrick, proceeding from Laoighis into the adjoining territory of Ui-Duach in Ossory, commenced the erection of a church at a remarkable place near the banks of the river Dineen ; but he was insulted by the chief of this territory, who forcibly drove him from that beautiful locality. Patrick, who appears to have been a man of great force of character, had no notion to allow this insult to pass unrevenged ; and he proceeded to hurl the red bolt of his malediction against the chief of Ui-Duach and his descendants. He opened his sacred lips to curse the territory, and pronounced the words *Malluigim, malluigim Uí Duac* (I curse, I curse Uí Duach). But one of his disciples, who was related to the noble family of Ui-Duach, with a view to avert the curse from the territory and the people, added immediately after, *bíod pín an óión a g-cnuac* (let that curse be upon the thatch of their corn-ricks). This rhyme, it appears, was sufficient to avert the curse, so far as it was pronounced by St. Patrick ; but his anger was not yet appeased, and he opened his lips again to curse the territory, saying, *Malluigim, malluigim Uí-Duac*. The disciple added, *bíod pín an bárr na luácpa* (let that be on the tops of the rushes). The saint's anger was still up, and he commenced his curse a third time, saying *Malluigim, malluigim Uí-Duac*, and the disciple averted it once more from the lands and the people by adding, *bíod pín ar an Deirdhín ruac* (let this be on the red Dineen). St. Patrick, seeing the counteracting lines of his disciple so opportunely added after his own maledicting ones, felt his anger subsiding, and believing that his disciple was inspired by heaven thus to save his native territory from a heavy malediction, left the matter so. And behold ! the effects of the three curses, thus modified, still remain wonderfully plain in the territory of Ui-Duach. The thatch of the stacks and the hay-ricks is there most furiously assailed and stripped by the winds ; the tops of the rushes exhibit all the withering influence of the curse ;

and the river Dineen, which has deserved for itself the soubriquet of 'the red and deceitful Dineen,' is so subject to sudden floods and inundations as to sweep away not only men, cattle, and corn, but also the churchyards which lie within the reach of its floods."

In his *Acta Sanctorum*, Colgan gives a series of miracles which eclipse those recounted of St. Patrick. Amongst others he relates that St. Cronan requested a certain scribe, named Dimma, to make a transcript of the Four Evangelists, but the copyist was only willing to work nine hours a day. In fact, he seems to have been on strike; but a compromise was effected, and he promised to write until the sun went down. St. Cronan then caused the solar rays to shine continuously for forty days and forty nights; and neither was the writer fatigued with the continual labour, nor did he feel the want of food, or drink, or sleep, but imagined the forty days and nights were but one day, until he had completed his task. Colgan, with honest simplicity, thought Dimma ought to divide the credit of the miracle with St. Cronan, as both had an equal share in the memorable performance.

The Irish mss. of the lives of the early saints, like the so-called historical romances, were "treated as a sort of common land upon which any goose might graze," subsequent copyists inserting passages by which the character of the documents was changed, yet many traits of stoical heroism have, apparently quite unintentionally, been allowed to remain, in which the old pagan heroes are depicted as regarding courage as one of the noblest of virtues, and victory the highest glory. "Shall I pray that the chieftainship may never depart from your race, or that your soul may find rest in heaven?" demanded St. Bridget of an Irish chief. The prompt reply of the warrior was characteristic of his time. "I care not for heaven, of which I know nothing; but give me victory over my enemies." St. Patrick, on the eve of a battle, is reputed to have given an Irish king the choice of two things, defeat and heaven, victory or hell, and received the emphatic answer: "Hell to all eternity, so that the victory be mine."

These stories have in them the true heroic ring, and it is to be wondered how they escaped the clerical bill-hook. They remind us of the legend of the old Viking, who, after great persuasion, had been at length induced to accept baptism. The aged warrior was in the act of stepping into the font when he inquired of his would-be baptizer, where were the souls of his ancestors? "In hell," was the injudicious reply of the priest. The old sea-dog drew back, and folding his mantle around him, said he would go to his own kith and kin. Let us hope he had his wish, and joined them.

There was a ferociously savage custom in full vigour, as late as two hundred years ago. People on presenting infants to be baptized, reserved, from the sanctification of the rite, the right arms of male children; for it was thought that the boys, when they reached manhood, would be able to give a more malignant blow with an unblest, than with a blessed arm. This custom must have originated at a time when Christianity first sought "to make children of grace out of children of wrath."

A perusal of the so-called "Lives" of the early Irish saints brings before the reader, in a striking manner, the survival of pagan institutions under Christian names and forms. As on the Continent, the Christian Church first planted itself in centres of intelligence, in the towns and cities of the Roman Empire; whilst long after these had accepted the truth, heathen superstitions lingered on in remote districts; so in Ireland also, the first conquests of the Church were effected in the centres of intelligence, the Court of the Head King, the fortresses of provincial chiefs, or the seats of commercial traffic; outside this sphere of influence, paganism, for many centuries, must have continued to visibly exist.

Many examples can be quoted from ancient mss. of the resignation of cashels and forts by their pagan owners for the use of Christian communities, notably one occurring in the life of St. Cuillin, where it is stated that the chief of the country of Breffny, or the present county Leitrim, on his conversion to Christianity by the saint, gave up to him his fortress, in order that he might erect his monastic buildings within the enclosure. Indeed, in many instances, groups of religious buildings stand within fortresses of the greatest celebrity, as within the grand stone fort on the Island of Aran, and within the walls of a cashel on the Island of Inishmurray, off the coast of Sligo.

It is remarkable how in different countries many ancient centres of Druidical cult survived into Christian times, their accustomed ceremonies being converted into Christian rites. For example, Chartres, about half way between Orleans and Paris, possesses, according to a pamphlet bearing the *imprimatur* of ✠ *Franciscus Episcopus Carnutensis*—the sanctuary of *Notre Dame de Sous-Terre ou la Vierge druidique*, dating, according to the above authority, before the birth of Christ. Then after stating that the surrounding district was a great centre for Druidical assemblies, it continues:—"However that may have been, they say that, before the Incarnation, they worshipped a rudely carved wooden image, which stood at the end of a mysterious grotto, representing the Virgin Mary seated, with closed eyes, holding the Divine Infant on her lap. This tradition, which reaches back to the most remote antiquity, is even

recited in the Charters of the kings of France."\* *Fides sit penes auctorem.*

Turning to other authorities, it is evident that Chartres was really a Druidic centre. After describing how the Roman Empire proscribed most impartially on political grounds both Christians and Druids, Ramsey, in his *Church of the Roman Empire*, states that "the institution of the Gallic festival in the purely Roman Capitol . . . was evidently a countermove of the Government against the old religion of the country, with its council of priests at Chartres, the centre of the Gallic land."

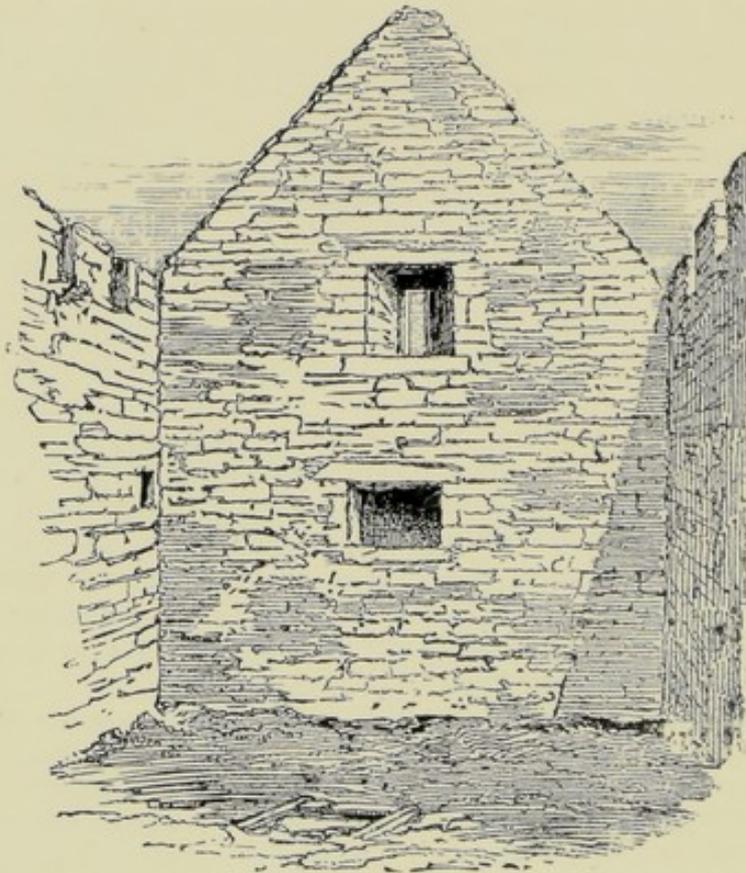


FIG. 82.

Interior of "the Church of the Fire" (*Teach-na-Teinedh*), showing in the foreground the position of "the Flagstone of the Fire." Reproduced from the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

\* "Quoi qu'il en soit, l'on dit qu'avant l'Incarnation ils honoraient, au fond d'une grotte mystérieuse, une statue en bois assez grossièrement sculptée représentant la Vierge Marie assise, les yeux fermés, et tenant sur ses genoux son divin Enfant. Cette tradition qui remonte aux siècles les plus lointains se retrouve jusque dans les lettres des rois de France."—*Notre Dame de Chartres*, p. 3.

The "splenetic Welshman," as Giraldus is styled by some Irish writers, draws attention to instances of the gradual but steady transition of the Irish population from the profession of Paganism to that of Christianity, and remarks that "not one was found to purple with his blood the foundations of the rising Church." Patriotic writers, in essaying to confute Giraldus, instead of studying the social and religious state of the country at the period of St. Patrick's advent, have endeavoured to invent a few martyrs to throw discredit on a statement which, to all intents, is correct.

The ancient Pagan sacred fires were occasionally taken under the guardianship of the new Christian communities. Giraldus Cambrensis reports the common belief, in his day, that the sacred fire of St. Bridget at Kildare, which the Druids had guarded long before the introduction of Christianity, had never been extinguished.

In the Church of Teach-na-Teinedh, or "the church of the fire" (fig. 82), one of many remains of early Christian architecture, within the walls of a Pagan Cashel situated on the island of Inishmurray, off the Sligo coast, there was formerly a remarkable flagstone styled *Leac-na-Teinedh*, or "the flagstone of the fire" (fig. 83). Until lately it covered a miraculous hearth—broken up by the officials of the Board of Works during their usual routine of "restoration,"—only the foundations of which still remain. On this flag, or fire-stone, fire was always kept burning by the monks for the use of the islanders. In later times, when monks no longer inhabited the cashel, whenever a householder wanted kindling for the family fire, a sod of turf or a piece of wood deposited on this holy hearth ignited spontaneously. Not many years ago, if any dependence can be placed on oral tradition, a Scotchman had the profane assurance, whilst visiting the island, to desecrate the sacred firestone of St. Molaise. Though generally reputed to be of placid temperament, the insulted saint and patron of the island implored his God to work a miracle for the confusion of the impious miscreant, whereupon a supernatural flame, issuing from the "fire-stone," reduced the wretch to a cinder, and the islanders still point out his calcined bones, deposited on the site of the hearthstone, as a warning to unbelievers.

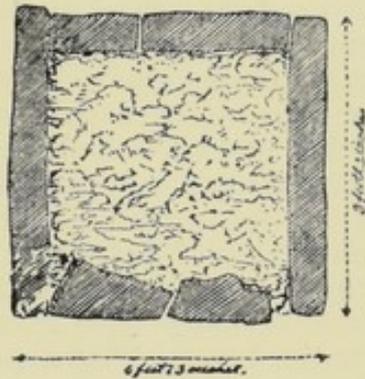


FIG. 83.

"The Flagstone of the Fire" (*Leac-na-Teinedh*). Reproduced from the *Journal* of the present Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

In the observances relating to fire, both as regards human beings as well as cattle, the ceremonies—particularly that of passing between two fires—appear in later times to have been intended not to sacrifice life, but merely as a means of periodical purification. For instance, Ledwick states that in his time “the more ignorant Irish still drive their cattle through these fires as an effectual means of preserving them from future accidents.”\* But at an earlier period it is but too certain that the sacrifice of human beings by fire formed a part of Pagan worship in Ireland, of which passing through or between two fires was a eucharistic celebration.

The remains of the fires were regarded with superstitious veneration—a small piece of charcoal, taken from the site of a bonfire on St. John’s night, in midsummer, and sewed up in the clothes of a woman, preserves her against fairy plots, or from abduction by the “good people”; whilst a live coal is considered to bring great luck to the house in which it ignites the new fire on the family hearth.

It is probable that the Druids consecrated water as well as fire, on the eve of Bealtinne, *i.e.* the 1st of May, and possibly they also prohibited its use, except when drawn from their own sacred fountains. This assumption arises from the special reverence in which certain springs and rude fonts were held. In some instances women were prohibited from ever drawing water from them; and, until a comparatively late period, it was customary not to draw the first water from wells till after midnight, on the eve of Bealtinne. This water was called “the purity of the well,” and is indubitably a relic of paganism. The people of each village were in the habit of sitting up, that they might be the first to draw a pitcher of water from the nearest holy well; and as it was considered that the water should be drawn

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\* “Two such fires as we have mentioned were kindl’d by one another on May Eve in every village of the nation (as well thro’out Gaule as in Britain, Ireland, and the adjoining lesser Ilands), between which fires the men and the beasts to be sacrific’d were to pass; from whence came the proverb, *between Bel’s two fires*, meaning one in a great strait, not knowing how to extricate himself. One of the fires was on the carn, another on the ground. On the eve of the first day of November there were also such fires kindl’d, accompany’d (as they constantly were) with sacrifices and feasting. These November fires were in Ireland called *Tine tlach’d-gha*, from *tlach’d-gha*, a place hence so called in Meath, where the Archdruid of the realm had his fire on the said eve; and for which piece of ground, because originally belonging to Munster, but appointed by the supreme monarch for this use, there was an annual acknowledgment (call’d *sgreaboll*) paid to the king of that province. . . . On the foresaid eve all the people of the country, out of a religious persuasion instilled into them by the Druids, extinguish’d their fires as intirely as the Jews are wont to sweep their houses the night before *the feast of unleavened bread*. Then every master of a family

furtively, many stratagems were devised to outwit the neighbours in procuring the earliest draught, or "purity of the well." Whoever succeeded in being the first to reach the spring, cast a tuft of grass into the water by which all subsequent arrivals were apprised that the spell was broken. This draught of water, carefully preserved during the year, was regarded as a powerful charm against witchcraft. It was used at the eve of Bealtinne in the succeeding year for another ceremony in which farmers, accompanied by all their household, walked round the boundaries of their land, after sunset, in a sort of procession, carrying implements of husbandry, seeds, &c., and this water. The procession halted when passing each of the cardinal points, commencing at the east, and various ceremonies were observed. All the cattle were then driven together and their tails examined, lest a witch might thereon have tied some spell; if anything were found attached, it was at once taken off and burned, and a sprig of rowan substituted. The ceremony was completed by sprinkling the assembled cattle with the water which had been preserved since the preceding May Day.

In some localities, cattle, either as a preservative against, or a cure of disease, were driven through certain bays, inlets, or streams; for instance, near the village of Culdaff, county Donegal, there "is a deep part of the river, into which it is usual to plunge diseased cattle, and at the same time to pray to St. Bodhan, who is supposed to intercede in their favour."

In a *Statistical account of the parish of Clonmany*, county Donegal, by the Rev. F. L. Molloy, written in the year 1814, he states that on the 9th June, on the festival day of St. Columbkille, the country people "formerly drove down their cattle to the beach on that day, and swam them in that part of the sea

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was religiously oblig'd to take a portion of the consecrated fire home, and to kindle the fire anew in his house, which for the ensuing year was to be lucky and prosperous. He was to pay, however, for his future happiness, whether the event prov'd answerable or not; and tho' his house should be afterwards burnt, yet he must deem it the punishment of some new sin, or ascribe it to any thing rather than to want of virtue in the consecration of the fire, or of validity in the benediction of the Druid, who, from officiating at the carns, was likewise called *Cairneach*, a name that continued to signify a priest, even in the Christian times. But if any man had not clear'd with the Druids for the last year's dues, he was neither to have a spark of this holy fire from the carns, nor durst any of his neighbours let him take the benefit of theirs, under pain of excommunication, which, as manag'd by the Druids, was worse than death. If he wou'd brew, therefore, or bake, or roast, or boil, or warm himself and family; in a word, if he would live the winter out, the Druids' dues must be paid by the end of October."—*Toland's History of the Druids*, new edition, 1814, pp. 117-119.

into which runs the water of St. Columb's well, which is thereby made holy water."

In the west of Ireland cows are also driven into certain springs or loughs, reputed holy, in order to restore them to health, or to make them again yield the usual supply of milk and butter, supernaturally extracted from them by the fairies. As a necessary part of the ceremony, lumps of fresh butter are thrown into the water through which the animals pass. The ceremony of swimming cattle as a cure for disease used to take place on the first Sunday in harvest, *i.e.* on Garland Sunday.

On the last day of April of each year, persons residing at a distance journey to a holy well where a large "patron" is held on May day. The well lies at the foot of "The Paps," two remarkable mountains which derive their name from their peculiar shape, and form a striking feature in the mountain scenery between Killarney and Cork. The pilgrims trudge to their destination, where having performed their devotions, they take away some water from the well in bottles for home consumption. The manner of using this water is peculiar. The operator—generally the person who performs the pilgrimage—commences first with the oldest cow in the byre, after which he takes the youngest, then the others are treated indiscriminately. He lets fall three drops of the holy water into the cow's right nostril, then three drops into the right ear, and then three into the mouth, at the same time repeating certain formula. Cattle so treated are considered by the country people to be impervious to all disease.

A description of an ancient pagan water rite occurs in an Irish mss. entitled, *Leabhar na h-Uidhre*. A Druid commanded a child to be washed every morning, with many attendant ceremonies, on the back of a cow. At the end of twelve months the cow, with the boy on its back, suddenly leaped into the sea, and was immediately changed into a rock; the child, however, by this time cleansed from the stain and disgrace of his birth, was uninjured, and finally rose to great eminence.

In souterrains, in the large interior chambers of cairns, and around the sites of primitive churches, rude shallow stone basins may be often observed. Whether the hollows were used for containing the ashes of the dead—for instances are on record in which ashes and calcined bones have been found in them when first discovered—for holding water, or some other offering to the manes of the departed is not clear; but one thing is certain, whatever their original use may have been, they, in many cases, were sanctified to the new religion, and utilized by the early missionaries, probably as baptismal fountains.

Not far from Dungiven, county Derry, there is a holy well much frequented, and the stone round which the penitents used to go after performing the ceremonies at the well, is in the river. Near Claudy, in the same county, there is a pool in the stream below Kilgort Bridge, called Turkish Lyn. Many country people yet believe that immersion in the water is a cure for all manner of diseases. On May eve the devotees bathe in the pool, and the offerings tied to the bush overhanging the "lyn," vary from a piece of cloth to a lock of hair. Sometimes small white stones, picked up from the pool, are deposited on the bank.

In the townland of Drumlighan, parish of Decies-without-Drum, county Waterford, a rudely formed fence marks the area of an ancient pagan burial ground. There is no tradition of any interments having taken place in it within living memory; but though devoid of Christian relics or associations, the enclosure is carefully preserved and guarded with superstitious veneration. Close to the fence, on the north side of the old grave yard, there lies a flat stone, its surface level with the green sward. In this stone there is an artificial cavity, about six inches in diameter, and six inches deep, usually filled with water, and containing a quantity of votive offerings in the shape of buttons, pebbles, pins, needles, and berries dropped into it by persons frequenting the place; for sufferers come from a considerable distance, and use the water as a cure for various skin diseases, especially for polypi and warts. The peasantry affirm that this cavity, or "well," as they style this hollowed stone, is never without water in the driest summer, and that it never freezes during the hardest winter.

This idea of the curative property of water contained in a depression in a rock, has been so amplified, by current superstition, that if a peasant sees a little water retained in the hollow of any curiously formed stone, he will, if so afflicted, wash the wart or polypus in it three times, and it will, he believes, gradually dwindle away.

The celebration of the old ceremony, performed by the Mayor of Cork, who takes possession of the Lee by the act of throwing a dart into the sea near the river's mouth, probably owes its origin to some ancient water rite practised by the Druids of Pagan Ireland. The marriage which Venice annually celebrated with the Adriatic is a world-wide known example of a water rite.

The pagans had thus evidently two rites of purification, the one by fire, the other by water. An important rite of the Druidical priesthood was purification of the postulant; so both elements were enlisted in furtherance of that end. Fire was probably the sacred symbol of annihilatory purification; whilst

water may have been regarded as emblematic of the purification attainable in ordinary and everyday life ; for these old-world wise men were most probably well acquainted with the fact that the ancient history of the globe is written by fire and by water, but the life which it supports by water alone. The earth they doubtless regarded as the great power that produces all things, from which all life springs, and to which all life returns. In nothing is the idea more noticeable than in the numerous charms and superstitious observances still in use amongst the peasantry with regard to the burying of objects, animate or inanimate, in mother earth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### IDEAS REGARDING THE DEAD.

Pagan Writers on the Cannibalism of the Irish—Corroborated by St. Jerome and others—Cannibalism and Human Sacrifices may exist with a high state of civilization—St. Patrick's allusion to Human Sacrifice—Notice in the Dinnsenchus—Cannibalism still prevalent in Polynesia, Australia, and Africa—Belief that the physical and mental qualities of man were intimately connected with his Food—Eating deceased relatives and adversaries perpetuated the physical and mental virtues of the dead in the tribe—Irish Wakes—A eucharistic Cannibal Feast—Various Superstitions relating to the Dead—The Dead even yet figuratively as well as actually eaten—Ritual and Ceremonies at Wakes—At ancient Burials, as given in Irish mss.—Human Sacrifices in Pagan and in Christian times—Cremation—The Keener—Various Examples of Keens—Plays and Games at Wakes—Pagan Burial Places still used—The Funeral—Barbarities practised in ancient times on the Dead—The counting of Heads, &c.—Funeral feasts—The custom of placing differently-coloured Stones with the Dead—Their probable Significance—Various Modes of Sepulture—Inhumation—Cremation—Irrefutable Evidence of Cannibalism presented by human Osseous Remains.

“WHATEVER degree of civilization the ancient Irish had attained before their reception of Christianity,” remarks the well-known Irish scholar, O'Donovan, “there is no nation in Europe of which a more barbarous character has been drawn by Pagan writers of the first century. These writers, it has been urged by those who deny the civilization of the Pagan Irish, had no motive for misrepresenting the Pagan inhabitants of Iernè or Hibernia; and it has been inferred that these ante-Christian writers stated what was actually true, or what they believed to be true, although they had never been in Ireland.” Previous to the first century a diametrically opposite idea of the civilization of Erin appears to have prevailed among early classic writers (provided always that Ireland be identified with one of the isles of the Hesperides); and it is a curious subject for speculation to determine why their opinion of the character of the inhabitants became so suddenly changed. In the first instance did “distance lend enchantment to the view,” or, at a later period, did “familiarity breed contempt”?

Bede writes as follows:—“In course of time, Britain, besides

the Britons and Picts, received a third nation, the Scoti, who, issuing from Hibernia under the leadership of Reuda, secured for themselves, either by friendship or by the sword, settlements among the Picts, which they still possess." This tenacity of the race in retaining firm possession of what they at any time seized, is exemplified in the modern rather uncomplimentary definition of a Scotsman, as "one who keeps the Sabbath and everything else he can lay hands on."

Ireland and the north of Scotland, at this early period, were regarded, as well by their inhabitants as by strangers, as one territory, and the population passed freely from one island to the other at a time when race, not territory, was the great bond of association. Hence it came that deeds and memories of a great warrior race belong equally to both countries; each had its songs and its legends about the self-same heroes, each had its local names taken from the same mythology.

Thus the designation Scoti, at an early period, means Irishmen, and on this subject some curious mistakes have been made. Dempster, when writing his *Menologium Sanctorum Scotorum*, took for granted that Scotia meant Scotland, and he transferred to Caledonia the greater part of that noble army of confessors of whom Erin is justly proud. For this theft Dempster was nicknamed *Hagiokleptes*, or the "Saint-stealer." That the name Scotia was originally applied to Ireland, and that the Irish were styled Scoti, or Scots, is a fact so well known as to need no more proof than a mere reference to Bede's writings. Adamnan, also, in his life of St. Columbkille, uses the terms Hibernia and Scotia synonymously. The saint ordered one of his monks to go "on a commission to Scotia," and informed his messenger that when "you arrive in Hibernia you shall find a man coming to meet you, from a distance, who will be the first to seize the prow of your ship in Scotia; he will accompany you in your journey, for some time in Hibernia."

Swift thus alludes to the same subject in poetic numbers:—

"From thee, with pride, the Caledonians trace  
The glorious founder of their kingly race.  
Thy martial sons, whom now they dare despise,  
Did once their land subdue and civilize.  
Their dress, their language, and their Scottish name  
Confess the soil from whence the victors came.  
Well may they boast that ancient blood that runs  
Within their veins, who are the younger sons."

The accounts given by the Pagan writers, Diodorus,\* Strabo,†

\* φασὶ τινὰς ἀνθρώπους ἐσθίειν ὡσπερ καὶ τῶν Βρεττανῶν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας τὴν ὀνομαζομένην Ἰρίν (qu. Ἰέρην).—(DIODORUS, v. 32).

† περὶ ἧς (sc. Ἰέρης) οὐδὲν ἔχομεν λέγειν σαφὲς πλὴν ὅτι ἀγριώτεροι τῶν Βρεττανῶν ὑπάρχουσιν οἱ κατοικοῦντες αὐτὴν, ἀνθρωποφάγοι τε ὄντες καὶ πολυ-

Pomponius Mela,\* and Solinus,† of the alleged cannibalism of the Irish, or Scoti, of their day, are corroborated by St. Jerome, who lived from about A.D. 329 to 420. The passage occurs in a controversial book which was written by him. Some writers, shocked at the narrative, try to evade its force by observing that Cæsar, and other standard authorities, make no similar statements; but, if Jerome's assertion is false, we might fairly expect to find it contradicted at the time, especially as the Scots are alleged, by their later historians, to have possessed literature much in advance of the age, and many able writers. Dr. O'Connor, in his *Prologomena*, goes so far as to assert that this Father of the Church is, in the case in question, not worthy of belief, as "he was a man of very fervid temper, even at an advanced age, for he asserts that he was flogged by an angel because he had read Cicero." That he may be accepted, with certain reservations, it may be presumed, as a theologian but not as a historiographer. Classic writers are vituperated for reciting such tales; but Keating, the "father of apocryphal Irish history," who recounts a revolting story of a young girl being reared upon human flesh, is allowed to escape criticism.

In the fourth century the principal food of the Irish seems to have been "stirabout"; and St. Jerome apparently had as great abhorrence of stirabout as of heresy, for, when writing against two theological opponents, he describes the one as "over-fatted with Scottish stirabout, and the other a huge and corpulent dog—one better qualified to argue with kicks than words—for he derives his origin from the Scotie nation in the neighbourhood of Britain." The saint seems not to love the Scots (*i.e.* Irish), and in his eyes the eating of stirabout is on a par with the eating of human flesh, which he describes in emphatic words:—"What shall I say of other nations, when I myself, when a youth in Gaul, saw the Scoti (or *Atticotti*), a race of Britons, eating human flesh; and, although in the forests they have herds of swine and herds of cattle, they are accustomed *pastorum nates et feminarum, et papillas abscindere, et eas solas ciborum delicias arbitrari?*" †

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φάγοι, τοὺς τε πατέρας τελευτήσαντας κατεσθίειν ἐν καλῶ τιθέμενοι καὶ φανερῶς μίσησθαι ταῖς τε ἄλλαις γυναιξὶ καὶ μητράσι καὶ ἀδελφαῖς. But he adds: καὶ ταῦτα δ' οὕτω λέγομεν ὡς οὐκ ἔχορτες ἀξιόπιστους μάρτυρας.—(STRABO, iv. 201, 4).

\* iii. 8. Cultores ejus inconditi sunt, et omnium virtutum ignari, pietatis admodum expertes.

† xxxv. Hibernia ei (sc. Britanniae) proximat magnitudine: inhumana est ritu incolarum aspero, alias ita pabulosa, ut pecuaria ibi nisi interdum aestate pastibus arceantur, in periculum agat satietas. Illi nullus anguis, avis rara, gens inhospita et bellicosa: sanguine interemptorum hausto prius, victores vultus suos oblinunt. Fas atque nefas eodem animo ducunt.

‡ *Adversus Iovinianum*, ii. 7 (= ii. 335, Migne). Quid loquar de ceteris nationi-

W. K. Sullivan, in his introduction to O'Curry's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, states that St. Jerome mentions the Atticotti in connexion with the Scoti, and after quoting the above passage, goes on to say that, "*the picture which he (Jerome) paints of both was very unfavourable, and based rather on prejudice than accurate information.*" St. Jerome, however, speaks very gravely of what he had himself seen: we might, with all due deference doubt of what he had heard others say; but to doubt of what he states he himself had been eye-witness is throwing great discredit on a great Father of the Catholic Church. Two more of Jerome's descriptions of the "manners and customs" of the Scoti may be cited:—"Scotorum natio uxores proprias non habet, et quasi Platonis politiam legerit et Catonis sectetur exemplum, nulla apud eos conjux propria est sed ut cuique libitum fuerit, pecudum more lasciviunt,"\* and again, "Scotorum et Atticotorum ritu ac de Republica Platonis promiscuas uxores communes liberos habeant."†

We have the account of the conduct of Dermot, King of Leinster, illustrating the ferocity, if not the actual cannibalism, of an Irish chief, but some seven centuries ago. A trophy of two hundred human heads was erected before this savage, who, on examining the pile, recognised the head of one of his most detested enemies, and in a paroxysm of unrestrained fury at the sight he seized it by the ears with his hands and tore off the nose with his teeth.

"Champion, who was in Ireland in the year 1567," remarks O'Donovan, "and who was not a rabid calumniator of the Irish people, like Hanmer, and even Spenser, believes that the Pagan Irish used to eat human flesh."

Thus, regarded from one point of view, the ancient Scoti, or Irish, were possessed of few virtues, and from the other point of view were innocent of crime; yet, when the past is examined, without regard to legendary tales or poetic fiction, we find them, even in their most polished periods, advanced only to an imperfect civilization. If passages from classical authorities, referring to the ancient Irish, be compared with statements made by modern travellers with regard to the various customs at present prevalent amongst savage tribes, they will be found to bear a great family likeness, and in trying to form a picture of human life, in ages when there were no written records, we ought carefully to utilise the analogies presented by modern savage customs.

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bus, cum ipse adolescentulus in Gallia viderim Scotos (*al.* Atticottos), gentem Britannicam, humanis vesci carnibus? Et cum per silvas porcorum greges et armentorum pecudumque reperirent, pastorum nates et feminarum, et papillas solere abscindere, et eas solas ciborum delicias arbitrari?

\* *Adversus Iovinianum.*

† *Epist. ad Oceanum.*

Viewed thus, we find many of them no longer inexplicable, for we often succeed in discovering their parentage in ancient thought. The passages in classic writers bearing on cannibalism in Ireland, have been very bitterly assailed, but it does not improve the position to turn to questions of textual criticism or to the credibility attachable to each writer. These objections can be simply met by the statement that the early recorded evidences of savage practices amongst the ancient inhabitants of Ireland do not chronicle any customs but that are to be paralleled among savage nations nowadays. It is impossible, also, to believe that human ingenuity could be charged with the invention, by different authors at different times, of customs which have their analogies in actual life at the present time.

Herodotus, when describing the habits of the Massagetæ, states that as soon as any one amongst them "becomes infirm through age, his assembled relations put him to death, boiling along with his body the flesh of sheep and other animals, upon which they feast, esteeming universally this mode of death the happiest. Of those who die from any disease they never eat; they bury them in the earth and esteem their fate a matter to be lamented, because they have not lived to be sacrificed."

In Greece, at the festival of the Omophagia, in honour of "Bacchus carnivorous," it is stated that, in early days, human victims were immolated; in later times, the sacrifice was commemorated by the priests alone being compelled to eat raw animal meat. "These bloody Omophagic feasts were celebrated every three years, and took place chiefly in Chios and Tenedos; from the raw flesh eaten at them, Dionysos obtained his names of *ὠμηστής* and *ὠμάδιος*. Toward the end of the third century before Christ, these rites had invaded Italy; in B.C. 186, a young Roman having been cautioned not to attend them, by a freed slave who had been initiated into the mysteries, and who knew that it was the intention of the priests to sacrifice him, communicated with the magistrates, and the horrors of the Bacchanalian rites were exposed. Then the Senate issued its famous edict, 'De Bacchanalibus,' which banished the mysteries from Rome and Italy. 'The Romans cannot be sufficiently thankful,' wrote Pliny, 'that they put away these monstrosities, in which it was regarded as an act of the highest religion to kill a man, and as a most salutary act to eat him.' This eating of human flesh was commuted afterwards to the devouring of the raw flesh of a ram or ox; and Arnobius describes the Bacchanalians of his day, who thought they received the fulness of God's majesty when they tore and ate struggling rams, with mouths that dripped with blood. Firmicius Maternus alludes to the same custom as prevailing in Crete, where, he says, in commemoration of the

boy Dionysos, they tear in pieces with their teeth, once in three years, a living ox. But this communion, united to a commemorative sacrifice, was not peculiar to the Bacchic rites, but prevailed in all, or nearly all, the sacrificial rites of the Greeks. Consequently, St. Paul exhorted his converts to avoid these communions of the heathen."

Thus human sacrifices and cannibalism have co-existed with a comparatively high state of civilization; numerous other instances could be mentioned—the Aztecs, in America, and the lately discovered early race of ancient Egypt will suffice. Instead of being embalmed, laid out straight, and placed in sarcophagi in tombs, the dead of this strange Egyptian people were buried in grave pits in their clothing, lying on the left side, facing the west, with the head to the south: the knees doubled up almost to the chin; the limbs frequently severed; the head usually cut off,\* and placed on a sort of pedestal. There were signs, not only that the bodies were cut up before being buried, but that they were sometimes partly eaten, and the marrow sucked from the bones, probably as a solemn rite, by which the virtues of the deceased might be transmitted to those eating him. Even more recently the ghastly discovery has been made, that so late in the career of the Egyptian nation as when the civilization of the eighteenth dynasty had impressed itself upon the people, human sacrifice was practised, and that not amongst the less cultured part of the community, but by the royal family itself.

People who sacrificed human beings, ate the flesh and drank the blood of their enemies, devoured their deceased relatives, and indulged in such like orgies, did so in obedience to the then fixed rules of society, which governed their religious life, and made all these, to us, horrible observances appear strictly right and proper in their eyes.

Ideas and practices of races in a very low state of culture are likely to present a faithful picture of the earliest races of mankind. When investigating the sites of Swiss lake-dwellings, the anthropologist turns for parallels to Borneo and to Africa; and, when investigating the alleged cannibalism of the primitive inhabitants of Erin, we necessarily turn to the most uncultured savage races at present in existence.

A passage from a poem in the "Dinnsenchus," on the Fair of Tailté, appears to refer to an alleged prohibition by St. Patrick of human sacrifice:—

"The three forbidden bloods—  
Patrick preached therein (*i.e.* the fair),  
Yoke oxen, and slaying milch cows,  
Also by him (against the) burning of the first born."

\* See page 335.

It is but right to state that some writers allege that the expression, "burning of the first born," refers to the sacrifice of cattle and not to that of children.

In Dr. Whitley Stokes' translation of the "Dinnsenchus," there are passages which refer to human sacrifices to idols. "'Tis there (Magh Slecht in the county Cavan) was the king-idol of Erin, namely the Crom Croich, and around him twelve idols made of stone; but he was of gold. Until Patrick's advent, he was the god of every folk that colonised Ireland. To him they used to offer the firstlings of every issue, and the chief scions of every class." In the poetical version of this same account the object of the worship of this idol is thus described:—"Milk and corn they used to ask of him urgently; for a third of their offspring. Great was its horror and its wailing." It appears evident from this, according to Irish mss., that at one period at least in ancient Erin the gods were propitiated by human sacrifices—and we have Pliny's expressed opinion that "the difference is but small between sacrificing human beings and eating them."

Among cannibals the offering of human flesh to the dead is inevitable. Human sacrifices at graves had originally the purpose of supplying human flesh for the support of the spirit of the deceased.

Canon Greenwell, who explored numerous barrows of the Stone Age—particularly in the North of England—is of opinion that many of the human remains which they enclose exhibited indications of cannibalism having been practised; whilst another specialist sees no difficulty in acceding to the conclusions thus arrived at. Thus we may, without being guilty of calumniating the dead, pronounce our ancestors of the Stone Age, if not even those of later dates, to have been savages. We cannot possibly reform our forefathers, we must depict them as they lived. If we represent them otherwise than they really were, we write fallacious history, pleasant reading for to-day, to be demonstrated false on the morrow. The accusation of cannibalism, it must be emphatically stated, relates not alone to the Irish, but to all the ancient people of the British Isles, though, at the time of the Roman conquest of England, its inhabitants appear to have already passed beyond the stage in which they eat their dead.

The food of primitive man for a long period, in one stage of his existence, was in all probability wholly, or almost wholly, animal, and the practice of an almost universal cannibalism is placed apparently beyond a doubt. Now it is well to state distinctly, that for the purpose of this investigation, *documentary evidence*—though classical evidence appears irrefutable—is *comparatively immaterial*; it is on the evidence the ancient inhabitants have themselves left, on the witness presented by osseous and other remains that

we must rely ; for it is clear that the first Christian compilers, or redactors, of the Irish records, would, as far as possible, erase from them all references to a former state of cannibalism. On the advent of the early missionaries the custom would probably be repudiated even by those addicted to it, whilst, unknown to the first pioneers, it may have secretly continued to exist for many years after the introduction of Christianity.

Until lately it was even denied by missionaries that cannibalism existed on the Congo, although the custom is practically universal ; the natives fully understand that it is not approved of by the white man, and a ludicrous instance which illustrates, in this connexion, the working of the uneducated conscience, is given by a medical officer of the Congo Free State. On asking some negroes, on the Lulanga, whether it was common for them to eat human flesh, they replied, with feigned horror—" Oh ! no, white man, we never do so ; but up the river, where you will be travelling to-morrow, the people are very bad, for they do it there." The doctor subsequently made inquiries from the up-river people, of whom he had heard such atrocities. He asked, " Do you eat one another up here ?" They indignantly replied, " No, no ! white man ; but the people down-river, from whom you have come, are very bad, they do such things."

The real fact was, that both tribes were cannibals.

Other races do not, however, attempt in the slightest degree to conceal their predilection for human flesh. A vivacious French writer recounts that, in the year 1725, some North American Indians were brought from the banks of the Mississippi to the Court of the King of France. A squaw, of whom he inquired if she had eaten human flesh, replied in the affirmative. The Frenchman appeared so astonished and shocked that the lady excused herself by explaining that " it was better to eat one's dead enemy than leave him to be devoured by wild beasts."

A missionary who sought to abolish this custom among a certain tribe, was met by the inquiry—" Would you have the dead eaten by the worms ?"

The Fangwes are cannibals of the most pronounced type, and are one of the many African tribes who eat their own dead. Miss Kingsley, who travelled in the Cameroons in the year 1895, did not discover a single burial-place in the Fangwee country ; but found in most of the huts junks of human flesh hung up, just as at home we keep meat in our larders.

Captain S. L. Hinde who for many years lived and travelled in the vast region of Equatorial Africa, states that nearly all the tribes in the Congo basin either are, or have been, cannibals. Since the advent of Europeans there have been greater facilities

for inter-communication, and tribes that were not originally cannibals have learnt to eat human flesh, whilst cannibalism in other tribes is on the wane. Captain Hinde further remarked that on the night after a battle, or the storming of a village, "these human wolves disposed of all the dead, and thus saved us, no doubt, from many an epidemic." He could not buy "meat in the markets, it being impossible to be sure that it was not human flesh."

The practice of eating the dead, whether captives in war or deceased relatives, is so prevalent, and modern travellers give so many instances, that only two more typical cases need be cited, one in Africa, brought into such notoriety by Stanley, the other a description of a funeral feast amongst the aborigines in Queensland, Australia, in the year 1870. In the latter case, a native having died, a funeral procession was formed, and the body was most scientifically skinned, dissevered, and the flesh removed from the bones, before a large fire. After a short absence from the scene, the spectator found upon his unexpected return great lumps of meat roasting on this fire, and, he significantly adds, that the natives "abstain from kangaroo for several weeks after a death."

It may appear strange that a creature apparently so insignificant as the hare should have been looked on in ancient times as sacred; but such appears to have been the case, at any rate in the British Isles; for we have the authority of Cæsar that, at the time of his invasion of Albion, the hare was "tabooed." The Roman gourmands esteemed the animal more highly than we do; and we find Horace praising it highly. Even at the present day there is, in some localities in Ireland, a prejudice against eating hares, lest they should turn out to be witches, and a great shriek should be heard when the hare was being killed.

We know that various animals were sacramentally eaten and others forbidden to be eaten in certain heathen and Jewish rituals. The rules as to the eating and not eating of certain kinds of flesh were directly connected with ancient superstitions, which in the last resort must have arisen out of ideas closely analogous to the totemism of modern savages. Most primitive peoples have rules forbidding the use of certain kinds of food, out of religious scruple, or, on the other hand, they never eat certain kinds of flesh except as a solemn act of worship. "An animal that may not be eaten, or that may be eaten only in solemn sacrament, is primarily a holy animal, and is often an object of worship, for in primitive religions the ideas holy and unclean meet. Similar prohibitions have been enforced in Christian times on converts from heathenism, in order to cut them off from

participation in idolatrous feasts. Thus Simeon Stylites forbade his Saracen converts to eat the flesh of the camel, which was the chief element in the sacrificial meal of the Arabs, and our own prejudice against the use of horse flesh is a relic of an old ecclesiastical prohibition framed at the time when eating of such food was an act of worship to Odin."

By way of guarding against the possibility of profanation the Pharisees enacted that the touch of anything *sacred* defiled the hands, while the Sadducees on the other hand ridiculed the idea that the roll of the law defiled the hands, but not such a book as Homer, and taunted their opponents with their many lustrations, or with what, in modern phraseology, we should designate their numerous "tabooes."

In ancient days it was a belief that the physical, mental, and moral qualities of man were intimately connected with his food, and it is still a very prevalent idea amongst tribes in a rude state that the flesh of certain animals imparts to some extent the characteristics of the animals eaten, the flesh of the fiercer beasts of prey imparts courage, that of the stag speed, that of the dove gentleness, that of the hare timidity, for which reason, perhaps, the ancient Irish did not eat the hare. This train of thought may have tempted the aborigines of Erin to eat their deceased relatives, so that the warlike or other virtues of the dead might be perpetuated in the family or tribe. In former days the heads of Maori chiefs slain in battle were usually preserved by the conqueror, so that we have, not only many beautiful specimens of tattooing, but also the record of the very curious fact that the eyes are generally missing, for the vanquisher generally scooped out and swallowed the eyes of his foe, and thought that "he had obtained the spirit and power of the slain, and was raised above his fellows, becoming—if he swallowed enough eyes—a god, even upon earth, and after death a heavenly luminary of the first magnitude."

When the motives which regulate still existing cannibalism are collected and tabulated, it is found that, in more than half the tribes, mental motives now prevail, whilst in the remainder the physical motives of hunger or pleasure even still predominate. W. N. Flinders-Petrie has roughly tabulated the ideas at root of present day customs amongst savage tribes thus:—

Honour, kindness, future good, love,	. . .	20 per cent.	} 54
To obtain strength, or magic results,	. . .	19 "	
As a ceremony, or to acquire position,	. . .	10 "	
As a punishment,	. . .	5 "	
From hunger or need of food,	. . .	18 "	} 46
From preference as food,	. . .	28 "	
Total,	. . .	100	

Thus we see that amongst the rudest people cannibalism is now generally considered a religious or semi-religious act, on the supposition that with the flesh the eater assimilates the spirit or some spiritual constituent of the victim.

The custom still surviving in Irish wakes of the entire assembly partaking of food, drink, salt, tobacco, or snuff, in the presence of the dead, is but an attenuated form of the older practice of consuming such things after they had been placed upon, or near the corpse or coffin. This in turn seems to imply that the recipients should have transmitted to them some of the qualities of the dead man, so that we have, in the modern usage, a fragmentary relic of the savage feast where the real body of the deceased was consumed, for it is evident that this rite has not the remotest affinity to that in which the "Sin-Eater" figures in connexion with funeral observances in Great Britain. There the "Sin-Eater" is generally a needy individual, though sometimes a "professional," hired to eat food laid on the chest of the corpse. He is supposed thereby to release the dead person from his sins, and, by his act, to take them upon himself.

Irish "Historians" are quite ready to believe anything which redounds to the glory of their country, but when the authority, which before was praised for truthfulness, proceeds to paint the other side of the picture, words fail to depict their righteous indignation. Cambrensis relates that when Irish chiefs who had been at variance desired to be friends "they used the custom of kissing the relics of the saints in the presence of a bishop as a solemn testimony of their reconcilliation." That was quite worthy of belief, but, according to Keating, what follows, although the mere incorporation of a pagan (and probably funeral rite) into Christian usage "is monstrous and incredible, *i.e.*, that they took a draught of each other's blood.'

In the *Yellow Book of Lecan* St. Cairnech, in concluding a treaty of amity between two opposing parties, mixed their blood in one vessel, and with it wrote the purport of the treaty.

The hand of a dead person was regarded as a certain cure for most diseases, hence the sick were often brought to the house in which a corpse was lying, that the hand of the dead might be laid on them. Bodies were often disinterred for the purpose of cutting off the left hand, for many strange spells are effected by its means. The best hand for the purpose is that of an unbaptized infant. If a candle is placed in a dead man's hand neither wind nor water can extinguish it; if it is thus placed in a house at night no earthly power will wake the inmates so long as the dead hand grasps the candle.

The following curious superstition is recounted by a Frenchman in the year 1795, in *Souvenirs de Mes Voyages en*

*Angleterre.* Describing an execution at Newgate, he says:—  
 “My horror was intensified by seeing many men and women carried to the scaffold in order to have applied to them for the cure of various diseases the still throbbing hand of the just executed criminal.”

There is a superstition of an extraordinary character prevalent in many districts of Ireland that to dip the left hand of a corpse in milk, and stir it, has the effect of making the milk produce cream in increased quantity and of richer and better quality. At Oran, in the county Roscommon, the corpse of a child was disinterred, its arms cut off and employed in some mystic rites, the nature of which is unfortunately not stated.

In many localities throughout Ireland mould taken from the reputed grave of a “saint,” if mixed with water or boiled in milk, and swallowed by the recipient, is considered to be an infallible remedy for certain maladies.

The Rev. Nicholas Sheehy, P.P., of Shanraher, executed for treason in the year 1766, lies buried in the little churchyard of Clogheen. T. Crofton Croker, who visited the place in 1828, recounts that a “hole is left in the side of the tomb to enable the peasantry to procure earth from the grave, and it is still visited for that purpose by the superstitious, who drink this earth in water, as a charm for various diseases. People have been known to come from Belfast and from beyond Dublin to obtain some of the earth.”

In the churchyard of Downpatrick Cathedral is shown the alleged grave of Saint Patrick. Only a depression marked the spot, as the earth was constantly removed and carried off to all parts of the country for its supposed healing powers and other virtues. The demand for the earth was at one time sufficient to remove the entire grave many times over, and would have done so were it not that fresh earth was constantly thrown on it (see *ante*, pp. 263-4, fig. 81). A similar demand and renewed supply existed at Banagher, county Down, and at St. Declan's grave at Ardmore, county Cork.

A cure for toothache is to drink water from a human skull, or to swallow a small quantity of clay from a priest's grave. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, mentions the use of a plaster of spiders—the web being useful for stopping the flow of blood—together with moss from a dead man's skull brought from Ireland. An Inishkea fisherman states that on the island it is believed that toothache may be completely removed, and will never return, if the tooth be rubbed with a dead man's finger.

There is a traditional story, recounted in the parish of Clonmany, county Donegal, “that the earth of a little hillock (*tempo desh*) on the right of the road leading from the chapel to the

church" formerly possessed miraculous power until the earth was vended when its curative properties ceased. "Still, however, they (the parishioners) carry all their dead around it, as being an ancient custom." This hillock appears to have been an old pagan sepulchral mound.

Several cases of the use of "the spancel" (*i.e.* ligature), a love charm of most gruesome character, the power of which is believed to be irresistible, came under the observation of the Rev. Cæsar Ottway. One notable instance, that of three young girls detected in the very act of flaying a corpse, is given in full in his *Erris and Tyrawley*: "The spancel" called in Irish, *stheiol dhrum agus thurragh*, consists of a continuous band of human skin, stripped from a corpse in the following manner, *viz.*, "from the side of one foot, up the outside of that leg and side, over the head and down the other side, to the sole of the other foot, up the inside of that leg and down the inside of the other, until the strip meets where it first set out." In order to secure the affection of the man, the only thing necessary is for the girl to tie the spancel round him when asleep. If he does not awake during the operation the charm will work, if he is aroused he will die within twelve months; thus the victim has no chance of escape.

In the curious account of the Irish given in Camden's History, some charm of the natives of the nature of the foregoing is evidently referred to where it is stated that the odalisques and "cast-off wives" of the chiefs resorted to witches, who were believed by them to be able either to procure the return of their husband's affection for them, or to be able to afflict their cruel masters with personal, or other calamities. A small portion of a human skull is also regarded as a specific.

Grose mentions that, in the graveyard of Clonthuskert, county Roscommon, a skull was shown "in which milk was boiled and given to a man afflicted with epilepsy." A well-known cure for this disorder is to take nine pieces from the cranium of a dead man, grind them quite fine and dissolve them in a decoction of wall-rue. The patient must swallow a prescribed portion of the mixture every morning fasting, until the whole is drunk, for if any be left the late owner of the skull will return to look after the unswallowed portion.

The skull of the poet Carolan was thus utilized by the peasantry. Small fragments broken off were ground fine, put in water and swallowed as a cure.

Epilepsy and kindred diseases were regarded by the peasantry as spiritual disorders, the work of demons, and the remedies recommended are highly suggestive, consisting as they do sometimes of fragments of the human skull, pierced and worn as

amulets round the neck, sometimes of the ashes of a skull applied as a plaster on the crown of the afflicted person's head, but more often, as already mentioned, ground and administered internally. In the Middle Ages the substance of the human skull was used by regular practitioners in the treatment of epilepsy. Even in the last century pharmacies contained a bottle labelled *Ossa Wormiana* employed for the treatment of epilepsy. The lambdoidal bone in form resembles the amulets cut from the human skull, thus showing a link between preventive and mystic medicine.

Making oath upon a skull—any skull will do, but a saint's for choice—used to be a very solemn affair. A writer describes one instance which came under his notice. An honest and very fearless woman was accused of theft. She was so indignant at the charge that she procured a skull, carried it to the chapel, and as the congregation came out after mass, she produced the gruesome object and "cleared herself." The greatest weight is attached to this strange oath, as it is believed that if it be violated the spirit, to whom the skull belonged will haunt, not only the perjured one, but the descendants from generation to generation.

In some localities, bodies when committed to the earth, do not decay in the ordinary way, and adipocere in large quantities is often noticed when the ground is opened for fresh interments. Adipocere is a soft, unctuous, or waxy substance, of a light brown colour, into which the fat and muscular fibre of bodies are converted by burial in soil of a peculiar nature. In one graveyard in the west of Ireland, the sexton had recently to gather up and carefully secrete this substance, as otherwise it would be carried off by people whose relations were afflicted with consumption; when melted, the adipocere was administered to the invalid as a certain cure for the malady. Here again the real body of the deceased is consumed, as in other instances before noticed, it is figuratively taken.

Strange ideas concerning human, or animal fat, were current in days both ancient and modern. In sacrifices by fire, amongst the Jews and heathen alike, the fat of the victim was specially reserved as the food of the gods; its use was therefore forbidden to the commonalty, by whom it was considered holy, and if a thing is regarded as holy or tabooed, it possessed, or is thought to possess, for that very reason, certain characteristic qualities. Among many savage races the fat of some animals is supposed to possess healing virtues, and melted in water, is often administered for cures. Dried flesh and fat are used by several African tribes as charms and to effect cures; grease is the common unguent employed all over Africa; its use is not merely considered hygienic,

but has also a sacred meaning. The use of various kinds of fat, but particularly of human fat as a charm, is common all the world over, and this is because fat, like blood, is regarded as a seat of life, and therefore a means of transmitting the virtues of the being from which it is taken to the being that partakes of it.

It was considered unlucky to change the clothing of a dying person, and a custom that, in some parts of Ireland, attends the last agonies of dissolution is stranger still. The moribund is lifted off the bed and laid on straw on the floor. On the island of Inishmurray, off the coast of Sligo, the straw or mattrass on which the corpse is lying, is carried, with the body, into the burial-ground, inside the enclosure of the cashel or stone fort, and deposited in one of the small pre-Christian recesses, or chambers, in the thickness of the cyclopean walls.

Not many years ago there were frequently deposited with the corpse a piece of a candle, a coin, and a small quantity of wine or spirits. The candle was to give the deceased light, the money was to pay his fare over the river of death, and the liquor was to sustain him on his journey. Glass bottles of the third and fourth century, found in the Roman catacombs embedded in the mortar of tombs, very probably contained originally a portion of eucharistic wine intended as a viaticum for the departed, that is, as food for his journey into the spirit world.

When a person lay dying, rush-lights were left burning (the unlighted end embedded in a bowl full of meal) till death occurred. The candles were then extinguished, and the meal given to the first person passing the house. The sheet in which the corpse was wrapped was carefully laid by as a charm for disease, and the pins, used in laying out the dead, were also carefully preserved, as they possess great mystic power.

Many funeral rites survived the substitution of the burial of the body for cremation: among them the lighting of torches with which the pyre was kindled, was, in after times, replaced by the lighting of candles placed around the corpse. The kindling of torches, or the lighting of candles, represents the ceremony of the ignition of the ancient funeral pyre.

At the ceremony of an Irish wake, the corpse is stretched on its back, on a table in the middle of the room, dressed in clean white grave-clothes, with five, seven, or even more candles around it, according to the circumstances of the defunct. On the breast of the corpse is placed a plate of tobacco, cut in short lengths, and a plate of snuff. Seats are ranged round the walls, and immediately behind the corpse's head is the place of honour, where sit the chief mourners and most respected guests. It is a

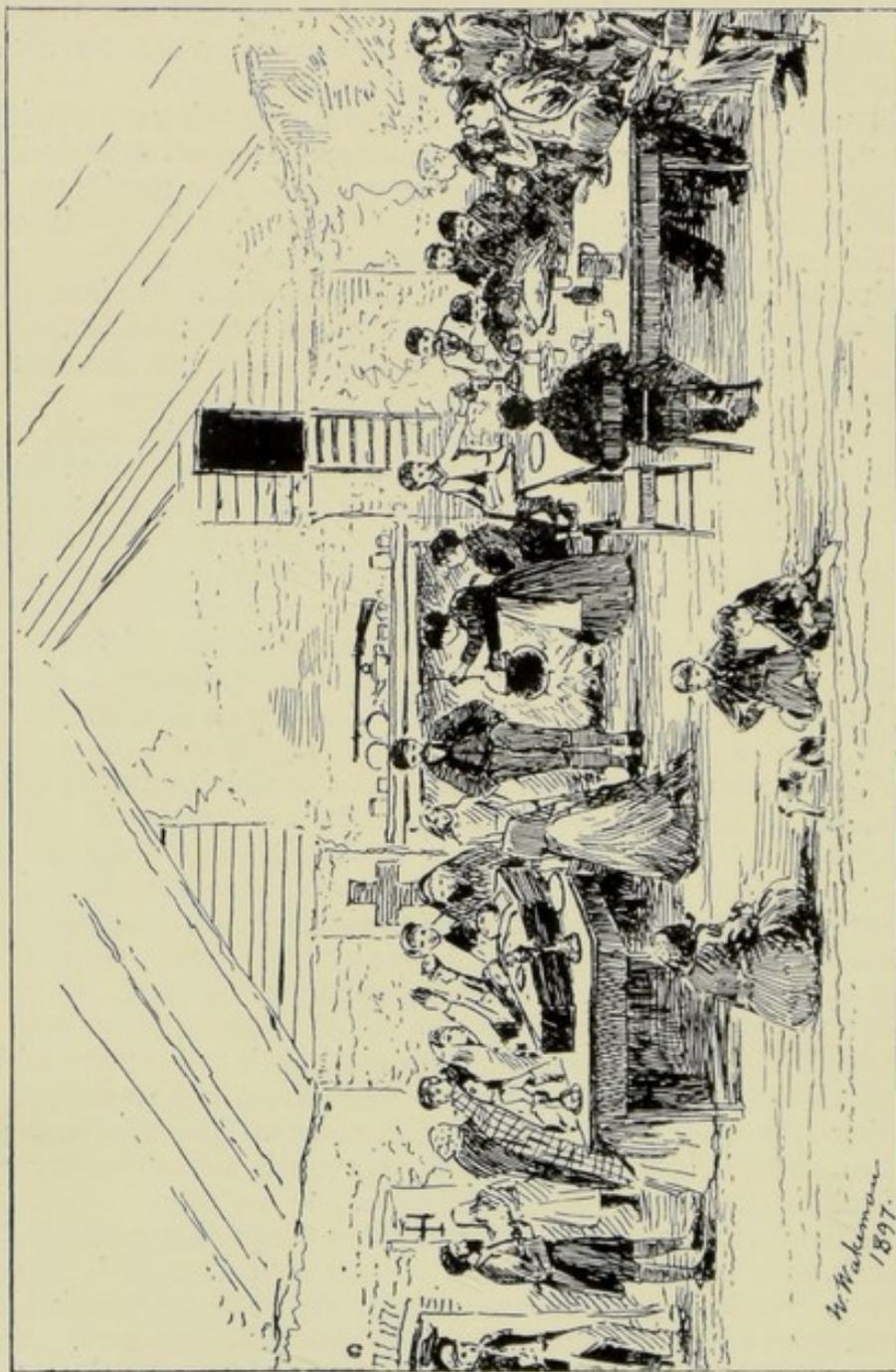


FIG. 84.—Scene at an Irish Wake.

common belief that if the corpse does not soon become rigid, but remains flaccid and limber, another death in the family will quickly follow.

When members of the family of the deceased, or near acquaintances, enter the room in which the wake is held, they stoop over the body and weep and lament, on which all in the house join in chorus, but when persons who are neither relatives nor acquaintances come in, they merely kneel, say a short prayer, take a seat and fill their pipes and their glasses (fig. 84).

In many parts of the country new clay pipes and packets of tobacco are distributed amongst the funeral guests, who sit around and smoke while the grave is being dug. It is believed that it is the duty of the ghost of the last arrival in a churchyard to watch the other graves, and attend upon their occupants; but the recently made spirit hankers after tobacco, and dearly loves a last smoke, so unused tobacco and unused pipes are not removed from the graveyard; the guests are, however, at liberty to take away the pipes they themselves have smoked. The pipe has, therefore, strange to narrate, developed into an actual religious symbol.

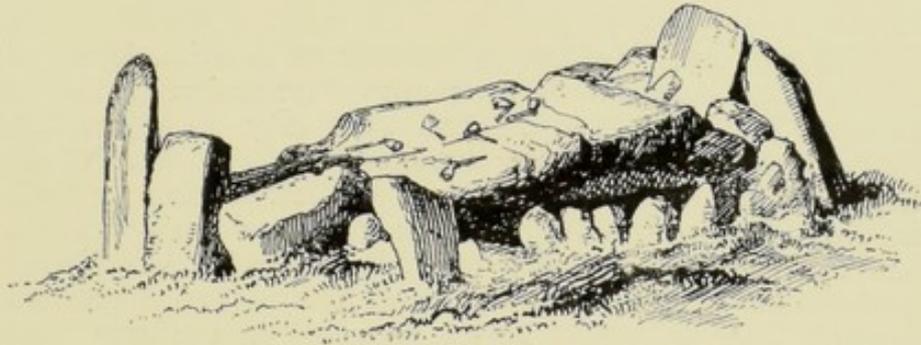


FIG. 85.

Tobacco Pipes on a Grave in a Churchyard in the West of Ireland.  
From Welch's Irish Views.

“When I was visiting Connemara two or three months ago” (remarks a contributor to *The Sketch*, July 28th, 1897), “I found an interesting relic of folklore custom among some of the inhabitants. Whenever a man of the village is buried, his friends and neighbours place their pipes on his grave duly filled with tobacco. Not content with this, they renew both pipes and tobacco from time to time. There are at least two churchyards near Leenane, in Galway, where you come across grave after grave decorated with pipes (fig. 85). This must of course be a variation of the old practices of placing food and drink in the dead man's coffin; but that a practice such as that, and also keening should survive to the end of the nineteenth century will be a surprise to the matter-of-fact

people on this side of the Irish Channel." Pipes and tobacco have been observed on graves in churchyards in the county Sligo.

Wakes held in the case of a person who has been drowned and whose body cannot be found, or wakes held on the arrival of tidings of the death of a person residing out of his native country, hold to a ceremony in which the corpse is actually present the same relation that does, in material matters, the cenotaph to the true burial earth. Gerald Griffin has immortalised this custom in his ballad of "The Wake of the Absent":—

"The dismal yew, the cyprus tall,  
Wave o'er the churchyard lone,  
Where rest our friends and fathers all,  
Beneath the funeral stone.  
Unvexed in holy ground they sleep,  
Oh early lost! o'er thee  
No sorrowing friend shall ever weep,  
Nor stranger bend the knee,  
Mo Chuma! lorn am I!  
Hoarse dashing rolls the salt sea wave,  
Over our perished darling's grave."

Although many writers assert that no mention is made in ancient Irish mss. of the ceremony of cremation of the dead amongst the Irish, yet it seems that they have overlooked indirect reference to it. For example, in the *Book of Ballymote* there is an account of the death of Fiachra, brother to Niall of the Nine Hostages. The ms. recounts how "his grave was made, his mound raised, and his *cluiche cainte* ignited." *Cluiche cainte* is explained as "funeral rites, including games and dirges." Now it is plain that a "game" or a "dirge" could not be ignited, and therefore the term *cluiche cainte* must refer to a fire lighted for the purpose, either of consuming the body of the dead chief or of preparing the funeral feast.

Commenting, however, on this passage, the late R. R. Brash, remarks that he fears it does not give any information on the point at issue. "The word *cluiche*, signifies games, and refers to hurling, wrestling and mock military combats that were performed at the *Aenachs* or annual assemblies; and also at the obsequies of great chiefs, or warriors; *Cainteach*, signifies fluency of speech, loquacity; we have also *Caintee*, a song, a canticle; *Caointe*, lamented, bewailed; and *Caointeach*, sad, sorrowful, mournful, plaintive. The reference here is certainly to the funeral games, and to dirge and laudatory requiems (*caoine*), which were recited, or sung, on such occasions. The word ignited, in the original '*hadnad*,' is very correctly rendered by Dr. Sullivan, but it also signifies, fervour, zeal, heat, excitement. I conceive that

the reference here is to the warmth of feeling and fervour with which the exciting portions of the funeral ceremony was carried out ; the term here appears used in a similar sense as when we say of an orator ' that he fired the enthusiasm of his audience.' "

In the story of the death of *Crimthann* and three other personages, as recorded in an Irish manuscript, there occurs a passage which, according to O'Curry, seems to prove not only the tradition in historic times of the practice of cremation of the dead in Ireland, but also that of putting persons to death at funerals. This important passage is as follows :—" *Fiachra* then brought fifty hostages with him from Munster, and he brought a great *cain* (*i.e.* booty levied as legal fine), and he went forth then on his way to *Temar*. When, however, he reached *Forud* in *Ui Mac Uais* in Meath, *Fiachra* died of his wounds there. His *Leacht* was made, and his *Fert* was raised, and his *Cluiche Caintech* was ignited, and his Ogam name was written, and the fifty hostages which he brought from the south were buried alive around the *Fert* of *Fiachra*, that it might be a reproach to the Momonians for ever, and that it might be a trophy over them." " The reproach which this act was intended to cast on the men of Munster consisted, no doubt, in treating the Munster hostages, who were all of the highest birth, as if they were the dependents and slaves of *Fiachra*. It may be, also, that putting them to death, in the way here described, and burying them around him, as they would have sat in fetters along the wall of his banqueting hall, consecrated them, as it were to perpetual hostageship even among the dead." Very similar ideas were current in classic antiquity. Achilles sacrificed twelve Trojan youths to the manes of Patroclus, together with his favourite horse and hound and a number of oxen and sheep. Aeneas sacrificed eight youths to the manes of his friend Pallas, as well as oxen and swine to the manes of those fallen in battle. Archæologists have long regarded the ceremony, practised at a mounted officer's funeral, of leading his charger in the procession, as a sampler survival from barbaric times, when the warrior's horse and trappings, armour and other weapons were actually buried with him, or burnt on his funeral pyre. The modern charger, which accompanies his master's body to the grave, and returns to its stable, represents the horse, which some centuries before, would have been offered to the priests at the church gate ; and earlier still would have been slaughtered for his master's ghost to ride, in fitting guise, into the warrior's paradise.

A work, entitled *Silent Gods and Sun-steeped Lands*, contains a series of remarkable stories, collected by R. W. Frazer, LL.B., when in the Indian Civil Service. One based on the widespread belief that the security of a building is insured by burying a human

being alive under its foundation, is annotated with quotations from reliable authorities regarding human sacrifice.

Jephthah's immolation of his daughter (some theologians, to avoid the difficulty, state that this was mere devotion and perpetual virginity), David giving the seven sons of Saul to be sacrificed, Samuel hewing Agag to pieces before Jahveh (theologians have little to say about these examples), appear to leave little doubt but that the Israelites of old, even "when devout worshippers of Jahveh, considered human sacrifices under certain circumstances to be *not only permissible but laudable.*"

In a primitive state of society it seems to have been a general belief that when a building was to be erected something living must be killed, in the blood of which the foundation was laid, and by this process the stability of the fabric was secured. In ballads and traditions the remembrance is still preserved of how human beings, children, and animals were slaughtered for the purpose of upholding large buildings with their blood. A tradition connected with many old Irish castles is that human blood had been mixed with the mortar, which imparts the hardness and tenacity so characteristic of ancient cement.

It was, it would thus appear, needful to appease the anger of the spirit of the earth for intrusion into its domain, by digging into the ground for the foundations of buildings. To this spirit human blood was considered to be the highest offering that it was possible to make. In India, as we have seen, and many Eastern states, the belief still exists—as well as in Siam, Borneo, Japan, New Zealand, and Fiji. It prevailed over the European continent and the British Isles. There is a well-known legend which relates that Voltigern, advised by the British Druids, sought out a victim to sacrifice at the foundation of his castle. In Scotland the Piets are reputed to have poured human blood on the foundations of their edifices. Attention may be drawn to the well-known legend which relates how Saint Columbkille defeated the machinations of an evil spirit which sought to impede his building operations on the island of Iona, by the sacrifice of one of his companions. This story contains very plain evidence indeed of the fact that in early Christian times human sacrifices were still remembered, if not, indeed, practised. After Columbkille\*

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\* Columbkille was both a poet and a theologian, and some of his verses throw a curious sidelight on the contemporary state of Ireland. At the close of one poem the saint observes that he loved Erin "all but its government," a good exemplification, even in those remote times, of the general bias of an Irishman's mind, as also of the state of society at the period, and a sentiment intelligible to the meanest comprehension when collated with another verse in which he describes "an island in the middle of a lake," that is, a crannog or completely insulated lake dwelling, as the only place in Ireland in which life might be deemed tolerably secure.

was banished from Ireland, his first attempts to build on Iona were rendered vain by the operation of some evil spirit; the walls fell down as fast as erected, and it was revealed to the saint that they could never stand until a human victim was buried alive beneath the foundation. One account says the lot fell on a companion of the saint named Oran, as the victim required for the success of the undertaking; another states that Oran voluntarily devoted himself, and was accordingly interred alive. At the end of three days Columbkille, wishing to take a farewell look at his old friend, ordered the removal of the earth. Oran thereupon raised his swimming eyes, and, addressing Columbkille, said: "There is no wonder in death, and hell is not as it is reported." The saint, shocked at this disclosure, and the loss to the coffers of the Church which it implied, instantly ordered the earth to be flung in again on Oran, uttering in Irish the words: *Earth, earth, on the mouth of Oran, that he may blab no more*, and this saying passed into a proverb.

The death of a fowl appears to be the last trace of this barbaric custom, but the Wind-God seems to divide the sacrifice with the Earth-God.\* It is the usage on some of the islands off the western coast on St. Patrick's day to sacrifice a black cock in honour of the saint, though no one can tell why it is considered necessary that blood should be spilt.

So late as the commencement of the nineteenth century, on the 11th of November, the eve of St. Martin, every family in the parish of St. Peter's, Athlone, as well as those in the surrounding districts, killed a living creature of some kind. Those who were well-to-do, an ox or a sheep, the poorer classes a goose, turkey, or fowl, and they then sprinkled the threshold and the four corners of the house with the blood.

In Irish mss. there are instances recorded of the punishment, for what were then considered as great crimes, by being burnt alive in public, and this ancient *auto da fé* may be regarded as a sacrifice to the deity supposed to be offended. Thus, Eile was burned in a *Teine Tulca*, i.e. a "hill-fire;" Murne, daughter of Tadhg, druid of Cathair Mor, would have been burned by her father, but for dread of the vengeance of Con Cet Chatach. In the case of the three kings of Emania, among the pledges given that they should rule by rotation were seven chiefs who were

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\* Fishermen in the west of Galway, in order to obtain a fair wind, buried a fowl in the sand on the seashore, turning its head to the point from which the adverse wind blew, and then left the poor bird to perish. On the island of Inishglora, a black hen used on some occasions to be buried alive, with its wings spread out, as a propitiatory offering to procure a fair wind, or some much-desired gift, from the invisible powers.

liable to be burned if the king, for whom they were security, did not resign at the end of his term of seven years.

Reference to cremation also occurs in Wasserschleben's *Die Irische Kanonensammlung*. The passage runs thus:—"A Sinodus Hibernensis: Basilion graece, rex latine, huic et basilica, regalis, quia in primis temporibus reges tantum sepeliebantur in ea, nomen sortitia est; nam ceteri homines sive igne, sive acervo lapidum conditi sunt." The place which this passage has found in a collection of Irish canons must be owing to its containing a recognition of the right of interment within the church. One is tempted to infer that, in the first instance, the chieftain who adopted the new faith desired to be there interred, as had been his ancestors. The second part of the passage seems to denote that cremation continued as one of the forms of burial, up to the introduction of Christianity into Ireland, for after stating that in early times only kings were buried in churches, the reason for this exception is thus given:—"The bodies of the rest of the people were either consumed by fire or buried under a heap of stones," *i.e.* they were cremated and placed under a cairn.

The capitularies of Charlemagne, of the year 790, contain ordinances levelled against burning the bodies of the dead with pagan rites, and against sacrificing human beings and making offerings to demons upon the corpse. Shortly after their conversion to Christianity the Prussians formally renounced pagan rites, such as the burning of the dead or burying them with horses, clothes, and valuables.

In one of the first accounts of ancient sepulture, which appeared in the *Transactions* of the Royal Irish Academy, W. Beauford, A.B., writing in the year 1788, says:—"The Irish long retained an attachment to their ancient customs and pagan superstitions, especially in the modes of interment; and the custom of burying in consecrated ground was not universal in Ireland in the twelfth century on the arrival of the English, as we find it enjoined in the Council of Cashel, held in 1172, and mentioned by Cambrensis."

A curious entry occurs in the *Annals of Loch Cé*, at so late a date as 1581. It is as follows:—"Brian Caech O'Coinnegain, an eminent cleric, and keeper of a general house of guests died, and the place of sepulchre which he selected for himself was, *i.e.* to be buried at the mound of Baile-an-Tobair." The compilers of the *Annals* try to explain this strange incident of the burial of a cleric in a pagan tumulus by the following remark:—"And we think that it was not through want of religion Brian Caech made this selection, but because he saw not the service of God practised in any church near him at that time."

A recent writer describing the miniature republic of St.

Marino in Italy says :—“ It is a curious fact that till quite lately the Sammarinesi have had no cemetery, and their manner of disposing of the dead was, to say the least, extraordinary. Except the few who were buried in the vaults of the churches, all were laid in stone receptacles in the walls between the exterior columns of the cathedral. After a term of years these were opened to make room for other inmates, the bones taken out, burnt on the hillside, and the ashes scattered to the winds of heaven.”

It seems extraordinary that in Ireland a memory of cremation should be almost absent from both history and tradition. Cremation appears never to have wholly mastered and driven out the more ancient and customary usage of carnal interment ; but the fact remains that at one and the same time both kinds of burial obtained. With the first supercession of inhumation, and the substitution, in greater part at least, of incineration in its stead, an immense forward stride was taken in spiritual development, for it is then that the idea of immortality commenced. Fire was employed in consuming the earthly shell, in order to set free the soul to ascend with the smoke of the pyre to its home beyond the clouds.

Amongst the Celts, according to Cæsar and other writers, burning the dead was customary, and he relates how, at one time, with the deceased were consumed whatever he valued most, *i.e.* his slaves, his horses, his dogs, &c. It may be surmised that calcined human remains found in Ireland are generally those of the “ upper stratum ” of society, though—judging from the exploration in the cemetery at Ballon Hill—cremation may, in some districts, have been the universal custom, but generally it was a funeral luxury. Pliny states that it was not an ancient institution, yet one is reminded of Ovid’s lines, so full of pathos :—

Cara fuit, conjux, primæ mihi cura juventæ  
Cognita ; nunc ubi sit quaeritis ? Urna tegit.\*

Some of the noble Roman families never adopted the new fashion, and in later times, amongst the Greeks, cremation, owing to the great expense of the funeral pyre, was by no means universal.

No account has yet been given of arrangements so systematic as that which occurred in the exploration of an old Irish pagan cemetery at Mount Stewart, in the county Down, where urn interment was the exclusive mode of sepulchre.

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\* “ I once had a dear wife, known as the choice of my early youth ;  
Do you ask where she is now ? The urn covers her.”

In the year 1789, circumstances necessitated the removal of a cairn (5 feet high, saucer-shaped on the summit, and 30 feet in diameter) in the demesne of Lord Londonderry. Though outwardly presenting no peculiarity to distinguish it from other similar structures, a very systematic arrangement of cists was disclosed when the stones composing it were carted away. Large flagstones occurred at regular intervals covering four others, set on edge, a sixth forming the bottom, and completing a box-like receptacle. The urns, though differing in ornamentation and

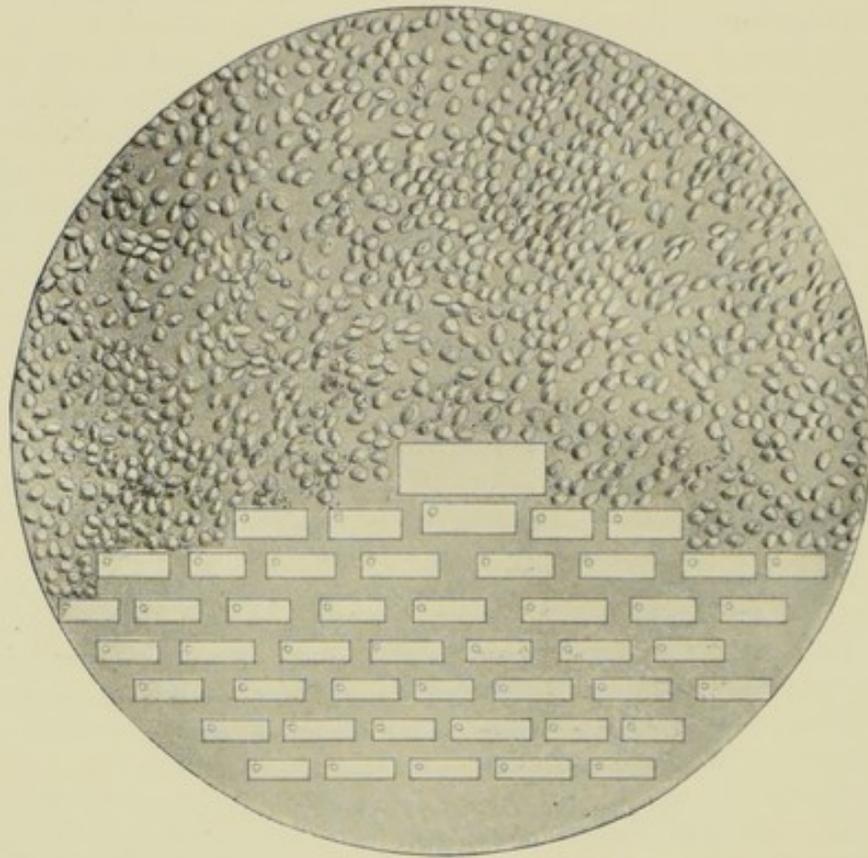


FIG. 86.—Systematic arrangement of Cists in a Tumulus in the county Down,  
From the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*.

shape, were of uniform size, averaging in capacity a quart measure. Calcined bones and charcoal mingled with gravel, showed that the bodies, prior to deposition in the cists, had been burned on a gravelly soil, and that in gathering up the remains gravel had been taken up with them. Each cist was 3 feet long by 18 inches wide; the urn was invariably at the north-west corner. South of the centre the cairn was closely and regularly filled with small cists, but neither cists nor urns were found on

the north side, although the exterior presented a uniform appearance to that on the south (fig. 86).

The assembling of the Irish peasantry at funerals and wakes, and the keening may be described in the Latin lines, of which the following is a free translation :—

“ Delaying not they hasten, speeding fast,  
And reach the house, to find a medley strange,  
Chaotic cries of grief, with turmoil mixed,  
While from the archéd chamber, far within,  
The piercing shrieks of mourning women ring,  
Re-echoing to the stars.”

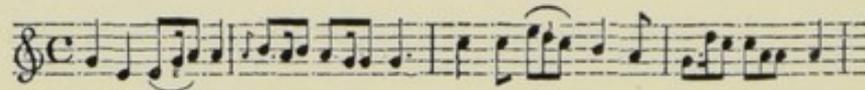
In the islands off the west coast of Ireland, where ancient superstitions still linger in greatest exuberance, no funeral wail is allowed to be raised until three hours have elapsed from the time of death, as the sound of lamentation might hinder the soul from leaving the body, and would also place the many demons lying in wait for it on the alert.

At an Irish wake the keener is almost invariably an aged woman : or if she be comparatively young, the habits of her life make her look old. Mr. and Mrs. Hall state that they remember one, “ whom the artist has pictured from our description (fig. 87). We can never forget a scene in which she played a conspicuous part. A young man had been shot by the police as he was resisting a warrant for his arrest. He was of ‘ decent people,’ and had a ‘ fine wake.’ The woman, when we entered the apartment, was sitting on a low stool by the side of the corpse. Her long black uncombed locks were hanging about her shoulders ; her eyes were the deep set greys peculiar to the country, and which are capable of every expression, from the bitterest hatred and the direst revenge to the softest and warmest affection. Her large blue cloak was confined at her throat, but not so closely as to conceal the outline of her figure, thin and gaunt, but exceedingly lithesome. When she arose, as if by sudden inspiration, first holding out her hands over the body, and then tossing them wildly above her head, she continued her chaunt in a low monotonous tone, occasionally breaking into a style earnest and animated, and using every variety of attitude to give emphasis to her words, and enforce her description of the virtues and good qualities of the deceased. ‘ Swift and sure was his foot,’ she said, ‘ on hill and valley. His shadow struck terror to his foes ; he could look the sun in the face like an eagle ; the whirl of his weapon through the air

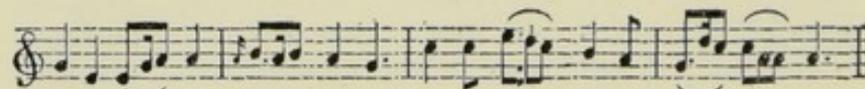


FIG. 87.—The Keener.  
From Mr. & Mrs. Hall's  
*Ireland.*

was fast and terrible as the lightning. There had been full and plenty in his father's house, and the traveller never left it empty; but the tyrants had taken all except his heart's blood, and that they took at last. The girls of the mountain may cry by the running streams, and weep for the flower of the country, but he would return no more. He was the last of his father's house; but his people were many both on hill and valley; and they would revenge his death!' Then, kneeling, she clenched her hands together, and cursed bitter curses against whoever had aimed the fatal bullet—curses which illustrate but too forcibly the fervour of Irish hatred. 'May the light fade from your eyes, so that you may never see what you love! May the grass grow at your door! May you fade into nothing, like snow in summer! May your own blood rise against ye, and the sweetest drink ye take be the bitterest cup of sorrow! May ye die without benefit of priest or clergy.' To each of her curses there was a deep 'Amen,' which the *ban caointhe* paused to hear, and then resumed her maledictions."



Mo laoch fein u, laoch mo laoch. Leanabh mo leanabh, ghil cha-ómh  
O my own youth, youth of my youth. Child of my child, gentle, valiant,



Mo chroidhe lium—nich mar long, Gulath bbrath cha n'ei—rich Of—car.  
My heart cries like a blackbird's. For ever gone, never so rife, O Oscar.

FIG. 88.

Marbh Rann Oscar—The Death-song of Oscar. From the *Transactions*,  
Royal Irish Academy.

Fig. 88 is the alleged keen of Finn Mac Cool over the corpse of his grandson Oscar, slain at the battle of Gabhra in the third century. The music was preserved in the wilds of Connaught, and in the Highlands of Scotland, the tune being nearly the same. Poetry and music are apparently coeval and of comparatively late date, having originated in the Bardic school of the Province of Connaught, a fountain from whence flowed many of those Irish ballads and romances which have, in these latter ages, become the foundation of the numerous ideal superstructures relative to the history and antiquities of this island.

The power of the keen, as a vehicle for conveying the sentiments of the heart, has, in the present day, completely vanished;

the Irish, like the Jews, Arabs, and other nations lamented over the dead, uttering cries of grief, tearing their hair, demanding of the deceased, "Why did he die?" "Had he not food, raiment, and friends: why then did he die?" Thomas Dineley, in the account of his tour through Ireland in the reign of Charles II., compares the funeral customs of some of the Carribbee Islanders to those of the Irish of his day. He mentions the "howlings and lamentations" practised by these savages over the dead body, "to which they add the most ridiculous and nonsensical discourses imaginable, and not much unlike the vulgar Irish. They talk to him of the best fruits their country doth afford, telling him that he might have eaten of them as much as he would. They put him in mind of the love his family had for him, and his reputation, &c., reproaching him, above all, for dying, as if it had been in his power to prevent it, as for example they tell him:—

"'Thou might'st have lived so well and made so good cheer, thou didst want neither manioe nor potatoes, bananas nor ananas.'

"'As the Irish.'

"'Thou didst want nor usquebaugh (whiskey), oat cakes, sweet milk, bonny clobber (cheese), mallahaune (sour buttermilk), dillisk (an edible sea-weed), slugane (sloak), and good spoals (joints of meat). How is then that thou didst die? Thou didst live in so great esteem with all men everyone did love and respect thee: what is the matter, then, that thou art dead? Thy friends and relations were so kind to thee; their greatest care was only to please thee, and to let thee lack nothing: pray tell us, then, why didst thou think of dying? Thou wast so useful and serviceable to the country; thou hadst signalized thyself in so many battles; thou wast our defence and security from the assault and fury of our enemies: why is it, then, that thou art dead?' Which last words are always the burden of the howl and song to both people, and the conclusion of all these complaints, which they repeat a thousand times, reckoning over all the actions of his life with all the advantages wherewith he was endowed."

O'Brien, in his *Irish Dictionary*, described the keen as comprising a lamentation of the dead, according to certain loud and mournful notes and verses "wherein the pedigree, land, property, generosity, and good actions of the deceased person and his ancestors are diligently and harmoniously recounted in order to excite pity and compassion in the hearers, and to make them sensible of their great loss in the death of the person they lament."

One of these modern keens attracted the notice of the poet Crabbe, who described it as very pathetic, the more so, as in it,

as in many of its class, there is no suggested Christian consolation, no implied reunion in a quiet, far off country; all is unqualified grief and, on that account alone, most deeply melancholy. Though stated to have been composed in the commencement of the nineteenth century it is pure paganism. Its beautiful simplicity is in part sacrificed by its rendering into verse, so it is first given in the literal translation of Crofton Croker:—

“Cold and silent is thy bed; damp is the blessed dew of night; but the sun will bring warmth and heat in the morning and dry up the dew. But my heart cannot feel heat from the morning sun; no more will the print of your footsteps be seen in the morning dew on the mountains of Ivera, where you had so often hunted the fox and the hare, ever foremost amongst your men. Cold and silent is now thy bed.

“My sunshine you were, I loved you better than the sun itself, and when I see the sun going down in the west I think of my boy and of my black night of sorrow. Like the rising sun, he had a red glow on his cheek. He was as bright as the sun at midday; but a dark storm came on, and my sunshine was lost to me for ever. My sunshine will never again come back. No, my boy cannot return. Cold and silent is his bed.

“Life-blood of my heart; for the sake of my boy I cared only for this world. He was brave; he was generous; he was noble-minded; he was beloved by rich and poor; he was clear-skinned. But why should I tell what everyone knows? Why should I now go back to what never can be more? He who was everything to me is dead. He is gone for ever: he will return no more. Cold and silent is his repose!”

The following is a paraphrase of the foregoing keen:—

“Oh! silent and cold is thy lonely repose,  
 Though chilly and damp falls the mist of the night;  
 Yet the sun shall bring joys with the morn, and the dews  
 Shall vanish before his keen arrows of light;  
 But the pulses of life in thy bosom no more  
 Shall vibrate, nor morning awaken thine eye;  
 No more shalt thou wander thy native hills o'er,  
 The green hills of Erin, that bloom to the sky;  
 And childhood's gay scenes, when thy soul undefiled,  
 First felt the dear blossoms of friendship unclose,  
 Where infancy's features in playfulness smiled;  
 But ah! cold and silent is now thy repose!

“Thou wert dearer to me than the sun in the west,  
 When he tinges with crimson the skirts of the sea;  
 But memory weeps, and my soul is distressed;  
 When I look on his beauty, I think upon thee!



“ At the glad sound of that footstep,  
 My heart within me smiled ;  
 Thou wert brought back all silent  
 On thy bier, my child.  
 Darkly the cloud of night comes rolling on ;  
 Darker is thy repose, my fair-hair'd son.  
 Silent and dark.

“ I thought to see thy children  
 Laugh on me with thine eyes ;  
 But my sorrow's voice is lonely  
 Where my life's-flower lies.

“ I shall go to sit beside thee,  
 Thy kindred graves among ;  
 I shall hear the tall grass whisper ;  
 I shall hear it not long.  
 Darkly the cloud of night comes rolling on ;  
 Darker is thy repose, my fair-hair'd son.  
 Silent and dark.

“ And I too shall find slumber  
 With my lost one, in the earth ;  
 Let none light up the ashes  
 Again on our hearth.

“ Let the roof go down, let silence  
 On the home for ever fall,  
 Where my boy lay cold, and heard not  
 His lone mother's call.  
 Darkly the cloud of night comes rolling on ;  
 Darker is thy repose, my fair-hair'd son.  
 Silent and dark.

Wakes, and the customs attached to them, portray varied phases of life in long past ages, and the idiosyncrasies of the people are no where so well displayed as at these meetings, where tragedy and comedy, all that is stern and all that is humorous in Irish character, are displayed in unfettered freedom. Transition from deepest sorrow to mirth occurs with the greatest rapidity, so that there is melancholy in their mirth, and mirth in their melancholy. Great dramatic talent was displayed by the actors of certain plays, games, and sports performed at these meetings. A peasant who saw, for the first time, a play at one of the Dublin theatres, said : “ I have now seen the great English actors, and heard plays in the English tongue, but poor and dull they seemed to me, after the acting of our own people at the wakes and fairs ; for it is a truth the English cannot make us weep and laugh, as I have seen the crowds with us, when the players played and the poets recited their stories.”

At wakes, plays, games, or sports were in use, which appear to have been essentially of pagan origin, and of such a character that, although at first tolerated, yet in more civilized days they

were suppressed. The game usually first performed, termed "Bout," was joined in by men and women. Pagan influence and pagan modes of thought may be traced all through various plays, as, for example, in that of "The Cow and the Bull."

The play entitled "The Building of the Ship" was divided into scenes or acts, severally entitled, "Laying the Keel," "Placing the Stem and Stern Post," "Painting the Ship," "Erecting the Mast," and "Launching," or "Drawing the Ship out of the Mud."

In the first proceedings the laying down of the keel, several lads were placed on their backs in line, on the floor. The hierophant, or master of the ceremonies, accompanied by his attendants, then walked on the row, tapping them pretty smartly with his wand or stick, to ascertain if the timber was sound.

The stem and stern posts were then put into position by placing two young men at the end of the line in a sitting posture. The ribs and planking were then arranged. These consisted of a double line of young men, the first row lying, the second sitting. The body of the ship being completed, the master of the ceremonies, followed by one of his attendants, walked down on the line of legs representing the ribs, kicking and striking them to see that the timbers were sound, examining the rivets, and giving an opinion as to whether they were sound or not.

When the inspection was finished, needless to say, after much severe practical joking, a huge bucket of dirty water and a mop were produced. The water was then poured over the performers, to represent the process of painting.

In erecting the mast, one of the youngest of the lads was selected, placed in the centre of the ship as a mast, and gestures, expressions, and acts were used, proving that this part of the play was an undoubted relic of the most primitive times.

In launching or drawing the ship out of the mud, the men engaged in the performance actually presented themselves before the assembled company in a state of nudity. It would be now difficult to obtain further details. Those here given were extracted from old countrymen, a little from one, and a little from the other, the fragments then pieced together. When inquiries were instituted of one informant regarding the ceremony of "erecting the mast," he looked surprised, and said, "Lord, how did you know that? it's nearly sixty years since I saw it, and sure the priests won't let it be acted now." The foregoing account of this play is corroborated by Lady Wilde in her description of Wake Games.

The play entitled "The building of the fort" was filled with sarcasms on various Christian rites and customs. The

erection of one of these ancient strongholds must have been inaugurated by the tribe with great ceremony, and the play was evidently a relic of the time-honoured pagan custom.

When space had been cleared in the centre of the room where the wake was held, the actors entered, wearing masks, and fantastically attired, carrying long poles for spears, plaited straw on the arms, to represent shields, and went through the form of building a fort, tracing out the shape with their spears. Whilst thus engaged, a new set of actors, also masked and armed, representing their enemies, appeared, and a general fight ensued, until a horn was sounded, when to save further bloodshed, it was proposed that a single combat should be arranged between the two leaders of the hostile forces. After a well-sustained fight one combatant fell, as if mortally wounded, and was immediately surrounded by women in cloaks, with the hoods drawn over their heads, who keened over the fallen warrior, whilst a bard recited his exploits, and pipers played martial music.

It was then suggested that the prostrate man was not dead, and an herb-doctor, arrayed with white flowing beard, carrying a huge bundle of herbs, was led in, and went through sundry strange incantations. The fallen man then came to life, and was carried off by his comrades with shouts of triumph. This concluded the play—a very good epitome of ancient Irish life.

It may be well to give typical examples of a restored stone fortress, or cashel, as also of an earthen fort, the laying out and building of which form the subject-matter of the wake-play just described.

The prominent feature of the primitive architecture of the early inhabitants of Ireland is uniformity and simplicity of design; the circle, sometimes slightly deviating into an oval, being characteristic of their villages, their camps, and their individual dwellings. Whether raised above the surface or below it, the same architectural uniformity of shape is everywhere displayed. Fig. 89 is a bird's-eye view of Dun Conor, one of the finest cashels in the Aran group, as it would appear if restored. The innermost enclosure, or fort proper, is of a long oval form—227 feet by 115—and the wall has two facings and a central core. The innermost wall is 7 feet thick, the interior core 5 feet 6 inches, and the outer face of an equal size; the greater depth of the interior face was to allow for the weakening of the work by the different flights of steps taken out of its thickness. Thus a triple compacted wall was formed 18 feet wide, and still in places nearly 20 feet in height, with a considerable inward slope or batter on both faces. The outer and inner compartments of the wall rose, at the summit, several feet above the central core, thus forming on either side a highly efficient breastwork.

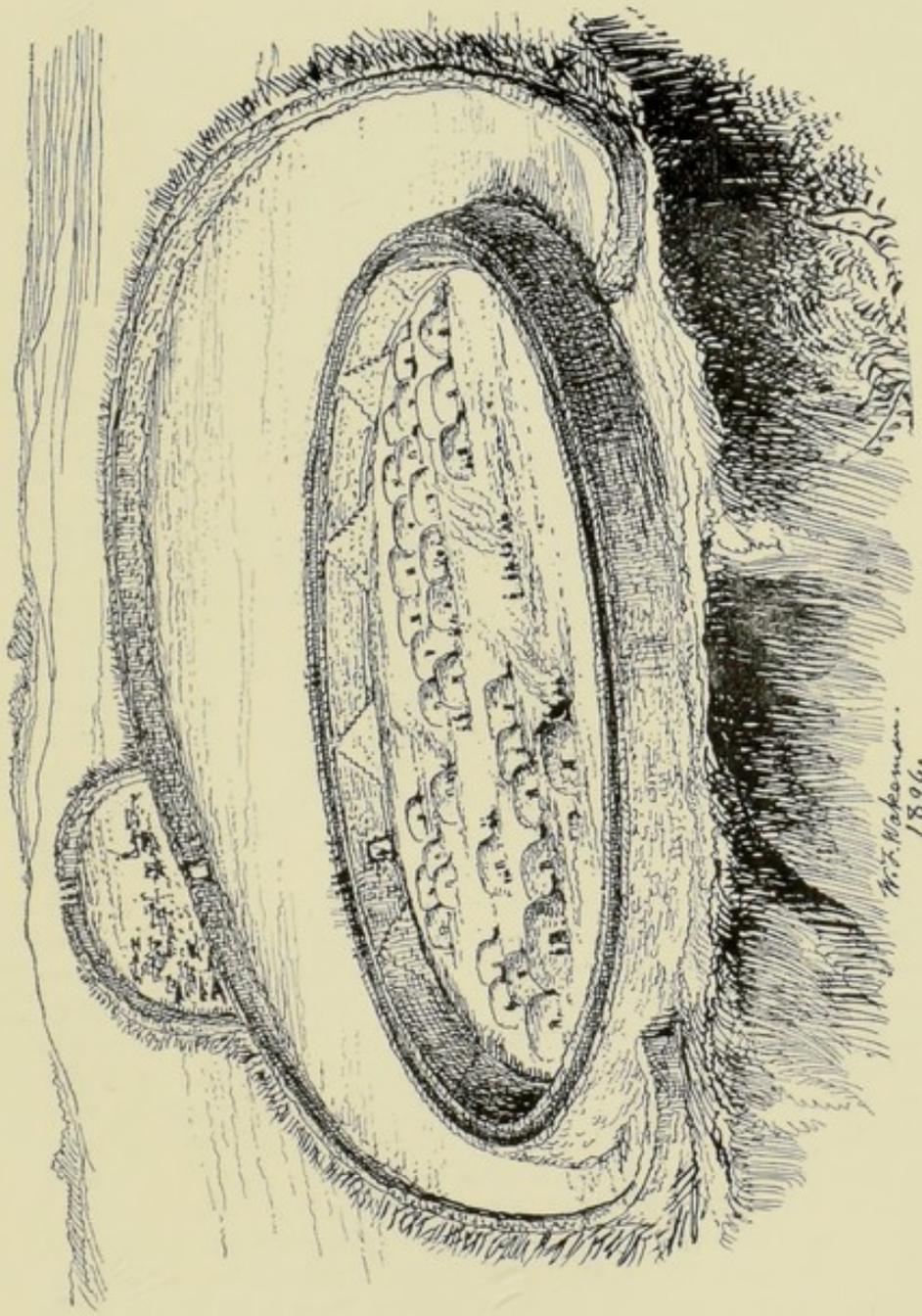


FIG. 89.

Bird's-eye view of the Cashel of Dun Conor. Restored.

On the north-eastern curve of the rampart is a semi-circular enclosure, pierced on its eastern side by a doorway; its unusual size suggests the idea that it was intended for the admission of cattle; a smaller doorway led through the second wall. Upon the western side of the cashel no outworks were required, a precipitous cliff answering all requirements for the protection of the hold. In the year 1839 many remains of bee-hive shaped huts, represented in the illustration, were to be seen within the inner enclosure. An array of narrow flagstones, in the form of a rude *chevaux de frise*, originally encircled nearly the whole of the outer wall.

Probably the most remarkable and typical remains of the rath class is the great work of Rathkeltain, close to Downpatrick, 2100 feet in circumference, with three ramparts (fig. 90). The central mound (a usual feature) is 60 feet in height; the principal rampart of the same elevation is in places 30 feet broad. Fig. 91 is an ideal restoration of a rath after a study of this great earthen fortress, as well as other typical raths.

"Turning the spit" and "Selling the pig" are the designations of two plays commonly acted at Irish wakes. "The game of the Rope" and that of "The Horse Fair" appear to have been also favourite pastimes. The following description of them was given by a peasant to Lady Wilde: "Two short ropes, made of hay, and twisted as hard as they can be made, are held by two men, standing on each side of a chair placed at some little distance from the corpse, lying in the coffin. Then a young man is led forward, who takes his seat on the chair, and they ask him who is his sweetheart. If he objects to tell them, they beat him till he names one of the girls present; then he is asked would he like to kiss her, and they beat him till he answers yes. The girl is then led over and seated on the chair, whilst the lover kisses her; but as he is beaten all the time with the rope, he makes the ceremony as brief as possible. The girl is then asked if she is content, and, sometimes, for fun, she tells them that the lover they gave her had no idea of a proper kiss at all, on which the young man is beaten again with ropes, till he cries out that he will try again. But the girl won't have him; and so the same game goes on, till every young man in the room has been seated on the chair in succession, and every girl has been kissed."

In the game of the "Horse Fair," the hierophant, holding a brogue in his hand, ties a string of youngsters together as horses, and drives them round the circle, while another man drags them on by the rope, striking any who are restive with the brogue. A blacksmith and a horse-dealer examine the horses, and put them through their paces. Any short, stout young fellow is named the "Cob," another with long legs the "Race Horse,"

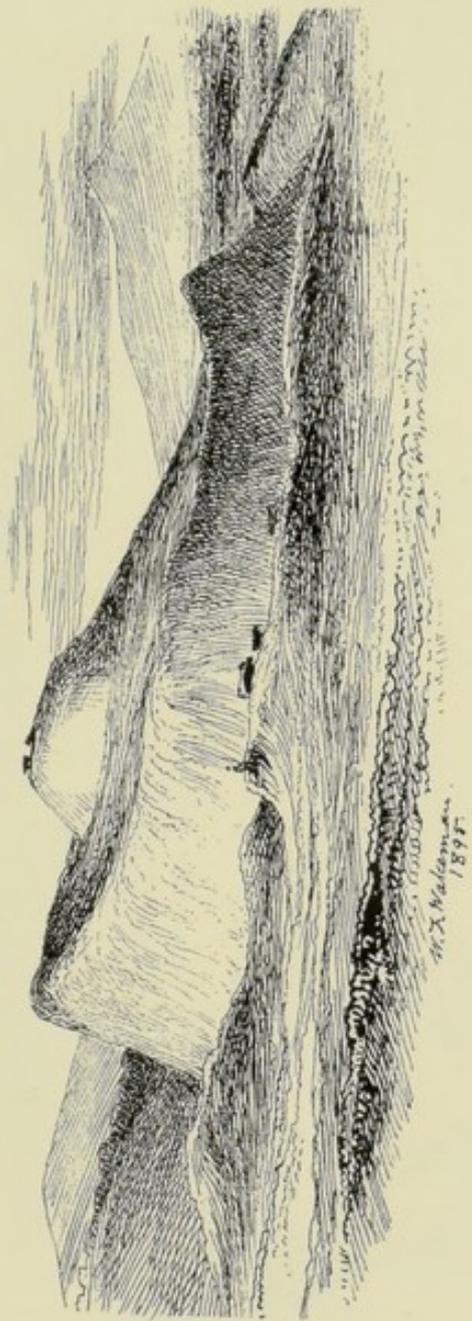


FIG. 90.

Rathkeltain, a large earthen fort near Downpatrick.

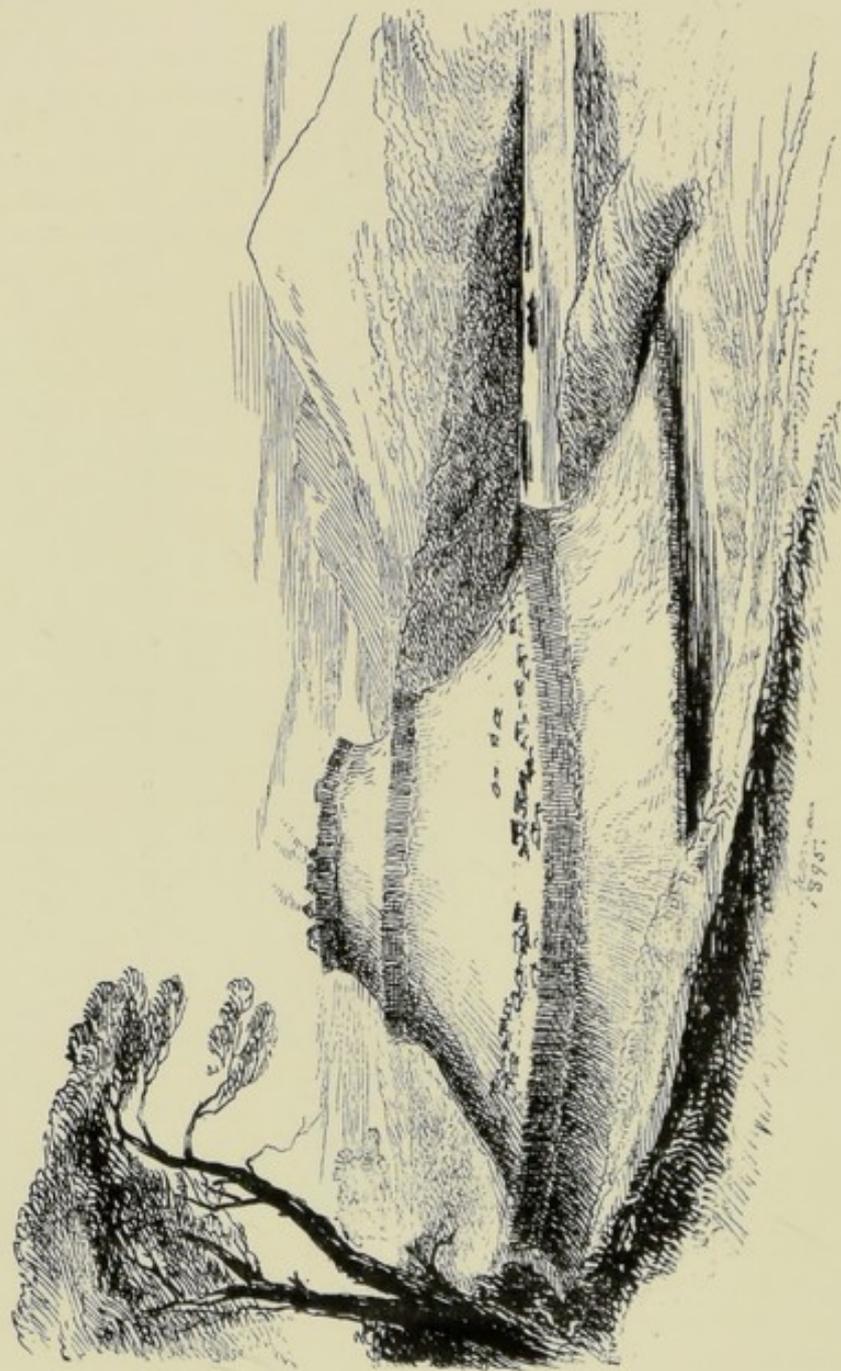


FIG. 91.

Ideal restoration of a Rath.

a good-natured looking young man is the "Pony," and the horse-dealer then declares he must see them jump before he bids for them. "So a great circle is made, a man being in the centre, bent as in leap-frog, for them to leap over, while the young girls sit round, and the best jumper is allowed the privilege of choosing the maiden he likes best, and giving her a salute. The young horses generally succeed in the jump, the reward is so attractive, though two men are never allowed to kiss the same girl. Should one man fail in the jump, he is derided and beaten with brogues, and ordered to be sent for further training, and the smith is desired to see to his shoes. So he is laid flat on the ground, while the smith examines his shoes, and beats the sole of the foot with a big stick to see if a nail is loose, and wants to be fastened: but then his sweetheart intervenes, and he is let off, and even allowed to salute her as a recompense for all he has gone through."

A gentleman who had the opportunity of collecting accounts of many wanton orgies which disgraced wakes, particularly in the province of Munster, says: "The highly obscene manner of the dance called 'Droghedy' is very objectionable. . . . Tradition also relates that females used to perform on these occasions as well as men."

A similarity to Irish wake orgies can be traced in the rites used by many savage tribes: for instance, in the Irish series of "the Building of the Ship" and the games of some of the Indians commemorative of the "Big Canoe." An early missionary reported that he had experienced comparatively little difficulty in converting one of the tribes of the Feejee Islanders to an acknowledgment of Christianity, but found it impossible to induce them to forego the obscenities enacted between death and the interment of the corpse. This may be a mere coincidence, but at least it is a most remarkable one.

Some modern "round games" in which young people in every class of society indulge, were played at Irish wakes; but it is evident they were of comparatively modern introduction.

The Church may have tolerated the acting of these plays, at certain seasons of the year, as she did the performance of somewhat similar burlesques elsewhere, or she may have anathematised the plays, or the actors who performed in them: be that as it may, her teachings were ridiculed to her face, up to a few years ago, by professing members of her fold; and it is possible that in many places these plays are even yet acted, but probably in a modified form. It is, however, right to state that in later times the peasantry who practised them had "no idea of outraging propriety or religion in their performance, holding an unquestioning faith in the old traditions that such observances were right

and proper at wakes, whilst under any other circumstances they would shrink with horror from such indelicate exhibitions."

Keels, with their other aliases, are ancient burial places, originally quite unconnected with Christian remains or associations, and where still made use of, it is, as a rule, solely for the interment of suicides, unknown strangers, and unbaptized children. Suicides, as a matter of course, are by their own act (theologically) deprived of a desirable hereafter. To the savage and uncultured mind all unknown strangers are necessarily enemies. The first very young child that dies in a family should be carried to one of these burial places: if it be buried in consecrated ground, two others will follow it. Many of the peasantry believe that the souls of unbaptized children are blind and imprisoned within these keels, or within fairy raths, and that their souls "go into naught." A somewhat similar idea is found in Longfellow's *Evangeline*, where there is an allusion to—

"The white *létiche*, the ghost of a child who, unchristened,  
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the chambers of children."

Wherever an unbaptized child is buried there is a "stray sod." If you unintentionally step upon this particular spot at night you are kept wandering until sunrise. Even turning your coat and waistcoat inside out (the charm against fairy influence) is no safeguard; when day breaks you will find yourself miles distant from home. The idea embodied in this superstition occurs in a cure for a sick cow. You take the piece of turf on which the animal first treads when rising, hang it on the wall and the cow recovers. Bishop Corbet, in his *Iter Boreale*, thus alludes to the supposed charm of turning the coat as a guard against fairy malice.

". . . William found  
A means for our deliverance, 'Turn your cloakes,'  
Quoth hee, 'for Pucke is busy in these oakes;  
If ever wee at Bosworth will be found,  
Then turn your cloakes, for this is fairy ground.'"

It may be of use to benighted individuals to know that a sprig of furze or gorse, carried about the person, secures the wayfarer against straying on mountain or moorland.

Tradition, together with the still existing superstitions of the peasantry, and other facts already noticed, indicate that many of the keels were undoubtedly pagan cemeteries. Their preservation, in such numbers, is due to an undefined feeling of dread of some calamity should they be injured, yet no persuasion will induce the peasantry to bury their honoured dead within their precincts.

That the term keel must have been used by the old pagans to designate a cemetery may be inferred from many examples. In the county Cork an ancient burial place is styled Cealnadruath, the burial place of the Druids; the townland of Killamucky commemorates the burial place of a magical boar; the name cannot well signify the "the church of the pig." Kilero should not be translated "the bloody church," nor should Kilmacat be rendered the "cat's church." Killtemplan and Templenakilla do not mean "the church of the church," but "the church of the keel or cemetery," and Kealkill and Kilkillan belong to the same class of nomenclature.

A good specimen of a connecting link between the pagan keel with its old-world ceremonies and Christian rites is afforded by observances which were formerly practised at Ballyvourney, county Cork, at a keel or low carn, composed of stones and earth, evidently an ancient pagan cemetery. On the summit of the mound lay a bullan, with a circular cavity or basin, overshadowed with low-growing bushes on which hung rags of various colours, votive offerings of pilgrims who were accustomed to encircle the mound upon their knees in the course of the sun. Persons afflicted with bodily ailments resorted hither, esteeming earth from the mound and rain water from the bullan, to be specifics for their complaints. It was also a great resort of cripples; a regular array of sticks and crutches was deposited on the tumulus by professional mendicants who pretended to have been cured in order to enhance the reputation of the place, as large crowds upon patron days brought considerable sums into their pockets.

When a murder, or supposed murder, was perpetrated, it was customary in former times, as the funeral proceeded to the graveyard, to carry the corpse to the house of the person suspected of having committed the crime. It was laid down at the door, whilst the relatives of the deceased, dropping on their knees, gave vent to the deepest imprecations, and invoked the wrath of offended heaven on the head of the suspected murderer (fig. 92). In cases where the crime was self-evident, the door was closed and the house abandoned, but if the accused had a sufficient following the intruders were repelled by physical force; in cases where the crime was doubtful, or unjustly imputed, those thus visited came out of the house, and laying their right hand upon the corpse or coffin, invoked heaven to witness to the truth of their denial.

The funeral is looked upon as a most important function. The aged peasant, incapacitated from labour, and able only to sit in the chimney corner from morning till night, will in mind be busily occupied with all the details of his last journey. In

many country districts, even in the present day, about the only neighbourly feeling displayed amongst all classes of the community is shown in attending funerals. Although the attendant has been unacquainted with the deceased, yet if he be a neighbour, not to go to the funeral is considered a slight to the corpse.

The countryman's ambition for a "good funeral" is unbounded, and the arrangements and expenditure on that occasion are, for his income, princely, for a sum of money equal perhaps to three years' rent, will be required to cover the priest's fees, the cost of refreshments for friends and neighbours, and the hire of professional mourners. "The imposing funeral procession, the

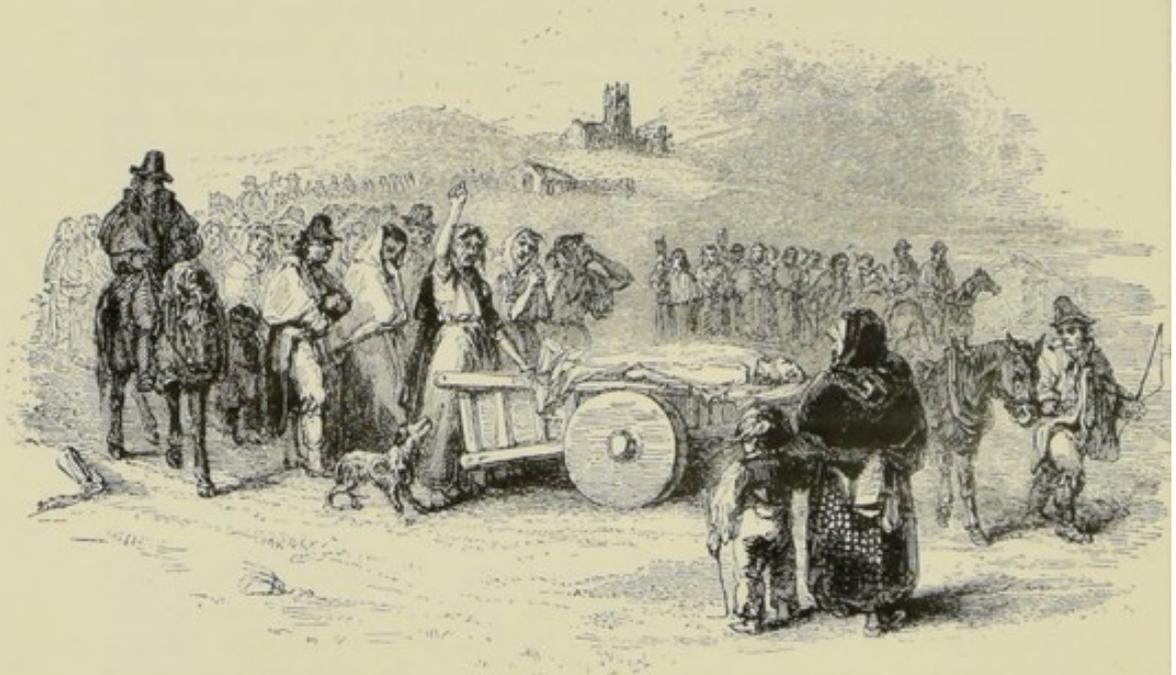


FIG. 92.

The Challenge to the Ordeal. From Mr. and Mrs. Hall's *Ireland*.

rear often brought up by as many as fifty mounted men, will not fail to strike the visitor in a very forcible way, and any casual onlooker from whom he may make inquiry, will be found enormously pleased to give him a full account of the life and death of the departed, a full summary of his estimable qualities, and a complete family history, into the bargain. 'Your riverance,' said a messenger to the priest engaged in preparations for the approaching cortege, 'the brother of the corpse would be plaised to have a word wid ye,' is truly Irish, illustrative of the paramount importance of the deceased on the occasion of his funeral."

It is well to see ourselves as others see us, and the following graphic description of a funeral in the island of Achill observed, in the year 1897, by an Englishman, presents a typical picture of the usual funeral procession in the wilds of Western Ireland:—

“I saw a singular procession winding sinuously down the opposite cliff, and surely no stranger sight was ever seen within the bounds of the British Isles. Men and women on horseback (for the poorest peasant owns a ‘garran’), the men attired in the conventional costume of the Irish high holiday, to wit, tall hats, breeches, and dress cut coats of thick frieze; the women barefoot as usual, but with feet well washed, the short red kirtle reaching to the knee, the head and shoulders swathed in brilliant-coloured shawls, the man astride in front, the woman balancing herself sideways on the crupper, all riding bare-backed, all guiding their yellowish steeds by means of a bridle of plaited straw. Sometimes there were three on a horse, never less than two, and there might be fifty horses proceeding at a slow pace, accompanied by some fifty women on foot. In the middle of the funeral train was one of the flat carts used in Connaught, with two short shafts for tilting purposes prominent behind, and on it the humble coffin of unplanned deal, with a sheet of paper—which may have borne the name and age of the deceased, with perhaps a prayer or two—tacked over the breast. The poorest Irish display an inordinate affection for their dead, and in Achill the nearest relatives testify their love and respect by sitting on the coffin during its progress to the graveyard. On this occasion the poor widow who had lost her son by drowning in Blacksod Bay occupied this position, accompanied by her daughter, a good-looking girl of twenty years or so. . . . On went the strange procession of the long line of riders, with the tanned complexions of the women, their jet black hair, their naked limbs dangling on the horses flanks, and the bright colours of their attire, strongly remindful of Buffalo Bill’s North American Indians, save that the Indian women wore moccasins. Here and there isolated dwellers in villages lying off the route emerged on horseback, with the invariable ‘God be with you’ in Irish, to which came the invariable reply, ‘God and the Virgin be with you.’ Now and then were seen women seated by the ditches, and by washing their feet achieving, at a blow, the distinction of full dress. All were speaking in Irish, modulating their tones to a sympathetic cadence and incidentally showing the instinctive good breeding which must be credited to the race. . . . The way was long, but at last the cortege turned sharply to the right, towards a hamlet on the mountain side. Somewhat short of it was a rudely-walled enclosure, without any chapel, lych-gate, or shelter of any kind, a wilderness of dense-growing nettles, among

which the bare-footed women walked and pushed their way with profound indifference to the stings, each lifting her voice in the Irish wail at the moment the coffin passed the graveyard wall. Echoing up the mountain, resounding over the lake hard by, never surely was heard a more fearsome chant. Beginning on a high note, the voices descended together in a sort of chromatic scale, not unlike the cry of the starling at certain seasons, the chorus numbering by this time at least a hundred women, whose lungs equalled their enthusiasm, the men remaining silent, placing the coffin by the family grave, and waiting until prescriptive custom brought their turn to act. Presently the 'keen' (fig. 93) subsided, and the crowd dispersed among the graves, many throwing themselves at full length among the nettles and clasping the poor mound in an agony of grief, kissing it and calling in heart-broken accents to the dead, with many bitter tears. Meanwhile two young fellows were digging the grave, the widow and her daughter sitting on the coffin a yard away, and watching every stroke. . . . The mourners, having paid respect to the family graves, sat in rows and smoked twist tobacco from new pipes of very thick clay, a young fellow going round (to both sexes) with a burning turf, brought from the neighbouring village, between two sticks. The grave being ready, the depth less than two feet, the coffin was placed therein, and then the mother came forward, while the crowd surrounded her as critical spectators.

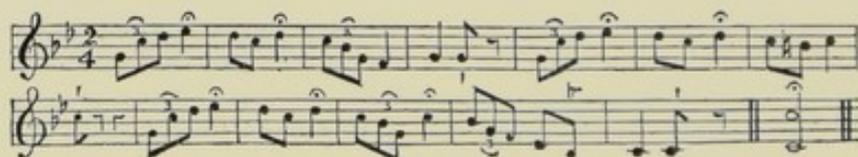


FIG. 93.

The Keen. From Mr. and Mrs. Hall's *Ireland*.

Kneeling on the grass, and looking down upon the coffin, the poor widow broke into rapid ejaculations of anguish, clasping her hands, swaying to and fro, recounting her boy's good qualities, bewailing his unhappy end, and expressing her irremediable heart-break. Suddenly she threw herself full-length into the grave, and clasping the coffin, fainted away. She was removed and water thrown upon her, upon which she recovered, and the daughter came forward with a precisely similar programme, only stopping short of insensibility. Then the men shovelled in the earth, replaced the pieces of rock which marked the grave, and the procession returned to Dugort, the two chief mourners sitting on the cart, which closely resembled a costermonger's barrow. There was no priest, nor any kind of religious service, save that

an old man, who acted as director of ceremonies, proposed at the close that all 'the boys' should stand up and say a silent prayer. He then sprinkled holy water from a lemonade bottle, and the funeral was over."

It is very unlucky to dig a grave on a Monday, but having once commenced, the grave-diggers must finish the work, no change of labourers being allowed. In one instance where the sexton was taken ill no one could be induced to complete the grave, so he had to rise from his sick bed and finish it himself.

If a death should occur in a family the last, or last but one day of the year, special care is taken to dig the grave—at least partially—on the last day of December, and thus avoid opening a new grave and a new year together.

According to Irish *ms.* authority many barbarities are to be met with in the tales relating to ancient warriors, who appear to have been addicted to an habitual savagery. An Irish warrior, when he killed his enemy, broke his skull, extracted his brains, mixed up the mass well, and working the compound into a ball carefully dried it in the sun, and afterwards produced it as a trophy of former valour, and a presage of future victory. "Take out its brains therefrom," was Conall's speech to his attendant, who declared he could not carry Mesgegra's head, "and ply a sword upon it, and bear the brain with me, and mix lime therewith, and make a ball thereof." Such trophies are described as being the object of pride and contention among the chiefs, and Mesgegra's brain being captured from Conall by Cet, was hurled at Conor, and caused his death. The above-mentioned Mesgegra, King of Leinster, was killed in single combat by Conal Cernach, who cut off his head and laid it down on a stone. Legend records that the blood pouring from the cranium pierced the stone and flowed through it into the ground. The oblong limestone boulder, of which this story is recounted, is a bullan of the usual type. On the cliffs of the mainland, opposite Tory Island, a similar story is told of the blood which gushed from Balor's head.

In the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* it is stated that when Muirchertach "of the leathern cloaks," who lived in the middle of the tenth century, carried off the body of Cerbhall, King of Leinster, he caused a chess-board to be formed of his bones. Other instances of utilizing the osseous remains of a dead adversary were, in ancient times, not uncommon. We have the practice recorded of warriors cutting off the point of the tongue by every man they slew and carrying it in their pouches. Carrying the heads of the slain at their girdle, first noted by Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, is clearly implied in the tale called the "Siege of Howth." In the story of "Echtra Nerai," the hero

is said to have seen a heap of heads, cut off by the warriors of the fort. This calls to mind the piles of heads described by travellers as occurring at the entrance to the residences of African chiefs. The Irish chiefs of olden day knew that if they fell alive into the hands of their enemies they were likely to be shortened of a head. Finn Mac Cool's celebrated wolf-hound, Bran, was, like his master, gifted in a remarkable degree with fore-knowledge of evil, and thus was enabled to give the chief many warnings and to guard him from danger. Once, when the Feni had suffered defeat, Bran showed the deepest dejection, and lying down at his master's feet, lifted up his head and howled, upon which Finn remarked:—"It is likely, my dog, that our heads are in great danger this day." The decapitation of enemies, or of the corpses of those fallen in battle, appears to have been a usual custom in Ireland. In the year 862 "one hundred heads of foreigners" were exhibited to the victorious Irish chiefs. Two years later the Danes were defeated in Lough Foyle; their heads were collected in presence of the king, "and twelve score heads were reckoned before him"; in the same year, when the men of Westmeath defeated the Connaught forces at Athlone, there was "a slaughter of heads left behind." Giraldus Cambrensis mentions that at the period of the Anglo-Norman invasion the Irish soldiery collected about two hundred of the heads of their fallen enemies, and piled them before Dermot, King of Ireland. In 1396, an Anglo-Irish force was defeated and "six score (of their heads) were carried for exhibition before O'Toole." In reading the foregoing records one is irresistibly reminded of the sculptured representations of similar scenes on the ancient *bas reliefs* of Assyria and of Egypt, where we see piles of heads of the slain placed before the conqueror, and the Royal scribes depicted taking an account of their number. It may be said that all this is mere documentary evidence, but material evidence corroborates these mss. descriptions. In a sepulchral mound at Aylesbury-road, near Donnybrook, in the county Dublin (removed in 1879 for building purposes) skulls were discovered in heaps, without other parts of human skeletons. There were several piles, all in an injured condition. The opinion the discoverers held was, that after being cut off, the heads were rolled about or treated with extreme violence, and the bones broken, previously to their being gathered into heaps. In one group, consisting of eight skulls, the facial bones were all smashed into fragments. The mound was probably of the eighth or ninth century at earliest.

Careful perusal and analysis of the accounts of the best and most methodical explorations carried out by qualified observers of the interments of the former inhabitants of Ireland, throw a flood of light on the ideas regarding a future state held by these

men of the *eld*. In addition to osseous human remains, ancient pagan cemeteries contain numerous bones of animals. These latter relics indicate that the obsequies of the dead were accompanied by huge funeral feasts and cannibalistic orgies, an idea which receives confirmation from the fact that excavations, exhibiting perfect sections of pits sunk in the ground, are observable. These excavations were probably used to cook animal food, according to the well-known method in vogue amongst the ancient Irish. Many traces of fractured shells of crustaceæ, of fish and bird bones, show that the viands were varied. Shells are also usually found in the cists with the dead. May not the presence of cockle or other shells in undoubted early Christian interments be a survival of this ancient custom, the shell-fish to be used as food by the tenants of the graves on their long journey. In most of the early prehistoric graves opened in England, Scotland, Ireland, the Channel Islands, Normandy, and Brittany, limpet and such like shells are present in great numbers. It is stated that the natives of Ceylon do not consider an interment properly performed until a few sea-shells of a particular species have been cast into the grave.

Quaintly-coloured pebbles, picked up on the banks of streams, were brought to their homes by the ancient cave-dwellers, as charms or curiosities, whilst sea-shells, perforated so as to form necklaces, must have been carried off from the shores of the Atlantic or of the Irish Channel. The ancient Irish had also a custom of burying white stones or lumps of quartz crystal with the dead; these are by the peasantry of the North of Ireland sometimes called "Godstones." In a cemetery of stone-lined graves, near the ancient burial-ground of Saul, county Down, it was remarked that in each grave there were several white pebbles. One cist examined by the writer at Barnasraghy, county Sligo, was literally filled with pieces of angular-shaped white quartz, and similar fragments accompanied almost every interment in the Carrowmore series of rude stone monuments. A white stone was found recently in a primitive interment not far from Larne, county Antrim; and many other instances, too numerous to mention, could be given. These white water-worn pebbles, or quartz stones, serve to identify the human remains as belonging to a very ancient period of sepulture. The custom, although common, has been little noticed by explorers. At the bottom of one of the cists in the celebrated pagan cemetery of Ballon Hill, county Carlow, a funeral urn was found inverted, and beneath it, placed in a triangular position, were three small, smooth pebbles, surrounded by a few pieces of burned stones: one was white, one black, and the third was of a greenish tinge.

White quartz stones have also been found in the Hebrides

in primitive interments, and in chambers in the interior of cairns. They have been observed in various old British tombs, and also within the sacred circle on the Isle of Man—a circle which from time immemorial has been held in reverence. In most of the old tombs excavated in the neighbourhood of Dundee these pebbles were also found. An examination of a "Pict's House," at Kettleburn, in Caithness, Scotland, demonstrated that smooth stones of various shapes and sizes, such as might be picked up on the sea-shore, were found in several of the chambers among the ashes. The custom of burying white water-worn stones or pieces of fractured quartz or crystals may have been practised contemporaneously in Scotland and Ireland. The smooth, white, clean, and polished stones were probably to the ancient pagan mind emblematic of some religious idea.

Pieces of pure rock-crystal, found in the Auvergne Mountains in France, were brought to the rock-shelters of Les Eyzies by the ancient cave-dwellers, probably as charms or on account of their sparkle. With the aborigines of Australia in the present day the possession of some such crystal is essential to the vocation of a medicine man, and quartz crystals are also regarded by the Apache Indians as "good medicine." With some of the people of India a white pebble of a certain size is reckoned a god of the highest class.

On the north side of Lough Neagh there is a holy well, still believed to have great power and sanctity. Yellow crystals are found in great abundance in the vicinity; these the country people believe grow on Midsummer's Eve, like mushrooms, in one night. The crystals must be gathered whilst certain rhymes are recited; they then possess the power of averting evil, and bring luck and prosperity to the household. They are found scattered within an area of about two miles round the well, and in the crannies of the rocks. One of the most depraved of all races, the now extinct Tasmanians, believed that stones, especially certain kinds of quartz crystals, could be used as mediums, or as means of communication with spirits, with the dead, or with living persons at a distance. On the Continent it was customary, in early times, to deposit crystal balls in urns in sepulchres.

On the island of Inniskea, as well as in the Mullet, it is customary to decorate the graves with large white pebbles. It is considered extremely unlucky to remove them; for everything deposited with the dead is held sacred. The old Romans regarded one who would rob the dead as the lowest of the low, and as so degraded that he would even "snatch victuals from the flames of the funeral pile."

Near Inverary, it is the custom among the fisher-folk, and has been so within the memory of the oldest, to place little white

stones or pebbles on the graves of their friends. No reason is now given for the practice.

In a description of Abyssinia, by J. Theodore Bent, it is stated, that a place called Bogas possesses a striking and highly interesting peculiarity in its numerous black and white tombs. "The approach to Keren is a perfect Appian Way of this curious form of sepulture. When a man dies they build a round wall of black stones over his grave; here they sacrifice goats, put food for the dead, and perform their wails over the departed. If the occupant of the tomb has died a natural death, they, in the course of the year, pile up heaps of white quartz in the form of a native hut; if he has died of the vendetta, or any other unnatural death, they put only black stones over him. One nest of graves we saw consisted of seventy-two tombs, round the big white grave of the head of the family; three only of these tombs were black, but in other groups the proportion was much larger."

Amongst the Manxmen it is considered to be unlucky to have a white stone in a fishing boat, even in the ballast. No explanation is given; but there can be no doubt as to the fact of the superstition. It may be illustrated from the case of a gentleman who went out with some fishermen several days in succession. They chanced each time to be unsuccessful, and therefore the men bestowed on their Jonah the nickname of Clagh Vane, or "White Stone."

In the present day, if a person in the Orkney or Shetland Islands is supposed to have been affected by the "Evil Eye," he is cured by having administered to him water, both externally and internally, into which have been dropped charms supposed to possess magical power. As a rule these are pebbles of different colours gathered from the sea-shore. The charm is considered most potent when one stone is white, another black, the remainder being red, olive, or of greenish tint. This clue may, to some extent, be deemed explanatory of the deposition of pebbles, of various colours, in ancient pagan graves. White, black, green, reddish, and variegated coloured stones, of oval shapes, were found by the writer in interments in the Carrowmore series of rude stone monuments near the town of Sligo.

In the present day the peasantry still believe that a cure for hip disease is to take three green stones, picked in silence between the period of midnight and sunrise from the bed of a running brook; each stone is then rubbed several times up and down on the naked limb, from hip to heel, while an Irish rhyme is repeated, of which the following is a free translation:—

"Wear away, wear away,  
There you shall not stay,  
Cruel pain, away, away!"

On this subject A. W. Buckland remarks, that "among the most ancient nations and the semi-civilized barbarians of our own day, green stones seem to have been more highly prized than those of any other colour."

Black stones are also still used as charms, particularly for curing the mumps; the form gone through is the same as in the foregoing ceremony with green stones. Sir E. Tennant describes certain stones, black in colour and polished, used in Ceylon for the cure of wounds; and a similar property is ascribed in Ireland to the ancient stone spindle whorls called "Fairy mill-stones."

The custom of placing these rounded or oval stones with the dead survived into Christian times. When the grave of St. Breacan, in Aran, was opened, there were found, beneath a large uninscribed flagstone, a number of rounded stones, averaging about nine inches in diameter, evidently picked up and brought to the saint's last resting place from the adjacent strand. One of these bears an inscription in Irish characters.

Shakespeare seems to have been well acquainted with the ancient rite of the deposition of stones with the dead; for in the play of *Hamlet* he makes the priest to say, when attending the body of Ophelia to the grave:—

" Her death was doubtful ;

She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet ; for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her."

This means that in case of supposed self-destruction, the corpse being deemed unworthy of the rites of the Catholic Church, pagan observances should suffice. Some excellent examples of this ancient peculiarity of sepulture were observable in the townland of Carrownagark, parish of Tawnagh, county Sligo. An esker, or hill, composed seemingly only of good gravel and sand, had been utilized as a gravel-pit. The upper surface of the soil, apparently not eighteen inches in depth, was thickly studded with human and animal bones; the excavations made for sand and gravel giving a perfect section of this interesting keel. About one foot under the surface sod two human skulls were observed; over one lay a hammer-stone, formed of sandstone, and over the other lay a flint flake and several pieces of charcoal. This custom of depositing certain kinds of stones with the dead lasted until well on in the present century; for Carleton, who drew from real life his character-sketches for *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, recounts, in one of the tales, how, on placing the body in a coffin, two "pebbles from Lough Derg" were deposited "on the breast of the corpse." The early mission-

aries may have thrown an air of Christianity around this curious rite by quoting to their converts the passage in Rev. ii. 17:—“To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it”; however, the symbolism of a white stone, as representing happiness, or a happy day, is widely spread.

A white stone was of old the mark of good fortune. By it the Greeks gave sentence of acquittal. The victor at the games received one, which entitled him to food at the public expense. The white stone of the Scripture admits the guest to the heavenly feast.

The theory has often been advanced that because osseous human remains decay under certain circumstances with comparative rapidity, that therefore the traces of man found in the rude stone monuments of Ireland can be of no great antiquity. Under certain conditions, however, the large bones of man and of other mammalia are comparatively indestructible. Animal matter is stated to be abundant in the bones of Egyptian mummies known to be upwards of 3000 years old. Buckland made soup from the bones of the extinct British cave hyena, and jelly has been extracted from those of the Ohio mammoth. An edible jelly was extracted from bones of the *Elephas primigenius*, and a strong paste made from those of *Ursus speloeus*; bones of the mastodon, found in New York in 1845, still contained nearly 30 per cent. of animal matter; from these it would have been quite easy to have prepared an antediluvian broth, a “real soup of pre-Adamite gelatine,” and this eccentric idea was actually carried to a practical conclusion by a meeting of German naturalists at Tubingen, who partook of a soup of mammoth gelatine. Bones committed to the ground will be preserved, or perish, in accordance with natural laws; it may, however, be fairly assumed that the exclusion of water is a special requisite for preservation.

Human skeletons are in Ireland sometimes found buried in a sitting posture; it is alleged that this was the position assumed by primitive man for repose, and some writers go so far as to state that “he had muscles developed specially for this purpose.” In a cist at Tullydruid, county Tyrone, a skeleton was discovered in a sitting attitude, an urn at the knees and the head turned towards the east. Another skeleton was in such good preservation that it was with the greatest difficulty some zealous members of the Royal Irish Constabulary were dissuaded from sending for the coroner to hold an inquest on the remains of the deceased, who had “shuffled off this mortal coil” some thousand years ago.

In the county Meath a skeleton was discovered buried in an

upright position in a tumulus. This singular mode of interment is noticed in Irish mss. One old warrior was buried within the ramparts of his fortress, armed for battle. King Laoghair was interred in a similar manner at Tara. Eoghan Bell, king of Connaught, slain in 537, was buried on the banks of the river Sligo, erect, weapon in hand, and his face to the foe. Till quite lately it was customary for the dead of one family in the county Sligo to be buried in an upright posture.

In committing to the ground the remains of their dead, the customs of the aborigines appear to have varied. After the discontinuance of a probably universal, or almost universal state of cannibalism, and when it had become merely ceremonial or sporadic, interments were at first carnal. Then cremation appears to have obtained, and again, later, carnal interments predominated. Of course there is confusion, and a commingling as one custom lingers on and overlaps the other, but such, it is believed by the writer, was the succession of funeral customs.

A good example of the transition from carnal interment to cremation is afforded in the examination of the *carn* of Cloghmanty, in the county Kilkenny. It had been originally of considerable height, with an average diameter of seventy feet, but the central and other cists had been denuded by the covering material having been removed for various purposes. The central chamber was large, and contained two almost perfect uncalcined skeletons. In the course of time new customs obtained; the dead were burned, portion only of the bones of the skeleton collected and placed in fictile vessels, and the old burial place was still used by the people practising cremation, the calcined remains being deposited in small chambers in the already existing *carn*.

Amongst a number of old pagan sepulchres examined in the county Sligo was one in which the remains of numerous skeletons, some evidently burned, others exhibiting no trace of fire, were piled on the floor of a cist that occupied the centre of a *carn*. An idea may be formed of the magnitude of the cist when one of the stones which formed the side was sixteen feet in length and six feet in breadth. In this chamber six different human interments were found, occupying the eastern and western ends, the centre part being unoccupied. The bones were collected into heaps that rested upon the freestone flags which formed the bottom or floor of the tomb. The large bones, such as those of the arms, legs, and thighs, covered the half-calcined remains of the smaller ones, and the skull surmounted the little pyramid thus formed. Round the margin of each heap were a quantity of the bones of birds and some of the lower mammalia, together with a number of small shells. Each of these six interments

was distinct, and surrounded by small freestone flags. No weapon or ornament was discovered.

In a tumulus near "Gibbet Rath," on the Curragh of Kildare, there was found, in a small cist, a large cinerary urn, about two feet in diameter, composed of half-burned pottery, and in it were deposited portions of a human skeleton comprising fragments of the skull and some teeth. In the course of subsequent explorations another urn was discovered in a neighbouring mound, and, about three feet beneath the summit of another tumulus, a cist was found nearly eight feet long, in which lay four or five uncalcined skeletons. In other interments portions only of the bodies seem to have been originally committed to the tomb; thus it will be perceived that in this area, which appears to have been carefully examined, almost every description of interment was practised by the old occupants of the land.

In an ancient sepulchral chamber at Ballynahatty, county Down, situated in a field almost adjoining the great circular embankment known as the "Giant's Ring," three methods of interment, all contemporaneously practised, were observed—Cremation with urn burial; cremation without urn burial; and the entombment of unburnt portions of the dismembered body:—

"Amongst the burnt bones contained both in the urns and the recesses were numerous fragments of skulls, clearly proving that the unburnt crania could not possibly have been portions of the individuals by whose burnt remains they were surrounded. From the position occupied by three undisturbed lower jaws, the heads had evidently been deposited upon their bases, with their faces towards the west, no portion whatever of the trunk having been deposited with them" (see page 290).

A good example of a mixed interment occurred in one of the cists of the Carrowmore series of rude stone monuments near the town of Sligo. An uncalcined interment had been made over incinerated remains. At the lowest level of the side-stones of the cist, a floor or flagging of calpy limestone slabs was found. It was on this, which overlay the undisturbed "till," that the body or bodies of the primary interment had been originally cremated, portions of the floor showing marks of fire, and semi-burnt wood was found intact, with the layer of calcined bones above. It was plainly evident, from the floors and burnt bones extending in "pockets" under the side-stones of the cist, that the latter had been constructed over the funeral pyre, that the calcined remains were the primary interment, and that they had not been placed within an already completed chamber, differing in this respect from the interments at a tumulus at Dysart, where the cists were first finished, and the fire lighted on the covering slabs. Although the soil and debris in the Carrowmore cist

were carefully excavated and sifted, no flint implements, ornaments, or traces of fictilia were observable. The exploration seems to throw great light on the manner in which these primitive "cremationists" burnt—at any rate in some instances—their dead. The word cremation is apt to convey to the mind an idea of swift and complete destruction of a body by fire. By some modern methods an ordinary-sized corpse can be reduced to a few pounds of ashes in a very few minutes, but the primitive method of placing the body on a pile of wood was necessarily often lengthy and imperfect in its results. Bones, thus roughly cremated, present curious crack-like marks or nicks, the effect—a mechanical one—of unequal contraction of the bone in cooling. They cannot be marks of scraping, for they are, almost without exception, transverse, whilst scrapes, if intended to strip the bone, would be longitudinal; they also, in many instances, extend through the entire thickness of the bones, show on the interior of the medullary canal, and are also found on pieces of the flat bones of the skull. To give prominence to such an apparently trivial detail is necessary, for a superficial observer might, on observing the cracks in calcined bones, arrive at the conclusion that they were marks of cannibalistic origin.

Amongst the animal osseous remains found by W. J. Knowles amidst the sites of primitive huts, believed to belong to the Stone Age, at Whitepark Bay, county Antrim, were human bones; but whether these thus scattered about, in conjunction with those of animals, indicated that the people of the littoral were, in general, cannibals is a question not yet positively decided. In the stations, rock-shelters, and cave-refuges of the Continent, amongst the split bones of the larger animals fractured to extract the marrow, a sufficient number of human bones have been found to prove that Palæolithic, or rude-flint using man, was, if not universally, still sporadically a cannibal. In several instances these bones, including those of women and children, have been discovered in great quantities, charred by fire, evidently the traces of cannibalistic orgies. While traces of cannibalism are frequent in the late polished Stone period they necessarily become fainter in the early rude Stone Age, *pari passu* with the diminution of human osseous remains.

In the cave of Ballynamintra fragments of human bones were mixed with rude stone implements and animal osseous remains. During the exploration of one of the Knockmore caves in Fer-managh, a quantity of apparently purposely fractured and broken bones were found, many having been subjected to the action of fire. When submitted to the inspection of Professors Haughton and Macalister several of these fragments were pronounced to be remains of human skeletons. The discovery favours the hypo-

thesis that, at one period of its history, the cave was occupied by a tribe of cannibals.

An urn discovered in a barrow at Topping, near Larne, county Antrim, contained imperfectly burned human bones, apparently much broken and split by force before being charred.

In presumably early, as well as in late, carnal interments, several instances occur in which stone or bronze weapons have been discovered embedded in human crania; a bronze spear-head was, in the year 1814, found near Kilkenny, driven into a human skull, part of the weapon being broken off, apparently by the force of the blow. This, of course, only proves that the defunct met his death by violence; but again, in many instances the long bones of the leg, and other parts of human skeletons, are found with clearly marked longitudinal fractures, which, when observed in osseous remains in the refuse-heaps of crannogs or lake-dwellings, have occasioned archaeologists to pronounce without hesitation the verdict that these animal bones had been fractured for the purpose of facilitating the extraction of the marrow.

In general, the space in which human remains are found is too limited to have contained even one adult body in an unmutated condition, whilst traces of several are often recognizable.

In some instances, whilst the crania were present, the remainder of the skeletons was missing. On the subject of the position of the bones, when found *in situ* in an obviously hitherto undisturbed sepulchral chamber, a surgeon who examined them stated that they were placed there subsequent to the removal of the flesh and other investing media.

The only way to account for this is, that the body or bodies were dissevered and packed within the very limited space. Again, it is a fact that, in many cases, no traces of the jaw bones or of the teeth were to be seen, although teeth are known to be the most enduring portion of the human frame, but otherwise the crania were comparatively perfect.

“The absence of the lower jaw,” remarks W. C. Borlase, “has been frequently remarked in the case of Irish skulls from cists in tumuli. That the sacrifices of human beings (infants when a good harvest was required and famine to be averted, and prisoners of war, malefactors, and strangers when the war god or the national deity was to be specially honoured or appeased) took place throughout the whole of north-western Europe, in Ireland, in Britain, in Scandinavia, in Germany, and in Gaul we have ample testimony, not from classical sources alone, but from the traditions which mediæval writers have rescued from the past.”

In a sepulchral mound opened in the neighbourhood of

Portaferry, there was a central chamber, about six feet long, formed by eight very large upright stones, a large flagstone forming the floor, on which lay a heap, a foot in thickness, of black mould and human bones, consisting of fragments of ribs, vertebræ, ends of the long bones, pieces of the skull and joints of the fingers of a full-grown person, together with several bones of a very young child. None of these had been subjected to the action of fire, but there were several fragments of incinerated or calcined bone, also human. Either these latter were portion of the same bodies burned, or they belonged to an individual sacrificed to the manes of the person whose grave this was. The latter is the more probable, from the circumstances under which similar remains have been discovered in other localities. There were no urns, weapons, or ornaments.

A dozen tumuli which lay in a small area on the Curragh of Kildare were opened, and in every instance large quantities of human bones were found, in most cases giving the idea of legs, arms, and skulls having been thrown in promiscuously. Examples of fragmentary human interments were discovered in the chambers of a cairn on the slopes of Topped Mountain, in the county Fermanagh, which had, until recently, been covered by a thick growth of peat.

The opening of a tumulus at Dysert, county Meath, resulted in the discovery of two chambers, containing each an unburned human skeleton. On the covering stone of one of the chambers there were uncalcined, or slightly calcined, human remains, with others fully calcined superimposed. One of these deposits consisted of the skeleton of a youth scarcely more than twelve years old. The chamber was completely surrounded with a mixture of clay, ashes, and sandstone blocks, partly disintegrated by the action of intense heat. It would appear as if the chamber was first constructed, the bodies then deposited in it, the covering flag imposed, and the funeral pyre erected over it, the victims immolated, their corpses then placed upon it, the torches applied, and the fearful rites of pagan sepulture consummated. The victims having been consumed, the fragments of their bones were collected and deposited on the cover of the chamber; the ashes of the pyre were then heaped upon the cists, the boulders over it, and lastly, the outer covering of clay over all. The supposed order of the rites observed at the deposition of the skeletons contained in the chambers, and of the immolation of the victims over the cists, is corroborated by the baked appearance of the top of the skulls of the tenants of the tomb. As the skulls are the only osseous remains enclosed in the chambers which show marks of having been subjected to heat, and as the upper portions of the crania must, from the sitting posture of the skeletons, have come

into almost immediate contact with the covering flagstone over which the funeral pyre was burning, the conclusion as to the process pursued becomes in this case a certainty.

From many well authenticated excavations of previously undisturbed interments, in which no traces of cremation were apparent, it is evidently physically impossible that the chamber which contained some few bones of well differentiated human skeletons, could possibly have received even one corpse entire. The bones must either have been the remains of victims immolated during the celebration of sepulchral rites, or relics of warriors slain in battle, buried, and subsequently disinterred for final repose in the sepulchres of their ancestors; but this latter theory would not account for the frequent recurrence of longitudinally fractured bones with medullary canals, nor for the great deficiency in the osseous framework of the tenants of the tomb.

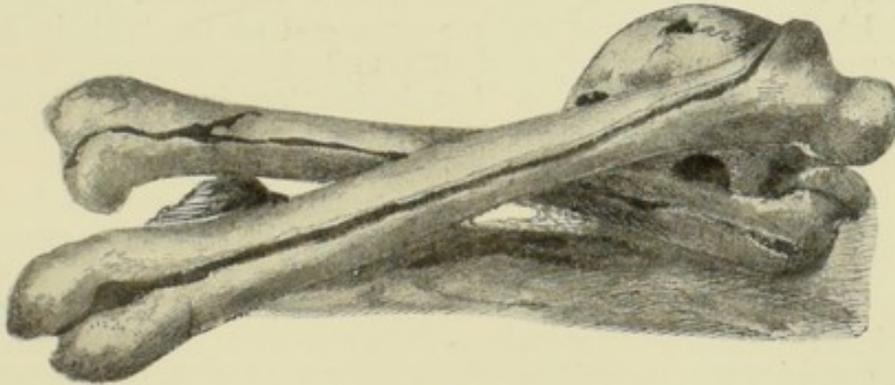


FIG. 94.

The remains of a pre-historic Briton's dinner. Human skull and bones artificially fractured for the purpose of extracting the brains and the marrow. After a sketch in the *Daily Mail*.

The prehistoric Briton, like his neighbour the prehistoric Irishman, had no objection to human flesh; on the contrary, there is conclusive evidence to show that human beings, with the animals, formed portion of his everyday food. In a lake-dwelling, of the rude Stone Age, discovered recently at Braintree, human skulls, split to extract the brains, and human bones, split from end to end by artificial means for extraction of the marrow, were discovered imbedded in the former lake bed, intermixed with those of oxen and other animals, which had undergone similar treatment (fig. 94).

Treating of a later period, Moore, in his *History of Ireland*, remarks that "in the ill repute of the ancient Irish for civilization, their neighbours, the Britons, equally shared; and the same charges of incest, community of wives, and other such abominations, which we find alleged against the Irish, are brought also

against the natives of Britain by Cæsar and Dion Cassius. . . . In referring to the charges of these two historians against the Britons, Whitaker says, 'the accusation is too surely as just as it is scandalous.' In a sermon of St. Chrysostom, quoted by Camden, that Father exclaims: 'How often in Britain did men eat the flesh of their own kind.' "

Whilst comparatively modern native writers state that ancient Erin was a highly civilized, cultured, and homogeneous nation, classic writers state—and in this they are corroborated by material evidence—that it was peopled by tribes of cannibals. When such a divergence of opinion arises, is it not the most straightforward course to appeal to the traces left by the primitive inhabitants to guide us to a right decision? If a man, in those distant ages, ate his enemy, his neighbour, or his friend, he did so without having before him the fear that, at a remote period, some antiquary would be investigating the *disjecta membra* of his feast; whilst, if it be thought that a slur is cast on the Irish by the suggestion of an early prevalent cannibalism, it should satisfy the national pride to know that the dwellers in Caledonia and Albion, and indeed it may be said almost all primitive tribes, were originally in a similar state of savagery.

It may be regarded as an undisputable fact that cannibal rites were practised in portions of Ireland and of the British Islands down to comparatively historic times; that savagery did not die out in every locality; but that, judged by folklore and archaeological evidence, there remained, here and there, restricted areas of unmitigated barbarism, hideous ulcers but half concealed beneath the fair surface which the pseudo-historians of early times present to our gaze.

The origin of Grecian civilization was quite as rude as that of the Irish or of the British; for, if we are to credit early tradition, the first inhabitants of Greece dwelt only in caves, whilst, during the period of internecine feuds, the vanquished were devoured by the victors.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GODS, GODDESSES, GHOSTS AND GOBLINS.

Survival of older Faiths than Christianity—Distinct traces of Paganism still to be found—Religion commenced with the worship of Fetishes—Rose to a Polytheistic Hierarchy—For a lengthened period there existed an undefined borderland between Paganism and Christianity—Reactions against Christianity—Memory of the Gods of ancient Erin very indistinct—Lir, the Sea God—Nudd, or Neit, the War God—Dianket, the Medicine God—Dagda, the Fire God—All deified mortals—The Goddesses of ancient Erin—Now styled Hags—Meaning of the term—They frequent “Hag’s Beds” and “Dermod and Grania’s Beds”—These monuments associated with Aphrodisiac customs—Legends relating to them—The White-robed Pagan “Hag”—The Black-robed Christian “Hag”—Aynia—Bav, the War Goddess, equates with the Gaulish Ana, or Cybele, the Valkyria of the Norse, the Bellona of the Latins—Her three sisters—Neman, Morrigan, and Macha—Wives of Nudd, the War God, *i.e.*, the Three Furies—Vera, Eevil, Una—The Banshee (a generic term)—an aristocratic spirit—Cleena, a free and easy spirit—Localities named after “Hags”—They erect Rude Stone Monuments in a single night—Grian—Grana—Murna—The water sprite or demon—The water serpent or *piast*—Aquatic horses—Gigantic Eels—An “Irish Crocodile”—Disease considered the work of demons—Anecdotes regarding this—Deities of one period become the demons of another—All these malignant beings degenerated representatives of the Goddesses of the ancient Irish.

THE presence, in our midst, of survivals of an older faith than Christianity is not readily grasped. Is not the historian of ancient Erin as much concerned with the faiths professed by the elder inhabitants as with the history of the various races who have successively occupied the country? Survivals of what we, in our pride, designate as “pagan superstitions” are in reality religious; they are fossilized fragments of the faiths of primitive peoples. All through the two ages, the remote and the present—often treated by superficial observers as differing in almost all essentials—there is a well defined, underlying and indivisible unity pervading the entire period, which modern research is making every day more and more apparent, for we now rightly regard “the present as the child of the past and as the parent of

the future." The root ideas in most primitive religions appear to be practically identical, yet the forms they assume vary greatly, according to the epoch in which they develop, and country, climate, and moral characteristics are important factors in moulding their growth. When popular superstitions are analysed a singular degree of uniformity is traceable in that realm of the ideal world where most diversity might be expected, and we find races, separated by the ocean, united in their delusions. It would appear as if primitive mythology had not spread from nation to nation, but that all have derived their belief from some very primitive root-idea, as supernatural beings, which owe their existence only to the imagination, betray, in every climate and in every age, so close an affinity to one another that it is scarcely possible to avoid admitting that the workings of the human mind, in separate and distinct peoples, had a predominant share in giving them their characteristics. Civilized and savage peoples alike divide souls into distinct parts. Throughout Asia, Africa, and America there is a belief in the transmigration of souls into animals, plants, and other objects, and in the general conception of the world as a living animal, with all the tendencies ascribed to it by Plato. Many savage tribes believe that their souls ascend to the stars and abide there, and almost all savages believe firmly in the demoniac possession of madmen and of the sick which has led to what may be styled a "diabolic pathology."

A theory frequently advanced is that the religious ideas of man began by the worship of special fetishes, whether elements or material objects, that these fetishes gradually coalesced into comprehensive types, then into polytheistic hierarchies, finally, in a few instances, a vague conception arose that there might be but one ruling power. Thus we should commence our examination of the traces of the ancient beliefs of the Irish by studying fetishism, but it may be clearer to the reader to start the inquiry from the highest point attained in Ireland, namely, a very loosely bound polytheistic hierarchy, and essay to discover from what depths the aborigines had ascended in their search after the Infinite, for the intellectual worth of a people is demonstrated in its mythical products, in the quality and greatness of its beliefs, and in their development into more rational notions.

Old pagan observances are being rapidly obliterated by social progress and the grim utilitarianism of modern times. The plains through which, as ancient tradition avers, Finn MacCool pursued the flying chase are now traversed by the locomotive, for the march of improvement is imperious, nay, at times ruthless, and everything has to go down before the destruction which it regards as necessary to progress; but the conception of what is

really necessary is now becoming more defined, and a greater regard is growing up as to the honour due to ancient land-marks, whether material or literary.

Studying the changes now going on throughout the length and breadth of our land may be likened to viewing the effects produced by magic lantern slides, where the receding picture blends strangely with the features of the oncoming scene. The quaint old elements of society are fading even as we gaze on the screen, and are being obliterated by the new scene. Much that we now see will soon have disappeared; that which the lapse of centuries failed to effect, education is now accomplishing so rapidly, that, ere long, the last faint traces of the olden times will have entirely vanished from the canvas.

Many singular customs of the Irish peasantry are but faint reflected lights of the old past, for, although the Christian missionaries did their utmost, according to their light, to stamp out paganism, there remained in the hearts of the people a deeply-rooted fondness for the form of worship in which they had been brought up. It was the religion of their forefathers, and despite the popular idea of the rapid conversion of the island to Christianity by St. Patrick, yet in almost every district there must have remained some few who clung, with tenacity, to the old tenets, and handed them down from generation to generation in a more or less mutilated form. To the present day very distinct traces of paganism may be found in the acts of that class of charlatans styled charm-mongers, herb- or fairy-doctors. Even where all traces of Druidism and fairyism are supposed to have vanished, many of the practices attributed to wise women or witches are but reproductions of those formerly ascribed to Druids. In these superstitions and observances of the peasantry are enshrined strange fragmentary relics of earlier creeds, sometimes even traces of cannibalistic practices, but their remote antiquity and now but half decipherable implications are, in general, passed unnoticed. The most exhaustive survey that could well be accomplished must of necessity fail to give a perfect delineation of the character of a people, unless it is based upon the confessions they themselves have placed on record. Without these history is a mere catalogue of dates and facts, useless alike as a panorama of the past, or as an object-lesson for future generations.

Close study of fragmentary remains of primeval customs possesses considerable interest as well as authoritative value. Better even than language these remains become beacons to point out the true origin of nations. They illustrate analogies of customs and usages in the West and in the East, which, to superficial observation, seem to possess little or no importance, yet they, to

the reflective inquirer, offer subjects of interesting speculation and create permanent land-marks on the road to real knowledge. As observed by Froude :—“ Our indifference costs us more than we are aware of. It is supremely desirable that we should be acquainted with the age in which Christianity became the creed of civilized mankind, and we learn but half the truth from the Christian Fathers. Whether we regard Christianity as a miracle from without, or as developed from within, out of the conscience and intellect of man, we perceive at any rate that it grew by natural causes, that it commended itself by arguments and example, that it was received or rejected according to the moral and mental condition of those to whom it was addressed. We shall understand the history of its triumph only when we see the heathen world as the heathen world saw itself.”

For a lengthened period there was in Ireland an undefined border line between Christian and pagan ; there were wavering chiefs who would fain strike a bargain with heaven ; they would accept Christianity if God would but grant them victory. So late as the year A.D. 561, at the battle of Cooldrumman, near Drumcliff, county Sligo, St. Columbkille, when praying aloud for the success of his supporters, addressed Christ as “ My Druid,” probably considering that, by thus imploring help from above, he would be better understood by his followers. The line between Christianity and paganism was gradually obliterated by the advancing tide of the new faith, which finally overspread the land ; the superstitions and legends of paganism remained, and in most districts, especially in remote and mountainous localities, they yet linger, but with ever diminishing strength ; for rugged highlands shelter old races and foster and sustain old practices. There were also several reactions against Christianity ; for example, in some fragments of Irish Annals, translated by O'Donovan, it is stated that many of the Irish, in the ninth century, forsook the Christian faith, and joined the pagan invaders in their plundering expeditions.

Religion sat lightly on the shoulders alike of pagans and of Christians. According to the Saga of Egil, Athelstan, King of England, when proffered the assistance of a band of sea rovers, accepted their aid on condition that the chiefs were “ prime-signed,” as was then very usual, both among traders and those who went into the service of Christians ; for those who were “ prime-signed, had full intercourse with both Christians and heathens, but at the same time they believed what they liked best.” A very convenient creed, resembling that professed by Redwald, King of the East Angles, who built a church, at one end of which he erected an altar for the sacrifice of the Mass, and at the other end an altar for sacrifice to his old Saxon gods.

The good simple man desired to propitiate both sides, and he has accordingly been excluded from the calendar. The Norwegian chief Helgi is another excellent type of a semi-Christianised warrior striving to serve two masters. As an infant he had been baptized; he therefore worshipped Christ when on shore; but on occasions of difficulty, or of danger, or when at sea, he offered up his prayers to Thor.

The gods of ancient Erin have vanished, leaving but faint traces of their former worship. The god, or demigod, Manannan Mac Lir, appears to have been a tutelary deity of the sea, an Irish Neptune, ruler of the waters, lakes, as well as giant Ocean. He was of Dedanann descent; we are told that he was a famous merchant, who resided on and gave his name to the Isle of Man. He was a weather-prophet, and ruler of the winds, and by examination of the heavens, he predicted the length of time fair or foul weather would continue. He has almost disappeared from popular tradition, and is now best known from having left nine daughters, who bequeathed their names to nine lakes. Of these only five are remembered by the peasantry—they are Gill, Erne, Labe, Arrow, and Key. Gill, from whom, in current tradition, Lough Gill, near Sligo, takes its name, is said to be often seen in the vicinity of the lake, over the waters of which she skims in her fleet rolling chariot. This banshee, or rather fairy queen, possesses an acknowledged pre-eminence over her other sisters:—

“ For o'er those waves, from time unknown,  
 Th' enchantress fair,  
 Whose name they bear,  
 Hath reigned on her crystal throne;  
 There her fleet chariot wheels of old  
 Over the glassy waters roll'd,  
 And legends say the royal maid,  
 In robe of purest white array'd  
 And crown'd with diadem of gold,  
 Still reins abreast three coal-black steeds,  
 Still on her car of triumph speeds  
 In royal pride and radiant sheen,  
 Around her native valleys green,  
 And skims o'er the blue tide's surface cold.”

It was probably owing to his familiarity with a tradition of this kind that Spenser drew materials for his “*Faërie Queene*.” These goddesses enjoyed a joke as much as present day ladies of Erin. Of the sisters, one possessed a beautiful lake in the territory over which she held sway, whilst her elder sister had none. One day the elder said to the younger, “Give me the loan of your silver lake, and I promise to return it on Monday” (it is well to explain that in Irish, the terms expressing Monday

and the Day of Judgment are identical). The younger good-naturedly poured her lake into a cow's hide and despatched it by special messenger; but when the porter was sent to carry it back, the elder sister made answer: "assuredly I said Monday, but I meant the Day of Judgment, and I intend keeping the lake until then." So Lough Foyle, or the "borrowed lake," remains in her country to this day, while the great bare and barren hollow from whence it was taken may be seen in Connaught, awaiting the return of the waters, which will take place on the Day of Judgment.

Amongst the gods there was also Neit, Ned or Nudd, the god of war; and Diancecht, or Dianket, the god of medicine, of whose healing powers extraordinary stories are told. Dr. P. W. Joyce states that the latter had a son, and a daughter named Armedda, more skilful than himself. The old legend relates that the son "took off the silver arm which his father Dianket had put on Nuada, and having procured the bones of the real arm he clothed them with flesh and skin, and fixed the arm in its place as well as ever." Dianket was so enraged at being excelled by his son that he killed him. After some time, three hundred and sixty-five healing herbs sprang up on his grave—each herb to cure disease, in that part of the human body from which it grew, and all of them were gathered by his sister, and placed carefully in their proper order. "But before she had time to study their several virtues fully, her father Dianket mixed them all up in utter confusion. Were it not for this churlish proceeding, Armedda would have found out, and we would now know the exact herb to cure each particular disease of the human frame."

Irish gods were apparently but deified mortals, celebrities of their day, taken indiscriminately from the three so-called colonies of the Formorians, the Dedanann, and the Milesians.

It may be interesting to point out that Keating, in his *History of Ireland*, explains the change in name of three of the chiefs of the Dedanann by stating that they were called, instead of their proper names, Maccuill, Maceacht, and MacGreine, because the idols they severally worshipped were distinguished by these names. Maccuill adored, for his deity, a log of wood (*cuill*), Maceacht worshipped a ploughshare (*ceacht*) and MacGreine chose for his god *Grian*, the sun. However all the Irish gods were not inanimate objects of nature, and although Dr. Todd, in his life of St. Patrick, is of opinion that the Irish had no knowledge of the gods or the feminine deities of the classic world under any Celtic designations, yet there can be little doubt but that many of them, under ancient Gaulish names, may be recognised in old Irish legends. Many of the old Celtic gods of Gaul, of Britain, and of Ireland appear to have been the nature-

gods of the primitive Aryan family, though in Ireland several were designated by names differing from their British and Gaulish prototypes. Edward Clodd, F.R.A.S., remarks that among those worshipped by the Irish was "Dagda, a fire-god, whose caldron was the vault of the sky, and whose hammer, like that of Tiranis and Thor, is the thunderbolt. . . . Among the gods common to the British and Irish tribes were Don and Nudd and Lir and their children. . . . Nudd, or Noden, was an ocean god . . . in Ireland he is King Nuada, whose wife was the goddess of the river Boyne. . . . Lir was also a sea god, who appears in old Welsh histories as Lud, to whom some think that a temple, on the hill where St. Paul's Cathedral stands, was once erected; and in another form of the legend, as King Lear."

It has never been sufficiently borne in mind that the deities of all peoples, with, perhaps, the exception of the Jews, are generally recognised as "earth-born." The members of the Olympian hierarchy were but human beings very slightly idealised, and endured all the ills of "suffering sad humanity." Their birth-places, pedigrees, histories, and deaths are given by those who adored them as deities. The grave of Zeus was shown in Crete, Apollo was buried at Delphi, and the graves of Hermes and Aphrodite were all anciently pointed out. In their poetical and dramatical machinery the ancients made their gods the prime agents of as much evil as good. "They have described them as mixing themselves up with human infirmities, and lending themselves to human passions, in so gross a manner that it is almost impossible to admire virtue, and to esteem such gods, or to look up to heaven with affection, without looking down upon its rulers with abhorrence. . . . The writers of the Greek tragedy were continually placing their audiences in positions where, if they exercised their pity it could only be at the expense of their piety, and where disgust was a feeling far more liable to be excited than devotion. In short, there seems to be this difference between the superstition of the Pagans and the religion of the Christians—the former lowered a god to a man, the latter exalts a man to a god!" Zeus, Ares, Poseidon, and Orcus contract what may be euphemistically styled morganatic marriages with mortal woman. On the other hand, favoured mortals, such as Anchises and Endymion, find favour in the eyes of goddess, or nymph of stream, sea, hill, or dale. According to all accounts these good old times have come to an end, the time when Ossian follows his golden-haired charmer through the sunlit waves till they reach the land of youthful delight at the bottom of the Atlantic; when Michael Scott dwells with the fairy queen in her kingdom; when the handsome young fisherman is enticed by the mermaid to

descend to meads and bowers beneath the green waves ; and when women, neglecting Christian rites, are carried off by the fairies into their underground palaces.

If we seek the origin of primitive Greek and Roman worship, all the hierarchy who, served by Hebe and Ganymede, feasted on Olympus, vanish ; for the first worship of Greek and Roman alike was the worship of the dead. In olden times not only every celebrated man, but every man who was not an outcast, became, when dead, a divinity to his descendants, who worshipped in him, and in all ancestors, the principle of life which they inherited. Just before his death Vespasian—evidently a sceptic as to his promotion to divinity, for the apotheosis of Roman Emperors was the last surviving application of a belief formerly universal—exclaimed mockingly, “ Alas ! I think I feel my divinity coming upon me.” Roman altars, discovered in various parts of Britain, are frequently dedicated to the *numen* or divinity of the Emperor.

Although memory of the gods of Erin has almost vanished, yet memory of the goddesses has been retained. In the folk-lore of the peasantry there are still existent prominent supernatural mythical beings, some passively benign, others actively malignant, who hold sway in popular tradition, and who are reputed to reside in the numerous rude stone monuments throughout Ireland named after them. The designation of these survivals is *Cailleach*, *i.e.* witch, or hag ; hence rude stone structures in which they are reputed to dwell are called “ hags’ beds.” The Irish-speaking peasant still designates these grand monuments, scattered broadcast over the land, *leaba* (pronounced *labby*), the resting-place or bed, understood as grave. The most imposing structures are usually called “ Labby Dermody agus Grania,” the bed of Dermod and Grania, this designation being derived from the well-known legend of Dermod O’Dyne’s elopement with Grania, but this portion of the story evidently took its rise from the word *labby* being understood in its literal sense of “ a bed.”

Even in the present day “ Dermod and Grania’s beds ” are associated with runaway couples and with aphrodisiac customs. Of this Dutton’s experience when in search of the Ballycasheen “ bed ” in Clare, is an excellent example. He relates that on inquiry from some country girls where this celebrated “ bed ” was situated, he was heartily laughed at for asking one of them to show him the way to it. “ After a long consultation with one somewhat older than herself—sometimes with very serious countenances, often with smiling ones, and the elder using a good deal of persuasion—she agreed to go with me, if she was certain I was a stranger, and she knew my name. As the conversation between them was in Irish, which I did not understand, and the evening was growing late, I became impa-

tient, and very ungallantly rode away. When I had ridden a mile further I made the same inquiry from a herd's wife, and at the same time told her how I had been laughed at by the girls. She said, 'No wonder for them, for it was the custom that if she went with a stranger to Darby and Grane's bed she was certainly to grant him everything he asked.'" Commenting on this, W. C. Borlace remarks that from anecdotes he had himself heard, as well as from covert jokes which he noticed, passing in Irish, between persons who had accompanied him to "Dermod and Grania's beds," he is sure that this reputation is still attached to these monuments. No doubt but that from Pagan times comes the widespread notion that these "Beds" were efficacious in cases of barrenness. Dutton remarks that if a woman "proves barren, a visit with her husband to Darby and Grane's bed certainly cures her." Mr. Borlace states that—"A similar superstition prevails in the case of some Welsh dolmens (*i.e.* cromleacs) in which country they also are associated with illicit and clandestine meetings. In Brittany, in the Pyrenees, and in Spain, megalithic monuments, menhirs especially, are resorted to by lovers in order to plight their troth."

There are mountain tribes in Northern India who still burn their dead and erect rude stone monuments over their ashes, and travellers have remarked the striking similarity that exists between the Indian and the Irish structures. The manner in which, in India, these stones are hauled to their destination might represent a scene from Neolithic Ireland. Partly according to the estimation in which the deceased is held, partly according to the amount of entertainment which the members of the family are prepared to dispense, a greater or less number of men proceed to the spot where the stones are to be raised. If of medium size they are placed on trucks, with enormous massive wheels; if of greater dimensions, sheer brute force, and pushing and pulling with ropes, suffice to carry them over all obstacles to their final destination.

On the banks of the Jordan there are ancient tombs of great rough stones, resembling the Irish; hundreds of rude stone monuments, in all important respects identical with those in Ireland, abound in Algeria. The Mediterranean parted the stream of this sepulchral building race into two great currents; one flowed along the northern coast of Africa, the other across the face of the European Continent. The rude stone monuments of France are well known, as Brittany presents the finest collection of this class to be seen in Europe; and from thence, apparently, was sent off a branch-stream, which overran Great Britain and Ireland, commingling with another which descended from northern latitudes. That such an immigration took place is

almost self-apparent ; the approximate date is the only matter that appears open to discussion, the low-age school of speculation brings down the use of rude stone structures to a very late period : on the other hand the high-age school dates their erection by many thousand years earlier. Many irrelevant observations regarding Irish monuments have been made even by otherwise able writers. Fergusson remarks that—"It is extremely difficult to write anything regarding the few solitary dolmens of Ireland. Not that their history could not be, perhaps, easily ascertained ; but simply because everybody has hitherto been content to consider them as pre-historic, and no one has consequently given himself the trouble to investigate the matter." Now Ireland, instead of possessing but a "few solitary dolmens," is, on the contrary, for its size, one of the richest, if not the very richest, country in Europe in that class of monuments, and further, as remarked by Mr. Wakeman, "Irish archæologists are not sufficiently demented as to go searching for the history of remains which, upon being dug into, almost invariably present calcined bones, sepulchral urns more or less perfect, and objects, instruments, and personal ornaments composed of stone, flint, bone or shell," the remains, in fact, of the "civilization" of savages.

Legends have gathered around these hoary monuments, even as mosses and lichens cluster on their weather-beaten sides. Unlike rolling stones which gather no moss, these large stationary masses have attracted around them a thick covering of moss, in the shape of oral traditions and legends, ever accumulating new material from current events, all jumbled together, just in the same way that, in a mediæval representation of the Virgin and Child, the painter depicts the abbot or other ecclesiastic who gave him the order for the picture, in the act of adoration—placing past and present on the same plane. These traditional stories were recited on the long winter evenings around the turf fire, whilst men, women, and children listened with eager, rapt attention. The old-world tales of Ireland, however, together with its language, are alike dying out, the days of traditional lore are now past ; for the modern schoolmaster is abroad and, except in remote parts of the country, the peasantry no longer venerate monuments from which, in their eyes, legend and glamour have alike fled.

The conclusion which Mr. Borlace, the latest writer on this subject, arrived at, with regard to the subject-matter of legends, and fragments of legends still existing, regarding Irish rude stone monuments, is "that for the most part it is referable neither to pristine ages of Aryan mythology, nor to traditions of events which occurred in Ireland itself ; but that it is largely

made up of genuine traditions of events which occurred on the Continent, from the third to the sixth century, A.D., with some more distant lights, perhaps reaching back to the first and second centuries."

In styling rude stone monuments giants' graves, the peasantry made the very pardonable mistake of confusing great men with big men; for there is a common and very prevalent idea that bigness constitutes greatness, and in vulgar minds wonder is proportioned in regard to the size of the object under notice; but in the best criterion, nature's workshop, the infinitely small is usually more remarkable for its superior workmanship than the infinitely great. The size of some of the Irish rude stone monuments first gave rise to the idea that giants were buried in them. It is not, however, always the greatest men, either mentally or physically, that have the largest monuments erected over them; and if some of these hitherto undisturbed tombs were scientifically examined it would probably be demonstrated that their occupants belonged to a primitive and undersized race. The rude stone monuments alone are gigantic, not the bones they contain. Bones of the gigantic Irish deer and of the mammoth were long mistaken for human remains, and seemed to confirm the erroneous idea as to their origin. Professor N. Joly remarks that, on the Continent, "a still greater and more deplorable error was the attributing these bones to saints, and, as such, they were paraded with great pomp through the towns and in the country, as late as 1789, in the hope of thereby obtaining rain from heaven in years of prolonged drought."

Popular tradition asserts that a "giant's grave" in the townland of Lickerstown, county Kilkenny, about 25 feet long and 12 broad, had been erected over "Ceadach the Great." The legend, preserved in the locality, which accounts for the death and burial of the giant, relates that he had quarrelled with another Irish Goliath, named Goll, and they chose this spot to decide their difference in single combat. Two of Goll's friends accompanied him to the ground, but Ceadach came alone, mounted on an enchanted horse, by means of which he traversed space instantaneously. A tree is shown marking the spot where the wonderful animal stood whilst the champions fought on foot. After a prolonged and desperate encounter Ceadach was victorious; but Goll, in a dying effort, pierced him through the heart with his spear, upon which the magical horse flew away through the air to his master's palace, conveying the news of his fall. On one of the rocks forming the monument indentations were pointed out, the imprints made by Ceadach as he fell. Goll's body was removed by his two friends, but Ceadach's was interred upon the spot. The legend also affirms that the giant Goll was father of

the lovely Grania, before mentioned, who by her fleetness of foot won the hand of Finn MacCool at the celebrated race of Slieve-naman, but who ran off with Dermot.

Another legend attached to the strand of Beltra, near Ballysodare, county Sligo, relates that the combat took place on these sands; that a young woman named Helè was a spectator, and seeing Goll, her loved one, fall, she dropped dead through excess of grief, and over her a cairn was erected, and another over her luckless lover.

Gathering and piling stones in an immense heap was an easy way of keeping a noticeable fact fresh in the mind of primitive man. In a similar way we nowadays build and endow an hospital or home as a tribute to the philanthropy of some citizen, or erect a statue, in a conspicuous place, to commemorate the fame of some distinguished warrior. The oldest reference to a cairn that the writer can find is in 1 Samuel xx., where, according to the Septuagint version, the Greek (v. 19) reads "beside yonder Ergab," and at verse 41, "David arose from the Ergab," Ergab, being the transcription, in Greek, of a rare Hebrew word signifying a sepulchral mound or rude monument of stones.

The Arabs, although they but destroyed the works of a foreign and conquered race, when they heated the public baths of Alexandria with the books of its famous library (though it is now asserted that they never did so, as it had been burned long previously), are execrated, even yet, in the literary world; how much more, therefore, do the Irish deserve a justly earned censure for their destruction of the primitive rude stone or earthen monuments of their ancestors for the purpose of macadamizing public roads, feeding the greedy maws of limekilns, or manuring fields. Mr. R. Lloyd Praeger draws attention to the wanton destruction of rude stone monuments which "happened under the very noses of the Royal Society of Antiquarians, and the Royal Irish Academy, and the energetic Field Club of Belfast." These monuments are destroyed it is true, these records of the past have vanished, but nevertheless worse might have happened. Had they been handed over to the tender mercies of the Board of Works, they might have been "restored" by that archaeologically intelligent and energetic body, and more "Board of Works lies" might have been handed down to puzzle posterity.

The destruction of these ancient structures has been the subject of comment, but their preservation has been but little noted. Throughout past ages, when other and later monuments have been destroyed, they remained guarded by unknown but dreaded beings. Legends where they have been removed and miraculously restored; beliefs which point to them as the residence of supernatural beings: facts which show the resentment

formerly felt by the country people at their disturbance, are well known. It is noteworthy that these former objects of the peasants' veneration were erected by an early wave of population. It may be suggested that their preservation by means of veneration for traditional beliefs points to the continued influence, up to a very late date, of their builders.

If we are to judge from their sepulchral monuments, these old world folk viewed their dwellings as mere temporary shelters, and regarded their tombs as their true and permanent abode. Even in the already highly developed and refined civilization of the earliest Egyptian dynasties, the tombs of the departed were apparently mere copies of their former dwellings. In these they were supposed to continue to live surrounded with replicas of their numerous belongings. The existence of underground beings was evidently regarded as a kind of phantasmagorical continuance of their past lives.

Some races, in ancient times, buried their dead in the actual houses occupied by them when alive; some savage tribes do so still. Many of the chambers in the tumuli of Northern Europe are regarded, by antiquaries, as copies, in stone, of the wooden dwellings then in use. As the power of the chiefs increased their dwellings became larger and grander, the chambers in the tumuli developing in proportion. Thus, it may be suggested, might not the chambers in the mounds of the New Grange series of monuments, be reproductions of the architectural features of the houses inhabited by their occupants when in the land of the living?

The way in which "hags" are even yet connected in legend and story with rude stone monuments is such, that it may be held as an extenuation of the pun that the myths regarding these venerable dames must be regarded as forming a part of "Hagiology." The race of Irish "hags" can at any rate boast of considerable antiquity; for, as a rule, most rude stone monuments, or carns, had their own peculiar patroness. Mr. Borlace remarks that "this word (*Cailleach*, i.e. 'Hag') is derived from *Caille*, a veil, and properly signifies simply *mulier velata pallio*, a woman wearing a cloak over her head, hence an old woman." Used in a Christian sense, *Cailleach* came to signify a woman who had taken the veil, who had become a nun. The sense of hag or witch was, however, preserved, although it had received it in respect of its connexion with a pre-existing pagan custom, according to which "inspired" women banded themselves together and veiled themselves, just as the druid or sorcerer had his own peculiar tonsure, called opprobriously "the tonsure of Simon Magus." There were female as well as male druids, and there are recorded instances of women placing themselves under

training in sorcery. "Hags" or witches of undoubted pagan pedigree are generally clothed in white (fig. 95); Christian witches wear the more unobtrusive black (fig. 96). In the same way the spirit of the Banshee assumes the form of a woman, sometimes young, but more generally very old. If young she is attired in loose white drapery; if old her long silvery locks float in the wind and her body is enveloped in black drapery.

Prominent in Irish Folk-lore are three celebrated "hags," Aine or Aynia, Bav, the Goddess of War, and *Bheatha* (Vera), variously written in English Vera, Verah, Berah, Berri, Dirra, and Dhirra. Aynia holds sway in popular tradition, principally, but not exclusively, in the North of Ireland; the legends regarding Bav and Vera are—as far as present investigation of legends has progressed—more widely prevalent.



FIG. 95.

The young and white-robed Pagan spirit. From Mr. and Mrs. Hall's *Ireland*.

Most popular superstitions and legends are found to be of a nature easily explainable. It is a strange yet well demonstrated fact that the deities of one period often become the demons of another; and, in the lapse of years, those that were formerly revered and worshipped become, under a new cult, ill-omened and vindictive. Of this no better example can be advanced than the transformation of the ancient goddesses, Aynia and Vera, into witches of ordinary type; yet, considering the attenuated stream of Pagan religious tradition, it is remarkable that the stories of these mythical beings are so widely diffused, and have descended to the present day from remote antiquity. Aynia is represented as passively benign and, only when provoked, demonstrates her power in an unkind manner. At Knocknanny,

in the county Tyrone, a remarkable rude stone monument crowning the summit of a hill is, by the peasantry styled "Aynia's Cove." The hill is considered to be a fairy haunt; and woe betide the unlucky wight who should dare to remove the smallest of the stones which now remain of the "Cove," in which Aynia, who is reputed to have become Queen of the Fairies, is said to have delighted. Aynia occurs as a personal name on the Ballymorereigh Ogham stone, in the county Kerry. According to some writers Aynia, in Irish mythology, held the place of Cybele, the Gaulish form of the name being Ana and Ananus.



FIG. 96.

The old and black-robed Christian spirit.

Edward Clodd states that amongst the old pagan Irish, "the moon was worshipped under the name of Aine, or Anu, as Queen of Heaven, and mother of the gods, bloody sacrifices being offered to her, 'She was upon the hills at midsummer, and at the winter feasts, when the spirits of the dead were propitiated.'"

No mere name similarity is of much intrinsic value; still it may be mentioned, as a curious coincidence, that at the head of the Babylonian mythology there also stands a deity named Anu.

He reigned over the upper and lower regions of the universe; when these were divided, the upper portion, or the heavens, were ruled by him, whilst the lower regions of the earth were governed by his wife Anatu.

Aynia appears in different guises in some of the traditional tales current in Ireland. Popular legend certainly supports the idea that she was at one time regarded as the moon goddess, as an immense stone to be seen near Dunany is called "the chair of Aynia," or "the chair of the lunatics." The country people believed that lunatics, if not under restraint, actuated by some, to them, irresistible impulse, made their way to this chair, seated themselves thrice upon it, and were thenceforth incurable. It was also extremely dangerous for sane persons to sit upon the stone, for they were then subject to the power of Aynia, and liable to become lunatics. Even rabid dogs travelled from all parts of the kingdom to this stone, and remained about it until impelled by some invisible influence, they finally retreated to the ocean, to the submarine dominion of Aynia. Her influence was particularly powerful on the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday immediately following Lammas Day. Few persons in the neighbourhood of Dunany would, in olden times, venture to bathe during these three days dedicated to Aynia; nor would fishermen, save with great reluctance, follow their avocation, as they remarked, that if they did so, one or more persons would lose their lives by drowning, victims of the relentless goddess. These facts, together with other evidence, warrant the belief that Aynia was an ancient Irish goddess of great power, attributes, and influence.

Under some circumstances there appears to have been a special reverential feeling displayed towards people bereft of reason, both in ancient and mediæval times; they were regarded somewhat in the manner in which an American Indian of the present day looks upon a lunatic. Lunacy was formerly supposed to be in some way connected with the phases of the moon, but such is not the case. A mania may, however, be recurrent, and the recurrent period may possibly coincide with the phases of the moon—hence the quaint idea. In old mss. frequent mention is made of the sudden loss of reason by warriors in the heat of battle; the cases of the son of the King of Ulster, at the battle of Ventry; and the Chief Druid of Nuada, King of the Dedannan, at the second battle of Moytirra, are good examples. The Irish ms., from which the following legend is paraphrased, was compiled in the year 1416 from an older version. The Druid, from whom, according to this legend, the name of the lake, *i.e.* Lough Key, near Boyle, in the county Roscommon, has been derived—and not from the daughter of Manannan Mac Lir, as before stated—

is represented as having been present, and having suddenly rushed from the field "in madness and red lunacy."

- "Ye green unruffled waves, ye pure glad waters,  
Whence rose ye? Wherefore flow'd ye o'er the plain  
When he who fled Moytirra's field of slaughters,  
Ignoble safety sought, but sought in vain.
- "When swords flashed, when arrows flew around him,  
Half fainting, panic struck, he fled the foe;  
A brave man would have fought till victory crown'd him,  
Or fallen where many a gallant heart lay low.
- "But King Nuada's Druid fled from glory,  
Pursued and wounded on that fearful day;  
Behind him raged the battle fierce and gory,  
Before, the velvet lawn of verdure lay.
- "There, and 'mid that plain, exhausted almost dying,  
On the rude cairn he laid his weary breast,  
There slumber'd, all unwept, unhonour'd, lying,  
To wake no more from that inglorious rest.
- "For silent, slow as dawns the light of heaven,  
Through the green sward the magic waters rose,  
Unseen, unheard, as falls the dew of even,  
Around and o'er the recreant's head they close.
- "No daring deeds on pillar rudely graven,  
To future ages shall record his fame;  
But men will ever scorn the dastard craven,  
While Key's avenging waters bear his name."

There is a valley in Kerry called Glannagalt, *i.e.* the glen of the lunatics, and it is believed that lunatics, no matter in what part of the kingdom they live, would, if left to themselves, find their way to the valley to be cured. "There are two little wells in the glen," remarks Dr. P. W. Joyce, "called Tobernagalt, the lunatic's well, to which the madmen direct their way, crossing the little stream that flows through the valley, at a spot called Ahagoltaun, the madmen's ford, and passing by Clochnagalt, the standing stone of the lunatics; and they drink of the healing waters, and eat some of the cresses that grow on the margin—the water and the cress, and the secret virtue of the valley, will restore the poor wanderers to sanity."

Fairy-, herb-, and charm-mongers believed that the witch or goddess, Aynia, possessed unlimited influence over the human frame, regarding her as equivalent to what they designated the "vital spark," which they imagined traversed the entire body once in twenty-four hours. Blood-letters would decline to operate on a day devoted to Aynia, for the efflux would carry

away the "vital spark" and the patient would die. Thus the attributes of Aynia appear to have been multifold; she even patronised literature, wept and lamented the loss of the learned, and on their departure from this life, introduced them into fairy realms. Two examples, both modern, of this aspect of the goddess' attributes—must suffice. Lindon, who died in 1733, depicts her lamenting the demise of a man of genius: the passage may be thus translated:—

“ The greater number of the inspiring geniuses of the learned,  
Shed tears in abundance through excessive grief;  
*Acibhinn* and *Aine* were tearing their tresses.”

Dr. James Woods, lamenting the death of a bard, thus describes (in Irish) the poet's reception by the goddess:—

“ He accompanied *Aine* throughout the pleasant district of *Fail*,  
And visited all the full residences of the blooming *Bean-Sighe*,  
To quaff copious draughts of the supreme fountain of *Druidism*,  
from chaste, brightly-polished goblets,  
With the view of whetting his genius and firing his spirit.”

Popular tradition bears testimony to former widespread belief in the magical powers of *Bav*, the war-goddess of the ancient Irish, who may be equated with *Bellona* of the Latins. Many places called *Bovan* or *Bavan* are supposed to signify "the fortress of *Bav*." *Boa* Island, in *Lough Erne*, is styled by the "Four Masters," the island of *Bav*; and the peasantry, according to *Dr. P. W. Joyce*, still style it *Inis-Badhghan*, the island of *Bav*.

The royston-crow, or the "chattering grey fennog," as it is called by Irish-speaking people, is regarded with feelings of mingled dislike and curiosity by the peasantry, who still recite tales of depredations and slaughter in which this bird is represented as exercising a sinister influence. A well-marked distinction is observable in the written as well as current traditions of the country, between the attributes of the scald-crow, or *cornix*, and those of the raven. The former is regarded not only as a bird of omen, but also as an agent in the fulfilment of what is decreed. The country people will not rob the nest of the *cornix*, and there is little doubt that its freedom from molestation is traceable to superstitious fear inspired by *Bav* in ancient times, for the croaking of the *cornix* was considered to be peculiarly unlucky, more so than the croaking of a raven. That the Romans were also imbued with superstitious ideas with regard to the raven is evidenced by their saying, "it was not for

nothing that the raven was just now croaking on my left hand." So also in Gray's fables :

" That raven on yon left-handed oak,  
(Curse on his ill-betiding croak ;)   
Bodes me no good."

In fact, not many years ago, sturdy men, who heard the scarecrow shriek in the morning, would abandon important projects fixed for the same day. Nor is this superstition confined to Ireland alone ; the popular tales of Scotland and Wales, echoes of similar stories once current, and even now not quite extinct in this country, contain frequent allusions to this mystic bird. In a ms. in the library of Trinity College there is a tract on omens to be drawn from the croaking of ravens. To dream you see this bird is bad ; to dream you see one flying is worse ; but to hear it croaking is worst of all ; if it flies round the head of anybody, the person so indicated is in imminent danger of death or of some great misfortune. Even hovering near a house it is a harbinger of ill, and to avert bad luck the following exorcism must be at once recited in Irish : " May fire and water be in you, O bird of evil ! and may a curse be on your head for ever."

The term *Badb* (pronounced *Bav*), signifying rage, fury, or violence, ultimately came to be applied to a witch, fairy, or goddess, represented by the scare-, scald-, or royston-crow. Ancient Irish tracts, romances, and battle-pieces teem with details respecting this goddess, and her sisters *Neman*, *Macha*, and *Morrigan*, or *Morrigau*, furies, witches, and sorceresses, able to confound whole armies.

*Bav* would seem to have been the generic title of the beings ruling over battle and carnage, *Bav's* three so-called sisters representing different aspects of the character of the supreme goddess. *Neman* afflicted her victims with madness ; *Morrigan* incited them to deeds of valour, strife, and battle ; *Macha* revelled amidst the bodies of the slain, and all three are described as being wives of *Neit*, the " God of Battle " of the pagan Irish. There is at least one passage in an Irish ms. which attributes to the goddess of battles the dedication of human heads. A gloss in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*, according to Professor Whitley Stokes, explains *Macha* as " The scald-crow," or " the third *Morrigau*," or " Great Queen." *Macha's* " fruit crop " is stated to be " the heads of men that have been slaughtered." If we read these extracts in connexion with the early practices of the Irish, as recorded by classical authorities, and the practices so frequently ascribed to them in early mss., and in the Irish Annals, the meaning and significance seems clear, and it is evident that the heaps of human crania piled up before the conqueror—often

unearthed by present day archæologists—were offerings to the goddess Macha.

Morrigan has been identified with Arrand or Ana, evidently the Aynia of popular folk-lore. Thus, even in the present day, the memory of the goddess of the ancient faith is still preserved in popular traditions. These stories abound in the North of Ireland, where, in early romances, Ana or Aynia watched over the interests of the Ultonians.

The comparative mythologist will find a curious correspondence between some of the attributes of the Irish Bav, and those of the Valkyria of Norse romance. In Irish tales of war and battle, Bav, in the form of a scald-crow, is always represented as foreshadowing, by its cries, the extent of the carnage about to take place. Thus, in an ancient battle story, the impending death of a hero is foretold thus :—

“ The red-mouthed Bav will cry around the house,  
For bodies it will be solicitous.”

Again :—

“ Pale Bav shall shriek,”

and whilst describing the carnage of a battle it is narrated that “ the red-mouthed, sharp-beaked Bav ” croaked over the heads of the heroes, for even until well advanced in the Christian Era it was considered a disgrace for a man to die a natural death, as thus graphically portrayed in the old saying :—

“ A bed death ; a priest’s death,  
A straw death ; a cow’s death,  
Such death likes not me.”

Bav is a term applied, even nowadays, in the South of Ireland to a scolding woman or virago ; goddess and witch have finally degenerated into common shrews.

The third celebrated “ hag ” of Irish folk-lore, *i.e.* Vera, is, in popular belief, of huge stature and forbidding mien. According to a tradition, current in the county Sligo, she was so tall that she could easily wade all the rivers and lakes of Ireland, but one day when trying to cross *Loch-da-ghedh* it proved beyond her depth and she was drowned. Her “ house ”—the denuded chamber of a carn—on the mountain, near the lake, still remains, and is styled “ Cailleach-a-Vera’s House.”

Some of the early Christian female saints seem also to have been fond of wading. Such was the case with St. Araght of Coolavin, in the county Sligo. She was once engaged in forming

a causeway, as a short cut, across part of Lough Gara, when a fisherman, observing that the saint possessed a good pair of ankles, approached to obtain a nearer view, whereupon the offended fair one flung down the stones out of her apron and abandoned her work. This heap and the unfinished causeway are still pointed out in corroboration of the story.

At the northern end of the parish of Monasterboice, in the county Louth, there is a large sepulchral chamber in remarkably good preservation called “*Cailleach Dirra's House.*” About two miles north of Dunmore East, county Waterford, is a rocky hill called *Carrick-a-Dhirra*. On its summit is an ancient pagan sepulchre consisting of five cists, also styled “*Carrick-a-Dirra,*” after this mythical being, who also gave her name to “*Hag's Head*” in the county Clare, as well as to the hills of *Slieve-na-Cailleach*, the site of the most wonderful sepulchral remains in Ireland. A gentleman of antiquarian tastes, living in the early part of the eighteenth century, invited Dean Swift to accompany him to these hills in order to collect the fables related about the district. The Dean turned into English verse the Irish tales thus collected. The following are a few of the lines bearing on the subject:—

“Determined now her tomb to build,  
Her ample skirt with stones she filled,  
And dropped a heap on Carnmore,  
Then stepped one thousand yards to Loar,  
And dropped another goodly heap;  
And then, with one prodigious leap  
Gained Carnbeg; and on its height  
Displayed the wonders of her might.”

O'Donovan cites a quatrain of her alleged composition then current amongst the Irish speaking peasantry of Meath, which he thus translates:—

“I am poor *Cailleach Bera*,  
Many a wonder have I ever seen;  
I have seen *Carn-Bane* a lake,  
Though it is now a mountain.”

In some parts of Ireland she is now looked upon as a banshee, and makes her appearance before the death of a member of some well-known families.

It is narrated that on one occasion she turned the celebrated hero of antiquity, *Finn MacCool*, into a decrepid old man, but his soldiers threatened to dig through *Slieve Gullian*, in *Armagh*, and to drive her out of a cave in which she then had her residence, and forced her to restore *Finn* to his former strength

and symmetry. Under the shadow of the Slieve Gullian range there is an enchanted lake styled by the peasantry "Lough Cailleach Berri." One version of the story related of this mountain and lake is as follows:—Finn MacCool observed a hare, one side of whose head shone with a resplendent golden hue, the other side being of a dazzling silvery white. He instantly hallooed his hound Bran to the chase, and for many days they incessantly followed the hare until they approached Lough Gullian. Finn was somewhat behind, being outpaced by the hound, and just as he reached the shores of the lake he met Bran returning, but so changed in appearance that he did not recognize his faithful dog until the animal, jumping on him, licked his hand, for the dog's coat, instead of lying in the natural manner, had the hairs turned the contrary way, as if they had grown from the tail toward the head, instead of from the head towards the tail. Much troubled at this strange alteration, Finn immediately concluded that some person had practised "druidism" (magic) on his favourite.

He followed Bran to the edge of the lake, where he found a beautiful female in tears, and apparently overwhelmed with grief. Urged by a spirit of gallantry, Finn inquired the cause of her sorrow, and whether he could afford her assistance. She thanked him, and said she had dropped a golden ring into the water which she was unable to recover. Finn immediately plunged into the lake; and after three attempts recovered the ring which he tendered to the owner, who, in accepting it, caught Finn by the hand, and changed him into an old man of miserable mien, with long white hair and silvery beard. Then springing aloft into the air, the witch disappeared into the midst of the hill, which rises over the lake.

The chief officers of the Feni felt alarm at the prolonged absence of their chief, and when the dog Bran returned his odd appearance increased their fears. They at length understood the dog's strange movements, and followed him in their search after Finn. On arriving at the enchanted lake they found their chief, but so altered as not to be recognizable. He too in his wretched condition wished to remain unknown; but the hound going up to him, wagging his tail and licking his master's hand, identified the missing warrior. Finn satisfied their curiosity by reciting what had befallen him, and ended by pointing out the retreat of the witch. They could not, however, discover the entrance to her underground mansion, so they commenced to level the hill by flinging it into the lake, when the enchantress appeared, and told them that if they spared her hill she, on her part, would restore to health both Finn Mac Cool and his dog.

Probably the foregoing story is an allegory. Finn may have

omitted the performance of some superstitious rite appertaining to the worship of the goddess, or he may have quarrelled with the druids and defied them, and after some time, having had the worst of the conflict, made his peace with the offended goddess and her priests. According to Mr. W. C. Borlace the story is a version of the sun-myth. Finn Mac Cool representing the sky turned to grey by the departing sun, who is driven out of her cave again, according to the usual myth current throughout the whole northern portion of the European continent. There are always, however, two sides to every question. Thus, while dealing at large with the theory that myths are derived from natural objects, Mr. Taylor condemns most emphatically the extravagance of solar interpretation which the writings of the meteorological school illustrate:—"No one-sided interpretation can be permitted to absorb into a single theory such endless, many-sided correspondences as these. Rash inferences, which on the strength of mere resemblance, derive episodes of myth from episodes of nature, must be regarded with utter mistrust, for the student who has no more stringent criterion than this for his myths of sun and sky and dawn, will find them wherever it pleases him to seek them. It may be judged by simple trial what such a method may lead to: in legend, no allegory, no nursery rhyme, is safe from the hermeneutics of a thorough-going mythologic theorist."

From a wild legend which came to the knowledge of Mr. Borlace, recited of St. Barry of Kilbarry, he was strongly of opinion that from it the non-Christian origin of the so-called saint can be detected; and that his name scarcely veils his identity with the deity, who, as King of the Fairies, still presides over the land of the dark race. "The oral legend tells us that he (St. Barry) chased a huge *ollphiast*, or serpent, into Lough Lagan, where it jumped into the water, but the saint made a prod at it with his *bachall*, or staff, and thrust it through. The blood gushed out in such quantities that the whole lake became coloured red. With the force of his thrust the saint lost his balance, fell on one knee, and from the spot thus touched by his person, a clear spring burst forth, which he blessed. For Barry, or Barra, read Varra, and the reasons the Christians adopted St. Barry for this district is clear. A whole chapter might be written on the legends extant about Finvarra—all belonging to these districts. The pagan hero, or heroine, it is doubtful which, who probably had his seat on Slieve Bann, was none other than the White Varra."

One story told of Cailleach Vera, amongst the peasantry near Slyne Head, shows that she could give good advice of a practical character, and that she was married. "One night she was on

the sea with her children; the night was still and dark, and it was freezing; the cold went to their very marrow. She told them to make themselves warm. 'We cannot,' they said. 'Bale the sea out and in,' said she. 'Take the scoop, fill the boat, and bale it out again.' They did so, and made themselves warm until morning."

Other legends make Cailleach Vera of Dedanann descent, and give her another name, Evlin.

It is extremely rash to place reliance on the similarity in names of gods or goddesses worshipped in the east and in the west; but mention may be made of a remarkable coincidence in this respect, in a notice written by M. St. Hilaire on human sacrifice, amongst the Khonds of Orissa, a mountainous district of India, who offered to the goddess of the earth, whom they named Bera, human hecatombs unequalled except amongst the ancient Mexicans. The bloody sacrifices are now a thing of the past; but the deep root which the custom had taken was proved by a naive complaint made to the English Resident, and the responsibility the Khonds laid upon him, should the anger of the Goddess Bera lead her to withdraw the protection and favour she had until then accorded them.

O'Donovan states that in the eastern counties of Ireland the banshee is styled *bodhbh chaointe*, pronounced *bowe keenty*; he also draws attention to the fact that the names of many banshees are preserved in Irish romantic tales as well as in elegies and other poems of which the most celebrated are:—"Aeibhinn (now Aoibhell) of Craigliath, near Killaloe, the banshee of the Dal-gCais of North Munster; Cliodhna of Tonn Cliodhna, at Glandore, the banshee of the Mac Carthys and other families of South Munster; Aine of Knockany in the county Limerick; Una of Cnoc Sidhe-Una, the banshee of the O'Carrolls; Cailleach Beirre of Dun Caillighe Beirre, the banshee of some of the Leinster and Meath families; Grian of Cnoc Greine in Munster; Aine of Lissan in Tyrone, so attached to the family of O'Corra; Eibhlinn of Sliabh-Fuaid, &c., &c. Each of these is *bainrioghan na bruighne*, or queen of the fairy palace in her district."

It is narrated in an Irish ms. that the Dalcassian hero, Dooling O'Hartigan, on his way to the Battle of Clontarf, was met by Aoibhell or Eevil,\* the guardian spirit of the Dalcassian warriors, who endeavoured to dissuade him from going to the fight, predicting that he should indubitably be slain. She proffered him pleasure and long life would he but remain away. The warrior replied that nothing could induce him to abandon

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\* O'Donovan states that the correct form of the word is Aeibhinn, and that it glosses *amoena*, 'pleasant, sweet.'

his friend in the day of battle. Eevil then cast around him a magical cloak, which rendered him invisible, and warned him that he would certainly be slain if he threw it off. In the heat of the conflict he forgot this warning, and he was, according to the prediction of the goddess, instantly slain.

This good-natured banshee figures in various comparatively modern poetical pieces relating to the Dalcassian race. MacNamara in his *Mock Æneid* makes her the sybil of his poem. Another author, Merriman, introduces her into his facetious poem of *The Midnight Court*, and depicts her as presiding at an assembly of the fairies at Craiglea, for the purpose of enacting regulations for the acceleration and growth of the Dalcassian population.

In the Battle of Clontarf, before mentioned, the Irish king, Brian Boru, then of great age, was urged by his attendants to retire, but replied :—“Retreat becomes us not ; and I know that I shall not leave this place alive, for Eevil of Craglea appeared to me last night, and told me that I should be killed this day.” Thus in this semi-historical tale two heroes (*i. e.* the king and O’Hartigan, before mentioned), who were presumably Christians, are depicted as placing implicit faith in the powers of one of the old heathen deities.

It is curious to observe that at this very period under notice, the Norse or Scandinavian foes of the Irish believed in female sprites and witches, who were, however, of a more gloomy and diabolical nature than those attendant on the Irish, and who also possessed the power of foretelling the dreadful slaughter about to ensue at Clontarf. Shortly before this battle a Norse leader, whilst at Caithness in Scotland, about to set sail for Ireland, sought to foresee his fate ; when leaving his home he noticed twelve women on horses riding towards a tumulus. These having suddenly vanished from view, he advanced to the tumulus, and looking through an aperture which he found in the stones, he saw women in the chamber in the interior of the cairn who had commenced weaving, having human heads for woof and warp, a sword for a reed, an arrow for a shuttle. Whilst thus employed they sang these words :—

“ Vitt er orpinn,  
Fyrit valfalli,  
Riss reidi skei,  
Rignir hlodi,” &c.

Which Gray has amplified as follows :—

“ Now the storm begins to lour,  
Haste, the loom of hell prepare,  
Iron sleet of arrowy shower  
Hurtles in the darkened air.

Glittering lances are the loom,  
 Where the dusky warp we strain,  
 Weaving many a soldier's doom,  
 Orkney's woe and Radner's bane,  
 See the gristly texture grow,  
 ('Tis of human entrails made);  
 And the shafts that play below,  
 Each a gasping warrior's head."

When they had finished, these weird females drew off the web, and cut it, carrying away each her own part. The witches then rode off, six to the north and six to the south.

The morose and diabolical character of Norse and Lapland witches is referred to by Milton in the description of Sin, the portress of Hell's gate, and her son, Death:—

"Nor uglier follow the Night-hag, when, called  
 In secret, riding through the air she comes,  
 Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance  
 With Lapland witches, while the lab'ring Moon  
 Eclipses at their charms."

O'Donovan mentions that Magrath, in his *Wars of Thomond*, introduces Brónach Boirne, or the hag of Burren Head (now Blackhead), as "foreboding the slaughter of the Abbey of Corcomroe, A.D. 1318, by washing fantastical skulls and other human bones on the margin of Loch Rasga, now Loughrask, in the barony of Burren; but in genuine Irish folk-lore Aebhinn is never represented as delighting in slaughter of this kind. She always grieves for it. In fact, she was not at all a foul and ugly hag."

One of the oldest references to a banshee is to be found in Mageoghegan's translation of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, where it is stated that Crimthann, head king of Ireland at the commencement of the Christian era, was carried off by a banshee or fairy to her palace, where he seems to have passed a very enjoyable time; and O'Flaherty, in his *Ogygia*, recounts this fairy tale as if it ranked as true history.

It would appear that originally every family possessed its own particular banshee, *i.e.* the spirit of one of its ancestors who always appeared to announce by its weird warning (fig. 97) the approaching decease of any member of the family.

"Anon she pours a harrowing strain  
 And then—she sits all mute again—  
 Now peals the wild funereal cry,  
 And now—it sinks into a sigh."

The banshee, however, finally became aristocratic, became identified with one of the ancient goddesses, only attaching herself to celebrated families. In many instances she is regarded as the ghost of some person who had suffered violence from a progenitor of the family, and in revenge she utters her vengeful wail to announce approaching death to his descendants. Her cry often arises from a particular spot, from a spring, river, or lake with which her name is connected. The characteristic figure and voice of the banshee are unmistakable.

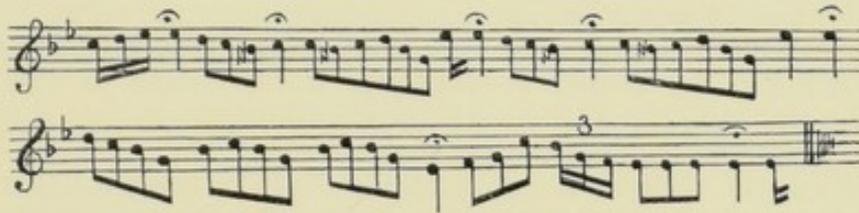


FIG. 97.

The wail of the Banshee. Archetype of the Keen. From Mr. and Mrs. Hall's *Ireland*.

The following verses, from Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends*, translated from a popular keen, are given on account of their introduction of the banshee. The mother of the dead young man speaks :—

- “ Maidens, sing no more in gladness  
 To your merry spinning wheels;  
 Join the keener's voice of sadness,  
 Feel for what a mother feels.
- “ See the space within my dwelling—  
 'Tis the cold blank space of death;  
 'Twas the banshee's voice came swelling  
 Slowly o'er the midnight heath.
- . . . . .
- “ 'Twas the banshee's lonely wailing,  
 Well I knew the voice of death,  
 On the night-wind slowly sailing  
 O'er the bleak and gloomy heath.”

The last verse seem to be a paraphrase of an allusion to the banshee in an Irish elegy by John MacWalter Walsh, of the county Kilkenny :—

- “ An duite, a uairil óig mo éroiúe!  
 Óo reread go duibac an bean riúe?  
 A meoðan éum uaigneac oíúce  
 Ip cuinac do bí ag eagcaoinead!”

Thus rendered into English by O'Donovan :—

“ Was it for thee, O youth in love allied,  
Close to my bosom as the spirit there ;  
The banshee, on the lonely mountain side,  
Poured her long wailings thro' the midnight air ?”

The banshees warned mortals whom they protected of impending danger, pointed out the right line of conduct to pursue, and appear to have been of quite as much use to the old pagans, in worldly and other matters, as his guardian angel, or saint, is to the Christian of the present. It is on record that the Banshee has followed the family to which it was attached to distant lands ; for space and time are no impediments to the mystic power appointed to bear the prophecy of death.

When the head of a noble family died, its banshee, like a mediæval herald, announced the event, and the news was passed on by every local banshee from place to place until it had made the circuit of the country. The keen composed on the death of Maurice Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry, describes how “ from crag to crag the signal flew ” :—

“ When I heard lamentations,  
And sad warning cries,  
From the banshees of many  
Broad districts arise,  
I besought thee, O Christ,  
To protect me from pain.  
I prayed ; but my prayers  
They were offered in vain.

“ Aina from her closely-  
Hid nest did awake,  
The woman of wailing  
At Gur's voicy lake.  
From Glen Fogra of words  
Came a mournful whine ;  
And all Kerry's hags  
Wept the lost Geraldine.

“ The banshees of Youghal  
And of stately Mogeely,  
Were joined in their grief  
By wide Imokilly.  
Carah Mona in gloom  
Of deep sorrow appears,  
And all Kinalmeaky's  
Absorbed into tears.

“ The banshee of Dunqueen  
 In sweet song did deplore,  
 To the spirit that watches  
 On dark Dun-an-Oir.  
 And Ennismore's maid  
 By the Feal's gloomy wave,  
 With her clear voice did mourn  
 For the fall of the brave.

“ On stormy Slieve Mis  
 Spread the cry far and wide,  
 From steep Slieve Finnaleun  
 The wild eagle replied.  
 'Mong the Reeks, like the  
 Thunder-peal's echoing rout,  
 It bursts, and deep bellows  
 Bright Brandon gives out.”

In the elegy on the Knight of Kerry, before quoted, there occurs a humorous quatrain recounting how, on this occasion, when the banshee was heard, in the town of Dingle, lamenting the death of the Knight, each one of the merchants was in mortal terror lest the mournful cry should be the herald of his own death; but the poet, satirically, assures them that their fears were quite groundless:—

“ *Annra an Daincion 'nuair neartaio an bpongol,*  
*Do glac eagla ceannuioche an enoiraice :*  
*'Na u-taob fein nra baogal doibrim :*  
*Ni caoinio mná riçe an rort ran.”*

His re-assurance is thus rendered from the Irish:—

“ At Dingle the merchants  
 In terror forsook  
 Their ships and their business,  
 They trembled and shook.  
 Some fled to concealment;  
 The fools thus to fly!  
 For no trader a banshee  
 Will utter a cry!”

Once in seven years a female apparition appears at the cairn on Knocknarea, near Sligo, and any mortal who chances then to see her, is certain to encounter some serious misfortune within twelve months. The spectral illusions so frequently observed upon many mountains, notably in Germany, and by which beholders were so long perplexed, have been explained by the discovery of the principles of reflection and atmospheric refraction of the rays of light. Increased information on similar subjects

has, latterly, been so great that it has taken all supernatural romances out of our lives, and left us not even the ghost of a ghost. Nowadays belief in the existence of the banshee is fast fading away, and in a few more years it will only be remembered in legends of the marvellous.

What the Irish designate "Fetches," the English call "Doubles." The Fetch approximates to the Highlander's "second sight," and is a mere shadow, resembling in stature, features, and dress, a living person well known to the beholder. If the apparition appears in the morning a happy longevity for the original may be confidently predicted; but if it appears in the evening the immediate dissolution of the living prototype may be as surely anticipated. When the Fetch appears agitated in its movements a violent or painful death is indicated for the doomed prototype, who is known at the time to be labouring under some serious illness. Individuals often behold their own Fetches, and the Phantom may make its appearance at the same time, and in different places, to several persons. Spirit-like, it flits before the sight of the beholder, walking leisurely in front, and mysteriously vanishing.

The wail of the banshee, or the natural moan of the wind in crevices in the rocks, frequently takes place just before the approach of a storm. Moaning waves are often alluded to by Irish bards; and a description of the sounds heard at Portnatraghan, between Benbaun and Bengore, on the north coast of the county Antrim, may be considered typical of other localities. Portnatraghan signifies the "harbour of the lamentations," and no more beautiful or appropriate designation could have been chosen for it. A stranger, unacquainted with its peculiarities, visiting the locality for the first time, describes the effect which this freak of nature produced upon his mind. He heard, suddenly, a heavy long-drawn sigh quite close beside him as he imagined, though no human being was in sight, and as he continued to listen intently, the sigh was repeated at regular intervals. When he regained self-possession he investigated the matter, and discovered that the sound, which had so startled him, issued from a fissure in the rocks over which he was standing. Close to this he found a second fissure from which unearthly groans proceeded, so like those of a human being, that it was distressing to listen to them. If such were the impressions produced on a nineteenth-century tourist by these mysterious sounds, how much more appalling must they not have been to the untutored savage?

A friend of O'Donovan's sent him the following account of the supposed wail of the banshee of his own family, which was of Irish aristocratic, or even royal descent; the anecdote, like that

relating to Portnatraghan, shows how easy it is for the most attentive listener to misconstrue the origin of mysterious or unusual sounds:—"In November, 1820, when I was in attendance on a near and dear relative's death-bed in an old castle in the county of Westmeath, I heard a most extraordinary sound resembling that of an Æolian harp, but also having a strong similitude to the human voice. It was more nearly allied to singing than instrumental music. I never heard anything like it before or since. Had I been superstitious, I should have at once considered it to be the song or wail of the banshee. The sound appeared to me to be everywhere in the room, and not to come from any point; and I feel certain that the servants in the house at the time might, with a little stretch of their fancy, have placed it anywhere except in the real locus from whence it proceeded, and that was the throat of the almost unconscious invalid. Under the circumstances in which I was placed, I could not escape examining into the nature of the extraordinary sounds; and I found they were due to an involuntary action of the organs of voice, coupled with the spasmodic breathing of the patient, which changed every moment, producing a sort of ventriloquistic singing or melody which was exquisitely harmonious and perfectly unearthly, as was observed by one of the listeners, who did not venture to form an opinion as to the nature of the sounds she heard. The sound heard on the occasion referred to is not, I feel certain, the only instance of its occurrence, for I have heard of others. But sensible people do not generally like to speak of such things; and servants, nurses, and indeed others who have heard of banshees, and would believe in their existence without investigation, have attributed such sounds to their agency. I have known a shutter closed, when a window-sash was not entirely shut down, emit sounds not unlike the Æolian harp, but this was not the sound I refer to above."

According to Dr. P. W. Joyce, Clíodhna (pronounced *Cleena*) is "the potent banshee that rules, as queen, over the fairies of South Munster; and you will hear innumerable stories among the peasantry of the exercise of her powerful spells. . . . In the *Dinnsenchus* there is an ancient poetical love story, of which *Cleena* is the heroine, wherein it is related that she was a foreigner, and that she was drowned in the harbour of Glandore, near Skibbereen, in Cork. In this harbour the sea, at certain times, utters a very peculiar deep, hollow, and melancholy roar among the caverns of the cliffs, and which was formerly believed to foretell the death of a king of the South of Ireland; and this surge has been from time immemorial called *Tonn Cleena*, *Cleena's Wave*."

O'Donovan remarks that when the wind is N.E. off the shore,

“the waves, resounding in the caverns, send forth a deep, loud, hollow, monotonous roar which, in a calm night, is peculiarly impressive to the imagination, producing sensations either of melancholy or fear.” The cliffs, from the caverns of which Cleena sends forth this remarkable wail, are the subject of a Latin poem, written by Dean Swift in 1723. The great Irish wit makes no allusion to Cleena, which the genius of Ovid would have turned to so much account:—

“*Ecce ingens fragmen scopuli quod vertice summo  
Desuper impendet, nullo fundamine nixum  
Decidet in fluctus: maria undique et undique saxa  
Horrisono stridore tonant, et ad aethera murmur  
Erigitur; trepidatque suis Neptunus in undis  
Nam longa venti rabie, atque aspergine crebrâ  
Equorei laticis, specus ima rupe cavatur:  
Jam fultura ruit, jam summa cacumina nutant  
Jam cadit in praeceps moles, et verberat undas.*”\*

Cleena had one of her palaces in the centre of a great rock, situated about five miles from Mallow, still well known by the name of Carrig-Cleena, and there is a legend attached to it, recounted by Windele, from which Cleena’s moral character appears to have been doubtful. A market or fair was held in the neighbourhood; and on these occasions she came out of her abode and carried off every good-looking young man at the fair who pleased her. It was told how a peasant one evening had seen the whole space about the rock brilliantly lighted up, the entrance door thrown open, and a fair lady standing within. Some people cultivated the ground around the rock with potatoes; but Cleena was heard within piteously wailing, as if lamenting the desecration, and the men desisted.

The cromleac in the townland of Ahaglaslin, county Cork, is styled Callaheencladdig, and there is an Irish refrain relating to it, which has been translated:—

“A little maiden of the shore  
Lamenting loud and waiting sore.”

The designation of this monument has also been translated the “Little Hag of the Seashore,” and the “hag” used formerly

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\* “Behold a mighty mass of rock, whose topmost peak hangs over, and sinks down into the waves, with no foundation there. The sea and rocks around re-echo with the dreadful din, and even to the sky the noise ascends, the waves of ocean also quiver, for by the continual raging of the wind, and by the constant washing of the waves, a cave is hollowed out from the solid rock. Now the storm strikes it, its topmost peaks thereby are shaken, and the mighty mass falls crashing down into the seething waves.”

to utter lamentations when anyone died in the neighbourhood. W. C. Borlace is of opinion that she can be identified, with tolerable certainty, as Cleena, "whose house on the flat stony seashore, consisting of a great squarish natural rock, was pointed out to me, at a turn in the road, just beyond the dolmen. Stories were current of her inveigling young fellows to the rock whence they never returned."

Even Cleena had a more estimable side to her character. Some of the peasantry of the country around Carrig Cleena regard her in the light of a benefactress. In her neighbourhood no cattle die from the influence of the evil eye, nor the malignant power of the unfriendly spirits of the air. Her goodness preserves the harvest from the blights which dissipate the farmer's hopes. The peasantry are the children of her peculiar care. She often appears, disguised in the homely garb of a peasant girl, to announce to some late wayfarer the expulsion from her dominions of invading spirits, and the consequent certainty of an abundant harvest. Cleena is also stated to dwell in the Bay of Dublin, and to cry whenever the head of an old Milesian family dies.

The late J. O'Beirne Crowe when writing on the ancient goddesses of the pagan Irish, states that the Irish possessed foreign deities; and he identified the above mentioned Cleena, *Clidna*, or *Clida*, with the Gaulish Clutonda.

A legend of the hero Cuchullin (Coolin) recites that, being pursued by a Cailleach, or witch, he ran southwards towards the ocean, until finding himself literally "between the devil and the deep sea," he sprang from a headland on to a rock in the ocean, closely pursued by the witch; then, with a superhuman exertion, he sprang back to the mainland; but the hag, attempting the same feat, jumped short, fell into the flood, and was drowned. The body of the witch, carried northward by the current, drifted ashore at a point called Cancalee, or the Hag's Head—a singular conformation of rock, worn into a grotesque resemblance of the human profile. The waves, however, are not, as we see, suffered to claim undisputed this rude sculpture as their own; legends relate that it is the body of this malignant hag, who for her misdeeds was transformed into stone, and doomed to remain there for ever, lashed by the raging billows of the ocean.

On the hill of Carrick, overlooking the river Boyne, there is a rock denominated the "Witch's Stone," which stands upon its northern brow. The legend attached to it recounts that a witch hurled this boulder from the hill of Croghan at some early Father of the Church, but missed his reverence, and the boulder fell where it is now to be seen.

Meendacalliagh, in the parish of Lower Fahan, county Donegal,

signifies "the mountain flat of the two hags." A locality near Monasterboice is styled "the Witch's Hollow," and a point of rock, near Youghal, jutting into the river Blackwater, is designated *Sron-Caillighe*, "the Hag's Nose," or promontory.

Legends are still recounted amongst the peasantry of immense carns, tumuli, rude stone monuments of various descriptions, cashels, and even of the comparatively modern round towers, being erected in the course of one night by a Cailleach, or hag. A rude stone structure near Dundalk, figured in Wright's *Louthiana*, and in the *Archæologia*, is styled by the country people *Fags-na-ain-eigh*, *i.e.* the one night's work; the carn at Heapstown, county Sligo, is also styled *Fas-na-hannahy*. The designation *Fas-na-hannahy* (*Fas-na-haon-oidhche*), "the growth of one night," *i.e.* a mushroom, is applied by the peasantry principally, however, to carns. The name may probably first have been given to some carns on account of their general appearance resembling that of an enormous mushroom, whilst the legend of their erection in a single night was then probably invented to account for their name.

A supernatural being, styled Grian, is reputed to have been buried in various localities; for several rude stone monuments in different parts of the kingdom are still popularly known as her last resting-place.

The legend, which transforms Grian from a beautiful charming young woman into an ugly vindictive old witch, relates that five young warriors, sons of a chief named Conall, attacked the "fairy mansion" of Grian's father, and destroyed the place. To avenge this act, the sorceress transformed them into badgers. When Conall heard of the fate of his sons, he set out to fight the enchantress. Grian addressed him in a conciliatory manner; but, when he unguardedly came close to her, she vanquished him by means of a powerful spell.

The name of the Castle of Carrigogunnell, on the banks of the Shannon, is understood by the peasantry to mean "the Rock of the Candle"; and, to account for the name, a legend is narrated by them of a witch, named Grana, who long ago lived on it, and nightly lighted an enchanted candle. Whoever beheld its rays died before the morning's sun rose. Crofton Croker, in his legend of this locality, depicts Grana as of gigantic size and frightful in appearance. "Her eyebrows grew into each other with a grim curve, and beneath their matted bristles, deeply sunk in her head, two small grey eyes darted forth baneful looks of evil. From her deeply-wrinkled forehead issued forth a hooked beak, dividing two shrivelled cheeks. Her skinny lips curled with a cruel and malignant expression, and her prominent chin was studded with bunches of grizzly hair." So numerous were Grana's

victims that "it was the mighty Finn himself who lifted up his voice and commanded the fatal candle of the hag, Grana, to be extinguished. 'Thine, Regan, be the task,' he said, and to him he gave a cap thrice charmed by the magician Luno of Lochlin."

"With the star of the same evening the candle of death burned on the rock, and Regan stood beneath it. Had he beheld the slightest glimmer of the blaze, he, too, would have perished, and the hag, Grana, with the morning's dawn, rejoiced over his corpse. When Regan looked towards the light, the charmed cap fell over his eyes and prevented his seeing. The rock was steep, but he climbed up its craggy side with such caution and dexterity, that, before the hag was aware, the warrior, with averted head, had seized the candle, and flung it with prodigious force into the river Shannon, the hissing waters of which quenched its light for ever."

"Then flew the charmed cap from the eyes of Regan, and he beheld the enraged hag, with outstretched arms, prepared to seize and whirl him after her candle. Regan instantly bounded westward from the rock, just two miles, with a wild and wondrous spring. Grana looked for a moment at the leap, and then, tearing up a huge fragment of the rock, flung it after Regan with such tremendous force that her crooked hands trembled and her broad chest heaved with heavy puffs, like a smith's labouring bellows, from the exertion. The ponderous stone fell harmless to the ground; for the leap of Regan far exceeded the strength of the furious hag. In triumph he returned to Finn:—

'The hero, valiant, renowned, and learned,  
White-toothed, graceful, magnanimous, and active.'

"The hag, Grana, was never heard of more; but the stone remains, and, deeply imprinted in it, is still to be seen the mark of the hag's fingers. That stone is far taller than the tallest man, and the power of forty men would fail to move it from the spot where it fell."

In the townland of Carrigmoorna, county Waterford, there is a conical hill, crowned by a large rock, in which dwells the enchantress Murna. When the wind blows strongly in certain directions it produces in some crevices of the rock a loud roar, and the country people state that this sound is the humming of Murna's spinning wheel.

The water spirit required his tribute, and hence is supposed to have arisen the wide-spread reluctance amongst primitive seaside folk to rescue a drowning man from the water, the old superstition that

"Save a stranger from the sea,  
And he'll turn your enemy,"

might many years ago have been considered universally prevalent along the Irish littoral.\*

When, in the Solomon Islands, a man accidentally falls into the water, and a shark attacks him, he is not allowed to escape. If he succeeds in eluding the shark, his fellow-tribesmen will throw him back to his doom, believing him to be marked out for sacrifice to the gods. A Hindoo will not rescue even a comrade should he fall into the waters of the sacred Ganges; for he thinks that the spirit of the river would thereby be defrauded of his just due. Tylor quotes an anecdote from Bohemia to the effect that some fishermen refused to save a drowning man, as they feared that the "waterman," that is, the water demon, would take away their luck in fishing and drown them at the first opportunity. In Egypt this idea of sacrifice to the water sprite is evidently present in the minds of some of the Arabs on the Nile. Before trusting their boat to the mercy of the cataract when descending the river a stick is thrown into the current; if this disappears in the swirl of the waters it is looked upon as a favourable omen, or that the offering has been accepted.

In an article on Iona, in the *Fortnightly Review*, signed Fiona Macleod, the writer states:—"When I was a child I used to throw offerings in small coins, flowers, shells, even a newly-caught trout, once a treasured flint arrow-head, into the sea-lough by which we lived. My Hebridean nurse had often told me of Shony, a mysterious sea-god, and I know I spent much time in wasted adoration; a fearful worship, not unmixed with disappointment and some anger."

The original level of the Forum at Rome was nearly forty feet below the present-day surface, and this ancient level was very slightly above that of the Tiber. Thus in early times the Forum was a swamp, into which Curtius plunged with his horse, in accordance with the widespread belief that a shaking quagmire can only be given solidity by the sacrifice of a human life. It is a mistake to suppose that the gulf into which he rode was an earthquake chasm. At the low level of the original Forum it would have at once filled with water.

The water demon, in modern times, assumes, in different localities of Ireland, various forms and attributes, according to the ideas of the peasantry in regard to its nature. The crops on Coolnabinch Hill, in the county Meath, were, in olden times, always eaten by the *ullfish*, which issued from the adjoining lake. This fabulous monster, according to the old shannachies, or story

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\* In Ireland the body of a drowned person is discovered by floating a bundle of straw on the surface of the water; it will stop and quiver over the spot where the corpse is lying. This superstitious custom is very widespread.

tellers of the neighbourhood, is an aquatic horse, which lives at the bottom of Moynagh lake and other sheets of water in the county Meath. *Ullfish* is a corruption of *ollphiast*—pronounced *ulfeest*, which has the same general meaning as *piast*. Oll, or ull, is a prefix, signifying very large, so that *ollphiast* is a very large *piast*, or serpent-demon.

There is a desolate-looking, but highly picturesque tarn in a hollow on the slope of Topped Mountain, county Fermanagh, a little to the south of the tarn that crowns the summit of the ridge. The country people recount that an apparition, in the shape of a water-horse, sometimes emerges from its bosom, traverses the wild heath of Cloghtogle to Loughascaul, where it descends again to its watery domain.

In the vicinity of a cashel on Slieve Mis, county Kerry, are two dark forbidding-looking lakelets lying in the hollow of the mountain. One is regarded by the peasantry as unfathomable. The tarn derives interest from a legend in the *Leabhar na h-Uidhre*, relating that it was once infested by an enormous *piast*, which devoured both the inhabitants of the fortress and their cattle. On one occasion when the hero Cuchullin (Coolin) was near the cashel, he heard, at midnight, the approach of the monster. "These be no friends of mine," said he, "that come here"; and he fled before it, jumped over the cashel wall, and alighted in the centre of the enclosure, at the door of the king's residence—a record leap. The Irish saints are depicted as bolder in their contests with water demons than this hero of Pagan times. Saint Mochua of Balla overcame a horrid monster which infested one of the Connaught lakes, whilst the saints, Senanus and Kevin, struggled successfully with the *piasts* or dragons of Scattery and Glendalough.

There is a *piast* at the bottom of a lake in the south of Ireland imprisoned under a great vat. In olden times the monster was the scourge of the whole country side, but on the arrival of St. Patrick on a missionary tour, it was induced by the saint to try the luxury of a residence under a huge vat, produced, by the national saint, for the occasion. St. Patrick promised to set him at large on the next Monday, *i.e.* *Luan*, an expression which may be interpreted either as Monday or the Day of Judgment. On a calm evening the poor deluded monster is heard bitterly complaining and appealing to St. Patrick in these words, "It is a long Luan (Monday), O Padrig!"

The oldest written reference, known to the writer, to belief in supernatural aquatic horses was discovered by O'Donovan, in a vellum manuscript, in Trinity College, Dublin. It is a very extraordinary passage. Readers interested in the subject are referred to the following literal translation, as given by the discoverer.

“Tria mirabilia de Glenn-Dallainn in Tironiâ, viz. Aper de Druim-liath; Bestia de Letter-Dallain, et Damh-Dile (Bos diluvii) Bestia de Letter-Dallain caput humanum habuit; forma follis fabrilis in reliquâ parte fuit. Equus aquatilis, qui erat in lacu juxta ecclesiam copulavit cum filiâ sacerdotis (ecclesiæ) ita ut generavit hanc Bestiam ex eâ.”

O'Donovan also recounts how, in the seventeenth century, one of his ancestors, living on the lands of Timaboe, county Kilkenny, close to a small lake, out of which horses of black colour and very beautiful symmetry were observed to emerge, became very anxious to learn all about them, and at length discovered that they were enchanted horses which had inhabited this lough from a remote period. Complying with the directions of one skilled in the Black Art, he caught a mare, which remained with him till she had had seven foals. At last the farmer, disregarding, or forgetting, the instructions which he had received, violated the rules by means of which he was able to retain the beautiful mare in his possession. She thereupon neighed seven times, broke loose, and galloped towards the lake, followed by her seven black foals. The farmer pursued them, but only arrived at the brink of the water in time to see the mare and her foals plunging into the lake, the mare first and then the foals in succession, according to their ages. He never saw them until seven years had elapsed, and by that time he had forgotten the mode by which to attempt their recapture. This kind of legend is not confined to Ireland; traces of it are to be found almost everywhere.

Enchanted horses used to emerge by night from Lough Ramor, in the county Cavan, and eat the oats in a farmer's field. The enraged owner managed at last to catch a foal, which he broke and used for ordinary purposes. As he was riding late one evening, along the shore of the lake, the water-horses in it commenced to neigh. On hearing the sound the foal, on which he was mounted, suddenly plunged into the water, taking his rider with him, and neither foal nor rider were ever again seen. A legend of Lough Caogh, or the Blind Lake, near Kiltubrid Church, county Leitrim, relates how a lad, working in a field close to the lake, caught a stray horse and commenced to harrow with him. The “water-horse” at once ran away, dragging harrow and boy with him, and disappeared beneath the waters of the lough. Labourers, hearing the shrieks of the youth, hurried to his aid; but when they arrived on the shore the waters were already dyed the colour of blood. The moral to be drawn from the story is that one should not catch horses of a neighbour to do farm work, lest something unfortunate should occur.

One very dry summer's day the level of a lake in the county

Cavan became unusually low, and the ruins of a castle were observed beneath the waters; a well-known swimmer dived to the bottom and soon reappeared with a golden cup, hotly pursued by the guardian of the treasure, in the form of a huge eel, from which he only just managed to escape.

Another enchanted eel of immense proportions was observed passing from Lough Ramor down the Blackwater; it broke through two nets, but was at last captured and brought ashore. It then suddenly put its tail into its mouth, making itself into the shape of a hoop, blew a shrill whistle, and trundled with lightning speed into the river.

Legends regarding these mythical demons assume various forms in individual cases, and many are the tales the people relate of fearful encounters with a monster covered with long hair and mane. Legends of aquatic monsters are very ancient; almost all sheets of water possess their local demon. O'Flaherty has a very circumstantial story of an "Irish crocodile" that lived at the bottom of Lough Mask. The commonest legend attached nowadays to almost all lakes is that they are the home of a frightful serpent, and that no one will swim in the water for fear of being swallowed by it. The story of immense deposits of treasures buried deep in the bosom of the lakes and jealously guarded by aquatic monsters, may have arisen from the actual deposition of treasure, or what was then regarded as such, in lakes or fountains, as an offering to or part of an ancient cult of water.

In ancient as well as in modern times, what men could not understand they put down to the supernatural, an easy method of explaining many things, and it was formerly, and is often still, the practice to attribute to unseen powers many evils and troubles for which we ourselves are directly responsible. In Ireland the numerous families of the peasantry were generally ascribed by them to "the will of God," quite ignoring the fact that their will was the immediate cause of the increase of the population. Some of the clerical profession now take a sensible and up-to-date, view of the subject. During the typhoid epidemic in Maidstone in 1897, one of the clergy is reported to have publicly declined to use the special prayer in the Church of England Liturgy set apart for epidemics, as the prayer refers to the plague as a visitation from God, while the clergyman held the opinion that it was entirely brought about by the remissness of man, in the form of the Town Council, who, according to his belief, had neglected the proper supervision of the water supply: in his mind, the cause of the outbreak of the epidemic.

What became of the sanitary science of pagan Roman civilization, and why the ages of faith in Europe were ages of filth

are interesting questions which await solution. Without some system of sanitation not inferior to that of modern London, ancient Rome would have been a physical impossibility. Why did Roman sanitation completely disappear? Why did the triumph of Christianity bring about a reversion to filth, so complete that, until comparatively lately, the habits and manner of living of the entire population were undoubtedly what we should now regard as bestial. It may be suggested that the introduction of Christianity was not the boon it is commonly supposed to have been, a moral which Gibbon, in his history, has endeavoured to point. The more rapidly a new and very revolutionary idea gains the mastery the more rapidly is the new equilibrium established. Now, in Europe, Christianity progressed but slowly. The old civilization gradually crumbled away: attacked, undermined, it fell at last. Chaos supervened, and from it a new order of things was slowly evolved.

There is nothing more certain than that among all barbarous peoples, disease, in every form, is regarded as the work of malignant spirits, and but for their interference human beings would live on for ever. Disease is regarded by the savage as something outside and foreign to humanity, brought about by a demon in the service of an enemy; therefore, the intruder, or disease, must be expelled by a more powerful spirit than that which first summoned it. Thus, if the witch-doctor, when called in, is more powerful than the evil spirit, he expels the malign influence and the patient recovers; if he be less powerful, he is impotent against the demon and the patient dies.

The receipt alleged to have been prescribed by the great Irish physician, Dianket, for the expulsion of a demon from the human body was to make a decoction from the roots of the alder and of the apple tree, to be boiled with the brains of a wild hog and drunk fasting; the potion to be administered until the bewitched person casts up the demon out of the stomach.

These Irish demons possessed the power to kill those persons against whom they bore animosity, or to transform them into wild animals. Sometimes their ideas of revenge presented a comical aspect. A demon installed himself inside a King of Connaught, and endowed him with such a voracious appetite that, in a year and a-half, his consumption of victuals caused a famine in the land. The king's breakfast consisted of two fat cows, a pig, thirty eggs, sixty wheaten cakes, and a barrel of ale, with a commensurate luncheon, dinner, and supper. The king was only able to subsist by travelling about his kingdom, visiting in turns all his well-to-do subjects, and he moved on to the next house when he had eaten up all the provision possessed by his unwilling host.

This wild legend of an Irish king, accidentally furnishing lodgings to an evil spirit, is paralleled by that related of a modern English nobleman who, in imagination, swallowed the Christian devil. From the most generous motives for the welfare of the human race, he refused to give any facilities to the foul fiend to regain his liberty, but his medical attendant overcame his resolution by surreptitiously administering an emetic in his food.

It appears very evident that the malignant beings now styled hags and witches, are but degenerated representatives of the goddesses of the ancient Irish : whilst the fairies, which we shall treat of next, are probably representatives of an aboriginal and conquered people.

It is quite possible, and indeed most highly probable, that the Irish goddesses, or witches, were not originally supposed by their worshippers to be so very malevolent, but when Christianity invaded and captured their territories, their disposition towards their former worshippers was imagined to have changed, and they plagued the people—or at least were thought to have done so—to wreak on them vengeance for their change of faith.

With all our modern science, and all our boasted knowledge, we cannot quite extinguish the last spark of superstition in the mind, although with the lips we may deny its existence. If, then, descendants of generations of more or less cultured ancestors still retain slumbering embers of belief in supernatural agencies, is it to be wondered at that savages, in all ages and in all climes, grovelling in ignorance, descend, at times, to depths of the greatest self-abasement, and to the perpetration of what, to us, appears the grossest absurdities, in order to propitiate imaginary spirits, benign or malign.

To one who believed himself under the influence of these malignant hags or witches, misfortunes were not the result of accident ; sickness was intensified by pangs of mental anguish. His cattle did not die of natural disease, but were victims of blighting spells ; his corn was not laid by the action of winds and rain, but by the trappings of furious fiends, belief in whose existence was at one time almost universal ; and the later expounders of primitive belief, by pretending to control the acts of these terrible beings, gained complete ascendancy over the minds of the credulous multitude. Superadded to this fear, there must have lurked in the mind of the aborigine the general idea that, though the world in day time belongs to the living, in night time it belongs to the dead.

It is a very mistaken idea to suppose that all this farrago of seeming nonsense was invented by a priesthood for the purpose of enslaving the masses. A priesthood originated in the idea

conceived by man of superhuman rulers of the universe ; but the class elected to the office originated priestcraft, to lend fictitious dignity to their office and to add to their emoluments. Old world ideas are almost inconceivable to us in these modern times. Carlyle describes paganism as " a bewildering, inextricable jungle of delusions, confusions, falsehoods and absurdities covering the whole field of life. A thing that fills us with astonishment, almost, if it were possible, with incredulity, for truly it is not easy to understand that sane men could ever calmly, with their eyes open, believe and live by such a set of doctrines." All religions in their origin possess some germ of truth, and " we shall begin to have a chance of understanding paganism, when we first admit that, to its followers, it was at one time earnestly true. Let us consider it very certain that men did believe in paganism ; men with open eyes, sound senses, men made altogether like ourselves, that we, had we been there, should have believed in it."

Whatever may be thought of the character-delineations of the ancient goddesses of the Irish, their implacability, their vindictiveness, as well as on the other hand, their occasional acts of benevolence, and the assistance they rendered to those whom they considered ought to be protected ; they were, at any rate, superior to the imbecility, depicted in mediæval and even modern representations of the devil, who in his dealings is sure to be baffled and cheated. After paying the fair market price for a soul, he loses his bargain through the equivocal wording of the covenant ; when he is agreeing for the first living thing that is to pass over the bridge he has assisted the architect to build, the latter anticipates the devil's disappointment when compelled to accept the dog, by which the literal wording of the contract is to be satisfied. " The idea of the devil," observes Jacob Grimm, " is foreign to all primitive religions, and for this reason, that in these the idea of God is the idea of a devil. In his lowest form man has no other conception of God than one of power, and that power exercised for his bane. Everything that is agreeable or useful he accepted as a matter of course, but that which injured him riveted his attention, as his life was a prolonged contest with their power ; thus the first stage in the conception of a devil is the attribution of evil to God. Even in the present day inquire of any peasant why he believes in an omnipotent Creator of the world, and he will not expatiate on the beauty and harmony of all creation ; to this he is accustomed and beholds it with unconcern. He will, on the contrary, recount to you as evidence of the existence of a God, the sudden and violent death of his friend or of his neighbour, some fearful accident or misfortune to another, or the inclemency of the season and the subsequent

failure of the crops. In fine, such events as, with good reasoners, are the chief difficulties in admitting a supreme intelligence, are with him the sole arguments for it."

The gods, goddesses, and banshees or ghosts were really feared by the Irish, for, as a sublime thinker says:—"Wo keine Götter sind walten Gespenster." But, for so-called Christian teachers, the Christianized Evil Spirit never was nor ever would be dreaded. Impressions stamped on the early infantile mind, whether of the nation or of the individual, are not easily effaced; even those engrained in early manhood are indelible. It is recounted of a well-known character, the early part of whose life was passed in great pecuniary straits, that even when fortune turned and smiled upon him, nothing could eradicate from his mind the fear of sheriffs' bailiffs, at sight of whom he incontinently fled. There is also the story of a proselyte converted by missionary zeal from devil worship to a supposed intelligent belief in Christianity, but who, nevertheless, in his last moments, grievously disappointed his spiritual father, for the good missionary, seeing the dying man troubled by considerations of futurity, and imagining he was racked by recollections of his former monstrous creed, and by a wholesome dread of condign punishment, said:—"You fear, is it not, to meet your God?" and was met by the totally unexpected and startling answer:—"Not in the least; with him, I shall be all right; it is of the other I am afraid."

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

### THE FOOD OF PREHISTORIC MAN.

[*Note to p. 29, line 26, after the word "Continent."*]

"Attention has recently been called to some curious experiments conducted some time ago by Mr. Charters White, M.R.C.S., lately the president of the Royal Odontological Society of Great Britain. Upon examining some skulls dating back from the Stone Age, he noted that several of the teeth, although quite free from caries, were thickly coated with tartar. It occurred to him that it would be possible by a rough analysis to identify any particles of food that might be embedded in this natural concrete, and so reveal the character of the ailment partaken of by prehistoric man. Dissolving the tartar in weak acid, a residue was left which, under the microscope, was found to consist of corn-husk particles, hairs from the outside of the husks, spiral vessels from vegetables, particles of starch, the point of a fish-tooth, a conglomeration of oval cells probably of fruit, the barblets of down, and portions of wool. In addition to this varied list were some round red bodies, the origin of which defied detection, and many sandy particles, some relating to quartz and some to flint. These mineral fragments were very likely attributable to the rough stones used in grinding the corn, and would account for the erosion of the masticating surfaces, which in many cases was strongly marked. This inquiry into the food of men who lived not less than four thousand years ago is a matter of great archæological interest."—*Chambers's Journal*. February, 1901.

### THE NEED-FIRE.

[*Note to p. 36, line 21, after the word "old."*]

"The same custom obtained in Scotland at the commencement of the nineteenth century and the charm was used, as in Ireland, against an outbreak of disease among cattle. Mr. Joseph Tain, who describes the ceremony, states that:—

"In the summer of 1810, while remaining at Balnaguard, a village of Perthshire, as I was walking along the banks of the Tay, I observed a crowd of people convened on the hill above Pitna Cree; and as I recollected having seen a multitude in the same place the preceding day, my curiosity was roused, so that I resolved to learn the reason of this meeting in such an unfrequented place. I was close beside them before any of the company had observed me ascending the hill, their attention being fixed upon two men in the centre. One was turning a small stock, which was supported by two stakes standing

perpendicularly, with a cleft at the top, in which the crown piece went round in the form a carpenter holds a chisel on a grinding stone; the other was holding a small branch of fir on that which was turning. Directly below it was a quantity of tow spread on the ground. I observed that this work was taken alternately by men and women. As I was turning about in order to leave them, a man whom I had seen before, laid his hand on my shoulder, and solicited me to put my finger to the stick; but I refused, merely to see if my obstinacy would be resented; and suddenly a sigh arose from every breast, and anger kindled in every eye. I saw, therefore, that immediate compliance with the request was necessary to my safety.

“I was soon convinced that this was some mysterious rite performed either to break or ward off the power of witchcraft; but, so intent were they on the prosecution of their design, that I could obtain no satisfactory information, until I met an old schoolmaster in the neighbourhood, from whom I had obtained much insight into the manners and customs of that district. He informed me that there is a distemper occasioned by want of water, which cattle are subject to, called in the Gaelic language *shag dubh*, which in English signifies “black haunch.” It is a very infectious disease, and, if not taken in time, would carry off most of the cattle in the country.’

“The method taken by the Highlanders to prevent its destructive ravages is thus:—

“All fires are extinguished between the two nearest rivers, and all the people within that boundary convene in a convenient place, where they erect a machine, as above described; and, after they have commenced, they continue night and day until they have forced fire by the friction of the two sticks. Every person must perform a portion of this labour, or touch the machine in order not to break the charm.

“During the continuance of the ceremony they appear melancholy and dejected, but when the fire, which they say is brought from heaven by an angel, blazes in the tow, they resume their wonted gaiety; and while one part of the company is employed feeding the flame, the others drive all the cattle in the neighbourhood over it. When this ceremony is ended, they consider the cure complete; after which they drink whisky, and dance to the bagpipe or fiddle round the celestial fire till the last spark is extinguished.’

“Here, within our own day, is evidently an act of fire-worship: a direct worship of Baal by a Christian community in the nineteenth century. There were other means of preventing diseases spreading among cattle practised within this century. When murrain broke out in a herd, it was believed that, if the first one taken ill were buried alive, it would stop the spread of the disease, and that the other animals affected would then soon recover. Were a cow to cast her calf; if the calf were to be buried at the byre door, and a short prayer or a verse of Scripture said over it, it would prevent the same misfortune from happening with the rest of the herd. If a sheep dropped a dead lamb, the proper precaution to take was to place the lamb upon a rowan tree, and this would prevent the whole flock from a repetition of the mishap.”—*Folk-Lore*, by James Napier, F.R.S.E., pp. 82-85.

#### ARE THE ENGLISH A CELTIC NATIONALITY?

[*Note to p. 207, line 38, after the word “Huxley.”*]

The question whether the English are a Germanic nationality has been much discussed, but, with all our faults, we are without those which are especially characteristic of the Teuton. Again the section of the average German cranium is, it is stated, usually circular, the section of an average

English cranium is usually oval, with the axis from front to back varying in length. The elongated skull is doubtless inherited from common Celtic ancestors, and its prevalence in England demonstrates that the population may with some reason be called Celtic. As a nation the English differs quite as much from the German as it does from the French. We have characteristics which distinguish us from the rest of the population of Europe, so that the most Irish of Irishmen is, on the Continent, often taken for an Englishman. The race which inhabits the United Kingdom is very much more homogeneous than is generally imagined. The mixture of aborigines, Celt, Saxon, Dane, and Norman which composes the English population is precisely the same mixture which we find in Ireland and in Scotland, the only difference is that in England the Saxon, in the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland the Celt, predominate, but as a whole the race is much more homogeneous than that which inhabits Germany or France.

A theory, accepted by many anthropologists, is that the population of Europe may be divided into two races, the oval or long heads, and the round or broad heads. Roughly speaking these are arranged in three strata running across the face of the European Continent; fair, oval, or long heads to the north; dark, oval, or long heads to the south; with a band of round or broad heads sandwiched in between. The British Isles are peopled by the oval or long-headed race. Along the eastern coasts the population is, in general, fair; along the western coasts, dark, corresponding to the northern and southern long heads of the Continent. But in the N.-W. of Ireland there is a restricted area inhabited by broad heads, a vestige of the race who are known to have invaded the British Isles in prehistoric times, and who still occupy the central European area.

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#### BURNING THE BEDDING OF THE DEAD.

[*Note to p. 299, line 15, after the word "walls."*]

Joseph Tain, writing in the year 1814, refers to a very similar practice then common in some parts of Scotland.

When the corpse was carried out of the house, the bed on which the deceased lay was also taken, and all the straw or heather of which it was composed was burnt, in some place where no beast could get at it. This practice is commendable from a sanitary point of view. Next morning the ashes were carefully examined as it was believed that the footprint of the next person of the family who was to die would be seen thereon imprinted.

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#### WAKE GAMES.

[*Note to p. 321, line 22, after the word "men."*]

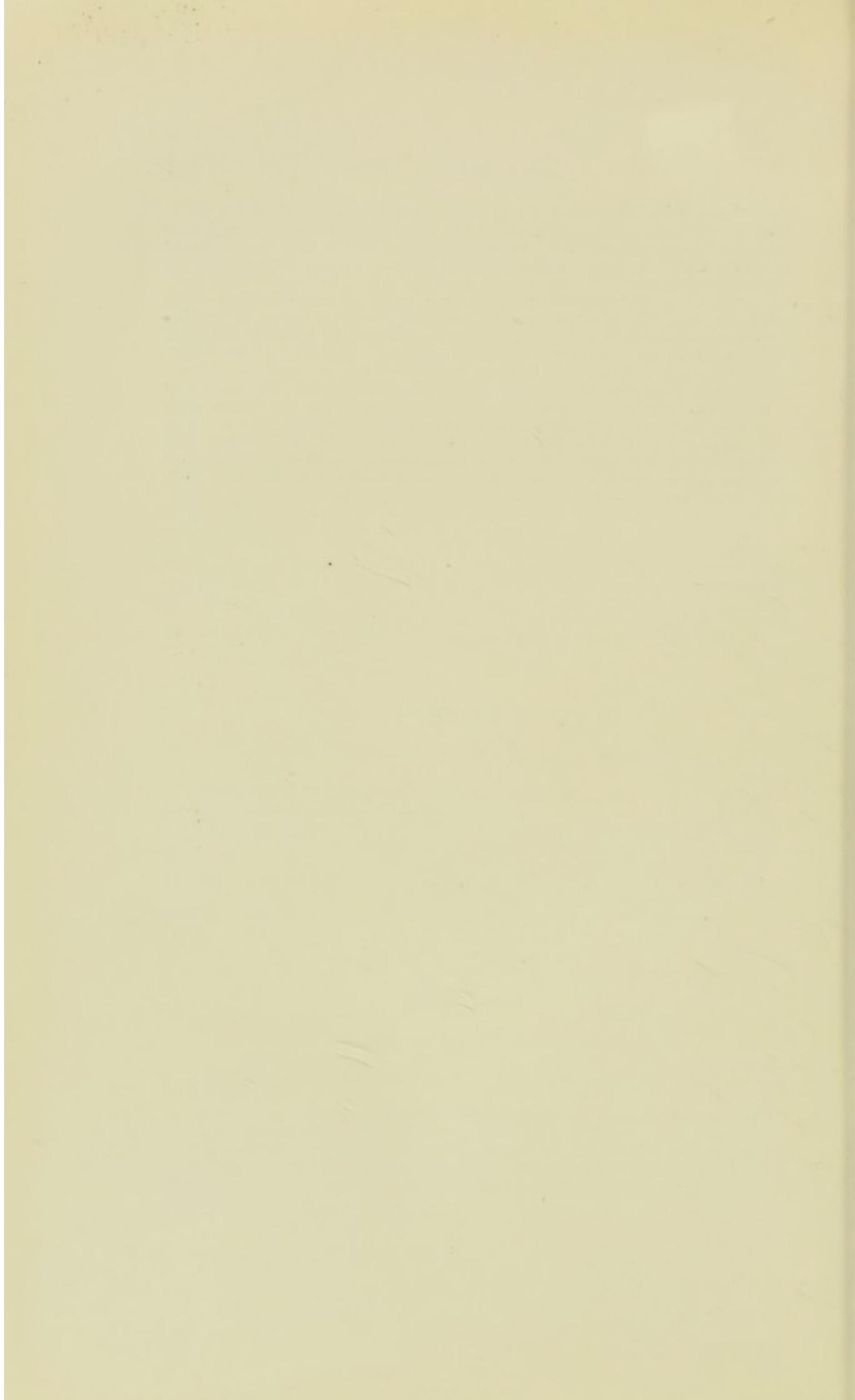
Lady Wilde describes another game, or play, styled "The Mock Marriage" as follows:—

"Two clever young wake-men dress themselves fantastically as priest and clerk, the latter carrying a linen bag filled with turf ashes, which he swings about to keep order, giving a good hit now and then, while the dust promotes a good deal of coughing amongst the crowd. But nothing irreverent is meant; for it is considered that whatever keeps up the spirits at a wake is allowable, and harmless in the sight of God.

“The priest then takes his place in the circle, the clerk at his elbow, and pours forth a volley of gibberish Latin, after which he calls out the names of those who are to be married, the selection being always most incongruous ; and the clerk seizes them and hurries them forward, the bag of ashes enforcing obedience to the call.

“As the names are called out, each man takes his place by the bride named for him, and the priest begins the ceremony in Irish, adding a homily, describing the horrid life probably reserved for the bride and bridegroom, owing to their vile temper and other bad qualities. But this is all pure fun, as nothing private or personal would be permitted.

“Then the clerk whirls his bag of ashes, and threatens to strike any man who grumbles at the wife he has got, and he demands his fee. Something must be given to him, a penny, or even a button, and the bride must give an article of her own property ; but this is returned to her, and she is told they only wanted to test her obedience. After the ceremony is over, whisky is served round, and priest and clerk and the bridegroom drink a glass for good luck, while the bride sips a little from her husband’s glass.”



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