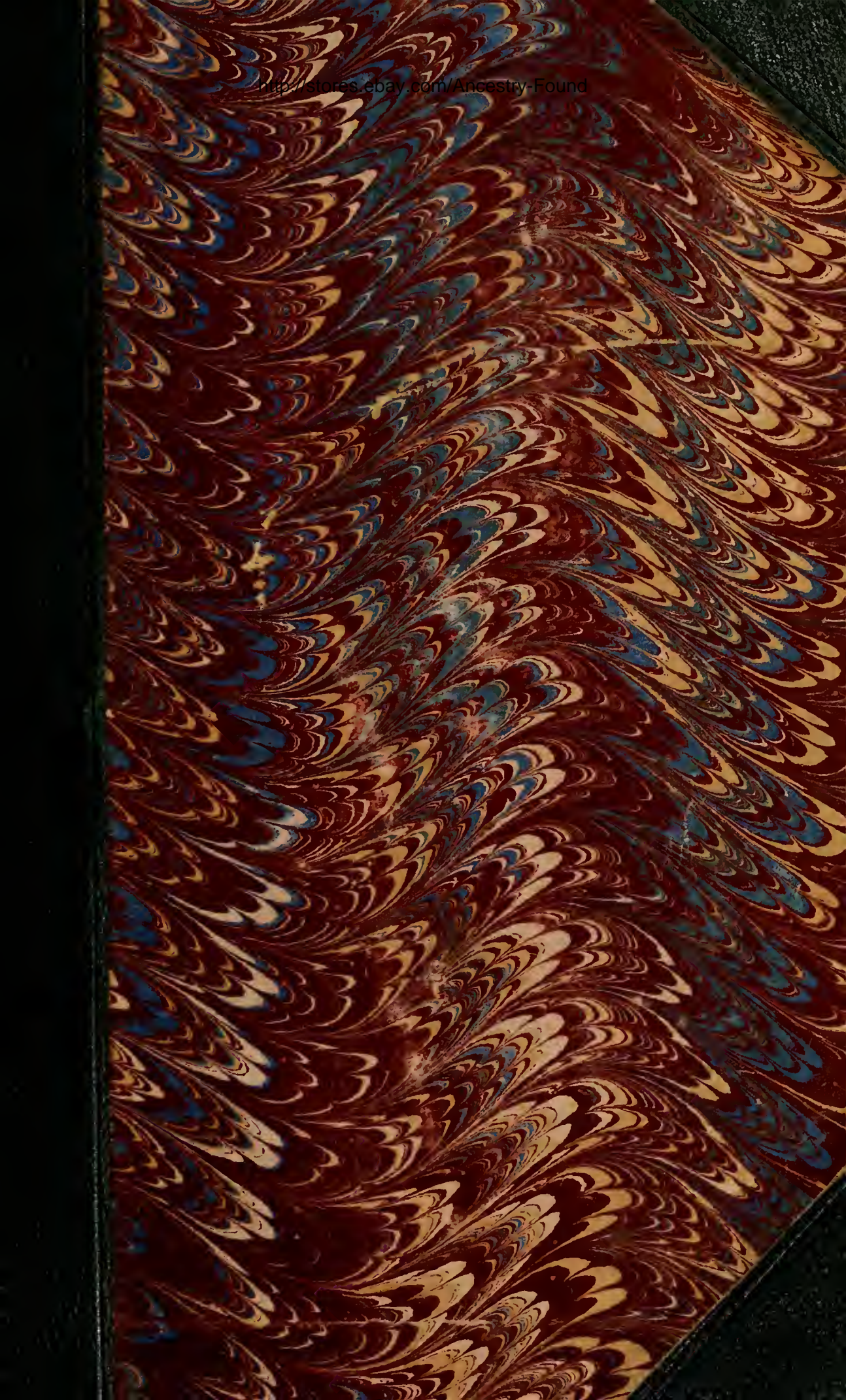
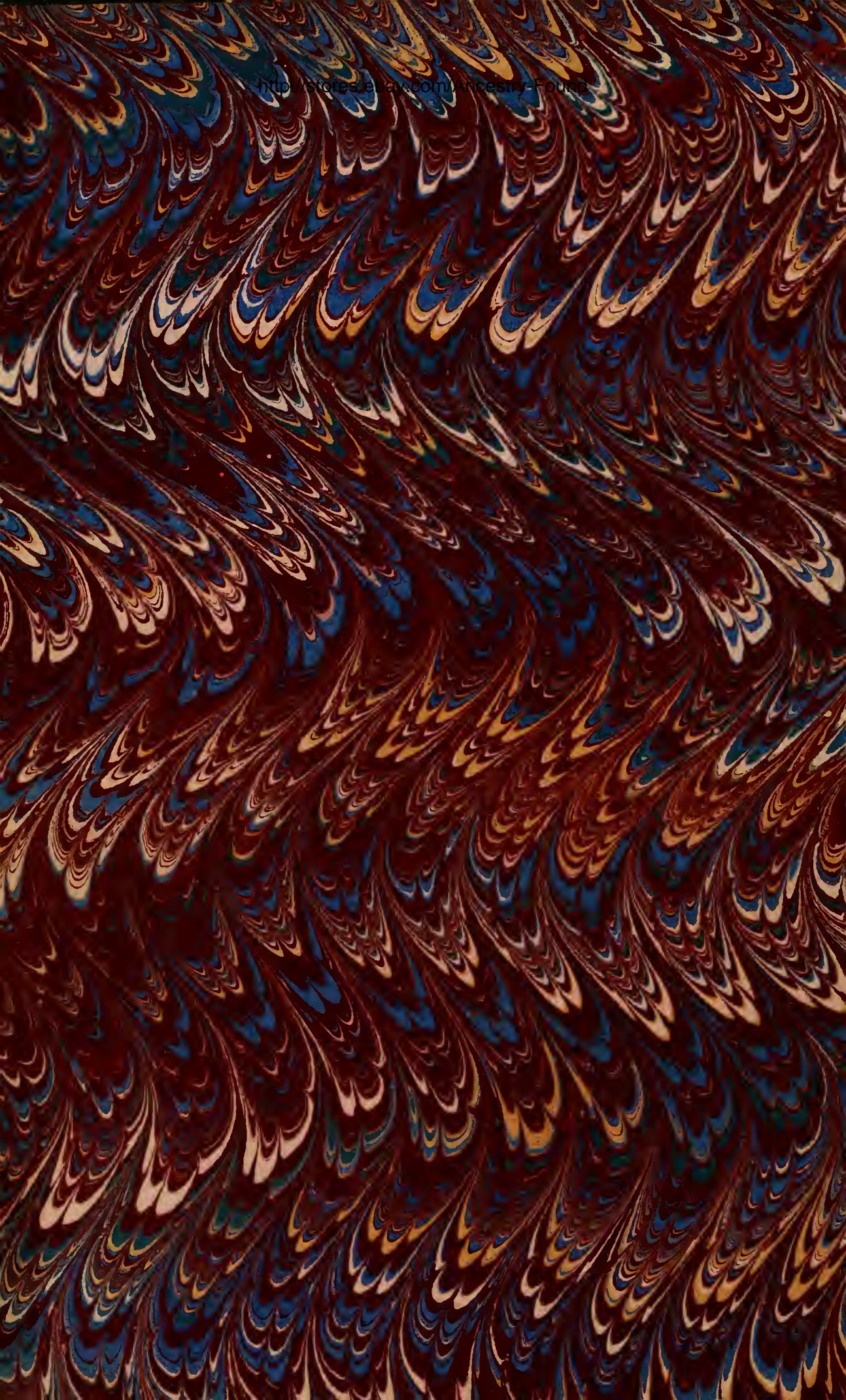


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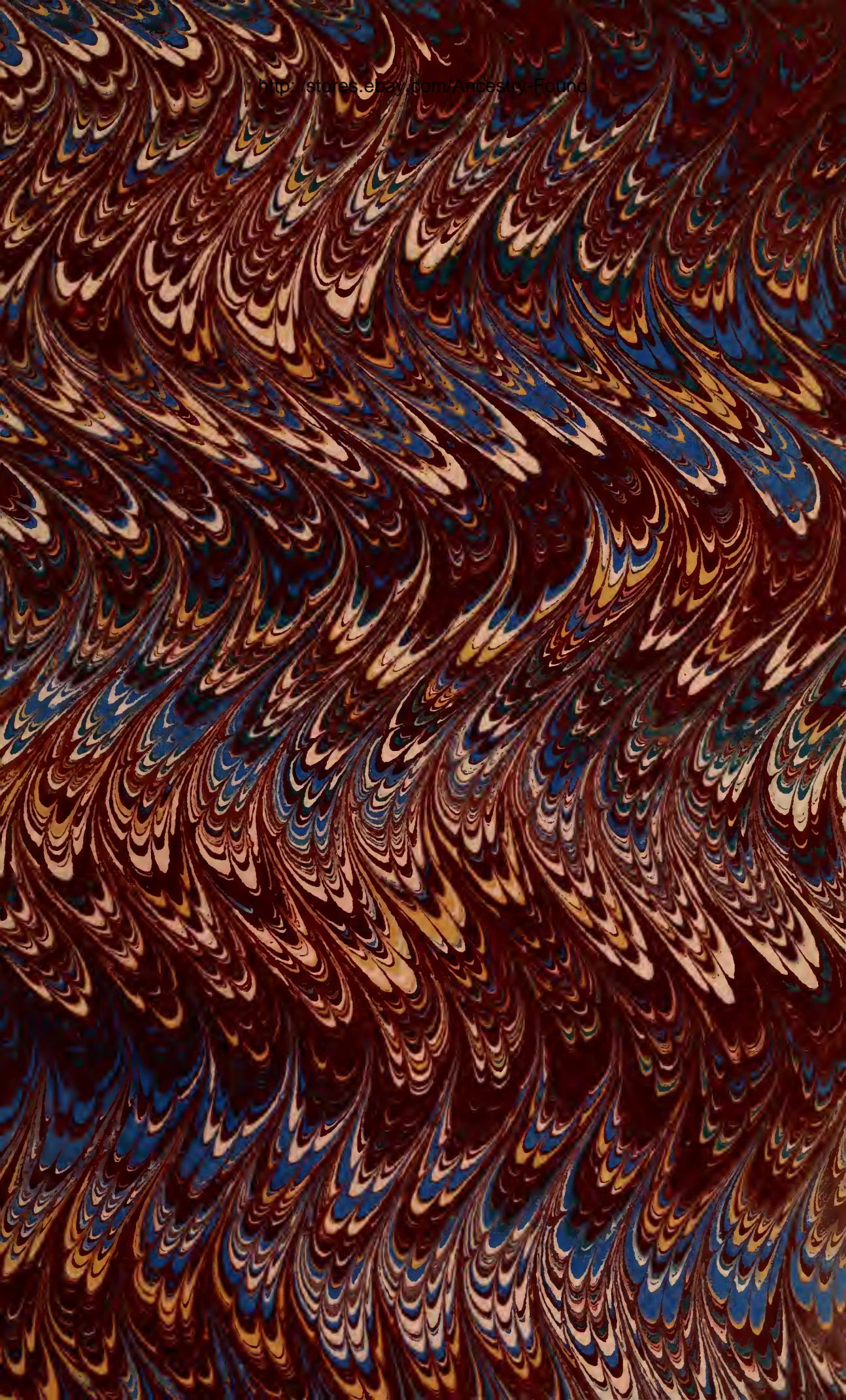








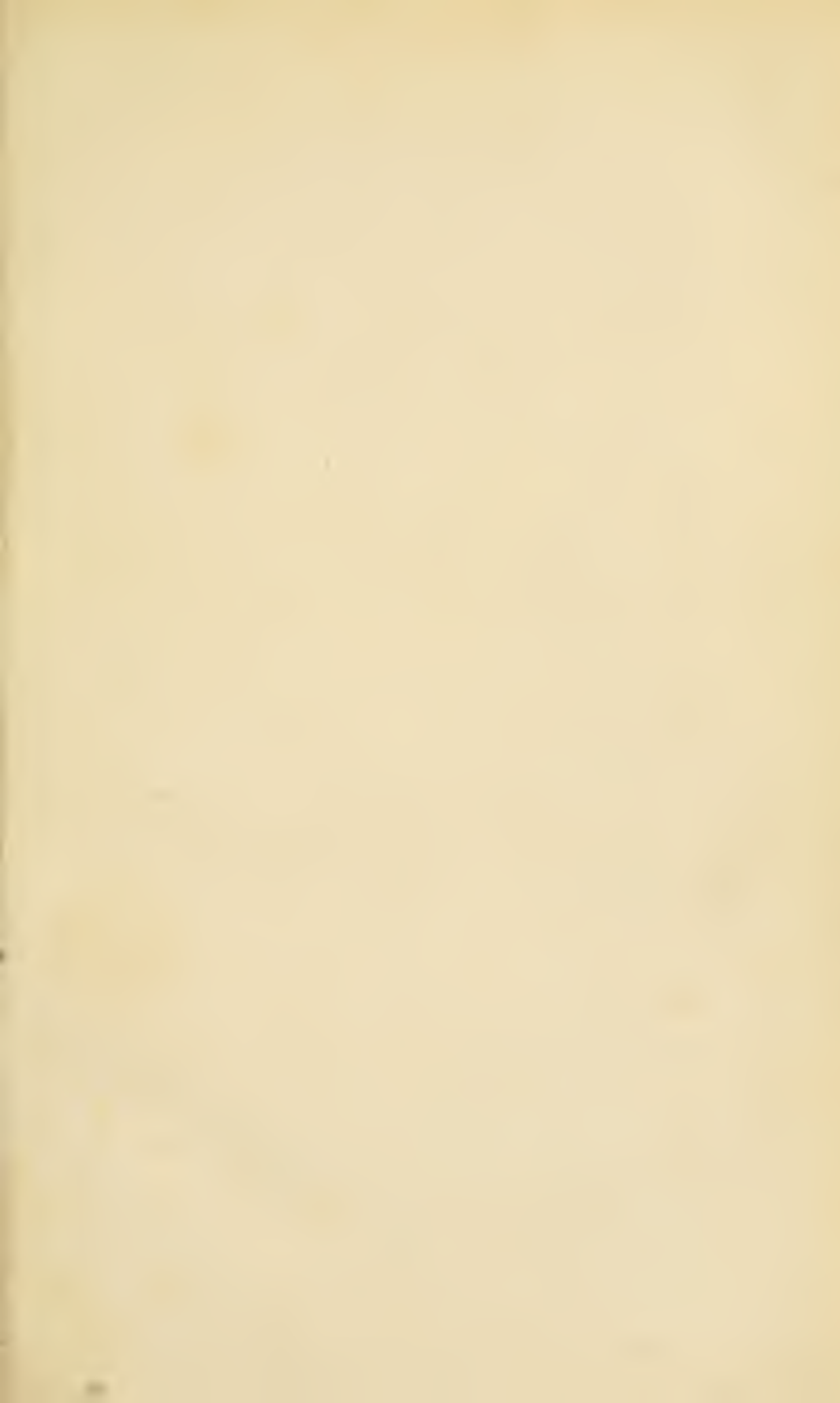
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LIVES  
OF  
ILLUSTRIOUS AND DISTINGUISHED  
IRISHMEN,  
FROM  
THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT PERIOD,  
ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,  
AND EMBODYING A  
HISTORY OF IRELAND IN THE LIVES OF IRISHMEN.

EDITED BY  
JAMES WILLS, A.M.T.C.D., M.R.I.A.,  
Author of Letters on the Philosophy of Unbelief, &c., &c., &c.

EMBELLISHED BY A SERIES OF HIGHLY-FINISHED PORTRAITS, SELECTED FROM  
THE MOST AUTHENTIC SOURCES, AND ENGRAVED BY EMINENT ARTISTS.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN, EDINBURGH, AND LONDON:  
A. FULLARTON AND CO.

1847.

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FULLARTON AND CO., PRINTERS, LEITH WALK.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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AMONG the many popular expedients by which modern literature is distinguished; that on which the plan of this work is framed, may be praised for its singular compass: its object is to collect the lessons of our moral and political history, and present them in the inductive form of examples, which expand or contract with the importance and interest of the subject. Instead of the continued progress of events, which demand laborious retention, the attention is excited by the familiar attraction of personal interest; and is thus led by successive and seemingly occasional incident, into a growing interest in details, which might otherwise fatigue the reader before they could be understood.

The extensive series of national Biography, of which this first portion is now offered to the public, has been planned to carry into effect this view. The successful execution of the Biographical Histories of England and Scotland, seem to demand the present work for Ireland, as indispensable to the completion of this department of our national literature. To supply this *desideratum*, the present publication has been projected, in which shall be comprised the lives of all such Irishmen, or persons connected with Irish History, as can for any reason be considered entitled to such notice. The following arrangement will convey a more distinct idea of the plan of this work. It is to be divided into Six Periods, conformable in duration to the successive changes of our history. Of these the main divisions are the following:—

- I. From the earliest times to the Danish invasions in the 8th century.
- II. From the Danish invasions to the battle of Clontarf.
- III. From the Battle of Clontarf to Queen Elizabeth's death.
- IV. From Queen Elizabeth's death to the accession of George III.
- V. From the accession of George III. to his death.
- VI. From the accession of George IV. to the present period.



Each of these divisions will be found to include the succession of a great national series of events, amounting to a revolutionary period. In these the plan to be pursued throughout, is according to the most comprehensive principles of History and Biography; and will include all that, on the most liberal allowance, can be looked for, as pleasing or profitable in either. According to this standard, appropriate space will be assigned to each name as it shall occur. Some names must be given because they will be looked for; some because they carry on the thread of the narrative; some for the occasion they afford to explain or describe interesting events.

The Publishers, therefore, in projecting this NATIONAL WORK, rest assured that it is one in which every native of Ireland will feel interested, not only on account of its literary merits, but as tending to supply an essential desideratum in the literature of his country. To the Irishman who sees in this work, for the first time, an attempt, on an extensive scale, to concentrate, in a well-digested and comprehensive form, the virtues and honours of his country; and faithfully to portray the individual lives of Irishmen who have obtained eminence in the various departments of human pursuit; little need be said to recommend it to his favour.

To make the LIVES OF ILLUSTRIOUS AND DISTINGUISHED IRISHMEN in reality what it ought to be—a truly national work—neither exertion nor expense have been spared. The Portraits, which have been copied from the most authentic original Paintings, by an eminent artist, are engraved in the first style; whilst the beauty of the typography, &c., is highly creditable to the advanced state of that art. For the different sections of the work, the services of men well versed in Irish literature have been secured; and the whole is under the Editorship of a gentleman whose profound erudition, and well known proficiency in Irish History, render him eminently qualified to do the work every justice.

In conclusion, the Publishers confidently appeal to the volume now before the reader, as a proof that they have produced a work every way calculated to uphold and advance the character of the literature of Ireland.

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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

TO FIRST PERIOD

EXTENDING

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES, TO THE DANISH INVASIONS  
IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF

**Distinguished Irishmen**

WHO FLOURISHED DURING THAT PERIOD.





# HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

TO

## FIRST PERIOD.

---

General Reasons for the Credibility of ancient Irish History—Inferences from Languages—From ancient Authority—From Monuments—Ancient state of Civilization.

MANY causes, of various degrees of importance, have contributed to render the history of Ireland difficult to the historian, and unpopular amongst the generality of readers. The remoteness and indistinctness of its beginnings—the legendary character of its traditions—the meagre and broken state of its more authentic annals—have not, as in other modern countries, been remedied or counteracted by the industry of the historian. The disputes of antiquaries, the extravagant theories of some, the equally absurd scepticism of others, and the differences of opinion amongst all, have only produced the natural effect—in causing a strong reluctance to seek information on a ground in which few seemed to agree. As the nature of our undertaking, which comprises the long and varied range of all that has any pretension to be regarded as authentic in Irish biography, imposes the necessity of commencing our labours in a period over which the lapse of ages has thrown much doubt, and not a little indistinctness, we cannot better preface the first division of this work, than by the endeavour to satisfy our readers of the probability of the general truth of the ancient history of Ireland.

The history of Ireland is marked by peculiarities which do not affect that of any other country. It comprises the remotest extremes of the social state; and sets at nought the ordinary laws of social transition and progress, during the long intervals between them. Operated on by a succession of *external* shocks, the internal advances, which form some part of all other history, have been wanting; and her broken and interrupted career, presents a dream-like succession of capricious and seemingly unconnected changes, without order or progress. But let scepticism make all reasonable deductions on the score of doubtful record or perplexed chronology, and refine away all that is not too ponderous for its partial and one-sided grasp—here a tradition, and there a broken monument—still the country



retains, indelibly stamped and widely abounding, characters which cannot be explained according to the simplest rules of right reason, but by referring them to the remotest ages of antiquity. The immemorial monuments—the ancient superstitions—the traditions descended from the common antiquity of the oldest races of mankind—the living customs, and names of things and places traceable to these alone—the ancient language—the very population—are actual remains of a state of things, which they as clearly represent, as the broad foundations, the massive pillars, and the gigantic arches of some wide-spread ruin attest the size and ancient proportions of the stately city of old time. To what precise point, in the scale of chronology, such indications are to be referred, we must leave to professional antiquaries to settle: our object is but to combat the vulgar prejudice against our ancient history, and the common errors which have caused it. It is our wish to refer the intelligent reader, from the *detached questions* on which the subject has been inadequately brought before him, to the more just and comprehensive result of its collective evidence. The investigation of each separate class of ancient remains, may lead to a vast variety of specious inferences; but the true probability, for the interpretation of each part, must be derived from its relation to the whole. When every single relic of our antiquity shall have been explained into something of more modern growth—probable conjecture will still continue to restore it to the massive combination of antiquities from which it is forced only for the moment of some fashionable creed, which gains popularity from the splendid caprices of talent. There is indeed no cause which has more contributed to the popularity of scepticism, than the real and imagined extravagance of antiquarian theories: when a large demand is made upon our faith, any attempt to lighten the exaction will be hailed with cordiality.

Among the popular impressions, unfavourable to the claim of our ancient history, the most prominent is due to the marked and clinging barbarism, which is the most characteristic feature of our middle ages. It seems difficult for incredulity to admit, that a race which, from the earliest period of the modern world—from the Danish settlements to the very date of our immediate ancestors in the beginning of the last century—seems to have preserved the characters of national infancy, can possibly have the claims to a mature antiquity, which antiquaries, however their creeds may differ, agree in affirming.

The fact is worth inquiry. Many of the causes of this anomalous combination of extremes lie on the surface. The fate of Ireland has been peculiar in this: that the same cause which partly contributed to her early civilization, was, in after times, the means of retarding her progress. We mean the circumstance of geographical position: more within the track of the Tyrian sail, than of the Roman eagle, the same position which exposed her shores to the approach of ancient commerce, must, to some extent, have isolated this country from the sweeping and onward mutations of the rest of the world.

The chances which, in earliest time, may have wafted to our coast such civilization as then existed, as they are beyond inquiry, so they are not worth it: they are but a very obvious part of the course of things, and cannot reasonably be the ground of objection or doubt;

so far, it is enough that such things were. *Assuming* that this island was peopled at an early period, it will nearly follow, that the first rudiments of social civilization must have been imported by any people who were then likely to find her shores: for the barbarism of after ages sprung on or from the ruins of anterior civilization. The next step is far more easy. While the neighbouring islands, in common with the nations of Europe, were repeatedly swept over by various races and hordes of either invaders or settlers—who desolated or usurped every country in proportion as it lay nearer the main line of social change, and thus involving every other land in the perpetual surge and eddy of this great human tide, brought on the barbarism obviously consequent on continued change and confusion—Ireland, comparatively sequestered from the inroads of change, long continued to maintain and cultivate the primitive arts and knowledge (whatever these were) transmitted by the parent country. To her peaceful shore the laws and religion, manners and customs, of *some* nation of antiquity, were brought; and when the neighbouring shores became the scenes of revolution and disorder, the same peaceful refuge received the kindred remains of many an ancient creed and family. Such literature as then existed, would probably soon begin to find its quiet centre, in the sequestered island; and, as the tumult of change began to settle among the neighbouring people, again to send forth on every side the light (such as it was) thus preserved. In all this there is nothing that is not an easy consequence from the whole known history of the ancient world. A theoretical consequence, we grant; but it loses this questionable character the moment we look on the facts of history, the memorials of tradition, and the monuments of the land.

The very same fundamental fact will, by the same simple reasoning, account for the other phenomena which we have stated as opposed to this view. The same sequestered position which preserved the form and structure of early ages from the desolating current of universal change, that for some ages continued to bear away the broken ruins of antiquity in every other land; had, in the course of time, by the same means, the effect of shutting out those succeeding changes which were the steps of a new order of things. And while the surrounding nations brightened, by slow degrees, into the spring of a new civilization—which, in point of fact, was but a step of human progress—the civilization of elder times became itself but a barbaric monument of earlier ages. In Ireland, it is true, the history of successive invasions may, on a slight view, be referred to as opposed to this opinion. But it is not by such visitations that the modern civilization of nations has grown; but from the combination of a variety of common causes, all of them implying the continued and diffused action of change. A few adventurers might, with the advantage of inconsiderable resources, effect a settlement; but they cannot, under such circumstances, be imagined to have imported or communicated a comprehensive change of manners, religion, and laws. They could not even be said to represent their country's manners and learning; they could not be supposed to obtain the necessary influence, or even the necessary intercourse, with the natives; and though it might be anticipated that, in the course of a long period, their manners and customs would



be found to modify the national habits; yet, before this could happen, their descendants would have largely contracted the character of the native population.

The changes of European society, which together have contributed to form its modern state, were the numerous and successive shocks of war, invasion, subjugation, and the mingling minds, manners, and opinions of a hundred races, whirled together in the wide-extended and long-continued eddies of European change; and their *quantum* of effect on any nation must have, in a great measure, depended on the freedom and constancy of its intercourse with all the rest. The intercourse of Europe with Ireland was very peculiar, and is likely to be overrated by those who have viewed it only with reference to church antiquity. But it was not an intercourse commonly productive of extensive change. It was such an intercourse as may be held with a college or a church. The learned came to imbibe the scanty and erroneous knowledge; and the religious, the pagan superstitions of their age. The sacred repository of ancient opinion was venerated as the fountain-head of sacred knowledge, until it became its tomb. But then, it was long left behind in the progress of nations, and lapsed into an obscurity bordering on oblivion.

Such are the conditions of the strange problem, about the opposite terms of which learned men have consumed much ink, and unlearned shrewdness much misplaced ridicule.

The impressions, from many causes, unfavourable to the fair reception of Irish antiquity, have been much aggravated by the unwarrantable omissions of some of our ablest historians. The observations of Dr Johnson, in his letter to Charles O'Connor, are worth repeating:—

“Dr Leland begins his history too late: the ages which deserve an exact inquiry, are those times (for such there were) when Ireland was the school of the West, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. If you could give a history, though imperfect, of the Irish nation, from its conversion to Christianity to the invasion from England, you would amplify knowledge with new views and new objects. Set about it therefore if you can: do what you can easily do without anxious exactness. Lay the foundation, and leave the superstructure to posterity.”\*

The antiquity of Ireland offers the most singular and instructive study, not merely to the systematizing antiquary, but to the general philosopher and historian, who takes it up for the strong light it reflects on the common antiquity of nations. The limited object of this work will not permit of our discussing, at large, the vast and curious field of authority on this important subject. Still less can we afford space for the volumes of ingenious conflicting speculations, which have found a fertile field of excursion in the obscurity of ancient monuments. Our concern with the subject has a limited purpose. The first persons with whom we are obliged to make our readers acquainted, stand far back within the shadow of antiquity; nor can we speak of them, without drawing much of our matter from the history of a state of the country, which may carry with it something more of the air of fabulous antiquity, than a large proportion of our readers may think consistent with

\* Boswell's Johnson.

the sober simplicity, which we should willingly infuse throughout our pages, as the appropriate expression of historic truth.

Much of the very common tone of scepticism which is manifested on the subject of Irish antiquity, is founded on that confined scope of mind, which is the general cause of scepticism in whatever form it appears. Some are involved in the difficulties which attend on partial views, and some are only difficult to convince, because they apply to the subject of Irish antiquity, a method of estimation which must equally reject all ancient history. The best resource against either of these errors, is, perhaps, to look attentively on the sum of evidence arising from the combined view of all the monuments and records of the past, to the careful exclusion of every system. The question will then stand thus: Whether there are or are not evidences of different kinds, by which the history of Ireland and its inhabitants can be traced back to a remote period, antecedent to any which belongs to the history of modern European nations? Such a question must, of course, involve in its detail all the special inquiries into the authenticity, or the import, of each special record or alleged monument; but when the whole is *first* laid together in one comprehensive view, much of the difficulty and complication attendant on such inquiries is likely to disappear. For the value and import of each allegation must undergo some modification from the connexion it may be found to have with a system of facts and evidences. The evidence arising from a single fact may be too vague and obscure to support any inference; or inferences contrary to those required by a probable theory may, with seemingly greater force, be drawn. But a main probability, arising from a sum of facts, may not only exclude this contrary inference, but even connect the seemingly hostile fact, with the reasoning it seemed to oppose, as the essential link of a chain of settled facts. It then not only receives an authentic stamp from this concurrence; but it gives much additional force to the whole chain of inference, and still more to the ultimate conclusion to which they legitimately conduct.

To state such a question, the testimonies of ancient authors, the traditions of the country, the customs and superstitions, the structure of the language, the names of places, and the monuments of the land, are the plainer and more tangible materials. To estimate these, there is no need for refined reasoning or minute and subtle investigation. Whatever separate weight may be attached to a few sentences of an ancient classic—or to the fractured pillar, or rusted weapon—or doubtful analogy of speech or custom; it will appear on the very surface, that there is a combination of phenomena, which belongs to the history of no other modern European land, and which, whatever may be its solution, excludes at least the analogies of modern history: and next, that these phenomena are such as to fall within the common analogy of another more ancient order of things.

The value of this simplification of the subject will be evident to those who have explored the voluminous range of writers, who have taken opposite views, in a field so fertile of controversy. There are indeed few subjects of human inquiry which have afforded more ample scope to the opposite errors of reason: the enthusiastic imagination, that beholds towers and temples, and the whole gorgeous moving scene of



human existence, in the distant clouds of ages receding into oblivion; the superficial but vivacious acuteness, that sees nothing but the atom on which the microscope of a small mind is directed, and exhibits its petty ingenuity, in reconciling, on false assumptions, the small portion which it comprehends, and denying the rest. The real importance of such a method extends, indeed, far beyond the limited subject of this dissertation; as it might be usefully extended to the erroneous school of history which disgraces the literature of the age.

A little impartial attention, thus directed to the subject of ancient Irish history, would dissolve many intricate knots, in which some of our very best guides have now and then entangled themselves: of this we shall presently offer some instances. But it is time to descend into the particulars. Of our view it perhaps may be now unnecessary to premise, that it is our object merely to exhibit an outline of the subject. To do this with less embarrassment, we shall exclude the consideration of the separate facts and opinions to be adduced, further than in their relation to the whole. So far as we shall be obliged to transgress this rule in a few important points, we shall take occasion to bring forward the statement of some authoritative writer. This will be the more necessary, as a great portion of our readers cannot be presumed to be sufficiently acquainted with our neglected history, to attach the proper weight to a merely general statement.

The records, of whatever class, which agree in referring the origin of the Irish population to a remote antiquity, are the only distinct traces to be found of the early history of the country. A different course of events must have left other traditions. Again; in every nation to which there is a history, the beginnings of that history are distinctly traced on the authority of some authentic records—unless in those cases in which all historians are agreed in attributing an immemorial antiquity: to this class may be referred India, Egypt, Persia, &c. So far, therefore, it is plain enough, that the early history of Ireland is, until the contrary shall be shown, referrible to the latter class, and not to the former. The traditions of the country affirm an extreme antiquity—the existing remains of ancient time correspond to this affirmation—the testimonies of ancient writers incidentally confirm the same pretension—the language of the people is itself not only a monument of a remote and aboriginal antiquity, but indicates the very race affirmed by tradition—the remains of ancient superstition—the variety of names of places and things, with the old customs, reconcilable with ancient rites and superstitions, and having no reference to any thing within the compass of modern history: all these, when taken in their full force, have separately a nearly conclusive weight; and together, set all rational scepticism at defiance. The reader must here recollect, that, so far, the inference is not one in favour of any particular system of Irish antiquity; it is simply the affirmation, that such a remote antiquity, as our historians claim, is to be admitted, whether it can be distinctly ascertained or not.

But when this point is gained, it will be quickly observed by the intelligent reasoner, that nothing remains worth the sceptic's disputing. If we admit the general assertion of an origin which must at all events synchronize with the ancient races of mankind, there can be nothing



incredible in the conclusion which fixes any ancient race as the primal colonists of the land; though there may be something absurd in the effort to arrive at inferences totally inconsistent with this general admission.

In the best evidence to be derived from tradition, or accidental notice of historians, or any other ancient record or monument not falling within the scope of full historical consent, there must be some degree of doubt. The origin of such memorials is questionable, or their imputed antiquity doubtful. But the case of Irish antiquity is something different from one of forced constructions and isolated testimonies. It is a case, having all the evidence that it admits of, to establish an inference of itself previously probable; and not encumbered by the adverse circumstances of any other construction to be set in opposition. If the Irish race is not to be deduced, according to the claims of its annalists and poets, *it cannot be deduced in any other way*. And the deduction of its annalists and poets, though vitiated by all sorts of extravagance, has yet a fundamental agreement with probability, which demands a general consent.

The highest degree of historical evidence, it must be recollected, has only existence in our example, in which a mass of parallel and correspondent narrations and documents, published by contemporaries, are, from the very period, confirmed by institutions, vast social changes, multiplied and lasting controversies, and authenticated by numerous copies, and the still more numerous citations of a series of writers, reaching down the whole interval ages. From this high approach to certainty, there is a descent through innumerable degrees of evidence, till we reach the legendary mixtures of fact and fable, which hang, with a cloudy indistinctness, about the twilight of barbaric tradition. But in all these lessening degrees, there is, to historic reason, a pervading thread of evidence of another order, and consisting in the analogy of our nature, and that analogy which is to be extracted from the traditions of all nations.

These considerations would lead us far from our direct purpose, which is, with the utmost brevity and simplicity in our power, to connect them with the questions which have been raised upon the early history of Ireland. To these we shall now proceed.

That all nations, of which the origin does not fall within the periods of modern history, have shown the natural disposition to claim a remote ancestry in, or beyond the earliest traditions of the human race, is a fact easily proved by an extensive induction. But it is also true that such pretensions must be within certain limits, agreeable to the general truth, which must so infer the origin of all. It is not about the fact, but about the authority and the particular account, that the objection can lie. Were we therefore to take up the extreme positions of those enthusiastic writers who have chosen to begin before the flood, it is not on the score of possibility, or even probability, that we are fairly entitled to impeach their assertions. It is simply a question as to the authority for affirmations which are in themselves not unlikely to come near the truth. In opposition to this truth, the objections of the sceptic have been too much aimed at the conclusion, and too little at the statements of evidence on which it rests. This fact may be illustrated by an observation of Plowden's: "Not one of

those," writes Plowden, "who deny, or even question, the general authenticity of the ancient history of Ireland, from Gerald Barry to the Rev. James Gordon, has offered an objection to any one of their philological observations and inferences. Most of them profess, and all of them are believed, to be ignorant of the Irish language."

*Language.*—When it exists to a sufficient extent, there is no evidence so authoritative as language. The exploits of visionary philologists have communicated to sober persons a not unwarranted distrust in a science confused by so much ingenuity. But setting this apart, the distrust it can reflect on the simplest and clearest inferences which such investigations can afford, must be described as the opposite extreme of prejudice. It is universally allowed, that the Irish language has an origin beyond the period of authentic modern history: and this, to go no farther, settles, *beyond dispute*, the remote antiquity of the race to which it is peculiar, and lays a firm foundation for the successive steps of inference by which that race can be more closely identified with the known races of antiquity. The affinity of this language with that of other people who are derived from the Celtic stock, and its entire freedom from analogous relations with the Roman, Greek, and other fundamental languages of the modern nations, guide, with unerring certainty, to the next generally admitted step—namely, the Celtic descent of the Irish.

On this point, we believe, there now exists little, if any, difference of opinion,—and it needs not here be argued further, than by the statement of the opinions of some of our most recent writers, who—having been expressly engaged in the study of the subject—have given their opinions on a full review of the best authorities. "There appears to be no doubt," says Mr Moore, "that the first inhabitants of Ireland were derived from the same Celtic stock which supplied Gaul, Britain, and Spain, with their original population. Her language, and the numerous monuments she still retains of that most ancient superstition, which the first tribes who poured from Asia into Europe are known to have carried with them wherever they went, must sufficiently attest the true origin of her people. Whatever obscurity may hang round the history of the tribes that followed this first Eastern swarm, and however opinions may still vary, as to whether they were of the same, or of a different race, it seems at least certain, that the Celts were the first inhabitants of the Western parts of Europe; and that, of the language of this most ancient people, the purest dialect now existing is the Irish."—*Cab. Cyc. Hist. Ire.* i.

From the same writer, whose work abounds with proofs of industry in the collection of authorities, we shall offer another attestation to the same purport, which bears yet more immediately on the point to be here illustrated. "Abundant and various as are the monuments to which Ireland can point, as mute evidences of her antiquity, she boasts a yet more striking proof in the living language of her people,—in that most genuine, if not only existing dialect, of the oldest of all European tongues—the tongue which, whatever name it may be called by, according to the various theories respecting it, whether Japhetan, Cimmerian, Pelasgic, or Celtic, is accounted most generally to have been the earliest brought from the East, by the Noahidæ, and accordingly



to have been the vehicle of the first knowledge that dawned upon Europe. In the still written and spoken dialect of this primeval language, we possess a monument of the high antiquity of the people to whom it belongs, which no cavil can reach, nor any doubts disturb." Some of the curious and instructive authorities, with which Mr Moore has illustrated these remarks, should not in justice be omitted. One of these may appropriately lead to the notice of a curious discovery, which, it appears to us, that Mr Moore is inclined to under-value on rather insufficient grounds.

Two confirmations of the antiquity and Eastern origin of the Irish language, mentioned by antiquaries, are the gutturals with which it is so strongly characterized, and the singular coincidence by which its alphabet seems identified with that brought by Cadmus from Phœnicia into Greece. On the latter of these points we shall be content to borrow a single quotation from Huddleston, on the authority of Mr Moore. "If the Irish had culled or selected their alphabet from that of the Romans [an assumption by which this coincidence has been explained], how, or by what miracle, could they have hit on the identical letters which Cadmus brought from Phœnicia, and rejected all the rest? Had they thrown the dice sixteen times, and turned up the same number every time, it would not have been so marvellous as this." This identity (if it exist) cannot be due to chance. It must arise from the adoption of the Phœnician alphabet, or from the same language having suggested the same letters. The latter inference is absurd; but either must lead to the same conclusion.

But the next point, of which this is valuable as a confirmation, is the real or supposed discovery of Vallancey, on the coincidence of the Irish language with some passages of an ancient unknown tongue, supposed to be the ancient Phœnician, and given as such in an ancient drama, the *Pœnulus* of Plautus. A coincidence so startling, is likely to awaken suspicion, and draw forth opposition in proportion to its value, as confirmatory of any historic inference. It is fair to preface it here by stating, that it is questioned by authoritative linguists and antiquaries: but we may add, that the objections which we have heard or read, are not conclusive enough to warrant our rejection of so important an illustration of our antiquity. The chief of these we shall notice, but first we may state the facts. The *Pœnulus* of Plautus contains about twenty-five lines of a foreign language, put by the dramatist into the mouth of Phœnicians; but which has ever since continued to defy the research of etymologists. By a fortunate thought, the sagacity of Vallancey, or of his authority (for his claim to originality is doubted), hit upon a key to the difficulty. By attending to the vocal formations of these lines, they were found, *without any transposition of sound*, to be resolvable into words, exhibiting but slight differences from the Irish language; and by the comparison thus suggested, they were, by several persons, translated into a sense, such as the suppositions of the drama required. As the experiment was repeated, with the same result, on persons having no correspondence with each other, and ignorant of the nature of the trial, two very strong confirmations were thus obtained: one from the coincidence of the interpretations with each other, and the other



from the coincidence of all with the sense of the drama, and the translation given by Plautus. If this statement be true, we submit, that the case so made out, must set aside all objections. These coincidences, of which we shall presently offer some satisfactory examples, are materially confirmed, by a fact which seems at first to bear the opposite construction. A similar comparison with the Hebrew is productive of a result of the same nature, but with a far inferior degree of coincidence, both in sense and sound. With a specimen of this we shall not need to detain the reader: the object of our noticing, is to point out, and still more to meet the prejudice, which it seems to raise against the argument. The direct inference in our favour is but slight—being the general confirmation of the affinity between the Irish and the Hebrew, an affinity by which it is, in a similar manner, connected with most other ancient Asiatic tongues. This has been distinctly traced by many writers, as well as by Vallancey, but our cursory purpose does not admit of entering into so expansive a field of etymological learning. The fact may, however, conduce to an object which we cannot thus pass by—the explanation of the seeming objection which seems to arise from the possibility of thus resolving the same lines into different languages. It seems, on the mere statement, to give an arbitrary character to all the interpretations, not reconcileable with any distinct or certain inference. But the objection, if admissible in its full force (which it is not), is met by the near affinity of all the languages which can be so applied; an affinity which may be indeed measured by the approach to coincidence in the third or common medium thus supposed. A moment's recollection of the nature of language, as addressed to the *ear* and not the *eye*, will enable the reader to understand the proposition: that all language is a succession of sounds, not distinguished by the divisions of writing; or by any divisions in the nature of separation; but by *syllables*, distinguished by a vocal formation, which compels the organs of speech to utter them in distinct articulations. Hence, if this be rightly understood, the formation of a supposed language, by an arbitrary division of letters, is impossible. To effect this object, the division must be strictly syllabic, and admits of but the few and simple variations which belong to languages which have the closest affinity: all possible divisions offer but one succession of syllabic sounds.

But the supposed objection can scarcely be admitted to exist. The verses in the *Pænula* may be decomposed into Hebrew sounds, and translated, by some force on words, into a sense not inconsistent with the design of Plautus. But the Irish approaches to the near coincidence of a dialect, and gives the full and accordant interpretation of the lines in Plautus, as translated in Plautine Latin. But this is not all: the same inference is supported as clearly through the dialogue of a scene in the same play. We shall now offer specimens of both, beginning with the scene, as least commonly to be met with in the writers who have noticed the subject.

In the second Scene of the fifth Act of the *Pænula*, the following dialogue occurs:—\*

\* Vallancey's *Collectanea*, vol. ii. 306, *et seq.*

MILP. Adibo hosce atque, appellabo Punice;  
 Si respondebunt, Punice pergam loqui:  
 Si non: tum ad horum mores linguam vertero.  
 Quid ais tu? ecquid adhuc commeministi Punice?  
 AG. Nihil adepol, nam qui scire potui, dic mihi  
 Qui illinc sexennis perierim Karthagine?  
 HAN. Pro di immortales! plurimi ad hunc modum  
 Periere pueri liberi Karthagine.  
 MIL. Quid ais tu? AG. Quid vis? MIL. Vin' appelle hunc Punice?  
 AG. An scis? MIL. Nullus me est hodie Pœnus Punior.  
 AG. Adi atque appella, quid velit, quid venerit,  
 Qui sit quojatis, unde sit: ne parseris.  
 MIL. Avo! quojatis estis? aut quo ex oppido?  
 HAN. *Hanno Muthumballe bi Cheadreanech.*  
*Irish.* Hanno Muthumbal bi Chathar dreannad.  
 I am Hanno Muthumbal, dwelling at Carthage.

Passing over some remarkable coincidences of the same kind, we come to some which exhibit the remarkable fact, that Plautus, who borrowed the scene from an earlier drama, did not understand the language thus quoted, or seem aware how it applied to the direct purpose of his dialogue. The Phœnician, it should be stated, is one who has been bereaved of his children:—

HANNO. *Laech la chananim lininichot.*  
*Irish.* *Luach le cheannaighim liom miocht.*  
 At any price I would purchase my children.

The interpreter, in the drama, gives the following explanation:—

Ligulas canalis ait se advexisse et nuce; &c.  
 AG. Mercator credo est. HAN. 'Is am ar uinam.'  
*Irish.* Is am ar uinneam.  
 This is the time for resolution.  
 HAN. Palum erga dectha!  
*Irish.* Ba liom earga deacta.  
 I will submit to the dictates of Heaven.

One extract more we must not omit, as containing a coincidence of a different kind, but not less important to another portion of this argument:—

HAN. Gun ebel Balsemeni ar a san.  
*Irish.* Guna bil Bal-samen ar a son.  
 O that the good Balsamen may favour them!

It would be easy, from the same source, to pursue these quotations with others leading to the same curious inference. We must, however, content ourselves for the present with a few taken a little further on, which we give as usually found in the essays written on the subject:—

*Punic.* Bythim mothym moelothii ne leathanti diœsmachon.

As arranged by Vallancey:—

Byth lym! Mo thym nocto thii nel ech anti daise machon.  
*Irish.* Beith liom. Mothime noctaithe niel acanti daisic mac coine.  
*English.* Be with me: I have no other intention but of recovering my daughter.

The last we shall give is literally coincident with the Irish:—

Handone silli hanum bene, silli in mustine.

*English.* “Whenever she grants a favour, she grants it linked with misfortunes.”

The question here stated, and so far explained for the reader's decision, was put to a test of the most rigid kind, by different inquirers, amongst whom Dr Percy, the celebrated bishop of Dromore, may be mentioned particularly. He mentions in the preface to his great work, that he set different persons to translate the lines in Plautus, by their knowledge of the Irish language: and, without any previous preparation, or any communication with each other, they all gave the same sense. Recent writers have treated this argument with undeserved slight. If the inference is to be rejected, all reference to the class of proof to which it belongs must be rejected: and we must confess, that notwithstanding the great learning and ability with which his argument is followed out, we are surprised at an elaborate parallel between Irish and Hebrew, in a recent writer, who rejects, by compendious silence, a parallel so much more obvious and complete. But a writer of higher note demands the few remarks which we dare to add to this discussion, already grown beyond the measure of a prefatory essay. The coincidences which Mr Moore calls casual, are not such as to admit of a term which annihilates all the pretensions of the closest affinities of language, and which violates also the demonstrative laws of probability: insomuch, that if, as Mr Moore affirms, the admission of the inference proves too much, we very much fear that so much as it proves must be admitted, though it should discomfit a little political theory. The reasoning adopted by Mr Moore (who does not, we suspect, attach much real weight to it) can be reduced to a very easy dilemma. The objection is this: that the “close conformity” attempted to be established between the Irish and Phœnician, does not allow sufficiently for the changes which language must be supposed to undergo in the six centuries between Plautus and the foundation of Carthage; and also, that Ireland should not only have been colonized directly from Carthage, but have also retained the language unaltered through so many centuries. The actual principle on which the real weight of this objection hangs, is the assumption of the necessity of the continual and uniform alteration of language in the course of time. Now, there is either a considerable difference between the languages compared by Vallancey, or there is not. If there is so much as reduce the comparison merely to a *casual resemblance*, this portion of the objection fails, on the ground that such a difference is a sufficient alteration for 600 years to have accomplished. If, on the contrary, there is so little difference as to answer the purpose of such an objection, it becomes altogether nugatory: if in this case the lines in Plautus be admitted as genuine, the Irish and Phœnician languages *are the same*: and the doubtful chronology must give way to the settled fact. But, in point of fact, the comparison in question, while it clearly establishes the close relation of dialects of a common language, exhibits full alteration enough for 600 years. The alterations of language are by no means proved to be uniform, but depend on many circumstances both in the character and history of a people. To estimate the law of change—and the change of language depends on all others—requires



much power of abstracting the mind from the notions acquired in the recent order of things. The laws of social progression have, since the end of the 18th century, undergone an alteration which continues to baffle calculation. The extraordinary disruptions and revolutions of ancient empires must, in numberless instances, have produced the most rapid alterations in habits, religion, language: but there was no rate of internal progress in the domestic history of any ancient nation which demands more allowance in the change of dialect, than is apparent in the case under consideration. This consideration derives some added weight from one frequently noticed by Mr Moore: namely, the natural tenacity of the Celtic disposition—a tenacity which is most remarkable in the Irish branch, and therefore probably in their Phœnician kindred: being, in fact, one of the great common characteristics of Oriental origin. In a word, on this point, we cannot admit that the question of time can be reasonably adopted as a criterion on this question. Of all the difficulties in the investigation of antiquity, these attending chronology are by far the greatest; and, when certain other tests not very abundant are wanting, the most dependent upon the previous decision of a variety of questions and the comparison of a multitude of slight probabilities. Such difficulties as the uncertain chronology of periods and people, of which our knowledge is but inferential and traditionary, cannot be suffered to interfere with the conclusions from the plainest affinity of language—preserved traditions—authenticated historical notices—and existing monuments. And if we are to be scrupulous in receiving the theories and systems of antiquarian fancy, we are, in like manner, bound to be cautious not to err on the other extreme, by lightly suffering theory equally unfounded to form the ground of our scepticism. The theory of human progress, were it to be reasoned out from a comprehensive view of the history of mankind, should itself depend on the comparison of facts of this nature. The rate of national change is, in any period, only to be ascertained from phenomena, of which the language of each period is by far the most available and certain test; as being an instrument most immediately affected by all the changes and peculiarities of nationality. We are reluctant to dwell on a subject which, to most of our readers, can have little interest; but we have also to remark, that the actual amount of change which the Phœnician language may have undergone in the 600 years supposed, is not to be measured by the language of poetry, proverb, or general moral sayings. To affect these there must be a rapid change of the moral character of a nation, and even thus the effects are comparatively slight, from the more permanent nature of moral notions. The changes to which the Phœnician people were most, but still comparatively little subject, must have arisen from the intercourse of commerce and the increase of luxury: and chiefly acted on the names of things and the operations of art. It is to be remembered, that the greatest changes language can be ascertained to have undergone, were from a cause not connected with time, but violent interference. But we are transgressing our limits and our humbler province: we shall now, as briefly as we can, lay before our readers the traditionary authorities, which derive much added weight from the above consideration.

*Ancient Authority.*—We should next offer a sketch of the ancient historic remains of Phœnicia, as from such a view might be drawn some of the most important corroborations of the common inference of our Irish antiquaries in favour of the Phœnician colonization of the country. But, anxious to preserve the brevity which should characterize a discussion merely incidental to our main design, we must be content to append the simple outline which a few sentences may contain.

Historians are agreed in attributing to the Phœnicians the origin of commerce and navigation; but it is enough that their history presents the earliest elements and first records of these great steps of human progress. For ages, they had no rivals on the sea; and as neighbouring states rose into that degree of prosperity which extends to commercial wants, the Phœnicians were still the carriers of other people. Situated on a rocky and confined tract of territory between Libanus and the sea, there was probably added to the enterprise of commerce, that overflow of people which causes migration; and in direct cause of these conditions there arises a very high probability, that they would be the first discoverers, and the earliest colonists, of distant islands only accessible by the accident of navigation. As this previous probability is itself of a very high order, so any circumstances tending to confirm it, being in themselves but probable consequences, both receive from, and impart considerable strength to, the same conclusion.

Of such a nature is the affinity of language so fully proved in the last section. To this we may add the consent of tradition, and the agreement, to a certain extent, of authorities.

On the latter topic we shall say little. There is satisfactory reason, why much stress cannot be justly laid on express historical authority—in either way. This period of the early occupation of Ireland by her Celtic inhabitants, and of her probable colonization from Phœnicia, is not properly within the limits of authentic history. Before the earliest of the Greek historians, to whom we are indebted for the first distinct notices of the island, a period of civilization and, perhaps, of commercial importance, had passed away. The power and glory of Phœnicia itself was gone—the relations of the civilized world and the form of civil society had changed: Ireland had passed into a phase of obscurity, and was mentioned but incidentally, or as a remote and unimportant portion of the known world. Such notices must needs have been slight, and for the same reason liable both to important oversights and misstatements. This consideration must, to the fair reasoner, suggest a special rule of historical construction, which, before noticing these authorities, we must endeavour to explain.

The assumption of the kind of ignorance here explained, suggests the inference that such accounts, while founded on some remains of an authoritative nature then extant—but remote, obscure, imperfect, and neither fully known or distinctly understood—must necessarily be affected by consequent misrepresentations: and that therefore, allowing a foundation in truth, they must be understood subject to the corrections to be derived from other sources of inference, and to be considered still as authoritative, so far as they can be confirmed by such a comparison. Into this comparison it is needless to enter formally: it is, when stated, so nearly the obvious common sense of the



subject, that the plainest reader may be safely left to apply it. Its main application is to account for the scanty notice of the early historians, who appear to have given so disproportionate an importance to the surrounding countries; and also for the existence of the adverse testimonies of Pomponius and Solinus, Strabo and Diodorus. Of these writers it may be observed, that the times in which they wrote, fall within a period in which the Irish nation had sunk both into barbarism and obscurity. It was also a period when the general ignorance which existed as to the greater portion of the world, exposed not only the geographer but the historian to the evils of credulity: where so much must have been received on trust, and so many false notions corrupted the little that was known; there was both a facility in the reception of vague report, and the adoption of hasty inference on insufficient grounds. The temptations to fill up a blank of slight seeming importance, in an anxious work of extensive and laborious inquiry, would, in the absence of that minutely searching and jealous observation which now guards the integrity of writers, make such temptations less likely to be resisted. But even with these allowances, there is, properly, nothing in the authorities called adverse, to impair the moderate view which we are inclined to adopt.

Our best authorities substantially concur in the opinion, that this country was, at a remote period, the scene of the highest civilization in that period existing. From this state it appears to have slowly decayed into a state of barbarism, in which little of that earlier civilization but its monuments remained. Of this, we must say more in our next section: we mention it here, as explaining more distinctly to readers who are not professedly conversant with the subject, the confusion which is to be found in all that numerous class of writers, of the last century, in their incidental notices of the subject of Irish antiquities. Assuredly the laws of human nature are sometimes overlooked in the eagerness of controversy. The inconsistencies discovered in the traditions of our ancient race, are admitted facts in the history of others. The very characteristic marks of extreme antiquity are made objections to the claim. Ancient civilization, altogether different from that of any time within the limits of modern history, is uniformly stamped with features to which may be applied the expressive term barbaric—conveying a sense different from the rudeness of the savage state. Characters of profound knowledge, high mental development, and mechanic skill, are accompanied by wants and manners now confined to the savage state. And thus may the sceptical inquirer always find materials ready for the manufacture of easy contradictions.

With regard to Ireland, the vicissitudes of many centuries have brought with them sad reverse. And the downright barbarism into which she has been crushed by a succession of dreadful revolutions—the ceaseless vortex of internal strife—have been mistaken by shallow observers for national characters. This is among the large class who take no interest in the history of Ireland—the main source of mistake upon the subject: they see, but do not learn or think; and therefore see but half, and are presumptuously or ignorantly wrong.

It is unquestionably to be admitted, that much of the common scep-



ticism, which we have here noticed, is due to the extravagance of writers on Irish history, who, combining enthusiasm with profound historical ignorance, have misinterpreted the proofs of Irish civilization, into a degree and kind of civilization which never had existence; confusing the additions of poetry and the dreams of fancy, with the slender basis of fact on which they are built. Such are the gorgeous chimeras which ornament and discredit the narrations of Walker, Keating, O'Halloran; while Ledwich and Pinkerton, with more seeming reason, but less truth, adopt the safe and easy rule of comprehensive incredulity.

But there is a juster and safer middle course which will be found to exact neither rash admissions or rejections. It sets out on two well-grounded conclusions, into which the strongest oppositions of fact will fall, disarmed of their opposition. The first, thus already explained: the admission of a previous period of civilization, followed by one of barbarism; the other, a known fact common to the ancient history of nations, the co-existence of high degrees of civilization in some respects, with the lowest barbarism in others. With the help of these two plain assumptions, there is nothing in the alleged antiquity of Ireland to be objected to on the score of improbability. By duly weighing these reflections, we have some trust that the general reader will not be repelled from the subject, by the reputed discrepancies and confusion of old historians. The effort to fill up a period of hopeless obscurity, by extending back the vague and traditionary accounts of the more recent period, immediately anterior to Christianity, has been, we believe, a main source of error and delusion, on which, at a future stage of our labour, we shall offer a few remarks.

The earliest notice, which the industry of students of Irish antiquity seem to have ascertained, occurs in a Greek poem, of which the supposed date is five hundred years before the Christian era. "There seems," observes Mr Moore, "to be no good reason to doubt the antiquity of this poem." Archbishop Usher says, in adverting to the notice it contains of Ireland, "the Romans themselves could not produce such a tribute to their antiquity." In this poem, Ireland is mentioned under the Celtic appellation *Iernis*; and this, according to Bochart, on the authority of the Phœnicians—as the Greeks had not then acquired a knowledge of islands as yet inaccessible to them. This assertion derives some added weight from the omission of any notice, in the same poem, of the neighbouring island of Britain. Herodotus affords an additional gleam, by informing us of the only fact he knew respecting the British isles—that tin was imported from them; while he was ignorant of their names. From these two notices, it seems an easy inference, that they were places of high commercial importance to the great mistress of the seas; while the Greeks, ignorant at that time of navigation, had no popular, or even distinct knowledge of them; and the more so, from the well known secrecy observed by the Phœnicians, in all things concerning their commercial places of resort. From Strabo we obtain a lively picture, which bears the marks of truth, of their jealous vigilance in preserving a naval supremacy, which must, in those early periods, have depended, in a great measure, on the ignorance of the surrounding states. If at any time, when at sea,

they fell in with the vessels of any other people, or discovered a sail upon their track, all the resources of art and daring were used to deceive the stranger, and mislead conjecture. For this purpose, no danger or violence was too great, and the loss of ship or life was not considered too great a sacrifice to the security of their monopoly of the islands. From this it appears unlikely that much, or very distinct notice of the British isles should occur in the early writings of the Greeks; and the value of the slightest is much increased, by the consideration, that more could not reasonably be looked for. The first of these notices of the two islands, is met in a work which has been sometimes attributed to Aristotle, but which, being dedicated to Alexander, is of that period. In this they are mentioned by their Celtic names of Albion and Ierne.

A notice far more express occurs in a writer of far later date; yet, bearing the authentic stamp of authority of a period comparatively early. At some time between the ninety-second and hundred and twenty-ninth Olympiad, the Carthaginians sent out two maritime expeditions to explore, more minutely, the eastern and western coasts of the world, as then known to them. Of these, that led by Himilco was directed to the Western Islands. Both of these voyagers left accounts of their voyages and discoveries, of which those written by Himilco were inserted in the *Punic Annals*. From these Festus Avienus, who wrote his poem, *De Oris Maritimis*, some time in the fourth century, affirms himself to have derived his accounts of the western coasts; and, indeed, asserts an acquaintance with the original Journal. In this account, Himilco is described as coasting the Spanish shores—the known Phœnician course to these islands; and stretching from the nearest point across to the Æestrumnides, or Scilly Islands. These are described, in the sketch of the geographical poet, as two days' voyage from the larger Sacred Island of the Hiberni, near which the island of the Albiones lies.

Ast hinc duobus in sacram sic Insulam  
Dixere prisci, solibus cursus rati est.  
Hæc inter undas multum cespitem jacet  
Eamque late gens Hibenorum colit  
Propinqua rursus insula Albionum patet.—  
Tartesiisque in terminos Æestrumnidum  
Negociandi mos erat, Carthaginiis  
Etiam colonis, et vulgus inter Herculis  
Agitans columnas hæc adibant æquora.

*Avienus, De Or. Mar.*

In this ancient poem, which has all the authority which can be attributed to the ancient records of the annalists of any country, the description of the place, the colonists, and the ancient trade—the Sacred Island—its natives, with their manners, customs, and the peculiarities of soil and climate—are traced with a truth which vindicates the genuineness of the authority. The intercourse of the Phœnician colonies of Spain is marked with equal distinctness.

It has been, from considerations in no way recondite, proved by Heeren, that Ptolemy's geographical work, must have been derived from Phœnician or Tyrian authorities.\* It proves a knowledge of Ireland

\* The fact appears from Ptolemy, who refers to Maximus Tyrius.



more minute and early than that of the other British isles. For while his accounts are vitiated by numerous topographical errors in describing these, his description of Ireland, on the contrary, has the minuteness and accuracy of an elaborate personal survey. This, considering that Ireland was at this period unknown within the bounds of the Roman Empire, plainly shows the ancient as well as the intimate character of his authority. This observation seems confirmed also by the peculiarity of giving the old Celtic names to the localities of Ireland, while Britain is described by the Roman names of places. Another ancient geographer\* states, that in the earlier periods of Phœnician commerce, the western promontories of Europe were distinguished by three sacred pillars, and known by ancient religious Celtic names. To these must be added the well-known testimony of Tacitus. In his *Life of Agricola*, mentioning the conquest of Britain, he describes it by its position opposite the coast of Hibernia. Describing the latter, he mentions its position: "Medio inter Britanniam atque Hispaniam sita, et Gallico quoque mari opportuna, valentissimam imperii partem magnis nobilem usibus miscuerit.....Solum cælumque, et ingenia cultusque hominum, haud multum a Britannia differunt: *Melius aditus portusque per commercia et negociatores cogniti.*" The force of the last sentence has been attempted to be removed, by referring the word *melius* to the former clause of the sentence. The correction has been justly rejected on consideration of style; it is still more objectionable, as it would destroy a sense confirmed by other authority, for one at variance with all; and, also, in some measure inconsistent with the context of the historian, who begins his paragraph by the emphatic description of the new conquest: "Nave prima transgressus, ignotas ad id tempus gentes." It is indeed quite evident, that there is a distinct and designed opposition between the two descriptive sentences, of which the latter has a reference to the former. The roads and ports, better known by commercial intercourse and to merchants, is altogether, and even strikingly at variance with the nations unknown till then. And the correction supposes a vagueness of style inconsistent with the known character of the writer.

We cannot, in this discourse, dwell at greater length on a topic capable of much extension, and have confined our notice to the more generally known writers. We think, however, that it is quite sufficiently conclusive, that there was an early intercourse between Phœnician traders and Ireland; that there may also have been at some period, of which the time cannot be distinctly ascertained, a Phœnician colony settled in the island; by whom, it is in a high degree probable, the Phœnician language, letters, and religious rites, were introduced. These we state as moderate inferences, from the authorities exemplified in this section. Most of them, however, are more conclusively inferred from other considerations.

Sanchoniathon, a reputed Phœnician historian, the supposed remains of whose history are preserved by Eusebius, furnishes an account of the early superstitions of the Phœnicians, which, by comparison, manifest remarkable coincidences with those which can be traced to the

\* Strabo.



heathen antiquity of Ireland. This work rests, however, on doubtful grounds; inasmuch as it is, by some learned writers, supposed to be the forgery of Philo Byblius, its alleged translator from the Phœnician original. This is therefore the point of importance. The nature and value of the testimony to be derived from it, scarcely warrant a minute and critical re-examination of the question: but we may state the reasons on which it has been thought proper to set aside even this quantum of our argument. The absence of all previous notice of a work, affirmed to be written before the Trojan war, until its translation by Philo Byblius, seems to discredit the assertion of its previous existence; and this the more, as it seems only to have been brought to light, by the only testimony we have for it, for the purpose of supplying an argument against Christianity. These reasons are of no weight: the obscurity of a Phœnician mythological work, in the time of Philo, was too likely a circumstance to be made an objection of; and the supposed argument is obliged to be given up, as unsustained by his authority, by the acute Porphyry. The errors which have been detected in the chronology, amount to no valid objection to the genuineness of the work. Stillingfleet, who exposes them with much learning and acuteness, does not think so. A copy of Sanchoniathon's work is said to have been recently discovered in Germany, and is now in process of translation.\* The worship and early religious opinions of the Phœnicians, as described by this author, so nearly resemble the ancient superstitions of the heathen Irish, that the attention of antiquaries was drawn to the subject, by the points of resemblance, before actual investigation confirmed the conjecture of their original causes of the resemblance. The worship of Baal may be considered as a sufficiently authentic character of both, not, indeed, resting on the authority of any doubtful writer. The Phœnicians worshipped the sun under this name, and celebrated the vigil of their annual festival by kindling a great fire: the same custom is familiar to every one, who knows the country, as an Irish custom. Dr Parsons, who describes it with the accuracy of an antiquary, observes, "In Ireland, the 1st of May is observed with great rejoicings by all those original people through the kingdom; and they call May-day *Bealtine*, *Beltine*, or *Balteine*, the meaning of which is, "the fire of Baal." Mr Plowden observes, that the "analogies and coincidences" between the still existing customs of the Irish, and the history of Sanchoniathon, are very striking; and, we would here observe, in addition to our previous remarks on the genuineness of that ancient writer, that as it could not have been forged for the purpose of this comparison, such coincidences are, to a certain extent, confirmatory of its authority; and, at all events, indicate a common fountain of authentic tradition from which the history of the ancient Phœnician worship must have been drawn. The Old Testament may have supplied an accurate outline, but no more. It can scarcely be supposed to supply a clue to details which are so faithfully reflected in the existing customs of the Irish people. The sun and moon were, it appears, worshipped under the appellations of Bel and Samhin; and O'Halloran has observed,

\* Report of Proceedings in the Royal Irish Academy.

that the most cordial wish of blessing among the Irish peasantry is, "The blessing of Samen and Bel be with you." The Latin translator of Eusebius, remarks on the Phœnician word Bel Samen, that Baal Schamain among the Hebrews has the same signification; and Plowden remarks also, that in the Punic lines, to which we have already referred, this familiar invocation of the great deity of the Phœnicians twice occurs.

Plutarch mentions an island in the neighbourhood of Britain, inhabited by a holy race of people. Diodorus is more particular: he describes an island over against Gaul, which answers to the description of Ireland, both as to position and extent, as well as the habits and peculiarities of its people. "This island," he says, "was discovered by the Phœnicians, by an accidental circumstance;" and adds, "the Phœnicians, from the very remotest times, made repeated voyages thither, for purposes of commerce."\* He also mentions the rites of sun-worship, the round temples, the study of the heavens, and the harp. These particulars, Mr Moore thinks, he may possibly have learned from the occasional report of Phœnician merchants; while he is at the same time inclined to rank the hyperborean island of the historian, along with his island of Panchœa, and other such fabulous marvels. There is, we admit, ground for this. But even allowing for the fictitious colouring, which so largely qualifies the statements of this historian, we are on our part inclined to estimate them by a principle, which, from the extent of its application, cannot be lost sight without mistake: the value which separate testimonies derive from their concurrence with universal consent.

The fanciful colouring of the writer is, in the class of cases here supposed, invariably grounded on some origin in reality. To draw the line between the fancy and the fact, might be impossible; but the object is here different: our immediate argument does not require the minute estimation of the writer's character, and the confirmation of every portion of his statement. Even the scenery and outline of a fable may be confirmatory or illustrative of the localities and incidents of history; and, if the coincidence be sufficient, become historical. The account of Diodorus, offered as history, has the sufficient value of accordance with various notices and testimonies; and is to be regarded as an indication of a received opinion, not in the slightest degree impaired by the author's known lubricity of statement. In the investigation of traditionary periods, no single statement can be received as historically authentic. The object is rather of the nature of that process which fixes a point, by the concurrence of the lines which pass through it. The concurrence is the principal ground of inference. It is, indeed, on the same principle, that to interpret justly the remains of Irish antiquity, it becomes necessary to enlarge the student's scope of investigation to the view of all antiquity. The confident theory which stands upon a small basis of a few remote and isolated facts, may be destroyed by the discovery of a single new incident; and is depreciated by inferences, numerous in an inverse proportion to the number of these data. It is not until the truth is recog-

\* Quoted from Dalton's Essay.



nised, that the antiquity of Ireland is a fragment of universal antiquity, or utterly fallacious, that a catholic principle of historic interpretation can be found to govern investigation, and put an end to the thousand errors of partial views and inadequate inductions. The reader, who appreciates the state of Irish ancient history, will easily excuse our dwelling minutely on this consideration—in our history so much more important than in that of any other modern state.

Of the ancient idolatry of the sun in Ireland, we have already noticed some proofs. The festival of Samhain, one of the great divinities, whose worship is said to have been imported into Phœnicia from Samothrace, is clearly ascertained to have existed in Ireland, until the very introduction of Christianity. Strabo, on the authority of some ancient geographers, mentions an island near Britain, in which worship is offered to Ceres and Proserpine, like to that in Samothrace. But the reader, who may chance to be aware of the vast ocean of antiquarian learning into which this branch of the argument must needs lead, will see the necessity of our being summary in our notice of authorities. Among the numerous indirect authorities which, by their descriptions of the ancient religions of Eastern nations, enable us to pursue the comparison of these with our own antiquity, the features of comparison too often demand extensive discussion, and the application of critical learning, to fall in with the popular discussion. Sanchoniathon, Herodotus, and many other ancient names of the earliest geographers and historians, enable the industrious antiquary to collect the real features of Oriental antiquity. In the application of their authorities, there are, it is true, some difficulties, arising from the fact of the common antiquity of so many early races. From this, some differences between the ablest writers, and not a little uncertainty has arisen: the reader is at first not a little confused by conjectures which appear to be different, while they are substantially the same; that is, so far as any question of the least importance is concerned. All agree in tracing to an early Oriental origin, names, customs, and superstitions, distinctly, and beyond all question, identified with the names, language, and local remains of Irish antiquity.

The evidence becomes more really important, as less liable to various or opposing comment, when traced in the actual remains of the ancient native literature. Of this we do not feel it necessary to say much here: it must be sufficient for the purpose, to say that it is now admitted to exist to a large extent; and the genuineness of the most considerable part is not questioned. From these, our ancient history has been compiled by Keating, in a work which has been much, though undeservedly, discredited, by the mistakes and interpolations of its translator. Of this Vallancey says, "Many of these MS. were collected into one volume, written in the Irish language, by Father Jeoff Keating. A translation of this work into English appeared many years ago, under the title of *Keating's History of Ireland*. The translator, entirely ignorant of ancient geography, has given this history an English dress, so ridiculous, as to become the laughing-stock of every reader!" To this, amongst other such causes, may be attributed the long unpopularity and the scepticism, now beginning to disappear.

The whole of these ancient materials correspond distinctly with the



ancient annals of Phœnicia, "translated out of the books of king Hiempsal's library for Sallust;" they agree with the ancient Armenian history compiled by a writer of the fifth century; and with many other ancient traditions and histories of the several nations having a common affinity. But, what is more, they contain the most distinct details of the early migrations and history of many of these tribes now extant.

Such is a slight sketch of a class of facts, which the reader, who looks for distinct detail, will find amply discussed in numerous writers. We only here desire to enforce the general probability in favour of those writers, who, abandoning partial views, and taking the general ground of historic principle, have adopted the more ancient view of the origin of our native Irish race.

The most probable illustration of the text of ancient writers, is their coincidence with the whole current of our national traditions; the more valuable, because it is easy to perceive that such a coincidence is altogether undesigned. The whole of these, again, is confirmed by the remains of antiquity, which are thickly scattered through every district. These last mentioned indications are indeed curiously mingled, and present, at first view, a vast confusion of national monuments and characteristics. But this confusion is not greater than, or in any way different from, that of the varying traditions of our earlier ages. Both are consistently and satisfactorily explained in one way, and in no other. The accidental allusions of ancient foreign writers—the monuments of various and unlike races—the traditions bearing the stamp of customs and superstitions of different ancient type,—are all the evident and distinct confirmations of a traditionary history, which records the several invasions, settlements, changes, and incidents of national intercourse, from which these indications might be inferred as the necessary consequences. Now, if such an extended and various adaptation does not amount to a proof of the general correctness of the ancient history, which our soundest antiquarian writers have inferred from it, the sceptical writer may lay aside any degree of reasoning, inference, or apparent facts, which he pretends to possess, as a worthless instrument and useless materials.

Not to enter into any premature detail, it is probable that the first race of the ancient Celtic stock, retaining the more recent customs, worship, and characters of Oriental antiquity, sooner or later (we are only speaking of antecedent probability) received a fresh infusion of Celtic blood, which had flowed farther from the primitive source; thus adding, to the more ancient form of paganism, the more recent characters of a more advanced and more corrupt idolatry. Other colonies, at farther stages, brought the changes and left the monuments of ages and climates far separated from the first. But these changes were, for the most part, melted down into the prevailing tone of nationality, preserved by the primitive population, which still constituted the main body of the inhabitants; and whose native peculiarities of character gave one national impress to the whole. Such is the view to be deduced from the comparison of indications, previous to any consideration of national tradition. Before leaving this point, it should be observed, that it is an important addition to the value of

the chains of coincidence thus explained, that they are all distinctive, being exclusively characteristic of Irish history, and cannot therefore be resolved by any general theories on the antiquity of modern European nations.

*Antiquities.*—Let us now offer a few examples, taken from among the best known antiquities of the country, to give the reader a distinct idea of the materials for the latter part of this comparison.

The reader whose curiosity is sufficiently active, may find ample information in recent and authoritative works; and every day is now adding to the abundance and distinctness of this information, under the active and able investigations of the Ordnance Survey, and the antiquarian department of the Royal Irish Academy. The *Rath*, the *Cromlech*, the *Cairn*, the *Rocking-Stone*, with various remains of ancient weapons, utensils, and implements, offer abundant indications of a far distant period in the antiquity of the human race. Of these, many can be traced to other ancient nations, and these for the most part the same to which tradition assigns the origin of some or other of the races by which Ireland was anciently colonized. At a sitting of the Royal Irish Academy, 9th April, 1838, a letter from Dr Hibbert Ware\* was read, describing a *Cromlech* near Bombay, in India, discovered by his son. As two very clever sketches accompany this letter, the slightest inspection is sufficient to identify these Indian remains, in character and intent, with the numerous similar ones in every district of this island. The same letter adverts to Maundrel's similar discovery on the "Syrian coast, in the very region of the Phœnicians themselves." At a previous meeting of the same learned body, February 26, a very curious and interesting account was given by Mr Petrie, of a remarkable collection of remains of this class, near the town of Sligo. Amongst many interesting facts and observations concerning these, Mr Petrie, after having mentioned that they contain human bones, earthen urns, &c., and conjectured that they are the burial places of the slain in battle, goes on to mention the highly curious fact:—"Such monuments," he states, "are found on all the battle-fields recorded in Irish history as the scenes of contest between the Belgian or Firbolg and the Tuath de Danaun colonies;" after which, Mr Petrie is stated to have observed, "as monuments of this class are found not only in most countries of Europe, but also in the East, Mr Petrie thinks that their investigation will form an important accessory to the history of the Indo-European race, and also that such an investigation will probably destroy the popular theories of their having been temples and altars of the Druids."† In June, 1838, a paper, read by Sir W. Betham, on the tumulus lately discovered in the Phœnix Park, contains some observations not less confirmatory of the same general view. From indications of an obvious nature, he refers this class of monuments to a more remote antiquity, "at least of 3000 years." Sir W. Betham affirms it to be his opinion, that the sepulchral monument here alluded to chiefly, is similar to the ancient *Cromlech*, and affirms the opinion, that all *Cromlechs* are "denuded sepul-

\* To Sir W. Betham.

† Report of the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy



chiral chambers." We might, were such an object desirable, enumerate a large consent of authorities, and bring forward many cases; we shall only further mention, that Sir William Ousley discovered structures of the same description in Persia; and it is not without value, as a confirmation, that the remarkable *Cromlech* near Cloyne, retains a name significant of coeval ancient superstition, being called, in the Irish, *Carig Cruath*, or Rock of the Sun. The *Cromlech*, by its construction, seems to imply a command of mechanic resource, which must be referred to a very remote period. The management of the enormous masses of rock which form these ancient structures, is little consistent with any thing we know of the more recent antiquity, when wood and hurdle were the only materials of building; but not wanting in analogous character with the period of the Pyramids and Theban remains. This observation applies with still more force to the rocking-stone, of which many remains are yet found, some of which still retain their balance. Of these, one stands not far from Ballina; another near Lough Salt, in the county of Donegal; there is also one in the county Sligo, at Kilmorigan. The above inference, from structure, applies with still more force to these, but their history offers a nearer approach to the same inference.

The rocking-stone of the Egyptians is minutely described by Bryant, and Pliny supplies a description still more exact—"Juxta Haspasus oppidum Asiæ, cautes stat horrenda, uno digito mobilis; eadem si toto corpore impellatur, resistens." The same, or nearly similar, stones are described by Sanchoniathon, as objects of Phœnician worship, and are still imagined by them (in the writer's time) to have been constructed by the great god Onranos. These remains of ancient superstition, were, however, probably common to Phœnicia, with every Asiatic race, and therefore to be simply regarded as indications of Eastern descent. They are found in Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall, and have been described by travellers as having been met in various parts of Asia.

The sacredness of hills is not peculiar to Irish, but known among the remains of early superstitions common to the primitive races of mankind. A more peculiar significance appears to belong to the known sacredness attached to certain hills which stood upon the boundaries of provinces or kingdoms. A French writer,\* cited by Mr Moore, among the "holy mountains of Greece," "has enumerated nearly a dozen, all bearing the name of Olympus, and all situated upon frontiers." The custom is proved to have pervaded the early nations of Asia; and connects them, in a common worship of the very remotest antiquity, with Ireland, in which the hill of Usneach, standing on the common frontier of five provinces, has always been held sacred, from the earliest times within the reach of inquiry. The sacredness of hills is indeed attested by many ancient customs, of which authentic traditions remain. Their kings were crowned on hills, and their laws seem to have derived sanctity from having been enacted on sacred heights.

The dedication of these artificial hills to the sun, is, however,

\* Dukane, des Cultes anterieure à l'Idolatrie, c. 8.



probably a distinct appropriation, confined to those Eastern countries in which the Cabini superstition prevailed. The more peculiar and (looking to the earliest periods still) recent connexion between Ireland and the East, will be observed to be indicated in the Irish names. The probability of a Phœnician origin, for this appropriation, is increased, by some traces of the same occurring in the mythological traditions of other nations, whose early history has an undoubted connexion with Phœnicia.

The reverence shown towards stones by the ancient Irish, is a mark of their Eastern descent. Of this there is one instance, of which the tradition has a very peculiar interest. It follows the singular fortunes of the stone on which the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned, through its various removals, from Ireland to Scone, and from Scone to Westminster, where it yet preserves its ancient place of honour in the coronation of our monarchs. Of this curious history there is no doubt, authoritative enough for notice.

“When the Tuatha de Danano came over, they brought with them” four curiosities or monuments of great antiquity. The first was a stone which was called Lia Fail, and was brought from the city of Falias; from which stone that city received its name. This stone was possessed of a very wonderful virtue, for it would make a strange noise, and be surprisingly disturbed whenever a monarch of Ireland was crowned upon it; which emotion it continued to show till the birth of Christ, who contracted the power of the devil, and in a great measure put an end to his delusions. It was called the Fatal Stone, and gave a name to Inisfail, as the poet observes in these verses:—

From this strange stone did Inisfail obtain  
Its name, a tract surrounded by the main.

This stone, called Lia Fail, had likewise the name of the Fatal Stone, or the stone of destiny; because a very ancient prophecy belonged to it, which foretold, that in whatever country this stone should be preserved, a prince of the Scythian race, that is, of the family of Milesius, king of Spain, should undoubtedly govern; as Hector Boetius gives the account, in his History of Scotland:—

Ni fallat fatum, Scoti quocunque locatum  
Invenient lapidem, regnare tenenter ibidem.

In the Irish language it runs thus:—

Cineadh suit saor an fine munab breag an fhaisdine,  
Mar abhfuigid an Lia fail dlighid flaithios do ghabhail.

In English:—

Unless the fixed decrees of fate give way,  
The Scots shall govern, and the sceptre sway,  
Where'er this stone they find, and its dread sound obey.

“When the Scythians were informed of the solemn virtue of this stone, Fergus the great, the son of Earca, having subdued the kingdom, resolved to be crowned upon it. For this purpose, he sent messengers to his brother Mortough, the son of Earca, a descendant from

Heremond, who was king of Ireland at that time, to desire that he would send him that stone to make his coronation the more solemn, and to perpetuate the succession in his family. His brother willingly complied with his request; the stone was sent, and Fergus received the crown of Scotland upon it. This prince was the first monarch of Scotland of the Scythian or Gadelian race; and, though some of the Picts had the title of kings of Scotland, yet they were no more than tributary princes to the kings of Ireland, from the reign of Heremond, who expelled them the kingdom of Ireland, and forced them into Scotland, where they settled. Fergus therefore was the first absolute monarch of Scotland, who acknowledged no foreign yoke, nor paid any homage to any foreign prince. This stone of destiny was preserved with great veneration and esteem, in the abbey of Seone, till Edward the First of England carried it away by violence, and placed it under the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, by which means the prophecy that attended it seems to be accomplished; for the royal family of the Stewarts succeeded to the throne of England soon after the removal of this stone; a family that descended lineally from the Scythian race, from Maine Leamhna, son of Corc, king of Munster, son of Luighdheach, son of Oilioll Flanbeg, son of Fiacha Muilleathan, king of Munster, son of Eogan Mor, son of Oilioll Ollum, king of Munster, who descended lineally from Heberus Fionn, son of Milesius, king of Spain; every prince of which illustrious family successively received the crown upon this stone.”\*

In fine. There is nothing more satisfactorily confirming the general truth of the accounts contained in the ancient tradition of Irish antiquity, than its strict conformity with the general analogy of human history. And this is so clear, as to admit of being stated as an extensive system of social institutions, manners, opinions, incidents, and events, which no human ingenuity could have framed together in all its parts, and so combined with existing remains, as to challenge not a single authoritative contradiction. If this vast and well devised combination be attributed to the invention of the bards, it assumes for these so much moral, civil, and political knowledge, as would do much honour to the discipline and experience of the 19th century. If it be attributed to the imagination of antiquarian theorists, we must say, that the most fanciful, credulous, and superstitious legendaries, have, after all, displayed more skill, method, and consummate wisdom, in devising a political and moral system, than their sober opponents have shown in detecting their error and credulity. And we should strongly advise our modern constitution-menders, and constructors of history, to take a lesson at their school.

That the language of the bards is largely combined with fiction, is no more than to say—that they were poets; and the poetry of the age and country, as well as the state of the profession, led to a vast increase of this tendency; that the legends of the monks were overflowing with romance and superstition; and that the sober-paced annalists, to a great extent, falsified their records, by omission; and partial statement. All this may be admitted. The manifest fictions

\* Keating.



and extravagancies, and anachronisms, may be allowed to prove so much. But the admission does not unsettle a single support, or shake down the slightest ornament, which belongs to the main structure of the ancient history of Ireland. The sceptic has to account rationally, not only for the history itself, but for the language, and the very letters, in which it is written; and must adopt a chain of denials, affirmations, and reasonings, of the most abstruse, inventive, and paradoxical kind, to establish the falsehood of traditions, which, had they no proof, are yet the most likely to be the truth, and are quite unobjectionable on the general ground of historic probability.

On the fictions of the ancient legends, it is, however, well remarked by Sir Lawrence Parsons,\* that they generally affect the opinions of the writers, and not their veracity, as they most commonly consist of extravagant explanations of common and probable incidents. Such are the varied narrations, in which the various calamities of sickness, famine, fire, flood, or storm, are ascribed to the magicians. If indeed the portion of common probability in the most fictitious legends be acceded to, as the necessary foundations of popular invention, there will be nothing worth contending for.

To sum briefly the general inferences to be drawn from the statements of our antiquaries, as to the origin of the Irish nation: As their letters and ancient language and traditions, are standing monuments of immemorial antiquity; as these are confirmed by a great variety of lesser, but still decided, indications to the same effect; we must conclude, that the people to which they belong, are a race derived from very ancient stock. Secondly, as there is no distinct tradition, assigning the origin of this race to any probable period, within those limits of time which commence the records of modern nations, it is to be inferred, as *most likely*, that this ancient people have sprung up from some earlier origin within the prior limits of ancient history.

If so, they must have derived those immemorial traditions, letters, language, and barbaric civilization, from that remote and primitive antiquity, and that ancient Eastern stock, of which they bear the decided characters. And the assumption may be taken, by antiquaries, as the solid basis of research, and probable conjecture. If these introductory remarks were indeed written to meet the eye of learned antiquaries, it must be observed, that these reasons would now be needless. Among the learned, there can scarcely be said to be a second opinion, so far as regards the main line of our argument. But with the vast and enlightened body of the reading public, it is, as we have already stated, otherwise. The claim of Irish history is regarded with a supercilious suspicion, very justifiable among those who know nothing of Irish antiquities.

*Ancient State.*—The reader will easily collect the political constitution of ancient Ireland, from our notices of the kings in whose reigns were effected the successive steps of its formation. We may here

\* The MS. of our half volume was unfortunately completed, when we received a copy of this Essay, by far the ablest on the subject. We have thus lost many conclusive arguments.



make this easier by a few general facts. To Eochaidh Eadgothach is referred the first step in the process of social institution on which all civilization rests as a foundation: the regulation of ranks and orders, without which a crowd of men can become no more than a herd of wild beasts, levelled in the brutal disorder of promiscuous equality.\* Legislation began with Ollamh Fodla, and subsequent kings effected various improvements and modifications, from which the historian can easily trace the prosperity and adversity of after ages.

There were five orders—the royal, aristocratic, priestly, poetical, mechanic and plebeian; of these, viewed as composing the body politic, they are more summarily distributed into kings, priests, and people: who assisted, or were represented, in the great assembly, or Fes.

The monarchy was elective, but the election was, by the law at least, limited to the members of the royal family. From this many evils arose; one consequence, however, may be enough to mention here: the tendency of the succession to assume an alternate order, such that, on the death of a monarch, he was succeeded by the son of his predecessor.

The disorders appurtenant to the elective principle, were in some degree limited, by the election of the successor of the monarch, or the chief (for the same rule of succession was general), at the time of their succession. This person was, in the case of the monarchy, called the Roydamna; in that of chiefs, the Tanist; and in both cases was endowed with proportional honours and privileges. “As to the law of Tanistry, by an inquisition taken at Mallow on the 25th of October 1594, before Sir Thomas Norris, vice-president of Munster, William Saxey, Esq., and James Gould, Esq., chief and second justices of the said province, by virtue of a commission from the Lord-Deputy and Council, dated the 26th of June before; it is found, among other things, “that Conogher O’Callaghan, the O’Callaghan, was and is seized of several large territories, in the inquisition recited, in his demesne, as lord and chieftain of Poble-Callaghan, by the Irish custom, time out of mind used; that as O’Callaghan aforesaid is lord of the said country, who is Teig O’Callaghan, and that the said Teig is seized as Tanist by the said custom of several Plowlands in the inquisition mentioned; which also finds, that the custom is further, that every kinsman of the O’Callaghan had a parcel of land to live upon, and yet that no estate passed thereby, but that the lord (who was then Conogher O’Callaghan) and the O’Callaghan for the time being, by custom time out of mind, may remove the said kinsman to other lands; and the inquisition further finds, that O’Callaghan Mac Dermot, Trrelagh O’Callaghan, Teig Mac-Cahir O’Callaghan, Donogho Mac Thomas O’Callaghan, Conogher Genkagh O’Callaghan, Dermot Bane O’Callaghan and Shane Mac-Teig O’Callaghan, were seized of several Plowlands according to the said custom, subject, nevertheless, to certain seigniories and duties payable to the O’Callaghan, and that they were removeable by him to other lands at pleasure.”†

\* We would not be understood to assert that this absolute equality ever existed. It is manifestly inconsistent with any state of human nature, until we reach that low level out of which no civilization can take its rise.

† Ware’s Antiquities.

The religion of the heathen Irish was, as the reader will have collected, an idolatry of a mingled form, to which many successive additions had been made by different races of the same general type. Their chief god was the sun, or Bel the god of the sun.

Of the manners, arts, and knowledge of the first periods of Irish antiquity, we shall here say little, as it has long been the popular portion of the subject, on which most general information abounds, and on which the scepticism of the public is little involved.

The bards were divided into three orders:—the *Filea*, the *Seneachie*, and the *Brehon*. They were historians, legislators, and antiquaries. They enlightened and soothed the privacy of kings and chiefs, roused their valour, and celebrated their deeds in the field.

Poetry was in the highest esteem: it comprised the learning, philosophy, and history, of the primitive forms of society. The poets were rewarded, caressed, and the exercise of their art regulated and restrained, as of the highest importance to the transmission of records, or the extension and perpetuation of fame. But the influence which they acquired over the passions of men was found to be excessive. The poet, and perhaps above all, the Celtic bard, when allowed to become in any way the organ of political feeling, has a tendency to faction, not to be repressed by discretion. The bower “where

“Pleasure sits carelessly smiling at fame”

is his most innocuous sphere, until his head and heart have been enlightened and enlarged by true Christian philosophy. The sword which may haply lurk within the flowery wreath, while its occasional sparkles are seen to glitter through the fragrant interstices, may give spirit, and an undefined charm, to the emanation of grace and sweetness which delights the sense. But to abandon a metaphor, with which an Irish bard of the highest order has supplied us, wo betide the land where the passions of party shall have caught the fever of poetic inspiration! The throne of poetic genius is, in our eyes, sovereign: but the hearts it can move to *action*, are never of the noblest order, and the passions it can awaken best, are not those which conduce most to the furtherance of sober truth, the peace of society, or the happiness of the human race.

Music has, perhaps in every age, had its fountain in the Irish temperament. It may perhaps be admitted as a fact by those who have an extensive knowledge of music, that the most perfect specimens of that part of musical expression which depends on the fine melody of an air, belong to the national music of the Celtic races. The ancient music of the Irish is celebrated by all writers in Irish history; but music and poetry appear to have been inseparably united in the same class of professors.

The introduction of Christianity changed the uses and, with these, the character of both these kindred arts. The Danes crushed them, together with the whole, nearly, of the graces and refinements of the primitive civilization of Ireland. Yet they lingered on still, and being deeply seated in the genius of their race, continued to shoot bright, but fugitive gleams, among the dust and ashes of national decay.



Cormac, the celebrated king and bishop of Munster; was a poet, and the harp of Brian still exists,

“ Though the days of the hero are o’er.”

We shall, hereafter, have occasion to offer a sketch of the history of the Irish bards.

The ancient architecture of Ireland has been too much the subject of controversy, to be discussed in an essay not designed for the purpose of inquiry. There is sufficient reason to conclude, that dwellings were constructed of wood.

“ The subject of my inquiry, here, is only of the dwelling-houses of the ancient Irish, which, as they were neither made of stone nor brick, so neither were they (unless in a few instances) subterraneous caves or dens, like the habitations of the ancient Germans, according to Tacitus, in his description of that people; but they were made of rods or wattles, plastered over with loam or clay, covered with straw or sedge, and seldom made of solid timber. These buildings were either large or small, according to the dignity or quality of the inhabitant, and for the most part were erected in woods, and on the banks of rivers.”\*

Of the handicraft arts of the earlier age of antiquity, we are left to the inferences we can draw from the regulations of the mechanic class, which are such, as to indicate a superior attention to the various manufactures then employed. These chiefly consisted of articles of arms, dress, religious, and perhaps culinary uses. If we give any credit to the descriptions of regal state, and the enumerations of articles contained in the writings of the bards, these uses appear to have been various and splendid.

From the same sources, gleams of manners are to be collected. These are such as might be inferred both from the state and natural genius of the people. But the subject is too merely inferential, to find a place here.

Of their moral knowledge, a highly favourable idea may be collected from an ancient writing, of unquestionable authenticity, by Cormac, the son of Act. Of this too, we shall hereafter give a large specimen.

The traditionary history of ancient *Lernè* may be comprehended in a narrow compass: for, though bards have engrafted on it much poetic invention, it is nothing more in itself than an old table of descents.

It appears probable that the first inhabitants of Ireland were from Britain and Gaul. To this source may be referred the Wernethæ, Firbolgs, Danaans, and Fomorians. Of these the settlements were probably various, and at various periods. The Belgians, who were a Gaulish stock, and having numerous settlements in England, were the principal among these. Their possession continued eighty years, in the form of a pentarchy, under the paramount government of one. At the end of the period here mentioned, the island was invaded by the Tuath de Danaans and Fomorians, who overthrew the Belgians in a pitched battle, and made themselves masters of the whole country.

\* Ware’s Antiquities.



The occupation of this race lasted one hundred and ninety-eight years. Their power was put an end to by the arrival of the Scythian, or Scottish race, a thousand years before the Christian era.

The frequent invasions of Spain, at this period, by the neighbour Eastern nations, seems to account for the migration of this colony, which had been settled in the northern parts of Spain. A race, to which navigation was already known, and which had already been separated, by one migration, from the parent stock, was the more likely, under such circumstances as rendered their settlement insecure, to have recourse to the same means, for the attainment of a settlement more secure, beyond the reach of their persecutors.

According to the most ancient records, collected in the ninth century, by the celebrated king of Munster, and corrected by a careful comparison of all the records and traditions then extant, it would appear, that the Spanish Celts, intent on discovering a new home, sent a chief to obtain intelligence as to the expedience and possibility of a descent on this island. The purpose of this envoy was discovered, and he was put to death; on which the sons of Milesius, roused by resentment to decision, made extensive preparations, and effected the conquest of the country.

From these the Scots of Ireland claim their descent. They were a race possessing the letters and civilization of their parent stock—a fact authenticated beyond question, by the letters, monuments, and even the legends of Irish antiquity, which are the remains of a civilized and lettered race.

Of the various methods which might be used in confirmation of this, the most suitable to the cursory design of this essay, is that afforded by the industry of O'Connor, which we shall here give, as it occurs in his work on Irish history.

The earliest accounts of foreign nations (as illustrated by Sir Isaac Newton), compared with those of Ireland:—

## FOREIGN TESTIMONIES.

## I.

\* An emigrant colony of Iberians, from the borders of the Euxine and Caspian seas, settled anciently in Spain.

## II.

† A colony of Spaniards, by the name of Scots or Scythians, settled in Ireland, in the fourth age of the world.

## III.

‡ The Phœnicians, who first introduced letters and arts into Europe, had an early commerce with the Iberian Spaniards.

\* Rudas ex Appian, in *Æneid.*, lib. ix., ad ver. 582.

† Newton. Buchanan. ‡ Strabo.

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## THE NATIVE FILES.

## I.

\* The Iberian Scots, bordering originally on the Euxine sea, were expelled their country; and, after various adventures, settled ultimately in Spain.

## II.

\* Kinea Senit (the Scots), and the posterity of Ebre Scot (Iberian Scythians), were a colony of Spaniards, who settled in Ireland about a thousand years before Christ.

## III.

\* The ancient Iberian Scots learned the use of letters from a celebrated Phenias, from whom they took the name of Phenii, or Phœnicians.

\* All the statements on this side, are from a very ancient Irish manuscript, called the *Leabar Gabala*.

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Passing over three other similarly compared statements, in which Newton's accounts are remarkably coincident with those of the old Irish historian, we come to the last, which has more especial reference to the statement we have made:—

In the days of the first Hercules, or Egyptian conqueror of Spain, a great drought parched up several countries.—*Newton*.

The conquest of Spain, together with a great drought, forced the Iberian Scuits, or Scots, to fly into Ireland.—*Ogyg. Domest.*, p. 182.

If the genuineness of the old Irish MSS. be allowed, and they are not disputed, these parallels require no comment; but amount to proof, as certain as the records of history can afford, of the facts in which they agree. The only reply of which the argument admits, is, that Newton's accounts are drawn from the old Irish; and this no one will presume to assert.

In these old records of the Fileas, it is granted that there is a mixture of fiction; but it is such as to be easily sifted away from the main line of consistent history which runs through the whole, with far more character of agreement with ancient writers, than the native records of any other existing nation. The fictions are connected by visible links, and traceable coincidences with the truth.

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## I. POLITICAL SERIES.

THE ancient Irish historians, upon authorities of which it is difficult to pronounce the true value, reckon a long line of kings, from Slainge, the son of Dela, to Criomthan Madhnae, in the twelfth year of whose reign the Christian era is supposed to have commenced. Of these accounts it is not improbable, that much that is true forms the nucleus of much fiction, such as would be most likely to mingle itself, from a variety of causes, in the course of traditions handed down from generation to generation, and to be fixed in the form of records by the excusable credulity of their first compilers. But it would be an unpardonable waste of time and expense, to encumber our pages with lives which, whether the persons ever lived or not, are manifestly overlaid with statements which cannot, in possibility, be authentic. Some eminent names among these are; however, liable to recur frequently in Irish history; and are supposed to stand at the fountain-head of those political institutions and arrangements, which are among the most interesting facts of Irish antiquity. Of these a few may be considered as useful preliminaries to our first biographical period.

In the year of the world 3082, Ollamh Fodla is represented as monarch of Ireland. He is said, with much reason, to have been the wisest and most virtuous of the Irish kings. The most useful laws and institutions, which can be traced in the historical records of the ancient Irish, are attributed to his profound design, and to the wisdom of his celebrated council, held in the ancient kingly seat of Tara.

The account of this assembly is the following:—Ollam Fodla, with

the natural forecast of a sagacious legislator, and the zeal of a habitual student of antiquity, observed, that the records of his kingdom were in a state not likely to be durable. The honour of his illustrious ancestors—the events worthy of perpetual note, on which it was his pleasure to dwell—and the glorious name which it was his hope to transmit—all forbade the neglect of any longer leaving the records of his kingdom to the growing obscurity of tradition. To deliver to posterity a faithful digest of the known traditions of former time, and provide for its authentic continuation, he summoned the chiefs, priests, and poets of the nation, to meet in council at Tara.

This assembly he rendered permanent. It was called Feis Feamhrach, and was to meet every third year. Their first business was to collect, clear from error, and digest into order, the mass of extant records and traditions of the kingdom. Next, they were to revise the laws; and, by suitable additions, omission, and alteration, accommodate them to the age. They carefully read over every ancient chronicle, and erased any falsehoods they could detect. A law was agreed on, that any falsifier of history should be degraded from that assembly—be fined, imprisoned, and his works destroyed.

With the assistance of this assembly, Ollamh regulated the different orders of rank amongst its members. He also made laws for the respect of their dignity, and protection of their persons. A still more important law was made for the protection of his female subjects, against the ungallant violence to which there appears to have been a national propensity in that remote age. For this, the offender was to suffer a merited death; to ensure which the more effectually, Ollamh placed the crime beyond the reach of the royal prerogative to pardon.

Keating, who has somewhat strangely fixed the meeting of this parliament before the comparatively modern festival of “All Saints,” describes, with great minuteness of detail, the long but narrow apartment in the palace of Tara, where this parliament used to meet. Before proceeding to business, they were entertained with a magnificent feast; in the description of which, the whole colouring and incidents are manifestly drawn from imaginations filled with the pomps and splendours of British and European customs in the middle ages. After the feast was removed, and the attendants withdrawn, the ancient records were introduced and discussed, as the annalist of the period would now describe it, “over their nuts and claret.” From this assembly is deduced the ancient *Psalter of Tara*; which ancient record, says Keating, “is an invaluable treasure, and a most faithful collection of the Irish antiquities; and whatever account is delivered in any other writings, repugnant to this, is to be deemed of no authority, and a direct imposition upon posterity.”

Ollamh Fodhla reigned, according to O’Conor, six hundred years before the Christian era. The events of his time cannot be considered as within the compass of authentic history; yet his reign itself is sufficiently authenticated by the sure evidence of institutions. He was to Ireland the first legislator; and his name and character stand out from the surrounding obscurity, with the same clear and steady light which has preserved so many of the greater sages, heroes, and bards, of primitive times, to the veneration of all ages.



The political constitution of the country, as settled in this reign, may be generally included under three heads: the institution of the Fes, or legislative assembly; the enactment of a code of laws; and the precise and orderly distribution of the orders of society. The classes were three: the nobility, the druids and learned men, and the common people. In an age in which literature was still confined to a privileged class, it is easy at once to perceive the impossibility of long preserving the balance required for the stability of any form of government. The main disadvantage, however, of this ancient constitution consisted in the crown being elective. Of this the consequence is noticed by O'Connor. "It is evident that such elections could seldom be made with sufficient moderation. Factions were formed; the prevalent party carried it; the losing party collected all their strength to set aside the monarch duly elected; and accordingly most of our princes died with swords in their hands."

It is, perhaps, also not unimportant to observe, that the frame of government, thus described, is stamped with the authentic features of the common type of primitive institutions. The system of a balanced combination of orders is itself, not to look further, a sufficient indication of a forward stage in the progress of civilization; and should the mere idea of such a system be found extant in really ancient records, or should it, with sufficient distinctness, be traceable in old customs and traditions, it ceases to be worth the sceptic's while to contend. His proposition must be reduced to something very frivolous, before it can be argued with any clearness.

### Hugony.

THREE hundred and fifty-two years elapsed from the reign of Ollamh—and some dozen kings, of whom many, by their adventures, as related by the ancient poets, might be classed with the "Three Calendars, Princes' Sons," and other heroes of Eastern poesy, followed each other over the bloody stage of an elective monarchy, the prize of arms—when Hugony, or Ugaine, a descendant of the royal line of Heremon, obtained the crown, by killing the reigning monarch, Reachta Rigdhearg; and if precedent might be pleaded in its favour, the claim was legitimate. Of these murders, most might be represented as bearing the character of retributive justice: but Reachta had ascended the throne by the murder of a female sovereign, who is described as the delight of her subjects, and the terror of her enemies. Of this worthy lady it is recorded that she beat the horses of Connor, king of Ulster, in a race, and was delivered of twins at the winning-post. Irritated by her sufferings, and by the cruelty which had forced or persuaded her to incur this trying risk, she cursed the men of Ulster, who were, in consequence, for many years afflicted with similar pains!

Ugony strengthened the monarchy, by the important measure of dividing the kingdom into provinces. The immediate disorders which led to this useful arrangement are not of any interest, further than the light their history might throw on its necessity. But the history of so remote a period, with whatever degree of probability we may trace

its outline, is by no means as clear in the details. The ancient poets relate a story of the oppressive exactions of his twenty-five sons, which at length drew forth a strong remonstrance from his subjects. Whether to remedy this evil, as is said (or sung), or to facilitate the levy of taxes, Hugony assembled his council, and by their advice divided the kingdom into twenty-five provinces, which he divided among the princes. By this distribution the revenue was ascertained, the inferior jurisdictions controlled and limited, and the royal power entrenched against the undue preponderance of provincial princes. To measure truly the magnitude of such a change, it must be noticed, that it was a violent interference with the rights of the five powerful princes who had hitherto held the five provinces into which the island had been till then divided. But Hugony was a warlike monarch, and a conqueror by sea and land, and in his reign the powers of the monarchy seem to have been extended. Another feature curiously illustrative of the character and position of this monarch, was his attempt to set aside all rival claims, and to have the succession fixed in his own family. The attempt had the usual success; it was easy to exact compliance, and impossible to carry into effect a law, which was to fix the bounds of lawless usurpation. In this instance, as in most such, the provision failed; and on his death, the stream of succession soon regained its blood-stained and uncertain course.

### Eochaidh Feidlioch.

ABOUT a hundred years before the Christian era, this prince becomes entitled to notice, by the injudicious measure which altered the division mentioned in the previous article, and restored the provinces to their ancient dangerous strength and extent.

### Tuathal.

A. D. 79.

THIS king is memorable for another remarkable alteration in the divisions of the monarchy. He is also distinguished from those we have as yet noticed, by having reigned within the Christian era; his claim is further recommended by measures for the improvement of the national records.

He “made his way to the throne through a sea of blood, and established a new constitution on the ruins of a monarchical oligarchy.”\* The historical importance of this monarch’s reign is sufficient to demand a little more expansion than we should have thought necessary in any of the previous reigns. But the reader’s attention is the more specially invited to the narration of incidents which explain many of those constantly recurring allusions to ancient institutions, which perplex the recital of most of our historians of the ensuing periods, and

\* O’Conor, Dissertations.

encumber their historic style with a confusion and obscurity, which none but the most attentive reader can unriddle.

The restoration of the pentarchy quickly produced disorders similar to those which a similar oligarchy will be seen to have produced in later periods. The violence of competition, ever attendant on elective monarchies, grew in the immediately preceding reigns to an enormous height, and the sufferings of the people became intolerable. Cairbre Catcan overturned the government, and for a time held the sceptre with a despotic grasp. His death only renewed the sanguinary contention for power. The provincial kings set up the tyrant Elim, through whom they jointly oppressed the land. Sufferance had reached its limit:—the inferior chiefs who shared in the oppressions of the people, excited and gave direction to their resentment. They sent an invitation to Tuathal, in Scotland, where he had grown to maturity, and received a careful education, his mother Eithne, having been daughter to the Scottish king.

Tuathal consented, came over, and, after a sanguinary struggle, obtained the throne of his ancestors. His first act was the convention of the council of the nation, and obtaining a law to secure himself by the exclusion of other families. He remedied the grievances of an oppressive oligarchy, by an expedient which increased his own power, and weakened that of the formidable Five: taking from each a large district, he united the portions thus secured into a province for himself—a measure which insured a considerable increase of wealth and power to the monarchy. He established in each of these an administrative centre for the transaction of the several departments of his government:—Religion at Tlachtga\* near Drogheda; internal commerce at Usneach in the county of Westmeath; at the palace of Tailtean, matrimonial alliances, from which, there is reason to think, he drew a considerable tax; Tara was the place for the great assembly of the Fes.

Tuathal, by his marriage with a daughter of the king of Finland, commenced or continued the intercourse of this island with the northern races who inhabited the Baltic coasts. This marriage led to an increased intercourse, and to subsequent alliances which were, at a remote period, to terminate in a long and ruinous struggle, under which the power of the monarchy, and the civilization of the country, were to sink into ruin, and nearly into oblivion.

The imposition of the celebrated Boromean tribute gives Tuathal another claim on historic recollection. It is said to have been exacted from the province of Leinster, as an atonement for the death of his two daughters, who lost their lives in consequence of the most brutal insult from the king of Leinster. As the story runs, this provincial king being married to Darine, one of Tuathal's daughters, pretended that she was dead, and thus obtained possession of the other, whose name was Fithir. When Fithir arrived at the palace of Eochaidh, she was struck with consternation by the appearance of her sister Darine: the sisters at once discovered the dishonour and injury they had each sustained, and their grief was sufficient to put an end to

\* This was the place where the sacred fire was kindled.



their lives. Tuathal levied his forces, and representing the baseness of Eochaidh's conduct, to the other princes, a universal sense of indignation was excited; and so numerous was the army thus obtained, that the king of Leinster submitted, and entreated to be allowed to compromise the matter. Tuathal, either having the peace of his kingdom at heart, or as is far more likely, a prudent disposition to avail himself of every occasion for the furtherance of his scheme of political aggrandizement, consented to withdraw his army, on obtaining a pledge of consent from the king and people of Leinster, to pay a stipulated tribute every second year, to him and his successors for ever. The proposal was agreed to, and the tribute appointed was as follows, in the words of an old poet:—

“ To Tuathal and the monarch's after him :  
Threescore hundred of the fairest cows,  
And threescore hundred ounces of pure silver,  
And threescore hundred mantles, richly woven,  
And threescore hundred of the fattest hogs,  
And threescore hundred of the largest sheep,  
And threescore hundred cauldrons, strong and polished.”

This tax was known by the name of *Boroimhe Laighean* (the tribute of Leinster), and is said to have been paid to forty Irish monarchs, from Tuathal to *Fianaetha*.

Tuathal caused a general revision of the annals of the monarchy, with a view to amend the errors which had latterly been supposed to have been caused by the unconstitutional influence of the provincial oligarchy, who had so long kept the nation in disorder. Such a solemn act was also necessary for the purpose of fixing their authority, and might be considered as supplying, in a minor degree, the evidence imparted to religious documents, by the solemn publicity of a regular perusal, in the presence of the people, at stated times and places.

Amongst other wise public measures, Tuathal is said to have contrived the important arrangement of classifying the mechanics of the country into companies, governed by their committees, and, as nearly as possible, resembling the corporate institutions of modern burghs.

This great monarch was, with the common fate of his predecessors, slain by *Mail*, who succeeded.

It is not our design to pursue the long line of princes who followed, to the introduction of Christianity, but simply to note, as we glance down this long line, such traditions as may be useful for the understanding of Irish history, or interesting to reasonable curiosity.

From *Rosa*, the eldest son of *Cathair More*, is said to be traced the family of *O'Connor Faly*, or *Failghe*. Many other well known Irish families are similarly traced from the same stock. Concerning these old genealogies, we cannot pretend to have had either the means or the will to trace them: we see, however, no sound reason for throwing a doubt on them. We are yet inclined to think that, like all our ancient records, while they are in the main not false, they have yet been subject to the singularly fantastic freaks of Irish enthusiasm and fancy.

*Conn* of the hundred battles, reigned, fought his hundred fights,

and was assassinated early in the second century; his reign is, however, rendered memorable by a territorial arrangement, which long continues to be a subject of allusion in Irish history. A war arose between Modha Nuagat, and some other princes, for the throne of Munster. Of these latter, one named Aongus, applied for aid to the monarch Conn. Conn complied, and supplied the prince with 15,000 men; but the laurels won in ninety battles, were torn from his brow in ten sanguinary defeats, and in the course of this dreadful war, the conqueror Modha obtained possession of half the kingdom. From this conquest, the southern portion of the country still retains a title from the conqueror's name. His acquisition became the basis of a regular partition, of the boundaries of which we are happily enabled to transcribe an interesting account, from the most intelligent mind, and graphic pen, that has ever attempted to sketch the localities of Ireland.

"Proceeding onwards for a mile or two, from Clonard, the road reaches a long continuous line of gravel hills, along which it runs for a considerable distance, and which is, perhaps, one of the oldest lines of road in Europe. These long lines of gravel hills are, all through Ireland, called *aigirs*, or properly *eiscirs*; this one is that which formed, in ancient times, the grand division of Ireland. I think I could trace this *eiscir*, from Dublin bay to the green hills of Crumlin, and so along by the *Eskir* of Lucan, then south of the Liffey near Celbridge, and so across the river near Clane, onwards by Donadea, until it strikes the line of road we are now travelling; then bending southwards of the hill of Croghan, until near Phillipstown, another line of road takes the advantage of its elevation, to run between two bogs; then passing through the barony of Garrycastle, in the King's county, in a very distinct line, it strikes the Shannon, in the exact centre of the island, at Clonmacnois. This very curious natural *vallum*, just as distinct as the great Roman wall dividing south Britain from Caledonia, was adopted as the dividing line between the two parts of Ireland, and was called *Eiscir Riada*, extending from Dublin to Galway, the northern portion being called Leath Con, and the southern Leath Mogha."\*

Modha went the natural way of Irish kings, being murdered in his bed by Conn of the hundred fights; and Conn himself soon after met the like fate. King Conary, who followed, may be mentioned as the ancestor of a Caledonian line of kings. He married the daughter of king Conn, and had by her a son, Cairbre Riada, who, in the middle of the third century, led a colony into Scotland, and founded, in Argyleshire, a settlement, which is reasonably concluded to have had from him its name of Dalriada. His descendant, in the ninth century, Kenneth Mac Alpine, was the first sovereign of Scotland. Through him, O'Connor, with seeming facility, traces the descent of the present line of British kings. The attempt is at least curious.

"Kineth Mac Alpine, the first king of Scotland (as known by its modern dimensions), was father-in-law to two of our monarchs of Ireland, AODH FINLIATH and FLANN-SIONNA. From that conquering

\* Dublin Penny Journal, 151.

prince, his present majesty is descended, in the thirty-first generation, as appears by the following authentic table:—

	A. D.		A. D.
Kineth I.....	850	Margery.....	
Constantine.....	862	Robert Stuart II.....	1370
Donald.....	895	Robert Stuart III.....	1395
Malcolm I.....	946	James.....	1406
Kineth.....	971	James.....	1437
Malcolm II.....	1004	James.....	1460
Beatrice.....		James.....	1488
Donchad, R. S.....	1034	James.....	1514
Malcolm III. R. S.....	1058	Mary.....	1542
David, R. S.....	1125	James.....	1565
Henry, Earl of Huntingdon and Prince of Scotland.....		Elizabeth.....	
David, Earl of Huntingdon.....		Sophia.....	
Isabel, Countess of Annandale..		George I.....	1714
Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick and Lord of Annandale.....		George II.....	1727
Robert I.....	1306	Frederick, Prince of Wales .....	
		George III.....	1760"

*Note to O'Conor's Dissertations on Ireland.*

Cairbre also founded another principality, under the name of Dalriada, in the county of Antrim, and, for some descents, his posterity succeeded to both. For a time, the Scottish colony was broken, by the military successes of the Pictish inhabitants of the neighbouring lowland districts; but, in the beginning of the 6th century, they regained their independence, with an increase of prosperity, and obtained the sovereignty of North Britain. From this period till the eleventh century, the line of Dalriadic princes continued to fill the Scottish throne.

## Oilioll Olum.

OUR plan of passing through this period, by a selection of those names which derive interest from frequent recurrence, or from their radical connexion with the important events of after ages, leads us next to the notice of Oilioll Olum, the king of Munster, and the founder of that singular law of alternate succession, which was preserved for so many centuries, the cause of much weal and wo to Ireland.

Of the adventures of Oilioll, in peace and war, many strange tales are told; but when all is deducted from these which must be referred to poetry, there is but little to swell the memoir of a monarch, the most eventful of whose actions is the last: the will, which bequeathed intrigue for power, contest, emulation, and expectancy, to his remote descendants. Oilioll was a poet, and the author of some verses, which Keating calls pathetic, but which, in the version of his translator, might more truly be called burlesque. Oilioll had his name, according to some old writers, from certain deformities, of which the account is simply absurd, yet may be considered, in some degree, as giving a reflection of the manners and morals of the period: a species of information to be gleaned from the characteristic spirit of all these fictions.



A lady, who had suffered from Oilioll the deepest injury a modest female can suffer, obtained satisfaction for the outrage, by biting off the royal ear, while Oilioll slept. Oilioll, roused by the pain, started up, and seizing on a spear, struck it through the unfortunate lady with such force, that he bent the point against a stone. Drawing forth the spear from the writhing victim of his worst passions, he very composedly attempted to straighten its point between his teeth: the spear had been poisoned, and the effect was to blacken his teeth and corrupt his breath.

The following is the history of the famous will. Oilioll's eldest son was slain in battle, on which he devised his throne of Munster to Cormac Cas, the second. Shortly after, the widow of the eldest (Eogan More) brought forth a son, who, in the direct course of descent, was the next rightful heir. Oilioll, unwilling, perhaps, to disappoint altogether the expectations which he had, by his will, excited in Cormac, and equally reluctant to disinherit the posterity of his eldest son, altered his will to meet this embarrassment. By the new arrangement, he settled, that Cormac should, according to the provision of the former will, enjoy the Munster sovereignty for life; on his death, it was to pass to Fiachadh Muilleathan, the son of Eogan More, or his next heir then living; and again, after the demise of Eogan or his heir, it was to revert to the lineal heir of Cormac, then living; after whose demise, it was to revert again to the living heir of Eogan's line; and thus it was to pass from line to line in a perpetual succession of alternate remainders. There seems also to have been, in this will, a solemn injunction to the descendants of Oilioll, that the combination of royal families thus established, should preserve this alternate inheritance without quarrels or disputes. The fear which might have suggested this desire was but reasonable, but the event was scarcely to be looked for. So great was the reverence of his descendants for Oilioll, that for some ages they continued to transmit the sovereignty in this alternate descent, without any contest. The seeming improbability of this will be much diminished, by considering the powerful sanction which such rights must have derived, from the jealous guardianship and time-established feelings of two extensive and powerful families, thus held together from generation to generation by the same tie of honour and interest. The same customary sense which entrenches the right of primogeniture, would, in the course of a few descents, equally guard the alternate right; and the indication of a desire to violate it, would be as shocking to the sense, as if a younger brother were to supplant the elder in his rights. The violator of such a right would have to outbrave the infamy of scattering discord between all the members of two strongly united houses, and defrauding a family of its honours.

Such was the cause and nature of this circumstance, so influential on the after course of Irish history.

Of the posterity of Oilioll Olum, some highly interesting particulars are authenticated by the industry of antiquaries. From Eogan More, the eldest, is lineally derived the MacCarthy's, of whom the earls of Clancarty are the immediate representatives. "Out of the wrecks of time and fortune," writes the venerable O'Connor in his *Dissertations*, "Donogh, the late earl of Clancarthy, had reserved

in his family an estate of ten or twelve thousand pounds a-year; a fair possession of more than two thousand years' standing, the oldest perhaps in the world, but forfeited in the days of our fathers."

From Cormac Cas, the second son, and first inheritor of Oilioll, descend the Dalcassian family, of which Brian Boromhe, the conqueror of the field of Clontarf, is the most illustrious link, and the earls of Thomond the existing representatives in modern times. Of this branch, also, there is an affecting record belonging to the history of our own times. O'Connor mentions that Henry, "the late earl of Thomond, was head of this name, and descended, in twenty lineal generations, from Brian Boromy, king of Ireland in the year 1014. This nobleman left his estate, no inconsiderable one, but small in comparison to the great possessions of his ancestors, to an English family; alienated the tenure of fifteen hundred years, leaving his bare title only to —— O'Brian, lord Clare, now lieutenant-general in the service of his most Christian majesty."

From Cian, the third son of Oilioll, have descended, amongst other families, the O'Haras, lords of Tyrawly, &c., and the O'Garas, lords of Coolavin, who forfeited their extensive possessions in the county of Sligo, in the troubles of 1641.

## Cormac—Monarch.

A. D. 213.

EARLY in the third century, Cormac, the grandson of Conary the Second, ascended the throne. His character and acts are allowed to hold a place of the highest order among kings; and in his reign it is not improbable that ancient Ireland had reached her *maximum* of national prosperity. The accounts, too, of his reign have all the authenticity which the knowledge and literature of his age could impart to its annals; and it is a part of his glory to have provided for the preservation of history from the corruptions, which it was at that time peculiarly in danger of contracting, from its dangerous alliance with poetry. The bards were also the chief historians of the age, and in the execution of their office, did not always sufficiently preserve the distinction between the recording and the celebration of an event. Hence, it has happened, that the most illustrious of our kings and heroes have had a veil of exaggeration thrown over their lives, which makes them impress with a sense of incredulity, minds unversed save in a present order of things. Actions natural and consistent with the order of things to which they belonged, require now no help from poetic invention to give them the semblance of fiction: a little exaggeration is enough to impart a grotesque air to manners foreign to our habits, and render ridiculous, actions and opinions which a little more consideration, and a little more knowledge of antiquity, would have looked for as simply essential to the record. It is thus that the details of the life of this illustrious prince, and of his general, Fionn, are tinged with a colouring of which the sober-minded biographer would gladly divest them, were not the process fatal to all interest, and even to the moral and



social character of the person and his times. The annalist may evade the difficulty, and give to the dry and spiritless *caput mortuum* of a name and date, all the verisimilitude of an almanac; but we are compelled to attempt at least the semblance of personality, and must not be false to our office because our heroes of reality have at times a strong resemblance to the heroes of romance.

The ancient historians of his day relate the insult and injury sustained by Cormac, when he was expelled from Ulster, at the instigation of Fergus, the monarch of Ireland, in 212; his resentment, and the prompt activity with which he formed powerful alliances, and collected an army to the field of *Brugh macanoig*. Having applied to a grandson of the famous Oilioll Olum, he received from him an assurance of support, on the condition of a pledge to settle on him a tract of land, after he had gained his objects. Cormac agreed, and his ally made immediate preparations to assist him, with whatever force he could raise. He also advised Cormac to secure the assistance of Lughaidh Laga, who was reputed to be the greatest warrior of his day. Lughaidh appears to have been at the time leading a life of solitary concealment: but his retreat was known to Thady, who was grandson to Oilioll Olum, the brother of Lughaidh Laga. Lughaidh was a person of a gloomy, stern, and impracticable temper, of irresistible personal strength, and subject to fits of capricious and ungovernable fury. He had slain in battle, Art the father of our hero; it was, therefore, a trial of self-command and courage, for a youth whose first appearance would seem to announce the presence of a foe, to face this moody man of violence in his savage retreat. By the directions of his new ally, Cormac entered the vicinity of Atharla, and with an anxious but steady heart threaded the forests and gloomy defiles around the base of the rugged Slieve Grott. He arrived at length at the lowly hut, where Lughaidh dwelt, apart from the ways of man. On entering, the first object which met his eye, was the gigantic frame of the redoubted warrior stretched across the floor: his stern and massive features were turned to the light, but he was asleep. Cormac's ready intellect perceived that the incident was favourable to his purpose; he gently touched the grim veteran with his lance. Lughaidh awaking, demanded who it was who presumed to disturb him with a freedom so insolent. Cormac told his name. As he must have anticipated, the impression was favourable. Lughaidh immediately observed, that Cormac might justly have slain him as he slept, in revenge for the death of his father. Cormac answered, that he thought something was due to him on that score, and that he came to seek his compensation in the friendly alliance of Lughaidh, against his enemy, Fergus. "The compensation which is your due," answered the warrior, "shall be the head of Fergus." Having thus come to a friendly understanding, they proceeded together to Ely, where the preparations of Thady were now considerably advanced.

The ancient bards describe, as poets will, the memorable battle of Criona chin Comar; and relate, with the circumstantial minuteness of accurate observation, the incidents, which it was impossible for them to have known with certainty. But the main particulars are consistent with probability; and Cormac's known veneration for historic truth,



in some degree vouches for the main fidelity of the traditions of his life. By the advice of Thady, Cormac stood upon a hill which overlooked the field, and saw the battle rage underneath, over the plain, without any advantage on either side for many hours. The desperate valour of Lughaidh at last turned the fortune of the day: he slew the monarch Fergus, and his two brothers, and bore their heads in ferocious exultation from the field. The victory was purchased with a heavy loss of men: the Ultonians, seven times compelled to give ground—each time still rallied, and came on again with the fierce impetuosity of desperation: but the valour of Lughaidh was not to be resisted, and Thady, at length breaking through their centre, prevented the possibility of repairing their scattered array. They soon gave way in the wild disorder of flight; and were pursued with tremendous slaughter from Criona to Glaise an Eara.

Cormac, upon this event, possessed himself of the kingdom. We have here omitted a strange story of the stratagem of Cormac to avoid the first effect of Lughaidh's reckless ferocity, which, when his blood was heated, made him dangerous to friend and foe alike—how he disguised a servant in his own clothes, to receive the warrior each time when he emerged from the tumult to exhibit, as he slew them in succession, the heads of his enemies. Having first slain, as the tale runs, the two younger brothers, he fiercely asked of the supposed Cormac if the head which he exhibited were the head of Fergus, king of Ireland; receiving a reply in the negative, he rushed again into the fight; but when, on his third return, the same question met with an affirmative reply, his insolent exultation could no longer be controlled: giving way to the fury of his heart, he flung the gory head at the servant, who was killed on the spot. Still less to be admitted is the story of a base and perfidious attempt of Cormac on the life of his efficient friend Thady. But true or false, the romance of his marriage with Eithne, the foster daughter of Buiciodh Brughach cannot be omitted.

Buiciodh was a wealthy Leinster grazier, renowned for carrying the ancient Irish virtue of munificent hospitality to a height unknown in the palaces of kings. But with the generous imprudence which so commonly qualifies this virtue, his expenditure approached too nearly the limits of his fortune. His guests too, either conceiving his riches to be exhaustless, or, as is not unfrequently the feeling of the spendthrift's guest, not thinking it necessary to spare one who never spared himself, gave him the most prompt assistance on the road to ruin: the Leinster gentry, not content with the free use and abuse of the most profuse hospitality, seldom left his habitation without carrying off whatever they could take. The departure of the guest was not unlike the plunderer's retreat: the horses and herds of the good host were carried off, without even the trouble of asking leave. Buiciodh's vast wealth was soon exhausted by this double outlet, to which no fortune could be equal. Finding himself at last reduced to a state bordering on poverty, he retired privately from the scene of his past prosperity and splendour, with his wife, his foster child Eithne, and the poor remains of a princely fortune. Leaving home by night, he travelled until he came to a forest in Meath, not far from Cormac's palace. Here, in the resolution to pass his remaining days in peace-

ful retirement from an ungrateful world, he built a small forest cabin for his small family.

It chanced one day that Cormac rode in the direction of the spot; and was attracted by the appearance of a cabin standing by itself in the solitude of forests. Approaching, he saw a young maiden of rare and consummate beauty milking the cows: as he stood concealed among the boughs, he observed, with admiration approaching to wonder, the grace of her action, and the neatness and skill with which she discharged her duty. Retiring with the milk, Eithne, for it was she, came forth again, and showed the same care and nice judgment in the execution of the remaining offices of her household occupation. Cormac now came forward, and with the prompt and facile adroitness which belonged to his character, calmed the fears of the startled maid, and entered into conversation on her rural employments. Professing ignorance and curiosity, he questioned her with an air of simple seriousness on the separation of thin milk and rich strippings, and was surprised at her preference of sound rushes to rotten, and clean water to brackish. In answer to his numerous questions, Eithne told him that her cares were given to one to whom she was bound by the ties of gratitude and duty: but when she mentioned the name of her foster father, Cormac at once remembered the princely herdsman of Leinster, and knew that Eithne, daughter of Dunluing, stood before him. The incident led to the usual termination of romantic story. Cormac married Eithne, and endowed Buiciodh with an ample territory near the palace of Tara, with plenty of cattle, and all other wealth of the age; so that, as Keating, in the true spirit of a storyteller, says, he was happy for the rest of his life.

The civil history of Cormac's reign is marked by no great or singular events, to distinguish it from the reigns of other ancient princes, whose names we have seen no sufficient reason to introduce: battles of policy and revenge occasion violations of every moral law, and common incidents, attributed to miraculous agency, chequer the record in a fair proportion; but this prince is distinguished in our most ancient annals for the magnificence of his establishment, the taste which he displayed in the cultivation of learning and the arts, the wisdom of his laws, and the excellence of his writings. For wisdom and splendour he was the Solomon of Ireland: the magnificent palace of Miodh-chuarta,\* which he built for his residence, and the works of moral and political wisdom which he left, appear to give aptness to

\* The following curious notices will be read with some interest:—

“Moidh-chnarta was the middle house of the palace of Tara. The splendour of this palace is described in an old Irish poem, beginning *Temhair na righ Rath Chormaic*, Temor of kings, the seat of Cormac; but lest this poem might be considered a bardic forgery, we shall give the following extract from Johnston's translation of an old Scandinavian MS., the historical testimony of which must be received as unquestionable. *In hoc regno etiam locus est Themor dictus olim primaria urbs regiaque sedes*, &c., &c.

*In Eдитори quopiam Civitatis loco splendidum et tantum non Dædaleum Castellum Rex et intra Castellum septa. Palatium structurâ et nitore superbum habuit ubi solebat litibus incolarum componendis præesse.*—*Ante Celt Scando*, last page.

In this kingdom, also, there is a place called Themor, formerly the chief city, and the royal residence, &c., &c.

In a more elevated part of this city, the king had a splendid and almost Dædalean



the parallel. An eminent poet of the period, describes, with the authority of an eye-witness, a structure of 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height, entered by 14 gates, and containing a vast and splendid hall, illuminated by an immense lanthorn of costly material and curious art, with sleeping apartments furnished with 150 beds. His household was worthy of this building: 150 of the most distinguished champions of the kingdom, surrounded his person, and 1050 of his best soldiers formed the guard of his palace and its precincts. On state occasions, his table was loaded with a rich and gorgeous service of cups and goblets of massive gold and silver. The superior officers of his household, according to established custom, were a judge, a druid, a physician, a poet, an antiquary, a musician, and three stewards. In addition to these, there was always a person of high accomplishments and noble birth, to be a companion to the monarch in his vacant hours. Amongst these may be distinguished some offices characteristic of the period. The druid was engaged in the duties and rites of religion; he offered sacrifices, and foretold events. The poet committed the deeds of famous men to verse, of which abundant specimens are yet preserved. The antiquary had still more important duties to perform: his care was to preserve and continue those genealogical tables of kings and their queens, which were then considered to be so important. It was also his office to correct and ascertain the pedigrees of the different orders, and register them in the public records.

Under this monarch, the annals of the kingdom were elaborately revised. Three academies which he founded (it is said) in Tara, were severally assigned to the cultivation of law, literature, and military science. He was himself a bard, a lawyer, and philosopher; of each of which capacities unquestioned proofs remain, in fragments which have been preserved of his writings.

During the reign of Cormac, the military power of the kingdom seems to have attained its highest point of perfection, under the care of Fionn, his celebrated son-in-law, and the commander of his armies. As we cannot pass this celebrated warrior, who is equally renowned in fiction and authentic record, we shall reserve the history of the famous Irish militia for his memoir.

Cormac is still more honourably distinguished for the profound capacity which, in the midst of a gross superstition, obtained views of a pure system of Theism: he would, probably, if not prevented by the course of events, have been the founder of a nobler system of theology, and more worthy of the Divine Being, than the idolatrous polytheism of his druids. But the opposition raised by his attempts at the reformation of a creed, the source of power and profit to these pagan priests, was dangerous in its result: they, by their too predominant influence over minds by nature prone to superstition, raised a dangerous spirit of discontent among the chiefs, and involved his reign in war.

His military operations were therefore numerous, but they were castle, within the precincts of which he had a splendid palace, superb in its structure, where he was accustomed to preside in settling the disputes of its inhabitants.—*Dublin Penny Journal*, pp. 213, and 231.



successful. The Munster kings sustained many defeats from his forces. Connaught also, and Ulster, gave him trouble, and experienced his superiority.

The reign of Cormac continued for forty years, and is said to have owed its termination to his meeting with the loss of an eye, in some attack which was made upon his palace. The fact is explained by an ancient Irish law, according to which the throne of Ireland could not be held by a person who should happen to be defective in any of his members. This seems to receive some confirmation from a parallel regulation in the ancient customs of Persia. "In the law thus enforced," writes Mr Moore, "may be observed another instance, rather remarkable, of coincidence with the rules and customs of the East. In a like manner we read, in the Persian history, that the son of the monarch Kobad, having, by a similar accident, lost the use of an eye, was, in consequence, precluded, by an old law of the country, from all right of succession to the throne."\* In consequence of this accident, he resigned the crown to Cairbré his son, and retired to pass the remainder of his days in a retirement made cheerful by literature, and famous by the works which the leisure of his age produced. Some of the writers who notice his life, assert that he was one of the first converts to Christianity. The grounds of this affirmation are not very satisfactory; though we should be inclined to conclude, from the very slight information which exists on the subject, that Christianity had obtained a precarious and difficult footing in Ireland during the first century of the Christian era; and we must admit that the tenets of Cormac's philosophy, were such as might lead to his conversion, or even resulted from some previous and secret acquaintance with the sacred books. These were in the highest degree likely to find their way into the library of a literary monarch, whose fame was spread abroad among the most civilized countries of his age.

Cormac, in his last retirement, wrote a volume of advice to his son. This, or its substance, epitomized by a later hand, still exists. The cast of the phraseology proves it to be very ancient. The form of a dialogue between Cormac, son of Art, and his son Cairbré, is preserved; and the precepts are remarkable for their point, sententious brevity, and the characteristic tone of a primitive age and manners. We subjoin a specimen of extreme interest, translated from the original Irish by Mr O'Donovan. Of Cormac's *Legal Essay*, an imperfect copy remains in the library of the Dublin University:—

"O grandson of Con! O Cormac!" said Cairbré, "what is good for a king?"

"That is plain," said Cormac. "It is good for him to have patience without debate; self-government without anger; affability without haughtiness; diligent attention to history; strict observance of covenants and agreements; strictness, mitigated by mercy, in the execution of the laws; peace with his districts; lawful wages of vassalage; justice in decisions; performance of promises; hosting with justice; protection of his frontiers; honouring the *nemed*s (nobles); respect to the *filcas*; adoration of the great God.

\* History of Ireland.

“Boundless charity; fruit upon trees; fish in rivers; fertile land; to invite ships; to import valuable jewels across the sea; to purchase and bestow raiment; vigorous swordsmen for protecting his territories; war outside of his own territories;\* to attend the sick; to discipline his soldiers; lawful possessions; let him suppress falsehood; let him suppress bad men; let him pass just judgments; let him criminate lying; let him support each person; let him love truth; let him enforce fear; let him perfect peace; much of metheglin and wine; let him pronounce just judgments of light; let him speak all truth, for its through the truth of a king that God gives favourable seasons.”

“O grandson of Con! O Cormac!” said Cairbré, “what are the just laws of a king?”

“I shall relate to thee my knowledge of the law by which the world is governed: suppression of great evils; destroying robbers; exaltation of goodness; prohibition of theft; reconciliation of neighbours; establishing peace; keeping the laws; not to suffer unjust law; condemning bad men; giving liberty to good men; protecting the just restricting the unjust,” &c. &c.

“O grandson of Con! O Cormac!” said Cairbré, “what is good for the welfare of a country?”

“That is plain,” said Cormac: “frequent convocation of sapient and good men to investigate its affairs, to abolish each evil, and retain each wholesome institution; to attend to the precepts of the elders; let every senad (assembly of the elders) be convened according to law; let the law be in the hands of the nobles; let chieftains be upright, and unwilling to oppress the poor; let peace and friendship reign—mercy and good morals—union and brotherly love; heroes without haughtiness—sternness to enemies, friendship to friends; generous compensations; just sureties; just decisions, just witnesses; mild instruction; respect for soldiers; learning every art and language; pleading with knowledge of the Fenechas (the Brehon law); decision with evidence; giving alms, charity to the poor; sureties for covenants; lawful covenants; to hearken to the instruction of the wise, to be deaf to the mob; to purge the laws of the country of all their evils, &c. &c. All these are necessary for the welfare of a country.”

“O grandson of Con! O Cormac!” said Cairbré, “what are the duties of a prince at a banquetting house?”

“A prince on Saman’s day (1st of November), should light his lamps, and welcome his guests with clapping of hands; procure comfortable seats; the cup-bearers should be respectable, and active in the distribution of meat and drink; let there be moderation of music; short stories; a welcoming countenance; *faílte* for the learned; pleasant conversations, &c. These are the duties of the prince, and the arrangements of the banquetting house.”

“For what qualifications is a king elected over countries, tribes, and people?”

“From the goodness of his shape and family; from his experience and wisdom; from his prudence and magnanimity; from his eloquence; bravery in battle; and from the numbers of his friends.”

\* Tigernach informs us, that the large fleet of Cormac Mac Art cruised in the Tyrhenian seas for three years.

“What are the qualifications of a prince?”

“Let him be vigorous, easy of access, and affable; let him be humble, but majestic; let him be without personal blemish; let him be a (filea) a hero, a sage; let him be liberal, serene, and good-hearted; mild in peace, fierce in war; beloved by his subjects; discerning, faithful, and patient; righteous and abstemious; let him attend the sick; let him pass just judgments; let him support each orphan; let him abominate falsehood; let him love truth; let him be forgetful of evil, mindful of good; let him assemble numerous meetings; let him communicate his secrets to few; let him be cheerful with his intimates; let him appear splendid as the sun, at the banquet in the house of Midehurta, (Mecoorta, *i. e.* the middle house of Tara); let him convene assemblies of the nobles; let him be affectionate and intelligent; let him depress evils; let him esteem every person according to his close sureties; let him be sharp but lenient in his judgments and decisions. These are the qualifications by which a chieftain should be esteemed.”\*

One more of these sentences should be given, as its sense is biographical.

“O descendant of Con! what was thy deportment when a youth?”

“I was cheerful at the banquet of *Miodh-chuarta*, fierce in battle, vigilant and circumspect; kind to friends; a physician to the sick; merciful to the weak; stern towards the headstrong. Although possessed of knowledge, I was inclined to taciturnity; although strong, I was not haughty; I mocked not the old, although I was young; I was not vain, although I was valiant; when I spoke of a person in his absence, I praised, not defamed him; for it is by these customs that we are known to be courteous and civilized.”†

The *Psalter of Tara* was compiled by order of this prince. His death is thus mentioned by Tigernach: “Cormac, grandson of Con of the hundred battles, died at Clothy, on Tuesday, the bone of a salmon sticking in his throat; or it was the siabra that killed him, at the instigation of Maeleinn the Druid, because Cormac did not believe in him.”

The evidence of a high, though peculiar, civilization in this monarch's reign, admits of no reasonable doubt. And the history of the island assumes a character of the clearest authenticity; that is to say, so far as actual records, pretending to so remote an origin, are attainable. In these, it is always easy, at a glance, to distinguish the truth from its ornament of fiction. Though the zeal of scepticism may find enough of chronological disagreement, and variation of statement, for the purpose of objection; yet objections, on such grounds, are but too apt to commit the oversight of objecting to a particular history, that which is common to all. The difficulties, in reality, are those arising from a neglected language, and from chasms which mistaken zeal, and a barbarous policy have caused, by the destruction of ancient manuscripts. Taking these facts into account, it may be fearlessly affirmed, that the well-treasured, and skillfully-collated records of Saxon and Norman England have been far inferior, in historic value, to the neglect-

\* Dublin Penny Journal, 215. translated by John O'Donovan.

† Ibid. 231.



ed and destroyed manuscript records of Irish antiquity, of a far earlier date. Of that which has been lost, the indications are as certainly ascertainable in that which we possess, as the living forms and functions of ancient zoology, are said, by comparative anatomists, to be discoverable from the broken structures of their fossil remains.

## Fionn.

THIS eminent warrior and statesman, was the son-in-law of Cormac. The flattery of ancient poetry had exaggerated him into a monster of the fancy; and the accident of a singular piece of literary imposture has obliterated from his fame all the circumstances of human reality. His wisdom and valour have had the singular misfortune of being consigned to oblivion by poetry, which has always been supposed to bestow on virtue the immortality of fame.

Fionn's father was Cumhal, the son of Trien More, descended in the fourth remove from Raugadut, king of Leinster. In right of his mother, he inherited the territory of Almuin in that province. He also possessed a large tract in Leinster, by a grant from the provincial king.

He succeeded his father to the rank and office of commander of the Irish militia, then the most select and highly-trained force of which there is any record in ancient annals. His station gave him the privilege of familiar friendship with the wise monarch of Ireland, by whom he was consulted, as a principal adviser, in the extensive improvements of the law and civil economy of the kingdom which he was labouring to effect.

The standing force of this Irish militia has been stated at three thousand select men. On occasions of apparent danger from rebellion, or any other cause, seven thousand were deemed fully adequate to all the demands of internal or external emergency.

At this period, there was between Ireland and North Britain the close alliance of parental affinity. The Dalriads, whose origin we have already noticed, looked chiefly to Ireland in their emergencies; and in the computation of the Irish force, there seems to have been an allowance for the protection of this colonial ally. Training, and careful selection, rendered this small force equal to the indiscriminate muster of a kingdom: a fact easily understood, from the description of the mode of selection, and plan of discipline; which, though alloyed by a little obvious exaggeration, may yet substantially be received as the truth. The number, station, and duty of the officers, may be passed, as having no peculiar difference from the modern distribution of military command. It is in the tests of selection, and the code of discipline, that the traces of Cormac and Fionn, and the spirit of the nation, are to be found. Among these, for they are minute and many, we select a few:—One of the ordinances was a provision guarding against the vindictive principle of retaliation, which was then a main cause of much of the disorders of society. No soldier was allowed to enlist, unless his relations entered into an agreement, binding them not to attempt to revenge his death. By this, it is also evident, that he became more strictly within the penal power of military discipline.

The second regulation provided for the respectability of the body, by making knowledge and literary taste essential to selection. The remaining conditions are, at least, amusing. They relate to bodily qualifications, and contain some curiously-impracticable tests. We extract them, however, as unquestionably containing the principle of selection, founded on the ancient state of warfare, as well as on the physical characters, to this day observable among the Celtic race of Ireland.

“ The second qualifications for admittance into these standing forces was, that no one should be received unless he had a poetical genius, and could compose verses, and was well acquainted with the twelve books of poetry.

“ The third condition was, that he should be a perfect master of his weapons, and able to defend himself against all attacks; and to prove his dexterity in the management of his arms, he was placed in a plain field, encompassed with green sedge that reached above his knee; he was to have a target by him, and a hazel stake in his hand, of the length of a man’s arm. Then nine experienced soldiers of the militia were drawn out, and appointed to stand at the distance of nine ridges of land from him, and to throw all their javelins at him at once: if he had the skill, with the target and stake, to defend himself, and come off unhurt, he was admitted into the service; but if he had the misfortune to be wounded by one of these javelins, he was rejected as unqualified, and turned off with reproach.

“ A fourth qualification was, that he should run well, and in his flight defend himself from his enemy; and to make a trial of his activity, he had his hair plaited, and was obliged to run through a wood, with all the militia pursuing him, and was allowed but the breadth of a tree before the rest at his setting out. If he was overtaken in the chase, or received a wound, before he had ran through the wood, he was refused, as too sluggish and unskilful to fight with honour among those valiant troops.

“ It was required in the fifth place, that whoever was a candidate for admission into the militia, should have a strong arm, and hold his weapon steady; and if it was observed that his hand shook, he was rejected.

“ The sixth requisite was, that when he ran through a wood, his hair should continue tied up during the chase; if it fell loose, he could not be received.

“ The seventh qualification, to be so swift and light of foot, as not to break a rotten stick by standing upon it.

“ The eighth condition was, that none should have the honour of being enrolled among the Irish militia, that was not so active as to leap over a tree as high as his forehead; or could not, by the agility of his body, stoop easily under a tree that was lower than his knees.

“ The ninth condition required was, that he could, without stopping, or lessening his speed, draw a thorn out of his foot.

“ The tenth, and last, qualification was, to take an oath of allegiance, to be true and faithful to the commanding officer of the army. These were the terms required for admission among these brave troops; which, so long as they were exactly insisted upon, the militia of Ireland

were an invincible defence to their country, and a terror to rebels at home and abroad.”\*

From these accounts, with all their palpable inconsistencies, one inference may be safely drawn: that the military force of the country were brought, by Fionn, to a high state of discipline and efficiency. The traditions of their exploits, and ascertained remains of their customs, alone are certain indications of so much.

We hasten, however, to a subject of more importance in the history of Fionn. We shall touch but briefly upon the spurious translations of Macpherson; because the world has been long since wearied with inconclusive reiterations on the subject; and the improved knowledge of our best modern antiquaries seems to have concluded, in a scornful silence, on the dishonest character of his attempt to rob this island of her bards and warriors.

As modern history began to emerge from the obscurity of the middle ages, much of those more ancient materials which should form the basis of all true history—scattered, obscured, and mutilated, by the events of a long revolutionary period of confusion—had not yet been sought out, restored, brought together, and compared: and while these were wanting, bold inventions, rendered specious by their adaptation to the spirit of their date, occupied their place. These were felt, for the most part, to be of spurious or doubtful authority by the more sober writers, in whose pages they yet found a place, from the mere want of the means to disprove or replace them. The genius of theory, however, which still holds by no means a sinecure station in history, was a principal guide through the perplexity of a research, where so much must needs have belonged to conjecture. Slight facts; faint analogies; traditions variously corrupted by omission, accumulation of error, fraud, and the natural prejudices of nationality; took form, according to the imagination or prejudice of the collector: and national periods, that never had existence, thus assumed a form and seeming consistency on the chronicler's scroll. One followed another, each adding some new confirmation, drawn from the same dark region of unreal fancies and dimly-seen shadows. Such is a brief abstract of the character and pretension of those writers of the 15th and 16th centuries, who enabled Buchanan to compose a history, possessing all the recommendations which national feeling, and a strong, elegant, and vivacious style, could impart to accounts grounded on a mixture of fraud, mistake, and speculation. By this class of writers the first colony of Scots from Ireland was carried back many centuries, and placed before the Christian era, which, in point of fact, preceded this event by two centuries and a half; and the history of a line, far more shadowy than the vision of Banquo's royal race, makes its appearance on the tablet of the imposing romance of the middle ages.

These old writers, however, were still to some extent compelled to adopt the main form of a tradition which, however obscure, corrupt, and dateless, was yet shaped from events and notions based on events. A writer belonging to a recent period, taking advantage of the silent obscurity of the subject, has made a more daring attempt to shape anti-

\* Keating.



quity into a theory, for the purpose of maintaining a literary project of his own. Taking advantage of the confusion by which the ancient name of Ireland has become the modern name of Scotland—availing himself of the near affinity of the Highland and Irish languages—of the traditions common to both—and of the specious prejudices of his time in favour of the more civilized, and against the less fortunate of the two countries; he boldly seized on a theory which, in the absence of the facts, is highly accommodated to appearances; and at once reversing the claims of Ireland and her Highland descendants, he peoples the former from the latter, and boldly transfers the poetry, history, and persons, of a most authentic period of Irish history to the Highlands of Scotland.

The fictions of the Scottish history of Buchanan's age and compositions have long been exploded, by the skilful science and united judgment of the most reputed modern antiquaries of the kingdom. Nor, in these days of enlightened research, would even a Highland bard be hardy enough to trace the Highland tribes, or the Scottish monarchy, beyond the dates assigned by the thoroughly established annals of their parent island. Nor need the ancestral pride of the Highland Celt shrink from the decision, which (looking justly on the past) adds to his descent the indefinite glories of the farthest descended and most illustrious race in the annals of European antiquity.

A just allowance for this consideration, which may here be allowed to repose on the view of Irish history already given, must dissolve the dreams of Mr M'Pherson, without the pains of any detailed analysis of his work. The grounds of charge against him are briefly: mistakes as to chronology; gross anachronisms in the use of names, and in the construction of his specimens of original language; the assumption, on no authority, of names, persons, and events, as part of the history of one country, which have an authorized place solely in the history and traditions of another. As O'Connor remarks, he describes Ossian as the illiterate bard of an illiterate age, having his poems handed down 1400 years by tradition, and *yet* unknown through all this period, till discovered at the end of it, and given to the world in the form of a voluminous well-arranged series of epic poems, deficient in no link, obscure in no allusion, and comprising a royal bard's history of the wars and changes of a most eventful period.

Such is no unfair description of a most ill-combined artifice; gratuitous so far as its authority, and, in its construction, a tissue of shallow contradictions. Of these the reader, who cares to satisfy himself by entering into details we cannot afford, will find a clear exposure in most recent histories of Ireland.

## Eríomthan.

A. D. 369.

PASSING the royal occupants of the throne, from Cormac son of Art,\*

\* Cormac was succeeded by Eochaidh Gunait, in 253. He reigned for one year, and was succeeded by Cairbre, the son of Cormac. Cairbre was slain in the battle

we arrive at Criomthan, a lineal descendant of the great Oilíoll Olum. The intervening names supply little more than a series of those genealogies, which formed so important a part of the ancient Irish records; of all these persons, there is not one whose history could afford new matter for observation, or indeed any event of interest, unless we except the curious history of the three Collas, of which the outline might doubtless be offered, on the satisfactory authority of the *Psalter of Cashel*; but when we have sifted the facts from the embellishments which they have received from antique superstition, they present nothing more than the ordinary features of rebellions, battles, and usurpations, on the same petty scale which applies to so much that we have related.

Criomthan is entitled to the distinction of this notice, however slight, not only because his reign occurs within the limits of a period of great and peculiar interest in the annals and traditions of Ireland; but is also distinguished by incidents, which, though, like all the real events of Irish antiquity sparingly recorded, yet cast a striking reflection on the increased communication which is presently to appear between Ireland and the continental nations. He carried his arms successfully into Britain, and exacted tribute both in England, and the neighbouring territories of the north. He had the like success in France; and as this example appears to have been followed by some of the succeeding princes, we are at liberty to conjecture the influence of an enlarged civilization, in expanding the national sphere of action and intercourse.

The reign of Criomthan is illustrated by the noble forbearance and justice of his friend Conall, a descendant of the Munster kings. This prince had been educated with Criomthan, who, in the amplitude of his power, thought fit to raise his young friend to the vacant Munster throne. Conall's first impulse was probably the natural triumph of gratified ambition. But he listened to the remonstrances of the members of the other branch of the family, whose representative Core, was the rightful claimant to the Munster throne. Conall might have retained this dignity without opposition, under the powerful alliance of the monarch. But a sense of justice prevailed, he referred the claims of both to an impartial arbitration, and by their just award yielded the throne of Munster to its rightful claimant. The sentence of the judges recognised at the same time his claim to the succession after Fiachadh, who soon made way for him to take rightful possession of the throne, of which he had the rare grace to abandon a wrongful claim.

Criomthan was poisoned by his sister, who is said to have been actuated by so inveterate a determination, that to deceive him, she tasted the poison, and paid with her life the penalty of her foul crime. The monarch died at Sliabh Vidhe, near Limerick. He was succeeded by the celebrated Niall.

of Gabbra, occasioned by the revolt of the militia, and succeeded by Fathach Airgtheach, and his brother, of whom the first mentioned murdered the latter, and was dethroned and slain by the militia in the battle of Ollarbha. Then, in 182, the reign of Fiachadh is marked by his struggle with the three Collas who, by his death, ended his reign of thirty years, and in like manner disturbed the succeeding reign of his son Muircadhach.

## Niall of the Nine Hostages.

A. D. 375.

NIALL was the son of Eochaidh Muigh Mcedon, the predecessor of Criomthan.

The settlement of the Caledonian Dalriads has already been described. They were at this time exceedingly harassed by their Pictish neighbours. In their distress, they looked to the usual resource of Irish protection, and Niall crossed over with an army, of sufficient power to awe the Picts into submission without recourse to a trial of strength. His interference became, therefore, more of a political than military character. At the request of the Dalriads, he changed the name of the country to Scotia; and that it might be distinguished from the parent island, he imposed the less flattering addition of minor. So that Ireland was from thenceforth designed to retain the appellation of *Scotia Major*, and Scotland of *Scotia Minor*. Till this period Scotland had borne the name of Albyn.

Niall also led a powerful army into France, where he committed considerable devastation; and making a second descent in concert with the Dalradians of Scotland, they plundered the whole district of the Loire. It was in one of these expeditions that a large body of captives was brought into Ireland by this monarch, amongst whom, it is said, was the youth afterwards so well known, in our ecclesiastical annals, under the title of St Patrick.

The ambition of Niall appears to have swelled far beyond the narrow circle of provincial enterprise, which formed the boundary of his predecessors. His life seems to have been passed in successive expeditions into Scotland, England, and France. In one of these he met his death, on the banks of the Loire, from the hand of Eochaidh, a Leinster prince, whom he had exasperated by various acts of hostility and oppression. The incident was as follows:—Eochaidh, burning with revenge, offered himself as a volunteer in the ranks of the Dalriadic force, which formed a part of the army of Niall. He had, while an exile in Scotland, formed an intimacy with Gabran, the leader of this force, by whom he was readily received, and thus contrived to attach himself to the force of his powerful enemy. Niall, who soon became apprised of the fact, seems to have taken the alarm, and refused to admit him to his presence. But his precaution was insufficient. Eochaidh watched with the deadly vigilance of hate, and it was not long till the moment of vengeance arrived. One day, as Niall had seated himself on the banks of the Loire, an arrow, shot from a thicket on the other side, pierced him through. Eochaidh immediately returned to Ireland, and, taking possession of the province of Leinster, reigned for many years.

Among the many curious romances of old tradition, that of Eochaidh's children is among the best. It would indeed require but a little aid from the established story-telling phrase, to entitle it to a distinguished place in Eastern fiction, to which the Irish legend has a family re-



semblance too near to be unnoticed. As it may, however, happen to be but an imaginative version of the truth, we shall offer it in the unassuming dress of a simple outline.

When Eochaidh was an exile in Scotland, and under the protection of the governor of the Scottish Dalradians—it fell out that his lady and the princess of Scotland were, on the same night, and in the same apartment, taken ill with the pains of child-birth. They were friends, and seemed resolved not to be separated in the pangs or the triumphs of that interesting trial of female fortitude. There was, perhaps, another reason. The princess of Scotland was deeply anxious to conciliate her husband's affections with the present of a son and heir, and had concerted the arrangement which was to ensure her an added chance. In order to effect the desirable object, no one but the midwife was allowed to enter, until they should be called for. The event proved the wisdom and success of this arrangement. The princess of Leinster had two sons, but the Scottish princess only a daughter. With silent celerity the preconcerted change was made; the princess received from the hands of the disreputable midwife, one of the boys of her friend, and the happy tidings of an infant prince of Scotland soon surrounded her bed with the king and his court in joyful congratulation.

Years rolled on—the infant grew to be a gallant prince, and at length, on the death of his supposed father, ascended the Scottish throne. Being of a warlike genius, he resolved to lay claim to the supremacy of Ireland; and making immense levies, he landed in Ireland, and struck terror and dismay wherever he turned his course. But of all the princes who trembled at a power they had no means to withstand, the youthful king of Leinster had the most to fear; the hostile purpose of Eogan seemed to be more especially directed against him. In this serious perplexity, when he had neither force to resist, nor wealth to comply with the exorbitant demands of his formidable enemy, he was, perhaps, little relieved by the sudden declaration of his mother, that she would herself seek the king of Scotland, and engaged that she would completely turn away his hostile design. The good old queen's proposal must have seemed absurd to her son; but she had her own way, and went to seek the king of Scotland in his camp.

The Scottish king was a little surprised at receiving a visit from one so old, and was still more so when she ventured to expostulate with him on his meditated hostilities towards her son. Thinking, probably, that the Leinster prince had shown no great wisdom in his selection of an ambassador, he gave way to his impatience, and exclaiming that he had no notion of being turned from his purpose by the ravings of an old hag, he sternly bade her leave his presence without delay. The old lady replied with a solemn composure, that his own mother was a hag such as she, and that she had an important secret, of the utmost concern to him, which could only be communicated to his private ear. The king's curiosity was excited, and he ordered the hall to be cleared. When alone, she told him the secret history of his birth, and that he was her son, and the brother of the prince whom he was about to invade. To confirm his story, she appealed to the evidence of his reputed mother, the princess of

Scotland. The king of Scotland was much astonished at so singular a story, and immediately despatched a messenger to desire the queen of Scotland's presence with all possible speed. In a short time she arrived, and unreservedly confirmed the whole account of the Leinster princess. The king, satisfied that a disclosure, which must needs endanger his crown, required to be suppressed at any sacrifice, exacted from both ladies a pledge of the most inviolate secrecy; and not only agreed to withdraw his troops from Leinster, but from that moment entered into a treaty with the prince, of which the event was lasting peace and strict friendship between the brother kings.

Niall had eight sons, to whom many ancient Irish families can be traced. The reason of his peculiar title, which has, by all historians, been added to his name, is said to be his having kept nine hostages—four from Scotland, and five from Ireland, as pledges for the peaceable conduct of each of these countries.

## Dathy.

A. D. 398.

DATHY succeeded Niall. He was much distinguished for personal activity, and the sprightly vivacity of his manner, temper, and motions. His claim to historic notice, is the enterprising spirit of his reign. Like his immediate predecessor, he carried his arms into France, where he met a fate not inappropriate to his sparkling temper, and bold career. At the foot of the Alps his ambitious course was put an end to, by a flash of lightning.

The bold and enterprising spirit of this monarch, and his immediate predecessor, first broke through the line of isolation between this island and the continent of Europe. By their foreign wars and alliances, they extended the fame and intercourse of their country, and thus paved the way for Christianity, which in their time was diffusing its civilizing lustre over a barbarous world. "No two monarchs," says O'Connor in his *Dissertations*, "can be equalled with them in this particular, as none ever carried the glory of the Scottish arms farther: both opposed the Romans in Britain—both pursued them into Gaul," &c. Dathy's body was brought over by his officers, and buried at Roilie na Riogh, near Cruachan, once a burial place of Irish kings. Of these ancient burial places there were two, in which most of the Irish kings were buried: Brugh na Boyne, and Roilie na Riogh. Of these the latter is the more eminent; its remains are yet to be found near Cruachan (Croghan), in Connaught. O'Connor thus describes them: "The latter place is of a circular form, surrounded with a stone ditch, greatly defaced. It measures a hundred and sixteen paces in diameter, and is remarkable, at present, for nothing but being once the dormitory of so many of our heathen kings, celebrated in a few sweet lines by Torna Egeas, a filea of the fourth century. Dathy, the last of our heathen monarchs, was therein interred." Keating gives at full length the history of this ancient cemetery, from the poetry of an Irish bard, who enumerates the

kingly occupants of its ancient dust: among the names thus mentioned is that of Dathy—

“ Here Dathy lies (whose deeds are sung by fame)  
Near Cruachan's pensive walls.”

## Laogaire.

A. D. 421.

LAOGAIRE was the son of Niall. His reign of thirty years is rendered especially remarkable, by the succession of events which made Ireland a Christian country. Of these our notice may be appropriated to the lives of those eminent persons who were the instruments of so great a revolution.

Among the strictly secular events of this reign, is to be noticed a solemn convention, for the special purpose of examining the ancient annals and genealogies of the kingdom. By this meeting the task was committed to nine persons, viz., Laogaire himself, with the kings of Ulster and Munster, the three bishops, Patrick, Benignus, and Cairneach, and the antiquaries Dubhthach, Fergus, and Rosa. The record of this transaction is preserved in an ancient Irish poem; of which, as a specimen of this class of compositions, the reader may find some interest in the following version from Keating, which, amid its uncouth versification, carries the peculiar tone of its antique originality:—

“ The learned authors of these choice records,  
Which for their truth are called the great antiquity,  
Were nine, selected by the Convocation,  
For wisdom and integrity renowned;  
Three kings, three prelates, and three antiquaries:  
The prelates were, the most devout St Patrick,  
The pious Binen, and the wise Cairneach;  
The kings were Laogaire, the Irish monarch,  
A prince in heraldry exactly skilled;  
Joined with him was the judicious Daire,  
The warlike king of Ulster; the third  
A prince for letters and for martial acts  
Was famous, his name was Corc, the potent king  
Of Munster: three antiquaries next surveyed  
These old records, and purged them by their skill;  
The faithful Dubhthach, and the sage Fergus,  
And Rosa, nicely versed in foreign tongues.  
These perused the annals of their ancestors,  
Erased the errors, the effects of fraud  
Or ignorance; and by the test of truth  
Examined, they established the records  
And every pedigree of noble blood;  
And thus corrected, they descend to us,  
Unworthy issue of our brave progenitors.” \*

From this period, by a decree of this monarch, the annals of the kingdom were committed to the keeping of the bishops; by these they

\* Keating.



were caused to be transcribed and deposited in the principal churches. Many of these venerable manuscripts, thus preserved, have survived the ravage of time, and of the Danish heathens of our second period, and found their way into public libraries and private collections, and form the most valuable portion of the material of our ancient history. Of these are enumerated, the *Book of Armagh*, the *Psalter of Cashel*, the *Book of Glendalough*, the *Book of Clonmacnoise*, &c., &c.

Laogaire's death is said by Keating to have been caused by a stroke of lightning; and, with the superstitious feeling in which this simple and credulous, but sincere and zealous, old man seems always to participate, is attributed to a special visitation of Divine anger, for breaking his faith with Criomthan, a Leinster chief, who having taken his monarch prisoner in battle, exacted as his ransom the remission of the Boromean tribute. That such are not the ways of providence, it is needless to tell the student either of profane history, or sacred revelation, or the observer of the events of life. Laogaire's son, Lughaidh, afterwards succeeded in the alternate course of Irish royalty. This was not, perhaps, the legal course of the monarchy: the establishment of the Munster throne, probably, afforded a general sanction to the ambition of princes; and as, in most cases, the kings of Ireland were carried off by some sudden and violent death, leaving their children either too young or too inadequately supported to assert their rights, an opening to the throne was thus made for the prepared vigilance of the next in title, or the strongest. From whatever cause it is, this period is marked by a remarkable uniformity in this mode of succession. Laogaire was succeeded by Oilíoll Molt, the son of his predecessor Dathy.

### **Oilíoll Molt.**

A. D. 453.

OF this monarch nothing is recorded of sufficient interest to detain our notice. He summoned a convention at Tara. It is said that in a manuscript of great antiquity, he is mentioned as "king of the Scots." He was at war with Leinster; and fought a battle at Tuama Aithie, memorable for an unusual carnage on both sides. The son of Laogaire at length was enabled to bring an army to the field, and a battle soon ensued, in which Oilíoll was slain.

### **Lughaidh.**

A. D. 473.

THIS reign has little memorable on record. Lughaidh was contemporary with Felix III., the bishop of Rome, who was excommunicated by the rival bishop of Constantinople. In this time, also, the struggle between the ancient Britons and Saxons seems to have been at its height. And it may best put the reader in possession of the general

position of the period to notice, that it was in 449 that the arrival of the Saxons in Britain, under Hengist and Horsa, is fixed by most historians of reputed authority, from whence this struggle may be reckoned to have continued for one hundred and thirty years, to the complete establishment of the Saxons, at the end nearly of the sixth century—a period of extreme rudeness and ignorance.

It was in this reign that a considerable force from Ireland was led into Scotland by Lorn, the eldest son of Ere, who conquered Argyle from the Piets.

We have already, as we advanced, noticed the various settlements of the Irish Scots in North Britain—the first, of which we have any certainty, occurred in the beginning of the third century. From this up to the period now before our notice, they had preserved their footing in the country, with various degrees of success; sometimes in alliance, and more frequently, perhaps, in hostility with the Piets, who may be regarded as the natives. These were (according to the best authority) a Gothic race from the northern forests of Germany, then very generally called Seythia. They had, it is said, early sought a settlement in Hibernia, and had been referred by the natives to Britain, as the less occupied territory. They followed the suggestion, but sought wives from the Irish Scots, which were allowed them, on the condition of settling that in doubtful cases the sceptre should descend in the female line. From this a broken and intermitting alliance seems to have begun—as the Piets and Scots are commonly named together in the numerous invasions of Britain, which the English annalists trace to the north. But there was still throughout a succession of repeated struggles between the Dalriadic or Hibernian colony and their neighbours; the effect of which was to make their tenure doubtful, and to repress their prosperity.

The event of this reign gave a decisive impulse in their favour. Although the Piets still continued to retain their independence, and to possess the best parts of the country; yet the foundation for conquest, was secured in the possession of a territory so well fortified by nature as the district now in possession of the Irish Scots. From this a Scottish kingdom may be said to have struck root, and begun to expand. The Piets, also, from many causes, began to decline: and were finally subdued in the 9th century, when the sovereignty of Scotland became vested in a line of Dalriadic kings, in the person of Kenneth M'Alpine. The period during which this early settlement was subject to the parent country, is computed by Giraldus at 315 years, to the time of William Rufus. It may here be added, that it was about the middle of the 9th century when the seat of government was removed by the Scots to the Lowlands.

The death of St Patrick took place in the fourteenth year of this reign, Gelasius was elected to the Roman see in the last.

Lughaidht was a violent enemy to the Christian religion, and a persecutor of its first preachers. He reigned twenty-two years, and died in 493.

Mortough.

A. D. 493.

MORTOUGH's reign was one of great trouble. In one year he was obliged to fight five battles.

He reigned till A. D. 515, when he died in his house at Chetteigh.

As the lives of these kings are little marked by any civil history, of sufficient interest to occupy the reader, and as the principal events of the period are entirely ecclesiastical in their character, we may refer them to the memoirs of our ecclesiastical series. To preserve the succession of order, we shall here, as in other similar cases, give lists containing the dates of the reigns which we do not think it expedient to offer at length. This course is rendered advisable, from the circumstance, that no reign occurs of sufficient importance or duration to comprise any integral portion of our ecclesiastical affairs.

Mortough was succeeded by Tuathal . . . . .	515
After whom, we have in order	
Diarmuid . . . . .	528
Feargus and Daniel . . . . .	550
Eochaidh and Baodan . . . . .	551
Ainmereach . . . . .	554
Baodan . . . . .	557
Aodh . . . . .	558
Hugh Slanie and Colman Rimidh . . . . .	585

II. ECCLESIASTICAL AND LITERARY SERIES.

INTRODUCTION.

Literature confined to the Church—Ignorance of the middle ages, and the progressive corruptions of literature—Application of this inference to the evidence of ancient Traditions, and to those concerning St Patrick in particular—Statement of the Controversies of the Tonsure, the time for keeping Easter, and the Three Chapters.

AT the early period, in the history of which we are engaged, the whole of literature which then had any existence, was confined to the church ; and in this, as in some succeeding periods, our literary and ecclesiastical periods cannot be separated.

The introduction to a series which is involved in all the obscurity that affects the period of tradition and legend which now occupies our attention, might at first view appear to be little more than the discussion of the various questions of interest, which the learning of curious antiquarians have raised. But, unfortunately, in this, as in most other subjects of Irish history, every spot of disputable ground has been trampled by contending politicians and divines ; and it has



become impossible to find a topic unappropriated by contention. Assertion or doubt cannot well be hazarded without the appearance of a party motive ; and though the contest on either side is fraught with error, no class of persons will complacently see wrested away from them any position to which they attach an assumption of importance.

The writers on the Irish church have very generally committed an error of serious magnitude and importance, of which the consequences involve the statements of every party, and are now become difficult to obviate ; because, in the attempt, we are brought into collision with those writers whose authority seems to be established on either side. The error we would point out is this—that of pursuing their investigations on the inconclusive ground of partial authorities, to the disregard of those comprehensive general truths of human history which are the first principles of every well-conducted inquiry. On one side, the desire to magnify the Irish church, and connect its history with that of the church of Rome ; on the other, to depress, or to establish opposite conclusions—has led either side into exaggerated and hasty views, with which it is difficult to deal in a summary essay such as our narrow limits afford ; there is too much to be explained, and too much to be cleared away.

We are then, at the outset, compelled to incur the charge of presumption by asserting our right to think for ourselves, and to use the learning and industry of our learned and able authorities, without much deference to their opinions on either side ; and, adopting the middle views which appear to our perceptions most reconcileable with general history, leave the learned antiquarians and commentators to fight out their differences among themselves. In attentively perusing several of these writers, (too illustrious to be named lightly,) we are frequently reminded of the profound discussion which is recorded in some old edition of *Joe Miller*, to have once taken place, for the purpose of investigating the cause why, when a large fish is thrown into a pail filled to the brim with sea-water, it does not cause a single drop to overflow, or seem in any way to have increased the contents of the vessel. On this perplexing investigation, after several days of most elaborate discussion and enlightened conjecture had been consumed between the advocates of contending theories, a listener, who, being no philosopher, was not puzzled by arguments on either side, of which he did not very clearly comprehend the force, ventured to doubt the fact, and suggest that before the philosophers wasted more of their valuable erudition, they should try the experiment. It is unfortunate that such a test cannot apply to historical disputation.

To escape the imputation of extreme audacity, we shall leave the more precise application of this parallel to those whom it may more especially concern. Contenting ourselves with a resolution to avoid the ingenious example of the conflicting philosophers, by not very largely entering into the authorities or arguments of the writers on either side of the question, which we propose here to notice so far as our own immediate purposes require. The method of discussion on which we are thus thrown, will be concise and summary, and, though having little of the learned fulness which astonishes and delights the patient reader in the full and copious pages of Lanigan, Ware, and

Usher, will yet be more suited to the time and intelligence of the popular mind.

Precisely to appreciate the history of the Irish ecclesiastics and writers, the legends and traditions, and the main disputes concerning the Irish church, during this period, we must endeavour to place briefly before the reader a concise view of the causes then in operation on the human mind in general, as well as on Irish literature and theology.

In the history of every ancient institution, there is one universal consideration which can never be lost sight of without risk—that of the course and changes of civilization; including under this comprehensive term, knowledge, and the state of opinion, with its diffusion as well as progress—with the state also of municipal laws and institutions, and manners, in successive periods. For it is quite evident, that the particular state of any institution subsisting by human instrumentality, must have always participated largely in the changes of the state of mankind. Thus, when we peruse the profound dissertation which elaborately, and with some doubt, establishes the point that the doctrine and discipline of the middle ages was or was not the same as that of Ireland in the days of St Patrick, we cannot help thinking of the fish and the tub of water, and reflecting on the melancholy extent to which controversy, over hotly pursued, will lead astray the learned lights of school and cloister.

All historians, and particularly the historians of literature,\* have dwelt upon the corruption and decay of human civilization during the decline of the Roman empire. The desolating invasions, and the wide-spreading, exterminating, and long-continuing succession of wars and revolutions, which during many generations continued to overthrow and sweep away the ruins of the ancient order of things, had, about the seventh century, reduced the state of Europe to unlettered barbarism. For a long continuation of dark ages, human knowledge was narrowed to a scanty residuum of corrupt language, and frivolous first elements, containing the forms without the substance of reason. Human ingenuity, not to be altogether eradicated by revolutions, was, in the absence of knowledge, employed on the materials of ignorance; in the absence of light, men wandered in the dark. It was not to be expected, for it was morally impossible, that any class or country, school or institution, could continue, in such a state of things, to wear its form, as in previous, or subsequent ages. Barbarism and ignorance, approaching that lowest stage in which the mass of mankind become only separated from the brute creation, by the hapless interval of error and of crime, could not fail to influence every existing institution. If, in such a state of things, the existence of any degree of literature is to be discovered, it must have been nothing more than the commonest purposes of civil or ecclesiastical government rendered essentially necessary. Necessity alone preserved a corrupted and feeble gleam of intellectual light, such as suited the vision of a period which has obtained the distinctive epithet of dark, which emitted its

\* For the most clear and satisfactory detail upon this subject, we would recommend “*Hallam on the Literature of the Middle Ages.*”



scanty and discoloured beam from the cloister. Letters were an instrument required for certain current uses, and all other uses were forgotten; it was just as if some dreadful revolution should come to suppress all the refinements and more extensive applications of philosophy which exist in modern society; the arithmetic of trade would still survive in the publican's book. But neither the science, philosophy, or poetry of the ancient world survived—its language was corrupted; and the changes, by which the world was yet to be redeemed from this state of barbarism, cannot properly be said to have had any operation. The ignorance here described had, however, an additional character of barbarism, for the literature of antiquity was not merely declining, but actually proscribed by the highest authorities of the sixth century. On this fact it is not within our purpose to dwell; we only seek to impress the truth, that the world was for some ages involved in a state of barbarism and intellectual degradation, in which all existing institutions fully participated. The rules of conduct and the manners of society, the opinions in philosophy, and the practice of piety and the doctrines of faith, all, by a necessary adjustment which could not but have occurred, shared in the corruption of knowledge and the entire depravation of reason.

It is owing to this consideration that we have found it essentially necessary, for the present at least, to combine our ecclesiastical and literary series into one. The literature of Europe was confined to the church and its uses. The same consideration may avail us for the important purpose of indicating a useful criterion to authenticate some of the most valuable documentary remains of the ancient Irish church.

The early history of the Irish church is not free from controverted points, which we think may be, in some measure, diminished by a full and searching analysis of the whole of the causes then in operation. Such a labour would, it is true, carry the historian far beyond the scope and objects of these pages; and we shall be compelled to confine our disquisition to the elucidation of a single question in which our own statements are to some extent involved. The early accounts of the first fathers of the Irish are rendered questionable, or at least have been much questioned, by reason of the strange mixture of absurd and monstrous fables with which they are unhappily mixed. The life of Patrick, the greatest and most disputed name, has, within our own times, been made the topic of a lively dispute; and while his identity is called into question by the learned industry of some, the sceptical ingenuity of others has altogether dismissed him into the category of fabulous worthies. Such, indeed, is the allowable uncertainty of a question obscured by the cloud of dreams which fill the vast intellectual void of the middle ages, through which all the events of the primitive ages of our history, are seen distorted and discoloured into miracle and monster. In the long perspective of the past, the keenest eye fails to discern the long intervals which lie between the realities and the grotesque shadows with which they seem to be combined. The materials for separating the fanciful legend from the fact, over which it has flung its fantastic foliage of legend, are slight, desultory, and difficult to authenticate beyond question. Every authority is open to cavil—the worthlessness of mere tradition, the defectiveness



of chronology, the uncertainty of transmission by manuscript, the facility of its forgery, and the known fact that such a practice existed. These causes appear to cast doubts not easily removed on every authority, upon subjects so partial and obscure as the life and acts of an individual.\*

It is from this consideration easy to see, that the distinction between the various ages of literature thus confused—to the confusion of all historical authority—must be of some importance; and it is our duty to ascertain whether there may be found some criterion in the matter of inquiry itself, and independent of any extrinsic questions which may affect it, by which the genuineness of our authorities may be ascertained with the least uncertainty.

Now, this we conceive to be a simple and obvious consequence of the considerations we have set out with. The legends and superstitious fables, which were the natural produce of ages characterized by their ignorance and barbarism, are little to be looked for so far back as the more civilized era to which St Patrick's life is referred by all. Neither the notions nor the purposes, which strongly mark the literature of the middle ages, can, with any reasonable likelihood, be referred so far back as the fifth century. Nor, for the same reasons, can the opinions and doctrines of the fifth century be rationally looked for in the literature of the eighth century.

If, therefore, statements of fact and opinion can be found in any of the lives of ancient persons, which are clearly inconsistent with the whole system of the belief of the middle ages, a very strong presumption arises in favour of the antiquity of such documents.

This presumption becomes much strengthened by the known fact,

\* For some of our readers it may at first appear unsafe to use an argument which seems to shake the authority of ancient manuscripts. The arguments which are aimed against the histories of St Patrick, have an obscure circulation, in a low quarter, to the prejudice of Christianity. But, whatever may be their force when aimed at Irish manuscripts they are downright nonsense when aimed against the gospel. The case is indeed widely different. The evidences of the gospel, do not rest on the authenticity of a few isolated manuscripts. It needs, in strict reasoning, no support from the investigation of ancient specific documents: if even all its direct testimonies could by some inconceivable means be annihilated, both its facts and doctrines are fixed beyond rational doubt, in the whole body of historical tradition and in the moral frame of the civilized world. It is so fully established in the very fabric and texture of society with all its institutions, so diffused through all literature from the first century, so implied in every constitution of laws, so inseparably blended with usages and tradition—being in a word, the very fundamental principle or first element of the social system—that the sceptic might as well attempt to fix a point of time within the last eighteen centuries when sunshine was invented, as to apply to the gospel the same objections which more or less impair the special authority of all other historical tradition. In fine, the best proof that any special document of Christian antiquity can have, is the support it may derive from the universal consent of tradition on this one event. Its evidence is the evidence of a system of facts, doctrines, controversies, institutions, and revolutions of Europe. The full and collective force of this species of proof we have explained at large in another work: *Philosophy of Unbelief*, pp. 216—232. *Fellowes, Ludgate Street*. We cannot end this note, without mentioning a remark of great force which we have met in some writer, that if the writings of the New Testament had been lost, they could be reconstructed from the controversialists, infidel opponents, apologists, and fathers of the first three or four centuries.

that in the middle ages all human opinions were in the strict custody of a class of persons, who, while they participated in the ignorance and intellectual degradation of their time, exercised a proportionally strict control over the narrow range of ideas they possessed. The assertion of the doctrinal tenets of the fourth and fifth centuries, would be then not only inconsistent but unsafe. In those dark times religion suffered in common with literature and science, and the church itself was for a time overshadowed by the eclipse of human reason. Tenets, which now have no ostensible existence, were maintained by a pervading and inevitable jurisdiction; and no writing, which contained any statement of Christian doctrine inconsistent with those tenets, could be put forth without question, although such may be allowed to have existed in those oblivious repositories of old parchment, which were the libraries of the monastic communities.

The progress of the ecclesiastical system was, as we have stated, such as to be wholly conformed to the decline of civilized society, and, for some melancholy ages, gave a tinge of ignorance and superstition to all such scanty literature as existed, so as to separate it altogether from all that had been believed or written in the earlier ages. We now return to the general argument.

Of the state of literature in the middle ages, as already described, the character most important to our present argument is, the *gradual progress* of its corruption. For seven centuries the mind of man sunk on from simple ignorance to positive error; the schools grew more and more involved in the cloudy maze of dialectical perplexity. At the same time the legendary lore which amused the simple, grew more characteristically extravagant, as the faith of the credulous was enlarged. The mind conformed itself to its stock of knowledge and opinion, and the superstitions of one generation formed a basis for the added absurdity of the next in succession. There was thus a proportional alteration in the style, tone, and substance of the literature of successive ages, which can be perceptibly traced. Thus the legends of the thirteenth century are easily to be distinguished from those of the eighth, and those again from those of the sixth; while still in these last, the eye of the intelligent critic will not fail to detect ample indications of declining taste and knowledge. Such is the important principle of criticism, which we would strongly recommend to antiquarian students.

A remark of Mr Harris, which we here extract, offers valuable confirmation, and is the more valuable as being the result of observation:—

“It is observable, that as the purest stream always flows nearest to the fountain; so among the many writers of the life of this prelate, those who have lived nearest to his time, have had the greatest regard to truth, and have been the most sparing in recounting miracles. Thus Fiech, Bishop of Sletty, the saint’s contemporary, comprehended the most material events of his life in an Irish hymn of thirty-four stanzas, a literal translation of which into Latin, hath been since published, with the original Irish, by John Colgan; but in process of time, as the writers of his life increased, so his miracles were multiplied, especially in the dark ages, until they at last exceeded all



bounds of credibility. Probus, a writer of the tenth century, outdid all who preceded him, but he himself was far surpassed by Joceline. At length came Philip O'Sullivan, who made Joceline his ground-work, yet far exceeded him, and seemed fully determined no future writer should be ever able to surpass him in relating the number and magnitude of St Patrick's miracles."

These facts are here cursorily stated, because they are universally known in our age of historical light. The inference, though not quite so familiar, is too obvious to detain us long. It evidently presents an important rule to guide the antiquary in his researches—as by a careful reference to these considerations, the age and the genuineness of the most important ancient manuscripts can be tested with much advantage. The criterion is rendered important by the controversies which in our own time, throw such doubt over the very existence of some of the most considerable personages of our history. An antiquary of much deserved reputation, has ventured, and on very specious grounds, to express an entire incredulity on the very fact of the existence of such a person as St Patrick. He has been ably replied to, upon the merits of his own argument by several; amongst others, by Mr Dalton, whose learned arguments we have attentively read, since the former impression of this article. With his arguments we perfectly concur, but we here offer one, as we cannot indeed afford to enter at more length into the subject.

The doubts of modern antiquaries have been mainly drawn from the two great and obvious sources of historical objection: the apoeryphal character of the greater part of the historians of the saint, and the silence of earlier and more authentic authority. Other objections there are; but these alone demand remark.

To the first of these, it may be *generally* replied, that the legend writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, are not to be accused of inventing persons, but of seizing and exaggerating traditions: even in this respect, their fault being more generally the result of the common error, of seeing and interpreting the past, according to the ideas of the present, than of wilful and deliberate imposition. That there were forgeries, must indeed be admitted: but even in these the material must have been established by the common consent of opinion. It is however to such, that our argument applies directly. No writing between the eighth and ninth centuries, could by any possibility have been the production of the fourth or fifth. And if the writing in dispute, can be traced so far back, the presumption in favour of its authenticity, remains, at least yet, unshaken by objection. The forgery of documents which was a known fraud of the middle ages, had not at that early period its commencement or its objects. But on this point it is unnecessary to dilate. As an example of this argument, we must be content barely to mention the composition well known to antiquarians, under the name of the "*Confessio Patricii*"—a narrative equally remarkable for its simple and genuine representation of the mind and spirit of a Christian of the primitive church, and its total freedom from the common characters of the legends of the dark ages of literature. Of this character, though in a less degree, and making some allowances for the nature of the composition, is the celebrated though not commonly



known hymn of Fiech, purporting to be a life of Patrick, and quoted as authoritative by most writers. Of this we here present the reader with a specimen: it lies before us in the original Irish. We however must prefer the more generally intelligible medium of a Latin translation, ascribed to Mr Michel O'Clery, one of the compilers of our ancient annals, who are known by the title of the *Four Masters*.

Natus est Patricius Nempturri  
 Ut refertur in historiis,  
 Fait annorum sedecim  
 Quando ductus in captivitatis ærumaas.

Sucat nomen ei primo impositum erat  
 Quantum ad patrem attinet sciendum fuerit,  
 Filius Calfarnii filii Otidii  
 Nepos Diaconi Odissii.

Annis sex erat in servitute  
 Escis hominum (nempe gentilium) non vescens  
 Ideo vocatus Cathraige  
 Quia quatuor familiis inserviebat.

Dixit victor angelus servo  
 Milconis : ut trans mare se conferret  
 Pedem imposuit supra petram  
 Ibique : exinde manent impressa ejus vestigia.

Profectus est trans Alpes omnes  
 Trajecto mari ; (quæ fuit felix expeditio)  
 Et apud Germanum remansit  
 In Australi parte Latii.

In insulis maris Tyrrheni  
 Mansit : uti memoro  
 Legit canones apud Germanum  
 Sicut testantur historiæ.

In Hiberniam venit  
 Admonitus angelorum apparitionibus  
 Sæpius in visionibus videbat  
 Se debere denuo eo redire

Salutaris erat Hiberniæ  
 Adventus Patricii ad Fochlaidios  
 Audiebat a longe vocem invocantium  
 Infantium de silvis Fochlaid

Rogabant ut ad cos veniret sanctus  
 Qui discurrerat per Latium  
 Ut converteret ab errore  
 Populos Hiberniæ ad viam vitæ.

Vates Hibernia vaticinabantur  
 Adventurum tempus pacis novum  
 Quæ duratura sit in perpetuum  
 Unde deserta foret Temores sub silentio.

Sui Druydæ Loegario  
 Adventum Patricii non cœlabant  
 Adimpleta sunt vaticinia  
 De domino quem predicabant.

Clarus erat Patricius usq. mortem  
 Extitit et strenuus in exterminandis erroribus  
 Et hinc merita ejus exaltata sunt  
 Supra nationes hominem.

Hymnos et Apocalypsin  
 Et tres quinquagenas *psalmorum* in dies canebat  
 Prædicabat, baptizabat, orabat,  
 Et a laudibus Dei non cessabat.

Nec temporis aliorum impediēbat  
 Quo minus manaret de nocte in mediis aquis  
 Ad cœli potiundum gaudium  
 Prædicabat de die super collibus.

In fonte san. ad aquilonem juxta Bennaboirche  
 (Qui fons nunquam deficit)  
 Decantabat centum psalmos singulis noctibus  
 Regi angelorum inserviēdo.

Cubabat postea super nuda petra  
 Capsula amictus madida  
 Saxum fuit ejus pulvinar  
 Sic arcebat a corpore remissionem.

Prædicabat evangelium populis,  
 Multas virtutes et signa simul operatus:  
 Curabat cæcos et leprosos:  
 Mortuos revocabat ad vitam.

Patricius prædicabat Scotis  
 Passus multos labores in Latio  
 Ut venirent in die judicii  
 Quos convertit ad vitam æternam.

Filii Emeri, Filii Erimonii.  
 Omnes seducti a dæmone,  
 Quos et recondidit Sathanas  
 In magno puteo infernali.

It is indeed in reference to Patrick, that the reflections on which we have been led to dwell at length, may be best exemplified. Many antiquarians have strongly questioned or denied his existence or his pretensions as the apostle of Ireland: among these Ledwich stands most conspicuous. But the same doubts have recently come into fashion, and been urged with considerable skill. Having attentively perused the principal arguments, we have here thought it sufficient to notice the defect of the investigation, rather with a desire to see it taken up on more comprehensive principles, than with much concern for the inference. The grounds of objections are various:—that here examined consists in the affirmation of the doubtful character of the legends of the middle ages. The argument is simply this,—that every mention of the name of Patrick, connected with opinions inconsistent with the spirit of those doctrines and pretensions maintained by the church of Rome in the middle ages must have been produced in much earlier times, and can be referred to no fraudulent design,—if, indeed, it will not be at once admitted that such writings as were not forged in those ages to which an extensive system of forgery has been imputed, were not likely to have been forged at all.

The pertinacious adherence to its ancient traditions, so evidently

characteristic of the Irish church, renders it unlikely in the extreme, that it should allow a spurious saint of such magnitude to grow up without question among its own traditions—still less, to be dilated into such formidable dimensions by the legendary blowpipe of Probus and Joceline, without uttering one denial.

But it is by no means difficult, from the same premises, to account for the silence, or the meagre entry of Bede's martyrology. The Irish and British churches were, in Bede's time, widely different in spirit. Christianity had been re-introduced into England by Gregory, after the occurrence of some changes, not known in the Irish church; and there was no union, but on the contrary a feeling of some acrimony among the English writers of that age, against the heretical antiquity of the Irish church.

We are thus led to one reason why Bede may not have seen cause to expatiate on the illustrious lights of a church, which he is likely to have regarded as schismatic. There is indeed a still stronger reason for silence. St Patrick's fame has come down to us through the medium of vast exaggerations. The true inference to be drawn from those omissions, which the ingenuity of modern reasoners has converted into arguments that he never existed, should simply be, that he was not quite so remarkable a person as legends have described, and fond nationality believed. Instead of the wonder-worker crowned with shamrock, and marching to the national air to subdue legions of vipers, the earlier documents describe a missionary teacher, simple, severe, and zealous, exhibiting the clearest evidence of one instructed in the word, and supported by the grace of his Master. Such a character is not the subject of imposture, which deals in different representations, and for different purposes. To Bede and the writers of the eighth century, he was seen divested of the rays of wonder, with which after ages adorned his name.

As there are in the following lives, a few allusions to the early controversies in the Irish church, we may conclude with some account of those which have the greatest historical celebrity.

The fact of a controversy, on a point so intrinsically absurd as the clerical cut of the hair, may not appear of light significance to those who have justly appreciated the foregoing observations. The more trifling the ground of controversy, the more decided is its value as an indication of the extent of the difference. The tonsure was a harmless superstition. The Roman ecclesiastics shaved the crown of the head. The Irish, allowing the hair to grow on the crown, shaved, or shorn away the front. Each church appealed to antiquity, and the precedent of their respective founders, real or supposed. But it is quite evident, that the part taken by the Irish monks in so trifling a difference is quite inconsistent with any authority whatever being supposed to have existed in the Roman see. It affords an absolute and incontestible proof that, during the long period of this silly controversy, *nothing* could have been conceded, whatever may have been assented to, on the undisputed common ground of Christian communion.

The subject of the Paschal controversy, which, for nearly two hundred years, divided the British church, was a difference as to the time for celebrating Easter, of which the main grounds are as follows:—One



party following the general corrected method of the Western church for fixing the time of Easter, computed their calendar by a cycle of 19 years for the moon, and 28 years for the sun. The other still used the rejected and exceedingly erroneous cycle, of 84 years for the same purpose. And secondly, the first, or Western church party, avoiding the adoption of the Jewish passover, never began Easter on the 14th day of the moon; but should it chance to fall on Sunday, referred it to the following Sunday. The other party, adopting no such scruple, began on the 14th, and so on in the following years. This opposition was not at an end till the year 800; when the excess of the lunar time grew so very apparent, as to make the error generally noticed, when the method was abandoned by its last adherents.

Most writers on this subject seem to have thought proper to offer some brief explanation on the nature of this ancient controversy, which occupied the churches for so many ages; but the subject has enough of difficulty, to admit of no explanation we fear consistent with the brevity we should wish to preserve.

The principle on which the whole depends is, that the lunar and solar revolutions are not commensurable; and, therefore, when it became important to fix a point of time with reference to both these periods by some general rule of computation—that is to say, a certain date of the moon's age to a certain day—the object to be ascertained would first be, to find some number of revolutions of the one, which should approach nearest to some number of the other. These numbers thus described are called cycles. Various cycles have been found, and of these various combinations have been made.

The occasion for this mode of computation arose on the dispersion of the Jews, who, still desirous to celebrate their passover at the same time, found it necessary to seek some other method than mere observation, to ascertain the precise time of the new moon. To fix the new moons, therefore, an astronomical cycle became necessary. Of these it appears that two had been in use; one of which consisted of 8, and the other of 76 Julian years (a Julian year was 365 days, 6 hours). These the Jews added together, thus forming one for themselves of 84 Julian years. The Christian church, taking its rise in the Jewish, carried with it their method for the computation of Easter.

Omitting such changes and disagreements as our object does not require, in the beginning of the third century, the application of this cycle was found to have led to a considerable error; as this cycle left still, between the solar and lunar periods, a difference of nearly, 31 hours. To remedy this several efforts were made. The difficulty was, however, in no degree diminished, till the Nicene council, 325, decreed the following particulars:—1st, That Easter should every-where begin on Sunday. 2d, That it should begin on the Sunday immediately following the 14th day of the moon, first after the vernal equinox, then 21st March. 3d, That it should be referred to the bishop of Alexandria, to calculate the time for each year in accordance with these rules. For this purpose the Alexandrians assumed the cycle of 19 years, the most precise that has yet been ascertained; as, at this period of years, the lunar phases return within an hour and a half of the same solar time as on the previous 19 years.

The Roman see, unwilling to follow the guidance of the Alexandrian, before long, abandoning the new method, returned to the adoption of the Jewish cycle; which they retained, until the amount of the error caused a perceptible confusion. It was then that Hilarius, bishop of Rome, employed the presbyter, Victorius, to ascertain a more accurate cycle. Victorius assumed the lunar cycle of nineteen years; and as the more precise period of solar time was found to be twenty-eight years, in which the days of the month would again return to the same days of the week, it seemed obvious that twenty-eight times nineteen years would give the most near combination of solar and lunar times into a third cycle; consequently  $28 \times 19 = 532$  years, was now adopted. Founding his computation on this cycle, and making the necessary allowances, Victorius assumed the beginning of his period at A. D. 28, and calculated the days for Easter for every succeeding year for that and all succeeding periods. This laborious computation he published A. D. 457. It is here unnecessary to explain the further amendments, at remoter periods, owing to the errors arising from the accumulation of the small differences mentioned above in the lunar cycle, and those arising from the precession of equinoxes. We have now arrived at the controversy of the age.

The patriarchs of the British church brought with them the cycle of eighty-four years; and their communication with the Roman see having ceased during the long interval between 449 and 600 nearly, they were found, at the end of that interval, celebrating a different Easter, according to a different rule. Hence arose the long and fierce controversy alluded to in so many of these lives.

The last point to be here explained, is the celebrated controversy of the Three Chapters. It is the more important, as an eminent authority has referred to it as the occasion of the separation between the churches of Rome and Ireland. We must, of course, according to our own view, look on it rather as an evidence of undoubted independence.

The language of cardinal Baronius is as follows:—"All the Irish bishops zealously joined in defence of the Three Chapters. On being condemned by the church of Rome, and finding the sentence confirmed by the fifth council, they added the crime of schism; and separating themselves from it, they joined the schismatics of Italy and Africa and other regions—exalting themselves in the vain presumption that they were standing up for the catholic faith."\*

\* Baronius, *Annales*.

The ground in this controversy taken by the Irish church, whether orthodox or the contrary, is not a question to which we attach any present importance: though we may not unfitly notice the independence manifested in the maintenance of opposite views; and the opposition amounting to an extent sufficient to bear the construction of Baronius. Without doubt, it must be admitted that the church of Ireland was tainted with errors and corruptions; and we must also admit that, in point of knowledge and intellectual cultivation, so important in the decision of controversial difficulties, it cannot be fairly compared with the main churches of the East and West at this period. Its main preservation of the primitive faith, was owing to *its separation* from the main grounds of error—speculation and political intrigue.



The history of this controversy is the following:—Nestorius was a Syrian bishop, the disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia, one of the most celebrated expositors of the fifth century. Before his time, though there was a general agreement as to the union of the Divine and human natures in the person of our Saviour, yet, concerning the manner and effects of this union, no question had been yet openly raised. That this should yet occur, must sooner or later have become a consequence of the subtle and metaphysical spirit which had, for a long time, been usurping the schools of theology. In the rashness and perplexity of speculative disquisition, doubtful positions and ambiguous expressions would escape from the subtilizing pen; and opinions not contemplated by the teacher, thus become noticed by the acumen, and fixed by the respect, of the student. On the subject of the nature of Christ, expressions were, in this manner so loosely used, as to favour the most opposite notions; and thus, it is probable, first arose the opposite tenets which confused the natures or divided the personality of the incarnate being of the Christ. The various shades of heresy which emanated from the fruitful obscurity of this mysterious topic, do not fall within our province to observe upon. Anastasius, a friend of Nestorius, had the merit of first giving a tangible form to the controverted notions. In a sermon delivered A. D. 428, he eagerly condemned the title, “Mother of God,” as applied to the Virgin Mary, and contended that it should be “Mother of Christ:” God, he observed, could not be born, and that the earthly nature alone could have birth from the earthly womb of a human mother. The position thus publicly and distinctly expressed, stirred up much opposition. Nestorius took up the cause of his friend, and maintained the orthodoxy of his opinions, with growing earnestness, and an eloquence which gave them additional notoriety. The opposition of some monks at Constantinople was of still more effect, and the fury of the people was excited against the heresiarchs. Still their opinions received currency, and the controversy widened in its progress, until it soon occupied and divided the theologians of the fifth century.

The council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, while it distinctly affirmed the doctrine—now most universally received, and most clearly in accordance with holy writ—of the subsistence of the two distinct natures of God and man, in one person; yet, with an inconsistency characteristic of the philosophising theology of the time, affirmed the orthodoxy of certain writers whose opinions were strongly tinged with the opposite opinions of Nestorius. These were, the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, from which, it is not improbable, that the opinions of Nestorius were first imbibed; the works of Theodoret, defending the Nestorians against Cyril, bishop of Alexandria; and third, a letter from the bishop of Edessa, on the condemnation of Nestorius. These were the writings which afterwards became the subject of contention, under the famous title of the **THREE CHAPTERS**.

A controversy on the doctrines of Origen, in which the followers of these doctrines were condemned by an edict from the emperor Justinian, was the proximate cause of the revival of this discussion in the following century. Theodore, bishop of Cesarea, who belonged



to the sect of the Monophysites,\* and at the same time had adopted the opinions of Origen, stood high in the favour of Justinian. This emperor was anxiously bent on extirpating a particular branch of the Monophysites, who were called Acephali, and consulted Theodore on the occasion. Theodore, anxious to divert the attention of this active and interfering, but not very sagacious emperor, from the persecution of the Origenists, suggested that the Acephali would return to the church, on the condition that the acts of the council of Chalcedon, which affirmed the orthodoxy of the writings above described as the Three Chapters, should be cancelled; and that other writings of the same authors, which tended to Nestorianism, should be condemned. The emperor consented, and the result was an edict to this effect, in the council of Constantinople, A. D. 553.

That Ireland had heard the preaching of the Christian faith before the commencement of Patrick's ministry, seems to be a settled point among the writers on the ecclesiastical antiquities of the country. The assertion of Tertullian, that Christian preaching had made its way in the British isles where the Roman arms had never reached, would seem an assertion descriptive of Ireland. The mission of Palladius, "ad Scotos in Christo credentes," directly implies a Christian church in Ireland. Ancient writers, admitting this fact, have attempted to trace the first introduction of Christianity, and to ascertain its author. Such attempts have, however, failed to attain any satisfactory result. Various conjectures have been proposed by a host of writers, but Usher, whose learning and ability might well outweigh them all, has sifted their authorities and arguments, without better success than discovering the fallacy of their suppositions. Of these conjectures, the multitude is such, as, without further objection, of itself to cast doubt upon all. St James the son of Zebedee, Simon Zelotes, Simon Peter, St Paul, Aristobulus, mentioned in Rom. xvi. 10, with others, have all been proposed, and none ascertained by any evidences which are beyond the scope of bare possibility. It would here be inconsistent with our object to enter into the ocean of antiquarian citation and comment, which occupies many pages of Usher's most learned and elaborate work on the first beginnings of the British churches. One of these conjectures has, however, met very general favour, as a topic of denial or affirmation among recent inquirers. The assertion quoted from Marian, that St James preached the gospel in Spain, and to the nations of western regions, &c., is reflected with more precise affirmation by Vicentius, who says, that "James, by the will of God directed to the Irish coast, fearlessly preached the divine word."† On this Usher observes, that before the separate mission of the apostles, James was proved to have been put to death by order of Herod; and that other authors, whom Vincentius had followed, refer the same event, expressed in the same language, not to Hibernia but to "Galæcia;" so

\* The Monophysites held, that in Christ the Divine and human nature were so entirely united, that they together constituted a single nature; yet this without any confusion or mixture, or change, sustained by either. The Acephali were a sect of these, who took this title in consequence of having rejected their chief, Mongus, of whose conduct they disapproved.

† Usher, *Primordia*, p. 5.

that the high probability of a mistake, arising from a literal error, must have betrayed Vincentius to set down Ibernica for Iberia. We omit the further consideration of these obscure and vague conjectures: as to St Paul we may observe, that his history is too distinctly marked, in a work which is virtually the record of his life and actions, authenticated by whatever authority is conceded to the inspired writers, to allow of an episode so considerable and so obscure.

It is enough to rest on the high probability, that, in the general mission which spread the gospel far and wide among all the nations of the known world, Ireland was not passed over; and for this the authorities, though for the most part indirect or merely inferential, are satisfactory enough.

The state of the Hibernian church was yet evidently at the lowest; and probably on the point of yielding to the enmity which the gospel alone, of all the creeds entertained by man, seems to have elicited, from human nature, in every age and climate. At the coming of St Patrick, four Christian preachers are mentioned by old Irish testimonies to have been before him, and still living in his time. These were, Ailbe, afterwards first bishop of Emly; Declan of Ardmore; Kieran of Saigre (by successive translation removed to Kilkenny); and Ibar of Beg Eri, a small island of the Wexford coast.

We think it but fair to apprise the reader, that considerable doubt exists as to the early date assigned to these ancient fathers of the Irish church. It chiefly rests on the dates of their deaths, which do not agree with the notion of their having preceded St Patrick. Ailbe died in 527; Declan later still; and Kieran cannot be supposed to have lived in the same period, but is referred to a much later time. If we allow Ailbe to have been 100 years of age at the time of his death, he would, on this supposition, be no more than five, in 432, when St Patrick arrived in Ireland as a preacher of Christ. These doubts, however, by no means affect the statement, founded on probabilities independent of personal history, that there was a Christian church of a prior date in our island.

## **Mansuetus.**

DIED A. D. 105.

MANSUETUS is mentioned as a convert of St Peter the apostle, who, it is said, sent him to preach the gospel in Lorraine. He built a church there, and died after a ministry which lasted forty years, on the 3d of September, 105. He was canonized by Leo IX., in the 11th century, and is proved by Usher to have been a native of Ireland.

This inference seems sufficiently supported by the following couplet, from a life written of him in the 10th century:—

“ Insula Christicolæ gestabat Hibernia gentis  
Unde genus traxit, et satus inde fuis.”

## St Catuldus.

HE was born in Munster, educated at Lismore, and was made bishop of Rachuen. After some years spent here, he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and, on his return through Italy, was made bishop of Tarento. He is also mentioned as having held a professor's chair at Geneva, with much reputation. He is celebrated by many ancient writers, both in prose and verse; and is chiefly famed for the prophecies of which he was supposed to be the author. He also has obtained no small celebrity for the dreams he dreamed, as well as for his occasional appearance in other people's dreams. He is commemorated by Moronus, Juvenis, Petrus de Natalibus, Ferarius, Usher, Colgan. He lived in the latter part of the 5th century.

## Palladius.

A. D. 431.

ACCORDING to Prosper, Palladius was sent to the "Scots believing in Christ." He was a deacon in the see of Rome, and sent on this mission by its bishop, Celestine. There is some ground for the supposition that he was a native of Britain, where he first became known as the adversary of the Pelagian heresy. In the year 431 he is supposed to have arrived in Ireland, accompanied by several missionaries, amongst whom were Augustin and Benedict. His first efforts were in the county of Wexford. He is next traced as the founder of three churches in Wicklow. He met, however, with violent opposition from the heathen priests—as yet by far the strongest party in this island. They succeeded in influencing the prince, Nathi, against him, and he was compelled to flee. He is said to have died on his way to Rome in the same year, but the place is doubtful.

## Pelagius.

A. D. 394—415.

THE birth-place of Pelagius cannot strictly be ascertained, and his country has been the subject of much controversy; on the perusal of much of which, as stated by different writers, but chiefly by Usher, we think the balance very doubtful. Some ancient writers have called him a Briton, and referred his birth to Wales. Catelupus and Caius assert that he had been a Cantabrigian. Ranulphus says,—“Some relate that Pelagius was an abbot in that famous monastery of Bangor,” &c.; on which Usher notes, that there was another of the same name in Hibernia, founded by St Comgall; and the ambiguity thus arising has appeared to some recent critics to solve a part of the difficulty. But, on looking on the date of Comgall's foundation, 555,



and that of the council of Carthage, 412, in which the errors of Pelagius were condemned, this explanation must manifestly be abandoned. But the fact of Pelagius having been a monk of the Welsh monastery which, according to Bede, flourished in the 6th century, and may have existed earlier by a couple of centuries, decides nothing as to his native country. There was much room for error in a point so likely to be indistinctly known, at the time when it may have been an object to ascertain it; and, as very slight indications are all that can be mostly had on such questions, we incline to take the direct affirmation or strong implication of those who were the most likely to know all that could be known of him. England and Ireland were frequently confused by the writers of the early ages, under the collective appellation of the "British Isles;" and the appellation of "Briton," hastily adopted, would receive a stricter construction from stricter minds, or in more informed periods; for this is an abundant source of historic error, and this may sufficiently account for the frequent application of the term "Brito" to his name. Garnier and Vossius are cited as admitting or asserting that he was an Irishman; and the affirmation of Vossius is remarkable as bearing the indication of a conviction, founded on such proofs as could satisfy a judgment so critical as his. "Pelagius professione monachus, natione non Gallus Brito, ut Danæus putavit, nec anglo-Britannus, ut scripsit Balæus, sed Scotus." Lib. i. cap. 3.\* St Jerome, in the contumelious tone of controversy adopted in his age, speaks of him thus:—"Neither let him be set down as most stolid and unwieldy with Hibernian porridge."

To whatever district of the British islands he may have owed his birth, the doubt alone is a sufficient reason why he should not be omitted here. Amongst our many ancient names which fill this period, no other has the same title to commemoration, for the wide-spread fame and the mighty influence of his talents and errors.

The earliest date to which we can distinctly trace him, is the year 394; at which time Major, in his *Treatise on the Acts of the Hibernians*, says, "The pest-bearing Pelagius, the Briton, sprung up in the church, denying the grace of God."† This, however, unquestionably ante-dates considerably the first notices we can discover of Pelagianism. Leaving, however, these considerations, the acts of the life of this eminent champion of an evil cause, are too clearly recorded in the whole history of his age, to require that we should detain our readers with the citation of authors.

Early in the 5th century, Pelagius dwelt in Rome, where the purity and amiability of his life and manners were rendered illustrious by the spirit, eloquence, and acuteness which brought them into extensive notice. But his mind, unclouded by passions, was (as indeed often occurs) inclined to form too low an estimate of their frightful power over the human race, and to exaggerate vastly the power and influence of virtue. Extending, probably, the insufficient experience of a cold temperament or of an untried world, into a theory, his reason revolted

\* Pelagius, by profession a monk, by country not a Welsh Briton, as Danæus has supposed, nor an Anglo-Briton, as Bale has written, but a Hibernian.

† "Anno 394, post partum virgineum, virus pestiferum Pelagius Brito in ecclesiâ seminavit, gratium Dei negans."—*Usher, Primord.* 212.

against the doctrine of human depravity, as inferred from Scripture; and, assigning far too much to the strength of man, he, with the common error of sectarians, assigned too little force to the texts which declare his corruption, curse, and the method of his justification; and magnified, by this removal of their limiting doctrines, those texts which inculcate virtue and insist on good works. Totally losing sight of those very distinct and intelligible conditions, on which the very definition of good works depends ("faith working by love," the "fruits of the Spirit"), and identifying them with the notions of heathen morality, he involved himself and his hearers in quibbles founded on verbal assumption. An act, to be sinful, must be voluntary; and to be voluntary, there must be a power to resist it: and from this and other such sophistical flippancies, it was easy to deduce the tenets which, by his opponents as well as by the disciples of his school, were construed into a direct opposition to Divine grace. Pelagius himself, however, seems to have been anxious, by specious provisions, to guard against these consequences. He carefully distinguishes between the fact, or actual conduct of men, and the abstract possibility of resisting sinful inclinations. "*De posse aut non posse, non de esse aut non esse, contendimus,*" is one of the many forms in which he states his own conception of the question; after which he admits that no man is free from actual sin. Supposing his antagonist to charge him with the denial of Divine grace, he replies, "I do not deny it; who makes the admission that the effect must be produced, admits that there is a cause by which it must be produced; but you, who deny the possibility of the effect, necessarily imply the denial of any cause by which it can be produced."\* Such is a specimen of the sophistry to which Pelagius and, after him, many resorted to defend tenets so founded on misapprehension, that it is difficult for the reader to believe that they were ever sincerely maintained. The truth appears to be—and it seems to be a truth applicable to the sectarians of every age, who have departed from the full recognition of every portion of the scheme of redemption, as comprised in the broadly comprehensive enunciations of Scripture—that there has been a constant necessity felt to state their opinions, so as to avoid the charge of the objectionable consequences of these opinions. But this precaution has never prevented either their disciples or their opponents from setting aside this artificial entrenchment of equivocal words, and adopting the consequences to the fullest extent of their zeal. It may be fit, before leaving this topic, to notice that the whole reasoning of Pelagius, through all his writings, seems to be founded on the equivocal sense of the word "sin," by which it is used to signify the commission of an act, or a certain state of heart unacceptable to God, and productive of sins of omission and commission. A thousand motives, little worthy of even human approbation, may deter a human being from guilt: one motive alone *can* be acceptable to God; and the true question to be answered must concern this motive. Hence, indeed, the reason and fitness of the 13th article of the church of England.†

\* Usher, p. 236.

† It is only after a full acquaintance with the opposite errors and perplexing subtleties of sectarian disputants on either side of truth, that the full merit of these



Whatever may have been the fear or caution of Pelagius, his opinions were quickly reverberated, in their full and undisguised form, by his followers; and he was himself led to follow them up into various consequences which set all disguise or reserve at nought. As we scarcely think it allowable to convert a simple memoir into a theological dissertation, we shall here present a brief abstract of those heresies which, we must observe, are the substantial events in the life of Pelagius.

He maintained that the sin of Adam was attended with no consequences to his posterity; that every man was free to obey or disobey the commands of God, as Adam was before his fall; that good works were meritorious in the sight of God; and that man, by the use of his natural faculties, could act conformably with Divine law, without any assistance from Divine grace. The opposite doctrines he taught were pernicious, as being adapted to oppose the cultivation of active virtue. Other tenets, respecting baptism, are mentioned; but this leading error may suffice.

So great was the respect for the talent and private character of Pelagius, that the first impression caused by the publication of his opinions seems to have been mixed with tenderness; and it is a strong indication of the impression he had made, that many applied to him the text of Revelation, "and there fell a great star from heaven."

He was opposed by the eloquence and reasoning of Augustin, and loudly assailed by his opponents with all the varied resources of controversy, whether employed in the support of truth or defence of error. Reasonings were mingled with invectives, and these enforced by sterner means.

These collisions of human bitterness were, for a moment, silenced by terrors which shook the city to its foundation, and stilled all other passions in the hearts of an empire. The effect of the capture by the Goths of the ancient metropolis of the West, is described in an epistle from Pelagius himself, written to the Christian lady Demetrias: "It has occurred, as you have heard, when Rome, the mistress of the world, struck with gloomy apprehensions, trembled at the harsh clamour and shrill reverberation of the Gothic trumpets. Where, then, was the order of nobility? where the jealous distinctions of rank? All was confusedly mingled by a levelling terror. There was wailing in every house, and one consternation seized on every soul. The slave and noble were as one: the image of death was equally terrible to all; unless, indeed, that they felt more painful fears to whom life had been the sweetest. If we are thus terror-struck by mortal foes, and by a human hand, what shall be our feeling when the trumpet shall begin to thunder forth its fearful call from the heavens; and the universe shall rebellow to the voice of the archangel—more loud than any trumpet; and when we shall behold, not the arms of human

thoroughly judicious expositions of Christian doctrine can be known. To appreciate the skill with which they preserve the whole of seemingly-opposed truths, and avoid the opposite errors which partial views of Scripture have occasioned, seems to have demanded a degree of caution, moderation, and a comprehensiveness of intellect not very often to be found in the same degree.



fabric waved above our heads, but the hosts of the heavenly powers assembled together?"

From these terrors which he has thus described, Pelagius, with his disciple and fellow-countryman Celestius, seems to have withdrawn into Africa, as he was present at a conference held with the Donatists, ten months after, in Carthage. This appears from the testimony of Augustin, who, first having mentioned the previous arrival of Pelagius in his sec (of Hippo), and his speedy retreat, proceeds to say, that he recollected having once or twice remarked his face in Carthage, "when I was pressingly occupied about the conference which we were about to have with the Donatists; but he hastened away to the countries beyond sea." Bale asserts, that he at this period visited Egypt, Syria, and other Eastern countries; and Usher cites a rather ironical epistle, from a Greek writer to Pelagius himself, which seems to cast a gleam upon his character, while it demands the usual allowance due to all satirical representation. "'Grey hairs are shed over Ephraim, and he knoweth it not,'—without doubt acting the youth in visions of fictions. In the same way a crowd of years have brought hoariness upon you; and nevertheless you retain a stubborn and unbending spirit—travelling from one monastery to another, and making trial of the tables of all. Wherefore, if the nicety of meats and the luxury of sauces is so much your object, go rather and assail with your flatteries those who bear the magisterial office, and walk the streets of cities; for hermits cannot entertain you according to your desire."\*

From this, in some measure, appears the general nature of the efforts made by Pelagius, to obtain proselytes among the vast multitude of the monastic communities which swarmed from the bosom of the church, falling fast into heresy and prolific superstition. It is, indeed, well worth noticing, and applicable to the heresies of all times, the mixture of dishonest artifice which takes a place even in the most daring efforts which obtain popular success. Pelagius united, in a singular degree, consummate craft and audacious boldness. Involving the most extreme errors in doubtful assertions, which, to the populace, might seem to bear the most orthodox interpretation, he reserved the comment for private exposition; and, while he dexterously avoided committing himself in public beyond what the public sense might receive, he sounded his way in every private channel, took advantage of ignorance, pliability, and intellectual unsoundness, to gain proselytes to opinions which he avoided pushing to their consequences. This he left for the rasher zeal of disciples, and the under-working of opinions of which the seed is scattered. In allusion to this part of his character, the following extract will be understood:—"Speak out what you believe: declare in public that which you secretly teach to your disciples; the privacy of cells hear one view of your doctrines, the pulpits another." . . . . "For that alone is heresy which shrinks from a public explanation, which it doth fear to offer in public. The silence of the masters advances the zeal of the disciples; what they hear in the secret chamber they proclaim on the house-top. If their

\* Usher, Primord. 216.

teaching shall please, it goes to the honour of the master; if not, to the shame of the disciple. And so your heresy has increased, and you have deceived many.”\* This is from a controversial correspondence into which he had entered with Jerome, during his residence in Jerusalem, where, after leaving Africa, he took up his abode. This position was, then, the most favourable for his purpose that could be chosen. Free from the disadvantages to be encountered in any of the great metropolitan centres of ecclesiastical power, it was the universal centre of pilgrimage from every Christian shore into which the devotion, zeal, and superstition of the Christian world was pouring and returning, and from whence he might hope to spread his opinions widest and with least opposition; while, in the meantime, Rhodes in the east, and Sicily in the west, were the district schools for the furtherance of this heresy in their respective churches.

The prudent reserve which thus served as the purpose of a covered way for the designs of Pelagius, and also to ward off from his person, the more direct, and therefore popular, attacks of his adversaries, were quite free from fear, or any natural infirmity of nerve or purpose. With the frontless confidence, so familiar to all who understand the arts of popular deception, Pelagius gave himself little trouble, as to the interpretations of Augustin or Jerome. He cared not for the opinion of the learned, the wise, and the powerful in reason or authority; if he might, by any means, turn aside such exposures as might defeat his purpose. Careless of opinion—indifferent to abuse—holding no communion of feeling with other minds of the same order—specious—insinuating—watchful: he was also firm and confident, within the limits of prudence. In the power of his intellectual strength, he was confident; and this confidence was preserved by the difficulty of overthrowing one, whose force it was to select the field of combat for his opponent, and to dwell in perpetual evasion. This character is partly shadowed out by one of his antagonists: “Goliath stands most enormous in pride, and tumid with carnal strength, imagining himself singly equal to all undertakings—clothed head, hands, and whole body, in the folds of manifold array; having his armour-bearer behind him, who, though he does not fight, yet supplies the whole expenditure of arms.”† The armour-bearer was Celestius, a fellow-countryman, and a disciple, who soon began to be considered more formidable than his master.

In Jerusalem, Pelagius was supported by the patronage of the bishop of that church, whose own opinions tinged with the views of Origen, leaned to the same way of thinking. In consequence of this protection, Pelagius expressed his opinions more freely. A synod was held about this period (415, A. D.), in Jerusalem, for the purpose of examining into his opinions; it was conducted by Orosius, a Spanish monk deputed by Augustin, in whose writings there is an account of the proceedings. But so dexterously did Pelagius play the game of verbal equivocation, and so deficient was the controversy of the 6th century, in that soundness of reason, which scatters aside the thin artifice of verbal equivocation and nugatory distinction, that Pelagius was acquitted from imputation here, and soon after in the council of Diospolis. But in 416 he was condemned in Carthage.

\* St Jerome; Usher, Primord. 228.

† Orosius; Usher, Primord. 234.



This controversy was carried on by epistles, preachings, theses, and synods, with various success, and with far more of subtlety and eloquence, than clearness of comprehension, or justness of discrimination, on either side; and more by the opposition of extreme opinions, than by the sound and full exposition of the truth. It was thus one of those great stages of opinion, from which have emanated the manifold divisions of the cloud of heresies which fill the atmosphere of theology, and carry on a restless contention in error, on every side of the truth, from the beginning even to the end. From the council of Carthage, Pelagius appealed to the see of Rome. It was hoped that the decision of the Metropolitan would carry with it the weight of court influence, and draw the authority of the emperor with that of the bishop—and, in this hope, the more orthodox bishops must have cheerfully acquiesced in a step so promising in its seeming circumstances. Zosimus, who had recently been raised to the metropolitan see, was, however, imposed upon by a confession, artfully worded by Celestius, so as to carry the sense of heresy under the sound and surface of orthodoxy. His simplicity was also assailed by the letters of Pelagius; and he declared in their favour. The declaration, however, quickly drew upon his head, a storm of indignation, invective, and reproach, from the sounder bishops of Africa, with Augustin at their head, to which he quickly felt the necessity, or the justice, of giving way. From approbation, Zosimus changed his tone to the utmost severity of censure and condemnation; and in consequence, in this fatal year for the Pelagian heresy, an imperial decree, in the names of the emperors Theodosius and Honorius was issued, condemning Pelagius and Celestius, with all who should thenceforth maintain their opinions, to exile.

The heresy thus suppress, nevertheless propagated a vivacious impulse throughout the church. The opinions remained under other names, and in other combinations; and Pelagius and Augustin has never since wanted their representatives in the lists of controversy.

Pelagius, after this, was little engaged in any public ecclesiastical controversy, as he ceases to be personally noticed in the writings of the age. He probably had begun to feel, for some time, the tranquillizing symptoms of old age, and given place to the increasing ascendancy of the vigor and abilities of his pupil Celestius; who, from this, is found in the foremost place, and maintaining the opinions of his master, with more boldness and equal dexterity.

### Celestius.

OF Celestius there is little to be said that is strictly in the nature of personal history; and his theological career would be but a repetition, with distinctions of time and place, little interesting, of our account of Pelagius. That he was a native of Ireland is undisputed. So great was the general impression produced by his writings and eloquence, that the fame of his more cautious master, was, to some extent, transferred to him, and he was, by many, reputed to be the real author of most of the writings which bore the name of Pelagius.



In concert with Julian, another disciple of the same master, Celestius still endeavoured to continue the propagation of the same tenets, with others equally objectionable, until, at the instance of Celestine, bishop of Rome, they were expelled from Gaul.

The heresy was carried, during the time of Celestine, into Britain, and has been supposed to be the cause of the mission of Palladius into Hibernia.

## St Patrick.

BORN A. D. 387.—DIED A. D. 465.\*

IF we are obliged to admit the uncertainty of the traditions and records of a time so remote as the 5th century, in a nation so little noted in history as Ireland is supposed to have been; if we must also confess that superstition and imposture have also additionally obscured these accounts, so as to render it, at first sight, doubtful what is to be allowed or rejected; it must, at the same time, be affirmed, that scepticism has been equally licentious in its doubts and rejections. The sceptical antiquary has but too much resembled the story-teller of the middle ages, in the easiness, indolence, and absurd confidence of his inferences from the slightest grounds, and oversights as to the most important probabilities.

The various lives of St Patrick which were written from the 10th century, have so overlaid the accounts of his contemporaries with monstrous legends, that the air of absurdity thus imparted to the whole of these narrations, has had but the natural effect of such a contaminating infusion of extravagance, in exciting the scorn and incredulity of an age so sceptical as the present. To enter seriously on the task of delivering the plain narrative of the life, thus beset between fiction and unwarrantable doubt, seems to be a task of some delicacy—and demanding some indifference to the preconceptions of opinion.

But the main line to be observed in discriminating the true from the fictitious, is, on inspection of the historians, their periods, and the scope of their opinions and designs: no very hard task. The writers of the middle ages may, in reference to our subject, be divided into two main classes: those who recorded the most extravagant fables, because they believed in them; and those who invented legends for their purposes. Between these, all ancient history and biography has been defiled with similar errors and impostures; and the argument in favour of incredulity only derives weight from the consideration, where the questioned fact stands solely on such testimony.

But omitting the consideration, that even these writers must be supposed to have some real foundation in fact, to succeed as imposture, or to be received by the credulous; in the case of St Patrick, it is to be observed that there is another very distinct class of testimonies. The alleged writers of his own period, are sufficiently proved

\* After a careful consideration of the opinions of various writers, we have followed Dr Lanigan in selecting the above dates.

genuine, by the omission of all those fictions, which the credulity, or the craft, of a far later period could not have omitted, and dare not have rejected. This test of discrimination is confirmed by the obvious and uniform facts of an extensive analogy. The comparison of any records of the same individual, in the early or middle ages of our era, will uniformly exhibit similar indications of the same respective classes of authority. "It is observable," says Ware, "that (as the purest streams flow always nearest to the fountain), so, among the many writers of the life of this prelate, those who lived nearest to his time have had the greatest regard to truth, and have been most sparing in recounting his miracles. Thus Fiech, bishop of Sletty, and contemporary with our saint, comprehended the most material events of his life, in an Irish hymn of 34 stanzas." "But in process of time," observes the same judicious writer, "as the writers of his life increased, so the miracles were multiplied (especially in the dark ages), until at last they extended all bounds of credibility. Thus Probus, a writer of the 10th age, outdid all who went before him; but he himself was outdone by Jocelyne, a monk of Furnes, who wrote in the 12th century."\* "At length came Philip O'Sullivan, who made Jocelyne his groundwork, yet far exceeds even Jocelyne."

These absurdities, when justly referred to their origin, have no weight in reference to the question of St Patrick's having existed or not; whatever they may have on the credulity or incredulity of the numerous classes who are ever more ready to believe too little or too much, than to hit the fine drawn line between truth and error. The authenticity of ancient accounts, or the genuineness of ancient writings, when questioned, are hard to prove; the full proof of standing institutions—immediate publication—contemporary citation and controversy, &c., exists in reference to the Bible only among writings of so early a period. But the objections must be themselves of cogent weight, which can overthrow a single ancient statement, not in itself in any way inconsistent with probability.

But however such questions may be decided, when all the doctors shall cease to disagree, it is not for us, "*tantas componere lites*," to settle these high and grave doubts of the inner conclave of antiquarian learning. As long as there is an Irishman who swears by St Patrick, he has a claim to find his name and life in the biography of the age of saints. In our sketch of this we must, from the necessity of the thing, abide by the best election we can make amongst conflicting statements on many points.

Among the different opinions as to his birth-place, the most received is that which makes him a native of Scotland. In a writing attributed to himself, he describes the place as "*in vico Banaven, Tabernie*," which is further explained by Joceline, as the site of a Roman encampment, near the town of Emphor and the shore of the Irish

\* This volume has been made, in some degree, more familiar, by the very singular inadvertence of its having been published as one of a series of Irish histories, so useful in its plan that its interruption is to be regretted. It comprised *Spencer*, *Campion*, *Hanmer*, and the *Pucatu Hibernia*: but a volume more widely extravagant than Gulliver, without the attractions of that witty satire, seems to have arrested the sale of the work, for it was at once discontinued by the publishers.

sea. Usher fixes the modern geography of the spot at a place called Kilpatrick, between Glasgow and Dunbritton, at the extremity of the Roman wall. Fiech, one of the earliest of our writers, also names the place by a name (Alcluith) which the consent of many ancient authorities fixes as an old name for Dunbritton.

The reasons, however, upon which this statement is opposed are too strong to be omitted, although we cannot here enter upon their merits consistently with any regard to our limits. All the circumstances of the early narrative of St Patrick's life are highly inconsistent with this statement; and all precisely agree with the supposition that he was a native of Gaul. His family were residing in Gaul—he was there taken prisoner in his youth—there the earlier events of his life took place—his education and his consecration; and considering the distances of the places, with the obstacles attendant upon all travelling in these early times, it must be allowed that the former notion involves nearly insurmountable difficulties. There was in Armorie Gaul a district called Britain at the period, and of this very district his mother was a native and his family inhabitants. The name Nemthor cannot, on any authority, be ascertained to have been applied to any locality in North Britain, but actually signifies “holy Tours,” and of Tours his uncle was the bishop, according to the statements on every side. We must leave the decision to the reader. The whole question is stated and discussed at great length by Dr Lanigan.

His father was a deacon, named Calphurnius, the son of Potitus a priest. And the fact is worthy of notice, as proving the antiquity of the ancient documents from which it is drawn. In the times when Probus, Joceline, and O'Sullivan wrote, such a story was unlikely to be forged; and the simple Joceline thinks it necessary to assume, that these ancient ecclesiastics took their orders after their children were born: there cannot be a better proof of Joceline's having had stubborn facts to deal with, or of the extent of monastic ignorance in his day. But there cannot be a much clearer confirmation of the antiquity, at least, of the *Confession* of St Patrick.

The data on which we have fixed his birth are briefly these. His consecration is placed by all the best authorities in 432. Upon this occasion, he tells us himself that a friend of his reproached him with a sin committed thirty years before, when he was yet scarcely fifteen years old. Adding, therefore, thirty to fifteen, and we make him forty-five in the year 432, which gives for his birth 387. This is confirmed by other particulars, among which it may be enough to observe the precision with which it synchronizes with the period of Niall's expedition into Gaul, at which time he was made captive at the age of sixteen: this must have occurred, therefore, about 403, and  $387 + 16 = 403$ .

While yet a youth of sixteen, he was carried away by Niall of the Nine Hostages, and sold into captivity in Ireland. Different versions of the same incident are given by various writers, but they all agree in the event; Patrick was captured by pirates, and sold to a chief named Mileho, who dwelt in the county Antrim, near the mountain of Slieve Mis.



This mountain was the scene of the next six years of his youth. Employed by his master to tend his flocks, his life was here spent in the lone and sequestered meditation for which the place and occupation were favourable, and to which he was by nature inclined. Of this period his *Confession* speaks in these terms: "My constant business was to feed the flocks; I was frequent in prayer; the love and fear of God, more and more inflamed my heart; my faith was enlarged, and my spirit augmented; so that I said a hundred prayers by day, and almost as many by night.\* I arose before day to my prayers, in the snow, in the frost, in the rain, and yet I received no damage; nor was I affected with slothfulness; for then the Spirit of God was warm within me"! To the Christian reader, or to the informed reader who is in the least acquainted with the human heart, this simple and beautifully just and harmonious view of the growth and expansion of Christian piety, according to its scriptural description in the language of its Founder and His first apostles, will at once convey an evidence of genuineness, far beyond any elaborate reasoning from ancient records. It neither indicates the mind of a superstitious era of the church, or of the legendary fabrications in which it dealt. In this period of captivity, he acquired a perfect mastery of the Irish language.

At the end of six years he obtained his freedom. The monkish writers refer this incident of his life to a miraculous interposition—told with various circumstances, by different writers, according to the liveliness of their fancy, and the several degrees of daring or credulity with which they wrote. But the saint's own account is simply natural: "he was warned in a dream to return home, and arose and betook himself to flight, and left the man with whom he had been six years."† "There seems to have been a law in Ireland," says Ware, "agreeable to the institution of Moses, that a servant should be released the seventh year." All that is known of the ancient traditions of Ireland, make this very likely; and if we assume such a law, it is most probable that the youth, as the time of his return drew nigh, entertained thoughts which would naturally have suggested such a dream; which an enthusiastic mind would impute to providence. Such, whether just or not, was the inference of St Patrick; who accordingly made his way to the sea side, and with some difficulty obtained a passage. As he mentions that the difficulty arose from his want of money, it may be right to mention, that such a representation was totally inconsistent with imposture; as it would have been too egregious an error, to write an account directly contradicting the marvellous inventions of his monkish historians. His escape was not immediately conducive to the anxious object he had at heart, which was to revisit his parents and brethren. After a month's laborious travelling, he was again seized, and again escaped after two month's captivity. Three months of hope deferred, and protracted toil, elapsed before he reached the home of his family, by whom he was joyfully welcomed, as one who had been lost and was restored.

His parents wished to detain him. But a dream, which the candid

\* This statement is simply the idiomatic expression for numerous prayers.

† *Confession*, quoted by Ware.

sceptic will attribute to the wonted course of his thoughts, and the Christian may, without superstition, admit to be not beyond the possible scope of providential intimation, had the effect of inspiring a different course. "He thought he saw a man coming to him, as if from Ireland, whose name was Victoricius, with a great number of letters. That he gave him one to read, in the beginning of which were contained these words, 'Vox Hiberionacum.' While he was reading this letter, he thought, the same moment, that he heard the voice of the inhabitants who lived hard-by the wood of Foclut, near the Western sea, crying to him with one voice, 'we entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us.'" To invent a dream well, does not require a knowledge of metaphysical theory; but the acute reader, who has studied the subject, will perceive in this, how happily the law of suggestion, commonly observable in dreams, is preserved. From this dream, Ware conjectures, that legendary stories of his intercourse with the angel Victor have been constructed.

The saint, from this moment, resolved to attempt the instruction of the Irish. To prepare himself for this arduous labour, he determined to travel in foreign countries, for the acquisition of the requisite experience and knowledge.

It was at the mature age of thirty, that he is said to have placed himself under the spiritual tutelage of Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, in Burgoyne—an ecclesiastic, eminent both as a theologian and civilian, a character which comprises the learning of the age. From this period his course is for many years indistinct—another probable character of authenticity: the interval is supposed, with good reason, to have been passed in the studious shades of cloistered study and meditation. He is said to have been ordained by the bishop, who gave him the name of Magonius, after which he dwelt, for some years, in a community of monks inhabiting a small island in the Mediterranean sea, near the French coast.

The accounts of the events of his life, during the interval which elapsed before his return to Ireland, are unsatisfactory, and not important enough for an effort to clear away the perplexities of Colgan, or the contradictions of his biographers. We shall therefore pass to the period of his mission without unnecessary delay.

According to the best authorities, the state of Christianity in Ireland was unprosperous; it had not fully taken root among the population, or the chiefs and kings; and there is some reason to believe that it was also tainted with heresy. The holy men, whose names are beyond rational conjecture, had spent their honourable and pious life in a fruitless struggle against the ferocious hostility of the Pagan priests—which encompassed them with obstacles and dangers, against which their best efforts had little weight. Palladius, the immediate precursor of St Patrick, had retired, in terror and despair, from the strife. Whatever had been the success of the early preaching of Christianity in its apostolic purity, it was little to be hoped that a religion, tainted perhaps by the gross and unspiritual errors of Pelagianism, could long continue to sustain the increasing hostility of a people, by nature fierce, in the defence of their faith or superstition. Palladius had, in the year 431, been sent by Celestin, bishop of Rome, on a mission to the Irish churches, "to the



Scots believing in Christ.”\* Ignorant of the Irish language, and devoid of the requisite courage, he left the island in the same year, and died in Scotland.

It is generally supposed that Patrick was, in consequence of these last incidents, ordained a bishop by Celestin. The difficulty seems to be in the short time which elapsed between the 15th December, 431, on which Palladius died, and the 6th of April, 432, the period of Celestin's death. This difficulty may be summarily disposed of, by at once abandoning the ill-supported statement that St Patrick ever visited Rome. It stands upon a heap of contradictions, interpolations, and false assumptions. The history of the notion is easily conjectured. A period of the life of St Patrick happens to be untraced by contemporary record: biographers in far later times fabricating history, as we know it to have been fabricated in the middle ages and by monkish writers, regularly filled up the chasms of their slender authority, according to their purpose, or their notions of probability. One or two writers in that inaccurate period, having made this unauthorized statement, either because they thought such must have been the fact, or that it should be so stated, were followed implicitly by a long train of ecclesiastical writers, each of whom shaped the fact according to the difficulties which obstructed his narration. These fabrications accumulating into authority, it became necessary for men like Usher and Dr Lanigan to discuss this vast array of conflicting testimonies, on the assumption that the main fact was in some way true. In the course, however, of their investigations, together with those of other learned men who disagree with each other, the whole details of all the statements are cut to pieces among them, and the fact which has been transmitted from scholiast to scholiast, and from doctor to doctor, has perceptibly not an atom of ground left to stand on. The critics and the commentators have devoured each other, and realized, after a manner of their own, the renowned legend of the Kilkenny cats. It only remains to point out the fact, that the statement has no ground to support it, and no documentary evidence to rest on. The fact that there existed and exists a motive for maintaining such a statement is obvious, and that various misstatements have been made for the purpose, plainly proved. Of these a curious one occurs in Probus, whose text has manifestly been tampered with for the very purpose. The interpolator, with the improvidence often accompanying craft like its evil genius, in his anxiety to effect the purpose, so confused the order of the narration, as to make it seem as if the chapters of the book had been by mistake inverted. After being placed at Rome, St Patrick is immediately after made to sail towards Gaul, *across the British sea*.

The fact most consistent with the best authorized outline of this saint's life, is this, that having, in 429, accompanied Germanns and Lupus on their mission into Britain, he saw reason to think it time to carry into effect his wish to preach to the Irish; and having, with this view, first crossed the British channel to Gaul, he was there qualified by episcopal orders. This was probably in his forty-fifth year. He was, it is said, accompanied by other pious men; among

\* Prosper, Chron.



these the names of Auxilius and Iserninus are mentioned, and twenty more are said to have accompanied them. This little band of Christian soldiers he increased on the way. He is said to have landed in a place called Jubber-Dea, now the port of Wicklow.

His first efforts were blessed with an important success in the conversion of Sinell, the grandson of Finchad, and eighth in lineal descent from Cormac, king of Leinster. He met with considerable opposition from Nathi the chief, whose opposition had terrified Palladius. He next visited a place called Rath Jubber, near the mouth of the river Bray. Betaking himself to his ship, he reached an island on the coast of the county Dublin, since called Inis Phadruig, where he and his companions rested, after the fatigues and perils they had sustained.

From Inis Phadruig, he sailed northward, until he reached the bay of Dundrum, in the county Down, where he landed. Here he met with an adventure, which had some influence on his after-course of life. As he was proceeding with his party from the shore, he was met by a herdsman, who imagining them to be pirates, took to flight, and alarmed his master Dicho. This chief, calling together his men, sallied forth for the protection of his property; his more intelligent eye, however, drew a more correct inference from the venerable appearance of Patrick. The sanctity of aspect, and the dignified deportment which are said to have suggested to the bishop by whom he was ordained, the new name of Patricius, had their full effect in the first impression which his appearance had on Dicho. The saint and his company were invited, and hospitably entertained by the chief. Following up so favourable an occasion, he easily made converts of his host and his entire household. The barn in which he celebrated divine service obtained, from the gratitude of his convert, the name of Sabhul Phadruig, or Patrick's barn.

The next adventure of St Patrick, was far more momentous in its effects. It might be briefly stated as the conversion of the monarch Laogaire, his court and people; a statement which would include, at least, all that can with certainty be told of the event. But some of the legendary accounts of the adventures of St Patrick, have at least the merit of romance; nor can we lose the occasion to offer a few specimens of the legends of the twelfth century. The following is extracted from Joceline:—

After relating a variety of marvellous adventures, chiefly remarkable for the curious contrast they offer to the miracles of the New Testament, both in style and design, Joceline, who tells each of these wonders with the gravest, and, we believe, sincerest simplicity, in a separate chapter, proceeds—"And the saint, on that most holy sabbath preceding the vigil of the Passover, turned aside to a fit and pleasant place called *Feartfethin*, and there, according to the custom of the holy church, lighted the lamps at the blessed fire. And it happened on that night, that the idolaters solemnized a certain high festival called *Rach*, which they, walking in darkness, were wont to consecrate to the *Prince of Darkness*. And it was their custom that every fire should be extinguished, nor, throughout the province, should be relighted, until it was first beheld in the royal palace. But when the monarch Leogaire, being then with his attendants at Temoria, then

the chief court of the kingdom of all Ireland, beheld the fire that was lighted by St Patrick, he marvelled, and was enraged, and inquired who had thus presumed? And a certain *magician*, when he looked on the fire, as if prophesying, said unto the king, ‘*Unless yonder fire be this night extinguished, he who lighted it will, together with his followers, reign over the whole island.*’ Which being heard, the *monarch*, gathering together a multitude with him, hastened, in the violence of his wrath, to extinguish the fire. And he brought with him thrice nine chariots, for the delusion of his foolishness had seduced his heart, and persuaded him, that, with that number, he would obtain to himself a complete triumph; and he turned the face of his men and his cattle toward the left hand of saint Patrick, even as the magicians had directed, trusting that his purpose could not be prevented. But the saint, beholding the multitude of chariots, began this verse: ‘*Some in chariots, and some on horses, but we will invoke the name of the Lord.*’ And when the king approached the place, the magicians advised him not to go near saint Patrick, lest he should seem to honour him by his presence, and as if to reverence or adore him. Therefore the king stayed, and, as these evil-doers advised, sent messengers unto saint Patrick, commanding that he should appear before him; and he forbade all his people, that when he came, any one should stand up before him. So the prelate, having finished his holy duties, appeared, and no one stood up before him, for so had the king commanded.” One only disobeyed this order: Ere, the son of Dego, struck with the impressively dignified and venerable aspect of Patrick, stood up, and offered him his seat. He was converted by the good saint’s address, and became a person of reputed sanctity. His eloquence—the sanctity of his demeanour, together with that presiding spirit of divine power, of which we are authorized to assume the adequate co-operation in all the cases of the first preaching of the gospel to the heathen—had the same powerful effects, of which so many instances are to be read in the early history of the church. Laogaire and his court, became converts in the course of a little time.\*

From Tara, he proceeded to Taltean, where, as the reader of the preceding sections is aware, the people met at a great annual fair with their families. There could not be a more fit place for his object, as there was no other occasion could bring the same multitudes together, in a temper so suited to the purpose of conversion. One of the peculiar advantages it offered, was the order and perfect sobriety of deportment, which was one of the regulations chiefly enforced at this meeting. The two brothers of king Laogaire were here before him; of these Cairbre received him with insult, but Conal, who was the grandfather of Columbkille, listened courteously, was convinced, and became a convert. So deeply was this prince impressed, that he offered his own dwelling to the saint; and a monastery was founded, with a city called Domnach Phadruig (now Down Patrick), from the saint. Near this, the prince built a dwelling for himself, which was called Rath Keltair.

\* Amongst these was the poet Fiech, who wrote the saint’s life in verse, and was afterward bishop of Sletty.



Patrick next bent his way towards Connaught; he met in this journey the two daughters of Laogaire, the ruddy Ethne and the fair Fidella, accompanied by two Druids, their instructors. This scene is described by Joceline:—"And of Laogaire were born two daughters, like roses growing in a rose-bed; and the one was of a ruddy complexion, and she was called Ethne, and the other was fair, and she was called Fedella; and they were educated by these magicians. And early on a certain morning, the sun having just arisen, they went to bathe in a clear fountain, on the margin whereof, they found the saint sitting with other holy men. And regarding his countenance and garb, they were struck with wonder, and inquired of his birth and residence, taking him for an apparition." The young ladies, considering this impression, must have had reasonably firm nerves. The saint, however, gravely told them, that he had more important information to offer; and that it would be fitter for them to ask him questions concerning God, than about his earthly dwelling. On this they desired that he would explain on the subject thus proposed. And he preached a sermon, in which he explained the articles of Christian belief; and explained to them, in answer to their further questions, the nature of the eucharist, which he persuaded them to receive. The princesses, on receiving the holy elements, according to the story, immediately died. Their Druid teachers, not unreasonably, angry at this incident, assailed the saint with loud and bitter reproach. But Patrick opposed their railing with divine truth, and succeeded in converting them also.

We cannot here omit another of the many fables to be found among the biographers of St Patrick; the more especially as it relates to a popular tradition. At the approach of Lent, he withdrew to a lofty mountain in Mayo, now known by the name of Croagh Patrick, to meditate among its tranquil elevations, above the "smoke and stir" of heathen Ireland. "To this place," says Joceline, "he gathered together the several tribes of serpents and venomous creatures, and drove them headlong into the Western ocean; and that from thence proceeds that exemption, which Ireland enjoys, from all poisonous reptiles." Ware mentions on this, that Solinus "who wrote some hundred years before St Patrick's arrival in Ireland, takes notice of this exemption." The same learned and authoritative writer cites Isidore of Seville, and Bede, also, to the same purpose; with Cambrensis, who "treats it as a fable, and even the credulous Colgan gives it up." For any reader of the present age, such an exposition must be merely curious.

After his descent from Croagh Patrick, he founded a monastery in Umaille, an ancient district of West Mayo, the country of the Omalys. The name of this monastery was Acliad Fobhair; afterwards an episcopal see, but since, the site of a parish church in the diocese of Tuam.

He next proceeded northward, until he reached the district of the modern barony of Tirawly, preaching and converting multitudes by the way. Here stood the ancient wood, towards which his thoughts had long ranged; it was the scene from which the voice of his dream had called him into Ireland; and here, opportunely, a mighty multitude was gathered together, for the sons of Amalgord were contending for the election to their father's crown, and had convened the nobles and



people to council. Many wonderful accounts are given, by different writers, of the success of his preaching here; but in his *Confession*, he mentions having converted many thousands.

He next travelled on through Sligo, and along the northern coast of Connaught, every where preaching and converting multitudes to the faith. And then passing on through Tirconnel, he staid for the conversion of prince Owen, the son of the king Neill. Having crossed Lough Foyle, from the peninsula of Inishowen, he remained for a few weeks, making converts, and forming ecclesiastical institutions in the neighbourhood; in this, pursuing the prudent course of a skilful conqueror, who places sufficient garrisons for the preservation of his conquests. It is needless, in a sketch which we are endeavouring to render brief, to dwell on the similar events which followed his course through Dalradia, or to name all the foundations, of which there is now no memory, but the dry record of the chronicle. He passed through many places, and in all effected the same invaluable results, in the course of a circuit, which cost him more than three or four years of toil and travel. In this course he founded the bishopricks of Louth and Clogher.

It was on this tour that he is said to have been joyfully received by the king of Munster, or as some with more probability state, by his son Ængus. A statement has been added to this account, which involves more serious interest, because it is the subject of much controversy. Some of the writers upon the period say, that St Patrick was at this time visited by his *predecessors* Ailbe, Declan, Ibar, and Kieran; but that a point of form was near occasioning the separation of these holy men. His predecessors were unwilling to submit to his ecclesiastical supremacy, as head of the Irish church. After some anxious contention upon this point, protracted by the obstinacy of Ibar, the difference was settled on the consideration of St Patrick's extraordinary labours and eminent success, and the jurisdiction of the other ecclesiastics was satisfactorily settled and limited.

It is, however, to be observed, that this account is not warranted by any of the lives of St Patrick. Usher, who quotes lives of Declan and Ailbe, evidently lays no stress upon their authority. The extract which he makes to this effect, is prefaced with these words, "If it be allowable to credit a doubtful life of Declan."\* Our main objection is, however, on the score of chronology, as according to the dates which we (on full consideration) adopt for the lives of these persons, they were none of them likely to have attained the age or authority which the above statement implies. We do not yet concur with the opposite opinion, which excludes St Patrick and defers the synod, for the purpose of admitting the others. This solution, which unfortunately resembles the story of "Hamlet omitted," in the stroller's playbill, involves a violation of the principles of historical criticism. We may safely presume that other synods were held by Ailbe, &c., but we are not at liberty to set aside the whole particulars of a statement, and then allege that it has reference to another place and time with *other* particulars. The error involved is only to be illustrated by the farci-

\* Primord. 801.

cal blunder in a well known comic song, which expresses, with singular aptness, the same confusion of identities.\* When the leading and essential parts of a statement are overthrown, the whole becomes a fiction.† But if we admit that St Patrick held the synod at the time, it involves no difficulty to suppose very gross errors to have been made as to the subordinate actors and unessential particulars. The synod, *if a reality*, was one at which St Patrick experienced opposition, and terminated it by certain means. That he experienced such opposition about the time is certain, being mentioned by himself in his *Confessio*.

An, incident referred to the same occasion, if not truly told, has at least the merit of being well invented. The king's son Ængus, being a convert, was baptized by the saint. During the performance of the sacred rite, it so happened that the staff on which St Patrick was leaning his weight was inadvertently placed on the prince's foot; he thinking this painful incident to be part of the ceremony, or repressed by the reverence of his feelings, patiently sustained the agonizing pressure, until relieved by the change of position which must have occurred during the service. St Patrick in his *Confessio*, states the opposition he had frequently to encounter from kings and chiefs, and the pains he took to conciliate them by presents; one of the effects of which appears to have been, that while the fathers stood aloof, they permitted their sons to follow him.

From this, St Patrick pursued his way through Munster, making numerous converts, and fortifying the church in faith and discipline. And having extended his course through South Munster, he proceeded onward into the south of the county of Waterford, and was for the most part received with joy by the people and their princes. Seven years elapsed in the proceedings of this part of his episcopal tour, when, solemnly blessing the country and its inhabitants, he turned on his way toward Leinster.

About this time, 452, it was, that one of his bishops, Secundinus, died in Dunshauglin, the seat of his see. He is remarked as the first bishop who died in Ireland, and as the author of a poem in honour of St Patrick, still extant. It has been published by Ware and many others, and speaks of the saint as still living at the time.

To this period, also, is referred the saint's well-known letter to the tyrant Coroticus, a writing generally concluded to be genuine. Coroticus was a piratical chief, who probably dwelt on the northern coast of Britain. He made a descent on the Irish coast, and though supposed to have been a professed Christian, carried off captive a number of converts, recently baptized or confirmed by St Patrick, who mentions them thus in his epistle: "...innocentium Christianorum, quos ego innumeros Deo genui, atque in Christo confirmari, postera die qua chrisma neophyti in veste candida flagrabat in fronti ipsorum."‡ These Coroticus carried away, having slaughtered many in taking them, and sold them into captivity. St Patrick upon hearing of the outrage, first addressed a private epistle to the tyrant, by whom it

\* "Arrah, Paddy," said he, "is it you or your brother?"

† The object of the biographers of Declan, &c., is justly presumed to have been a desire to magnify the pretensions of their sees.

‡ Quoted by Lanigan, i. 299.



was disregarded. He then wrote a public letter, of which the following appears to be a summary: "Announcing himself a bishop and established in Ireland, he proclaims to all those who fear God, that said murderers and robbers are excommunicated and estranged from Christ, and that it is not lawful to show them civility, nor to eat and drink with them, nor to receive their offerings until, sincerely repenting, they make atonement to God, and liberate his servants, and the handmaids of Christ. He begs of the faithful, into whose hands the epistle may come, to get it read before the people every where, and before Coroticus himself, and to communicate it to his soldiers, in the hope that they and their master may return to God, &c. Among other very affecting expostulations, he observes, that the Roman and Gallic Christians are wont to send proper persons with great sums of money to the Franks and other Pagans, for the purpose of redeeming Christian captives, while, on the contrary, that monster Coroticus made a trade of selling the members of Christ to nations ignorant of God."\*

In the course of his episcopal journeyings, it may be presumed that the saint did not travel without meeting difficulties of every kind incidental to the state of the country and time. Accordingly, in all the lives we meet narrations of peril by the way, which only require to be divested of the absurd additions with which all the monkish historians and biographers have ornamented them, to have the resemblance of truth. The story of Failge, who, by treachery, attempted to murder the saint in his chariot, and slew his driver in the attempt; the robber Mac-caldus and his associates, of whom one feigned sickness, to make the saint's charity the occasion for his assassination, want but a little change of name and weapon to present no untrue picture of atrocities of recent times, attempted in the self-same spirit, though alas with different success! Of these stories, the latter is at least happily conceived. The robber and his heathen accomplices, doubtless scandalized by the falling away of their country from its ancient superstitions, and fired with indignant feelings to which it would not be quite fair to refuse the praise of patriotism and national spirit, resolved to redress their country's wrongs by waylaying the saint upon his road. The plot was laid, and at the appointed hour (the biographers unjustly rob the patriots of the merit of preconcerted design) they were at the place of appointment, when Patrick, ignorant of their laudable purpose, came walking on the road. The assassins had contrived an expedient of singular felicity: knowing that the saint never denied the claim of sickness on his humanity and charity, one of them named Gorran or O'Gorraghane, feigning illness, lay down under a cloak. By this happy contrivance it is evident, that the most favourable opportunity would be secured, of knocking out his brains while he was bending over the "clever boy" who thus deceived his charitable credulity. All this having worked well, according to the plot, the other patriots stood around. "Sir," said one of the company as he came up, "one of our party has been taken ill on the road; will you sing some of your incantations over him, that so he may be restored to health?"

"It would not," replied Patrick, "be in the least surprising if he

\* Lanigan, Eccles. Hist. i. 297.



were sick." As he uttered these words very coldly, and without stooping as they expected, the crafty rogues thought to excite his sympathy by assuming the appearance of increased anxiety; and bending their looks upon their prostrate comrade, they were startled by the change which had passed over his features: he was dead! The remainder of the story is such as every reader will correctly imagine—Maccaldus became a convert—was baptized—became a bishop in the Isle of Man.\* Probus, speaking of the same person, says, "*Hic est Macfail episcopus clarus et sanctus postmodum effectus in Evonincasium civitate, cujus nos adjuvant sancta suffragia.*" Dr Lanigan, who quotes this sentence, as omitted by primate Usher, remarks, as the cause of the omission, "he did not relish the invocation of saints;" we think Dr Lanigan wrong in supposing that Usher could feel the slightest care about any statement by a monk of the 10th century. We notice this here, not for the purpose of quarrelling about such trifles with our trustworthy guide, but to suggest to the reader of the same class of old legends, one of the useful rules of distinction between probable and improbable. The writer of a legend, if he believes his tale to be untrue, would be likely to mould it to his purpose; if true his own creed would necessarily suggest constructions, which, believing to be matters of course, he would add as essential parts of the narration. The above expression of Probus belongs to neither of these cases, as it is simply the expression of a pious though superstitious sentiment of his own. As we have ourselves adopted the rule of omitting the more marvellous parts of such incidents as we have seen occasion to notice, it may also be fit to assure such readers as may not approve of such omissions, as amounting to a denial of these miraculous incidents, that it is far from our design to imply such an opinion. We think that the relation of a miracle performed by the primitive missionaries of the gospel of Christ, is neither to be lightly admitted or rashly denied. There cannot be a rational doubt that, if the purpose required such deeds, they would not be wanting. But the sources of imposture are too obvious, not to suggest to every sane mind the necessity of a severe law of admission. Mere presumptive probability, whatever may be its value as confirmation, is useless as evidence—tradition more worthless still—and the legendary writings of so remote a period, require many corroborations of existing monuments, concurring testimonies, adverse notices, numerous and authenticated copies from documents of genuine character, to give them the least claim upon the historian's assent.

St Patrick is still, by his more circumstantial biographers, traced on his way, erecting churches and establishing bishops. Usher mentions a tradition, still remaining in his own time, heard by himself among the inhabitants of Louth, that the saint had been some time among them. The same writer adds, that having erected a church here, when he afterwards determined to found his cathedral of Armagh, he appointed to the place a British ecclesiastic of great piety, named Maccheus.†

In the course of this tour he also visited Dublin, where he converted

\* J celine, &c.

† Usher, Prim. 855.

and baptized Alphin, the king, with all his people, in a fountain called, after him, Patrick's well. He also built a church, on the foundation of which the cathedral of St Patrick was afterwards raised. The fountain Usher mentions as having seen it, "not far from the steeple, but lately obstructed and inclosed amongst private houses." It is also mentioned by Usher, from the *Black Book* of Christ's church, that the vaults of this cathedral had existence previous to the coming of St Patrick, having been built "by the Danes;" but that he celebrated the eucharist in one of those vaults, afterwards called the vault of St Patrick.

It is with most likelihood computed, that it was after these long and laborious wanderings, after he had established his church on the best foundations which circumstances permitted, that he bent his steps towards the north, with the intention of establishing a primatial see, and confirming his labours by a body of canons. With this in view he reached the place then called Denein Sailrach, and since Armagh. From the chief of this district he obtained possession of a large tract, and founded a city upon it: "large in compass, and beautiful in situation, with monastery, cathedral, schools, &c., and resolved to establish it as the primatial see of the Irish church." This foundation, according to Usher and Harris, took place in 445.

According to the chronology here adopted, this foundation may rather be placed in 454. Here, and at his favourite retreat at Sabhul, he probably spent the remainder of his life. To the same period must also be referred the canons universally ascribed to him, and supposed to have been ordained in a synod held in Armagh. They are yet extant, and many of their provisions are such as to indicate their antiquity. By the 6th, "The wife of a priest was obliged, when abroad, to appear veiled." "The 14th lays a penalty on those who should have recourse to soothsaying, or the inspection of the entrails of beasts, for searching into future events."\*

Omitting the absurdity of a visit to Rome in his old age, we may now close our perhaps too rapid sketch of his eventful life. Amongst the last of his acts, was the sketch he has left us of his life, under the title of *Confession*. This simple, characteristic, often affecting, and always unpretending document, is precisely what the occasion and the character of the writer required, and is quite free from the difficulties which affect his more recent lives. He speaks of approaching death, and returns thanks for the mercies of God to himself, and to the Irish, &c. He was seized with his last illness at Saul, or Sabhul, near Downpatrick. Wishing to die in Armagh, he attempted the journey, but was compelled by his complaint to return, and breathed his last on the 17th of March.

If we view his character as represented by the facts of his life, combined with his own accounts of himself, and take into account the magnitude of the difficulties with which he must have contended, and the result of his labours, we are struck by the consistency of the facts with the character; and feel irresistibly the conviction, that it is no

\* Cited by Ware. These canons are published by Ware, among the works ascribed to St Patrick.

creation of legendary writers, whose statements plainly prove them to have wanted both the knowledge and good taste requisite for such a conception. His gravity, simplicity, wisdom, moderation, piety, and just views of scriptural Christianity, gleam through the most legendary of these fantastic inventions, and confirm their pretension to a foundation in the main fact ; while these ennobling traits are as inconsistent with the superstitious fancies of his biographers, as they are with the drunken orgies and unchristian observances which help to cast a disrespect on his memory in our own times.

## Ailbe.

DIED A. D. 527.

THIS ancient bishop is said to have been born in Munster, and having been the fruit of an unlawful union, was left by his father to perish under a rock ; being found, he was, by the discoverer, entrusted to the care of some Britons, who gave him a name significant of the incident—"Ail" signifying a rock both in the Irish and the ancient British. By his protectors, he may perhaps have been first instructed in the Christian faith. The history of his life is, however, involved in much uncertainty. A wish to honour the see of Emly, to carry back the antiquity of the Irish church, and magnify the authority of the Roman see, has been the cause of much misrepresentation. Ailbe is thus said to have been consecrated a bishop at Rome, at the instance of Hilary, and, in 412, returned to Ireland, where he converted and baptized many. It was in the year 448 when his first meeting with St Patrick is thus mentioned by a writer of his life:—"When St Ailbe had heard that St Patrick had converted Ængus Mac Nefrien, king of Munster, to the faith in Christ, and that he was with him in the city of Cashel, he went to salute them ; and the king and St Patrick rejoiced at the arrival of St Ailbe ; and he rejoiced to see them. And there St Ailbe took St Patrick for his master, for he was full of humility. Then king Ængus and St Patrick ordained, that the archbishopric of all Munster should for ever continue in the city and chair of St Ailbe."\* Much of this may be true, but the archbishopric is a glaring anachronism.

Tirechau, an ancient writer, mentions that he was priested by Patrick himself ; and, in an ancient life preserved by Colgan, he is called his disciple. This is probably the true account. If we were to give credit to some accounts of his life, he should indeed be also mentioned as one of the small number of instances of longevity, far beyond the usually known periods of protracted life in the latter ages of the world ; having been born in 360, and died in 527, according to the computation of Usher.† He must, if so, have died at the age of 167.

The following interesting particulars we extract from Ware's

\* Harris's Ware. Usher, Primord.

† Ibid.



works, by Harris:—"Here also, in ancient times, stood a celebrated city, which, however, by degrees hath dwindled into an inconsiderable village. It was placed on the edge of a lake, which was formerly considerably large, and covered at least 200 acres or more of excellent pasture. This lake was, from time to time, gradually lessened by the improvements of the neighbouring proprietors; but, in the year 1717 or 1718, it was laid almost dry by the industry of Robert Ryves, Esq., who held the rich bottoms bordering on it from archbishop Palliser. There was formerly a ferry kept here, to waft people over the lake to the church; and, to this day, a crown rent of 6s. 8d. is charged in the collector's books, payable yearly out of the ferry of Emly, which is constantly returned in arrear, the cause having ceased. There is a lane leading from Emly to the low lands, which were formerly overspread by the water, called Bothar-y-coit, *i. e.* the Lane of the Cot or Boat. About the year 1703, some people, digging turf in the neighbouring bog, discovered a large post standing in the ground, and an iron ring fixed in it, which was supposed to be placed there for fastening the ferry-boat to.

"In the church-yard of Emly is erected a large cross of rough unhewn stone, about eight feet high from the surface of the ground, and there is a well near it, called St Ailbe's well; both which are held in great veneration by the superstitious Irish, who flock hither in vast multitudes to celebrate the festival of the patron, on the 12th of September yearly. In the time of archbishop Pallisser, two neighbouring magistrates obtained a license from him to demolish the cross, and stop up the well, as being encouragements to idolatry, and the causes of some disorders in the vicinity; yet they never put their design in execution, and the cross and well continue there to this day.

"The annals of Ulster say, that Emly was plundered by robbers, and the mitre of St Ailbe, which had been preserved there for many ages with great care, was burned A. D. 1123. Malmorda, who was at that time bishop of Emly, made his escape by flight. It was afterwards destroyed by fire, in 1192. Bishop Christian, who died in 1249, is said to have been a great benefactor to this church, and was very intent on repairing and adorning it. Thomas Hurly, bishop of Emly, erected in this place a college for secular priests, in the reign of king Henry VIII."

## Declan.

At the time of Ailbe's death, it is agreed that Declan was still alive; while the state of Christianity in Ireland, as described in the accounts of his birth, indicate a period before the general conversion of the people. "Tum jam Hibernia gentilitati dedita erat, et eo tempore raro singuli Christiani inveniri solebant;" Ireland was then abandoned to paganism, &c.—a fact perhaps indicated by the statement of the circumstances attending the baptism of Declan, when his parents are described as becoming converts. On the consideration of these general facts, with others stated by Dr Lanigan—who endeavours to ascertain his time, by fixing the period of his best known contempo-

raries—we are inclined to consider him as contemporary with St Patrick, but considerably later in the periods of his birth and death. We therefore conclude, that it is erroneous to make him a bishop before the mission of St Patrick; although, from the great uncertainty of any thing that has been stated about him, we should think it presumptuous to affirm that he did not precede him as a preacher.

Declan was the descendant from a royal stock; his father was Ere, a prince of Waterford. At the birth of Declan, he was, with his wife, Dethys, and others of his suite, on a visit at the house of a friend named Dobran. Colman, a priest, who afterwards became a bishop, came to the house—according to the old writer whom Usher quotes—with great joy, and filled with the spirit of prophecy. His preaching converted Ere and his wife, and they suffered him to baptize the child, whose glory, as the servant of God, he prophesied. Dobran, struck with these circumstances, and others related at large by the biographer, requested that the child should be committed to his care. The dwelling of Dobran, which was called Dobran's Hall, afterwards obtained the name of Declan's Hall; and, having been presented by Dobran to his ward, became the site of a cell which he erected to God. Declan, having completed his seventh year, was, according to Colman's directions, delivered to the tuition of Dymma, a Christian teacher, from whom he learned whatever was then to be taught, and, before long, became himself famous for knowledge and wisdom.

After some time it is asserted, by his biographers, that he travelled to Rome, and received episcopal consecration from the pope. We see no reason to dispute the fact; but think it right to observe, that in the accounts of those who assert it, we think it would, if worth while, be easy to point out some gross anachronisms. But we notice it here for the purpose of observing, that when Usher quoted the following sentence—"Then it occurred to St Declan to go to Rome, that he might there acquire the knowledge of ecclesiastical customs, and receive a faculty or degree in rank, and obtain from the *Apostolical See* a license to preach," &c.—it is quite plain that he could have no controversial object, worth contending for, in view. We cannot help observing, that Dr Lanigan is scarcely warranted in the assertion that Usher, whose merits no one can appreciate more fairly than himself, has either made or omitted any statement with a view to any system. It is to be admitted that, in the prosecution of inquiries so vague and perplexed as those, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the fairest mind to avoid seeing occasionally through the light of *system*; a primary tendency of reason, and the source of error as well as of invention. From the illusory effect of this tendency, few indeed have the soundness to escape; and Dr Lanigan—to whose honesty of purpose, great learning, and judicious criticism, we offer our willing testimony—presents his full share of examples.

On this occasion, he is stated to have met St Patrick in Italy, about A. D. 402—a date much too early for the statement which makes him yet alive in the 6th century. We are inclined, for many such reasons, to consider the whole of these lesser details of his life, to be a spurious accommodation to imagined probabilities, and to adopt the supposition that he was contemporary with the latter period of St Patrick,

and a bishop of his appointment; and, on this supposition, we do not think it necessary to admit, upon any authority we have seen quoted by our authors—Usher, Lanigan, Ware—that he visited Rome, or received any authority from its bishop.

It is stated probably that he took up his residence in his own province, where he preached, and baptized, and made a multitude of converts. His eminence was very great in his lifetime. There is stated to have been a very great friendship between him, Ibar, and Ailbe, especially the latter, to such a degree, that they wished to be always together; and made a vow of friendship, which was to be kept by themselves and their posterity to the end of the world—"on earth and in heaven."

## Ibar.

A. D. 500.

IBAR is, by some writers, affirmed to have been a bishop before the coming of St Patrick; and by others, on the other hand, to have been one of his disciples. According to the statements we have adopted, the latter is the more probable. Some lives of St Patrick confirm it also. He lived in his monastery, on Begery, a small island near the harbour of Wexford. He died A. D. 500.

## Bridget.

439—510.

THIS eminent person is said to have been born in 439. Her father's name was Dubtacus. The antiquarian writers differ as to his rank. Bale calls him a nobleman, the *Book of Howth* a captain of Leinster: both may possibly be correct, and the point is of no importance. Her mother appears to have been a person of less respectability: she held some servile office in the house of Dubtach, and having an attractive person, as the story runs, the wife of Dub soon found reasonable occasion for jealousy, and caused her to be sent away. Dubtach, anxious to save the unfortunate victim of his crime, delivered her in charge to a bard. The bard fulfilled his trust with due fidelity, and, when the infant Bridget was born, continued his zealous service by watching over her growth and instructing her early years with parental care. She was thus instructed, as she grew, in all the knowledge of the age; her talent excelled her acquisitions, and she soon obtained a far extending reputation. This was yet increased by the sanctity of her life, and the singular weight and wisdom of her opinions. Her sayings, in an age when the learned were but few, obtained extensive circulation, and from being repeated and admired, soon became in high request. Her advice on weighty occasions began to be sought by the ecclesiastics of her day, and on one occasion is said to have been alleged as authoritative in a synod held in Dublin.



The various acts of her life, as collected by numerous biographers, are not, in general, such as we can consistently with our plan, offer here, though we do not doubt the foundation of most of them in fact, yet they are too inseparably interwoven with monstrous inventions, to be reduced to reality.

She became a nun, and built herself a celle under a goodly oak. This was after increased into a monastery for virgins, and from the original cell, called Cyldara, "the cell of the oak." As her memory obtains its chief interest from this institution, the reader will be gratified by the following extract from Harris's Ware:—

"The church of Kildare is for the most part in ruins, yet the walls are still standing, together with the south side of the steeple, and the walls of the nave, which is adorned to the south with six gothic arches, and as many buttresses. The north side of the steeple is level with the ground, and is said to have been beaten down by a battery planted against it during the rebellion in 1641. The choir, where divine service is used, had nothing worth notice in it, except a large gothic window, much decayed, which the chapter have lately taken down, and in the room have erected a modern Venetian window. The south wing, which was formerly a chappel, is in ruins, and in it lie two large stones, in alto-relievo, curiously carved. One represents a bishop in his robes, a pastoral staff in his right hand, and a mitre on his head, supported by two monkeys, with several other decorations, but being without inscription, it leaves only room for conjecture, that it was erected for *Edmund Lane*, bishop of Kildare, who was buried here in 1522. The other is the monument of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, of Lackah, curiously cut in armour, with an inscription round the stone, and upon the right side of it are five escutcheons, differently emblazoned. Ralph of Bristol, bishop of Kildare, was at no small charge in repairing and adorning the cathedral, and was the first Englishman who sat in this see. He died in 1232. It again fell into decay in the reign of king Henry the VII., and was repaired by the above mentioned Edmund Lane. At thirty yards' distance from the west end of the church, stands an handsome round tower, adorned with a battlement; it is full forty-four yards high, and at the same distance from the tower, an ancient pedestal of rough unhewn stone remains, on which formerly stood a cross, the top of which now lieth in the church-yard, but the shaft is converted into a step leading to the communion table. Not far from the round tower is to be seen an old building called the Fire-House, where the inextinguishable fire was formerly kept by the nuns of St Bridget, of which an account may be seen in the *Antiquities of Ireland*. Among the suffragan bishops of Ireland, as the bishop of Meath in councils and elsewhere had the precedence, so the bishop of Kildare claimed the second place, the rest taking their seats according to the dates of their ordinations. This practice obtained in several parliaments, viz., in those of the 27th of queen Elizabeth, and 11th of James the First. It was controverted before the privy council, March 15th, 1639. But the lords, justices, and council did not think proper to adjudge the right, in regard the parliament was to assemble the day following, and that they had not time to enter into the merits on either side. Yet to avoid the scandal and disturb-

ance which might arise from a contention in the house, they made an interim order, 'that the bishop of Kildare, without prejudice to the rights of the other bishops, should be continued in the possession of precedence, next after the bishop of Meath, and before all other bishops, although consecrated before him; and that he should take place accordingly, until the same be evicted from him, upon the discussion of the right.' The bishops of Kildare, since the Reformation, have been for the most part of the privy council, and for some successions past have held the deanery of Christ-church, with this see in commendam. In a return made to a regal commission, A. D. 1622, by bishop Pilsworth, it is said, that by the ancient rolls of the bishoprick, it appeared, that there were seventy-three parishes in the diocese of Kildare. The constitution of the chapter is singular. It consists of four dignitaries, and four canons, viz., dean, chantor, chancellor, and treasurer. The four canons have no titles from any place, but are named, 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th canon. There are also in this diocese an archdeacon, and eight prebendaries, who are called prebendaries *ad extra*. The archdeacon is no member of the chapter, but hath a stall in the choir, and a voice in the election of a dean only, and so have the eight prebendaries *ad extra*. Each of the dignitaries or canons are capable of holding any of the prebends *ad extra*, but as such have only one voice in the election of a dean. The prebendaries *ad extra* take their designations from these places, viz., 1. Geashil; 2. Rathangan; 3. Harristown; 4. Nurney; 5. Ballysonan; 6. Donadea; 7. Lulliamore; 8. Castropeter.\*

"In this place," says Stanihurst, "*Ibique maxima civitas, postea in honore beatissimæ Brigidæ erexit quæ est hodie metropolis Lagenensium.*"

The succession of bishops in the see of Kildare, is thus given by the last writer, "Conlianus, Long, Ivar, Colnic, Donatus, David," &c.

Bridget was extensively known and revered in her lifetime, through the different nations which then composed the population of the British isles. A *Harmony of the Gospels*, written by St Jerome, was copied at her desire in letters of gold. This Boetius mentions as having seen it; and Stanihurst says, it was preserved, "as a monument," at Kildare. Bridget died about 510. She is said to have been buried in Iona, but afterwards, with Columbkille, taken up and transferred to the tomb of Patrick. Of this the following legend is preserved:—

"Hi tres in Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno  
Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba pius."

Among the early notices of her life, Colgan has collected and published, together, the following:—

A hymn by St Brogan, on her virtues and miracles, "*Tempore vero Lugaidu Leogairo, Rege nati, &c., compositus.*" Much, however, of this poem seems to be the production of a later state of theology.

The second is a life by Cogitosus, and supposed to have been written before the year 594. One sentence of this seems to imply an early date, in which this island is named, "*Scotorum terra.*" A third

\* Harris's Ware.

by St Ultan, was obtained from an old MS. in the monastery of St. Magnus, at Ratisbon. It is fuller than either of the former. A fourth, written in the 10th century, by Animosus or Animchod, a bishop of Kildare, is published from a defective MS., but, as might be expected from the more recent date, is more full on the marvellous particulars of Bridget's life than any of his predecessors. Two more, one in prose by "Laurentio Dunelmensi;" and another in verse by St Cœlun, of the monastery of Iniskeltein, complete the collection.

## St Finbar.

A. D. 570—630.

LIKE St Bridget, St Finbar was the fruit of an unlawful union. His birth is rendered illustrious by its circumstances, which were rather of the order of the miraculous. By order of the zealous Tege-matus [Tigecnatus?] his father and mother were cast together into a hot furnace, where his mother was soon safely delivered of a fine child. He was baptized by the name of Lochan, and delivered to the charge of three holy men, who, struck by the beauty of his countenance and flowing hair, called him Fuenbarrak. He was brought up by one Torpereus, and received some lands from the munificence of king Fattinus. Having been ordained by Torpereus, he went to preach in Scotland, then a principal field of missionaries from the Irish church. On his return to Ireland, he received, from a chief of the name of Edo, a grant of land near the river Lee; and here he founded the city of Cork, with a cathedral, to which he annexed "a faire church-yard." Here the first person buried was his old master, the good bishop Torpereus. St Finbar was consecrated first bishop of Cork. He entered into a solemn compact with Congellus, abbot of Cloane, that they should be buried in the same place. He was probably induced to this, by a natural and laudable zeal to advance the reputation and interests of his own church-yard—a touch of natural feeling, which gives, if this were wanting, strong corroboration to the legend of his life. Here, in conformity with this agreement, he was buried; and, shortly after, the abbot of Cloane fulfilled his part, by following his venerable friend to the appointed place of rest. Hanmer, in his *Chronicle*, preserves a portion of the legend in which these particulars have been handed down.

Besides the fame due to St Finbar, as the founder of Cork, his name is rendered interesting both to the antiquary and the tasteful explorer of Irish scenery, by his connexion with a scene of unparalleled beauty and interest, which lies among the mountain solitudes in the immediate vicinity of that realm of wonder and admiration, Glengarriffe. The ancient hermitage of St Finbar occupies a small island in a lake about a mile long and half as broad. This lake lies in a little circular valley, shut in on every side by the rude and enormous precipices of the wild mountains of Kerry—Dereen, Maolagh, Nada-nuillar, and Faoltena Gouganne. The effect of this scene is singularly and wildly impressive; it has lately been made known to the public



by a coloured engraving, from a painting by Mr Petrie, in which he has, with his usual felicity, embodied its character and conveyed its wild expression.

## St Kevin.

A. D. 618.

THIS ancient person, though less important in the history of the country, and far more identified with venerable fable than the last, is, nevertheless, made eminent by the association of his name with one of the most ancient remains of Irish antiquity—the celebrated scene of the seven churches in Glendalough. The vicinity of this curious and striking scene to Dublin, has in some degree anticipated our legendary office, by not only diffusing the knowledge of the saint, but by also producing, for the edification of touring antiquaries, a yearly growth of marvels, which, for the most part, do more honour to the humour of the tellers, than to the sanctity of the saint. These, however entertaining they might be to those who have not listened to Joe Irwin and his fraternity, must, we regret to say, be excluded from this sober page; not so much that they want the truth, as because they are deficient in the mellow age, which constitutes so much of the essence of history.

Of St Kevin's (or Coragenus's) actual history, there are some authentic remains. He was born in the year 498; was baptized by St Cronan; received the first rudiments of his education from Petrocus; was priested by bishop Lugid. He was the contemporary of Columbkille, and held constant intercourse with him and the other holy men of his day. He led a hermit life, in an old place called Cluagn Duach, since called Glendalough (the valley of two loughs). He died on the 3d day of June, 618, at the age of 120. The day of his death is yet commemorated in the place by a *patron*. After his death, Dymnach, one of the lords of the surrounding territory, founded a cathedral church, with other buildings, which gradually sprung up into a city, the history of which is not extant, but the ruins exist and tell its whereabouts, and attest the ancient legend. Kevin was the author of two works, *De Britanniorum Origine*, and *De Hebero et Hermone*.

## Sedulius.

A. D. 450.

SEDULIUS lived in the 5th century, and was remarkable for his genius, learning, and piety. He is said to have been a bishop, but this assertion is denied on good authority. It appears that there were many of the same name, all Irish. The subject of our present notice was a poet, an orator, and a deeply learned theologian. Trithemius, in speaking of him, says, "Sedulius, a Scottish (Irish) priest, was, from his youth upwards, a disciple to Hildebert, archbishop of the

Scots. He was a man well versed in the knowledge of the Scriptures, of great accomplishments in human learning, and had an excellent taste both for prose and verse. For the love of learning he left Scotia, travelled into France, and from thence into Italy and Asia. At length, departing from the borders of Achaia, he came to be in high esteem in the city of Rome, on account of his wonderful learning. He writ many works, both in prose and verse, of which I have only met with the titles. He dedicated a notable treatise to the abbot Macedonius, composed according to the series of the whole gospel, which he entitled—

“Carmen Paschale metricè. Lib. 4.  
 In omnes epistolas Pauli prosaice. Lib. 14.  
 De Miraculis Christi. Lib. 1.  
 Ad Theodosium Imperatorem. Lib. 1.  
 In majus volumen Prisciani. Lib. 1. }  
 In secundum editionem Donati. Lib. 1. } Some think these are by  
 Exhortatorium ad Fideles. Lib. 1. } Sedulius the younger.  
 Epistolas Plures ad Diversos. Lib. 1.  
 De Miraculis Christi prosaice. Lib. 2.”

Bale has added many to the above list; we shall therefore transcribe his as it stands:—

“Carmen Paschale. Lib. 5. Paschales quicunque Dapes.  
 De Signis et Virtutibus. Lib. 1. Domino Charissimo.  
 Gesta et Miracula Christi. Lib. 4. Expulerat quendam, &c.  
 Super utroque Testamento. Lib. 2.  
 In Psalmos Davidicos. Lib. 1.  
 Collectanea in Paulum. Lib. 14. Antequam Apostolica verba.  
 In Paulum Romanos. Lib. 1. Sciendum est quod in hoc.  
 In Corinthios. Lib. 2. Quod Nomen suum præponit.  
 Ad Galatas. Lib. 1. Hoc est non ab humana.  
 Ad Ephesios. Lib. 1. Refert Scriptura, testante Hieronymo.  
 Ad Philipenses. Lib. 1. Metropoli Macedoniæ.  
 Ad Collossenses. Lib. 1. Hac vice Apostolatus.  
 Ad Thessalonicenses. Lib. 2. Quod non dicit Apostolus.  
 Ad Timotheum. Lib. 2. Non secundum Præsumptionem.  
 Ad Titum Discipulum. Lib. 1. Hanc Epistolam scribit.  
 Ad Philemonem. Lib. 1. In Carcere vel in Cathenis.  
 Ad Hebræos. Lib. 1. Quoniam apud Hebræorum.  
 De factis Christi prosaicè. Lib. 2.  
 Ad Cæsarem Theodosium. Lib. 1. Romulidum Ductor Clari.  
 Exhortatorium ad Fideles. Lib. 1. Cantemus Socii Domino.  
 Epistolas ad Diversos. Lib. 1. Sedulius Scotigena.  
 In editionem Donati. Lib. 1.  
 In Prisciani volumen. Lib. 1.  
 Carmina Diversi Generis. Lib. 1.”

It is of course obvious that the Epistles are included in the fourteen books of *Collectanea in Paulum*.

Bale adds, that he wrote hymns, which the church uses, as, *Hostis Herodes impie*; *A Solis ortus Cardine*; and that he flourished A. D. 450. Hanmer mentions three more hymns, beginning as follows:—

Ad usque terræ limitem.  
 Christum Canamus Principem.  
 Christum venisse quid times?

Usher makes it clear, that the grammatical works ascribed to Sedulius were written, at a later period, by another of his name. John Sichard, who first published his valuable treatise, from an ancient copy which he had from the abbot of Fuld, calls him *Sedulius Hiberniensis*.

## St Binen, or Benignus.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 465.—DIED A. D. 468.

BENIGNUS, was a disciple of *St Patrick*, and his successor in the see of Armagh. He was baptized by *St Patrick* A. D. 433, and was instructed by him in the rudiments of learning and religion. According to the most probable computation, he succeeded to the see in 465, and resigned it in 485. He was a man eminent for piety and virtue, and died about three years after his resignation. There are various opinions respecting the place at which he died, some asserting it to be Rome, others England, and others Armagh. Usher thinks it was at the latter place, where, the tripartite writer of *St Patrick's* life says, "his remains were deposited with great honour."

## Jarlath.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 468.—DIED A. D. 482.

JARLATH, the attached friend of Benignus, was appointed by *St Patrick* to succeed him in the see of Armagh. He was of the family of the *Dal-Fiatacians*,\* and was born in Ulster, in the barony of *Mourne*, in the south of the county of Down. His father obstinately adhered to paganism, but he and his brother *Sedna* were educated by *St Patrick*, and were zealous imitators of his virtues. He died on the 11th of February, 482, in the 14th of his pontificate. The annals point out the time of his death under the year 481. "*Quies Jarlatha filii Trena, episcopi Ardmachani*. The rest of Jarlath, son of Trena, bishop of Armagh."

## Cormac o' Ernaidhe.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 482.—DIED A. D. 497.

CORMAC was appointed to the see of Armagh, on the death of Jarlath, by *St Patrick* who was then very old. He had been baptized by him, and became an eminent example of learning and piety. He was well versed in the holy Scriptures. He is confounded, by some historians, with another who was bishop of Trim in the 7th century.

\* *Dal-Fiatacia*, the family and country of *Fiatach* or *Fiachad*, king of Ireland.



## Dubtach II.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 497.—DIED A. D. 513.

DUBTACH succeeded to the see of St Patrick in 497, but it has not been ascertained by whom he was nominated. Some think by Cormac; for it is certain that the pope did not interfere in those nominations until the reign of king John. By some writers he is called Duach, and the *Annals of the Four Masters* place his death in 512.

## Ailild II.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 513.—DIED A. D. 526.

AILILD, or Ailil, or Helias, was of royal blood, being the son of Trichen, prince of East Ulster. Both he and his successor, Ailild II., were descended from the royal family of the Dalriatacians, as we learn from the annals both of Munster and Ulster. He was converted to Christianity by St Patrick, and died on the 13th of January, 526. The *Martyrologies* of Marian Gorman, Ængusius Auctus, and others, place his death a year earlier.

## Ailild II.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 526.—DIED A. D. 536.

AILILD II., according to the *Annals of the Four Masters*, succeeded to the see of Armagh, immediately on the death of his relative Ailild I., and continued in the archbishopric for ten years, though the martyrologists place his death a year earlier.\*

\* The purpose of this volume does not require the continuation to the utmost, of lives so barren of record. Some of our readers may be gratified by seeing the list which exhibits the continued succession from St Patrick in the see of Armagh. We transcribe it to the end of the period.

DUBTACH II.,	.....succeeded 536.....	died 548
DAVID MAC-GUAIRE HUA-FARANAN,	...succeeded 548.....	died 551
FEIDLIMID,	.....succeeded 551.....	died 578
CAIRLAN, called HY-NIELLAN,	.....succeeded 578.....	died 588
EOCHAIID (MAC-DERMOD),	.....succeeded 588.....	died 598
SENACH,	.....succeeded 598.....	died 610
MAC-LAISIR,	.....succeeded 610.....	died 623
THOMAIN (MAC-RONAN),	.....succeeded 623.....	died 661
SEGENE,	.....succeeded 661.....	died 688
FLAN-FEELA,	.....succeeded 688.....	died 715
SUIBHNEY,	.....succeeded 715.....	died 730
CONGUSA,	.....succeeded 730.....	died 750
CELE-PETER,	.....succeeded 750.....	died 758
FERDACHRY,	.....succeeded 758.....	died 768
FOENDELACH,	.....succeeded 768...resigned in 771	

He is said to have died in 794.

There are great and irreconcilable differences about the succession at this period,

# St Edan.

PROMOTED A. D. 598.—DIED A. D. 632.

ST EDAN, commonly called St Moedoc and St Moeg, was the son of Sedna, and the eighth in descent from Colla-vais, king of Ireland. His mother, Ethne, was also of royal blood, being descended from Amalgaid, who was king of Connaught at the time of St Patrick's arrival in Ireland. He formed a strong friendship in early youth with St Laserian, abbot of Devenish, and also spent a long time in Wales with St David, by whom he was much loved and diligently instructed both in learning and religion. Some years after his return to Ireland, he was consecrated bishop, or as some say archbishop, by the command of Brandub, king of Leinster, who gave him the city of Ferns, of which an ancient writer of the life of St Edan says, "A large city called Ferns, grew up there in honour of Moedog." Afterwards, at a great synod convened in Leinster, king Brandub, and both the clergy and laity decreed, that the archbishopric of all Leinster should for ever continue in the chair and see of St Moedog, and then St Moedog was consecrated by many catholics." According to Colgan and Dempster, he died on the 31st of January, 632, after having governed the see for about fifty years, and founded many churches; but the *Annals of the Four Masters* place his death in 624.

# St Moling.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 691.—DIED A. D. 697.

ST MOLING, the son of Oilan, was born in the county of Wexford, and founded a monastery on the banks of the Barrow, of which he was himself the abbot. He spent some time at Glendalough, and is reported to have written prophecies in Irish, foretelling many things respecting Ireland, its kings, and the vicissitudes of its history; in consequence of which Cambrensis classes Moling with Bracean, Patrick, and Columb, and calls them the four prophets of Ireland; and affirms that their books, written in the Irish language, were extant in his time. Moling stood high in the estimation of the bishops and clergy of his day, and at their request was appointed, in 691, by the king of Leinster, to the vacant see and chair of Moedog. In 693 he was, according to Ware, "a signal benefactor to his country, by

owing to the controversy which arose between this prelate and his successor Dubdalethy, concerning the right to the primatial see.

DUBDALETHY I.	.....succeeded 778.....died 793
AFFIAT,	.....succeeded 793.....died 794
CUDINISCUS,	.....succeeded 794.....died 798
CONMACH,	.....succeeded 798.....died 807
TORBACH (MAC-GORMAN),	.....succeeded 807.....died 808

persuading Finacta, king of Ireland, to release to the kingdom of Leinster the Boarian tribute, or tribute of oxen, which had been an insupportable burthen on that province ever since the fourth year of Tuathal Techmar, A.D. 134, and had been the cause of many wars and much bloodshed; of which the reader will find an account in the Annals, under the reign of Tuathal Techmar." Moling resigned his see some years before his death, and retired to his own monastery, where he at length died at a very advanced age, and was buried at Tegh-Moling.

## St Kieran.

DIED A. D. 549.

THIS ancient bishop has a peculiar claim, from the interesting remains of ecclesiastical antiquity which still commemorate his munificent piety.

By a comparison of differing authorities, it appears that Kieran was born about 516, being the second year of the reign of the monarch Tuathal. He was descended from the sept of the Arads, but his father was a carpenter of the name of Boctius, "from whence he was commonly nicknamed Mac-Steir (son of the artificer)." He is said to have been baptized by St Patrick. By many he has been confused with Kieran of Saigir, who lived at a later period.

In the year 548, the monarch Dermot granted him a tract near the eastern bank of the river Shannon, in the county of Meath. Here he built the abbey of Drum Tipraid, the ruins of which, under the well-known name of Clonmacnois, are the most interesting remains in the island. This foundation was afterwards enlarged by several additions in different periods. The piety or pride of kings and princes added nine churches for the sepulture of their remains, all within the same inclosure, and within the small space of two acres. Of these churches, one called Temple Ri was built by O'Melaghlin, king of Meath; "and to this day is the burial-place of his family;" Temple Connor, by O'Connor Dun; another by O'Kelly and Macarthy More; another by Mac-Dermot. Of these churches one has been repaired, and is now the parish church.

These ruins are generally described in antiquarian and statistical works: they are remarkable to the observation for the venerable appearance of a wide-spread scene of the ruins, stamped with the remembrances of the ancient church and monarchy of Ireland. A curious examination of the detail offers a host of interesting associations, rendered more so by the undoubted indications they afford of the princely munificence, refined taste, and artificial skill, employed in their erection. We give the following particulars from Harris, in his edition of Ware:—"Before the west and north door of Mac-Dermot's church stood a large old-fashioned cross or monument, much injured by time, on which was an inscription in antique characters, which nobody that I could hear of could read. The west and north doors of this church, although but mean and low, are guarded about with fine



wrought small marble pillars, curiously hewn. Another of the churches hath an arch of greenish marble, flat wrought and neatly hewn and polished, and the joints so close and even set, that the whole arch seems but one entire stone as smooth as either glass or crystal. The memory of St Kiaran is yet fresh and precious in the minds of the neighbouring inhabitants; insomuch that they make no scruple in joining his name with God's, both in blessing and cursing. 'God and St Kiaran after you,' is a common imprecation when they think themselves injured. In the great church was heretofore preserved a piece of the bone of one of St Kiaran's hands, as a sacred relic. The 9th of September is annually observed as the patron day of this saint, and great numbers from all parts flock to Clonmacnois in devotion and pilgrimage."

The title of Clonmacnois signifies the "retreat of the sons of the noble," and is supposed to originate in the place having been a seminary for the education of the sons of the chiefs and princes of the land. It continued long the see of the ancient bishopric, till about the middle of the 16th century, when the bishopric was united to Meath, and the place reduced to the rank of a parish. During this long interval, it passed through various changes of fate, having, in common with the other ecclesiastical foundations of this country, suffered more or less from all the various and disastrous revolutions of which it has been the subject almost from the beginning of its history. In 1201, the work of dilapidation may be said to have commenced, by a sack which it underwent from the English leader Meiler Fitz-Henry; after which there was little intermission from violence, while there was any thing to be preserved from the violence incidental to war in its most destructive form. The interval which succeeded was one in which the ancient foundations of the island, deprived of their use and indwellers, were abandoned to the slower working but not less efficient ravage of time.

This place has many peculiarities in common with Glendalough. It is, like it, called the Seven Churches, and is the place of an annual patron, to which the peasantry flock from a wide circle of country.

St Kiaran only survived this foundation one year, having died in 548.

## St Conlæth.

DIED A. D. 519.

THERE is a disagreement amongst writers as to who was the first bishop of Kildare. The *Red Book* of the earl of Kildare states, that Sonino was the first, Svorious the second, and Conlæth the third; and Richard Stanihurst, on the authority of this book, makes the same statement. But in a *Life of St Bridget*, ascribed to Animosus and published by Colgan, it is asserted that Conlæth, or Conlian, as he is otherwise called, was first bishop of Kildare. We incline to the latter opinion, especially as he was the founder of that cathedral, aided by St Bridgid, to whom it is dedicated. Cogitosus calls Conlæth "arch-

bishop and high-priest;" and another ancient writer of the life of St Brigid says, that "the holy Brigid elected him bishop in her city of Kildare." He died on the 3d of May, 519, and was buried in his own church in that city.

### St Aed.

DIED A. D. 638.

ST AED was, according to Colgan, king of Leinster, and "abdicated his government to become a monk." We have no record of the succession to this see from the time of Conlæth to Aed, though Cogitosus, who flourished before the year 590, says that it continued uninterrupted till his time. The *Annals of the Four Masters* confirm the statement "that he was abbot and bishop of Kildare, and had been formerly king of Leinster," and state that his death took place in 638. There is a long period in which the order of succession seems to have been lost between Aed and Maeldoboreon, who is next named as bishop of Kildare, and who died, according to the *Annals*, in 704. In the list of abbots of Kildare there are, however, some who intervene; and Ware suggests that, as amongst the Irish writers the term "abbot" and "bishop" are often synonymous, they may possibly have held the office, and if so, will in part fill the chasm.

LOCHEN MEANN (or the SILENT), abbot of Kildare,.....	died 694
FARANAN, abbot of Kildare,.....	died 697
MAELDOBORCON, bishop of Kildare,.....	died 704
TOLA, bishop of Kildare, .....	died 732
DIMAN, abbot of Kildare,.....	died 743
CATHALD O'FARANAN, abbot of Kildare, .....	died 747
SOMTUIL, bishop of Kildare,.....	died 785
SNEDBRAN, bishop of Kildare,.....	died (same year) 785
MUREDACH O'CATHALD, abbot of Kildare, ...	died (same year) 785
EUDOCIUS O'DIOCHOLLA, abbot of Kildare, .....	died 793
FEOLAN O'KELLACH, abbot of Kildare,.....	died 799

### Fridolinus Viator.

A. D. 495.

AMONGST the many Irish ecclesiastics who carried learning and piety into France at this period, Fridolinus Viator was distinguished as being the son of a king, and as having early resisted the attractions of a court that he might devote himself to religion and philosophical studies. He travelled through France and Germany preaching Christianity and founding monasteries, in the latter of which he was assisted by king Clodovarus. He obtained the name of Viator from his unceasing toil in travelling from one country to another for the propagation of religion; and at length ended his labours at the monastery of Seekinge, in Germany, where his remains are interred. He wrote many sermons and learned interpretations, and *A Book of Exhortations to the Sacred Virgins*.

## St Molua.

DIED A. D. 609.

ST MOLUA, otherwise called Lugid, was born in Munster, and was abbot of a monastery called Clonfert-Molua, in Leinster. He was educated by St Coemgall in Ulster, and was remarkable for his sanctity. He was afflicted with leprosy for twenty years before his death, but was not prevented by it from attending to the duties of his situation. He wrote *A Rule for Monks*, which was carried by St Dagan to Rome, and read and confirmed by pope Gregory I., who publicly declared,\* “that the holy abbot who composed that rule, had built a hedge about his family as high as the heavens; and he sent his blessing and prayers to St Molua, at which St Molua was highly rejoiced.”

## St Dagan.

DIED A. D. 640.

ST DAGAN, who was contemporary both with St Munnu and St Molua, lived in a place called after his name Achad-Dagan, of which he was at first abbot and afterwards bishop. According to Colgan, he was born in Leinster, was brother to Molibba, bishop of Glendalough, and was descended from the noble and ancient sept of the Messingoorbs. From his earliest youth he devoted himself to the church, and was educated first by Pulcherius, abbot of Leithmore, in the Queen's county, and afterwards by Petroeus, a Briton, who had also been tutor to his uncle St Coemgene, abbot of Glendalough. He travelled to Rome, and obtained from Gregory, as we before mentioned, a confirmation of the rule of St Molua. He was a zealous supporter of the opinions of St Munnu, respecting the time for celebrating Easter, and was so vehement in the support of the rites and traditions of his country,† that Lawrence, archbishop of Canterbury, in his Epistle to the Irish Bishops, states “that, when bishop Dagan was with him, he refused not only to eat in his company, but even under the same roof.” According to Bale, he wrote *Ad Britainorum Ecclesias*, lib. i. He established a monastery at a place called Inverdaoile, in the county of Wexford, where he died in 640.

## Ængus Macniissius.

DIED A. D. 507.

ÆNGUS MACNISSE, first bishop of Connor, and founder of that church, was, according to the *Annals of Tigernach*, the son of Fobrec,

\* Usher.

† Ware.



but adopted the surname of his mother, and was commonly called St Macnisse. He died at an advanced age: according to Ware, in 507, though the *Annals of Inisfail* place his death a year earlier, and Colgan states him to have been a disciple of St Olcan (who was a disciple to St Patrick), and says he died on the 3d of November, 513.

## Díma, or Díman.

DIED A. D. 656.

DÍMA, called Dubh, or the Black, was the son of Ængus (Mac-Carthen-Fion), of the noble family of the Dalcassians, and was appointed to the see of Connor and continued to govern it to a very advanced period of life. Ware says "he was one of those bishops of Ireland to whom the Roman clergy, in the vacancy of the papal chair, anno 636, wrote that epistle concerning the due observation of the festival of Easter, which the venerable Bede mentions. Some have called him Diman the scribe, from his skill and dexterity in writing." According to Ware, he died on the 16th of January, 656, while an ancient calendar in Irish states his death to have taken place on the 5th of January, 658.

## St Eunan.

ST EUNAN is said to have been the first bishop of Raphoe; but it is difficult to discover either when this see was founded, or the date of St Eunan's appointment. St Columbkille founded a monastery here, and this building was afterwards repaired by Adamnanus the celebrated abbot of Hy. St Eunan erected the church at Raphoe, or, as it was anciently called, Rath-both, into a cathedral. Few of the names of his successors can be traced until after the arrival of Henry II.; but Melbrigid, or Brigidian Mac-Dornan, who was afterwards archbishop of Armagh, and who died in 927, is one of the first mentioned.

MALDUIN MAC-KINFALOID, bishop of Raphoe, .....died about 930  
ÆNGUS, or ÆNEAS O' LAPAIN,.....died in 957

## Columbkille.

A. D. 521—577.

AT an early period, the precise origin of which is not ascertained on any sufficient data, Christianity was introduced into England. But in the still barbarous state of its inhabitants, devoid of even the first rudiments of art and literature, there was no soil into which a national faith, inculcating the principles of a high civilization, and claiming a moral and intellectual assent and conformity, could well strike root. A constant strife of petty kings, and a succession of desolating revolu-

tions, suspended the progress of every civilizing influence, and repressed the human mind; and the newly-implanted faith, after a precarious struggle, in which it never gained its true position, was swept away by the Anglo-Saxon conquest. From this a long period of heathen darkness followed, during which there is nothing to call for the observation of the ecclesiastical historian; unless the contemplation of that low and degraded state of human nature, which manifests in stronger contrast the powers of revealed truth to civilize and enlighten, as well as to redeem. From the Anglo-Saxon wars in the 5th and the beginning of the 6th centuries, there was, through the whole of the latter century, an interval of extreme ignorance and darkness, until the memorable arrival of Augustin and his missionary train, in 596. It was during this night of the British churches, that a bright and steady light of religion and civilization was kindled in the northern island of Hy, from untraceable antiquity the seat of heathen idolatries. There, amid the waves of the northern sea, the word of power and the arts of civil life obtained a permanent habitation; and, through the darkness of the unsettled age, sent out the message of peace and truth; and in better times spread far and wide its saving light among the reviving churches of the British isle. In noticing these facts it would be a grievous omission to pass unnoticed the strong reflex evidence they cast upon the antiquities of the Irish church. The ages of revolution which have overswept our island so repeatedly, have carried away much of that evidence of ancient things which impresses the eye of common observation with a sense of conviction. The visible remains tell too little, and history does us wrong. But the history and the remains of Iona have derived, from its isolated station, a permanency, and from its connexion with British antiquity, a celebrity, which carries back inquiry to a further date, and unfolds a steady and graphic gleam of the ancient church, from the bosom of which it first threw the glorious light of redemption over the waves of the north. Whatever fatal destruction may have, by repeated spoliations and burnings, obliterated the better part of our annals; whatever lying legends render truth itself suspicious, in those which a later time has produced; or whatever barbarism of recent times may seem to contradict all our pretensions: it must yet be felt, that the ancient church, from which the whole of north Britain, and, we may add, so many churches of Europe, drew their most illustrious minds and their efficient beginnings, could not have been less eminent for the gifts they communicated than is affirmed by the most high-coloured tradition. And it must be felt, that whatever we are to subtract for legendary invention, and misrepresentations arising from the doctrinal errors of after time, the facts, after all, are likely to be as much incorrect from omission as from addition; and that, however the historians of later times may err in details, yet there is no reason for rejecting the high claim of the antiquity of the Irish church. According to a biographer of the 16th century: "Towards the middle of the 6th century of redemption, in which Hibernia, the island of saints, shone with saints as numerous as the stars of heaven, there arose in the same island a new star, which excelled all others, as the sun outshines the lesser stars of heaven." This star was Columbkille, whose birth probably happened about 521. He was of a

royal race, being a lineal descendant, in the fourth generation, from Niall of the Nine Hostages. His father's name was Feidlim; his mother's, Ethnea, eminent for piety, and, like her husband, of royal descent. During her pregnancy this lady had a dream, that a person of majestic stature and presence stood before her, and presented her with a splendid veil, which she had scarcely touched, when, escaping from her hand, it rose upon the air, floated away, and expanded before her astonished eyes, as it receded into distance, until its vast folds were spread abroad far over hill, valley, forest, and lake. Turning to her solemn visitant, he told her that it was too precious to be left in her possession. This dream did not fail to receive its interpretation as it was accomplished in the events of Columba's after life. At his baptism, he is said to have received the name of Críomthan. The following translation of the legend of this circumstance may be received as a specimen of the style and manner of those early poetic legends, in which so much of the history of this period has been preserved:—

“ The pious Christian hero Collumcille,  
When he was baptized, received the name  
Of Críomthan Oluin; his guardian angel  
Was the most watchful Axall; but the demon  
Who, with infernal malice stung, attended  
Upon the saint, to torture and torment him,  
Was called Demal.\*

The change of name is referred, by one of his biographers, to accident, and may well have occurred as related, though rendered doubtful by the superstitious tone which seemed to refer every slight occurrence to special design. His exceeding meekness attracted the attention of the children of the neighbourhood, who were accustomed to see him coming forth to meet them at the gate of the monastery in which he received his education, and by a fanciful adaptation, common enough to lively children, they called him the “pigeon of the church,” which, in Irish, is “Collum na cille.” The childish soubriquet adhered to him, and had perhaps taken the place of a name, when it caught the attention, and excited the superstitious fancy of his guardian, Florence, who set it down as the special indication of the intention of Providence, and from thenceforth called him Collum cille.

He is stated to have studied in Down, under the eminent St Finian, and other pious persons; and began early to acquire reputation for sanctity and knowledge of Scripture.

The first forty-three years of his life were passed in Ireland, where he founded several monasteries; of which one is thus noticed by Bede: “Before St Columba came into Britain, he founded a noble monastery in Ireland, in a place which, from a great plenty of oaks, is, in the language of the Scots, called Dearthach, *i. e.* ‘the field of oaks.’”

This Ware describes as the “same house with the Augustinian monasteries, now called Durrough or Darmagh, in the King's county.” Another of his foundations was near the city of Derry. The history of this monastery and city from the annalists, may be cited for the miniature outline which it may be said to reflect of Irish history.

\* Keating.



Founded about 546, on a large tract of land, said to have been granted to Columbkille by prince Aidan, a descendant from the same royal house, it grew into a large and prosperous city and monastery. In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, are the following entries of its calamities from the 8th century. In 783, Derry Calgach was burned; 989, it was plundered by foreigners; the same entry occurs for 997; in 1095, the abbey was burned. In 1124, a prince of Aileach was slain, in an assault of the church of Columbkille; 1135, Derry-Columbkille, with its churches, was burned; 1149, it was burned; 1166, it underwent another burning; 1195, the church was plundered. In 1203, Derry was burned from the burial ground of St Martin, to the well of Adamnan. In 1211, the town was plundered and destroyed. In 1213, it was again plundered. In 1214, it was, with the whole district (O'Neill's country), granted, by king John, to Thomas Mac-Uchtred, earl of Athol. In 1222, Derry was plundered by O'Neill.\*

This appears to have been the favourite residence of the holy man; it was rendered sacred by the recollection of his pious deeds, and the traditions of his miraculous works. Among the most interesting of the ancient memorials of his affection for the place, is a passage in his life by O'Donnel, in which it is mentioned as his desire, that the delightful grove, near the monastery of Derry, should for ever remain uncut. And that if any of the trees should happen to fall, or be torn up by a storm, it should not be removed for nine days. The tenth of its price was then to be given to the poor, a third reserved for the hospitable hearth, and the remainder, something more than half, distributed among the citizens. So great was his regard for this grove, that, being about to found the church called Dubh-reigleas, when it was found to stand in the way, so as to confine the intended site—sooner than destroy any of his favourite trees, he ordered the building to be erected in a direction transverse to the common position, from east to west. But that this might not occasion a departure from the usual practice, he ordered the table, at which he commonly officiated, to be erected in the eastern end, “which the remains of the aforesaid church, existing at the present day, confirms.”† Columbkille is said to have founded many other monasteries; O'Donnel states the number at 300; the more probable number of 100 is adopted by Usher, from Joceline. It, however, is the more difficult to be precise, as there is much confusion on account of the numerous persons bearing the name of Columba: the extensive jurisdiction of his monastery in Iona, seems to attest at least that many others were founded by the same person. Having established his monastery of Derry, we are told by O'Donnel, he was seized by a violent desire to travel through the whole country, and awaken all its inhabitants to the study of piety. In the course of this circuit, he visited Lagenia, Connaught, the county of Meath, &c.; wherever he came, founding and restoring churches, and exciting every sex and rank to piety. Not the least space, in the relation of these adventures, is commonly bestowed on the miracles of the saint.

\* For these facts we are indebted to an extract given by Mr Petrie, in his masterly article upon the antiquities of Derry, in that valuable work now proceeding from the *Ordnance Survey*.

† Colgan, *Thaum.* p. 308.

It was probably after this foundation that he received the order of priesthood from Etchen, bishop of Clonfadin. The story is curious enough. By the consent of the ecclesiastics of his neighbourhood, he was sent to Etchen, bishop of a neighbouring diocese, to be made a bishop of. When he arrived, the bishop was, according to the usage of this early period, engaged in ploughing his field. Columbkille was kindly received, and stated that he came for ordination. But it did not occur to him to specify the orders he came for. The bishop, knowing that he had only received deacon's orders, very naturally pursued the common course and gave him priest's orders. When this oversight became known, he offered to consecrate him a bishop, but Columbkille, who looked on the circumstance as a manifestation of the will of God, declined this further step. The story derives some confirmation from the circumstance that he never became a bishop, though occupying the station and authority in an eminent degree.

But it is as the apostle of the Piets, that Columbkille is entitled to the distinction of being here thus diffusely noticed. Until his time, but slight inroads had been made on the paganism of the northern parts of the district, as yet unknown by the name of Scotland. In the 4th century, the preaching of St Ninian had been attended with small success among the Southern Piets: St Kentigern, from the districts of Northumbria, had followed without obtaining any more efficient result. Of these persons and their preaching the accounts are perplexed and unsatisfactory, nor is the broken and tangled thread of their history worth our attempting to unravel here: suffice it, that there seems to have been a widespread predominance of heathenism, both in Scotland and the northern realms of England, in 534, when Columbkille, owing to circumstances imperfectly related, and of slight interest, went over to attempt the conversion of the Northern Piets. O'Donnel mentions his having levied war against king Dermot, for a decision oppressive and tyrannical to the church of Ireland; and describes a battle in which the troops of Columbkille gained the victory with much slaughter.\*

The story is inconsistent with the character of Columbkille. There is another which, though liable to the same objection, is yet worth telling, because it is likely to involve a certain portion of truth, and as characteristic of the time. According to O'Donnel, Columbkille was the guest of Finian, of Clonbille, who lent him a copy of some part of the holy Scripture to read: Columbkille, who was celebrated for his penmanship, soon began to transcribe the manuscript. Finian, on being told of the circumstance, highly resented it, and insisted on his right to the copy which Columbkille had taken. Columbkille referred the case to the arbitration of king Dermot, who decided in favour of Finian. This injustice was, according to the story, retaliated by a threat of vengeance, quite as inconsistent with the whole character of Columbkille, as Finian's resentment and its motive were unworthy of a Christian of any age. A more probable story mentions an outrage committed by Dermot, which is assigned as leading to the war which

\* Colgan, Thaum. 406.



followed: A son of the king of Connaught, pursued by Dermot, took refuge with Columbkille, from the influence of whose rank and sanctity he hoped for protection; the licentious fury of king Dermot, however, was stopped by no consideration of reverence or regard, and the youth was dragged from the arms of his protector, and murdered before his face. An outrage so aggravated, bearing the atrocious character of sacrilege joined with cruelty, appealed loudly to the compassion and piety of the royal relations of Columbkille, and those of the murdered prince. The forces of Tyrone and Connaught were raised, and the battle of Culedreibhne (near Sligo) took place. To this statement it is added, that during the battle, while Finian prayed for Dermot's party, their antagonists were backed by the more effective devotions of Columbkille. Dermot was defeated with a loss of three thousand men; while the allies, as the tale runs, lost but one. This otherwise incredible disproportion is, however, made quite natural by the additional circumstance—that during the battle a gigantic angel made its appearance among the ranks of Tyrone and Connaught, and struck their enemies with panic and dismay. These passages—of which we may say with Usher “quod poeticâ magis quam historicâ fide habetur hic descriptum”—though they cannot be received as the truth, are yet valuable as exhibiting the mode of thinking of an age, and as indicating what may be called the actual poetry of the age of saints; they are also, it must be said, likely to contain as much of the truth as can be, by any possibility, extracted among the chasms and legendary concretions, the frauds and conflicting statements, of traditionary history. The only fixed point in the narrative is the fact, that the battle was fought about the year 561. We shall not unnecessarily lengthen our narrative, with the equally doubtful tales of the excommunication or the penance of Columbkille, in consequence of his share in these transactions.

It was probably in 563, about two years after the battle of Culedreibhne, that Columbkille, leaving a scene in which he was incessantly harassed by the feuds, animosities, and tyrannies, of his royal enemies and friends, migrated to try his success among the Picts. The following is part of the account given by Bede:—“Columba arrived in Britain in the ninth year of Brude, the son of Meilochon, king of the Picts, who was a potent king, and whose subjects were, by his preaching and example, converted to the Christian faith. On this account he obtained from them the above-mentioned island as a demesne for his monastery.”

In accordance with this account, it is said, he landed at the island, “Inish Druinish,” or island of Druids, and having successfully laboured for the conversion of the Picts, and converted their king, he received from him the possession of the island of Hy, or Iona, still called I by the natives. Another account which, with Lanigan, we are inclined to think far more probable, represents Columbkille as having obtained possession of the island from his relative, Conall, king of the Irish Scots, then settled in North Britain. This opinion is supported by Dr Lanigan, from the *Annals of Tighernach and Ulster*, and enforced by the opinion of Usher, who observes that Hy was too distant from the British territories to have been part of them: while the position of



Conall was such as to make it highly improbable that he should not have been its possessor. In either case, it seems that it was at the time occupied by the Druids, whose remains are affirmed to be yet traceable there. These he expelled, and began his operations by the erection of huts, and a temporary church of slight materials. Having thus effected his settlement, he began his operations in those wild regions north of the Grampian hills, where no Christian preacher had ever before made his way; and ere long succeeded in converting king Brude, with his court and people, who soon followed the example of their king. There is something in the history of these rapid and total conversions, which seems to lend a doubtful air to this period of church history. It is, however, in conformity with the entire history of the Christian church. The same All-disposing Power, which enabled the primitive teachers to triumph over the wide-spread and deep-seated obstacles presented by the gorgeous and sensual heathenism of Greece and Rome guarded as it was, with imposing philosophy, and ornamented by poetry and the arts, was also present to guide and give efficacy to the apostles of the British churches, who had obstacles of a less formidable nature to contend with. The paganism of the barbarian Pict had little in its constitution to hold captive either the taste, passions, or reason. The very first lessons of the gospel carried, in the apt simplicity of their adaptation to the wants and defects of humanity, an evidence which must have been more impressive, as those wants were the less supplied from all other sources. Without hastily adopting the miraculous narrations of monkish historians, the Christian reader will also readily acknowledge, that the powers of the Spirit, which never deserted the missionaries who founded and extended the church of Christ, cannot be supposed to have been less bountiful of its gifts than the occasion required. And if we feel obliged to reject narrations which want all the characters either of evidence or adaptation, on a just view of the general analogy of God's dealing, as evidenced in the authentic records of the sacred history: even here, too, it must be kept in mind, that the circumstances were different, and that a different kind of opposition was to be encountered. This, however, we offer rather as a reason against sweeping incredulity, than as warranting the affirmation of any special instance we have met with. The cause of sacred truth imposes strict severity in the reception of the miraculous; and while we insist on even the necessity of such (the only unquestionable) attestations of Divine authority, we cannot admit the simplest case on the authority of an unsupported legend. Hence we offer the few of these which we have admitted, rather as curious illustrations, than as authorized facts. Among such we may relate the first adventure of our saint among his Highland neighbours. Arriving at the residence of king Brude, his entrance was denied by the inhospitable gates of the pagan king. After suing for admission to no purpose; and, we must suppose, allowing a fair time for the use of gentler means, Columbkille advanced, and signing the cross upon the stubborn doors, they flew open at a gentle push, and admitted the saint with his company. The king was in council when he was disturbed with the account of the startling prodigy; yielding at once to the influence of astonishment and superstitious fear, he went forth with

his council to meet the formidable visitor. Finding his errand to be one of benevolence and peace, and affected by the eloquence of his language, and the venerable sanctity of his manner, presence, and company, he received him with respect and kindness, and submitted to receive his instructions. The result rests on less doubtful grounds. Then began the conversion of the northern Piets.

In the mean time we may assume the growth of the Island church. His fame was soon widely diffused, disciples flocked from all quarters, and the means probably increasing with the increase of his flock, he soon considerably enlarged his foundation to more proportionable dimensions; the buildings increased in number and size; and the widespread remains of an ancient monastery and nunnery offer the most authentic record of the saint's power and successful labours. At first, it is said, St Columbkille refused to permit the foundation of a nunnery: he, probably, like his more legendary countrymen, Saints Senanus and Kevin, found natural reason in the infirmity of the human passions. He soon, however, learnt to regret the error of overhasty zeal: constant observation taught him to revere the sanctity of a colony of Augustinian nuns, who dwelt in another small island in the vicinity, and they were in a little time permitted to dispel the gloom of his monastic domain, by settling in the same island, to the mutual improvement, it may be easily judged, of both. There seems, from the still perceptible ruins of these ancient edifices, to have been a broad paved way, leading from the nunnery to the cathedral, where the two communities met in the festivals, and solemn hours of devotion, without the levity of an earthly aspiration, and parted with their piety exalted by a communion which never fails to expand and warm every affection of the breast. There is nothing in these ruins from which their precise date can be fixed. On the island are the remains of edifices built at different periods, during the interval between the 6th and 12th centuries, when the importance of the place declined. The following is a recent description:—"The remains of these edifices, almost all constructed of fine sienite, together with crosses and sepulchral monuments, are the antiquities now extant. The exact date of some of the former is known, but the church is said to have been built by queen Margaret, towards the latter end of the 11th century. This, though inferior to many other structures, was a magnificent edifice for that period. No polished work is employed, but the stone, which is compared to the finest used by the ancients, has been brought to a plain surface. Many blocks five or six feet long are seen in the walls, and also in the rubbish. The church is built in the form of a cross, 164 feet long without, and 34 broad. The body of the church is 60 feet in length, and the two aisles of the transept or cross, are each 30 feet long, and 18 broad, within the walls. The choir is 60 feet in length; within it are several fine pillars, carved in the gothic way, with great variety of fanciful and ludicrous, representing parts of Scripture history. Amongst the rest is an angel, with a pair of scales, weighing souls, and the devil keeping down that in which is the weight with his paw. On his face is portrayed a sly and malicious grin. The east window is a beautiful specimen of gothic workmanship. In the middle of the cathedral rises a tower 22 feet square, and between 70 and 80 high,



supported by four arches, and ornamented with bas reliefs. At the upper end of the chancel stood a large table or altar of pure white marble, 6 feet long and 4 broad, curiously veined and polished. Of this beautiful fragment of antiquity there are now scarcely any remains, as it has been all carried off piece-meal by visitants, as relics, and by the natives, from a superstitious belief that a piece of it was a preservative from shipwreck. Near where this altar stood, on the north side, is a tombstone of black marble, on which is a fine recumbent figure of the abbot Macfingone, exceedingly well executed, as large as life, with an inscription in Latin as follows:—"Here lies John Mackinnon, abbot of Iona, who died A. D. 1500, to whose soul may the Most High be merciful." Opposite to this tomb, on the other side, executed in the same manner, is the tombstone of abbot Kenneth. On the floor is the figure of an armed knight, with an animal sprawling at his feet. On the right side of the church, but contiguous to it, are the remains of the college, some of the cloisters of which are still visible. The common hall is entire, with stone seats for the disputants. A little to the north of the cathedral are the remains of the bishop's house, and on the south is a chapel dedicated to St Oran, pretty entire, 60 feet long, and 22 broad, within the walls, but nearly filled up with rubbish and monumental stones. In this are many tombstones of marble, particularly of the great Lords of the Isles. South of the chapel is an enclosure called Reilig Ouran, "the burying ground of Oran, containing a great number of tombs, but so over-grown with weeds as to render few of the inscriptions legible. In this enclosure lie the remains of forty-eight Scottish kings, four kings of Ireland, eight Norwegian monarchs, and one king of France, who were ambitious of reposing on this consecrated ground, where their ashes would not mix with the dust of the vulgar. South from the cathedral and St Oran's chapel, are the ruins of the nunnery, the church of which is still pretty entire, being 58 feet by 20 on the floor, which is thickly covered with cow-dung, except at the east end, which Mr Pennant caused to be cleaned, and where the tomb of the last prioress is discernible, though considerably defaced."

From this retreat Columbkille occasionally visited Ireland. One occasion may be selected, as showing in a strong light the influence of the saint, and the political state of the time. It was about the year 573-4, that king Aidan, the successor of Conal on the Pictish throne, put in his claim to the sovereignty of a large part of the county Antrim, as a descendant from its first proprietor, Cairbre Riada, and asserted the freedom of this territory from the paramount sovereignty of the Irish monarch. Columbkille resolved to accompany his patron. After a tempestuous passage they landed in Ireland, and at once proceeded to Drumceat, where the National Assembly were sitting; engaged, it would seem, on a question respecting the order of bards, who were at this early period beginning to wax numerous, insolent, and troublesome, so much so, that it was thought necessary to devise some remedy, either by reduction of their numbers and privileges, or by a total suppression of the order. The question was decided, by the timely arrival and interposition of the Saint, so far in favour of these licensed liars that they were still permitted to exist, and spin out the



fabulous additions which give an apocryphal tone to our tradition. On the introduction of the more important suit between the kings, the question was, by general consent, referred to the wisdom and impartiality of the venerable bishop—a reference made singular by the fact of his peculiar connexion with the Scottish claimant. Columbkille, no doubt sensible of this impropriety, and conscious of a natural desire for the success of his own friend, declined the office, and it was transferred to St Colman, who decided against king Aidan, on the obvious and just ground, that the territory was an Irish province.

After visiting his foundations in Ireland, the bishop returned to his Island church, where, shortly after, he felt the approach of his last illness. Sensible of the advance of death, he retired to a small eminence, from which he was enabled to overlook the holy settlement which was the work of his piety, and the last earthly object of his affections. Here, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, he invoked emphatic blessings on his monastery. After this prayer, descending from the hill, and returning to the monastery, he sat down in his shed or hut, "*tugurio*," to transcribe the *Psalter*; and coming to that verse of the 3d Psalm, where it is written, that good shall not be wanting to those who trust in God, he said "Here I must stop at the end of this page, let Baithen write what is to follow." Notwithstanding this he so far rallied as to attend evening service, after which he retired to his cell, and lay down on his stone bed. Again at midnight, he made another effort to attend the church, but finding his strength to fail, he sunk before the altar. Here the monks immediately following, saw their revered head extended in the last faint torpor of approaching death. Gathering round with their torches, they were giving way to their sorrow, when, as the writer of his life says, "as I heard from some who were present, the saint—whose life had not yet departed—opened his eyes, and looked round with wonderful joy and cheerfulness: then Diermitius raised the saint's right hand to bless the train of monks; but the venerable father himself, at the same time, moved it by a voluntary effort for this purpose, and in the effort he expired, being then 76 years of age."\*

"The name of this eminent man," writes Mr Moore, "though not so well known throughout the Latin church, as that of another Irish saint with whom he is frequently confounded, holds a distinguished place among the Roman and other martyrologies, and in the British isles will long be remembered with traditional veneration. In Ireland, rich as have been her annals in names of saintly renown, for none has she continued to cherish so fond a reverence through all ages as for her great Columbkille; while that isle of the waves with which his name is now inseparably connected, and which through his ministry became the luminary of the Caledonian regions, has far less reason to boast of her numerous tombs of kings, than of those heaps of votive pebbles left by pilgrims on her shore, marking the path that once led to the honoured shrine of her saint. So great was the reverence paid to his remains in North Britain, that at the time when the island of Hy began to be infested by the Danes, Kenneth the Third had his

\* Extract from Keating, ii. 107.

bones removed to Dunkeld, on the river Tay, and there founding a church, dedicated it to his memory, while the saint's crosier, and a few other relics, were all that fell to the share of the land of his birth."

In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, for the year 1006, we find mention made of a splendid copy of the *Four Gospels*, said to have been written by Columbkille's own hand, and preserved at Kells in a cover richly ornamented with gold.\* In the time of Usher, this precious manuscript was still numbered among the treasures of Kells,† and if not written by Columbkille himself, is little doubted to have been the work of one of his disciples.

Of the prophecies of Columbkille there are some curious accounts. The first is of the arrival of the English, and their subduing Ireland. Giraldus Cambrensis takes notice of the fulfilling of this prophecy. "Then," says he, "was fulfilled the prophecy of Colum of Ireland, as it is said to be, who long since foretold, that in this war there should be so great a slaughter of the inhabitants, that their enemies should swim in their blood. And the same prophet writes (as it is reported), that a certain poor man and a beggar, and one as it were banished from other countries, should with a small force come to Down, and should take possession of the city, without authority from his superior. He also foretold many wars, and various events. All which are manifestly completed in John Courey, who is said to have held this prophetic book, written in Irish, in his hand, as the mirror of his works. One reads likewise in the same book, that a certain young man, with an armed force, should violently break through the walls of Waterford, and, having made a great slaughter among the citizens, should possess himself of the city. That the same young man should march through Wexford, and at last without difficulty enter Dublin. All which it is plain were fulfilled by earl Richard. Further, that the city of Limerick should be twice deserted by the English, but the third time should be held. Now already it seems it hath been twice deserted, first by Raymond, secondly by Philip de Braosa, &c., wherefore (according to the said prophecy), the city being a third time assaulted, shall be retained, or rather, it was long after fraudulently overthrown under the government of Hamo de Valoinges, Lord Justice, and by Meiler recovered and repaired." Thus far Cambrensis, who afterwards mentions this prophecy, as well as that of other saints on the same subject, in these words:—"The Irish are said to have four prophets—Moling, Breacan, Patrick, and Columbkille, whose books in their native language are yet extant

\* Usher mentions also another copy of the *Gospels*, said to have been written by Columbkille's own hand, which had been preserved at the monastery, founded by that saint at Durrogh. "Inter cujus *κειμελῖα* Evangeliorum codex vetustissimus asservabatur, quem ipsius Columbæ fuisse monachi dictitabant. Ex quo, et non minoris antiquitatis altero, eidem Columbæ assignato (quem in urbe *Βιλλες* sive *Βενλὶς* dicta Midenses sacrum habent) diligentè cum editione vulgatâ Latinâ collatione factâ, in nostros usus variantium lectionum binos libellos concinnavimus."—*Eccles. Primord.*, 691.

† This Kells manuscript is supposed to have been the same now preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, on the margin of which, are the following words, written by O'Flaherty, in the year 1577:—"Liber autem hic scriptus est manu ipsius B. Columbæ."—*Moore*.

among them. Speaking of this conquest, they all bear witness that, in after times, Ireland should be polluted with many conflicts, long strifes, and much bloodshed. But they all say, that the English shall not have a complete victory, till a little before the day of judgment. That the island of Ireland should be totally subdued from sea to sea, and curbed in by castles, and though the people of England, by trying the fate of war, should often happen to be disordered and weakened (as Breacan testifies, that a certain king should march from the desert mountains of Patrick, and on Sunday should break into a certain camp in the woody parts of Ophelan, and almost all the English be drove out of Ireland), yet by the assertions of the same prophets, they should continually keep possession of the eastern maritime parts of the island." This is the account of Cambrensis, written upwards of 500 years ago.

## St Columbanus.

A. D. 559—615.

THIS illustrious saint and writer was the descendant of a noble family in the province of Leinster. Of his youth we have no accounts distinct enough to be relied upon. He is, however, credibly reported to have been conspicuous for the singular beauty of his person; and it is more than hinted by some of his biographers, that he was in consequence exposed to temptations, which for a time must have rendered it a doubtful matter whether posterity was to be edified by the sanctity, or warned by the frailties of his subsequent career. Such is the history often of the most holy men; as the saint must, in all cases, be more or less the result of a conquest over human frailty. Fortunately for himself and the world, the saint prevailed, and the young Columbanus had the firmness to achieve the greatest triumph which human strength can win over temptation, by flying from the dangerous field. He tore himself, doubtless with pain and after many serious conflicts of the heart, from his father's house, and the temptations by which he was beset; his youthful pride and passions, "*Nihil tam sanctum religione* (says an ancient author of his life) *tamque custodiâ clausum, quod penetrare libido nequeat.*"

From his native province he retired to the monastery of Banehor, in Ulster, where, under the tuition of Saint Coemgall, he spent a considerable portion of his life in holy meditation and study. Here he continued to attain experience, patience, firmness, and self-command, with the knowledge of men and books, which were necessary for the career for which he was designed, till the mature age of fifty, when feeling, doubtless, that the time was at length arrived for the useful application of his attainments, he selected twelve of his companions—we may safely infer, men of piety and learning—and crossed over to Gaul, where there was at this period an ample field for the exertions of holy men.

At this time, the state of Christianity in France had fallen into the most melancholy depravation. The prelates had nearly forgotten



the common decencies of Christian society, and altogether lost sight of the dignity and duties of their sacred calling. They had, in common with their flocks, relapsed into the barbarism of savage life, and the rudeness of paganism, and were virtually to be reconverted to the faith which they had solemnly professed. The consequence was, an abundant growth of superstition, and the decay of the yet imperfectly established religion of the gospel. Such a state of things held out an ample field for the work of conversion, and afforded highly beneficent occupation to the numerous tribes of the monastic orders, who, whatever may have been their demerits in later times, may, we think, be recognised as instrumental to the preservation and furtherance of Christianity, in these perplexed and semi-barbarous periods.

St Columbanus found a spot adapted to the retirement of his taste, and the sanctity of his purpose, in the gloomy and sequestered forests of Upper Burgundy, in the neighbourhood of the Alps. Here, in this savage region, as yet perhaps unpenetrated by the noise and depravity of life, he had twelve cabins built for himself and his companions, of whom most, perhaps all, were afterwards to be the missionaries to other realms. The fame of his eloquence and learning, and of the sanctity of the company, soon drew the inhabitants in vast crowds from every quarter, settlements arose in the vicinity, and the saint was soon enabled to erect the monastery of Luxeuil. Here he remained about twenty years, during which he acquired great influence and renown. Some of his historians report, and probably believed, that he worked divers wonderful works, of which the greater part seem to have been at the expense of the wild beasts of the surrounding wilderness, which were subdued by his sanctity, and fled or fell before his power.

Among the concourse of his followers and disciples, many were of noble birth, and many possessing ample means and influence. Not a few of these devoted themselves to the pious pursuits of the monastic life; and, while they created the necessity, at the same time supplied the means of extending the institutions of the saint. Another monastery was built in a more select situation, and, from the springs with which it abounded, received the name of Fontaines.

In the course of a ministration, the immediate duties of which were such as to imply a continued struggle between the principles of Christianity, and the moral as well as political disorder and misrule of the age and nation, resistance to wrong armed with power must have been a consequence in no way to be avoided, unless by an unholy compromise with expediency or fear, and such were little to be found in the rigid sanctity and firm character of the saint. These virtues found there fitting exercise from the vice and tyranny of the Burgundian prince and his vindictive mother, queen Brunehaut. The detail of the petty collisions between the low and vindictive pride of barbaric royalty and the stern sanctity of this primitive reformer, abound with touches of moral truth which confer the seeming, at least, of authenticity upon the legendary historians of the saint and his times. "They will be found worthy, however, of a brief passing notice, less as history than as pictures for the imagination, in which the figure of the stern but simple and accomplished missionary stands out to the eye

with the more force and dignity, from the barbaric glare and pomp of the scenes and personages round him."

"Thus, on one occasion when the queen dowager, seeing him enter the royal courts, brought forth the four illegitimate children of king Thierry to meet him, the saint emphatically demanded what they wanted. 'They are the king's children,' answered Brunehaut, 'and are come to ask your blessing.' 'These children,' replied Columbanus, 'will never reign, they are the offspring of debauchery.' Such insulting opposition to her designs for her grand-children roused all the rage of this Jezebel, and orders were issued for withdrawing some privileges which the saint's monasteries had hitherto enjoyed. For the purpose of remonstrating against this wrong he sought the palace of the king; and, while waiting the royal audience, rich viands and wines were served up for his refreshment. But the saint sternly refused to partake of them, saying, 'It is written, the Most High rejects the gifts of the impious; nor is it fitting that the mouths of the servants of God should be defiled with the viands of one who inflicts on them such indignities.'"\*

Another scene, described by the picturesque pen of the same agreeable writer, we must abridge for our purpose. One of the regulations which met with the censure and resistance of the court, was that which restricted the access to the interior of the monastery. The invidious feeling thus excited was seized on by the watchful malice of queen Brunehaut, as an instrument of persecution. For this purpose she instigated an attempt to put to the proof the monastery's right. King Thierry, followed by a numerous and gorgeous train of his courtiers and nobles, approached its gates. As they rudely forced their way, the saint, surprised by the noise of unhallowed and disrespectful violence, came forth and, as they had gained the door of the refectory, stood before them in the way. The king, still forcing in, addressed him, "If you desire to derive any benefit from our bounty, these places must be thrown open to every comer." The singular gravity and dignity of Columbanus's form and aspect are authentic facts of history; and when these are recollected, it may enable the reader to conceive the full effect which Mr Moore ascribes to the following emphatic answer of the saint to the intruding king:—"If you endeavour to violate the discipline here established, know that I dispense with your presents, and with every aid that it is in your power to lend; and if you now come hither to disturb the monasteries of the servants of God, I tell you that your kingdom shall be destroyed, and with it all your royal race." The king was terrified, and withdrew with his astonished train.

The consequence was, however, such as to fulfil the immediate design of the vindictive Brunehaut. It was intimated to the saint, that as his system was unsuited to the place, it was fit he should leave it. Mr Moore, on this occasion, cites a speech attributed to king Thierry which, as he justly observes, "betrays no want either of tolerance, or of the good sense from which that virtue springs." "I perceive you hope," said Thierry, "that I shall give you the crown of martyrdom; but I

\* Moore's Ireland, i. 261.



am not so unwise as to commit so heinous a crime. As your system, however, differs from that of all other times, it is but right that you should return to the place from whence you came." The saint refused to submit to any compulsion short of armed force, and accordingly a party of soldiers were detached to his retreat. None but his countrymen and a few British monks were allowed to follow him: they were conducted by an armed party on their way to Ireland. It was on their arrival at Auxerre that Columbanus gave utterance to a prediction, which was shortly accomplished,—“Remember what I now tell you; that very Clothaire whom ye now despise will, in three years’ time, be your master.”

Accident prevented the destination which would have interrupted the allotted labour of the missionary saint, and converted the malice of his enemies, into the means of extending the scope of his piety and exertion. He was left at liberty to choose his course, and visited the courts of Clothaire and Theodebert.

Both of these kings received him kindly, but he soon had won the confidence of Clothaire; nor is it improbable, that the judicious advice of the counsellor, contributed to fulfil the prediction of the saint. He now engaged in an active course of missionary exertion, in which he visited many places in France and Germany, after which his course was determined, by the reports which he was continually hearing of the growing power of his enemies in Franche Comté. To remove himself more completely from their malice, he resolved to pass into Italy.

In Italy, his uncompromising vigour of character, had fresh occasion for display. The controversies of the last century were still in their full vigour. After the decrees of councils, and the angry or interested interferences of popes and emperors, the dispute upon the Three Chapters, decided by the condemnation of the writings so called in the council of Constantinople, A. D. 553, still had in its embers heat enough to warm the zeal of another generation in the next century. The pious Theudelinda, queen of the Lombards, with the zeal and perhaps the indiscretion of a recent proselyte, had given offence to the see of Rome, by her protection of the bishops who obstinately held out in schism against this decision of a council. It is supposed that the Lombard court were drawn from their error by the judicious and moderate persuasion of Gregory; but however this may have been, it more certainly appears, that on the arrival of St Columbanus, the Lombards had again fallen back into the same heretical opinions. King Agilulph was the first of the Lombard kings who had embraced Christianity, and his queen had become eminent for her active exertions in its cause. By her advice he had hitherto been led to the expenditure of large sums, in the building and endowment of monasteries; and it is therefore easily understood, how attractive must a court, thus illustrated by pious and charitable zeal, have been to the wandering steps of the saint.

The sentiments of St Columbanus were, fortunately for this new alliance, in conformity with those of the royal schismatics. By the desire of Agilulph, he addressed a letter of considerable vigour and spirit to Boniface IV., who was at this time bishop of Rome, and the



first who held that dignity, which is now comprised in the papacy. In this letter he maintains the views of the schismatics, or opponents to the decision of the 5th General Council, and treats Boniface with very little ceremony.

This eminent Christian is said to be the author of many writings yet extant; but of the greater part of these, the genuineness is very uncertain. Among these, a poem, which on the competent testimony of Mr Moore may be described as "of no inconsiderable merit," seems to intimate the great age to which he lived.

"Hæc tibi dictaram morbis oppressus acerbis  
Corpora quos fragili patior, tristisque senectâ."

But the date of his death leads to another inference. Worn with the labours, controversies, persecutions, and wanderings of a long life, spent in the service of Christ and the enlightening of a barbarous age, he received permission from king Agilulph to select a retirement in his dominions. Retiring to a secluded spot among the Appennines, he founded the monastery of Bobio, in which he passed the remaining interval of his old age, and died on the 21st November, 615, in the 56th year of his age.

### Frigidian.

DIED A.D. 595.

FRIGIDIAN, or Phridian, son of a king of Ulster, went at an early period of his life to Rome, and from thence to Lucca, where he was consecrated a bishop. The office of St Fridian relates, "that he was honourably received at Rome by pope Pelagius I., by whom he was ordained a priest, and placed among the canons of the Lateran church. That he afterwards returned to Ireland, where his heathen parents used all their endeavours to bring him back to the worship of idols, and to induce him to enter into the state of matrimony; instead of which he converted them to the Christian religion. That having founded a monastery, and established canons in it, according to the rule he had received at Rome; he returned to Italy, and went to Lucca, where he was held in such veneration by the citizens, that, at their request, he was promoted to the bishopric of that city. During the space of twenty-eight years, which he spent in the government of the said see, he founded twenty-eight baptismal churches, the principal of which, dedicated to the honour of the Three Levites, is now called St Frigidian's church, in which he was at length buried, having died in a good old age. The festival of the discovery of his body is celebrated at Lucca, on the 28th of November." He is said to have been the author of a book of canons; but, according to Ware, this is a mistake, as the canons which bear his name, were a present to him from pope Pelagius. He is said, by Colgan, to have died in the year 595. This date is questioned by Dr Lanigan, who, on an Italian authority, states his death to have taken place in 588.

## Brendan.

DIED 571.

BRENDAN, abbot of Birr, was contemporary with his namesake of Kerry, and was son of Luaigne. His abbey was in the territory of Ely O'Carroll, now a part of the King's county, where he died November 29, 571. He is said to have written a poem on the virtues of St Columbkille, who was then living.

## Cogitosus.

COGITOSUS is, on sufficiently probable grounds, supposed to have been a monk of the monastery of Kildare. His own words seem to establish the fact, that he lived in the time of St Brigid, of whom he wrote a life. In this, mentioning her miracles, he writes, "which miracles I have not only heard, but have seen with my own eyes."

## St Brendan.

DIED A. D. 577.

ST BRENDAN, a native of Kerry, founded a monastery at Clonfert, and another at Enachdune. In these establishments he presided over 3000 monks, who maintained themselves by labour. His life abounds with stories, which suggest the idea, that its author, or the good saint, may have studied Arabian fiction through some channel, as his mysterious voyages and enchanted islands, remind the reader of these diverting liars, the tale-tellers of the East.

This eminent saint appears to have had a dream or glimpse of purgatory, before it was yet discovered by the spiritual adventurers of the middle ages. Camden cites the following description from one of his biographers:—

" Asserit esse locum, solennis fama diatatum  
Brendano, quo lux lucida semper micat.  
Purgandas animas datur hic transire per igne  
Ut dignæ facie indicis esse queant."

He wrote, among other works, *A Monastic Rule*, which, an anonymous biographer informs us, was dictated by an angel. He also wrote a work, *De Fortunatis Insulibus: Revelationes de Futuris Temporibus*, as also an essay on the *Life and Miracles of St Brigid*.

St Brendan is said to have died on Sunday, 16th of May, 577, in the 94th year of his age.

## St Ruadan, Abbot.

DIED 584.

ST RUADAN was the contemporary of St Brendan. He was ordained by St Finian, and built an abbey at Lothra. He wrote a work (a political pamphlet we presume) against King Dermot; and two other works, of a very different character, entitled

De mirabili Fontium in Hibernia Natura  
De miraculosa arbore.

He died at Lothra 584. His festival is 15th April.

## St Coemgall.

DIED ABOUT 601.

ST COEMGALL, born 516, in Ulster, educated in the Queen's county,—first under St Fintan, and then at Clonmacnoise, under bishop Lugid.

In 555, he founded at Banchor a celebrated abbey, thus described by an ancient writer, as “a great monastery called Beanchor, in a territory called the Ards, or heights of Ulster, near the Eastern Sea; and a vast number of monks flocked thither to St Congall, so that one place could not contain them; from whence he took occasion to build many cells and monasteries, not only in Ulster, but in other provinces of Ireland, and there were 3000 monks, under the care of the holy father Congall, dispersed among these monasteries.” St Coemgall died about 601.

## Eochoid, the Blind.

EOCHOID lived about 580, and is celebrated for his learning. He wrote a book, of which the idiom was become so obsolete that no one could guess what it was about: it may probably have been antediluvian researches, or an inquiry about round towers, as Eochoid was called master of the antiquities of Ireland. As invariably occurs, these obscure works had the merit of calling forth a rich suprefetation of commentaries. Among other works this illustrious scholar wrote an essay on Columbkille.

## St Cannice.

DIED 600.

ST CANNICE was born in the north of Ireland; and was the son of an eminent poet named Laidec. At 13 years of age he was sent over into



Britain, and placed under the tuition of Docus; under whose care he is said to have acquired great learning in the canons and rules of ecclesiastical discipline. He is then said to have travelled into Italy, where he met with attention, and was remembered with respect. We do not think it necessary to follow him through his many peregrinations. He seems to have had an active spirit, and made his piety and eloquence useful and conspicuous in many parts of England and Ireland. His principal labours were in Upper Ossory, where he founded several monasteries. At one of these called Achad-boe (*i. e.* field of oxen), he died in 599 or 600.

The cathedral of Kilkenny is named after him. He wrote the Life of St Columbkille, &c.

## St Munnu.\*

DIED 635.

ST MUNNU was the founder of an abbey near Wexford. He is chiefly entitled to a place here, for the sake of a curious and most characteristic account of a dispute between him and some other ecclesiastics. The following is the account extracted from his life, by Ware:†—"On a certain time there was a great council of the people of Ireland held in the White Field; between whom there arose a controversy concerning the order of celebrating Easter. For Laserian, abbot of Leighlin, who presided over 1500 monks, defended the new order, which was then lately sent from Rome; while others adhered to the old form. But St Munnu did not immediately appear at this council, though every one waited for him. He stood by the old order and came to the council the same day before evening. Then St Munnu said to the abbot Laserian, in the presence of all the people, thus:—"It is now time to break up this council, that every man may depart to his own place. In our contention concerning the time for celebrating Easter, let us dispute briefly, but let us give judgment in the name of the Lord. You have three options given you, O Laserian: Let two books, one of the old order, and another of the new, be cast into the fire, and let us see which of them shall escape the flames. Or let two monks, one of yours, and another of mine be shut up in the same house, and let the house be set on fire, and we shall see which of them shall escape unhurt. Or let us both go to the sepulchre of a dead monk, and raise him up to life; and he will shew us which order we ought to observe in the celebration of Easter." To which St

\* In our anxiety to give the fullest space we can afford to these old saints, we have noticed many whose actions are scarcely distinct enough for biography. Yet considering that the names alone which are enumerated by Ware and Harris, Usher and Lanigan, would fill a larger volume than this, we must adopt a strict limit. Little can in general be said of literary men of ancient date; but where the man is forgotten and the book not extant—the *nominis umbra* of antiquarian celebrity will hardly supply a sufficient apology for a life which comes very near an old wag's "Memoir of Nobody at all." We have here omitted, St Baithen, Colchus, the anonymous author of a work called the *Life of St Ita*, and a host besides.

† See also Usher, Prim. 937.

Laserian answered, ‘We will not proceed to judgment with you; because we know that if you commanded Mount Marge to be changed into the White Field, and the White Field to be removed to the place where Mount Marge stands—that on account of your infinite labours and great sanctity, God would immediately do this for your sake.’ For they were then in the White Field, over which Mount Marge hangs. Afterwards the people returned every one to their own homes.” This council was held A. D. 630.

### Laserian.

PROMOTED 632.—DIED 638.

LASERIAN, or Molaisne, was the son of Cairel and Elitha, daughter to a king of the Picts, who seems to have carefully attended to his religious instruction, and early placed him under the abbot St Murin. He afterwards spent fourteen years at Rome, where he heard St Gregory explain the Scriptures; and having received priest’s orders from him, he returned to his own country. Being there held in high estimation, the abbot Goban voluntarily resigned the abbey of Leighlin to him, and retired with a few monks to a cell that he built for himself. Laserian was opposed to Munnu respecting the time for celebrating Easter, and combated his opinions stoutly at the great synod, held in the White Field; which Usher places on the banks of the river Banow, near Mount Marge. On his second visit to Rome, pope Honorius consecrated him a bishop, and appointed him legate of Ireland. This gave Laserian increased influence, and we find that, after his return, the south of Ireland conformed to the views of Rome, in the observance of Easter. Laserian died on the 18th of April, 638 or 639, and was buried in his own church, which he had himself founded.

### St Evin.

7TH CENTURY.

THERE is little distinctly related of St Evin; but he is entitled to notice as the author of an ancient life of St Patrick—which the monk Joceline mentions as one of his chief authorities. He also wrote a life of St Colgan.

A church near Ross was dedicated to his memory. He lived about the end of the 6th and beginning of the 7th centuries.

### St Gall.

DIED A. D. 645.

ST GALL, eminent for his writings and sanctity, is still more so for the strange adventures and vicissitudes of a life divided between the

wanderings of a missionary and the stern seclusion of a hermit's cell. He was first the pupil and afterwards the companion of the illustrious Columbanus, accompanying him in his journeys and sharing in his dangers and sufferings. As we have given already an account of these, we shall not here go over the same ground, but pass briefly to the notice of his separate adventures. He seems to have been to St Columbanus what is now sometimes expressed by the familiar phrase, "his right hand," having been endowed with a fervent zeal, of which the impulses were always ready when heathen idolatries were to be assailed with fire and active violence, the effects of which sometimes were such as the reader will imagine: the saints were in their turn exposed to the rage or mistaken zeal of pagan superstition. These eminent missionaries had been, by the intrigues of queen Brunehilde, banished from their monastery at Luxeuil. They had arrived in the country of the Grisons, where, after much opposition from the people—met on their part with firmness and patient endurance, and gradually appeased to an apparent acquiescence by their virtues and the power of their preaching—they succeeded in converting many to Christianity; and, collecting their converts into a small settlement, they led a useful, quiet, and happy life, in the peaceful occupations of agriculture, and the forest sports of hunting and fishing; in which latter sport St Gall is mentioned as a distinguished proficient.

In this happy episode of their tragic and stormy lives, they were disturbed by the jealousy of the heathens, who, perhaps reconciled to their religious demeanour, did not so easily acquiesce in the encroachment on their hunting grounds. They complained to Gunza, the prince of the surrounding territory, and in the meantime assailed the pious community with many petty insults and depredations. At last they slew two friars; and, at nearly the same time, an order from the prince decided the saints to change their quarters. They resolved to pass over into Italy.

Immediately before the departure of Columbanus, St Gall fell dangerously ill. The languor of convalescence, operating on a mind of enthusiastic piety, naturally suggested the attractions of solitary piety. Having consulted his friends, they endeavoured to deter him from his purpose, by stories of wild beasts and other terrors of the savage wilderness of Swiss mountains and lonely forests, to which his fancy seemed to lead. But the saint was not to be daunted by earthly perils; and, entering the woody wild, he pitched on a sequestered site on the bank of the little river Stinace, running into the neighbouring lake of Constance.

The bishopric of Constance falling vacant, St Gall was invited to assist at the election. He consented; and, coming to the council of bishops, abbots, and holy men, assembled for that purpose, he had some difficulty in resisting their unanimous disposition to elect himself, "on account of the good testimony he bore with all men, for his knowledge of the Scriptures, his wisdom, justice, chastity, meekness, humility, patience, and charity."\* He declined the office, and John the deacon was elected on his recommendation.

\* Ware.



On the death of the successor of Columbanus, the friars of Luxeuil, to whom his character had been long known as a brother of their community, sent a deputation of six to invite him to be their abbot.

He was shortly after invited by Wilimar, a priest and one of his most intimate friends, to pass some time with him at his castle of Arbon. He had not arrived two days at this place when he was seized with his last illness, and died on the 16th of October, 645, in the 95th year of his age.

The hermitage, once sanctified by the latter years of his pious life, became soon an object of veneration, and, by the magnificent piety of kings and nobles, was erected into an abbacy of wide domain and princely jurisdiction. The abbot became the prince of a canton of 1100 square miles which composed his estates, the population of which is now 134,000 souls. The remains of the ancient Benedictine abbey are, we believe, still visited as the principal curiosity of the ancient town of St Gall.

The chief writings of St Gall are "*A Sermon* preached in St Stephen's Church, on the Ordination of John, bishop of Constance," and "some epistles published by Canisius."\* Many other writings are added on less certain authority.

## St Aidan.

DIED A. D. 651.

ST AIDAN was a monk of Iona, born in Ireland. He was appointed a bishop in Northumbria. By grant of king Oswald, he fixed his episcopal see in Lindisfarne. Not being sufficiently master of the Saxon tongue, he received assistance from the king, who interpreted his preaching to the people. The pains he took to make converts, were such as only occur in the primitive ages of the church. Bede expresses the comparative inferiority of his own times in the following sentence:—"His life was so widely different from the sloth and negligence of our own times, that all who travelled with him, whether shorn or laymen, were obliged to exercise themselves either in reading the Scriptures or in learning of psalms." He governed the see of Lindisfarne for seventeen years, during which time he converted Northumbria, and died 31st August, 651.

None of his writings remain, except some fragments preserved by Bede.

## Finan.

DIED A. D. 661.

FINAN, a native of Ireland, flourished in the year 651. He was appointed by king Oswin to govern the church of Lindisfarne. He

\* Ware's Writers.

was consecrated a bishop, and, as Bede tells us, “erected a church in the island of Lindisfarne, fit for an Episcopal see; which, nevertheless, he built after the manner of the Scots, not of stone, but of sawn oak, and covered with thatch. Archbishop Theodore, in after times, dedicated this church to the honour of St Peter the apostle, and Eadbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, stripped off the thatch and covered both the roof and walls of it with leaden plates.” Finan was, according to Bede, “a man of a fierce and rough nature,” but was very successful in his ministerial labours, and not only converted and baptized Peada, king of the Middle Angles, along with all his court, but sent four priests to instruct his subjects in Christianity. Sigbert, king of the East Angles, was also baptized by him, as well as his people; “and he sent,” says Bede, “for two other bishops to assist him in the ministry of ordination, and consecrated Cedda bishop of the East Angles.” The only writing ascertained to be his, is that mentioned by Bale, *Pro Veteri Paschatis Ritu*, though others have been attributed to him. He died in the year 661, having governed the church of Lindisfarne for ten years, and was succeeded by Colman.

## St Camin.

DIED A. D. 653.

ST CAMIN was brother to Guair, king of Connaught. He retired to the island of Iniskeltra in Loch-Derg, “where,” says Usher, “a sacred edifice is seen, which yet retains the name of Camin’s church.” A commentary on the Psalms is said to have been composed by him, of which fragments were seen by many, among whom are Colgan and Usher, who mentions it thus:—“Habebatur Psalterium cujus unicum tantum quaternionem mihi videre contigit, obelis et astericis diligentissime distinctum, collatione cum veritate Hebraica in superiore parte cujusque paginæ posita et brevibus scholiis, ad exteriorem marginem adjectis.”

## O’Burechans.

ABOUT the middle of the 7th century, three brothers of the above family are said to have united their efforts in compiling and digesting a body of Irish laws out of a great variety of scattered legal documents which they had collected. They combined in their work ecclesiastical with civil law, and entitled it *Brathaneimhadh*, i. e. sacred judgments. They must have been well qualified by their professions for the undertaking; for Boethgal was a judge, Boigalach a bishop, and Moeltule a poet and antiquary. Mr Lynch has given us the following distich, as describing the chief heads of the work:—

“Eaglais, flatha agus filidh, Britheamh’d dhios gachdligh,  
Na bruigh fo aibh dar linn, na saor agus na gabhan.”

which he thus translates:—

“ Quid fit jus Cleri, Satrapa, vatisque fabrique,  
Nec non agricola, liber iste docebit abunde.”

“ The priest, the prince, the bard, the man of art,  
And peasant, from that book may learn their part.”

## Maildolph.

DIED A. D. 675.

MAILDULPH, a learned Irish monk, founded a small monastery at Ingleborne in Wiltshire; and, from his residing there, it was anciently called Maildulfesburg, which has since been corrupted into Malmesbury, where there was afterwards a richly endowed monastery, to which king Athelstane and others made large presents. Maildolph instructed at Ingleborne a great many persons afterwards eminent for learning and sanctity, and, amongst others, Aldelm who, according to Camden, “was the first Saxon that ever wrote in Latin, and the first that taught the Saxons the way of composing Latin verse, and so performed what he promised in these verses:—

“ Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita superfit  
Aonio rediens deducam vertice musas.”

He wrote, according to Bale,—

De Paschæ Observatione, lib. i.  
Pro Tonsura ac Cœlibatu, lib. i.  
Regulas Artium Diversarum, lib. i.  
De Disciplinis Naturalibus, lib. i.

Besides, *Hymnos*, *Dialogos*, *Epistolas*, and other works which are not now extant. He lived to a very advanced age, and died at Malmesbury, where he was buried in his own monastery, in the year 675.

## St Finian.

DIED A. D. 552.

FINIAN is one of those whom Usher ranks high among the second order of ancient saints, and lived in the 6th century. He is entitled to our special notice as the founder of the celebrated abbey and city of Clonard, and as the most learned Irishman of his time. To his school flocked the students and holy men of his day, to draw wisdom from his teaching; and, among the three thousand students who sat at his feet, the various writers of his life enumerate most of the illustrious names which grace the annals of the 6th and 7th centuries. The following hymn was sung in his office:—

“ Nativus de Lageniâ  
Qui sprexit nomen regium  
Hic sumpsit infra mœnia  
Legendi privilegium



Trium virorum millium  
 Sorte sit doctor humilis :  
 Verbi his fudit fluvium  
 Ut fons emanans rivulis.  
 En hic rexit in literis  
 Viæ vicinus regiæ  
 Hic se jungebat superis  
 Hic transfertur egregii.\*

which gives the better part of his history. We are saved the necessity of any more detailed account, by a writer whose pen never fails to touch with life-like expression whatever it describes.

“ Beyond the moat, and farther to the right on a swelling bank over the Boyne, is the spot where once stood the abbey and cathedral of Clonard-cluain-eraind, the Field of the Western Height; but not a vestige now remains but a stone baptismal font, of what was once a bishop’s see, and the most famous seat of sacred literature and pious study in Ireland. Here St Finnian, the most learned of all the successors of St Patrick, established, in the 6th century, his college, to which three thousand students, resorted not only from all Ireland, but also from Britain, Armorica, and Germany. The venerable Bede describes the English, both of the better and middle ranks, as coming here not merely for the sake of study, but in the hope of leading a quieter and more contemplative life, (for it would appear that the Irish, in all their feuds, respected learning and the clergy,) and, under the direction of holy Finnian, receiving from Irish hospitality, instruction, food, lodging, and books, without charge—*céad mile fáilte*. So great was the fame of Finnian as a commentator on holy Scripture, that all the holy men of Ireland came to hear wisdom from his animated discourses. Hither came the twelve saints whom St Patrick constituted apostles of Ireland; the venerable Kieran of Saiger, who, with his hair whitened with the snows of an hundred winters, did not disdain to hear Finnian expound to him the sacred book. Here also came Kieran of Clonmacnoise, the carpenter’s son, who wore himself out in deeds of penance and sanctity, and died in his thirty-third year; the two Columbs, Columkille and Columb of Tirdaglass; the two Brendans, Brendan of Birr and Brendan of Kerry; Ruadan of Lorra, Molua of Clonfert, and others, as reported by Usher and Colgan, resorted hither. It would appear that these holy men, while residing at Clonard, did not allow their studies to interfere with their bodily exercises, but that they cultivated the rich and fertile soil around their abode; and thus, by invigorating their bodies, enlivened their minds, and rendered them more capable of enduring the mental toil attendant on the accumulation of great learning. There yet remains a legend which says, that St Columba, the son of Crimthan, one night when his lamp failed, being exceedingly anxious to master some important passage he had taken in hand, was seen with the fingers of his right hand tipped with light, running along the leaves of his book, and so, from the effulgence which they cast on the pages, he was enabled to study on, while all around him was dark.”\*

\* From the Dublin Penny Journal.

## Fiacre.

7TH CENTURY.

FIACRE was born early in the 7th century, of a noble family in Ireland. He early devoted himself to religious exercises, and having sought seclusion in France, obtained from Pharo, bishop of Meaux, a wood, where he built a monastery, which he dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and in which he lived the life of a hermit. He wrote, according to Dempster, *Ad Syram Sororem de Monasticæ Vitæ Lude*, which is said to be extant in manuscript at Meaux; and *Meditationes*, Lib. 1. Some Scotch writers assert that Scotland was his birthplace; but this would seem to be refuted by the legend published by Capgrave, in which the bishop of Meaux is described as inquiring from Fiacre respecting his country, to which the hermit answers, *Hibernia, Scotorum Insula, mihi meisque genitoribus originem dedit*. Ireland, an island of the Scots, gave birth to me and to my parents. There is also a tablet hanging up in the church of St Maturin, in Paris, on which is inscribed a hymn to the honour of St Fiacre, and one of the verses is as follows, which shows that he is there understood to have been an Irishman:—

Lucernæ nova speculâ  
Illustratur Hibernia  
Coruscat Meldis insula  
Tantæ Lucis Præsentia.  
Illa misit Fiacrium  
Hæc missum habet radium,  
Habent commune gaudium  
Hæc Patrem, illa Filium.

He died the 18th of August, but the year is not known. Monsieur Bireal, one of the French king's preachers, pronounced the eulogium of St Fiacre, which is printed amongst the compositions of that orator.

## Fursey.

DIED A. D. 650.

FURSEY was of royal blood by both parents, Fintan, his father, being the son of Finloge, king of South Munster; and his mother, the daughter of Adh-fin, or Hugh the White, prince of Hy-Bryun, in Connaught. He was baptized and educated by his uncle, St Brendan, abbot of Clonfert, and early embraced a religious life. By the licence of his uncle, he founded a monastery in an island called Rathmat, near Lough-orbsen, in the county of Galway, with all the necessary cells and appendages belonging to it. There are now no remains of this building, but there is a parish church near this lake called, in honour of him, Kill-Fursa. He continued to preach the gospel for about twelve years in Ireland; and about the year 637 he went to England. There, by the assistance of Sigibert, king of the East Saxons, he

founded a monastery in Suffolk, to which he ultimately induced Sigebert to retire, and to exchange the regal for the monastic life. Sigebert afterwards being compelled to witness a battle, fought against Pendo, king of the Mercians, and holding (says Florence of Worcester) only a wand in his hand, was slain, together with his kinsman Egrie, to whom he had resigned his kingdom. This monastery was afterwards adorned with magnificent buildings and valuable presents, but Fursey, to avoid the horrors and dangers of war, committed the care of his abbey to his brother, Foilan, and two other priests, and, accompanied by his other brother, Ultan, went over to France, where he founded a new abbey, in the diocese of Paris. A life of Fursey has been published in French, by a learned doctor of Sorbonne, which has since been translated into Latin, in which he is described as having gone to Rome before the foundation of the abbey of Laigny; and the conversations which took place between him and the pope are detailed. It is also stated, that the pope consecrated both him and his brother, Foilan, bishops, though without appointing them to any sees. Their journey back is then described through Austrasia, Flanders, Brabant, Liege, and Namure; their meeting with St Gertrude, who formed so strong a friendship for Fursey, that she accompanied them in their subsequent journeys, and at length founded a monastery for her fellow-travellers at Fossis, and made Ultan abbot of it. Foilan continued to travel through Flanders, boldly preaching Christianity wherever he went, and overturning the pagan altars. At length he, with three of his fellow-labourers, gained the crown of martyrdom, having perished by the swords of the infuriated pagans. Fursey fearlessly continued his labours, and induced large numbers of the courtiers of the king of Austrasia to embrace Christianity. He then proceeded to the court of Clovis, where he was received with great honour, and was highly esteemed for his uncompromising boldness in rebuking the vices of the king and his courtiers. Fursey died at Peronne, in Picardy, on the 16th of January (which day has been consecrated to his memory), in the year 650, or as others say, in the year 653. Under this year the author of the *Annals of the Abbey of Boyle* places his death according to the following passage: "Anno 653, Fursu Paruna quievit." In the year 653, Fursey went to rest at Peronne. *Miræus* states that on his death-bed "he bequeathed the care of his abbey of Laigny to St Eloquentius, an Irishman, who afterwards perceiving faction to have arisen among his disciples, retired, with a few friars, to Grimaec, on the river Isarake."

Fursey wrote, according to Dempster, *De Vita Monastica*, Lib. 1. There is also a prophecy, written in the Irish language, still extant, which is ascribed to him.

## Arbogast.

DIED A. D. 679.

ARBOGAST, a native of Ireland, was consecrated bishop of Strasburgh, in Germany, A. D. 674. "He came," says Gaspar Bruschi-  
us,



“a stranger and a hermit into Alsace, and there built an oratory in a sacred grove, almost on the spot where Hagenau now stands, and in that place served God diligently, in fasting and prayer. Yet he was not altogether idle, for he appeared abroad, and diligently instructed the inhabitants in the knowledge and fear of God, and in the true invocation of that Omnipotent power, by his son Christ; reprehending their idolatrous worship, and confuting their fanatical opinions. From this practice he fell under the notice of Dagobert II., by whose appointment, he succeeded St Amand, in the see of Strasburgh, A. D. 674, which he governed five years. He died in 679, and was buried near the common place of execution, called St Michael’s Mount: for that was his request, in imitation of what happened to Christ, who suffered without the walls of Jerusalem, in the place of the wicked.” Many years after, a monastery, dedicated to his name, was built over his tomb, and in the neighbourhood of it, the high church of Strasburgh was erected.

Bale says he wrote *Homilius Aliquot*, Lib. 1.; and William Eysengreinius ascribes to him *In Epistolas Pauli Doctissimos Commentarios*.

## Aileran.

DIED A. D. 665.

AILERAN, Aireran, or Ercran, for he is designated by these various names both by Latin and Irish writers, was regent of the celebrated school of Clonard, in Meath, and was called *Aireran an teagnaidh*, i. e. *Aireran the wise*, in a long poem written by St Ængus. He died in 665, and his death is recorded in the *Annals of Ulster*, under the name of *Aileran the wise*. He was a contemporary of St Fechin, of Foure, whose life he is said to have written; but he survived him only about one year, so that, in this case, he must have collected the documents for it during the lifetime of the saint. He is also said to have written the lives of St Patrick and St Brigid; but his most celebrated work is *An Allegorical Exposition of the Genealogy of Christ*, which was copied by Patrick Fleming out of a manuscript in the abbey of St Gall, in Switzerland, and first published by Thomas Sirin, 1667, under the title *Ailerani Scoto-Hibernia, Cognomento Sapientis, Interpretatio Mystica Progenitorum, D. Jesu Christi*, (to which is annexed, *Moralis explanatio eorundem Nominum*, compiled by the same author). Sedulius inserts the *Exposition* amongst his *Collections on St Matthew’s Gospel*, and speaking of it, says, “Here begins the typical and figurative signification of the genealogy of Christ, which St Aileran, the wisest of the Scottish nation, explained.” Archbishop Usher mentions, “that the said small piece was the only monument of Aileran’s wit remaining” in his time; so the lives above alluded to must have been lost.

## St Cumin of Connor.

ST CUMIN lived and wrote about the year 656. He appears to have been a poet, and composed in verse, *A Treatise on the singular Virtues of the principal Saints in Ireland*, in which he panegyricizes some heroic action, or special virtue belonging to each. The year of his death is unknown.

### Cumin.

BORN A. D. 592, DIED A. D. 662.

CUMIN FADA, *i. e.* the Long, was the son of Fiachna, king of Jarmnan, or West Munster, was educated first by the virgin St Ida, and afterwards by Colman O'Clua-saigh, who is said to have written the acts of Cumin Fada, and to have died the same year with his pupil. Cumin was appointed to the bishopric of Clonfert, by the king of Connaught. He wrote an hymn which begins *Celebra, Juda, Festa Christi gaudia*, and died in the year 662, at the age of 70.

### Cumian.

DIED A. D. 669.

CUMIAN, or Cumene, abbot of Hy, was a descendant from the royal line of Tyrconnell, and was born in their territory, which is now the county of Donegal. He retired in extreme youth to the abbey of Hy, for the purpose of education, as it was at that time greatly renowned for learning and for learned men, as well as for the strictness of its monastic discipline. After his return to his own country, he either founded, or governed an abbey in the west part of Leinster. At this period, the controversy respecting the *time* for the celebration of Easter was carried on with great acrimony on both sides, by the opposite factions; part of the kingdom adhering to the regulations and traditions of their ancestors, and the remainder adopting the opinions of Rome. About the year 630, pope Honorius the First, had exhorted the Irish by letter, "to reflect how few they were in number, compared to the rest of the world, and that they, who were placed in the extreme bounds of the earth, should not consider themselves wiser than all the ancient and modern churches of Christ; and that they should not presume to celebrate a different Easter from the rest of the churches, contrary to the Paschal calculations and synodal decrees of the whole world." Bede tells us, that "the nations of the Scots, who inhabited the south parts of the kingdom of Ireland, had lately been taught, by the admonitions of the prelate of the apostolic see, to observe Easter according to canonical rite. But the northern province of the Scots, and all the nation of the Picts, notwithstanding

the pope's admonition, did not forbear to observe Easter from the 14th moon to the 20th, according to their usual customs." Cumian, who at first took no part in the controversy, seeing that there was so great a schism, and not having made up his own mind upon the subject, determined to seclude himself for an entire year, that he might, according to the advice of the apostle, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." He says himself, that he turned over the holy Scriptures, studied histories, and all the cycles which he could find, and adds, "I inquired diligently what were the sentiments of the Hebrews, Grecians, Latins, and Egyptians, concerning this solemnity;" and the result he came to was, that the view taken by the church of Rome, on this subject, was the most consonant with Scripture, and he accordingly adopted it. By doing so, he gave great offence to his old friends, the monks of Hy, who went so far as to call him a heretic, which induced him to write *A Treatise on the Paschall Controversy, after the manner of an apologetic Epistle, directed to Segiene, abbot of Hy; to Beccan, the Solitary, his dear brother, both according to the flesh and spirit, and to the rest of the wise men with them.* This treatise was published by archbishop Usher, and is considered to have shown much learning and research. Notwithstanding the anger of the monks of Hy for his adoption of these views, they ultimately elected him as their abbot; and during the twelve years in which he held that situation, he took the most indefatigable pains to convince them of their error respecting the celebration of Easter, and to induce them to conform their practice to that of Rome. He stated, that when the synod of Leighlin had sent deputies to Rome, to investigate the subject, "they abode together at one inn, with Grecian and Hebrew, Scythian and Egyptian; there they celebrated Easter, all together in the church of St Peter, in the observation of which solemnity," he adds, "we are separated from them a whole month, and they solemnly testified to us, saying, we know that Easter is thus celebrated through the whole world." His death took place in the year 669, though some assert that it was earlier. He was much venerated for his learning and sanctity, and wrote, according to Adamnanus, a *Treatise on the Virtues of St Columb*, and is also supposed to be the author of a penitential, entitled *De Mensurâ Pœnitentiarum*.

## St Wiro.

DIED A. D. 650.

ST WIRO was of a noble family, and was well instructed, not only in learning, but in morality and religion. He was elected bishop, but of what see is uncertain, and most reluctantly accepted of the office. It is also affirmed by him, that he went to Rome to receive consecration, and on his return to Ireland was received with the most enthusiastic joy. He did not, however, long retain his bishopric, preferring seclusion and prayer to the pomp of his office, and the public testimonies that his sanctity obtained for him. He ultimately retired to France, where he built an oratory, which he dedicated to the blessed Virgin.



He lived to a very advanced age, and died May 8th, 650. He was buried in the oratory.

## Disibod.

RESIGNED A. D. 675.

DISIBOD, said to be bishop of Dublin (to which see, however, no bishops had been as yet nominated), was born in Ireland, and was elected to some bishopric in that country at an early age. He was of a noble family, and besides possessing great learning, was remarkable for genius and piety. These qualities, however, were not appreciated by the people he had to govern, and after holding his see for ten years, their insolence compelled him to resign it, A.D. 675, or according to Marianus Scotus, 674. He then left Ireland for ever, and went to Germany, where he travelled about for ten years, preaching the gospel, assisted and accompanied by Gisualdus, Clement, and Salust, three men remarkable for religion and piety. He at length selected a high and wooded mountain, which was given him by its possessor, and he there founded a monastery of the order of St Benedict, which, Arnold Wion says, was first called Mount Disibod, after his own name, but has since been changed into Disenberg. He lived here for thirty years, practising great severities, and died of extreme old age, the 8th of July, but in what year has not been ascertained. Surius published a life written of him by a nun; and Dempster attributes a composition, entitled *De Monachorum profectu in Solitudine Agentium*, to Disibod, which he affirms to have seen himself.

## St Rumold.

DIED A. D. 775.

ST RUMOLD was the son of an Irish prince, and was heir to his father. He was baptized by Gallagher, who also instructed him in learning and religion. Rumold's mind was so impressed by the truths of religion, that he sacrificed all his worldly prospects, and travelled through England and France, preaching the gospel of Christ. He afterwards crossed the Alps, and went to Rome, where he was well received by the pope, and subsequently returned to Gaul and came to Mechlin, at which place he was most kindly treated by Odo and his wife, who gave him a tract of ground for a monastery, and induced him to settle there. He had been early consecrated bishop of some see in Ireland, but the time of his consecration, or the cause of his leaving it, are not known. It is, however, certain, that both occurred previous to his missionary labours. On Mechlin being erected into an episcopal see, he was nominated its first bishop; but was at length cruelly murdered by two ruffians, one of whom he had reproofed for his vicious courses, and his body was thrown into the river, from

whence count Odo had it removed, and buried in St Stephen's church. It was afterwards removed to the metropolitan church in Meehlin. His festival is celebrated on the 1st of July, in all the province of Meehlin, though the murder took place on the 24th of June, but pope Alexander transferred the day, that it might not interfere with the festival of St John the Baptist. Before the reformation this festival was observed in Ireland.

## Molibba or Libba.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 612.

MOLIBBA flourished, according to Colgan, in the beginning of the 7th century, and succeeded his uncle St Keivin, in the see of Glendalough, A. D. 612. His mother was sister to the saint, and his father, Colman, was descended from a most ancient and powerful family in Leinster, called the Messingcorbs. His uncle lived six years after Molibba's appointment to the see; but how long he continued to hold it, after the death of St Keivin, is not known, for although the 8th of January is mentioned as the day of his death, no year is specified.

## Aidan, Bishop.

AIDAN was of the same family, by his father's side, as Molibba; his mother, Briga, the daughter of Cobthaig, was also of the same tribe. He was of high rank, for his half-brother, CEd, or Hugh, was the son of Amirach, king of Ireland, and ultimately became king himself. The time of Aidan's birth and death is unknown; but he was certainly bishop of Glendalough, being styled so by Boroimhe Laigen, and probably succeeded Molibba.

## Ampadan, Bishop.

LITTLE is known of Ampadan, beyond his having been bishop of Glendalough, it is supposed, about the year 656, but there is a chasm here in the successions to this see, which has not been filled up. The next of whom we read is Dungall Mac-Baithen, who died 899.

## Dungall Mac-Baithen.

DIED A. D. 899.

DUNGALL was both abbot and bishop of Glendalough, being given both titles in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, but little more is known respecting him, excepting the year of his death.

## Albin.

LIVED A. D. 792.

ALBIN, whom some confuse with Alcuin an Englishman, and whom *Hector Boetius*, *Lesley*, and *George Mackenzie*, claim as a Scotchman, was born in Ireland, and was conspicuous for his learning, wisdom, and piety. His own country, constantly the theatre of war, being unfavourable for the advance or diffusion of knowledge, he sailed to France, accompanied by his friend Clement. Charles the Great being then on the throne, and a zealous promoter of learning, they proceeded to Paris, and took the strange course of making their pretensions known, by crying aloud in the streets that they had wisdom to dispose of. Polydore Virgil states that Charles had, by the advice of Alcuin an Englishman, a teacher of the sciences in Paris, founded two establishments for learning, one in that city, and another in Ticinum, now called Pavia. He adds, "in the year 792, when (as it is said) two monks sailed out of Ireland, or out of Scotland (as some will have it), into France, where they with a loud voice proclaimed that they had wisdom to sell, and demanded for a reward only food and raiment; and one of them, called Clement, was detained by Charles at Paris, and all the young men of the city of every rank were put under his tuition, but the other was commanded to pass forward into Italy, and to teach at Ticinum." Ware says, "The doubt as to the country of Clement and Albin is (at least in my opinion) removed by Notker Balbulus, an ancient monk of the abbey of St Gall, contemporary with Albin, who, in a book written by him of the actions of Charles the Great, published out of a Bavarian manuscript, by Henry Canisius, A.D. 1601—says, 'After the Omnipotent Creator of all things, and Disposer of kingdoms and seasons, had broken to pieces the feet of iron and clay of that wonderful statue (Dan. ch. 2d), in the destruction of the Romans, he erected another golden head of a no less wonderful statue among the Franks, in the person of the illustrious Charles, in the beginning of whose empire in the West, when learning was almost every where lost, it happened that two Scots from Ireland, landed with some British merchants on the coasts of France, who were men incomparably skilled both in humane and divine literature. These men, having nothing to expose to sale, cried out to the crowds of buyers, and said, *If any body wants wisdom, let him come to us and receive it; for we have it to sell.* They made this declaration, because they observed that people were fond of buying wares for their money, and not what they might have for nothing; that so they might either provoke all people to buy *wisdom*, together with other things, or, as the event proved, that they might by such an outcry raise their admiration and astonishment. Finally, they continued to cry thus so long, till the people, who stood amazed at them, or thought them out of their senses, carried an account of their proceedings to king Charles, who was always an ardent lover of wisdom. That prince, without delay, sent for them; and when they were conducted into his presence,



he demanded whether what fame reported of them was true—that they carried about wisdom with them? They made answer, that they had it, and were ready to impart it to as many as were worthy to search after it. Then, when he inquired of them what they demanded for their knowledge? they made answer, that all they expected was, convenient apartments, ingenuous souls, with food and raiment, without which it was impossible to perform a pilgrimage. When the king understood thus much, he was filled with great joy, and at first entertained them with himself for a short time, but afterwards, being taken up with war-like expeditions, he commanded one of them, whose name was Clement, to reside in France, to whose tuition he committed a vast number of youths of all degrees and qualities, and furnished them with convenient habitations, and suitable provisions, such as they thought necessary. The other, whose name was Albin, he sent into Italy, and assigned him the monastery of St Augustine, near the city of Ticinum, that as many as pleased might resort thither to him for instruction.” Nicholas Crusenius states, that St Albin died in the monastery of St Augustine at Pavia, but in what year is unknown. There are some *Epistles* of Albin’s still extant, and *Rhetorical Precepts*, which have been falsely ascribed to Albinus Flaccus.

Clement wrote *Grammatica quædam Collectanea*, and a *Life of Charles the Great*; also *De Evangelistarum Concordiâ*, Lib. 1.

Lupoldus Bebenburgius, says, “The French may be compared to the Romans and Athenians, by the works of Clement an *Irishman*.”

## Claude Clement.

LIVED IN THE 9TH CENTURY.

CLAUDE CLEMENT was a man of eminent piety and learning. He wrote, according to Ware, *Commentarium in St Mattheam*, in the preface to which is mentioned the expedition of Lewis the godly, against the Normans. *In omnes Epistolas St Pauli Commentarios. In Pentateuchum. In Libros Josuæ, Judicum, Ruthæ, et in Psalmos. Memoriale Historiarum. Summam quandum. Homilias*, and *De Evangelistarum Concordiâ*.

Claude also wrote a *Treatise* against the use of images, in which he maintains these three points; “1st, That we ought to have no images; 2dly, That we ought not to worship the cross; and 3dly, That it is of no use to visit churches where the bodies of saints are laid, or to visit their relicks.” Dr Lanigan attributes this book to another Clement.

## Colman.

DIED A. D. 676.

THE name of Colman is remarkable, from there having been, according to Colgan, 120 of that name, “all men of sanctity, and of Irish birth,” and Angus Ceilide, a writer of the 8th century, states the number to have been above 200.



Dumque diversos Populos pererrat,  
Rhæticas tandem veniens ad oras," &c.

" Undaunted Colman, greatly sprung  
From royal ancestors, is sung,  
Fair Austria's saint, a star  
From Scotia's Western Isle afar.  
While he, intent on pious calls,  
Pass'd to the Solymean walls,  
Abandoning his native soil  
And rest, to combat foreign toil ;  
He scorned the regal pomp, the gem,  
The sceptre, crown, and diadem ;  
In other climes to serve the Lord,  
An exile of his own accord,  
Within his pure and faithful breast,  
He gained the mansions of the blest.  
Through various nations as he past,  
At Rhætia's bounds arrived at last,  
*The goodly memorable sage*  
*A victim fell to Pagan rage."*

Some writers assert that he was the son of Malcolm the First of Scotland, which seems to be alluded to in the above lines; and they would also seem to confirm the account of his martyrdom. Other writers state that he died on the 8th of August (on which day his festival is kept), 676, and that he was buried in his own church of Inisbo-fin.

## St Cuthbert.

DIED A. D. 687.

ST CUTHBERT, son to one of the lesser princes of Ireland, was born (according to the annals of St Mary's Abbey) about four miles from Dublin. He was prior of Maileross, and afterwards removed to Lindisfarne, at the desire of the bishop of that see; but subsequently removed to Farne, an island about nine miles distant, where he lived the life of a hermit. At the earnest solicitation of king Egfrid, he was induced to accept of the bishopric of Lindisfarne, and was consecrated in York, in the presence of the king, by Theodore, archbishop of that see, on Easter Sunday, 684. *Bede* gives this account of his election: "Cuthbert was first elected bishop of the church of Hagustald (Hexham), in the room of Trumbert, who had been deposed from that bishopric; but, because he was better pleased to preside over the church of Lindisfarne, where he was more conversant, it was thought proper that Eata should return to the see of Hagustald, over which he was first ordained, and that Cuthbert should assume the government of the church of Lindisfarne;" and a little after he adds, "he spent only two years in the bishopric, and then returned to the island of Farne, and to his monastery," where he at length died on the 20th of March, 687. The venerable *Bede* thought so highly of him, that he has written his life both in prose and verse. The lives published of him, both by John of Tinmouth, and Capgrave, particularly notice



his *Monastic Institutions, delivered by him to his Friars*, which Dempster calls "Exhortationes ad Fratres." His other writings are, *Ordinationes suæ Ecclesiæ*, Lib. 1. *Prima Regula est de Domino. Præcepta Vitæ Regularis*, Lib. 1.

## St Kilian.

DIED A. D. 689.

ST KILIAN early left Ireland, where he was born and educated, and travelled into Germany. He was there consecrated bishop of Wurtzburgh or Herbigopolis, about the year 686, and is said to have converted duke Gosbert and almost the entire of Franconia from paganism. He has been called the apostle of Franconia, and there he may be said to have obtained the crown of martyrdom; for, in consequence of his urgent recommendation to Gosbert to break an unlawful union he had formed with Geilana, his brother's wife, she planned his destruction, and had him and his companions cruelly murdered on the 8th of July, 689. His bones were afterwards taken up and buried, by one of his successors in that see. He is said to have written *Contra Arianismum*, and *Contra Peregrinos Cultus*. And Dempster says that he also wrote another work, entitled, *Monita ad Gosbertum Ducem super Divortio cum Fratris Uxore*.

Some writers have asserted that he was a Scot; but besides the testimony of Marianus Scotus to the contrary, we have that of Egilward, a monk of the abbey of St Burchard near Wurtzburgh, who wrote the life of St Kilian. This has been published by Canisius, and also by Surius. "St Kilian," says this writer, "was of a Scottish race and born of noble parents, but was most illustrious on the score of his divine graces. Scotia, which is also called Ireland, is an island in the main ocean, of a fruitful soil, but more eminent for the sanctity of her inhabitants; of whom Italy was blessed by Columban, Allemane was enriched by St Gall, and Teutonic France was ennobled by Kilian."

## Adamnanus.

DIED A. D. 704.

ADAMNANUS, abbot of Hy, was sent on an embassy into Britain to Alfred, king of Northumberland, and, while he continued there, became a convert to the views of Rome respecting the true time for celebrating Easter. "After his return home," says Bede, "he used his utmost endeavours to guide the monks of Hy, and all those who were subject to the said monastery, into that beaten road of truth which he himself walked in, and of which he made a sincere profession, but was not able to prevail." He then sailed into Ireland, where he had better success. He composed, according to Ware, *Vitam St Bathildis Clodovæi Francorum Regis Uxoris*. He also wrote *De Viâ Columbæ*, Lib. iii., *Poemata Varia*, and a description of the Holy Land,

which was afterwards, published at Ingolstad under the following title, in 1619; *Adamnanni Scoto-Hiberni Abbatis celeberrimi de situ Ferræ Sanctæ, et Quorundam aliorum Locorum ut Alexandria et Constantinopoleos*, Lib. iii.; *Ante Annos Nonagentos et amplius conscripti, et nunc primum in lucem prolati, studio Jacobi Gretseri Soc. Jesu Theologi Ingolstadii*, 1619. Bede states the circumstances which gave rise to this work as follows:—"Arculph, a French bishop, who had travelled to Jerusalem merely to visit those holy places, and having taken a view of the whole Land of Promise, travelled to Damascus, Constantinople, Alexandria, and to many islands in the sea. Thence returning to his native country on shipboard, he was drove by a violent tempest on the western coasts of Britain, and at length came to the before-mentioned servant of Christ, Adamnanus; who, finding him well versed in the Scriptures, and of great knowledge in the Holy Land, joyfully entertained him, and with great pleasure hearkened to what he said, insomuch that every thing he had affirmed to have seen in those holy places, worthy to be preserved in memory, Adamnanus committed to writing and composed a book profitable for many, and especially for such who, being at a great distance from the places where the patriarchs and apostles resided, have only a knowledge of them from books. Adamnanus also presented this book to king Alfred, by whose bounty it fell into the hands of more inferior people to be read. The writer also himself, being rewarded with many presents, was sent back into his own country." Bede gives a short abstract of the book in two chapters. Our abbot is said to have written, besides, some *Epistles*, *A Rule for Monks*, *De Paschate Legitimo*, and the *Canons of Adamnanus*. He died on the 23d of September, 704, in the 74th, or, as others say, the 80th year of his age. His remains were removed to Ireland in 727, but were conveyed back again, three years after, to the monastery of Hy.

### Maccuthenus.

MACCUTHENUS was a contemporary of Adamnanus and of Longsech, king of Ireland, who began his reign in 694 or 695. He is mentioned by Usher as having written the life of St Patrick, and addressed it to Aed, bishop of Sletty, who died 698. Colgan thinks the name ought to be Cuchumneus, or Mochumneus (Mo being a familiar addition of the Irish to names); which Cuchumneus lived in the time of Aed, and is said to have composed a hymn in praise of the Virgin, beginning thus:—

" Cantemus in omni die concinnantes variè,  
Conclamantes Deo dignum Hymnum St Mariæ."

If Maccuthenus and Cuchumne be the same person, he died in 746, according to the *Annals of Ulster*, which state, that in that year "Cuchumne the Wise went to rest."

## Sedulius the Younger.

8TH CENTURY.

FROM the great reputation Sedulius had acquired by his *Commentaries on St Matthew*, he was selected by pope Gregory II. to go into Spain to reconcile some differences that had taken place amongst the clergy of Oporto; and, to give him additional authority over them, he was nominated bishop of that see. The Spaniards, at first, showed some hesitation in receiving him, on the plea of his not belonging to their country; upon which he wrote a treatise to prove, that as he was of Irish birth, he was consequently of Spanish descent, and therefore entitled to their regard. The invasion of the Moors, however, shortly after drove him from his bishopric and broke up the establishment; but the pope continued to him his rank, by providing him with a titular bishopric in England. In consequence of this appointment, he assisted at a council held by pope Gregory II., on the 5th of April, 721, on the subject of unlawful marriages, along with Fergust, a Pictish bishop of Scotland, and subscribed to the decree of that council in the following form:—"Sedulius, bishop of Britain, of Scottish descent, hath subscribed to this constitution promulged by us." His writings are as follows:—*Collectanea in St Matthæi Evangelium*, which is extant at Paris in manuscript; and a treatise said to be discovered in a monastery in Galicia by Sir John Higgins, written on parchment in the Gothic character, and entitled, *Concordantio Hispanio atque Hiberniæ a Sedulio genere Hiberniensi et Episcopo Oretensi*. Some writers attribute also to him the *Commentaries on the large Volume of Priscian, on the Second Edition of Donatus, and on Eutichius's Art*; and there is a doubt whether the commentaries on St Paul's epistles were written by him or by the elder Sedulius.

## Æneas or Ængus.

8TH CENTURY.

ÆNEAS lived about the close of the 7th century, and was descended from the royal blood of the Dal-Ardrians of Ulster. He was remarkable for his piety and learning, and obtained the honourable title of Ængusius Ceil-de, or Colideus, a worshipper of God, from his great zeal in the cause of religion. He early became a monk in the monastery of Cluainenaich in Leinster, where he made great progress in learning. It is supposed that he became the abbot of that house after the death of Melathgene, who was his friend and instructor, and who died in 767. All the country about Cluainenaich was thickly wooded, and Ængus retired to a desert spot, where he remained for several years, and which was afterwards called Desert Ængus. "The fame of his austerities," according to Ware, "spreading far and near, to avoid the appearances of vain-glory, he forsook these places (the



desert and his own abbey), and betook himself to the abbey of Taulaught, three miles from Dublin, where, concealing his name and habit, he was received into that house by the abbot Mœlruan as a lay-brother, and employed in all the servile offices of the monastery. He continued seven years in this laborious station, but at length was accidentally discovered by Mœlruan, and from that time received by him into the highest degree of trust and friendship." We meet with but few other particulars of the life of Ængus. He is said to have been father and abbot of many monks, and to have been promoted to the episcopal dignity, but no writer that I know of mentions the see of which he was bishop; and therefore Colgan thinks he exercised that office in the same place where he was abbot, *i. e.* of Cluainenach or Desert-Angus, bishop and abbot being often used as synonymous terms in those early times. He died, according to the martyrologists, on Friday the 11th of March, but the year is not mentioned; yet, as the 11th of March fell on a Friday, or the *feria sexta*, in the years 819, 824, and 830, it may be conjectured that he died in one of these years. He wrote a *Martyrology* in verse, much esteemed, with notes, also supposed to be written by himself, recording added particulars of the saints there eulogized. He also compiled a *Martyrology* in prose, in which work he was assisted by the abbot Mœlruan, and the names of both authors are affixed to the work. His other works are, *De Sanctis Hiberniæ*, Lib. v., and *A History of the Old Testament*, in very excellent metre; a *Miscellany*, in prose and verse, Latin and Irish, called *Psalter Narana*, is also attributed to him.

### Fothadius.

FOTHADIUS, called Fothadius de Canonibus, from his extensive knowledge of law, was contemporary with Ængus. About the year 799, when Aid-Ornidhe had summoned the provinces of Ulster, Munster, and Connaught, with their respective clergy, to join with him in fighting against Leinster, the clergy petitioned the king to be in future exempted from serving in such expeditions; when he ordered that Fothadius should be consulted upon the subject, and promised to concur with his decision, whatever it might be. He gave sentence for the clergy; and they accordingly obtained the document *Opusculum pro Cleri Defensione Immunitate*, by which they were for ever after freed from such compulsory warfare.

The saints of this period might easily occupy the whole space assigned to this work. We may well omit the history of the venerable St Sith, or O'Sith, who, when the Danes cut off her head, had the presenee of mind to pick it up, put it under her arm, and, with a heroism truly marvellous on such a trying emergency, carry it to the church door, where, her strength naturally failing her, she fell down and is supposed to have died! For similar reasons we pass the detail of the removal of the ponderous antiquities of Stonehenge from a mountain of Kildare, by the sage advice of "one Merlin of Worcester, a prophet, a *searcher of antiquities*, and a man of rare gifts;" nor shall we note the wars which made this solid acquisition costly to king

Arthur, and deluged Ireland with blood in the reign of her heroic king, Gillomer, who was afterwards one of the knights of the famous Round Table, instituted by his illustrious enemy. Here, too, we must resist the temptation to relate the story of the famous knight, Murogh, brother to the queen of Leinster, who fought a fierce combat with Sir Tristrem, from whom he received his death wound. From this, had our plan admitted, with equal aptness and probability might we follow the romantic history of the adventures of Sir Tristrem, and the Irish princess, familiar to all our readers by the title of La belle Isod, rather famed for her beauty than her sanctity. It may be here mentioned, that her husband, or her father, king Anguish, built in her honour a chapel, with a village, which is yet called Chapel Izod, near Dublin. In these omissions there is little to regret: and within the limits of a work which is designed to include more than fifteen centuries, we cannot avoid being from page to page painfully reminded of the necessity of more important omissions. We have indeed had too much occasion to regret the scantiness and indistinctness of our materials, for the notice of those truly illustrious persons, the fathers of our early church, who were the light and ornament of the remote period in which they lived, and whose deeds are remembered in heaven, though nearly lost in the perishable records of this world's honour.

We shall close the biography of this period with the ancient *Itinerary* of king Alfred in Ireland.

“ I found in the fair Inisfail  
In Ireland while in exile,  
Many women, no silly crowd,  
Many laics, many clerics.

“ I found in each province  
Of the five provinces of Ireland,  
Both in church and state,  
Much of food, much of raiment.

“ I found gold and silver,  
I found honey and wheat,  
I found affection with the people of God,  
I found banquets and cities.

“ I found in Armagh the splendid,  
Meekness, wisdom, circumspection,  
Fasting, in obedience to the Son of God,  
Noble prosperous sages.

“ I found in each great church,  
Whether internal, on shore or island,  
Learning, wisdom, devotion to God,  
Holy welcome and protection.

“ I found the lay monks  
Of alms the active advocates,  
And, in proper order with them,  
The Scriptures without *corruption*.

“ I found in Munster without (geis) prohibition,  
Kings, queens, and royal bards,  
In every species of poetry well skilled—  
Happiness, comfort, pleasure.

“ I found in Conact, famed for justice,  
Affluence, milk in abundance,  
Hospitality, lasting vigour, fame—  
In this territory of Croghan\* of heroes.

“ I found in the country of Connall (Tirconnell)  
Brave victorious heroes,  
Fierce men of fair complexion,  
The high stars of Ireland.

“ I found in the province Ulster  
Long blooming beauty, hereditary vigour,  
Young scions of energy,  
Though fair, yet fit for war, and brave.

“ I found in the territory of Boyle  
\* \* \* (manuscript effaced,)  
Brehons, Erenachs, palaces,  
Good military weapons, active horsemen.

“ I found in the fair-surfaced Leinster,  
From Dublin to Slewmary,  
Long-living men, health, prosperity,  
Bravery, hardihood, traffic.

“ I found from Ara to Gle,  
In the rich country of Ossory,  
Sweet fruit, strict jurisdiction,  
Men of truth, chess playing.

“ I found in the great fortress† of Meath  
Valour, hospitality, and truth,  
Bravery, purity, and mirth—  
The protection of all Ireland.

“ I found the aged of strict morals,  
The historians recording truth :  
Each good, each benefit that I have sung,  
In Ireland have I seen.”

\* Croghan was the royal palace of Connaught; hence the province was frequently called by the poets, “the country of Croghan.”

† Alluding to Tara, in which the monarch of Ireland lived.





HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

TO SECOND PERIOD,

EXTENDING

FROM THE DANISH INVASIONS TO THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF

**Distinguished Irishmen**

WHO FLOURISHED DURING THAT PERIOD.





# HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

TO

## SECOND PERIOD.

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State of the Country at the arrival of the Norwegians—Traditions concerning their ancient Origin—Authentic History—Their Religion—Earlier Connexions with England—With Ireland—Their Invasions during this Period—General Reflections.

FROM the general substance of the preceding pages, it will have been observed that, from the introduction of Christianity to the period on which we are about to enter, our history is chiefly to be characterized as ecclesiastical. During this long interval, the literature and civilization of the country derived their form and chief source from the numerous ecclesiastical communities which covered the island, and exerted the predominating influences over manners and events. The Irish church, till the 12th century, independent in its government and discipline, and for a long period unvisited by the deteriorating influences which were from age to age encrusting with corruptions the body of the Christian churches, continued long to be a centre of light to this island, and a pilgrimage of talent and Christian zeal to the better spirits of the surrounding countries.

Paganism had, in this interval, altogether disappeared before the laborious and successful efforts of that illustrious multitude of holy men, of a few of whom we have given imperfect sketches, and who are not inappropriately honoured with the high title of "saints." Numerous monasteries and churches, though of a rude structure and mean materials covered the land; and from these the whole of Europe received a light of Divine knowledge, which was not exceeded by the ministry of any *other church*. There was yet a wide and dark interval between the knowledge of the church and that of the secular classes; which gives to the latter, as compared with the former, the character of extreme barbarism: and, from this cause there is, in all that remains of the history and monuments of the time, a singular mixture of barbarism and refinement, which has had the effect of casting doubt, difficulty, and varying interpretation upon the whole. But the records, the literature, and the architectural remains, speak unequivocally as to the antiquities of the church, and, in a vast variety of instances, the ancient record is confirmed by the monument. The ancient fields of Glendaloch and Clonmacnoise, the venerable remains of Kildare, and hundreds of other venerable ruins, confirm the legends and traditions

of ancient time; although the dwellings of civil strength, the homes of princes, the palaces of monarchs, and the halls of ancient national power, have melted away, as the flesh is mouldered from the bones of other generations.

The institutions of the country, partly the remains of a still more ancient state of things, partly of the self propagating and continuing property of all institutions, and perhaps in a greater measure of the diffusive counsel and influence of a national church, were not destitute of wisdom and civil efficacy to control and regulate the movements of a barbaric race; for, such were the chiefs and still more the population of a country in which the chief pursuits were war and the chase, the homely and simple elements of the savage state. The remains of the ancient codes, the existence of which was long disputed, but which have now been placed out of doubt by the translations of Vallancey, O'Connor, and others, manifest beyond all question much legislative wisdom; and indicate, by their skill and by their peculiar structure, the exercise of much knowledge engaged in adapting legislation to a state of society seemingly more primitive and rude than such knowledge seems to imply. The ports of Ireland were as distinguished by commercial resort, as her church by superior endowments in holiness and wisdom. The arts were cultivated; and, though imperfect and barbaric, yet in a state of advance which undeniably attests a considerable degree of progress in civilization.

This state of things was, however, to be interrupted by a new succession of changes from without, which were thenceforward to follow each other with an increasing force and extent, without any intermission, until they reduced this island to a sad but singular example of the combined effect of all the disastrous causes which contribute to the decay of nations.

We have already observed\* the peculiarity arising from geographical position, by which, while this island was protected from the vast and sweeping wave of universal movement by which the ancient structure of society was overthrown; it was, at the same time, exposed to those minor eddies of the same wave, which found their way through the channel of navigation and commerce. Instead of the invading horde, of which the columns extended through provinces, and which have been described as drinking up the rivers on their desolating march, the ports of Ireland, from time to time, through a long period, continued to be visited by the seafaring Phœnician, and next by the Northern adventurer; and was thus successively, as long as tradition can trace back, the resort of trade or invasion, each, in its turn, limited by the scanty resources of the nautical science of those periods. Of such communications the effects must have needs been slow in progress, and partial in extent. The changes of manner and opinion introduced, must have blended themselves slowly with the ancient fabric of custom; and conqueror or colonist must be supposed to have acquired at least as much as they can have communicated. From such a course, little effect of any kind might seem to be derivable; but the inference is different when we refer to the operation of

\* First Introduction.

the continued state of strife, terror, and insecurity now to be described. This unhappy result is mainly to be traced to the invasions of the Scandinavian pirates, who, for so many centuries, continued to make our shores a principal resort. Some account of these will, therefore, form an appropriate preface to a period chiefly memorable for their actions. Among the different races who are known, or supposed, to have at any period found their way to this island, none have a more decided claim on our notice, than the people now known by the common appellation of Danes. For ages the chief occupants of the surrounding seas, and traders to our ports—they became at last a large integral portion of our population, and continued to maintain a doubtful struggle, of various success, for the possession of the supremacy of the land, until they were ultimately subdued and blended with the native population, under the ascendancy of more powerful invaders. During the whole of this period, their history takes the lead of that of the native races, with whose manners and monuments their remains are still inextricably blended.

*Danish Antiquity.*—Of the northern nations which exercised so large an influence on the destinies of the Roman empire, the knowledge of the most accurate of the Roman historians was confused and conjectural. Of the mingled races which composed the population of their British, German, and Gaulish territories, their knowledge was more inadequate still. In these, the various tribes of Goth and Celt, became variously mixed up, and successive migrations, which, as they poured on through a long period of ages, found kindred still and the remembrances of common custom. The elements of language, the ancient traditions, the mythological system: the only materials (such as they are) of a more accurate knowledge were beyond their reach. They only knew them as the tempest is known by the point of the compass, from which it carries menace and devastation; they were barbarians from the unexplored climates of the north. Thus the Celt, Goth, and Tartar are confused; and Zosimus, a writer of the third century, calls all by the common name of Scythian. The ancestors of this race soon extended their conquests, and branched into widely spreading affinities, and into nations confused under many names; and to find the clue of probable tradition, we must look chiefly to the natives themselves.

The northern historians go no farther back than the descent of Odin, who, about 70 years before the Christian era,\* led from Asia a powerful tribe of the Indo-Scythian race, and expelled the ancient inhabitants of the shores of the Baltic. From this period the history of the Scandinavians assumes a form such as belongs to the earliest periods of the records of nations—that is to say, imperfect, conjectural, and legendary: overlaid with superstitions and visionary genealogies.

The earliest historian who is entitled to be named in our summary notice, is Saxo Grammaticus,† whose name is familiar to the reader, as occurring in every English history: Saxo carries back the history of the Danish kings to a period far beyond the range of probability.

\* Torfæus. Mallet.

† Saxo was called Grammaticus from his learning: he lived in the 12th century.



His materials were the hymns of the bards, in which they sung the praises, and narrated the exploits, of their leaders and heroes; secondly, from ancient inscriptions on the rocks, which are still discovered in the north, as, indeed, they are in every ancient country; and last, from the Icelandic chronicles, and the accounts he received from native scholars. It will be needless here to dwell on the objections to these sources. The Icelandic chronicles, which are by far the least affected by defect and corruption, are, to a comparatively recent period, little worthy of trust: largely alloyed with poetic allegory, and mythological marvel, they cannot be said to commence till after the establishment of Christianity in those northern regions. According to this statement, a long and dark chasm separates the time of Odin from the period of trustworthy history (about eleven centuries). This long interval is filled up by tradition, and the songs of the Scalds.

We should not pass on without a few words to gratify the curiosity of our reader, as to the importance here assigned to an island apparently so obscure and isolated as Iceland. This island, made additionally interesting to the Irish antiquary by the traditions and ancient remains which indicate, unquestionably, an early communication with Ireland, was early famous for the cultivation of History and Poetry: the former perhaps consequent on the latter, and both practised by a class known by the name of Scalds. The islanders are said to have been a colony from Norway, who, late in the 9th century, fled from the tyranny of Harold Harfagre; and who still continued to hold intercourse with their parent land. Among these, in the quiet seclusion of their island, it seems probable that the arts then existing should flourish, and that records collected from tradition should assume something of a permanent form.

*Their History.*—On the first period of the history of these nations, there does not appear much difference. The main incidents of Odin's life are tolerably certain, and derive some confirmation from their connexion with the authentic history of Rome in the time of Julius Cæsar. A few years before the birth of Christ, Mithridates, the king of Pontus (now Georgia), pursued by the victorious legions of Pompey, had contrived to rouse to arms against his invader, the numerous and formidable races who inhabited the surrounding districts of Armenia, Cappadocia, Iberia, and other Persian provinces, forming the frontier between it and Scythia. The alliance was, however, unequal to resist the ascendancy of the Roman arms; Mithridates was slain, and the tribes which had espoused his fortune were subjected to the law of conquest. From this calamity, however, multitudes withdrew towards the more impenetrable regions of Scythia. Of these fugitives, we are told by Snorro the earliest historian of Norway, Odin, whose name was originally Sigge, was a leader. Desirous to place himself and his followers, beyond the far extending grasp of Roman conquest, he led his army away into the northern regions of Europe, subduing on his march the earlier inhabitants, and settling on his sons the different kingdoms thus acquired. Having thus effected settlements in Saxony, Westphalia, Franconia, and part of Russia, he went on into the realms of Scandinavia, and conquering wherever he went, obtained and settled in like manner the sovereignty of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

Having acquired absolute dominion over these countries, he introduced the laws and religion of his own country; and having himself assumed the name of its chief god, Woden or Odin, he received divine honours from all the surrounding princes. These arrangements being fully completed, he perceived symptoms of the approach of death, but resolving not to die by a lingering disease, and desirous to crown his achievements by a heroic example, he assembled his sons and followers, and in their presence inflicted on himself nine wounds in the form of a circle. While dying he told them that he was returning into Scythia, to assume his place at the eternal banquet of the gods, where he would receive with honour the brave who should fall in the ranks of war.

This statement could be confirmed from many indirect authorities and coincidences, with which the Icelandic annalists could not have been acquainted. Travellers of modern times have frequently remarked and described the close resemblances long preserved between the manners and customs of Norway and Sweden, and those of the Georgians. Such agreements are in their nature transient, but the antiquities of both countries present abundant and distinct confirmations. If, however, this link of descent be admitted, on the ground of the general consent of historians: the next, when we state the dogmas of their religion, will present itself unlooked for to the reader of English history in its most accessible forms: the coincidence between the ancient Danish and Anglo-Saxon creeds is unquestioned: the romance of *Ivanhoe* must have made it universally known to all readers. In the simplicity of the primitive structures of society, the manners and institutions of nations were either largely modified by their religious notions, or entirely formed from them; and to this latter class may be referred the manners and institutions of the Danes and Saxons. The history of their gods, and the description of their notions of worship, will afford the clearest ideas of the people themselves.

*Religion.*—Their mythology, devised by the policy of their warlike leader, had for its main object to create a nation of warriors, bound by a religious veneration to their founder's race, enthusiastic in their love of war, and prodigal of their blood. It was necessarily built on their primitive Persian creed, and naturally ornamented by Eastern imagination. Of such a system, the gods were Odin and his sons, Thor, &c., with other inferior divinities. The most pleasing sacrifice to these was the death of an enemy, and their altar was the field of battle. To die in peace, by a natural death, was considered by them as the worst of evil and disgrace, and they who fell in battle, according to the institution of Odin, were conducted by the *Dysæ* to their heaven *Valhalla*, where the fortunate spirits of the brave passed their mornings in the stormy delights of a fierce and bloody fight, in which they enjoyed, in superhuman perfection, the luxury of being cut to pieces. The body thus dismembered, came together again in a state of perfect health, and with an excellent appetite for supper—the next great reward and pleasure of the brave. At this meal they passed the afternoon and night, feasting on the boar *Serimner*, who having thus been, like his caters, cut piecemeal, and passed through the added



delights of mastication and digestion, was like them also whole, and fresh as ever for the chase and revel of the following day. The immortal diet was washed down by endless draughts of mead, milked from a she-goat, in sufficient quantity to make them all dead drunk. This they drank out of the skulls of their enemies. This state was to continue until, at some period in remote futurity, the powers of evil, led on by the dreadful giant Lok, were to prevail over the gods of Valhalla: a notion which will remind the reader of the similar feature of Indian mythology, brought out into such vivid and startling effect by Mr Southey, in his *Curse of Kehama*. In strict keeping with the same impressive mythology, in which the innate superstition of the mind is touched on its deepest chord, by the mysterious impression of fate brooding with terrific indistinctness in the dark distance of futurity, the gods of Valhalla knew their doom from oracles; and not being able to avert it, they exerted their power over its instrumental agents, the children of Lok, by consigning them to places of imprisonment, from which they should not escape for ages. Of these places, the most graphic description we have met, is from Mr Southey's account of the religion of the Danes; these we shall present to our reader in his language:—"This Loke had three dreadful offspring by a giantess. The wolf Fenris was one, the Great Serpent was the second, and Hela, or Death, the third." "Hela he placed in Riffenheim, and appointed her to govern the nine dolorous worlds, to which all who die of sickness or old age are fated. Grief is her hall and Famine her table, Hunger her knife, Delay and Slackness her servants, Faintness her porch, and Precipice her gate; Cursing and Howling are her tent, and her bed is Sickness and Pain. The Great Serpent he threw into the middle of the ocean; but there the monster grew till, with his length, he encompassed the whole globe of the earth. The wolf Fenris they bred up for a while among them, and then by treachery bound him in an enchanted chain, fastened it to a rock, and sunk him deep in the earth. The gods also imprisoned Loke in a cavern, and suspended a snake over his head, whose venom fell drop by drop upon his face. The deceit and cruelty which the gods used against this race could not, however, change that order of events which the oracles had foretold; that dreadful time, which is called the twilight of the gods, must at length arise. Loke and the wolf Fenris will then break loose, and, with the Great Serpent, and the Giants of the frost, and Surtur with his fiery sword, and all the powers of Muspelheim, pass over the bridge of heaven, which will break beneath them. The gods and all the heroes of Valhalla will give them battle. Thor, the strongest of the race of Odin, will slay the great serpent, but be himself suffocated by the floods of poison which the monster vomits forth. Loke and Hiemdale will kill each other. The wolf Fenris, after devouring the sun, will devour Odin also, and himself be rent in pieces by Vidae, the son of Odin; and Surtur with his fires will consume the whole world—gods, heroes, and men, perishing in the conflagration. Another and a better earth will afterwards arise—another sun, other gods, and a happier race of men." Such is a summary but correct outline of the Danish mythology. Among its practical tenets, the reader will have been struck by one which appears the same in principle with that



peculiar tenet of the Koran, which once gave its fearful edge of power to the desolating fanaticism of the Turkish hordes. The creed which held forth a state of perfect enjoyment according to the tastes and passions of its believers, as the exclusive reward of those who died in battle, and appended the penalty of its hell to a peaceful death, was the efficient principle of a barbarian valour, scarcely to be resisted by those who regarded life as a certain good and death as an evil. The Dane looked on a peaceful death as the greatest evil, and sought to obviate its dreadful consequences by a voluntary and violent death. "A bay in Sweden," writes Mr Southey, "surrounded by high rocks, which was one of the places frequented for this purpose, is still called the hall of Odin." Such was the mythology which may be traced, with some slight modifications, in the early history of the Saxon and Scandinavian races.

If we compare the incidents of their history, with those of the antiquity of the Irish race, we are met by remarkable coincidences and contrasts. On this point, before proceeding further, we think it right to remark, that while we agree with those writers who have found, in the differences between the ancient Celtic and these northern superstitions, the most intelligible marks of a different origin, we are yet inclined to receive the inference with much qualification. In both we apprehend that the characters of an earlier common origin are sufficiently plain. The Celts appear to have *retained* in a purer form the elementary superstitions of the East, which the Goths overlaid with the structure of a political system, of which the beginnings can be discerned in the institutions of a warlike settlement, and of which the legendary additions of Scaldic poetry, was the successive growth from the genius and superstitions of after ages. While the creed of the Celt, retaining the characters of primeval idolatry, can point by point be compared with the mythology and ritual of ancient Persia, that of the Scandinavian is with still greater ease traceable to the deification of its founder and his sons, with the laws and customs which their inventors chose to clothe in the more permanent garb of a religion. While the Celts adored the celestial luminaries, and either worshipped or regarded as sacred the element of fire, attached a solemn and impervious mystery to their sacred rites, and adopted the refined Eastern creed of absorption or transmigration; the Scandinavian, more physical in his mythology, and more strictly adapting his notions of human destination to the grosser purpose and policy of this life, devised a religion more practical and conformable to human pursuits and duties, hopes, fears, and desires. Their chief gods were thus, in the first place, the sun and moon, remains of a more primitive belief; to these were added the later elements of this more peculiar superstition, less elemental and refined, and yet not presenting less awful and magnificent images to the imagination.

The remains and traditions from which the earliest conjectures can be formed of the inhabitants of Ireland antecedent to the First Period of our work—seem to indicate a combination of the Scythian mingled with some former race. And it is not improbable that a colony of the ancestors of the Danes were, in some simpler stage of their national state, blended with the primitive Irish: leaving thus the

customs and remains which actually seem to indicate such a combination. "The fertile Erin," says a northern writer, "was long the great resort of the Scandinavians."\* Lochlin, the Celtic name of Scandinavia, by which it is so often named in the remains of Scottish and Irish poetry—seems to affirm such an intimacy to have existed. The poems of Ossian or Macpherson (to the point here in question it is indifferent, as the ground is unquestionably Irish), and Highland tradition and poetry, strongly corroborate the supposition; to this is to be added the general consent of the earliest traditions: and lastly, the opinion of the most industrious and informed writers, who have given their time and thoughts to this class of investigations. The Scandinavian legends contain as distinct affirmations of the fact of this early intercourse, as the legends and ancient annals of Ireland; and while in a former chapter we were engaged in the view of remains which seemed to confirm the traditions of an Eastern origin and a Phœnician intercourse, we were lost in every direction among monuments of nearly equal antiquity, which seem, with not inferior evidence, to indicate the intermixture of a northern race. The mysteries of the Edda seem to have left their traces among the tracks of the Oriental worshippers of the Sabeian creed, and—having perhaps clashed among the sects of times antecedent to distinct tradition—to have left remains equally to perplex the faith and embroil the creeds of antiquarian scholars and theorists. This, indeed, is one of the main difficulties of Irish antiquity: the heterogeneous character of its indications not only suggest and support the spirit of controversy, but, what is far worse, supply, in a very unusual degree, material for the most contradictory theories. Whether or not the Lochlanders were the same Danish race who, in the 8th century, became so formidable to the British isles, may be a difficult, and is perhaps a trifling question; but there is no doubt that it designated some northern race in the earliest traditions of Ireland. To prove that these were the Danes many ancient authorities have been advanced; but these are justly affirmed to be simply the copyists of a single writer, himself not to be respected as an authority.† In a previous part of this volume, we have already intimated our belief, formed on the perusal of various and opposing writers, that the peculiarities of disagreement, on the evidence of which they have inferred generic distinctions, in reality but indicate the degree of separation in the pedigree of nations; while the analogies and agreements, many of which can neither be referred to accident nor resolved in any general law of nature, must (unless by the abandonment of all grounds of investigation) be admitted as derived from the same original source. And before leaving the subject, we cannot refrain from observing, that amongst the writers who have expressly engaged in inquiries upon this difficult and obscure subject, by far the greater number, if not all, seem to be embarrassed by a false assumption, either expressed or understood, which has had the effect of imparting a fallacy to their speculations, and embarrassed them in needless difficulties. To state this distinctly might require a wider digression than we can here afford. The learned antiquary too often appears to labour under an

\* Cited by Mr Moore.

† Saxo Grammaticus.



impression, that he must attain the objects of his inquiry, only by such reasons and authorities as may not be irreconcilable with the speculations and theories of philosophers, whose reasonings are grounded in denials of authority, and lead to no conclusion. There appears to be established a *tacit consent* that nothing is to be admitted but recondite and unsettled authorities: and nothing concluded inconsistent with unascertained theories. The very Christian divine, who in his pulpit stands upon the authority of the inspired writings as the immovable basis of Divine truth, fixed as the foundations of the universe, but too often labours under the gross inconsistency of imagining, that in questions of ancient history, this *one only unexceptionably authentic basis of such questions* is to be thrown overboard in deference to inquirers, to whom least of all is due on the score of soundness or knowledge; and appears to have taken for granted, that the accounts which are true in subjects of religion, might be questionable in history. In consequence of this most rash and unjustifiable fallacy, it has become customary amongst modern inquirers to pursue their speculations either in direct or indirect opposition to two fundamental facts, which are the only certain and tangible first principles of ancient history. These are, first, that all races of mankind are from one race, whose descent and first divisions are recorded with a certainty as unerring as the reigns of the lines of Tudor, Stewart, and Hanover; and secondly, that all creeds and old mythologies have their foundations in one original religion, and are but variously modified branches of the same errors. From the neglect of these principles has arisen the confusion of opinions, and the contradictory language and reasoning of writers, upon the various questions which we have been obliged to touch upon in this volume far too glancingly for the difficult and perplexed nature of this subject of national antiquity. We shall therefore, we trust, be excused if we endeavour briefly to explain the application of these two fundamental *data*. If we set out with the assumption of the truth of the Pentateuch, a rule of reason presents itself, which is verified by all that is authentic fact in the history of nations: and by this rule the most perplexing confusion of indications becomes simply explicable, and the learned gentlemen who pelt each other with *misplaced* monuments, and confute each other in very good Gothic, Celtic, or Phœnician, may shake hands, and be reconciled in the confidence of a common ancestry. Descended from a common origin in the East, the different races of mankind, as earlier periods of their history are approached, present common characters to the inquirer. Descending along the stream of ages, as new customs and varied elements of civilization are acquired from the accidents of locality and the varying circumstances and combinations which time brings forth, wide diversities of national character become developed, so far different as to justify the cursory inquirer in a notion of a total difference of origin and descent; while, at the same time, the remains of aboriginal custom, tradition, mythology, and language, can be traced; and transformations, wide in proportion as time and circumstances tend to vary them, remain to present the materials of discussion and theory. From these remains, on a partial view, it is evident how false inferences may be drawn, as to the immediate connexion between any two races



of a common stock, which may chance to become subjects of inquiry. Hence one vast source of uncertainty. Hence the remoter affinities of language, from which so much specious inference has been drawn, to the great discredit of etymology. Similarly the evidence to be derived from the early forms of human mythology, are rendered uncertain by a consideration not resting on any doubtful inquiry: the certainty of the fundamental elements of all religion being derived from one, and the high probability of much being retained in common by many. The separations of creed need not be supposed to have been all sudden ramifications from this primal form; for such is not the true descent of human opinion. A few great leading branches were, by many degrees and in the course of many vicissitudes, ramified into further forms, distinguished by slight shades of belief. In the long lapse of ages, causes similar to those from which differing national states have been formed, under the varied control of climate, produce, position, and accident, transformed creeds founded on the same basis into widely differing religious beliefs. To pursue the subject further would be digressive, but the train is obvious which connects it with the whole of our remarks.

*Danish Invasions in the 8th Century.*—The race of invaders who occupy the most prominent position in our present period, though little subject to any difficult or doubtful inquiry, are left in considerable obscurity by the Irish annalists, who, until a later period, only mention them under the appellation of strangers, Galls, Gentiles, dwellers on the lakes, or pirates. Their first communication with our shores, to whatever period it may be referred, was early. In the middle, and towards the end of the 8th century, however, their naval power had usurped the northern seas and harbours; and their flag, unrivalled on the deep, was the terror of every coast. Commerce had not then established its equitable conventions, nor had Christianity yet diffused its humanizing moral sense: the chief object of navigation was piracy, and piracy was not held dishonourable. The least formidable end of the naval expedition was colonization—seldom to be effected without bloodshed. Accordingly, both the English and Irish history of this period derive their chief features from the struggles of the inhabitants of either country, against the continued successive aggressions and territorial usurpations of these strangers. Often appearing in small parties, they surprised the coasts; and, before resistance could be collected, the villages and churches were blazing, and the spoil and captives on the sea with their captors. At times availing themselves of the dissensions of the native chiefs or the wars of petty kings, they espoused the party that had most to offer or least to lose, and obtained advantages from both. But the broader features of the history of that period, are the results of the large settlements they effected in the British isles. Hardly had the possession of Britain been left unoccupied by the Roman empire, then in its decline, when the Saxons, a branch of the same Scandinavian race, obtained the mastery of the island; nor were they well settled in their possession, when they were followed by their Danish and Norwegian kindred. In 789 and 832 they had made destructive attacks upon the coast. In 835 they effected a still more formidable landing. Early in the course of this

century, they were masters of the northern provinces; and, in the 10th and 11th centuries, their kings sat upon the throne of England. In Ireland the incidents in their history are contemporary with these. In the reign of Aidan Ornidhe their approaches began to take a more formidable character than they had previously assumed. In 807 they landed in considerable force; and, entering Connaught, ravaged the country as far as Roscommon, which they burnt; and in 818 they had, after different struggles of varying fortune, obtained settlements and a tyrannical ascendancy in the island. The tyrant Turgesius then commenced a reign of thirty years; and that unhappy series of calamitous burnings and spoliations, which form so much of our history for the two following centuries, had set in.

During the course of these disastrous visitations, it should be observed, that they were rendered additionally destructive and difficult to be guarded against, by the nature of the Danish armaments. Uncombined by the connecting principle of any single or supreme command, they consisted of distinct piratical associations, under the separate conduct of the chiefs who were, by wealth or influence, enabled to collect under their flag a sufficient band of these ferocious adventurers. From this it constantly occurred, that one strong body of spoilers was followed by another, and that their enterprises were too uncertain and desultory to be guarded against, or, were there the force and the will, to be met by any uniform and systematic resistance; while they were still fully strong enough for the insurance of general success.

*General Remarks on this Period.*—The few and uncertain lights to be derived from the annalists of this period, and the still less distinct gleams of Irish tradition to be extracted from ancient foreign writers, combine to indicate a state of internal disorder, not more the result of foreign invasions and the usurpations of the Ostmen or Danes, than of the tyranny and unchecked ambition of the native rulers. If the Danish pagan obeyed the love of plunder, or the vindictive impulses of continued aggression and resistance, which prompted him to carry fire and slaughter into the sacred institutions of a religion which he despised: the profane contempt of sacred things, so much at all times the ruling impulse of the secular spirit, was careless to protect them. But it was more particularly reserved for the early part of the 9th century, to exhibit a native race of kings contending with the sacrilegious Dane in the violation of church property, and in disregard of the sanctity of religious communities. What the Dane left behind in the fulness of spoliation, the native leader gleaned with cupidity as relentless. It would be difficult to select a fact more explanatory of the calamities of this disastrous era. A contempt for religion deprives the land of its protecting influences. The spoilers of the church can have no reverence for God, and are, in any time, little likely to be restrained by any consideration. It is religion only, protecting and equalizing in proportion to its purity and freedom from error, which presents still, in every form of which Christian truth is the basis, a protecting shelter to the rights and personal immunities of that crowd, which never can have any other permanent protection. In the laws of man there is neither stability against popular encroach-



ment, nor the usurpations of power, nor the corruptions of abuse; and, while the very authorities by which alone laws can be preserved are also the shelter of their privileged abuses, the resistance of popular combination, however overwhelming in its ebullitions, has in it neither the wisdom which regards right nor the permanence which can secure it. Opinion itself, and the respect for public feeling, had it existed in those less civilized periods as a principle, is still dependent on the knowledge and certainty of the facts which must be the basis of that feeling or opinion; nor is there in the wide range of human notions one so capable of exerting an equalizing, protecting, and restraining influence as religion. In its nature susceptible of every modification which the varied stages of human progress may require, its entire power is derived from its immediate operation on the first principle of human action—affecting the motive before it condemns or approves the act. Its seat of power is the conscience; and it is not more effective in resisting evil than, with a power unknown to human enactments, in enforcing duty.

These considerations become the more apparently applicable, on the stricter inspection of the state of Ireland through the 10th century. It was a period replete with all the elements of social transition; and, considering the state of the national institutions, no change that could well have happened can be now regarded with reasonable regret. A religion, degenerated into superstition, had lost its vital principle and conservative influences; it could neither protect itself nor give shelter to the people. The kings were tyrants, the people slaves, and the land torn asunder in a contest between the tyrant and the invader. Sometimes a more warlike chieftain succeeded for a time in repelling an aggressor who was not to be wholly arrested in a progress founded on superior arms and civilization: but the progress of the Danes was strictly progressive in its character; and, if the English had not some centuries after obtained possession of the land, the irresistible course of causes must have given it to them.

The civilization which tradition and the evidence of national remains claim for this country at early periods, has in some degree stood in the way of the historian who has endeavoured to reconcile it with the more authentic barbarism of later times. But however the facts may be settled, there is no difficulty in the commentary. Allowing all that the most imaginative antiquary will presume to claim for the brightest age of Irish civilization—and it is still but something comparative between a milder barbarism and the dark state of the surrounding nations, had it even continued unimpaired in positive lustre—yet the progress of nations had attained a stage in which the comparison changed sides, and the poetry and polity of our antiquity stood amidst another order of things, like a petrification of the past amidst the living forms of the present, until swept away by surrounding movements, and the waters of change from without. The law of national being, by which no nation can stand still amid the universal progress of surrounding nations, operated even at this early period as it must sooner or later operate; but the civilization of the invader was, in some respects, on the same level with, and in others below, the nation they aimed to obtain possession of. Advanced in arms, com-



merce, and the arts of life, they were still, like the natives, rude and incapable of comprehending or acting on the more enlarged and tolerant principles of humanity and justice. Hence their occupation of such portions of the country as they obtained, was held by violence and the pressure of continued encroachment and outrage.

The occupation of Ireland by the Danes may be regarded as a step of transition in the same progress, by which it afterwards became subject to the power of England. But while the unprogressive character of the native Irish exposed their country, at all times, more peculiarly to the usurpation of other nations, it also, in some degree, stood in the way of that amelioration which, under favourable circumstances, is to be derived from the mixture with a more civilized population. The native Irish character, separated by strong peculiarities, refused the tinge of other habits and foreign affinities of feeling; and, with their native talents and natural fine qualities, continued still but barbarians of a subtler kind.

Were it worth while, it would be easy to show, that in such a state of things the advance of the social system must have been slow, and that vast changes nearly revolutionary in their nature must have occurred, to enable Ireland to take a place in the ranks of those nations which, with lesser seeming advantages, were at the same time passing onward, through many changes, into the form which they have at present. But it will be enough for our purpose, to mark the actual course of events. In England the national changes, from which the stages of her history are reckoned, were in their general character diffusive and total. However vast and violent may have been the havoc with which they seem to have overwhelmed the nation, it was yet prolonged by no divided elements of internal action. The result was, a long interval of quiet; and the natural tendency of even the most imperfect institutions to progress, was suffered to work on for ages, and to produce their effects in the growth of the social frame. But in Ireland it was far otherwise. All the interruptions which disturbed her social advance were partial and indecisive. Too strong to be repressed and too weak to become total, the result was a national struggle prolonged through ages—a slow and lingering revolution: destructive not only by the social wreck, but by the interruption to progress it caused, it not only impaired the health, but dwarfed the growth. By their native bravery repressing the advances, and often nearly arresting the progress, of their Danish neighbours—but still neither acquiring their commercial industry or their military discipline—they continued, through the whole of the Danish period, to retrograde in power and knowledge; until the English found them without the power, means, or knowledge of resistance; and, in point of fact, owing the most effectual defences, which in some measure retarded the success of a small handful of adventurers, to the vigour and skill of their Danish countrymen. Of these the history is in every way interesting. It must ever be felt to hold an important place in the history of a country which, of all others, is best worthy of the historian's attention—for its obscure connexion with antiquity, for the curious anomalies it offers to inquiry, and for the singular record it contains of a romantic and unfortunate people.

Unhappily, the history of a people who, for many centuries, held so large a place in this country, is far less distinct than should reasonably be expected. Neither the Irish annals—which on all subjects are meagre and, on such subjects as involved national feeling, prejudiced—give any distinct information; nor are the native records of these Danish adventurers more satisfactory. Distinct and full information was not indeed the produce of the era. History—the literature of modern times—was in its infancy. The records of the most advanced people of the time is meagre, corrupt, and defective. In Scandinavia, as in Ireland, if it embodied any thing more than the mere dry calendar of principal events, it was but the exerescence of superstition and poetic invention. But it must be observed, that the Danes, while in Ireland they were tyrants and intruders looked on with national hate; at home they were viewed but as adventurers, whose fortunes led them to a remote soil.

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## I. POLITICAL SERIES.

### Aidan—Monarch.

A. D. 795.

THE monarchs of Ireland, unlike those of England, fail to present to the historian or the biographer the tangible grasp of personal detail, but pass, as confused and doubtful shadows, through the dense obscurity of our annalists; occasionally, and but occasionally, made visible by the reflection of some decisive event, and then as suddenly lost in the surrounding gloom of this dark period. Following, of necessity, the nature of our material, we can but endeavour to mould the broken history of an ancient revolutionary war, into the consistent form of biography which belongs to our plan.

The monarch Aidan was the son of Nail Freaseach (of the showers). In the year 797, he succeeded king Donchad in the monarchy. The events of his reign were of serious and fatal importance; though little can be recorded of his personal history. The capricious record of a byname informs the antiquary, that, “when weaned from the breast of his nurse, he used himself to that unbecoming practice of sucking his fingers;”—from this he obtained the name of Dorndighe, or Ornidhe: a name signifying “finger, or fist sucker.”

It was in the reign of Aidan that the order of events already described in the Introduction had their beginning: though we have been obliged to dwell upon them already, yet, as the entire substance of the history of this reign, they must still detain our attention. Among the earliest distinct statements of the Danish invasions in this monarch's reign, the first describes a numerous army landed from fifty vessels on the Munster coast. They were attacked by the king of that province, who repelled them with slaughter to their ships. The discouragement of this defeat, kept them from any renewed at-

tempts for six years. At the end of that time they again returned, and received another severe check, from the yet unbroken force of the Irish kings. Defeat had however but little power to deter these reckless adventurers, whose trade and pleasure it was to stake life freely upon the chance of gain. A rapid and destructive succession of descents and devastations, soon began to pursue each other, with increasing quickness and more fatal effect. Among their ravages are enumerated Inis Eibhin, the famous monastery of Banchor, Ross Maoiladh. The abbot of Banchor they slew; and the pious veneration of holy men was outraged by the sacrilegious plunder of St Comgall's shrine. Fleet followed fleet upon the first intimations of success—and the enumeration of their successes becomes a crowded list of the names of the churches they despoiled and burned. The people fled before them, hopeless alike of mercy or succour; and the few occasional checks they received served more to irritate than deter them. Their antipathy to Christianity seems, indeed, to form the aggravating character of these invasions and usurpations in Ireland, from this time, until their own conversion to Christianity gives a totally altered character to their history. Mr Moore cites the authority of Dicuill, an Irish geographer, who, writing in the beginning of the 9th century, describes the ruin they committed; and mentions, that in many of the smaller islands of the surrounding waters they did not "even leave a hermit alive." The geographer perhaps chiefly alludes to their attacks on Iona; the sacred retirement of which they flooded with the blood of its pious inhabitants, of whom they massacred sixty-three. The fact is singularly descriptive of mingled barbarism and fanaticism:—

" For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,  
His few books, or his beads or maple dish,  
Or do his grey hairs any violence?"

These horrors were sadly aggravated by civil discord. The wreck of churches and the devastation of districts had little power to arrest the purposes of ambition and enmity. The kings pursued their private aims and resentments, and rivalled the invader in devastation; while destruction and debasement were rushing in upon them with overwhelming fury, they played their petty game, like children fighting for their toy in the midst of a conflagration. The monarch Aidan claims no honourable exception from our justice. The most marked action of his reign was an inroad into Leinster; in which he desolated the province with robbery and unsparing carnage of the people, whom he caused to be slaughtered wherever they chanced to be met with. The steps and example of Aidan were closely followed by the Danes, who plundered and burned whatever he spared.

Aidan, after a troubled reign of twenty-two years, was slain in the battle of Da Fearta by Muolcanaigh. In this reign there is recorded a storm, in which 1010 persons were slain by lightning.



## Conchobhar—Monarch.

A. D. 819—832.

ON the death of the monarch Aidan, Conchobhar, or Conor, the son of Donchad, ascended the throne. The first year of his reign is signalized by an incident, which the annalists appear to attribute to “a miracle of God.” An army of the northern O’Niells was led by Murtogh against the new monarch, Conor. On a plain near the Hill of the Horse, the two armies met; but, when they stood in front of each other, some strange and perhaps unaccountable impression seized on both bodies of warriors, and wholly arrested their intended purpose. After gazing on each other for a short interval, both hosts at the same moment turned away, and thus separated without a blow. If this relation appears too marvellous, we can only meet the justifiable doubts of our reader, by reminding him of our canon of historical faith—that, after rejecting the improbable part of such stories, there is little reasonable doubt of the truth of the main incident, which is, in common with many such, made unaccountable only by the suppression of detail.

On the reign of this monarch there is little to be said, which will not fall more appropriately within the life of Turgesius. Conchobhar died in 832, and was succeeded in the monarchy by Niell Calne, the son of Aidan Ordnidhe or Aodh. The character and conduct of Niell has nothing in it worthy of special notice; and the principal events in which he is chiefly concerned, may be related under the head of one of the inferior princes of Cashel. He was drowned in the river Calluin, and was succeeded by O’Melachlin, or Malachy, a nephew of Conchobhar.

## Feidlim, King of Cashel.

A. D. 839.—DIED A. D. 846.

AT the time that the devastations of the Norwegians had arisen to their fiercest pitch of violence, Feidlim M’Crimhan, king of Cashel, obtains the revolting eminence of rivalling their worst deeds in sacrilege and devastation.

His great success in the field, and the consequent increase of his power, has led some of our historians erroneously to place him among the monarchs of Ireland. And yet, as it will appear, the error is not altogether without excuse. For some preceding reigns the princes of his line had been increasing in power, and encroaching, by successive usurpations, upon the monarchy of Ireland. Feidlim took the occasion of those calamities, which disarmed or repressed the activity of other chiefs, to extend his power. Distinguished by his courage, military talent, and freedom from all restraints of patriotism or piety, he pursued the example and followed the steps of the northern spoilers; visiting, in

his relentless course, the sacred communities which, by their wealth, invited the spoiler's cupidity, he carried fire and sword into the retreats of holy men. The monastery of Clonmacnoise, first ravaged by the Danes, had scarcely time to recover from the horrors of such an infliction, when it was attacked by king Feidlim, who laid waste its lands and slaughtered a considerable number of the community. Of Kildare he secured the first spoils, and carried off many of its friars as slaves: the Danes repeated the blow, and seized on the relics of the spoil.

It was in the year 832 that Niell Calne succeeded to the monarchy; Feidlim's repeated aggressions roused him to resistance. Reviving a contention of ancient standing between Connaught and Munster for the possession of Clare, Feidlim gained a bloody victory over the forces of Niell. This victory was rendered decisive by an overwhelming demonstration of military power in Meath, where he carried off Gormflatha, Niell's daughter, with her maiden train. The monarch Niell was, in consequence, obliged to submit and give hostages; so that the Munster annalists might, with some reason, say that he was then king of all Ireland. A few years ended his career. According to the poetical justice so often preserved by our ancient historians, his unhallowed course met with a strict retribution. While engaged in a sacrilegious incursion on the lands of the abbey of St Ciaran, his steps were arrested by the stern appearance of the holy abbot, who came forth and confronted on his path the spoiler of the church; a curse from the holy man's lips was rendered doubly effective by a blow from the consecrated pastoral staff which he held, from the effect of which Feidlim never recovered. Between the two causes the effect is not improbable; but it is added, that the sacrilegious spoiler, during the remaining year of his life, was thus metamorphosed into "the most religious and learned anchorite that Ireland ever saw."

## Turgesius.

A. D. 815.—DIED A. D. 844.

OF Turgesius, before his landing on the Irish coast, nothing can be told on any probable authority; and even as to the date of this, there are some differences.\* According to the most sanctioned authorities, we may place the event some time in the year 815, when he came from Norway with a large fleet and a formidable army. This crafty chief had further views than his adventurous fellow-countrymen had hitherto entertained, and he did not enter on his plans without having, like a prudent and wary leader, taken all due precautions to ensure success. It was now become an enterprise of much increased risk, to attack a nation which, from frequent experience of the calamitous nature of

\* The frivolous questions as to his being the same with Gurmundus, or different, we omit, as having no interest, unless for those who are likely to be conversant with our authorities. It is to be regretted that the old writers, who are prolix on such questions, are at the same time so defective in more essential respects.

such attacks, had at length been taught the necessity of a more concentrated resistance. A successful effort of this nature was undoubtedly, at the period, beyond their state of military knowledge, and still more, beyond their capability of concerted movements. Division was the main source of their weakness, and with this was combined that besetting infirmity of the Celtic nature, the fatal proneness to betray.

Turgesius, aware of the weak points of the nation, readily contrived to secure the co-operation of some of the most powerful of the native chiefs; and it was probably by their aid and guidance that, without being compelled to betray his purpose by any decisive encounter, he contrived to secure possession of many strong positions, in which he was unhappily suffered to establish settlements, with such fortifications as the science of the time afforded. Some mention occurs of a battle which he gained against Edmundlius, or Felim M'Edmond, and others of a defeat sustained from Feidlim, king of Cashel. The fact is, however, unimportant, as it is uncertain. It is probable that he gained advantages and suffered reverses in action; but it is known that he obtained eventual success. Having divided his fleet and army, for the purpose of striking sudden terror by constant surprises and simultaneous attacks in different quarters, it is probable that the collisions were slight and partial, which the native annalist might have magnified into battles won or lost. But it is probable that his progress had in it the uniformity of progress which must have attended the systematic direction of a powerful force, against an unregulated and tumultuary resistance.

His followers were indulged in all the license which, in these rude times, and by that piratical nation, were held as the soldier's right; and the evils they inflicted can only be conceived by those who have attentively read the history of the buccaneers in America; or realized, by meditation, that horrible interval of human woe, when the Roman world was swept by the locust march of the Goths.

The Danes, who had already obtained settlements by the incidents of a long-continued communication, now flocked in, and powerfully reinforced the army of Turgesius, and he was quickly enabled to seize on Armagh, where he established his seat of power, and occupied the lands of the clergy, whom he ejected from the province.

His views now expanded with his power, and he saw that the monarchy lay within an easy grasp. The northern adventurers who, lured by his success, thought to follow his example, he was enabled to repel. The native chiefs, although unable to look beyond the narrow scope of their private feuds and animosities, had no actual perception of the real dangers which menaced them, till it was too late. The struggle was, however, protracted through a long and fearful interval of horror and desolation. Although incapable of steadfast purpose and concerted action, the chiefs of the country were as little capable of unreserved submission: ready to assume the tone of humble submission when resistance became impracticable, they cherished individually the will to resist the claim of tyranny when it approached them in their respective seats of authority. In addition to the calls of self-interest, and the impulses of barbaric pride, they were subject also to the more regulated influence of their clergy. In the church



lay the chief cause of this protracted struggle. The Irish people would probably have early submitted to a tyranny which they could not shake off, but it was a part of the usurper's plan to root Christianity from the land. The persecution of the clergy thus produced a protracted but desultory resistance, which ended in that species of compromise which is the result of time and experience, rather than of formal compact; and at length, after a fierce persecution of thirty years, Turgesius was proclaimed monarch of Ireland.

In the course of this long struggle for power, the prominent incidents were the sufferings of ecclesiastical persons and places. The monastery of Banchor, before attacked and plundered by these barbarians, was again the scene of their mingled rapacity and cruelty. The *Annals of Munster* and of the *Four Masters*, state, that on this latter occasion, the abbot and 900 monks were all murdered in one day. Mr Moore's history supplies us with an expressive enumeration of these and similar horrors—"Wherever pilgrims in great numbers resorted, thither the love at once of slaughter and plunder led these barbarians to pursue them. The monastery of the English at Mayo; the holy isle of Iniscathy in the mouth of the Shannon; the cells of St Kevin in the valley of Glendalough; the church of Slane, the memorable spot where St Patrick first lighted the Paschal fire; the monastery of the Helig isles, on the coast of Kerry, a site of the ancient well-worship; all these, and a number of other such seats of holiness, are mentioned as constantly being made the scenes of the most ruthless devastation." These atrocities were, as the reader may have already seen, swelled in their amount and aggravated by the continued force of ill example on the native chiefs, who, while they followed the track of the destroyer, with a purpose as destructive and less excusable than his own, are probably to be looked on as indications of the diminished hostility which his character and crimes must have, for a long time, opposed to his recognition as king.

But in the absence of distinct details, we need not further labour to give distinctness to our portrait, and to fix the shadowy horror of the tyrant's features. His government, as king, was but another frightful phase of his character as an enemy. Oppressions and extortions assumed a rougher and sterner form from the license of authority; and the insolent exactions of Norwegian officials were added to the relentless demands of authorized extortion. The religious houses found no longer even that shadow of a hope which resistance imparts; schools and monasteries went, by one compendious mandate, unresistingly to the ground; and their inhabitants were turned out to seek a refuge in foreign countries, or in a poverty which had nothing to attract the spoiler.

The effect of this was such as might have been anticipated from human nature. They who would have submitted to the foreign usurper, found no rest or safety in their abasement; and a strong sense of animosity against the tyrant gradually began to diffuse itself from mind to mind. The attempt at open resistance was not to be thought of, but an occasion arose by which O'Meloghlin, prince of Meath, contrived to seize his person.

Giraldus, and after him Hammer and other historians, relate a story of the manner of the death of this tyrant, which is not noticed by any of the ancient annalists, and yet, from its circumstantial detail, is hardly to be attributed to mere invention. It has at least the merit of being in strict keeping with the age and the character of the agents; and may have been omitted by the annalists, from a sense that, however just may have been the tyrant's fate, the manner of it does not, in the highest degree, reflect honour on the illustrious O'Meloghlin; and, it may be added, that there is an evidently studied reserve in the early writers on all transactions in which the Danes were in any way parties. Gordon, Mr Moore, Leland, and Dr O'Connor, concur in treating it as fable; but, true or false, we may not omit it here.

In the thirtieth year of his residence in Ireland, Turgesius conceived a dishonourable passion for the daughter of O'Meloghlin, king of Meath, and, being deterred by no consideration either of decency or respect, offered the most insulting and offensive proposals to the royal father of the princess. Such was the abject state of subjection to which the native kings were reduced, that the outraged father could not, without the utmost peril, refuse; and resistance was hopeless. In this hapless condition, the humiliation of which may well account for the silence of the annals, the heroic O'Meloghlin had recourse to a stratagem, "resembling," as Mr Moore observes, "in some of its particulars, a stratagem recorded by Plutarch in his life of Pelopidas." He replied to the insulting proposal, "Appoint the day, the hour, and the place, and sequester yourself from your court and retinue, and I will send my daughter unto you, with twelve or sixteen gentlewomen, of the choice and beautifullest maidens of my country, and take your choice of them; if my daughter please you best, she is at your command." The appointed hour drew on, and the tyrant, fired with guilty expectations, betook himself to the place of assignation. O'Meloghlin caused the princess to be splendidly attired, and sent her with sixteen young men, disguised as maidens, and having each a long knife under his mantle. The bloody tragedy was not long in acting. Turgesius had scarcely time to insult the princess with the first expression of his revolting love, when the fatal circle of avengers was drawn close around him, and, ere his astonishment and terror could find vent, the knives of the sixteen were contending in his breast.

In this story there is nothing improbable; the scheme is simple, and, in some measure, such as the circumstances may have suggested. There is, also, in addition to the reason already mentioned, this consideration: enough is mentioned by the annalists to warrant the inference of more. The tyrant who had for thirty years held the minds of the Irish nation in the bonds of hate and terror, could not have been surprised by craft, and slain, without some more especial note of the manner of his death, than that he fell into the hands of O'Meloghlin, and was by him drowned in Loehvar. The truth may probably be a combination of the particulars of both accounts. He may have been seized by the youths and drowned by the monarch; but as there was, at the moment, no war, or no ordinary circumstances which might have led to his capture in the field, some stratagem must have



been employed to obtain possession of him, and such must either have been most diligently concealed, or, as in all such incidents, have made the chief part of the story.

Whatever be the true account of the death of Turgesius, the results were important. The ascendancy of the Danes was thenceforward lightened; and from that period, as an ancient annalist observes, "the Irish began to conquer."

## The Monarch O'Meloghlin.

DIED A. D. 863.

THE best authority places the event of the death of Turgesius in 844,\* but it was not for about four years later that O'Meloghlin was raised to the monarchy.

A circumstance which seems to add some credit to the romance related above, is the circumstance (if truly affirmed) that he had previously lived on terms of great favour with Turgesius. It is mentioned, as an incident of his previous life, that once, in conversation, he familiarly asked of the tyrant, "by what means certain ravenous and pestiferous birds, which greatly infested the country, might be destroyed?" Turgesius replied, "If they breed, destroy their eggs, birds, and nests,"—a policy which, it is said, O'Meloghlin thenceforward designed to observe towards the Norwegians.

On the death of Turgesius, it is said, O'Meloghlin immediately sent out his messengers in every direction, to give notice of the event, and to rouse the chiefs to take arms. The Norwegians, sustained chiefly by the energy and political talent of their ruler, had neither union, council, firmness, nor foresight, to meet the exigency of the moment. They stood undecided, and were taken by surprise. The Irish had been some time prepared, and on the intelligence, Meath and Leinster were at once in arms; the chiefs from every quarter repaired to O'Meloghlin, who soon found himself at the head of a numerous army. The results appear to have been decisive; but the brevity of the annalists does not afford us the means of describing the battles by which the strangers were now reduced to the lowest state of depression, and either driven from the land, or subjected to the authority of its native chiefs. There cannot be any reasonable doubt of the decided advantages which were thus obtained, but there can be as little that they are vastly over-stated by the annalists, whose accounts are uniformly at variance with the course of events as inferred even from themselves. The account of Giraldus, from whatever sources it is drawn, has in it some touches peculiarly characteristic of the actors: "*Fama igitur pernicious alis, totam statim insulam pervolante, et rei eventum, ut assolet, divulgante; Norwagienses ubique truneantur; et in brevi omni omnino, seu vi, seu dolo, vel morti traduntur, vel iterum Norwagium et insulas unde venerant, navigio adire compelluntur.*" A series of massacres and well-concerted surprises, were probably rendered decisive by

\* The time of these events is involved in doubt, &c. Moore, ii. 33.



victories won by the conduct of O'Meloghlin. He soon after obtained the monarchical crown, and sent messengers to the French court to announce his triumph and his accession. He also announced his purpose of a visit to Rome as an act of thanksgiving, and desired a free passage through the French territory. The ambassadors were charged with costly gifts to the king of France; and, as Mr Moore has judiciously observed, the high reputation of Irish learning and piety sustained at this period by the constant resort of Irish missionaries, as well as by the reputation of John Erigena, in the French court, must have conciliated for Irishmen the good-will of both the king and people. The design of O'Meloghlin, common at the period, was little in his power. The Norwegians were scattered and disorganized, but not in reality subdued. They wanted but concentration and a head, to regain their wonted place in the field as harassing and formidable foes. Three days' sail intervened between them and the Baltic shores, which still teemed with unexhausted swarms of fierce adventurers.

In 849, a fleet of one hundred and sixty sail\* landed a strong reinforcement from the northern coasts; and the Danes, who had for some time been struggling, under the appearance of commercial views, to regain a difficult footing, were enabled to assume a sterner front. A tedious and destructive, but indecisive warfare set in, and during its course, some important changes took place in the mutual feelings and relative positions of the parties; the result of which was to enable the Danes, who generally acted on wider views, to attain considerable advantages.

The native chiefs, acting ever under the impulse of the most recent impressions, and ever ready to start aside from the more remote objects of common interest at the slightest call of private passion, soon fell away from the public cause, into their wonted tenor of petty dissension. The Danes, always on the alert for every advantage, soon found means to insinuate themselves into the game of strife, and thus obtain, unobserved, the secure footing of alliance with the strongest. The conventions of party, which, even in this advanced age, and in minds elevated by knowledge and talent, hold an ascendancy exclusive of higher and more general principle, may then be supposed to have bound, with an iron force, the uncivilized breasts of the barbarian chiefs of the day. Occupied with the engrossing concerns and small expedencies which affected the narrow circle of their immediate relations, the chiefs saw nothing further, but felt that, while they were individually at liberty to wield their small privileges of oppression and mutual strife, the nation was free: it was all the prosperity they could comprehend!

This evil practice was sanctioned by O'Meloghlin, who availed himself of the ready arms of these northern settlers to retain his station against the encroachments of rival chiefs. The character of the foreigners had, in the course of time, assumed a more civilized form. From pirates, they were now fast settling into traders; by craft, as by the neglect of the natives—quite ignorant of the importance of these positions of advantage for commerce and strength—they had secured

\* Ware, Ant. c. 24.

possession of the cities and principal harbours of the island; and it became no longer a doubtful question, as to the pre-eminence they might thereafter hold in the nation, if their progress was allowed to advance toward a secure possession of their present advantages. But this advantage was rendered precarious by interferences far different from the brawling hostility of the native chiefs. The kindred tribes of the Baltic—which, in their common character of pirates and foes, are, to a great extent, confounded by historians under a common name, were yet distinct in tribe and country; and though ready to unite their arms for mutual advantage, yet little disposed to concede, without a struggle, the possession of a country which was progressively becoming more important as they advanced in commercial prosperity. The Norwegians, or White Strangers, were at strife with the Danes, or Black Strangers, or as they were, in the native Irish, called Fingalls and Dubhgalls.

In the year 850, a considerable fleet of the Dark Strangers, a race till about this period not much known in the island, landing on the Irish coast, made an attack on the White Strangers, who were in possession of Dublin. This event is, with the uncertainty of our annalists, placed by each at a different period. The *Four Masters* are said by Mr Moore to make it 849, Ware 851; but the following extract from the *Four Masters*—carefully translated, and compared with the *Annals of Tighernach*, by an Irish scholar of high reputation, for a most authoritative antiquarian publication of the present day\*—seems to involve the matter in some additional difficulty. Under the year 845, it is mentioned: “The Dubhgalls arrived this year in Dublin, slaughtered the Fingalls, demolished their fortress, and carried off prisoners and property. The Dubhgalls attacked the Fingalls at Lindunachail, and made great havoc of them.” The date matters little—of the event there is no doubt. And it is pretty evident that, under the liability to such contingencies, there could be little steady prosperity. The Danes were, besides, beginning to be divided among themselves: the habit of entering into the feuds of the native chiefs had, as Mr Moore observes, this weakening effect. In the following year from the event last mentioned, the Fingalls having recruited their numbers from abroad, made a fierce and successful effort to regain their city. The battle was one of violence unprecedented in Irish history; it continued three days and three nights, and ended in the entire discomfiture of the Dubhs, with dreadful slaughter.

We have already offered the reader some important notices of ancient Ireland, in which express mention is made of the city of Dublin: its growing importance at the period in which we are now engaged, make this the fittest occasion to offer some further notices from the same authority. These, for the convenience of our narrative, we extract in the form of a note.† The next occurrence, of which

\* Dublin Penny Journal, p. 175.

† “Dublin, therefore, has a just claim to an antiquity of seventeen centuries, and it is manifest that it must have existed several centuries before Ptolemy’s time, else he would not have called it a *city*, or even have heard of it. The first mention we find made of Dublin, in the remnant of ancient Irish history that has reached our times, is in the *Annals of Tighernach*, under the year 166, where he tells us that



there is distinct notice worthy of mention, is one alike important in the history of both the British isles. The protracted tyranny of Turgesius, and the growing power and union of the Danes in both islands, gave a prospect of advantage sufficient to awaken the ambition of the Norwegian princes, Anlaf, Sitrie, and Ivar. Collecting a powerful body of troops from the coasts and islands of the Northern sea, they landed on the Irish coast, and took unresisted possession of the ports of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford,—the latter of which now for the first time became the site of a city, of which Sitrie is allowed to have been the founder.

A tale is told by Giraldus, of the stratagem by which the three brothers obtained possession of the country. Coming in the disguise of merchants, he represents them as gaining a friendly footing in different parts of the country. The story has not, however, even the ordinary probability of a fairy tale, or requires at least, in the reader, the most childlike ignorance of the common workings of any state of society.

Superior sagacity, knowledge, resources, and the command of an extensive line of well-manned positions, in a word, a force which rendered hopeless such efforts as could at the time be brought to bear upon them, gave them that commanding and admitted influence, which nothing less could have given; and O'Meloghlin soon saw himself occupying a place virtually subordinate in his dominions. A tribute to the Norwegian princes, was the unequivocal test of national

the Con of the hundred battles, and Mogha Nuadhat, divided Ireland into two parts, by a line drawn from the eastern to the western *Athcliath*, i. e. from *Athcliath Duiblinne* to *Athcliath Meadhraidhe*, or from Dublin to Clarin's-bridge, near Galway. It is added in other accounts (not in Tighernach), that Mogha Nuadhat, who was otherwise called Eogan the *Splendid*, thought himself over-reached in this partition, because the half of the harbour of Dublin, which he observed to be commodious for traffic, and visited by ships, did not fall within his allotment; and that to gain which he commenced hostilities, and lost his life in the attempt.

"I cannot at all believe that the settlement of Dublin as a place of commerce, and as a fortified town, can be attributed to the Scandinavian pirates, in the ninth century. The *Annals of the Four Masters* record the death of *St Beraidh*, abbot of Dublin, under the year 650, and that of *Siadhal*, abbot of Dublin, under the year 785.

"The author of the *Life of St Kevin*, who wrote more than a thousand years ago, thus speaks of our city:—

"*"Civitas Athcliath est in aquilonali Lageniensium plagâ super fretum maris posita, et Scotice dicitur Dubhlinn quod sonat Latine Nigra Therma, et ipsa, civitas potens et Belligera est, in qua semper habitant viri asperimi in præliis et peritissimi in classibus."*

"The city of *Ath-cliath* is situate in the northern region of Leinster, upon a strait of the sea; it is styled in the Scotie language *Dubh-linn*, which signifies Dark Bath. This city is powerful and warlike, and always inhabited by men most hardy in battles, and most expert in fleets.

"The Irish name of Dublin is *Baile Atha Cliath*, or *The Town at the ford of the Hurdles*; and the name of that part of the Liffey on which it is built, *Duiblinn*, or the *Black Water*.

"The *Book of Dinseanchus* informs us that this ford across the river was called *Ath-cliath*, or *the ford of Hurdles*, from hurdles of small twigs which the Lagenians, in the reign of their king Mesgeira, placed across the river for the purpose of conveying the sheep of *Athirny Ailgeascah* to *Dun Edair*, a fortress of the hill of Howth, where many of the young warriors of Ulster were then stationed."—*Annals of Dublin*, translated by Mr John O'Donovan, *Dublin Penny Journal*, i. 174.



submission; and Imar, or Ivar, is mentioned by the *Four Masters* as king of the Danes in England and Ireland. The last effort of Malachy to shake off the iron weight that pressed his monarchy to the ground, was a battle fought at Drummoy, of which the *Masters* rather equivocally state, "where many of them fell."

O'Meloghlin died some time in 863, and was succeeded in the monarchy by Aodh Finliath.

## Aodh Finliath, Monarch.

A. D. 863—879.

ERE this, the reader of these pages will have it forced on his observation, that the monarchs of this confused period are, without any stretch of rhetorical licence, described as shadows of royalty. Under the names of these kingly phantoms, we are compelled to proceed onward with a broken and uncertain record of events, in which they appear to have had but little part; and under the name of biography to present a scanty and doubtful history. But in this there is little choice—as the only alternative would consist in the detail of those incidents without character or probability, with which a few writers of heated imagination have filled up the broken cloud-work which conceals the unrecorded past. The interest arising from continuity and connexion, in a well-ordered narration, is here of necessity broken at every step, not alone by the chasms of the narration, but by the controverted points which start up at every period, and the conjectural notions, the claim of which is chiefly derived from the undue importance which has been attributed to them, by writers unaccustomed to weigh the actual progress and true connexions of historical events—a fault not more to be imputed to the most zealous fanatic of a theory, than to the little philosopher who is found demolishing the fantastic edifice with weapons not more substantial. In making this statement, we feel a natural wish to support ourselves by the sanction of a name, and none perhaps can be found less exceptionable on every account than Mr Moore, whose learned, intelligent, and industrious history, strongly exemplifies these inevitable disadvantages of the subject, when encountered by the fairest mind. We have, with this view, lit on the following passage, which fully states the difficulty with which the biographer has to contend:—"Among the deficiencies most to be complained of by a reader of our early history, is the want of interest and instruction arising from the contemplation of individual character,—the rare occurrence not merely of marked historical personages, but of any actors in the tumultuous scene sufficiently elevated above their cotemporaries to attract the eye in passing, or form a resting-place for the mind."

Under the name of Aodh, the only point of historical importance to be mentioned, is his marriage with Malmaria, daughter of Kenneth MacAlpine, king of the Irish colony of Scotland. The history of this colony may be briefly summed.

It is, after some controversy now superfluous to detail, admitted by all recent historical writers, that Scotland has derived its name,

with no inconsiderable portion of its inhabitants, from the neighbouring shores of Ireland, of which the inhabitants are commonly mentioned in old historians under the name of Scots, or Scots of Hibernia; while Scotland was known under the name of Albyn, or Albania, to the 11th century.\* Of the origin of the Irish colony in Scotland, we have already mentioned some particulars in our previous sketches, in the former division of this work. In the time of this eminent Christian, this colony ceased to be dependent on an Irish chief. Its position, and the extent of the district which it occupied, is described by Dr O'Connor—it comprised “Kentiréam, Knapdahan, Loarnam, Ardga-theliam, and Braid Alban, cum vicinis insulis Hebridum.” “On the small stage of this miniature realm,” writes Mr Moore, “we find acted over again, most of the dark and troubled scenes of the Irish pentarchy; the same lawlessness and turbulence, redeemed sometimes by the same romantic heroism; a similar reverence for all that was sanctioned by the past, combined with as light and daring a recklessness of the future. That rooted attachment to old laws and usages, which marked the natives of the mother country, was here transmitted in full force to their descendants; the ancient language and all the numerous traditions of which it was the vehicle; the system of clanship and laws of succession; even the old party-coloured dress worn by the ancient Scots, all continued to be retained in North Britain to a much later period than among the original Irish themselves.”

The succession of internal feuds and dissensions which occupy the interval, we must refer to the history of Scotland. But, not long before the period in which we are engaged, a series of desperate conflicts, between the Irish Scots and their Lowland neighbours the Picts, ended in the union of the two races in one monarchy, under a king of the Irish race—the celebrated hero Kenneth MacAlpine. To the daughter of this monarch Aodh was married. He died 879, after a reign of 16 years, and was succeeded by

### Flan Siona.

OF this monarch, the only particulars worth record may be dismissed in a brief space. He was the son of Malachy, and married Malmaria, the widow of king Aodh, his predecessor. By this alliance, with each of the main alternate branches of the Hy Niell family, the Tyronian, Clancolman and Slanian branches were reunited, to the exclusion of the Tyrconnel branch.

Under the year 885, the *Four Masters* mention that Flan, the son of Malachy, king of Ireland, was defeated in a battle by the Danes of Dublin, when Hugh, son of Connor, king of Connaught, Lergus, bishop of Kildare, and Donogh, son of Maildun, abbot of Kidelga and other churches, and many others were killed.”

\* This fact, does not now admit of elaborate disquisition. But the reader, who desires to obtain full and minute information upon it, may find it discussed with the most copious learning and authority by primate Usher, in his work, *De Primordiis*, c. xvi. p. 725.



Among the few notices we find of the events of this reign, the most interesting are those which relate to the illustrious Cormac, king and bishop of Cashel, with whom Flan was engaged in a destructive war, of which the success was chiefly on Cormac's side.

As we do not think it would be just to the most illustrious person of his time to include his life in our account of a monarch whose monarchy is his chief claim to this notice; we may conclude it by saying, that Flan died in 916, after a reign of thirty-six years, spent in wars which have little record, and little worthy of record. The principal events mentioned by the annalists of this period, are obscure notices concerning the Danes, which, although not devoid of foundation in fact, are at best unintentional misrepresentations. To take these cursory chronicles for fact, they require explanations, which would depress their value into something far below any claim to notice—in the absence of such a commentary they sound like cross purposes and contradictions: in the successive sentences, the Danes of Dublin appear and disappear from the scene, after a fashion which must remind the gravest antiquary of the tragedy of Tom Thumb. But as Mr Moore has observed, with his usual good sense, “those boasts of the entire expulsion of the Danes, which occur more than once in the records of this and the preceding century, imply nothing more than the total dispersion of some of those later swarms of freebooters, from whose visitation, arriving fresh as they did to the work of spoil and murder, it might well be considered a triumph and signal blessing to be delivered.”

### Cormac, King of Cashel.

A. D. 903—A. D. 908.

CORMAC MACCULINAN, king and bishop of Cashel, or as he is more correctly styled by some of our ancient writers, king of Munster and bishop of Cashel, appears to have been born in the year 837. The early portion of his life may be passed—but he seems to have ended a long life spent in the tranquil pursuits of literature, by a brief and troubled reign chiefly passed in the field. Seventy years from his birth passed away like a long and calm day of sunshine, spent in the contemplative repose of the conventual cell; and terminated, as such days will sometimes terminate, in the din and confusion of gathering storms. Except the honourable evidence of his important writings, his previous course, for the long period of seventy years, is trackless on our annals: but these obscure years have left to posterity, in that valuable record the *Psalter of Cashel*, a striking illustration of the law by which the fame of the scholar may be reflected, from the humblest station or the most unnoticed obscurity, beyond the most swelling characters and noisiest events which arrested the applause or censure of his day. But Cormac, though the events of his life are only known by such a result, was not obscure—he was of royal descent and high ecclesiastical station, and he lived in a period and country when learning,



though its state was not much above a formal ignorance, was held in veneration proportioned to the difficulty of its attainment.

Cormac had scarcely time to settle in his throne, before he learned that it was not to be the easy chair of an aged priest. Some doubts have been expressed as to which side the aggression came from, in the war which, in five years from his accession, began between him and the monarch Flan. We have no authority, but it is inconsistent with all the probabilities, that the ancient and venerable student could have been the first intentional aggressor. The monarch was the first who struck the blow, having, according to the annalists, in 906, made a hostile inroad upon Munster, and laid waste the whole district from Gaura to Limerick. The insult was not destined to pass unpunished.

In the next year, the venerable prince took the field at the head of a sufficient force; and, with the assistance of the valiant abbot of Iniscathy, encountered the monarch on the heath of Moylena, and obtained a decided victory, which compelled Flan to give hostages of submission. Following up his good fortune, he entered Roscommon, where he exacted and received similar tokens of subjection.

It was, however, a uniform result of the multitude of small conflicting interests of these petty princes of an uncivilized period, and of disputes as to rights in themselves ill-defined and liable to the wilful misunderstanding of an encroaching spirit, that pledges of submission were no longer binding than while there were means to enforce them. The monarch did not altogether acquiesce in the king of Munster's assumption of rights, which seemed in a great measure to have their basis in usurpation. In the gradual increase of its prosperity, the throne of Cashel had begun to assume the portentous aspect of a rival power; and its demands of tribute, by right limited within its provincial boundaries, were, by tacit sufferance, extended through the southern provinces of Ireland. Against a demand thus questionable in its origin, resistance quickly gathered force among the more intelligent people of Leinster, whose habits were rendered alert and firm by their more constant contact with the Danes. In this they were sanctioned by their king, and encouraged by the monarch. Cormac would, it is agreed, have willingly consulted his repose, the peace of his people, and perhaps the obligations of his sacred calling; but these milder dispositions were under the control of a rough, ambitious, and violent spirit. Flathertach, the warlike abbot of Iniscathy, quickly overruled any pacific scruple he may have entertained, and the Munster forces were led into the province of Leinster.

But the combined forces of his two great antagonists were far beyond the utmost force which the king of Cashel could lead to the field: and the foreboding of his fate, which on this occasion is attributed to him, may well have been the just impression which this disparity was likely to make on a mind observant by nature, and touched with the natural apprehension of old age. Under this impression he entered with calm resignation on the important preparations for the event. He sent for the rightful head of the Daleassians, and made a public and solemn declaration of his right to the succession. He also made a will, in which he bequeathed legacies to his friends and the church.

The result of the battle of Beallaghmnughna, which soon after followed, but too truly justified the presentiments of Cormac. The struggle was long, but the Munster troops were forced to yield to a superior force: Cormac was slain most probably in the confusion attendant on the route, as his character and age forbid the supposition of his having assumed a prominent part in the ranks.

There is nothing, however, in the ecclesiastical character of that barbaric period—when martial virtue was all in all, and Christianity was already far gone in the corruptions which continued, for five centuries more, to encrust its holy light—to cast reproach on the bishop or abbot, who exchanged his mitre and gown for helmet and mail, and, at the call of sovereign or feudal duty, led his subjects or retainers to the field. Of this the reader's recollections of English contemporary history will supply abundant examples. Cormac was, as Mr Moore has justly remarked, "made evidently the instrument, during his few years of sovereignty, of some of the more violent and aspiring spirits of his order." If we stop to compare (although such a comparison must rest only on strong inferential grounds) the apparent character of this venerable prince with the probable character of his adviser—the intermeddling, arrogant, and underplotting abbot of Iniscathy, who contrived to persuade, against his better purpose, the aged priest and student, to an unequal contest for an unrighteous demand—the mind is struck by an impressive contrast, which often recurs among the events of every generation. The mild and gentle simplicity of a great and wise mind, rendered perhaps additionally yielding from the natural effect of age—too simply good to penetrate the folds in which duplicity hides its inmost purpose, or to see through the lurking snare which is led to by a series of crafty and specious impositions; he becomes an easy prey to the cautious and pliant, but daring and unscrupulous schemer, who seizes on his easy ear with specious pretences, winning insinuations, confident and outfacing lies, or finely devised positions of necessity, as occasion offers. We need not labour to give force to a picture, to which the recollection of most of our readers, who are not young in the world, will suggest resemblances; our own many.

Such is the probable sketch of the king and his mitred counsellor of state: but that of the former will best be completed by observing the tranquil firmness and justice of his preparations for the event of a war in which he was reluctant to engage; his equitable respect for the alternate right of the Daleassian branch to give a successor to the throne; and the calm resignation and piety which place him rather in the light of a noble spirit in the midst of adversity and danger, than the leader of an unjust war.

The items of his will are, with sufficient probability, given by Keating. They consist chiefly of bequests to the churches of ounces of gold and silver, with various articles of church service, as chalices, vestments, and a mass-book. Some, however, of the accompanying bequests have been noticed, as affecting the credit of the whole: a "clock," and a "coat of mail of bright and polished steel." We have not, at this moment, the means of ascertaining the allowances which may be made for the mistranslation which may possibly have betrayed the



historian into an anachronism seemingly so gross. We have familiar proof that the clock was yet unknown in any form, from the common story of Alfred's application of candles to the purpose of the measurement of time; nor was the coat of mail known until long after the Norman conquest, from which its gradual invention, by repeated improvements, is traced with historical precision, from the iron-ringed tunic of the Norman knight of that period, to the perfect panoply of steel in the 14th century. But the use of armour in early periods, and the Eastern invention of curious pieces of mechanism to supply the want of the clock, are of uncertain antiquity. Cormac was an antiquary, and doubtless a collector of such rare and foreign curiosities as the wealth of a royal collector of his period might command. He was a scholar; and an occasional communication with the best intelligence then in Europe, may have placed in his possession many imperfect things, the rudiments of future improvement. No allowance, however, on the score of such considerations, can be made for the language of the will, as given by Keating; and, on the whole, we incline to reject the document.\*

\* " Summoned away by death which, I perceive,  
Approaches—for, by my prophetic skill,  
I find that short will be my life and reign—  
I solemnly appoint that my affairs  
Shall thus be settled, after I am dead,  
And this I constitute my latest will :—  
My golden vestment, for most sacred use  
Ordained, and for the service of my God,  
I give to the religious St Shanon  
Of Inis-Catha, a most holy man.  
My clock, which gave me notice of the time  
And warned me when to offer my devotion,  
I leave—nor is my will to be revoked—  
To Connil of Feargus, a true friend  
And follower of my fortune, good or bad.  
My royal robe, embroidered o'er with gold  
And sparkling with the rays of costly jewels,  
Well suited to a state of majesty,  
I do bequeath to Rosere, to be kept  
By Cronane with the strictest care. My armour  
And coat of mail, of bright and polished steel,  
Will well become the martial king of Ulster,  
To whom I give it; and my golden chain  
Shall the most pious Muchuda enjoy  
As a reward for all his worthy labours.  
My royal wardrobe I resolve to give  
To MacGleinin at Cluain, by Colman.  
My Psalter, which preserves the ancient records  
And monuments of this my native country,  
Which are transcribed with great fidelity,  
I leave to Ronal Cashel, to be preserved  
To after times and ages yet to come.  
My soul for mercy I commit to heaven,  
My body leave to dust and rottenness.  
May God his choicest store of blessings send  
Upon the poor, and propagate the faith  
Of Christ throughout the world !"



## Niell Glundubh.

A. D. 916.

OF Niell's reign we have no record sufficiently important to detain our progress. He is, however, entitled to our distinct notice as the common ancestor of the family of O'Niell, which so often claim the notice of the Irish historian. His reign appears to have lasted but a year at the most, unless we shift back the death of Flan to 914, to accommodate it to the chronology of the following entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters*:—"917. A furious battle was fought this year between the Irish and the Danes at Dublin. Imar and Sitric commanded the Danes in this battle. There fell, on the side of the Irish, Niell Glundubh, son of Hugh Finliath, who was king of Ireland for three years," &c., &c.—in which is a long list of kings and chiefs, ending with the words, "with many other nobles too numerous to be mentioned."

## Anlaf, King of Dublin.

THE great prominence of the Danes in the entire civil history of this period, together with the fact that they must also be now regarded as having become virtually no inconsiderable division of the inhabitants of the island, whether respect is had to their power, possessions, numbers, or length of settlement—these considerations demand the admission of this eminent king and captain into our series of biographies. There is, indeed, a difficulty which has very much limited our means of being as authentic and distinct as might be desired, on the history of the Danish princes. While the main record of their achievements is sufficiently marked with a deep and blood-stained outline of murderous fields and forays, the annalists, both in England and Ireland, are always briefly confined to the events of war; and, being often contradictory on these, are also pretty uniformly so on all other subjects of historical inquiry. The frequent repetition of the same principal names among the Danish princes has, in the absence of connected detail, constantly misled the compilers of the scattered and broken links of their history; and, though the task of historical research may thus derive additional interest in comparing authorities and balancing adverse probabilities, it remains for us, whose office excludes all that is much beneath the surface of popular interest, to proceed straight forward according to the most allowed and known views of history.

We have already mentioned the arrival in this country of the three brothers, Anlaf, Sitric, and Ivar. The coincidence of names and dates, in the Saxon and Irish records, with sufficient accuracy settle the important fact, that England and Ireland were equally the subject of their hostile operations; and the same comparison enables the historian to infer, that these operations were generally conducted with

similar success and like consequences in each. Although interrupted and frequently divided in its progress, by the diverse accidents of a war continued in different places and with different people, there was yet a combining principle, under the influence of which the empire of the Northmen always tended to a union under a single head. The far more authentic view which we are enabled to take of their English history, casts also a strong reflection on the obscure conciseness of our annals, and explains the mystery of their having out-lived so many deaths and expulsions as these records exhibit.

The chief, Ivar, whom our annalists have described as king of English and Irish Danes, is mentioned by the *Northern Annals* as having landed on the English coast and obtained possession of the northern side of the Humber, A. D. 867. The account which they give of the circumstances which led to his coming over from Denmark, cannot, without some uncertain adaptations, be reconciled with his previous history. But it is enough here to state, that he is represented by the English historians as king of Northumbria, and by the Irish as king of the Danes of England and Ireland. Mr Moore is perhaps right in conjecturing, if we have correctly understood his intent (for he does not say so much), that two distinct persons are confused under the common name of Ivar, and that the northern chroniclers have anticipated the events of a later period. We incline to think that the perplexity arises from the confusion of generations, so likely to occur in an incorrect chronology. The sagas were reluctant to deduce the history of an important enterprise unless directly from the Scandinavian shore, and desirous to magnify the hero of the story by combining the honours of several descents in one.

Without perplexing ourselves, therefore, with investigations which belong to a more learned class of historians, it may be stated, on the distinct and circumstantial authority of all the most received Saxon chroniclers, that a Danish chief, named Ivar, invaded Northumbria, East Anglia, and Wessex; and that, in the course of his campaign, he won some bloody battles and sustained some slight reverses, but remained master of a considerable territory, which was retained by the Danes till the final success of Alfred reduced their force and defined their condition as subjects.

Still formidable in numbers and spirit, the Danes appear to have rested subdued under the firm and comprehensive ascendancy of Alfred's genius, until we arrive at the period in which our notice is actually engaged.

Sitric, who was probably the son of Ivar, died sometime about 925 or 926, and left two sons, Godfrid and Anlaf. Athelstane, who now had succeeded to the kingdom of England, immediately formed a determination hostile to the succession of these to the Northumbrian territories of their father. A prompt and rapid inroad left the brothers no alternative but a hasty flight, and Athelstane seized on Northumberland. Godfrid, by the result of the course he took, was soon compelled to submit to Athelstane, who received and treated him kindly. Anlaf, of far superior abilities, adopted a more cautious course. He retired to his friends and relations in Ireland, and watched the course of events. A favourable juncture seemed to arise.



In the rapid and complex operations of a system of small and unsettled politics, it was obvious to a sagacious understanding, that he could not have long to remain in suspense. He soon learned that some cause of quarrel existed between Athelstane and the Scottish king. To this latter prince he instantly proceeded, and awakened his fears for the consequences by the reasonable suggestion, that Athelstane was as likely to attempt the surprise of Scotland as of Northumberland. He urged the expediency of anticipating this dangerous movement, and offered the assistance of a powerful force from Ireland. The Scottish king, already alarmed by the successes of Athelstane, and still writhing under the insult of a haughty reception at his court, was easily excited to action. Each withdrew to prepare his forces. They were joined by the Welsh. The accounts of this war are not quite consistent, but the differences do not affect the leading facts. Athelstane began by obtaining a decided victory over the Welsh; and, meeting soon after the forces of the Scot and Dane on their way, he gave them a most bloody defeat, in which the son of Constantine, the Scottish king, with six Danish kings and twelve earls, together with a prodigious multitude of their men, were left dead on the field. The scene of this battle is, by the most probable conjecture, laid at a place now called Bromford, in Northumberland. It is represented to have lasted from dawn till sunset; and, during this long interval, to have been maintained with alternate success. The annalists agree in representing it as without parallel in the history of England. Anlaf, who had been the head of the league, was now reduced to the necessity of seeking a refuge in Ireland, for himself and the wretched remains of his army.

Athelstane who, by the result of this bloody fight, was raised above the level of the ambition or resentment of his adventurous neighbours, was allowed to continue in peace for the remainder of his short reign. A story is told of Anlaf, on the authority of William of Malmesbury, which it is our duty to repeat, as it may probably be true. A few days before this battle, so disastrous to his fortunes, took place, he was anxious to ascertain with precision the strength, and to penetrate the designs of the enemy. For this purpose it occurred to him to adopt the celebrated expedient attributed, truly or falsely, to Alfred by the same questionable writers. Having assumed the disguise of a harper, he entered the enemy's lines, where he might have successfully effected his purpose, had he not been recognised by a soldier. The soldier, who had served under Anlaf, allowed him to retire without molestation; but, having given him time to reach his own lines, he immediately apprised king Athelstane, excusing his own conduct on the ground of the military oath he had given to Anlaf,—at the same time he advised the king to change his quarters, as he judged that Anlaf had some design of attacking him there at night. The soldier's hint was acted on; and, as the story is told, Athelstane had reason to be thankful for it; for, during the night, Anlaf, at the head of a select party, made an attack on the camp; and, having penetrated to the site from which the king had removed, slew a bishop with all his troop, who had, in the meantime, taken up his quarters there. The reader should be made aware,



that the objection to this story, and to the previous edition of it which occurs in the reign of king Alfred, is simply this—that neither of them occur in the earlier chronicles of England, but are found for the first time in the pages of writers, in whose time it had become customary to give popularity to history, by interweaving it with the devices of a fertile imagination.

It was seven years from the battle of Brunanburgh when Anlaf, who had in the meantime remained in Ireland, was induced, by communications with the Northumbrian Danes, once more to try his fortune in England. Athelstane was dead—his successor, Edmund, an inexperienced youth. Anlaf found means to raise a sufficient force, and also succeeded in obtaining a strong addition to his troops from Olaus king of Norway. He soon entered Northumberland; the gates of York were thrown open to receive him, and he recovered many places without serious opposition. But the antagonist with whom he had to contend, though inexperienced, was brave, and eager to put the contest to the issue of arms. They met near the old Chester, and came to an engagement which continued the whole day without a decisive result. The next day the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the first on the Saxon and the second on the Danish side, contrived to set on foot a negotiation, in which a peace was concluded. By the terms of agreement now entered upon, king Edmund ceded to Anlaf all the territory north of the Roman highway, which divided England into two nearly equal parts.

Anlaf had, however, contracted a heavy debt for the expenses of his Norwegian army; and to pay it was compelled to adopt the unpopular resource of an oppressive taxation. A large province revolted, and set up a claim for Reginald, the son of Godfrid, the brother of Anlaf—so that thus in 944, two years from the date of his first success, Anlaf found himself once more involved in a dangerous war; for king Edmund, placing himself at the head of what we might term an army of observation, hovered near the hostile powers to watch and take advantage of their strife. His presence had, perhaps, some effect in moderating their disposition to engage; and he seems to have taken the most prudent counsel, in taking upon him the part of a mediator, and effecting a peace between the parties on terms most favourable to his own interests—namely, the division of the rival power, by each retaining the portion of territory which he respectively held. Edmund, however, had not reached his home, when he was overtaken by an account of the two kings having united their arms to free themselves from subjection to his authority. At once turning back, he came upon them before their forces were drawn together. Resistance was out of the question, and the two kings fled: the Danes threw down their arms, and swore allegiance to Edmund.

It is not within our province to relate the tragical death of Edmund, A. D. 948. But soon after, in the reign of his successor Edred, Anlaf was recalled by the Danes from Ireland, and placed in a condition so secure as to have little fear of reverse, had not his own oppressive temper, or the exigency of his necessities, rendered his government intolerable to the Danes, so that he was once more compelled to leave his Northumbrian dominion for Dublin, and Eric was chosen to fill

his place. A part of the Danes still adhered to Anlaf; and having reinforced himself in Ireland, he marched again into Northumbria, and Eric was compelled to fly. King Edred marched an army into Northumberland, but a strong appeal to his mercy changed his purpose, and, listening to the wishes of the Danes, he confirmed Eric in his authority. Again, he had not retired when the Danes pursued and fell upon his rear, so that it was by considerable effort that his army escaped being cut to pieces. Justly resenting this repeated treachery, he collected a large army, and, returning, desolated Northumberland, and reduced it to a province of his own dominions. Of Anlaf, we find no other authentic trace. The Irish annalists are full of notices of the contemporary and immediately following successes and defeats of the Danes in Ireland. But there is much difficulty in finding who is meant in each of the several Amlaves (Anlafs), Imars, and Sitrics, who follow each other with an undistinguished rapidity, which requires to be checked, by a comparison with some other narrative, to ascertain the person. This inconvenience is caused by the circumstance of the same names having been so often repeated among the three families, that unless the incident recorded be such as to distinguish the person, there is generally no other means. A hundred years passes on the brief and rapid page; but, like the Hermes and Herculeses of old, Amlave and his brethren still appear conquering and conquering behind the shadow of a name which conceals their extinctions and renewals.

### Donogh—Monarch.

A. D. 917.

AFTER the fall of Niell Glundubh, in the battle already described as fatal to so many Irish princes and chiefs, Donogh or Donchad, the son of Flan, succeeded, according to the law of alternate succession among the princes of the Hy Niell race; and the heroic Murkertach, the son of Niell Glundubh, became the heir apparent to the monarchy.

On the reign of Donchad we shall say little; for although it was the period of some remarkable events, it appears more expedient to refer them to their more prominent actors. The monarchs of this period are frequently thrown so far into the obscurity of the remote back-ground—by the method uniformly observed by our annalists, of recording events with reference simply to their date, without any regard to the history of persons or administrations—that the biographer is compelled to conform himself to a manner a little unaccommodated to the purpose of this work.

In the year 936, Anlaf, the son of Godred, and probably nephew to King Anlaf whose history we have related, plundered Kilcullen. In connexion with this action, the annalists record that “Donchad, king of Ireland, and Murkertach, having joined all their forces together, marched with a numerous army to Dublin and laid seige to the garri-



son; they despoiled and plundered all the possessions of the Danes from Dublin to Athy.

Donogh died in the year 944.

### **Murkertach, the son of Niell.**

THIS eminent warrior is, in an entry of the annalists of Dublin, mentioned under the name of Muirkertack na g-Cochall g-Croiceann. He was, as we have mentioned, the heir apparent to the monarchy. The first of the many signal exploits, which obtained for him the appellation of "the Hector of the west," was a decisive victory over the Danes, in a battle which cost them 800 men, and 80 of their chiefs, among which was the son of Godred, at the time king of Dublin.

A few years after, another splendid victory is recorded. The Danes having laid waste a considerable part of Ulster, were surprised by this gallant prince, who put them to the rout with some slaughter. It is mentioned, that on this occasion he carried from the field 200 heads as a trophy of his success. This incident was probably a constant and ancient custom, among the many traits of manners of which, from the brevity of our historians, there is little told.

The next event in which we find him bearing a distinctly ascertainable part, is the battle in 936, already mentioned under the head of Donogh. It may be added that, on this occasion, Murkertach had probably to obtain first one of those still more heroic victories which seldom finds its record in human fame—a conquest over himself. A jealousy, very easy to comprehend and of a very usual kind, subsisted between him and King Donogh, who did not view with much complacency the rising fame and power of a successor, with whom, it will be recollected, he was not connected by the tie of parentage. As this temper naturally gave a tone to his actions and communications, the gallant and high-spirited prince had to endure both affronts and wrongs, which rendered his position often unpleasant and difficult. A regard for the interests of his country, however, prevailed over all personal resentments, and he came forward to defend or avenge the public cause, in concert with one whom he must have felt to be a bitter and powerful enemy.

The history of this period is comprised in few words, and these confined to some passing reverse or advantage of the Danes of Dublin. In the next year we find, in the annals of this city, the following mysterious entry:—"937. The Danes fled from Dublin. This was attributed to the prayers of Maethalius, patron saint of that city. 938. Blaeair, the son of Godfred, returns to Dublin."

Under the following year, he is again brought into conspicuous notice, by an event which, in its character, sufficiently indicates the magnitude and importance of his previous exploits. Arriving in the vicinity of Dublin, at the head of a small but select force, he made a demand of submission and tribute from the Danes. They complied without resistance, and gave him Sitric, the son of their king, as a hostage.

Entering the county of Wicklow, he demanded and obtained a



tribute, and carried away Lorcar, the king of the Lagenians, as a hostage.

The next enterprise of Murkertach is calculated to convey a far higher notion of the general impression of terror, which his continued career of victory had produced. Entering the territory of the warlike king of Munster, whose military renown stood as high for valour as it was debased by the aims and purposes of the enterprises by which it had been won, Murkertach sternly demanded, as the price of peace, the unconditional surrender of the king. An effort to avert this galling condition, was repelled with uncompromising scorn; and the ferocious Callaghan was sent with the long train of other captives and hostages to King Donogh.

Two years more end the illustrious list of this hero's exploits. He died as he had lived, in a sanguinary, and doubtless fiercely contested, battle with the Danes, led by Blacar, the son of Godfred, lord of the Danes of Dublin. This battle took place at Ardee, on the 26th of March, 941. The next day, the Danes followed up their victory by the plunder of Armagh.

On the death of Murkertach, his rank, as heir apparent, devolved on Congelach, the son of Maolmitheach.

### Callachan, King of Cashel.

WHILE the heroic Murkertach presents an example, rare in the annals of his country, of devotion to the national cause, we have to offer in our notice of Callachan, king of Cashel, a contrast, equally marked by the harsh depth of its broken outline, and fiery force of its colouring. But it appears to be a curious indication of the little real existence of any national feeling among the historians of that period, that this ferocious ally of the enemies of his country, and sacrilegious spoiler of her altars, should have won the tribute of national admiration; and, although disgracefully led into bondage by his rival, yet stand in reputation above his illustrious conqueror.

Uniformly the ally of the Danes, he was also the faithful follower of their excessive and unremitting warfare on Christianity. The venerable monastery of Clonmacnoise, the picturesque ruins of which are sadly invested with historical association, by the frequent devastations of the heathen Northmen, preserves also the more dark recollection of the crimes of the prince of a Christian people, and the successor to the throne of the illustrious bishop and king, Cormac. What the Danes of Dublin spared in this ancient monastery, Callachan with more cruelty and baser avidity pillaged. We can add no blacker line to his character, than the shame of deeds which find no excuse in the ignorance and barbarism which palliates so much of the history of these dark periods. But the instance is only one of many. With equal disregard of sacred and secular considerations, the following year he obtained the assistance of the Danes to invade Meath, with the purpose of plundering its shrines. This purpose he effected by the pillaging of the abbey of Clonenagh, and the church of Cilla-chin, from both of which he carried off the abbots.

Such was the uniform tenor of his life: other chiefs, in the prosecution of their quarrels, which were the business of their lives, availed themselves of the assistance of the Danes; and entered into alliances with them as neighbours whom long establishment in the country had begun to naturalize: but it was reserved for the king of Cashel, to carry this dangerous intimacy with a heathen people into an adoption of their hostility to the national altars.

The disgrace of this course, is thrown into more prominent relief by the real triumph which Christianity appears at this time to have won, in the conversion of the Danes of Dublin, which most authorities fix about the year 948. As might be inferred, this conversion was imperfect; whatever may have been its workings on a few clear minded and intelligent converts, the habits of the crowd long continued to assert their darker supremacy. The same year they left a monument of this event, by founding the abbey of St Mary, near Dublin.

It was impossible for a career, such as we have described, to continue altogether unchecked by the entirely opposite course of Murkertach. And we arrive next at the memorable event, already related, by which Callachan's downfall became an illustration of the advantage of worth and piety over mere prowess in the field.

It is only by shadowy glimpses of light or blackness, that the heroes of our narrative appear. The last we have of Callachan exhibits him, not long after, gaining a victory over the father of Bryan Boru, at Muighduine.

And there we are compelled to leave him.

## Congelach—Monarch.

A. D. 944—954.

In the annals of Dublin, under the year 942, occurs the following entry: "Dublin was devastated by the Irish, viz., by Congelach, son of Maolmitheach, heir apparent to the throne of Ireland, assisted by Braen, son of Maomorda, king of Leinster, and by Kellach, son of Foclan, heir apparent to the throne of Leinster. They reduced to ashes all their houses, fortifications, ships, &c.; led captive their women, sons, plebeians, &c.; killed their soldiers, and totally extirpated the Danes, save only a small number who fled in a few ships to Delguinmis" (Delgany). This glorious enterprise must have excited favourable anticipations, although something is to be deducted from its value on the score of exaggeration: a figure of the Irish language, which, when translated, has the appearance of violent misrepresentation, but is really no more than the species of hyperbole of which the modern application of the word "kilt" is an example. The "total extirpation" is used precisely in the same sense, and is to be understood as no more or less than "a good beating."

Again, in 945, he led his troops against Dublin in concert with Rory O'Cannanan, and gained a battle in which the Danes lost many men. And in 946, he "fought the battle of Dublin against Blacar, the son of Imar, lord of the Northmen. In this battle fell Blacar

himself, and 1600 of his people were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners." \*

During this reign, the struggle between the native princes and the Danes appears to have been much on the increase in violence and military character. Though utterly devoid of the strict science of war, as now understood, yet their fights were becoming less tumultuary in their character, and more destructive in their effects. We are, nevertheless, inclined to suspect in every statement the continued recurrence of the same dry cold exaggeration, which is so often apparent in the Irish annals.

In 948, the round tower of Slane was burned by the Danes; and it is mentioned, that it "was full of relics and religious people, among whom was Ceoineacair, lecturer of divinity at Slane; among the relics was the crozier of Saint Erlama, and the best bell in all Ireland."† In the same year, a victory over the Danes cost the life of Rory, heir apparent to the crown of Ireland.

And in 954, it is recorded in the same ancient chronicle, that "Congelach, king of Ireland, fought a battle against Aulaf, son of Godfred, lord of the Danes of Dublin, in which he himself, with many other Irish chieftains, lost their lives."‡

## Domnal.

A. D. 954—980.

THE reign of Domnal was signalized by events and actions in which his name has no pretension to occur. Like his tributaries of old, we are obliged to pay him the formal courtesy which is due to an honorary member of the sceptred guild. But the illustrious course of the hero whose actions, commencing during this reign, form the chief interest of the period of which they close the civil history, can only be properly classed under their appropriate head: the life of Bryan is not to be told under the name of the obscure Domnal. For a different reason he must also take precedence of the brave monarch Malachy, whose reign is broken by the ascendancy of Bryan's genius and fortune, but who survived to regain his crown and repair his fortune, after the hero of Clontarf had ended his illustrious course in the brightest of its glorious days.

Domnal died in the year 980, and was succeeded by Malachy, whose history we shall presently reach, in the order now explained.

## Bryan Boru.

A. D. 926.—1014.

WHILE the crowned phantoms of the Irish monarchy rise and melt away, so as to afford barely the excuse for the continuation of a scanty

\* An. Dub.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.



record, dry and marrowless as the forgotten kings whose names alone are their monuments; our formal line of succession is broken from time to time by the ascendant fortune of the Munster kings, who, from various causes, appear to have been gradually advancing to a power which long rivalled, and at last bore down the monarchy. "It will not be thought wonderful," says Mr Moore, "that the throne of Munster, filled alternately from among the chiefs of two warlike tribes, each emulous of the other's valour and renown, should, in the race of power, have gained rapidly on its monarchical rival, and at length out-gone and eclipsed it." The main secret of the development of civil and military talent lies, undoubtedly, in the principle of competition. This is, however, true only in the ordinary course; admitting the soporific influence of settled rights, compared with the strenuous excitement of the deep game of political acquisition, we may claim a proud exemption for Bryan.

Bryan was a younger son of Kennedy, king of Munster. On the succession of his eldest brother, Mahon, to the provincial throne, he had reached his thirty-fourth year, and attained high reputation for valour and judgment. His active and enterprising spirit had made itself conspicuous in early life, and collected round him the bravest and most adventurous of the Munster youth. The activity of his genius, excited by universal expectation and the influence of this stirring companionship, quickly led to numerous bold and adventurous exploits on a small scale, which were important enough to raise his reputation for valour and conduct, while they prepared and opened the way for more weighty command. At this time the forest retreats and mountain passes of Munster were infested by numerous plundering parties, which spread fear and insecurity among the peaceful. Against these his little band of brave Dalcassians was trained to deeds of hardihood, and exercised in the warfare of the age. The obscure annals of the period afford no satisfactory means of tracing the steps of this early ascent to fame. The earliest event of importance, in which his presence is otherwise than inferentially ascertained, occurs in the course of an expedition in which he served under his brother. The purpose of this expedition was plunder—an object quite reconcilable to the morality of the period, which recognised in its fullest extent the "good old rule," made universally familiar by Mr Wordsworth's terse stanza—

"The good old rule sufficeth them—the simple plan—

That those may take who have the power, and those may keep who can."

In the spirit of this elastic equity, the party of king Mahon had swept together the spoil of half a county on the Connaught side of the Shannon; and, with the satisfactory sense of a conscientious execution of their duty, were meditating a peaceful retreat, when O'Ruare with a large body of bold Connaught men unfortunately appeared and quickened their march into a rapid retreat. The river Fairglin arrested their steps. Encumbered with their spoils, and by no means prepared for a pitched battle, the party of Mahon was taken at a very serious disadvantage; and their defeat was a consequence which no valour or skill could have averted. Mahon saved himself by swimming the

stream; while the character of Bryan was maintained by the cool and steady valour which mitigated, though it could not avert, the evil fortune of the day. Another occasion, of which the event was more suited to the valour and renown of the brave Dalcassians, was not tardy in presenting itself. The Danes of Limerick, apprised of the approach of a strong body of Munster forces, had taken a position on a vast plain at Sulehoid, well known for the commodious extent and position which made it a suitable field for a pitched battle. On the approach of Mahon's army, a strong detachment was sent out to favour the purpose of observation. Against these Bryan advanced at the head of his troop, with such rapid impetuosity, that, before they could well prepare for blows, they were routed with the loss of half their number. This effective charge decided the battle. The fugitives, rushing in unexpectedly upon the main body, threw it into confusion, and scattered disarray and panic through every rank. Before they could recover, the entire force of Mahon was pouring its thick and steady column into the midst of their broken masses, with a force which permitted no effort to rally. An unresisted slaughter commenced, and continued till 3000 Danes lay heaped upon the field: they only recovered self-possession to fly, but the conquerors had broken through their scattered ranks and allowed them no advantage in flight. Both entered Limerick together; and the work of death, commenced in the field, was prolonged into a hideous and indiscriminate scene of havoc in the city. At last the fury of the Dalcassians subsided, for want of foes to strike. Mahon then collected all the spoil of the city, and left behind him a desolate mass of smoking ruins.

The reign of Mahon was signalized by frequent enterprises of the same kind; the repetition of which can now add nothing to the reader's interest, as they have nearly all the same character and event. The brilliant results of a continued succession of victories, must have placed this Dalcassian chief high among the most eminent names of his period; but the crime of an inferior chief, not wholly accounted for, cut short his heroic career to this illustrious eminence, and left the way open to Bryan. A neighbouring chief—envious, it is said, of his fame, but more probably under the exasperation of some slight, not intended by its author—contrived a most perfidious and cowardly scheme, of which Mahon was the victim.

Like most impetuous persons, accustomed to meet with uniform deference and respect, Mahon could not suspect treachery under the mask of pretended friendship; frank and generous, too, he was slow to suspect the overtures of an humbled enemy. Maolmua—a person of aspiring and presumptuous character, who had once ventured to brave his authority, and suffered the reward of his temerity—sent him an urgent message, expressive of a strong desire to confer with him. There must undoubtedly have been some important understanding, of which we are not aware, to give weight and interest to the request; at all events, the frank and generous nature of Mahon was peculiarly open to such a demand. Summoning a few attendants, he turned towards the distant habitation of the chief. It was probably late when he arrived at a lonesome region among woods and mountains, where he was quickly surrounded by a strong party, and he found himself a



helpless captive in the hands of an implacable enemy. The place of his death had been marked out; and, when the night had fully set in, he was hurried on to an unfrequented hollow in the mountains near Macroom, where he was murdered.

Bryan, who had for some time held the chieftainship of Thomond, succeeded to the throne of Munster, on his brother's death. He lost no time in exacting a stern retribution for the murder of his brave brother. Collecting an adequate force, he sought the perfidious Maolmua where he had secured himself among the secluded and difficult recesses of the wild mountain district which had been the scene of his crime. Thus strongly posted—with a considerable force of his own, and assisted by the Danes, whom fear and hatred armed against the growing power of Munster—Maolmua cherished a strong sense of security, and doubtless was not without some presumptuous hope of winning honour by the defeat of a hated rival. But the courage of Bryan was tempered, in an unusual degree, with cool caution, and the skill acquired by long habits of forest and mountain warfare. Quickly ascertaining the position and advantages of his enemy, he discovered that a strong reinforcement, expected by Maolmua, had not yet come up; taking his measures accordingly, he managed to throw himself on its line of approach; he thus intercepted, and gained a complete victory over Donovan, Maolmua's ally; and then, rapidly turning his steps, he came unexpectedly on the latter, who had probably supposed him to be still engaged with Donovan, and broken up from his position to assist his ally. However this may be, there is no doubt that Bryan surprised him somewhere near the spot of Mahon's murder, and defeated his party with great slaughter. It is also mentioned, that Bryan's brave son, Morough, won his first fame in this battle, by engaging hand to hand with Maolmua, whom he slew on the spot which had been the scene of his brave uncle's murder.

But the lasting honour, which has rendered the name of Bryan still more illustrious in the annals of his country, was not gained in civil feuds, of which the occurrence was but too frequent, and the results too fatal and durable. These were but the obstacles with which his genius and valour had to contend in his long and consistent opposition to the strangers who, notwithstanding their partial conversion to Christianity, still continued to persecute the religion and devastate the sacred monuments of Ireland. At the very time that he was engaged in taking just vengeance for his brother's death, the Danes were in possession of the island of Iniseathy, which the reader may recollect as the scene made venerable by the sanctity of its eleven churches, as well as by the tomb and recollections of its patron saint, Senanus. Here the Danes had availed themselves of the position and probably of the buildings which had been constructed for very different purposes, to establish a repository for military stores; and, as the native Irish, by nature devoted in their zeal, whether for religion or superstition, flocked, in defiance of all danger, to pay their vows and place their offerings at the sacred shrines of the island, it thus afforded no small acquisition to the rapacity of its masters. Here Bryan landed with twelve hundred of his Dalcassian heroes; and, after a fierce struggle with its Danish occupants, assisted by a strong detachment from Limerick,



recovered entire possession of the sacred isle. His success was secured by subsequent operations. Availing himself of the dispersion and temporary prostration which his recent victories caused among the Danes, he laid waste the settlement they had established in the other islands of the Shannon and along its banks, and carried off a rich spoil.

The encroachments of the Munster kings upon the monarchy had been, in some measure, sanctioned by time; yet a tribute which implied subjection, and which had no higher claim than that of successful usurpation, could not be expected to pass uncontested, longer than force or spirit were wanting to give effect to resistance. Of this extorted contribution the people of Leinster were among the chief sufferers. By position, they were necessarily exposed to the power and influence of the Danes, who would not, of course, be slow to strengthen themselves against a powerful enemy, by instigating resistance among his tributaries. The Leinster province, thus stimulated by the king of the Danes of Desies, now joined in a strong confederacy with these and the Danes of Cork and Waterford, together with the chief of Ossory. In this exigency, Bryan's prompt spirit and masterly tactics did not fail him; coming upon the combined force of his enemies, at a place called the Circle of the Sons of Conrad, he burst upon them with an overwhelming force, which quickly scattered them into irretrievable confusion, and, with prodigious slaughter, drove them from the field. The league being thus effectively dissipated, he followed up his victory by the steps usual in the barbaric warfare of the age. Seizing on the chief of Ossory, and exacting hostages from the chiefs of that province, he proceeded to ravage the territories of Leinster; and, indemnifying himself for the tribute which had been withheld, by a rich spoil, he demanded hostages for their future submission, and received the homage of the Leinster chiefs in his tent.

Before this time, the monarch Domnal, having been removed by death, he was succeeded by the brave prince, Malachy, whose wisdom and valour, while they were such as to shed permanent glory on his memory, were yet late to redeem the weakness which a succession of feeble monarchs had entailed on the sceptre of Tara. Malachy had, in the year 978, won universal honour by the splendid victory of Tara; in which, after a contest of memorable fierceness and slaughter on both sides, he routed the Danes, and broke their strength and confidence for a time.

Thus balanced in strength and renown, and placed in the political position of rival claimants, these two prominent chiefs and warriors, must be supposed to look forward to the struggle for pre-eminence which could not long be deferred, and which each must have looked upon as involving his prospects of fame and ambition. Though, like Bryan, ardently bent on resistance to the Danish chiefs, yet it was not to be expected that the active and successful campaigns which had confirmed the Munster usurpation of the rights of his crown, could be brooked with complacency by the warlike spirit of Malachy. The monarch's indignation was betrayed by a rash and splenetic action, which his calmer recollection must have condemned as unworthy. Having led a predatory expedition into the Daleassian territory, he came in the course of his march to Adair, where his eye was met by

an ancient and venerable tree, sacred for the immemorial usage by which the Dalcassian princes were inaugurated under its spreading shades. Irritated by a swarm of humiliating and wounding associations, his fiery impulse gave an order which, too promptly obeyed for recal, left the venerable tree prostrate on the ground—a disgraceful monument of an unworthy impulse, and of a deed which imparted a hallowed character to his rival's resentment. But Bryan's spirit was regulated by a patient and long-sighted comprehension of his own interests; and ambition mastered the sense of insult in his firm and capacious mind. He knew his time, and allowed the over active Malachy to ripen for vengeance. Malachy, rendered secure by this impunity, again, in the following year, entered a part of his inheritance then under the dominion of Bryan. This could not be allowed to pass unresisted; and the superior ability of Bryan is shown by the prompt measures which, without a battle, and by the mere demonstration of a superior force, compelled the monarch to give way, and to confirm, by a binding treaty, claims founded in usurpation. The tribute of Leinster, formally ceded to Bryan, was, on this occasion, a trophy more honourable to himself, more mortifying to his rival, and in itself more profitable and permanent than the glory of twenty victories could have really been.

For some years there was peace between these great competitors; but it was a politic forbearance, and affords no true interpretation of the dispositions of either. Malachy could not be supposed to acquiesce in the dismemberment of the monarchy, or in the growing power of a rival; while, maturing in the depth of Bryan's thoughts, his designs on the monarchy itself awaited the seasonable moment of execution. Of this there is enough of indication in the whole consistent tenor of his progress; there could, however, remain no lingering doubt, when, in 988, he availed himself of a costly and distant expedition, which Malachy led against the Danes of Dublin, to invade the principal provinces of his dominion with an immense army. Covering the Shannon with the vessels in which he embarked his force, he descended upon Lough-Ree, and levied contributions from the whole bordering country. He then divided his force; and, sending one detachment into western Connaught, he led the other into the province of Meath: thus spreading plunder, slaughter, and waste, through both these important districts of the monarchy, he returned to Kinkora laden with the spoil of two provinces.

A warfare of spoliation and devastating inroads now continued, for some years, to foster the hostility and to weaken the resources of the two great competitors; during which the spirit of Malachy and the vital strength of his monarchy are strongly shown, by the strenuous warfare which he kept up all this time against the Danes. Against this powerful common enemy, a sense of self-preservation at last combined, for a season, the forces of both these kings. The result was, a treaty based on the mutual recognition of their respective rights, to the sovereignty of the two great divisions of Leath Cuinn and Leath Mogh.

Uniting their forces, they marched to Dublin, whence they met with only sufficient resistance to justify the acquisition of spoil. A



more equal contest soon after led to the more honourable and decisive victory in the valley of Glenmaura. Thinking to gain an advantage by surprise, the Danes came on their army with a seemingly superior force; but the manœuvre was rendered vain by the skill and valour of the Irish leaders; who obtained a destructive victory, by which the Danes lost many chiefs, and among them Harolf, the son of king Anlaf.

All danger arising from the power of the Danes was now, for a time, dispelled; and the bond which held together two spirits, of which neither could well brook the rival pretensions and character of the other, must have begun soon to grow uneasy to both. Historians who, looking on the results, to which these two illustrious warriors were led by the course of events, as the leading objects of their lives, have shown some anxiety to defend their heroes from the imputation of this breach. Considering them as patriot chiefs, whose policy it was to expel the common enemy of their country, such views might have some reason; but it is quite obvious, on a consistent view of their entire course of conduct from the beginning, that the main object of each was the maintenance or extension of his power. Patriotism must be assumed in a limited sense, and modified by many considerations, which make it not worth contending for. The subject is well worth a little of the reader's attention, as one of the popular errors of every age.

Each of these powerful rivals began to feel that the stage was clear for the contest in which, sooner or later, they must of necessity be engaged; and each, in all probability, bent his mind to the one only consideration of any importance, in the unprincipled game in which monarchs have seldom thought it criminal to engage. The conduct of Malachy was perhaps the most dexterous, as he took a step admitting of a doubtful construction: he marched his troops into Leinster on a predatory excursion against those who, while they were by right his own subjects, were also by treaty under both tribute and allegiance to Bryan. To recover his sovereignty here must have been his principal object; to retain it, Bryan's. It was the most serious loss which the monarchy had sustained, and the most splendid acquisition of the kings of Munster. This being considered, there can be little doubt as to the several impulses which moved these warriors. Bryan could not, without a jealous eye, look on so equivocal a proceeding; and he felt that the time was come for a bolder and more decisive move. Collecting from every quarter a numerous force, and strengthening himself additionally by a strong party of the Danes of Dublin, he marched towards the royal seat of Tara. Here, discovering that the monarch had taken up a position on the plain of Bregia, he detached a party of Danish cavalry, most probably for the purpose of observation; they came, however, into collision with Malachy's force and, rashly pressing on, were cut to pieces.

The triumph of Malachy was but short-lived. Bryan's army soon came up, and, by its vast numerical superiority, made it evident that nothing but defeat was to be expected from resistance. The monarch, therefore, submitted; and, making those appeals to justice and generosity which suited the occasion, he secured present safety by submis-



sion and hostages. Bryan, however willing, could not have attacked him under the circumstances, without the certainty of incurring reproaches that would but ill second any further designs which he may be supposed to have entertained.\* Mr O'Halloran, who seems to have, to an unusual extent, yielded to the temptation of writing history in the spirit of romance, represents the monarch as not only having appealed (as he may have done) to the generosity of Bryan, but also as pledging himself to meet him in the field, and set his crown on the issue of a battle. For this, we are assured, there is no authority.

Bryan had, however, in all probability, a clear perception of a fact, which cannot now be so easily inferred—that his object was, by this event, quietly secured; and if so, there needs no further reason for a forbearance which saved his force, avoided an unnecessary risk, and ensured golden opinions. And, if we suppose this event to have been the result of forecast and deliberate projection, it is not easy to give too much credit to the sagacity and adroitness which executed so able a manœuvre. From the moment of the event, which had thus set the superiority of Bryan's force and conduct on so prominent an elevation, the opinion of every class must have been working round into an anticipation of the issue. The real danger of an usurpation of such magnitude, must have consisted chiefly in the first great shock to the conventional notions of the Irish aristocracy. The appeal of the monarch—struck by surprise from his ancient throne, in the very height of a glorious career—to the pity, sympathy, and justice of kings and chiefs, would have been formidable in its first effects; but the actual event, while it magnified his illustrious rival, subjected Malachy to a strong reverse of feeling, from which nothing but prompt and vigorous measures of retaliation could have saved him. And when, in the following year, 1001, his rival marched to Tara at the head of a strong force, there was neither help for the monarch in his weakness nor pity in his misfortune. Without a blow to retrieve the honour of his house, the “descendant of fifty Hy-Niell kings”† became a subject, and pledged his allegiance to Bryan as monarch of Ireland.

The view here taken of the cautious policy of Bryan, if not absolutely affirmed, is strongly justified by the concurring conduct both of himself and the excluded branches of the monarchical family. On his side, restless vigilance and the demonstration of military force—on theirs, a succession of cautious and timid, yet sufficiently intelligible attempts at disturbance—were terminated by a bolder effort, which gave occasion to Bryan to crush their disaffection, in a victory which he gained over the southern Hy-Niells near Athlone.

He next had to encounter some feeble demonstrations on the part of Aodh, the grandson of the renowned Murkertach, and the northern Hy-Niell branch; who severally exhibited a disposition to resist, but were, without any serious effort, repressed.

It would, perhaps, be carrying too far the license of historical septicism, to refuse to Malachy the praise which his subsequent course of

\* To explain Bryan's forbearance requires no supposition. His conduct was equally prudent on the opposite assumption, though the reason would be in some degree different.

† Moore.

conduct will bear. If his motives were not of the highest order, his actions will yet bear the noblest interpretation; and, although it is our opinion that he could not, with safety or prudent policy, have taken any course but that which, while it preserved his substantial power, kept open the succession,—yet we must admit that the most heroic patriotism could not have selected higher ground than the course actually pursued by the deposed monarch. As we have already taken occasion to observe, a high course of conduct, in whatever motives it may begin, seldom fails to call into action those high motives from which it should have arisen. Such is the mixed character of human virtues.

Setting aside the philosophy of motives, Malachy's acquiescence in his rival's supremacy was followed by a sincere and manly, as well as wise adoption of the best means to give firmness and security as well as a beneficial direction to the usurper's government. Aware that a struggle for the monarchy would be the certain sacrifice of the nation to the common enemy, he exerted his influence to preserve the peace of the country; and, when Bryan made a splendid display of military strength and royal munificence, in a progress through his dominions, attended by the kings of Leath Mogh with their attendant forces, Malachy, accompanied by the contingent due from his own province, followed with the rest.

These progresses form, for some years, a conspicuous feature in the policy of Bryan. They must have combined many important advantages. Admirably adapted to conciliate the veneration of the multitude, they afforded a not invidious test and *surveillance* over the chiefs, few of whom were indeed above the influence of the popular impressions made by these magnificent displays of power. The costly devotion of the new monarch—whose offerings at the shrines of churches, and general munificence to the church, secured for him the zealous support of that influential body—affords an additional indication of the profound and comprehensive policy of his character.

The consequence of this vigorous and prudent policy cannot fail to be anticipated by the reader. Equally vigilant to control disaffection and turbulence, and to conciliate opinion—equally politic to select the means, and powerful to enforce them—his reign was the most prosperous for Ireland that her annals, with any seeming of truth, record. The dissensions of chiefs, the restless hostilities of the Danes, the incessant and universal harass and insecurity arising from the sanctioned practice of robbery on every scale, were compelled, for a time to pause and disappear before the ascendancy of a policy so alert, vigilant and pervading. The ruin of ancient institutions was repaired; and laws, which had dropped into disuse in the general disorder, were restored, improved, and enforced. Much of the unauthoritative exaggeration of historians may be deducted from this account; but still probability itself affirms enough to convince us, that a considerable advance in national prosperity must have followed the use of means so well adapted to produce it. It is added, that this monarch expended the public revenue on solid improvements. Roads, bridges, and fortresses, as well as churches and colleges, arose wherever they were



required; and it will be easily believed, that royal dwellings were not forgotten.

The next noticeable event is one which strongly confirms our view of the real principles of Bryan's conduct. In 1013, the Danes, in combination with the natives of Leinster, made a fierce incursion into Malachy's province of Meath. Malachy retorted the injury by an inroad into Leinster, in which he burned the country up to the hill of Howth (anciently Ben Hedar, or the Mountain of Birds). Here his progress was intercepted by the combined forces of the king of Leinster and the Danes, and he was defeated with great loss of lives; amongst which were his son and many of the chiefs of his province. In his distress, he addressed to Bryan an appeal, the refusal of which cannot be easily reconciled with justice or generosity. To this application, however, a cold refusal was the only response which the unremitting, but not always high-minded, policy of Bryan could afford. The prudence, indeed, of this refusal may well be doubted; but, under the circumstances, a suspicion is suggested, that a further depression of the still popular king of Meath, now deprived of his next heir, would not be unwelcome to the ambitious and hard-minded monarch. The consequences of a triumph thus allowed to the Danes could not be a surprise to Bryan: the Danes of Dublin, combined with the Irish of Wicklow, soon assumed a menacing attitude, and he was ready to shake off his politic repose. He now led his army towards Dublin, wasting the lands of Ossory upon his way. His eldest son, Morough, he detached to create a diversion in Wicklow; who, in the same manner, carried devastation and slaughter as far as Glendalough. The monarch, having reached Kilmainham, encamped there, and remained for some months. At last, having so far succeeded as to keep the Danes in awe, though unable to effect a more decisive result, he returned to Kinkora enriched with the ample plunder of the province.

The activity of the Danes was, however, not to be subdued by any demonstration of military power. Possessed of the strongest fortifications then in the island, with superior naval and commercial resources—and though inferior in numerical force, superior in military discipline and arms—they had the prudence, activity, and address, which enabled them to multiply their attacks, and to put in motion the ever-ready and restless turbulence of their neighbours, in whatever direction their own policy required. During Bryan's encampment before their walls they had managed to effect a most destructive descent on Munster; but, before they could re-embark, they received a severe repulse from the inhabitants, which cost them many lives, among which was Anlaf, son of the king of Dublin.

But no partial effort, or merely predatory descent, could avail to secure, against Bryan's growing power, the extensive and also increasing possessions and influence of the Danes. It was necessary for them to adopt far more ordered and energetic measures for their own security. The designs of Bryan were perhaps better understood by them, than they can now be traced among our scanty records; but it seems apparent that a struggle could not fail soon to take place. The Danes adopted a course which requires no hesitation to interpret.



They summoned their allies from every quarter where their countrymen were to be found. Scotland, and the northern islands in her vicinity, were roused to arms by their envoys; the coasts and islands of the Baltic received the awakening message, and responded with the din and bustle of preparation.

The accounts given by historians, differ so widely on the circumstances which led to these preparations, that they in some measure expose the arbitrary character of such statements. There is, indeed, every probability, that all such statements as go beyond the mere narrative of the event, are of the same nature and have the same degree of truth as the news-room disclosures of the present time; which collect probability and circumstantiality, as they pass from tongue to tongue, until either the fact becomes truly known, or the report becomes confirmed by sufferance when the time for exposing it is gone past. The statements of the most widely different kind may, nevertheless, have all their foundation in real facts, on which busy conjecture has supplied the connexion. These remarks find some illustration in the statements here referred to.\* Hanmer, citing the *Book of Howth*, gives a story which we shall abridge. A Danish merchant, who was jealous of his wife, having occasion to absent himself, left her under the protection of Bryan's lady; but still distrustful of this guardianship, his absence was made unhappy by doubts as to the validity even of a monarch's protection in such a case. Hastening his return, he came, early in the morning, by surprise into his wife's apartment, and there found her with Morough, the monarch's eldest son. Without disturbing the guilty pair, he exchanged swords with Morough; and, finding the monarch, vented his indignation in threats which were but too soon fulfilled. Bryan, we suspect, would have cut short his menaces by a still more summary arbitrement. But there is this value in the tale; that, allowing for the invention which story-tellers use to come at the chasms of their facts, it seems to point to some "foregone conclusion," and may have occurred, without being more than remotely connected, as one of many incidents, with the battle of Clontarf.†

\* Such, indeed, is the common vice of history, and the main consideration which justifies the dry matter-of-fact method of our annals. These stories afford us the occasion of noticing the manner in which contemporary gossip was likely to mix itself with history. Any one who reflects on the numerous discrepant reports on every incident of sufficient note—which fill the columns of papers and buzz round the streets, attracting credence each in some private circle, and, if not contradicted by the event, passing unquestioned or undecided into a dim recollection—will easily conceive how the same process may have given a shape to the private history of a period, when rumour was more authoritative and the age less sceptical. The earnest anxiety to secure credence, by the most scrupulous investigation, is even now inadequate to secure invariable precision to historic statements. The true occasions—which are of a general and purely political nature—of this great struggle were, in a time of comparatively small intelligence, little likely to be known, except to parties concerned. But the occurrence of incidents, such as those of which we have given the above versions, were, in the highest degree, likely to be seized on as causes, and woven by the chronicler into a connexion with the events. From this operation would also arise the particular shape of the narrative; it was an allowed custom to invent the speeches; and the facts being admitted, the narrator had no idea that, in shaping them into explicit connexion, he was departing from the office of an historian.

† Hanmer, 184.

Another story we shall extract from the ancient document, which we design to adopt as our authority for the particulars of this celebrated battle. If true, it has the rare merit of affording a singularly clear glimpse of the domestic manners of the age and country; but we ought to add that, without questioning the foundation of the statement, we cannot adopt the writer's statement of the consequences. The story is thus, in the writer's (or rather the translator's) words:—*"Maelmordha, who usurped the crown of Leinster, in 999, by the assistance of the Danes, being at an entertainment at Kincora, saw Morogh, Bryan's eldest son, at a game of chess, and advised his antagonist to a movement which lost Morogh the game; whereupon Morogh observed to him, with a sneer, that if he had given as good advice to the Danes at the battle of Glen-mara, the Danes would not have received so great an overthrow. To which Maelmordha replied: 'My instructions, the next time, shall lead them to victory;' and Morogh, with contempt, bade them defiance. Maelmordha became enraged, retired to his bedchamber, and did not appear at the banquet; but passed the night in restless anger, and ruminating his country's ruin. Early next morning he set out for Leinster, without taking leave of his monarch or any of his household, to show that he was bent upon desperate revenge. The good monarch, on hearing of his departure, sent one of his servants after him, to request his reconciliation with Morogh. The servant overtook him east of the Shannon, not far from Killaloe, and delivered his message from the monarch. Maelmordha, who all the while listened with indignation, as soon as the servant was done speaking, raised the rod of yew which he had in his hand, and, with three furious blows thereof, fractured the servant's skull, to make known to Bryan how he rejected such reconciliation. He pursued his way on horseback to Leinster; where, the next day, he assembled his nobles, represented to them the insult he had received at Kincora, and inflamed them to so great a degree, that they renounced their allegiance to Bryan, confederated with the Danes, and sent the monarch defiance. Emissaries were sent to Denmark and Norway. The Danes of Normandy, Britain, and the isles, joyfully entered into the confederacy, pleased at the prospect of once more gaining possessions in this land flowing with milk and honey."*

But whatever may have been the incidental causes, which immediately brought on the decisive battle which now followed, there can be no doubt as to the general accuracy of its details.

The following account is taken, with some omissions of little general interest, from a translation of an ancient manuscript, by an Irish scholar of established reputation, who has given additional value to his work by carefully collating it with the *Annals of Inisfallen and Ulster*.<sup>\*</sup> After enumerating the Danish force, the ancient annalist proceeds as follows:—

"The king of Leinster, being now animated by the number of his auxiliaries, without longer delay, bid defiance, by a herald, to the monarch Bryan, and challenged him to fight at Moynealty, a spacious plain near Dublin, now called Clontarf.

<sup>\*</sup> Mr J. O'Donovan for the *Dublin Penny Journal*, p. 133.



“Bryan Borumha, with all possible speed, mustered the forces of Munster and Connaught, and marched directly to Clontarf, the place appointed, and there saw the enemy prepared to oppose him, viz., sixteen thousand Danes, together with all the power of Leinster, under the command of their king, Maelmordha, the sole author of this battle. Then the power of Meath came in to aid their monarch Bryan, under the conduct of Maelseaghlain their king, who, however, intended to betray Bryan. For this purpose, he sent to the king of Leinster to inform him, that Bryan had despatched his son, Donogh, at the head of a third part of the Eugenian forces, to ravage Leinster, and that he and his thousand Meathmen would desert Bryan on the day of battle. Accordingly, it was determined to attack Bryan before Donogh could come up. He was then encamped on the plain, near Dublin, with a smaller army than he otherwise should have had. His opponents formed themselves into three divisions: the first consisting of a thousand Northmen, covered with coats of mail from head to foot, and commanded by Carolus and Anrud, two Norwegian princes; and the Danes of Dublin, under Dolat and Conmael. The second division consisted of Lagenians, about nine thousand strong, commanded by their king, Maelmordha MacMorogh; and under him several minor princes, such as MacTuathal or Toole, of the Liffey territory, the prince of Hy-Falgy (Ophaly), together with a large body of the Danes. The third division was formed of the Northmen, collected from the islands, from Scotland, &c.; it was commanded by Loder, earl of the Orkneys, and Broder, admiral of the fleet, which had brought the auxiliary Northmen to Ireland. Bryan was not dismayed by this mighty force; and, depending on Providence and the bravery of his troops, prepared for battle, dividing his troops likewise into three divisions; one to oppose the enemy's first division, under his son Morogh, who had along with him his son Torlogh, and a select body of the brave Dalcassians, besides four other sons of Bryan—Teige, Donald, Connor, and Flan—and various chieftains, Douchman, &c., &c., &c., together with a body of men from Conmaicne-mara, a western part of Ireland, under Carnan their chief. To this division Maelseachlain was ordered to join his followers. Over the division which was to fight the second of the enemy, Bryan placed Kian and Donald, two princes of the Eugenian line, under whom were the forces of Desmond, and other parts of the south of Ireland, viz., Mothla, son of Faelan, king of the Desies; Murtough, son of Amnchadha, lord of Hy-Liathan; Scanlan, son of Cathal, &c., &c., &c. The division opposed to the third of their antagonists, consisted chiefly of Connacians, commanded by Teige O'Connor, as chief, under whom were Mulroney O'Heyne, chief of Aidhne; Teige O'Kelley, king of Hy-maine; O'Doyle, &c., &c.

“The Northmen, who had arrived, under Broder, at Dublin, on Palm-Sunday, A. D. 1014, insisted on the battle being fought on Good Friday, which fell on the 23d of April—a day on which, by reason of its sanctity, Bryan would have wished to avoid fighting; yet he was determined to defend himself, even on that day; and, holding the crucifix in his left hand, and his sword in the right, rode with his son, Morogh, through the ranks, and addressed them as follows, as we read in the *Annals of Inisfullen*, under the year 1014:—



“ ‘*Be not dismayed because that my son, Donogh, with the third part of the Momonian forces, is absent from you, for they are plundering Leinster and the Danish territories. Long have the men of Ireland groaned under the tyranny of these sea-faring pirates! the murderers of your kings and chieftains! plunderers of your fortresses! profane destroyers of the churches and monasteries of God! who have trampled upon, and committed to the flames, the relics of his saints!*’—(and raising his voice)—‘*May the Almighty God, through his great mercy, give you strength and courage this day to put an end for ever to the Lochlunian tyranny in Ireland, and to revenge upon them their many perfidies, and their profanation of the sacred edifices dedicated to his worship—this day on which Jesus Christ himself suffered death for your redemption.*’ ‘So saying,’ continue the *Annals*, ‘he showed them the symbol of the bloody sacrifice in his left hand, and his golden-hilted sword in his right, declaring that he was willing to lose his life in so just and honourable a cause; and he proceeded toward the centre to lead on his troops to action; but the chiefs of the army, with one voice, requested he would retire from the field of battle, on account of his great age, and leave to his eldest son, Morogh, the chief command.

“ At sunrise in the morning, the signal for battle was given; but, at this very critical moment, Maelseachlain, finding an opportunity of being in some measure revenged of Bryan, retired suddenly from the scene of action with his thousand Meathmen, and remained an inactive spectator during the whole time of the battle, without joining either side.

“ This defection certainly rendered the division of the monarch’s army very unequal in numbers to that of the enemy’s which they were appointed to engage with; but Morogh, with great presence of mind, cried out to his brave Dalcassians, ‘that this was the time to distinguish themselves, as they alone would have the unrivalled glory of cutting off that formidable body of the enemy.’

“ And now, whilst the Dalcassians were closely engaged with battle-axe, sword, and dagger, the second division, under the command of the king of Connaught, hastened to engage the Danes of Leinster and their insular levies; whilst the troops of South Munster attacked Maelmordha and his degenerate Lagenians. Never was greater intrepidity, perseverance, or animosity, displayed in any other battle than in this, as every thing depended on open force and courage. The situation of the ground admitted of no ambuscades, and none were used; they fought man to man and breast to breast, and the victors in one rank fell victims in the next. The commanders, on both sides, performed prodigies of valour. Morogh, his son Torlogh, his brethren and kindred, flew from place to place, and everywhere left the sanguinary traces of their courage. The slaughter committed by Morogh excited the fury of Carolus and Conmael, two Danes of distinction; they attacked him in conjunction, and both fell by his sword. Sitric, the son of Loder, observed that Morogh and other chiefs retired from the battle more than twice, and, after each return, seemed to be possessed of double vigour;—it was to quench their thirst, and cool their hands, swelled from the violent use of the sword and battle-axe, in an

adjoining well, over which a guard of twelve men were placed. This the Danes soon destroyed.

“ On rejoining his troops the last time, Sitric, the son of Loder, with a body of Danes, was making a fresh attack on the Daleassians, and him Morogh singled out, and, with a blow of his battle-axe, divided his body in two, through his armour! The other Irish commanders in like manner distinguished themselves, though their exploits are not so particularly narrated; and it would seem, from the number of prime quality that fell on both sides, that the chiefs everywhere attacked each other in single combat.

“ The issue of the day remained doubtful until near four o'clock in the afternoon; and then it was, that the Irish made so general an attack on the enemy, that its force was not to be resisted. Destitute of leaders, and consequently in disorder, the Danes gave way on every side. Morogh, at this time, through the violent exertion of his right arm, had both hand and arm so pained, as to be unable to lift them up. In this condition he was attacked by Anrudh the son of Ebhric; but Morogh, closing in upon him, seized him with the left hand, shook him out of his coat of mail, and, prostrating him, pierced him with his sword by leaning with his breast upon it, and pressing upon it with the weight of his body. In this dying situation of Anrudh, he nevertheless seized the skeine (scymiter) which hung by Morogh's side, and with it gave him, at the same instant, a mortal wound! The Dane expired on the spot; but Morogh lived until next morning, when he made his confession and received the sacrament.

“ The confusion became general through the Danish army, and they fled on every side. Laidin, the servant of Bryan, observing the confusion, feared that the imperial army was defeated. He hastily entered the tent of Bryan, who was on his knees before a crucifix, and requested that he would immediately take a horse and flee. ‘No,’ says Bryan, ‘it was to conquer or die I came here; but do you and my other attendants take my horses to Armagh, and communicate my will to the successor of St Patrick:—That I bequeath my soul to God, my body to Armagh, and my blessing to my son Donogh. Give two hundred cows to Armagh along with my body; and go directly to Swords of Columbkille, and order them to come for my body to-morrow and conduct it to Duleck of St Kieran, and let them convey it to Lowth; whither let Maelmurry, the son of Eochy Comharb of St Patrick, come with the family of Armagh, and convey it to their cathedral.’

“ ‘People are coming towards us,’ says the servant. ‘What sort of people are they?’ says Bryan. ‘Green naked people,’ says the servant. ‘They are the Danes in armour,’ says Bryan; and he rose from his pillow, seized his sword, and stood to await the approach of Broder and some of his followers, and he saw no part of him without armour, except his eyes and his feet. Bryan raised his hand, and gave him a blow, with which he cut off his left leg from the knee, and the right from the ankle; but Broder's axe met the head of Brian and fractured it. Bryan, however, with all the fury of a dying warrior, beheaded Broder, and killed a second Dane by whom he was attacked, and then gave up the ghost.

“ From the vast number of chiefs who fell, we may form some idea



of the carnage on both sides. On the monarch's side, besides himself, were slain Morogh, with two of his brothers, and his grandson, Turlogh; his nephew, Conang; the chiefs of Corca Baisgin, of Fermoy, of Coonach, of Kerry-Luacha, of Eoganacht Locha Lein, of Hy-Conaill Gabhra, of Hy-Neachach Mumhan, of the Desics, &c., fell in this battle; as did the Connaught prince, O'Kelly of Hy-Maine, O'Heyne, and many others.

"The great stewards of Leamlhne (Lennox) and Mar, with other brave Albanian Scots, the descendants of Core, king of Munster, died in the same cause.

"On the side of the enemy there fell Maelmordha, the cause of all this blood, with the princes of Hy-Failge (Ophaly), of Magh-Liffe, and almost all the chiefs of Leinster, with three thousand of their bravest troops. Of the Danes, besides their principal officers, there fell 14,000 men. The thousand men that wore coats of mail are said to have been all cut to pieces.

"The Danes were routed and pursued to their ships, and as far as the gates of Dublin. The surviving foreigners took an eternal farewell of the country, and the Irish Danes returned to Dublin."

That this was a real and great victory is attested in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, under the year 1014, as also in the *Annals of the Four Masters* and of *Ulster*; yet Sir James Ware, in his *Antiquities of Ireland*, chap. xxiv., has some doubts on this point, as if, towards the end, the Danes became uppermost. But the Scandinavian account of this sanguinary battle, which was, long after, famous throughout Europe, is sufficient to remove this doubt. The *Niala Saga*, in Johnstone's *Antiquitates Celto-Scandicæ*, has a curious account of this battle; in which the Northmen are represented as flying in all directions, and large parties of them totally destroyed. And in the *Chronicle* of Ademar, monk of St Eparchius of Angouleme, this battle is represented as even greater than it really was; for it is said, that all the Northmen were killed, and, it is added, that crowds of their women threw themselves into the sea. Yet it is true, that of some of their divisions not a man was left alive. Ademar makes the battle last three days, but this does not agree with other accounts.

In the *Niala Saga*, above-mentioned, a northern prince is introduced as asking, some time after the battle, what had become of his men? The answer was, that they were all killed. This seems to allude to the division in the coats of mail, which, as we are told in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, were all cut to pieces!

The body of Bryan, according to his will, was conveyed to Armagh. First, the clergy of Swords, in solemn procession, brought it to their abbey; from thence, the next morning, the clergy of Damliag (Duleck) conducted it to the church of St Kieran. Here the clergy of Lowth (Lughmach) attended the corpse to their own monastery. The archbishop of Armagh, with his suffragans and clergy, received the body at Lowth, whence it was conveyed to their cathedral. For twelve days and nights it was watched by the clergy, during which time there was a continued scene of prayers and devotions; and then it was interred with great funeral pomp at the north side of the altar of the great church. The body of Morogh, with the heads of



Conang, and Faelan prince of the Desies, were deposited in the south aisle of that church; but his grandson, Turlogh, and most of the other chiefs, were interred at the monastery of Kilmainham.\*

Donogh, after having plundered Leinster, arrived at Kilmainham, on the evening of Easter Sunday, with the great spoil of Leinster,

\* The following just notice of Bryan's character and policy, is from Mr Moore's *History*:—

“In estimating the character of Bryan Boru, it will be found that there are three distinct points of view in which he stands forth prominently to the eye, namely, as a great warrior, a successful usurper, and a munificent friend to the church. In the attributes belonging to him, under these three several aspects, are to be found the main as well as subsidiary sources of his fame. The career of Bryan, as a military leader, appears to have been uniformly, with one single exception, successful; and, from the battle of Sulchoid to that of Clontarf, his historians number no less than fifty great battles, in which he bore away the palm of victory from the Northmen and their allies.

—“In his usurpation of the supreme power, he was impelled evidently by motives of selfish ambition; nor could he have entailed any more ruinous evil upon the country, than by thus setting an example of contempt for established rights, and thereby weakening, in the minds of the people, that habitual reverence for ancient laws and usages, which was the only security afforded by the national character for the preservation of public order and peace. The fatal consequences of this step, both moral and political, will be found but too strikingly evolved in the subsequent history. Attempts have been made to lend an appearance of popular sanction to his usurpation, by the plausible pretence that it was owing to the solicitation of the states and princes of Connaught, that he was induced to adopt measures for the deposition of Malachy. In like manner, to give to this step some semblance of concert and deliberation, we are told of a convention of the princes of the kingdom held at Dundalk, preliminary to the assumption of the monarchy, and convoked in contemplation of that step.

“But the truth is, for none of these supposed preparatives of his usurpation, is there the slightest authority in any of our records; and the convention held at Dundalk, or Dundalk, so far from being a preliminary measure, did not take place till after the ‘first rebellion,’ as it is styled by our annalists, of the king of Munster against the monarch.”—*Moore's Hist.*

To this note we may subjoin the following account of Bryan's harp, an interesting and curious relic, noticed by Ware, Keating, and many antiquarian writers. The following extract is from the *Dublin Penny Journal*, of which the first volume, notwithstanding its unpretending title, is well known to be a repository of the most authoritative learning and research:—“Henry VIII. gave the harp to the first earl of Clanricarde, in whose family it remained till the beginning of the 18th century; when it came, by a lady of the De Burgh family, into that of M'Mahon of Clenagh, in the county of Clare, after whose death it passed into the possession of commissioner MacNamara of Limerick. In 1782, it was presented to the Right Hon. William Conyngham, who deposited it in Trinity College Museum, where it now is. It is thirty-two inches high, and of good workmanship; the sounding board is of oak, the arms of red sally, the extremity of the uppermost arm, in part, is capped with silver, extremely well wrought and chisselled. It contains a large crystal, set in silver; and under it was another stone, now lost. The buttons, or ornamented knobs, at the side of this arm, are of silver. On the front arm are the arms, chased in silver, of the O'Brien family, the bloody hand supported by lions. On the sides of the front arm, within two circles, are two Irish wolf dogs cut in the wood. The holes of the sounding board, where the strings entered, are neatly ornamented with an escutcheon of brass, carved and gilt; the larger sounding holes have been ornamented probably with silver. The harp has twenty-eight keys, and as many string holes, consequently there were as many strings. The foot-piece, or rest, is broken off; and the parts, round which it was joined, are very rotten. The whole bears evidence of an expert artist.”

where he met his brother Teige, Kian the son of Molloy, and all that survived that battle, both sound and wounded; and he sent many presents and offerings to the Comharb of St Patrick.

Malachy, who resumed the monarchy of Ireland, after the fall of Bryan, having been requested by the clan Colman to describe the battle, thus proceeds:—

“It is impossible for human language to describe it; an angel from heaven only could give a correct idea of the terrors of that day! We retired to the distance of a fallow field from the combatants, the high wind of the Spring blowing from them towards us; and we were no longer than half an hour there, when neither of the two armies could discern each other, nor could one know his father or brother, even though he were next to him, unless he could recognise his voice, or know the spot on which he stood; and we were all covered over, both faces, arms, heads, hair, and clothes, with red drops of blood, borne from them on the wings of the wind! And should we attempt to assist them, we could not; for our arms were entangled with the locks of their hair, which were cut off by the swords, and blown towards us by the wind, so that we were all the time engaged in disentangling our arms. And it was wonderful that those who were in the battle could endure such horror, without becoming distracted; and they fought from sunrise until the dusk of the evening, when the full tide carried the ships away.”

### Malachy.

A. D. 850—1022.

THE death of Bryan, and of his heroic son, left the conclusion of this decisive day to Malachy, whose history may be taken up and concluded from the event which once more restored him to his rights.

It is already known to the reader, that about thirty-four years previous to the period of his life at which we are now arrived, Malachy succeeded king Domnal in the monarchy of Ireland; nor will it be forgotten, that soon after his accession, he gained a signal and decisive victory over the Danes, in the battle of Tara, which is said to have lasted three days without interruption. This achievement was made illustrious by the “noble proclamation” by which it was followed:—“Let all the Irish who are now suffering servitude in the lands of the stranger, return now to their several homes, and enjoy themselves in gladness and peace.”\* Among the captives released on this occasion were Domnal, king of Leinster, and O’Niell, prince of Tyrone. Next to the battle of Clontarf, this victory is considered by historians to have been the most decided advantage ever gained over the Northmen, and to have produced the most depressing effects upon their strength; as, besides the multitude of their people who fell, nearly all their chiefs and officers were also slain.

With this glorious opening, the general character and conduct of

\* Tighernach ad an. 980. IV. Mag. 979. Moore’s Hist., ii. 91.



Malachy concurred to raise expectation; and all things seemed to announce the beginning of a prosperous and illustrious reign. He was considered by the kings and princes of the island, to be among the most powerful and wisest monarchs that ever sat upon the Irish throne; and his whole conduct through life, until one equivocal occurrence which has clouded his fame with a dark suspicion, was such as to maintain his pretensions to his title of "the Great." But his virtue, power, and success, unhappily fell under the influence of an evil combination of events; and have left a striking illustration of the power of circumstance, and the feebleness of human strength. We have, in our life of Bryan, been obliged to anticipate the series of reverses which terminated in the deposition of this great warrior and king, and shall not now repeat them. After the battle of Clontarf, he comes again upon the scene of events after an interval of some years; but with diminished lustre, and a taint upon his honour, which they who have attempted his vindication, have not found means to remove. Looking attentively to the facts and the reasons on either side, we have only succeeded in arriving at the conclusion—that much may be said, and nothing proved, on either side. As this question is now to be regarded as the principal interest of the remainder of Malachy's career, we shall not hesitate to pause upon it: and though, like the "anarch old," in Milton's poem, it may be thought that our decision "more embroils the fray"—being able to reach no conclusion—we shall impart the benefit of our doubts.

It has already been stated in the account of the battle of Clontarf, that as soon as the engagement had commenced, Malachy withdrew from the field with his provincial troops, and remained inactive until the termination of the fight. This defection, upon such an occasion, could scarcely escape from the malignity or justice of imputation. Mr Moore treats the story with contempt, on the strong ground of Malachy's previous reputation; on the less tenable ground of its wanting authority; and on the utterly inconclusive ground of his subsequent conduct on the termination of the day, when Bryan having been slain, he assumed the command, and completed the victory.\* The first of these reasons we admit in the fullest extent to which such a principle can be admitted in estimating human conduct; the second can scarcely be maintained against the *Annals of Inisfallen*, and the contemporary writer whose account we have given at length; the third has positively no weight. Any inference in Malachy's favour, from his conduct after the battle, is destroyed by the consideration, that the contrary conclusion is perfectly reconcilable with the same facts. The discomfiture of Bryan and his sons was the most probable means of restoring Malachy, especially if favoured by the support of the conquerors. But a still more favourable means of promoting the same *main object*, was precisely that which, by a favourable conjunction of circumstances, took place; and there was but one way of meeting it. His guilt yet undivulged; his rival swept from his path; a conquering army under his command, and a glorious victory throwing a splendid reflection on his character;—there was none either to accuse him or to

\* Moore's Hist. ii. 108, 138.



claim his pledge. In the turn of the fight, his vigorous reinforcement would be likely to meet all questions, or silence all objectors whom the fate of the field had not quelled. In the confusion of a wide-spread field of slaughter, it is little known to any but the leaders, who is present or absent from the field; and a temporary secession would appear but as a prudent reserve, kept for a decisive onset, and then effecting its work: the assumption of a monarch's power would silence the detractor's tongue. But the same conditions, which would have facilitated and concealed the base manœuvre here supposed, may have also, in some degree, it must be admitted, have favoured the still baser and less excusable whisper of calumny. The action of Malachy was equivocal: it might be treachery, it might be a politic reserve, it may have been a movement preconcerted with Bryan; he may have withheld his forces, first for the usual purposes of a reserve, and then from seeing they were not wanting. And on such a supposition, it is far from impossible that Malachy's prudent reserve, perhaps preconcerted with the leader, might be misrepresented as the fulfilment of a treacherous understanding with the enemy; and that the surviving family of Bryan might, either by error or design, have been led to devise or listen to a surmise, injurious to an ancient rival, who was now to gain the ascendant over their family by the very event which should be the most crowning and glorious consummation of its fortune. Looking to the facts, we cannot detect the slightest inclination in the balance of judgment. Looking to mere policy, the keen and long-continued rivalry—the injury, and humiliation more galling than injury, sustained at his rival's hands—the favourable chance of the occasion, and the strong impulses of ambition and jealousy, with the long-suppressed workings of vindictive feeling, and the alleged treason, seems to be a result naturally suggested in the perusal of the history. But the whole of this nefarious web of baseness is so inconsistent with all that can be authentically known of Malachy's character, that, on this ground alone, we must reject it as the well-conceived slander of a rival or an enemy. The baseness imputed is of the lowest stamp, and involves all that is degrading in human character; it is far below the level to which a generous mind and an elevated understanding can easily stoop. Malachy stood high above the betrayer's class; and, though human virtue is fallible, such an inversion of feelings is not to be presumed on grounds which admit of a more natural explanation. On the force of this argument—one rather to be felt than clearly understood—we must consider the question to rest. Let not the reader charge us with needless digression, to arrive at so slight an inference: it is no less than the question, whether this renowned warrior is to be regarded as a hero or a knave.

A more impressive proof perhaps of this conclusion, is the prompt and unquestioning assent of the native princes to Malachy's re-assumption of the monarchical crown. His first act was the vigorous prosecution of the victory which had been just obtained. The blow so fatal to the Danish power, was followed up by an attack on their stronghold in Dublin, of which he destroyed the greater part.

Although the result of the battle of Clontarf was the complete

subversion of the powerful ascendancy which their wealth and arms had been for a long time acquiring in the confused politics of the country, still this brave and persevering people were reluctant to let go their hold of a country so favourable to the acquisition of wealth. In the next year, they obtained strong reinforcements, and renewed their predatory inroads by an expedition into Carlow, then known by the name of Hy-Kinselagh. They were once more interrupted in their course by a successful attack from Malachy, who routed them with considerable slaughter.

In this year also, a most ill-timed cruelty was the means of drawing down another signal and decisive blow upon their declining state. The fierce Sitric, under the irritation caused by repeated humiliations, caused his recent ally, the prince of Leinster, to be deprived of sight. The people of Leinster rose up against the cruel and ungrateful tyrant, and gained a destructive victory over his forces at Delgany.

The spirit of the native princes when relieved from the firm coercion of Bryan's ascendant policy, and extricated from the constant fear of Danish incursions, soon began to blaze forth with its wonted and characteristic energy. Dissension among themselves, and insubordination to the monarch, soon began to show themselves in every quarter. The military promptitude of Malachy was displayed in the valour and efficiency with which he checked revolts and encroachments among his restless tributaries. In 1016, he obtained hostages from the Ulster princes. In the following year he met the Danes again, and defeated them at Othba.

There is a sameness in the repetition of the same featureless events. They convey nothing to the mind more than may be conveyed by the expression of their sum. Among the numerous successes of the same nature, Malachy gained an important victory over the O'Nealls of the North—and received hostages from the princes of Connaught.

"In approaching," writes Mr Moore, "the close of this eminent prince's career, it should not be forgotten, among his other distinguished merits, that unlike the greater part of those chieftains who flourished in what may be called the Danish period, he never, in any one instance, sullied his name by entering into alliance with the foreign spoilers of his country: and as the opening year of his reign had been rendered memorable by a great victory over the Danes, so, at the distance of near half a century, his closing hours were cheered by a triumph over the same restless but no longer formidable foe." Without entering to the full extent into Mr Moore's views of the patriotism of Malachy or of his age, we think that the fact observed in the above extract, is the most authentic justification of Malachy to be found in his history. His enmity to the Danes appears to assume, in his character, that consistent ascendancy which belongs to a man's characteristic habits only; and against the violation of which there is always a *prima facie* probability, which must repel conjectural affirmations to the contrary.

In the year 1022, he obtained another glorious and decisive victory over the Danes at Athboy, then called the Yellow Ford. Immediately after the battle, feeling the approach of death, he retired to a small island upon the Lake Aumin in Meath; where, resigning himself to death, he spent his last moments in devotion. His deathbed was



cheered and alleviated by the attendance of the three Comorbans, successors of St Patrick, Columba, and Ciaran, and illustrated by acts of public charity, which have been celebrated by the poets of his time. His last act was the institution of a foundation for the support of 300 orphan children, to be selected from all the chief cities in Ireland.\*

## Donchad O'Brien.

A. D. 1004.

WITH Malachy the civil history and biography of his period, might legitimately be terminated. We shall, nevertheless, more fully complete this portion of our task, by following the family of O'Brien along the brief remainder of its course.

The day after the battle, Donchad, who it will be remembered had been detached on a predatory expedition, returned laden with spoil to Kilmainham. He was here met by a demand of hostages from Cian, who asserted his claim to the throne of Munster, by the right of alternate succession, recognised among the branches of the Eugenian and Dalcassian families. This Donchad refused to admit—usurpation founded on the right of arms had gained the splendid sanction of his father's reign. The contention was, however, appeased by Cian's cousin and colleague in command, who perhaps, seeing the inutility of pressing his claim, contrived to withdraw him from the camp. Donchad marched his enfeebled army towards Munster. Reaching Ossory, he was met by its prince, Macgilla Patrick, who refused to allow him to proceed through his territory, unless on the condition of submission to his sovereignty: at the same time insolently menacing the alternative of a battle. To this menace—which under the circumstances was base and cowardly—the brave son of Bryan replied, by selecting the more honourable but most dangerous alternative. “Never was it yet said, within the memory of man, that a prince of the race of Bryan, had given hostages to a Macgilla Patrick.” He now prepared for a battle which has been consecrated to poetry, by the affecting heroism of which it was the occasion.† Donchad, like a humane leader, was about to make an arrangement for the safety of the numerous men who had been wounded at Clontarf—by allotting the duty of protecting them to a select band of his bravest men. The wounded soldiers, would not consent to be protected at the expense of so dangerous a sacrifice of strength. “Let

\* Moore ii. 140.

† Few of our readers will fail to recollect Mr Moore's spirited stanza:—

“Forget not our wounded companions who stood  
In the day of distress by our side;  
While the moss of the valley grew red with their blood,  
They stirred not, but conquered and died!  
The sun, that now blesses our arms with his light,  
Saw them fall upon Ossory's plain!  
Oh! let him not blush, when he leaves us to-night,  
To find that they fell there in vain!”

*Irish Melodies.*



there be stakes fixed in the ground," was their spirited and noble reply, "and to each of these let one of us be firmly tied, holding our swords in our hands." The strange expedient was adopted. The effect was just such as the reader will be likely to anticipate upon brave men, who could feel the situation in its full force. Surprise, compassion, and involuntary awe, arrested the ranks of Ossory, as they approached this mingled front, and marked the calm and stern aspect, which bespoke the determined resistance of those who were prepared to die. The chief of Ossory had the sagacity to perceive an impression which might damp the power of his onset—and to respect the calm desperation which would make the most dangerous resistance: and drawing off his army suffered the troops of Donchad to continue on their march.

Donchad's life offers little more worth gleaning by the biographer. Sharing with his brother Teige the throne of Munster, he was ere long involved in a contest with him. A desperate and destructive battle was followed by a reconciliation of doubtful sincerity and short continuance. It was soon interrupted by some new broil—and Donchad contrived to have his brother murdered, by which he secured the entire sovereignty of Munster to himself: and reigned for several years in considerable prosperity.

His crime, however, was ripening for punishment. Tirlogh, the son of the murdered prince, at length contrived to raise a force against him. After a struggle, which lasted some years, and was marked by repeated defeats and humiliations, Donchad O'Brien surrendered the Munster throne to Tirlogh, and retired to Rome; where, having entered into the monastery of St Stephen, he died in 1064. There is a tradition, scarcely deserving of credit, that he brought the crown of Ireland to Rome, and, according to a custom not very unusual in that age of ignorant superstition, laid it at the pope's feet. Mr Moore repels the assertion on three grounds, viz., there not being in our annals any mention of the act, and this we think enough to discredit it: as for the grounds that Donchad had not the crown of Ireland in his possession, there can be no assurance of the matter—if there was a crown, it had been in the possession, and may have remained among the treasures of his father. But the last objection has an interest independent of its decisive weight, if admitted. Mr Moore remarks, that antiquaries have doubted the existence of any sort of crown among the ancient Irish kings. "It is said by Hector Boetius, that the kings of Scotland, from the time of Fergus their first king to the reign of Achaius, who died in 819, wore a plain crown of gold in the form of a military palisade. It is no improbable conjecture that they imitated their ancestors, the Irish kings, Fergus being of that race. This conjecture receives some strength from a golden crown, which, in the year 1692, was dug out of a bog on the top of a hill, called Barnanely, or the Devil's Bit, in the county of Tipperary, which is supposed to have been a crown belonging to some provincial king. It weighed about five ounces. The border and the head were raised in chasework, and seems to bear a resemblance to the close crown of the Eastern empire, which was composed of the helmet and diadem. It is not unreasonable to suspect that this crown is of great antiquity, and that it

belonged to some Irish king, who reigned before the planting of Christianity in Ireland; because it is destitute of any ornament of the cross, which was the usual ensign of Christian princes, at least from the time of Constantine the great. It fell into the hands of one Mr Comerford, who carried it into France, where it is supposed to remain among his descendants. The royal ornament for the head, both of the provincial kings and queens and of the supreme monarch of Ireland, was anciently called *asion*, pronounced in one syllable *asn*, and was of gold; perhaps it was so called from the word *assain*, which signifies plates, as being composed of several foldings or ribs of that metal. It was afterwards applied in a religious sense to signify the reliques of the saints; and in process of time the word *asion* and *coroin*, a crown, came to be promiscuously used one for the other. It is related in the Irish histories, that eight years before the birth of Christ, Fergusius Rogius the deposed king of Ulster, and Maud queen of Connaught, marched an army into Cuailgne, a territory so called in the county of Louth, and from thence drove an immense booty of cattle; which action has been ever since remarked under the name of Tain-bo Cuailgne, *i. e.* the herd or drove of cattle of Cuailgne. The queen is said, in this expedition, to have marched in an open chariot, surrounded by four other chariots, so disposed as to keep the bands of horsemen at a distance from her, ‘that the dust and foam of the horses should not stain the golden asion with which her head was encircled,’ A. D. 174. The queen of Cathoir-Mor, king of Ireland, had her golden asion stolen from her at the convention of Tarah; but Hugh Ward, an antiquary of great reputation, tells us, ‘that all the kings of Ireland in battle, and other public solemnities, appeared crowned with a diadem. In the memorable battle of Clontarf, Brien Boromhe, monarch of Ireland, fell by the hands of the Danes, being discovered by the royal crown on his head. Some writers affirm, that many of the family of the O’Briens were, with great solemnity, created kings of Ireland, and crowned with a golden crown. And in particular, we read in the Irish histories that Donat O’Brien, son to the said Brien Boromhe, in the year 1065, undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, and carried with him the royal crown of his ancestors. What Cassaneus says may add some weight to these instances, where he gives, for the ancient arms of the kings of Ireland, *a king holding a golden lilly, and sitting in majesty in a black field*. For what can be understood by *a king sitting in majesty*, but sitting on his royal throne, and adorned with his crown and other ensigns of majesty?”\* Similar crowns, have been found in other parts of Ireland, of somewhat greater weight, but none of them have been preserved.† To ourselves, there seems to be much internal evidence, in the ancient Irish history, for the existence of the crown. A race conspicuous for the love of all that belongs to external state—early possessed of golden ornaments—of the half refinement that would omit no circumstance of royal exterior, and having knowledge enough to be aware that the crown was one of the principal: we should consider it the height of absurdity to imagine (unless the crown were proved

\* Ware’s Antiquities.

† This crown is also described in the Preface to Keating’s History.



to have had no existence till a later period, which will not be asserted), that the stately barbarians who called themselves kings—spoke bog Latin, exacted homage, hostages and tribute, from whole provinces, and loaded altars with costly offerings—wore no crowns—sat on no thrones—willed no sceptres, and did not play at kings to the utmost extent they had the power or means. Such questions do not exclusively rest on the evidence of remains,—we must also admit the common evidence of nature's laws in the human breast.

## Tirlogh or Tirdelvac.

A. D. 1086.

ON the abdication of Donchad, Tirlogh succeeded to the throne of Munster, which, at that time, may be regarded as equivalent to the monarchy. Many chiefs were inclined to question his title to supremacy, from a preference to the claim of the prince of Leinster. This prince, however, so far from standing upon the question of this supposed right, was the active and efficient friend who enabled Tirlogh to secure his birth-right.

Of Tirlogh's reign, the notices are indistinct. But there are incidental notices worth collecting here, from the indirect gleams they cast on the relations of our kings with England, as well as the respectable notion they suggest of Tirlogh's reign and character. Of these may be the letter of the English primate Lanfranc, of which we extract some sentences, cited by Mr Moore, from a volume of *Ancient Irish Correspondence*, (*Vet. Epist. Hebernie Sylloge*, Ep. 28.) "That God was mercifully disposed towards the Irish when he gave to your excellency royal power over that land, every intelligent observer must perceive. For, so much hath my brother and fellow-bishop Patrick reported to me, concerning your pious humility towards the good, your severe justice on the wicked, and the discreet equity of your dealings with all mankind, that, though it has never been my good fortune to see you, I yet love you as if I had." This letter is addressed "To the magnificent monarch Tirdelvac." Another letter addressed to Tirlogh, "the illustrious king of Ireland," by pope Gregory VII., may be noticed from the same authorities. A far more respectable testimony is to be extracted from the application of the island people of Man, to desire that during the minority of their king, Tirlogh would send them a regent of his own selection and family, a request with which Tirlogh is said to have complied.

It is said to have been by this monarch's permission, in 1098, that king William Rufus obtained the Irish oak which forms the curious old roof of Westminster hall.

The death of Tirlogh, which occurred in 1086, after a reign of 22 years, is ascribed to a fright, from an occasion too absurd and frivolous to be easily admitted; but still, with all this absurdity, it is not unlikely, in the most ridiculous particular, to be correct. We shall here state the whole story, and the reader may believe as much as he pleases. Many years before this period, the monarch Tirlogh bore



to a king of Meath, who had been his enemy, so deadly a hate, that he was not satisfied even when his enemy was dead and buried, but resolved to make the matter doubly sure, by removing the dead man's head completely out of all possible chance of ever coming within reach of his body again. This ingenious piece of malice he executed by cutting off the head, and carrying it away to Kinkora, where he caused it to be secured under ground. On the following Sunday, however, his astonishment and dismay were great, when he learned that, in despite of his precaution, the hostile head had contrived to find its way back to Clonmaenose, where it was found quite comfortably at rest with its body, and wearing round its neck two collars of gold, which, with the thieving propensity for which its owner had once been celebrated, it had plundered on the way. Tirlogh was, perhaps, slow to credit a report which was not very agreeable to his feelings of enmity to both head and body, and resolving to manage better the next time, went himself to Clonmaenose. On taking up the skull, however, in his hand, an incident occurred, the effect of which upon the nervous system of the chief is easily accounted for, by the combined effects of old age and superstition; the aged king had scarcely turned the skull once in his hands, and was yet with the eager eye of keen and implacable animosity prying into its crevices, when, with a sudden jump, a little mouse leapt out into his bosom. Of the fright this incident caused, the *Four Masters* say he never recovered—a fact which, all things considered, is likely enough.

### Dermot, King of Leinster.

A.D. 1072

THIS worthy prince should not be defrauded of a niche in our gallery. We have, however, little more to say, than that his character, and many of the actions of his life, appear deserving of the highest praise. As, however, the scanty narrative we could give of his reign should be nothing more than a reiteration of adventures and battles, without distinct incidents to give them interest, we cannot better execute our duty than by the following brief eulogium:—

“If a generous sacrifice of his own interests to those of others might be taken into account among Dermot's titles to supremacy, his claims would be of no common order, as the liberal aid he from the first proffered to the young Tirlogh, enabling him to assert and obtain his birth-right, lends a moral dignity to his character, far surpassing any that mere rank could bestow, and justifying, in a great degree, the eulogy bestowed upon him by the Welsh chronicler Caradoc, who pronounces him to have been ‘the best and worthiest prince that ever reigned in Ireland.’”

Dermot was, as we have already mentioned, killed in 1072, in the battle of Obdha, in Meath.

## II. ECCLESIASTICAL AND LITERARY SERIES.

### INTRODUCTION.

THE comparative scantiness of our material, and uncertainty of our authority for the more ancient periods of our biography, seem to render it inexpedient to encumber our brief divisions with the over-frequent recurrence of prefatory matter. And there is little to be now stated, which may not advantageously be reserved for the ensuing period. The long continuance of her trials had not added to the purity or wisdom of the Irish church. It was, in truth, a period of surpassing and universal darkness. If we admit that Ireland was still distinguished by her schools and learned ecclesiastics, little can be deducted from the general reproach, on the score of knowledge, which was so far worse than ignorance, as error is more injurious than the mere privation of truth. The learning of the period consisted in the nugatory subtilties of the schoolmen, and the inventions of men substituted for the doctrines of revealed religion. Human intercessions and atonements were contrived as necessary supplements to the one sacrifice, "once offered;" penances and purgations for faith and love; pardons and indulgences usurped the attributes of conscience, and superseded the Christian graces. Corruption, which began with the beginning of church history, and advanced with accelerating rapidity, had now nearly reached its height, and the religion of the gospel only existed in a few scriptural metaphors, separated from the context and perverted from their applications. From such an unhappy state, we cannot say that our Island church, the cradle of so much genuine holiness, was at this dark period exempt; and if we assert her still continued independence, it is with an acknowledgment, that the honour, if such it be, is little worth dispute. We shall have to revert to the question hereafter, when we shall have arrived at that period when it becomes no more doubtful. Up to the 12th century, there is sufficient warrant for the assertion, that the Irish church government was purely domestic and conducted by synods, of which two were held every year, and by canons at several times ordained in these. There was yet, on the part of the more learned ecclesiastics, a strong leaning towards the Roman see; from which that preponderant church obtained a weighty influence in Ireland. The power too of kings, and the violence of conquerors, often interfered, and arbitrarily disposed of the ecclesiastical appointments.

The Danes had been converted to a Christianity which had in it no vital power to impart a pious regard for its institutions—the only public test of religious sincerity.

The monasteries, though the seats of superstition, credulity, fraud, and ignorance, were yet, all deductions being made, the last retreats of the little of worth, piety, and learning, that had existence, in the time, and, with all their demerits, preserved the few virtues or graces

which were consistent with the degeneracy of mankind in an age of darkness and ruin. We shall trace their history in the next period, when it will come before us in its close.

## Patrick, Abbot.

A. D. 850.

THIS once eminent, but now little noted, father of the Irish church, lived about 850. His name is to be commemorated chiefly as “the founder of the fabulous purgatorie, which goeth in Ireland under the name of St Patrick’s purgatorie.” In the *Martyrology* of Larum, his feast is fixed on the 24th of August. Stanihurst mentions that he left a book of homilies, but for this there is no certain evidence—the book is not extant.

There is in Hanmer’s *Chronicle* a description of Patrick’s purgatory, which is at least amusing. “And it seemeth to be after the manner of concavities in the bowels of the earth, where the ayre entering naturally to avoid vacuum, and the wind following, whisteleth and crieth like doleful ghosts, the silly and ignorant people, being deceived through persuasion of covetous priests, that some souls and spirits do penance there for their sins, call it a purgatorie. And further, we see reason and daily experience in miners, that if any be much under ground, the dampness of the earth takes away their lively colour, and makes them look ghastly, and if they continue any long while there (the vital spirits being barred of their usual course), they are mightily tormented, cast into trances, and distracted; and being once delivered from the place, report things at random of heaven and earth, beleieve them who list.”\* This amusing by-play of the wind and air at that period, evidently endisciplined by the strict laws of pneumatic science, and howling in their flight from the dreaded vacuum, has excited the sceptical doubts of Krantz, a foreign writer, who “reckoning up reports given forth out of several countries touching visions, &c., &c., inserteth among them Patrick’s purgatorie, and concludeth that they are to be accounted old wives’ fables.” From which opinion we see no great reason for dissenting. According to the account of Dr Lanigan, the place so called at Lough Derg, was a kind of opposition purgatory set up against another on Croagh Patrick. The following is the learned doctor’s account: “This purgatory or purging place, of Lough Derg, was set up against another Patrick’s purgatory, viz., that of Croagh Patrick, mentioned by Jocelyn, which, however ill-founded the vulgar opinion concerning it, was less objectionable. Some writers have said that it got the name of Patrick’s purgatory from an abbot Patrick that lived in the 9th century; but neither were there canons regular of St Augustin at that time, nor were such abridged modes of atoning to the Almighty for the sins of a whole life then thought of. It was demolished in the year 1497 by order of the pope, although it has since been, in some manner, restored.”†

\* Hanmer.

† Lanigan, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 368.



## Ængus, Abbot.

A. D. 800.

OF this pious writer it is mentioned, that his piety obtained for him the appellation of Ceile-De, or “servant of God.” He was accustomed to retire into a waste and solitary place near the monastery of Clonenagh, of which he was abbot, where he spent hours in prayer and holy meditation.

He is said to have been the author of a select *Martyrologie*, and of another similar work, inclusive of all the saints of all ages and nations. Among these he enumerates saints of the Italian and Egyptian churches, who died and were buried in Ireland.

## Modwenna.

DATE UNFIXED.

THE chief title to notice of this pious lady, is a tradition which places her name in a connexion, not improbable, if it were otherwise authenticated, with the education of the illustrious Alfred. The tradition, as mentioned by some ancient authors, and repeated or adverted to by Usher, from Polydore Virgil, and Nicholas Harpsfield, &c., &c., is simply this, that prince Alfred being affected with some tedious and dangerous disease, was sent by his father to Ireland to Modwenna, whose fame for cures had reached him. The cure was performed, and the intelligent mind of the prince, thus excited by the various attractions of this island, then the centre of all sanctity and learning, received a direction towards piety and literature, which never after left him. “Unluckily,” says Mr Moore, “Asser, in his life of Alfred, a work worthy of its noble subject, makes no mention of the visit of his hero to Ireland; and it is probable that some confusion between the great Alfred, and a king of the Northumbrian Britons, named Aldfrid, who really did pass some years of exile in Ireland, may have given rise to the tradition.”\*

If the tradition mentioned above has any claim to be admitted, such would be an inference. But this pious virgin seems to have been as a shuttle-cock to the learned fraternity, who have exhibited more than their usual learning and expertness in shifting the date of her existence from age to age. Dr Lanigan, who weighs their opinions with his usual perspicacity, does not decide the point. From this writer we also learn, that the learned, who have not been able to discover when she lived, have been equally at a loss to settle where she died. On this point it is mentioned, by her own request her body was buried at Andressy, but removed by order of king Alfred to Burton. Dr Lanigan cites some verses which serve to convey this part of her history:—

\* Moore, ii. 57.

“ Ortum Modwennæ dat Hibernia, Scotia finem  
 Anglia dat tumulum, dat Deus alta poli  
 Prima dedit vitam, sed mortem terra secunda  
 Et terram terræ, tertia terra dedit.  
 Aufert Lanfortin, quam terra Conallea profert  
 Felix Burtoneum, Virginis ossa tenet.”\*

There is some doubt of the precise period to which this pious woman belongs. But we incline for many reasons to place her in our present period.

## Tigernach, Abbot.

A. D. 1088.

THE name of Tigernach, the abbot of Clonmacnoise, is connected with the important question of the authenticity of our Irish annals; as the valuable work of this nature, written in the 11th century, which he left, is not only of the first importance as authority, but perhaps even more so for the general evidence of authenticity which it reflects on the early history of Ireland, by the strong internal indications of its having been in part collected from ancient annals then existing.

The accuracy with which the annalist has preserved the dates of eclipses, can only be explained in one of two ways—either by the possession of ancient records, or by astronomical calculation; of which the latter is in a very high degree improbable. One consideration will satisfy the reader. It may be admitted that the annalist had the astronomical skill to calculate a table of eclipses, but it would be a most absurd and gratuitous assumption, that a compiler or writer of annals would sit down to this laborious exertion of skill, for the purpose of scattering the results among other incidents, and simply as matters of record. The tables would, at the time, have appeared of more interest than the records, and reflected a higher literary character on the author. The insertion of the eclipse as an incident, could serve no purpose, as it added nothing of authority to the record at the time, and it is not to be supposed that a dry annalist would have devised a contrivance to meet the scepticism of a period when remoteness should have cast obscurity on his period. The artifice would have been equally elaborate, uncharacteristic, and without object. It must also be observed, that if any writer of a fictitious record (and this assumption is involved) had conceived the idea of giving an authentic stamp to his work by the insertion of eclipses; his results must have been affected by certain errors, consequent on the state of astronomy in the 11th century; whereas an actual record would still be correct. From these and other such considerations (for we think it unnecessary to exhaust so plain a question), it is to be inferred, that Tigernach was possessed of annals reaching back to a period earlier than the 6th century.

Accordingly, as should be anticipated, Tigernach intersperses his

\* Lanigan, Eccles. Hist. iii. 42.

annals with extracts from ancient Irish writers of the 8th, 7th, and 6th centuries, "whose names, whose periods, whose very words are preserved, and the antiquity of whose idiom confirms, to a certainty, the ancient date which Tigernach himself assigns to them."—"The correctness of his citations," observes Mr Moore, "from foreign authors with whose books we are acquainted, may be taken as a surety for the genuineness of his extracts from the writings of our own native authors now lost." Were it otherwise indeed, we should possess a singular instance of paradox, as the combination of marks which indicate the most cautious precision, unaccompanied as they are by any signs of a turn for invention, would be thus proved to be the results of the highest order of historical mendacity.

Indeed, the widely concurring evidences of the ancient literature of Ireland are so numerous and satisfactory, that we have all through entertained much reluctance in reasoning on the subject, as if it were a doubtful question. But the subject has yet to be placed in a popular light. And doubts and suspicions, altogether unwarranted by any reasonable data, are the abundant produce of a shrewd and ingenious sophistry which has never yet found its appropriate employment, unless in the accessible but fruitless field of scepticism.

Tigernach died 1088.

## Marianus Scotus.

A. D. 1086.

MARIANUS SCOTUS, the contemporary of Tigernach, and also an annalist. His name occurs as the earliest of those distinguished writers whom the illusion of a name has seemed to transfer from Ireland to Scotland. Marianus himself is said to have been the first by whom Scotia, originally applied to Ireland only, was applied to Scotland. The following proof of Ireland's claim is brought by archbishop Usher. Edward I., in his well-known attempt to prove his claim to the feudal allegiance of Scotland, brought forward this writer as one of his authorities. He was answered by an argument which, without impugning the authority of Marianus, established the point, that he was a Scot of Hibernia, and not of Scotland.

Marianus, in 1056, went abroad and joined a religious community at Cologne, from which he removed to Fulda, where, until 1066, he led a recluse life. Being removed from this, he spent the remainder of his life in Mentz, in strict religious retirement until 1086, when he died.

## St Colman.

THIS is one of the many who appear under the same name and title in our ancient records. He is said to have been executed as a spy, and to have received the honours of martyrdom in consequence of certain miraculous occurrences on his death. A Benedictine monastery was



founded at Melek in honour of his name, "which still exists, it appears, in great splendour." He is, or was, a patron saint in the Austrian calendar: "Austriæ sanctus canitur patronus," is the first line of an ode, by Stobæus, historiographer to the emperor Maximilian, cited by Mr Moore, in which his royal descent, his travels to Jerusalem, and his saintly scorn of the trappings of royal pride, appear to be the theme of praise.

### **Mac Liag, Antiquary, Poet, and Physician.**

MAC LIAG, was the chief antiquary of Ireland in the days of Bryan, to whom he also was poet laureate, and secretary, as well as doctor. His physic was, it is to be trusted, more effective than his poetry, or if a judgment may be formed from the specimens we have seen, this ancient bard might claim the application of the stinging epigram on the rather inappropriate mutual resemblance between the farces and the physic of another poetic doctor, who had the ill luck to live among the wits of Boswell's day.\* His chief theme was the celebration of the glories of Bryan, and lamentations for his death. He is said to have survived his royal patron but a year. We have been indebted to him for our version of the battle of Clontarf. He was also the author of the romantic fiction, which Mr Moore has woven into the striking lyric, too well known to be cited here, "Lady dost thou not fear to stray."

### **Gilla-Coeman, Metrical Annalist.**

WE notice this writer for the sake chiefly of some observations which we think useful in their application to some of our modern Irish historians. As we have them from Mr Moore's history, they may be most fitly presented in his language. "Some curious historical poems by Flann and Gilla-Coeman, two metrical chronographers of this century, have furnished a subject for much learned comment to the pen of the reverend editor of the *Irish Chronicles*; who, in proof of the accuracy of Gilla-Coeman's chronological computations, has shown, that all the dates assigned by him to the great events of Scripture history coincide, to a wonderful degree, with those laid down by no less authorities than Scaliger, Petavius, and Sir Isaac Newton. It should have been added by the learned doctor, that, when coming to apply this chronological skill to the ancient history of his own country, Coeman was found to be by no means so trust-worthy, and for a very sufficient reason, having in his former task been guided by an acquaintance with foreign historians; whereas, in calculating the successions of the kings of his own country, he was led away partly by the national vanity on this point, and partly by the grave fictions of the bardic historians who had preceded him. The author of the

\* We cannot at this moment recal the couplet or the author's name. The line which expresses the point runs thus: "Thy farces are physic, thy physic a farce is."

*Ogygia*, who adopted Coeman as his chief guide, in computing the periods of the Irish kings, has been thereby led into such wild and absurd flights of chronology, as even the most sanguine of his brother antiquarians have refused to sanction.”\*

### Dubdalethe.

ST BERNARD, in his life of Malachy, mentions this person as one of those married and unordained clergymen, who had obtruded themselves into the Irish church—a stricture softened by the valuable qualification contained in the words, “*literati tumen*.” His annals are cited by many of the Irish annalists.

Ireland though far on the wane of her literary consideration, was still comparatively of the highest reputation for the learning of the age—a reputation advanced by the renown of those great scholars, whom she still continued to pour forth into the ecclesiastical communities of France, Italy, Germany, and England. But the glories of her literature were fast verging to a close. Causes which had already, in different periods, obstructed the progress of those institutions, and the operation of those principles which, when unobstructed, conduct to the highest degree of national refinement, were still in active and increased operation. These we shall have to notice in our summary of the history of the interval between this period and the following; when a new series of revolutionary events were to introduce events of another and entirely distinct order, and to originate a revolution, which the centuries that have since elapsed have not brought to its consummation.

### Scotus—Erigena.

IN the 9th century, there existed a deeply-seated disorder throughout the constitution of the social state. Learning, religion, and morals, were depraved to a state nearly touching upon the dark limit of ignorance, superstition, and barbarism. The just, simple, and practical truths of the gospel, were, with the book which is their authorized testimony, rendered obsolete amidst the obscure refinements by which its doctrines had been corrupted. Science was suppressed by the blindfold timidity of ecclesiastical ignorance; and reason, fatal to a system based on fraud and sophistry, was subtilized away into a safe game of words. The sound-minded reason, sentiment, and feeling, of the earlier writers of Rome and Greece were lost, with their pure, graceful, and correct style of language. The secular portion of society, absorbed in the business and waste of war, was buried in the most gross and abject ignorance, which was enlightened by no glimmering beam of knowledge, and knew no higher or purer aim than fame in arms, and state and luxury in peace. Ignorance had ceased to be a reproach among ecclesiastics; for a little

\* Moore's Hist. ii. 179.

knowledge was enough for the commerce between superstition and ignorance, and more than a little dangerous to its professor, and more dangerous to the system in which he dwelt.

But there is no state short of the lowest barbarism, in which the powers and faculties of the intellect will not rise to the utmost limit of their confinement: debarred from truth, error itself will offer no small or narrow scope to the ingenuity that can defend it: reason, habitually employed either in maintaining falsehood or in devising riddles for itself, must needs change its character with its essential end, and find in mere subtilty, a sufficient scope for its irrepressible powers. This however is but half the process which gave its form to the scholastic theology: the corruption of the moral sense, and the sophistication of the judgment, are among the consequences of habitual abuse; and a driftlessness of aim and result adapted to bring learning into merited contempt with the practical common sense of the illiterate, completed a state of intellectual darkness, not easily conceived without much consideration of these causes, joined with others, to be found in the political state of the time. While learning was suppressd and corrupted by a peculiar system, among the ecclesiastical body, none but ecclesiastics had the power to cultivate it. The disruption of an ancient empire yet continued to roll the waves of revolution over the world. And a state of confusion and disorder, such as admits of no comparison with any thing that has since occurred to disturb the repose of states, made property and personal safety too insecure for the cultivation of learning, unless within the sanctuary of the cloister and the cell.

Such is a summary sketch of the intellectual state of the continent, when Charles the Bald ascended the throne of France, and by his love of knowledge, and encouragement of its professors, made his court and table a centre of attraction for the better intellects of his age. Among the most eminent for extensive knowledge and pleasing conversation, whom the sagacity and taste of Charles distinguished by peculiar favour, the Irish scholar, John Erigena, was the first; the same keen and subtle invention and adroitness, which placed him at the head of the disputants of his controversial period, gave ready tact, quick discernment, and facile point in conversation, and he so won on the monarch, that he became his constant companion, was a frequent guest at the royal table and admitted to the privileges of friendship, and placed at the head of the university of Paris.

Amongst the eminent scholars who cultivated the Greek and Roman literature, Scotus may be classed high. By his great reputation as a scholar, and as a master of dialectics, he was naturally led into all or most of the prevalent speculations and controversies of the day in which he lived. It was a time, when all of religion that was not superstition, was the dry and barren chaff of dialectics; and when philosophy had no existence but in its theological abuse. Scotus was, by his royal patron, induced to take part in the controversy concerning the Eucharist. This controversy may be briefly described, as the same which now exists between the churches of England and Rome, of which latter church, the doctrine was for the first time distinctly asserted in an essay by Radbert, abbot of Corbey, which at once set the theological seminaries in a blaze of



controversial conflict. Charles ordered Ratramur and Scotus to compose a clear view of the doctrine. The work of Scotus, now lost, took the same view as the reformed English church; Ratramur pretty much the same.

Another controversy arose, in the meantime, on the subject of predestination and divine grace, in which the depths of God's counsels and the mystery of his nature were audaciously sounded by the shallow line of human knowledge and reason. The well known tenets which are designated from the name of Calvin, were promulgated by Godescalchus, and drew opposition from many, among whom Scotus was the most distinguished. But the great distinction to which he owes his place in literature, is that of his philosophy. A distinguished expositor of the philosophy called Aristotelian, in his age, he had the boldness to give free scope to original speculation, and to erect a system of his own.

This temper received its direction from circumstances. From the earliest records of philosophy in the East, the idea of a mystical union of the spirit of man with the universal spirit by contemplation and ideal absorption, appears to have been in some form a tenet of doctrine, or a practical habit of devotion. It was indeed a natural effect easily traceable to temperament, and likely to be one of the diseases and gratifications of the solitary or ascetic state. Early in the first age of the church, this solitary species of fanaticism was communicated to a Christian sect, who received it from its native climate among the ascetic deserts of Egypt and Thebais. But a moral intoxication which can be reconciled with the conscience of the cloistered cell, must be a happy relief against the languor of its sad and colourless monotony, and the dreams of mysticism were never quite suppress in these dark ages of the church's slumber. The effect of a philosophical system adapted to the scholastic method, and favouring this peculiar tendency could not fail to produce a vast influence on philosophy and theology, which at the period cannot well be said to have a separate existence.

In this state of things, the Greek emperor sent over, as a present to Lewis the Meek, some works of mystical theology, which had long been highly popular in the Eastern church. Of their tendency the reader may judge from their titles. *On the Celestial Monarchy; On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy; On Divine Names; On Mystical Theology.* These treatises received additional value from the reputation of their pretended author, Dionysius the Areopagite, who, under the familiar name St Denis, was believed to be the first Christian teacher as he was the patron saint of France. Charles was ignorant of the Greek language, and therefore sought a translation. It is said that an ill-executed and unfaithful translation of some of these writings had already circulated among the schools, and attracted the attention of studious persons. However this may have been, Scotus was applied to by the king and undertook the task. The translation of Scotus proceeded, and in its progress, the alteration in his philosophy became not only apparent but influential on his hearers. In executing his task he became enamoured with a system, in the transcendental altitudes and depths of which the reach of his subtilty, and the boldness of his fancy could range unquestioned above the dull track of common notions.

Seizing on this vast scope he began by reconciling it with the scholastic philosophy, of which he was the unrivalled master, and explaining the one so as to combine with the other, he quickly infused a new spirit into the philosophy of the age. Between the dry subtilty of terms and logical forms, which were thoroughly separated from ideas or things, and conceptions equally remote, though in an opposite direction from the experience of realities, there was a nearer affinity than will at first be allowed: though opposed both in spirit and form, and exercising faculties altogether distinct, yet they had in common the arbitrary nature, which admits of indefinite accommodation. The strict law of modern science, the principle of which is definition, and its foundation the reality of things, was unthought of, and its absence left an obvious arena clear for the union between the science of arbitrary terms, and the fantasies of imagination. The translation of Scotus was eagerly received, and laid the foundation of the theological controversies of the following three centuries. On the fortune of Scotus the result was less favourable. The translation was in many respects at variance with the dogmas of the Western theology, and the book was published without the licence of the Roman see. Nicholas the First applied, by a menacing letter, to Charles, who dared not openly defy the pontifical requisition, to send the book with its author to Rome. Scotus decided the perplexity by withdrawing himself from Paris.

Such is a brief view of the character of the Alexandrian philosophy, and of its introduction into the Western church. The corruptions which, under various forms, it from the beginning diffused into the spirit and substance of Christianity, were but too consistently followed up by the evils it effected during the long continuance of the dark period under our notice: evils far indeed from having ceased in our own times though wearing a different form. But on this we must observe the rule of abstinence from modern disputes, which, with some inevitable exceptions, we have adopted. Of the place of Erigena's retreat, there is some inconsistency among the scanty notices which are extant. The error caused by the term "Scotus," expressive of his native country—which in the course of after ages changed its local application—appears to have been in part the cause of this difficulty.

About the period of his death, we cannot but feel much doubt as to the representation of Ware, which seems to make it immediate on his retreat. A work highly distinguished among the writings of the age, having evidently been the result of his studies of the mystical theology, we mean his book on the division of nature—"five books of John Scotus Erigena, long wanted, on the division of nature."\* This work, in which inferences are drawn by a subtle play on the changes of words in propositions without real meaning, has, in the specimens which we have been able to find, a curious similitude to the *à priori* school of the last century; in which premises which, with equal facility, lead to opposite conclusions, formed the subtle links of reasonings on the most important subjects. His argument to prove the eternity of the world, will illustrate this to the reader who is versed in the dialectics of Edwards, or still more of Clarke, whose subject and material is the same, and

\* Joanni Scoti Erigenæ de Divisione Naturæ, libri quinque, diu desiderati.



his inferences, in the instance we shall offer, opposite. “Nothing,” says Scotus, “can be an accident with respect to God; consequently, it was not an accident with respect to him to frame the world: therefore God did not exist before he created the world; for if he had, it would have happened to him” to create; that is, creation would have been an accident of the Divine nature. God therefore precedes the world not in the order of time, but of causality. The cause always was, and is, and will be; and therefore the effect has always subsisted, doth subsist, and will subsist; that is, the universe is eternal *with\** its cause.” From this, the inference was not remote, that God is the universe, and the universe God. If the reader will take the trouble to observe, that the real ground of the above argumentative quibble might be resolved into a disjunctive proposition, stating—Every thing must exist by accident or necessity;—he will have the same argument reduced into the language of Clarke’s demonstration, of which the foundation is the same impossible conception of necessary existence.

### Macarius.

CONTEMPORARY with Erigena, Macarius offers us another singular illustration of the state of knowledge and the abuse of reason in the 9th century. He lived in France, where he published a treatise *De Anima*, “said to be yet extant in the monastery of St Eligius.”† In this work he taught the singular doctrine afterwards maintained by Aversoes, that one soul animated all mankind; with this seemingly inconsistent proposition, that our souls and bodies are material, and that God alone can be said to be incorporeal. Of these notions, the first is in principle contained in Berkeley’s theory: as this illustrious philosopher, the acutest reasoner of our own period, having by his system annihilated our organic existence with that of the external world, is compelled to give to the Deity the precise place of the one individual soul of Macarius.

Macarius was confuted by Corbey. According to Ware’s account, he was, in his opinions, but a follower of Faustus, bishop of Ries.

### Virgilius.

DIED A. D. 784 OR 785.

VIRGILIUS SOLIVAGUS, so called from his love of solitude, was born in Ireland, and descended from an ancient and noble family. Like most of his countrymen at this period, who were distinguished by learning, philosophy, or piety, he left his own country and passed into France, where he spent two years in the court of king Pepin, who valued him highly on account of his learning, knowledge, and acquirements. He had gone beyond his age in scientific research, and in the

\* Mistranslated “in,” which conveys an ambiguous sense.

† Ware’s Writers.



adoption of true views, for which he was ultimately a sufferer, and was even arraigned as a heretic, but escaped the penalties generally attendant on such a charge. He had been sent by Pepin to Otilo, duke of Bavaria, who, in consequence of the king's recommendation, appointed him first, rector, or guardian of St Peter's Abbey of Salzburg, and in June 767, he was consecrated bishop of that see, where he built and dedicated a cathedral to St Rupert, whose bones he at that time translated thither. "While he governed this see (according to Ware), Boniface, archbishop of Mentz, being general visitor in Bavaria, re-baptized some whom he suspected to have been disorderly and invalidly baptized." This gave rise to a sharp and lengthened controversy between Virgilius, who highly disapproved of the practice, and the archbishop; and Sidonius, archbishop of Bavaria, coincided so fully with the view of Virgilius, that he not only opposed Boniface in the prosecution of his purpose, but joined with Virgilius in addressing an epistle to the pope on the subject, entitled "*Ad Zachariam Romanem Pontificem.*" The pope took the opposite side from his legate, and decreed "that Boniface maintained an error, and that Virgil and Sidonius held nothing in that point but sound doctrine." Virgilius was subsequently engaged in another controversy which had not so successful a termination; and probably the persecution he received on this occasion was owing to the animosity excited in the mind of Boniface by his former defeat. Ware, in speaking on this subject, says, "Virgil, to his other acquisitions of learning, having joined the study of philosophy and the mathematics, and especially of the writings of Ptolemy (who first reduced geography to art and system), combated those opinions (*i. e.* against the existence of antipodes) and held the sphericity of the earth, and consequently that a great part of it was yet undiscovered, and that every nation had their antipodes, or a people living diametrically opposite to them. This notion being contrary to the received opinion of the ancients, and seeming to oppose some passages in Scripture and the writings of some of the fathers, particularly of Lactantius and Augustin, Virgil was accused by Boniface of propagating heretical doctrine, and was, by pope Zachary, declared an heretic; as is *not obscurely* hinted in an epistle of that pope to Boniface. 'If (says he) it be proved that Virgil hath maintained that there is another world, and other men under the earth, another sun, and another moon; expel him the church in a council, after first divesting him of the priesthood,' &c. By which quotation it appears, that Virgil's opinions of the antipodes were misconceived by the pope; for though he held that there were antipodes, yet he did not hold that there was another world, other men under the earth, or another sun and moon. It does not appear that this sentence of the pope was ever carried into execution." According to Bale, "Hee governed his church prudently some thirty yeeres, and gave place to nature." He died on the 27th of November, 784 or 785, and was esteemed a man of great piety, as well as of eminent knowledge. Henry Canisius gives a full account of the controversy between him and Boniface, on the subject of the antipodes. All his works are lost, excepting a glossary quoted by Melehior Goldastus, in his notes on Columban. Virgil was canonized in the year 1233, by pope Gregory the Ninth.

## Donat or Dunan.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1038.—DIED A. D. 1074.

DONAT was by birth a Dane, and the first of that nation who was appointed to the see of Dublin. He built the cathedral of the holy Trinity in that city, by the aid of Sitricus, about the year 1038. Little is known about him farther than that he maintained a correspondence with Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, respecting the administration of baptism and the holy sacrament. He died on the 6th of May, 1074, and was buried in his own cathedral, near the high altar. He is by some called "Dunan."

## Patrick.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1074.—DIED A. D. 1084.

PATRICK, a priest of noble birth, was elected to the vacant bishopric on the death of Donat, and was sent by Gothric, king of Dublin, to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, for consecration. He bore with him letters from the clergy and people of Dublin, stating that he was well versed in apostolical and ecclesiastical discipline, and requesting that he might be ordained a bishop. After being examined, and having made a public profession of obedience to Lanfranc, and his successors, "in all things appertaining to the Christian religion," he was consecrated, and was the bearer of letters from Lanfranc, both to Gothric and Tirdelvac, respecting the moral and religious abuses which existed in Ireland. After governing the see of Dublin for about ten years, he was sent by Tirdelvac, who had then obtained the sole sovereignty of Dublin, on a mission to Lanfranc, when he was shipwrecked and drowned, on his way to England, October 10th, 1084.

## Donat O'Haingly.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1085.—DIED A. D. 1095.

DONAT, or Dongus O'Haingly, a Benedictine monk, was appointed by Tirdelvac, king of Ireland, with the consent of his clergy, to the bishopric of Dublin, in the year 1085, and was sent over to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, to be consecrated; to whom he made the following profession of obedience:—"I, Donat, bishop of the see of Dublin, in Ireland, do promise canonical obedience to you, O Lanfranc, archbishop of the holy church of Canterbury, and to your successors." Lanfranc sent over, by him, presents of books and church ornaments to the church of the holy Trinity in Dublin. Donat was highly esteemed in Ireland for his wisdom and learning, and died of the plague on the 23d of November, 1095.

## Samuel O'Haingly.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1095.—DIED A. D. 1121.

SAMUEL O'HAINGLY, nephew to Donat, succeeded him in the see of Dublin. He was a Benedictine monk, of the abbey of St Albans, and was sent over to Canterbury by Muriertaeh, king of Ireland, to be consecrated; the people and clergy joining their consent with that of the king. He was received with much joy on his return by his countrymen, but shortly afterwards seems to have over-strained his privileges, and assumed those of an archbishop, for which he was subsequently reprov'd by Lanfranc. He also stripped his church of the books and ornaments bestowed on it by Lanfranc, which he was commanded to see restored; and he expelled monks, whom Anselm directed should be reinstated. Usher\* states that he died on the 4th of July, 1121; but the *Annals of St Mary's Abbey* place his death in 1122, and others a year later. He was the last bishop of Dublin, his successor, Gregory, being invested with the archiepiscopal dignity.

\* Usher, Sylloge, p. 98.



HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

TO THIRD PERIOD

EXTENDING

FROM THE ENGLISH INVASION TO THE DEATH OF QUEEN  
ELIZABETH.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF

**Distinguished Irishmen**

WHO FLOURISHED DURING THAT PERIOD.



# HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

TO

## THIRD PERIOD.

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Closing Events to the last Period—State of the Country at the beginning of the present—General Causes of the English Invasion—Means of Resistance—Calamitous Period which followed—Question of Conquest—Manners—Conclusion.

*Closing Events of the previous Period.*—The fatal precedent of Bryan's usurpation had generally excited the disposition of the aspiring and unscrupulous to pursue the same course. The right of succession, rendered venerable by custom, and protected by the very prejudices of the nation, when once deprived of this old constitutional safeguard, was laid open as a tempting prize to the ambition of the strongest. Neither the monarchical crown, or the right of alternate inheritance could, unless under favourable circumstances, any more be peacefully transmitted from branch to branch of the respective families of Munster and Tara; but became the object of a contention liable to recur whenever the golden prize seemed attainable by whatever stretch of right. The consequence was, the rapid diffusion of a spirit of intrigue which degraded, and of dissension which weakened the greater chiefs; while the country, thus exposed to perpetual broils, and deprived of the tranquil workings of those longer intervals of peace which lead to the increase of civilization, gradually, but with no slow descent, became degraded into a state of barbarism, of which the consequences were fatal to many generations. On Turlogh's death, Munster was divided among his three sons. Of these, one soon dying, a fierce and lingering contest commenced between Murkertach and Dermot, the remaining brothers. Murkertach, at the outset, succeeded so far as to obtain possession of the throne. But Dermot, who had been obliged to take refuge in Connaught, found a powerful alliance in the kings of the other provinces. This alliance was indeed, so far as Dermot's object was concerned, no better than specious: as enmity to Murkertach, who claimed the monarchy, was rather the object than regard for him. But a fiercer and stronger motive actuated Domnal M'Lochlin, the rightful claimant of the throne—who boldly announced his right, and his resolution to maintain it. He was met by the fatal plea of the new order of things above explained; it was as if the herald's trumpet had proclaimed among the princes of the land, "there is an end to right



for evermore;" a call to the inheritance of unremitting strife, when the only resource of strife was the field of battle.

M'Lochlin was joined in arms by the king of Connaught, and prudently suppressing all present mention of his own claims, he marched, under the pretence of redressing Dermot's wrongs, against Murkertach. Invading Munster, he spread desolation from Limerick, "as far as Imleach Ibar, the castle of Ached and Lochgar."\* Nor did he pause in his destructive course until he laid the palace of Kincora in ruin. As was common enough in the warfare of that period, Murkertach retaliated, by pursuing a separate march of devastation up the Shannon, where, sparing neither sacred or profane, he plundered the churches and the people with an indiscriminating fury. Having carried destruction here to an extent rarely experienced from a native prince; Murkertach next entered the province of Leinster, which he reduced to submission, and seizing possession of Dublin, he expelled its Danish king and assumed the government himself.

The next step of this contest, contrasted with the former, exhibits, in a strong point of view, one of the most fatal characters of Irish warfare—that the people were the entire sufferers. All these wars were, in the main, against property: in destroying its security, they diminished the motive for its improvement, and thus took away the very first principle of civilization. The "*quicquid delirant reges*" of the Roman, never had, in Homer's fierce confederacy of royal warriors, an application so fearfully true as here. Neither, it must be added, did these desolating contests effect the only advantages to be drawn from habitual strife—the preparation to resist a common foe. Of this, the proof will ere long be apparent. Each of the chiefs had, it is likely, enriched himself with the plunder of a province. But when it came to the point when blows and bloodshed were to risk the nicely-balanced chance of war between two princes of equal abilities and resources, the prudence of a compromise became obvious.

The two princes feeling that nothing was likely to be gained by farther strife, came to an agreement to settle their difference by a mutual compromise. Meeting at Lough Neagh, they pledged themselves upon the relics of saints, and by oaths of the most solemn import, to divide the kingdom of Ireland; according to the well-known ancient line which separated the northern Leath Cuinn, from the southern Leath Mogh. Of these the latter was to be possessed by Murkertach, the former by M'Lochlin. This treaty was witnessed by Meleachlin prince of Meath, and O'Connor king of Connaught, who are supposed to have, jointly with Murkertach, acknowledged the supremacy of M'Lochlin.

The inconclusiveness of such pledges was among the most especial evils of the age. The passions, excited by ambition and emulation, having their operation within the contracted sphere of provincial authority, acquired the virulence of personal feelings; and being let loose by the demolition of ancient restraints, were no longer to be constrained by pledges, the sole effect of which could be to give the conscience an effective influence. The reverence for customary barriers, and still more the respect for the law of opinion, ever the main controllers of

\* Four Masters.

the vast majority of human minds that are not subject to any higher control, had been recently demolished; and henceforward the only security for the most consecrated right, was to be the power to hold it.

The hereditary right to the monarchy was unquestionably in the family of M'Lochlin, the representative of the southern branch of the Hy-Niel dynasty; while Murkertach's right could have no other foundation than in the usurpation of his great-grandfather Bryan, maintained by the disputed ascendancy of the intervening ancestors. A long and sanguinary struggle followed, which exposed the rival princes to various changes of fortune, and brought on a ruinous dissolution of laws, moral feelings, religious reverence, all the sanctions of opinion and habit, and all the holds and interests of social life. Throughout the country, the law of vested right (if we may apply a term which has acquired a technical sense) was virtually abolished, and it was open to every small proprietor (the real character of these petty princes) to avail himself of force or fraud to assail his neighbour's right. The annals of the next thirty years attest the evils of such a state of things, with more than their wonted prevalence of sanguinary record.

Leading his army into Ulster, Murkertach caused the palace of Aileach to be razed to the foundation, and similarly destroyed all the surrounding churches in the district. He was in this violent step actuated by a vindictive recollection of the fate of his ancestors' palace of Kincora. It is easy for those who can have felt the natural affection for the seat of hereditary youthful recollections, to understand the impulse, though carried, in this instance, far below the level of generous or manly indignation. But we recognise the spirit of the age, and the revenge of the barbarian in the command, to leave no stone in Aileach, but to bear all that could be carried away to Limerick. A deed which appears to have found its praise or censure in the poetry of the age—"Let not the congregation of the saints hear what has reached the congregation of warriors, that all the stones of Alichia were heaped on the pack-horses of the angry king."\*

Notwithstanding the signal overthrow and the numerous disasters which the Danes had experienced in Ireland, it is sufficiently apparent that there was no decided interruption to the real progress of that industrious and persevering nation, in acquiring the rights of naturalization and the privileges of superior civilization in the country. The slaughters and defeats so often recorded by the annalists, were neither so decisive as they are made to seem in those brief entries, and they were more than counterbalanced by successes of a similar nature. The truth is in some measure concealed from the reader of the history of those periods, from the tone of misrepresentation unconsciously adopted by the patriotism of our historians. The true position of the Danes, at this period, is best to be understood by viewing them as a sept of Irish, distinguished from the other septs by some peculiar civil as well as natural characteristics. They were intermixed with them in the alliances of peace and the collisions of strife, as the septs and tribes were amongst each other; forming similar alliances by treaty and intermarriage, and when in peace living on terms of good-will and

\* Moore, ii. 163.



intercourse with the bordering districts. But in their collisions with the natives, there was this very conceivable cause of difference—the reproach of foreign blood: hostility naturally seeks to discover and aggravate all considerations from which reproach may grow; the appeal to popular or national feeling, the effort which resentment will ever make to expand its private wrong into a common cause, could not fail to seize on the reproach of a foreign origin, a different creed, or to charge as peculiar, the crimes common to all. This ancient artifice of faction has found its hollow echo in the despicable cant of the spurious or fanciful patriotism of modern times. But on a sober comparison of facts, it becomes clear beyond reasonable doubt, that in this interval between the battle of Clontarf and the invasion of the English, the Danes had become not only a portion of the nation, but a main support of its fast decline of power and civilization, and its most effective defence in the shock of a new revolution. Their descendants, at this moment, form a considerable portion of the people of Ireland, which, in reality, derives its descent from the mingled blood of three nations. Nor, indeed, can it with strict truth be said, that the ancient Irish race has any existence now in that unmixed state, which the blind fondness of nationality is desirous to assume. In some future period, when a happier juncture of circumstances shall have extended to our people the blessing of civilization, it will be found that this mixed race combines most of the best qualities of the triple ancestry, which its demagogues would tempt it to disclaim.

The conversion of the Danes to Christianity had removed the great barrier between them and the native population. This conversion was in some respects imperfect; but if it was, the Christianity of the nation was long fallen from its influence and purity. The standard of primitive faith, long preserved in the sequestered Irish church, had at length been lowered both in doctrine and moral efficacy by the secularizing influence which corrupted the European churches.

This union between the Irish and Danes, was, however, much retarded by the continuance of northern descents upon the island. The continued transfusion of foreign blood and spirit, must have retarded a combination, dependent on the increasing affinities of habit and mutual interest. During Murkertach's reign, many of these fresh hostile importations had taken place. Of these, some are of sufficient importance and magnitude for distinct notice. Godred, an Iceland chief, came over with a considerable armament, and made himself master of Dublin, and a large tract of Leinster; having for some time, by means of his fleet, tyrannized over the surrounding seas, and restricted within narrow limits the commercial intercourse of the British Isles, his name disappears in the obscurity of the chronicles of the age. A more important enemy was the celebrated\* Magnus, king of Norway, the

\* In that singularly bold and original masterpiece, *The Pirate*, Sir Walter Scott has given to this race a celebrity which brings them into strong relief from the obscure canvas of northern tradition. Few of our readers will fail to recollect the Runic incantations and sublime phrenzy of "Norna of the Fitful Head," or to recall old Magnus, the descendant of the pirate sea-kings, in his marine villa, appropriately built and furnished with the spoil of shipwrecks and the plunder of nations.



Hebrides, and the Isle of Man. The marriage of his son, Sigurd, with the daughter of Murkertach, seemed, to his grasping policy, to open a way to the extension of his dominion into Ireland. The Irish monarch having, with the wonted faithlessness of the period, violated the terms of the treaty which had been made on this union, Magnus made a descent on the island. The result was unfortunate—the natives contrived to surprise his force by one of those manœuvres for which they seem to have had at all times a peculiar genius: the Norwegian king was entangled in the hidden terrors of a numerous ambush, and, with his army, cut off without the power of effective resistance.

Mr Moore, in this period of his history, quotes William of Malmesbury in support of the important surmise, that the commerce between England and Ireland was then more habitual than is generally supposed. The inference seems unquestionably to follow; and yet it is easier to doubt the fidelity or the information of the chronicler, than to allow much weight to an inference apparently so inconsistent with the history of the age. That trade, to a limited extent, and such as might be inferred from this general history, had taken place between the countries, can easily be proved. The close connexion between the Danish races in both, together with their commercial character, and the abundant pastoral produce of this island, must have created an intercourse of trade, restricted by many causes, to explain which would lead us too far.

In 1103, Murkertach sustained a severe defeat from MacLochlin, from which he is said never to have entirely recovered. His subsequent conduct was probably such as to conciliate for him the favour of the church, as different instances are mentioned by the *Four Masters* of his being protected by the interposition of Celsus.

A severe illness, in 1114, probably consequent on the breaking of the powers of life attendant on old age, called up the ambition of his brother Dermot from its long torpor of repose. Murkertach, feeling himself unequal to the disturbance and vicissitudes inseparable from such contentions, soon found it expedient to consult the suggestions of a wiser spirit, by resigning the sceptre, which he found it difficult to hold, into the eager grasp of his brother, and entered into the monastery of Lismore, where he died, 1119.

MacLochlin, who had trod the same path of secular ambition and violence, was, by the instrumentality of reverse, conducted to the same penitent end. The unspiritual career of both had been largely qualified by munificence to the church, and in the utmost excess of their least justifiable courses, they had wisely paved the way for reconciliation. The ideas of religious restoration, and the forgiveness to be won by acts of munificence or by the merits of self-infliction and spiritual abasement, were something widely different from the earlier or more recent doctrines of the church. But however discordant with the original institutions of its Divine Founder, Christianity had assumed a tone and character in strict accordance with that period. The power and political influence of a corrupt church were then undoubtedly increased, by an understanding which transferred penitence from the broken spirit and contrite heart, to the act which could be at will performed by the purse and the scourge.

It should, at the same time, be observed, that the corruptions which had arisen through that long period of obscurity, emphatically termed the darker ages, did not in the British isles at any time amount to the deep central midnight of Italian superstition: around the remoter borders of the papal empire, there played a faint stream of freer air; there was indeed, in every church, resistance proportioned to the learning of the bishops, the civilization of the chiefs, and to their remoteness from the central machinery of that unhallowed empire of intrigue and darkness.

The Danish churches in Ireland were united with their English brethren, under the jurisdiction of the see of Canterbury. And although the Irish bishops acknowledged no share in this connexion, there was yet maintained a friendly communication between the most distinguished persons in either church, of which the remains are honourable to both. From the letters written by Lanfranc and his successor, inferences unfavourable to the discipline and influence of the Irish church at this time, appear to follow: in some measure, such inferences are indirectly corroborated by the general indications of the moral state of the people; but allowances are to be made for the misinterpretation of conduct arising from ignorance of national customs. The state of the Irish was peculiar—the remains of an ancient order of civilization were combined, somewhat fantastically, with the two deep shades of real and apparent barbarism. The one, the result of the progress of the surrounding world; the other, the retrogression attendant on the continued prevalence of a state unfavourable to the existence of civilization: an observation the more intelligible, as it has yet an application to the state of the lower classes in Ireland, which, though in many important respects different, is yet in principle the same.

The impulse given to civil discord by the disturbance of prescriptive right, with the usual and necessary operation of all such interferences, when not conducted by the most disinterested integrity and wisdom, and according to the most rigid principles of constitutional right, propagated itself on into increased disorders of the same nature. The law of succession had fallen into a confusion, which demanded more than human energy to rectify. The chaos of contesting claimants produced a long interregnum which lasted for fifteen years. In this continued struggle, Tirdelvac, the king of Connaught, was to be distinguished as first in vigour and activity. Between him and the kings of Munster, who succeeded each other in this interval, an unintermitting succession of hostilities was carried on with various fortune. An active and valiant leader in the field, Tirdelvac was no less alert and much more successful in the game of diplomacy. And at length after a long and doubtful struggle, in which his prospects had often been reduced to the verge of ruin, he contrived to scatter dissension between the Eugenian and Dalcassian tribes; the details of this course need not detain us here. The fiercest part of the struggle through which he had to make his way by slaughter to a throne, seems to have been the last; when a brief succession of furious and bloody collisions with Connor O'Brian, ended, through the mediation of the clergy, in a peace, of which Tirdelvac's genius, or the favour of the



ecclesiastical arbitrators, secured for him the advantages. Between the success of his arms, and the adroitness of his policy, he at length obtained the monarchical supremacy in 1136.

The spirited descendants of Brian, were little likely to acquiesce in the departure of the supreme power from a house in which it seemed to have been vested by usurpation, and secured by hereditary valour. But the contagion of discord, had spread from house to house, and from branch to branch. Weakened by dissensions which were fatal in proportion to the combative alertness of the warlike Momonians, the Munster kingdom began to exhibit signs of rapid dissolution.

In this eventful crisis, when the actors of a new and unthought of order of things were entering on the stage of worldly events, we must for the first time introduce the name of one, in whom virtues far beyond the ordinary standard of Irish monarchs, were, through a long and eventful life, to be neutralized by an adverse combination of events. Roderic, the son of Tirdelvac, who was to witness the passing away of the power and glory of the monarchy, was to give the last blow to the falling throne of Munster. At the head of a chosen band he made an irruption into Munster, and burned Kincora to the ground. The insult roused from its recesses the entire spirit of the Munster tribes; a vigorous effort on either side brought together the full force of both, into the fatal field of Moindnoe, where the army of Munster was defeated, and the king of Thomond, with the flower of the Dalcassian peerage, fell upon a bloody field among seven thousand of their bravest men.

Tirdelvac died about 1150, the exact year is not ascertained, after an active and eventful life of various and extreme vicissitude, crowned with a prosperous termination. And as, in human estimation, the actions of public men are oftenest judged by the event, his historians are not unwarranted in applying the epithet of great, to one whose virtues appear to have been confined to those qualities which secured a dear bought honour for his own person, at the cost of many a field of slaughter, and the peace of nearly half a century of wide wasting and demoralizing civil contention, which but too well prepared for the darker crisis which was at hand. At the close of a career marked by the continual breach of all that Christianity has pure and elevating to humanity, he indicated his fears or wishes for futurity, by lavish bequests to the church, of the wealth he could retain no longer in his grasp.

He was succeeded by Murtagh MacLochlin, whose succession was interrupted by no rival. In truth this tranquil moment was simply the exhaustion of a state of national collapse. The fiery atoms were burnt out, in the dance of confusion which had signalized the age. Roderic made some hesitating demonstrations, but they were discountenanced; and, on being brought to the trial of arms, subsided, with some loss of life to the people and no material consequence to the chiefs, into a calm acquiescence in the monarch's right. MacLochlin did not long survive this decision, and Roderic quietly succeeded to the monarchy.

We have now slightly, but sufficiently for our design, traced the stream of Irish history from period to period. We have next to



make some general remarks upon the period upon which we are now to enter. As the Danes occupied a prominent space in the annals of the preceding centuries, so we are now to transfer our attention, with an increasing interest, to the connexion with the sister isle of England; and to keep in view the relations to which the fortune of our island became indissolubly united with her for good and evil.

*State of the Country.*—At the commencement of the period upon which we are now to enter, some centuries of continued oppression and disorder, had not only retarded all national advance, but occasioned a considerable decline of prosperity and civilization. The refinement and literature of the middle ages, confined to a particular class, had never been, at any time, productive of that diffusive popular influence, which is the growth of recent times: there was therefore no rooted civilization adequate to withstand the repeated shocks of invasion, feud, rapine, and oppression. It cannot therefore be a subject of wonder if, at the coming of the English, the real state of the people was that of nearly pure barbarism. They who, from political motives, find it useful to their objects to deal in exaggerations and popular flatteries, may attempt to conceal the facts or to dispute them; but such they were, nor was it possible for them to be otherwise. The contrary supposition is quite inconsistent with any regard to possibility, or to the facts of history. Had such a state of things continued without interruption, it may be with some probability supposed, that it might have still led to a better: the Danes had become Christian, and were fast melting into the national population. The growth of cities, the advance of commerce, the spirit of freedom and civil equalization which result from corporate institutions, might, by a slow progress in the lapse of ages, have enabled this island to follow in the wake of improvement. But these are yet but assumptions: in the then existing state of the country, its laws, manners or civil institutions, there was nothing for the loss of which the philosophic historian will be likely to lament. And had the English conquest been but *complete*, there was no other event so likely to have led the country as rapidly forward in the advance of surrounding nations.

The circumstances which had the fatal effect of preventing this desirable consummation are now to be brought before us in all the detail of biography.

The sources of literary information for this purpose, continue as yet but scanty, and afford little means of personal portraiture. The individuals whom we shall have to speak of, must as hitherto be but indistinctly seen through the medium of the events, of which they were the actors and sufferers: our materials must be rather the events than the men. It will be therefore unnecessary, to encumber our page, with any prefatory sketch of a history, which it will thus be our business to pursue in detail. A few general facts, and observations, will, nevertheless, prepare our reader, for the more distinct and thorough appreciation of the scenes, persons, and events, which are to pass before him in lengthened array.

*Causes.*—If we look for the causes of the English invasion, they are too apparent to occupy research and space. A succession of monarchs whose interest, ambition and pleasure, was war—the game

of kings and the sport of feudal chivalry—must always have looked on a country, in the state of this island, as an object of enterprise. Nor was there any thing, in point of reality, to shelter it from the valour and activity which had for ages disturbed the repose of France, and made its fields the theatre of British valour, but the low state of civilization, which made this island less an object to attract attention, excite cupidity, or awaken military ambition. The mere possession of an uncultured territory, had not the value which would have made it a full equivalent for the expense of invasion. And it was then evident that generations must elapse before the new conquest, if made, would be brought into a state of subordination and civil order, such as to make it an integral addition to the English throne. The ablest and most clear-sighted monarchs who sat upon a throne, made ever uneasy by the turbulence and insubordination of the English baronage, were also likely to have seen in the progress of such a war, and the occupation of such a territory, the means rather for the increase of the baronial power than that of the throne. It was indeed only in a reign of unusual vigour and military success, and in a state of profound peace with the other surrounding countries, that it could have been attempted in a manner conformable to the actual objects of royal ambition. The conquest, to be effectual for any desirable purpose, should be led by the monarch, and end in a thorough subjugation and settlement of the country. Such was accordingly the design of Henry. But such a project might have slept till other times, had not the course and concurrence of circumstances effected, by a different method and to a different issue, the object which the embarrassments and prudence of Henry deferred.

*Means of Resistance.*—If, from the causes which may have led to the events of the following period, we look to the means of aggression and resistance, there is nothing worthy of remark that will not suggest itself to the reader. While the constitution of England was such as to offer many obstacles, nearly, if not wholly, insurmountable to foreign conquest: the state of this island was such as to afford little means of resistance against invasion. In England, the nature of feudal military service was unfavourable to all enterprises which demanded time and cost, as it was limited to a certain number of days, and at the cost of the baron who led his retainers or feudal tenants to the field. And though the warlike monarchs of England found means, in an age of which the occupation was war, to keep large armies in the field, it was only at a cost wholly beyond the limits of national sufferance, and which seldom failed to involve their reigns in embarrassment and strife, or by the exceeding popularity of the war amongst the greater barons. There was, at the period of Henry II., no standing body of forces which cost upwards of six annual millions for its support, nor had public credit, by which alone a permanent fund of this nature could be secured, been thought of. It was thus that the execution of the invasion, which was now to occur, was little likely to be effected, unless by the ambition or the cupidity of individuals. Henry, already engaged in a war with France, and engrossed by the stormy politics of his own dominions and the turbulence of his rebellious sons, had enough to fill his mind and exhaust his resources.



But the means of resistance were slight and ineffective. Military science had gained considerable progress in England, of which the chivalry stood in the foremost rank of all that was renowned and illustrious in Europe. The Irish were utterly ignorant of all military knowledge beyond the rude ambuscades and tumultuary onsets and flights, to which their bogs and forests gave the little advantage they had against their disciplined adversaries.

In the course of time, they unquestionably learned from their conquerors, and became dangerous antagonists in the field: but even after a struggle, which lasted for generations, the native Irish were even physically inferior to their invaders.

*Question of Conquest.*—The question as to the completeness of the conquest of Ireland, has been debated with a zeal and ability, which impresses the notion that it must have some importance. It has absolutely none; and can only lead to any practical inference by some combination of illusions. The right of mere forcible occupation, only lasts so long as it can be maintained by force: but the rights which may arise out of it, as they pass down the course of ages, assume the form of prescription, the main foundation of all right, and cannot be touched without shaking the very name of right, and endangering the foundation of both property and civil order. Ireland, an integral member of Great Britain, is connected with the nation by no link which is understood to imply conquest, but is depressed by some disadvantages and inequalities which arise from her different condition and state of social advance, or at least are so understood. If then the question of conquest be discussed, it is only rationally to be considered as a point of national pride, or as a means of exciting popular enthusiasm; and as such, it is nugatory still. If the conquest of Ireland was not completed, it was from no conduct on the part of her rulers, or valour on that of the people. But the reader may judge from the events to be detailed hereafter.

A more serious question is, as to the injustice and impolicy of not establishing the law of England as the law of the land, though often and earnestly sought by the Irish people. The answer appears to us to be, that it would have been inexpedient, or indeed impossible, until the time had arrived when the natives could be controlled and governed, as well as protected, by the English laws. They sought their protection, and had no design of submitting to them. We must at the same time admit that, as in all human concerns, evil motives are likely to have concurred with policy. The support of right and the maintenance of civil order, do not necessarily imply spotless honour and justice in the governors. Such is man, a mixture of good and evil, and such his best acts.

*Manners and Civilization of this Period.*—The history of England, unlike our own, has long been rendered easy of general access. The history of the Saxon Heptarchy, is more familiar to children, than many portions of Irish history up to our own day to learned men. It is quite unnecessary to dwell on topics with which every eye is familiar. But it will be conducive to clear notions of these times, now about to be entered upon, if we can recall to the reader's memory something of the general state of knowledge and manners peculiar to them.



There is, indeed, no function of history of more importance, or which has been so inadequately fulfilled. The historian is generally satisfied with the views of mankind, which are presented in the progress of events: in these, however, none but the broader and more abstract characters of humanity are seen. Man appears, therefore, in the historian's page, only in his gregarious capacity—masked in the common conventions of the crowd. All that characterizes the person or the home scene of domestic life, are sunk and clouded in the far off march of generations. And when, as it must sometimes occur, a glimpse of the individual appears: the features and the acts, are mostly so unlike all that we know and feel—so little to be resolved into the motives of existing men—that the reader cannot accord the sympathy or even the credence, which the interest of the page requires. The materials for personal portraiture are slight. It was not, indeed, even possible for the annalists of any period, to foresee the importance or interest of the minuter details and colouring of social life to future times. The Saxon chronicler, or the monk of Croyland, could little foresee a period, when the flowing romance with which they made their histories palatable to the ear of adventure-loving vacancy, would have infinitely less interest than a clear and distinct sketch of the simplest and plainest details of the daily life that was passing under their eyes. The learning of the stately oratory and illuminated scroll,—the gothic pomp of architecture, the magnificence of all in the costly decoration, of which the remains are now but monumental, of generations whose life and fashion has passed from memory, remain, nevertheless, the sure testimonies of past refinement, intellectual cultivation, art, luxury, and commerce. The application, however rude it was, of ancient literature, had a charm for the aristocracy—the study of architecture, directed by a taste and a reach of magnificent conception, still attractive to the cultivated eye—the castles and churches which covered the land, are signs of a certain advance in the arts of life. To these may be added the various remains of ancient furniture and household utensils: and the various art exhibited in the arms and machinery of war. Proofs still more distinct, are those records which remain of the feast—the public solemnity, the tournament—of the food, dress and money—of the value of land—the prices of commodities, and the various fiscal regulations, that exhibit the growth of an orderly community, a civil government, and national institutions.

In the reign of Henry the Second, the state of civilization in England, was in some important respects advanced to a high stage of refinement and luxury: in others, to those who look from the high ground of modern times, it must appear still upon the verge of barbarism. Many useful discoveries and inventions, which have changed the state of society, were yet unknown—literature was unrestored from the ruins of the ancient world—laws and constitutional improvements, of which a form of civil liberty, perfect beyond the dreams of ancient philosophy and poetry, was to be the result, remained yet for time and providence to develop; but considering the general scale of the wealth and knowledge of the age, England had made rapid and well-directed advances towards the still remote maturity of civilization. In many things barbaric, because such was the general character, the English nation

even then held the foremost station in the advance of that period, which she has ever since retained. Not backward in literature, which was hardly yet a feature of refinement, she was polished in manners, and consummate in the military arts of the time. Chivalry, with its barbaresque ornaments of morals and manners, though inconsistent with more sober and true moral wisdom, and with the constitutional laws and customs of modern society, was but a portion of the ancient scaffolding of the growing structure, and among the various results which developed some of the higher social functions and passed away:—

“Endured their destined period, and fulfilled  
Their purposed end, then at the appointed hour  
Fell into ruin.”\*

The surest indication of the advance of the social state, is the progress of constitutional government, of which the improvement marks the steps of growing national prosperity, as its corruption accompanies the decline and falling of states. The establishment of regular courts of judicature, in which the law is supposed to shut out the fallible discretion of individual opinion; however defective in construction, or existing state of law, is yet an element of high civilization, and bespeaks a far advance towards the perfection of civil order.

The stormy collisions between the barons and the throne, have been adduced as supporting an opposite inference. But in this there is an oversight of no small magnitude; their occasions are overlooked and their real value—a far advance towards civil order. Of the same nature are the contests between the orders of the state, and their consequences. For though sometimes adverted to, for the purpose of strengthening the opposite inference, by the Irish historians: their real value, is the universal sense they indicate of the importance of just laws and constitutional rights. The constitution of England, as best described by the most authoritative modern lawyers, may be discerned afar by the philosophical historian, reflected from the mind and spirit of every order of the English nation, from the commencement of the varied and long-continued series of actions and reactions, which fill the whole period from the battle of Hastings to the Revolution in 1688. To estimate the value of the argument which can be drawn from the disorders and varied collisions of this period, from which Leland and others have inferred a rash comparison between England and Ireland in the ensuing period, an important omission in their premises is to be supplied. The causes of national disorder on either side are to be minutely investigated. The collision of tumultuary factions or of embattled ranks, tells nothing but the fatal condition of human nature; for it is the occasion and the cause. There is in the main course of English history a constant struggle, of which the cause is mostly political in its character. In the whole course of contemporary Irish disorders, on the other hand, there is, traceably and simply, an individual impulse, or the operation of some vindictive passion, or the attraction of plunder. The wars between the contending chiefs—the struggle between these and the Danes—the long and sanguinary strug-

\* The Universe, p. 60.



gle between the Geraldines and Butlers, and their still more disorderly succession of aggressions and retaliations between these and the ancient septs: have in them not a single feature of national or political collision. There is no point of resemblance between them and the revolts of the barons, or even the insurrections of Cade and Tyler—not to speak of the wars of the Roses, or the fearful civil wars of later periods—but the common consequence of national calamity.

If from these considerations we pass to the actual state of Irish civilization at this period to which we are arrived, we find the fullest and most authentic accounts confirming each other in the representation of a state of the most evident national decline. And while we can discover abundant and satisfactory proofs of a high state of ancient refinement, the evidences of more recent barbarism are equally beyond the reach of sober denial. On this point, however, any thing we could say, has found expression throughout the preceding divisions of this volume. We shall now therefore content ourselves with a brief specific notice of the manners, knowledge, and arts of the Irish, at the commencement and during the early centuries of the English period.

The state of manners mentioned, continued to deepen in the features of barbarism, to times within the scope of modern history. An unreflecting and indiscriminating spirit strongly tinctured with prejudice and party feeling, has viewed them as neutralizing the claims of Irish antiquity. But the more just view, regards them as the natural and necessary consequence of a long suspension of the laws of social order. The operation of circumstances which continue to render life, subsistence, and property precarious, of themselves constitute a necessary approximation to the state of savage life, and cannot continue long to operate, without rendering it a habit; a simple and self-evident principle, which involves the whole history of barbarism. Cambrensis, after all deductions are made for nationality or prejudice, gives in his history of the English conquest, the unequivocal portraiture of a people if not wholly barbarian, yet unquestionably in the very lowest state of civilization. The same impression is made by Spenser, after the interval of several centuries. We cannot here protract this introduction with a description which is transfused through his pages; but we shall hereafter avail ourselves of his most valuable authority and graphic portraiture as we approach a later period.

There is no topic of this introduction that will not of necessity recur, and it is to avoid swelling our volume with needless repetition, that we have given but a cursory glance at these main topics by which this long period is mainly to derive its character. We shall therefore conclude, with a few remarks on the broader transitions which are to stamp a period, for which, from the scantiness of personal history, we have been compelled to take a lengthened scope. It is indeed a curious feature of our history which marks it from the beginning nearly to the end, that it presents itself in no regular unbroken series of events, but a remotely interrupted succession of fits of light and darkness, of loud and flashing tempests, followed by long and lifeless calms. Beginning with saints and heroes, of whom we have selected enough to illustrate an age, we become soon involved in a period of invasion, slaughter, and sacrilege, which slowly subsides into a state of national



demoralization and anarchy, from which any change would seem to be an advantage. From this we enter into a stirring period, of which the history is more accessible and authentic, and the persons more distinct. Of these, the fortunes present no small interest, as their difficulties and dangers appear to be great, and their aim considerable: their conduct too occasionally presents the attraction of chivalric heroism, and constancy of spirit unflinching under the most formidable trials. But their period is confined to a single generation; the Fitz-Stephens, De Courcys, and St Laurences pass; and there occurs a long interval of which every historian laments the obscurity. The two centuries and upwards of murders, massacres, and civil wars, between rival barons and rival races, throughout the whole of which there is no virtue to redeem, or splendour to give life to the torpid succession of the Lacies and De Burgos, the Geraldines and Butlers, who follow each other across the dark and sanguinary stage, till the power of Elizabeth's reign closes the scene.

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## I. POLITICAL SERIES.

### **Dermot Macmurragh.**

KING OF LEINSTER. A. D. 1150.

DERMOT MACMURRAGH is generally represented in an odious light, by the historians of this period. His father had the reputation of a cruel and barbarous tyrant; he is said to have seized on seventeen of his chief nobility, some of whom he murdered, and the rest he deprived of sight. The son inherited his father's cruelty, and probably improved this inheritance by vices of his own. His chieftains were oppressed by his robberies and civil invasions of their rights and personal immunities. The church, however, was conciliated by his politic liberality; and the lower classes, who were, as is ever found, the indiscriminating instruments of the wrong-doer, were the grateful dependants of his protection and bounty, and the admirers of his personal qualifications. These were such as ever secure the admiration of the ignorant: stature, strength, and personal bravery; and a rude, gross, and violent deportment. He was noted for the hoarseness acquired by a habit of constant vociferation; from which we may infer that the repulsiveness of his character was heightened by frequent irritability, and furious excesses of passion on slight occasions. Many of these personal defects are probably concealed by the partial hand of his friendly biographer, Maurice O'Regan, from whom our most trustworthy authority is derived.

Such a character had nevertheless attraction for the lady Devorgoil, daughter of the prince of Meath, and wife of O'Ruark, the prince of Brefni (*Leinster*), who was neither deterred by the coarseness of his person and manner, the vices of his character, or by his cruelty against her injured husband. Between Dermot and the prince of Brefni, a keen and bitter animosity had long subsisted. It was perhaps aggra-

vated by vindictive passion on one side, and jealousy on the other; for it is said that before her marriage with O'Ruark, a passion between Dermot and herself had been mutually felt and communicated. The eager contention for power, was at all events sufficient occasion for the fierce hostility of the base Dermot.

A truce between the two leading potentates of the north and west, O'Connor and O'Lochlin, happened at this time: one of its consequences, traced to the instigation of Dermot, was the expulsion of O'Ruark from his territory. The enterprise was undertaken by Dermot, in league with Tirlogh O'Connor. Resistance was of little avail: the unfortunate prince of Brefni was ejected. But the immediate consequence with which our narrative is concerned, was the injury to which so much importance in the history of Ireland has been given, in tale and song; the abduction of the fair Devorgoil.\* For this shameful purpose Dermot took advantage of the extremity of his enemy's misfortunes, and inflicted upon him one which may be generally felt to be a greater misery than all. Something, however, will be subtracted from the amount of the reader's pity, in consideration of the unworthy participation of the princess. In the anxiety of ambitious contrivances, and the hurry of armed aggression, a message from the lady reminded the licentious king of Leinster, that softer interests were to be pursued, and that however willing, the same of the object of his guilty love was to be consulted by the appearance of violence. Hammer, under the veil of some Latin sentences, gives a disgusting picture of the character of Devorgoil, and one not less gross of the rude and indecent contentions between herself and her husband. He concludes his account of this transaction by saying, that "O'Rorie (O'Ruark), being in pursuit of thieves and kernes that had mightily annoyed his people in the farthest part of his country—she, with all celerity, supposing it a fit time, sent for her lover, Dermot. The message was no sooner delivered, but he was a-horseback, posting to the harlot. To be short, he took her away with him; at which time (O false heart!) she struggled, she cried, as though she were unwilling." This incident had place in 1153, thirteen years before the great events with which, by the industrious romance of poets and chroniclers, it has been so often forcibly connected. The error has been universally noticed by the most intelligent historians of modern date, from the clear and authentic Leland to Mr Moore, who, having faithfully discharged the devoir of the poet, in his song, too well known for quotation here\*—has, in his *Irish History*, no less honourably performed the opposite office of a veracious historian in exposing the figment of the poet.

The outrage soon brought down vengeance on the guilty Dermot. The prince of Brefni, enraged at the insult, though perhaps regardless of the lady, carried his complaint to Tirdelvac O'Connor; and backed his application with representations still more likely to be persuasive. The crime of Dermot might, according to the loose notions and unsettled principles of a barbarous state of society, be looked on with

\* Every reader will at once recollect Mr Moore's singularly beautiful and affecting version of this incident among his melodies.



indulgence, in the friendly shelter of which every chief might feel an individual interest. But Turlogh was, by the suppliant chief of Brefsni, induced to look on Dermod as treacherous to his paramount authority, and devoted to the service of his rival M'Loghlin. For himself, O'Ruark promised inviolable attachment.

The position of O'Connor made such an accession to his friends desirable. He was in possession of the monarchy; but his claim was disputed by M'Lachlan, the heir of the northern Hy-Niall house, to whom he had been compelled to make large concessions; so that, in point of fact, the kingdom, and the kingly power, were divided between these two rival princes. Under such circumstances, perpetual jealousy and frequent collision were necessary results; and each party must have maintained a constant vigilance, both to prevent surprises, and seize upon such advantages as might offer. By such a powerful combination of motives, O'Connor allowed himself to be won to the redress of the injured O'Ruark. He collected a formidable army and entered the territories of the king of Leinster; who, being ill-supported by his lukewarm and disapproving chiefs, was little capable of resistance. The faithless and abandoned Devorgilla, torn from her guilty paramour, was restored to her husband's house; where she remained for the rest of her days in peace, and preserved a blameless life. It may be inferred, from the laxity of the age, that she was reinstated in the little of domestic regard or honour, to which her character had ever any claim; and it is said, that she manifested a remorseful sense of her crimes, by the "usual method of magnificent donations to the church."

Some popular writers have attached to this incident an importance to which it has no claim; following the authority of Giraldus, they have traced the invasion of Ireland by the Normans, to the infidelity of this "degenerate daughter of Erin,"\* and thus corrupted history with a legend more adapted to the purpose to which Mr Moore has so admirably applied it, than sanctioned by truth. The incident here related took place in 1154; while the flight of Dermod into England was at least fourteen years later, in 1168. In this long interval many violent changes of fortune occurred to the rival chiefs and the rival princes, by whom they were alternately depressed and raised; and the subsequent facts of his history, will sufficiently account for Dermod's eventful action.

Tirdelvae's protection cemented a firm alliance between him and O'Ruark, of which the consequences were severely felt by Dermod. His chiefs were in a condition of perpetual discontent; their passions were tampered with, and dexterously fermented into a state bordering upon rebellion against his authority. Of this his enemies availed themselves.

For two years he was thus harassed with incessant anxiety and exertion; after which he was to have his turn of triumph and revenge for a season. In 1156, the death of Tirlogh O'Connor made way for his rival to the monarchy of Ireland. Dermod was on terms of the strictest amity with O'Loghlin, and was the foremost to assert his right and acknowledge his authority. His zeal was recompensed by

\* Moore's Irish Melodies.



an exertion of his royal ally, which, for a time established his peaceful sway. O'Loughlin's first act was to march an army to his assistance, and secure his authority in Leinster. His revenge was now provided for. During the reign of O'Loughlin, the prince of Leiríim was allowed no rest from aggressions and insults, to which his means of resistance were quite unequal.

For about ten years things remained thus; but, in the year 1167, the hour of retribution came. O'Loughlin, in defiance of all principles of humanity and justice, seized on the prince of Uladh, with whom he had just concluded a treaty, and, with the most barbarous cruelty, deprived him of sight. The surrounding chiefs, shocked at the perfidious outrage, and feeling themselves involved in the insult to their associate, rushed into a confederacy to revenge him. The battle of Litterluin soon followed. O'Loughlin fell, and with him the pretensions of his family; the scale of the house of O'Connor again preponderated, and Roderic ascended the throne of his father, Tirlagh. He also inherited his friendship; and O'Ruarc once more found himself in a condition to bid defiance to his inveterate and mortal foe.

Roderic was a practical warrior. His life had been spent in the field, and he came to the throne of Ireland with considerable reputation. He lost no time in securing his fortunes. He quickly raised a strong force, with which he marched to Dublin. There he was solemnly inaugurated, and increased his forces by retaining in his pay the Ostmen of Dublin. With these he marched into the North, and awed its chieftains into tranquil submission.

Dermot was paralyzed with terror; there was no refuge from the black storm which hung lowering over his guilty head. His aggressions had grown beyond the forgiveness of man, and his provincial power was as a grain of dust in the scale of resistance. In the frenzy of despair, he set fire to his royal seat and town of Ferns, that his enemies might not obtain his spoils. His utmost apprehensions were not beyond the real danger. Roderic, returning from the north, and accompanied by the hostile lord of Leiríim, poured his troops over Leinster. Dermot's chiefs propitiated the invader by submission; and, without the satisfaction of striking a blow for himself, Dermot was formally deposed on the dishonourable ground of utter unworthiness to reign. One of his family was raised to his throne, and gave sureties of allegiance to the paramount authority of Roderic.

Dermot was not wanting to himself in this humiliating crisis of his affairs. He applied to former friends, and sought alliances by promises and flattery; but mortification and insult encountered him wherever he went. His chiefs had, in the first instance, universally deserted him. The lord of Dublin and the lord of Ossory joined his enemies. In this strait he retired to the abbey of Ferns, from whence he sent a monk bearing a letter to Morrogh O'Brián, the lord of Wicklow, in order to persuade him to a conference. In his impatience he followed his messenger; and, meeting his alienated tributary in the open air, by a wood side, was received by him with a scornful disavowal of his authority, and a peremptory command to depart.

Thus universally repulsed, and maddened with anger and despair, in the extremity of his distress Dermot formed a new and desperate

resolution. It occurred to his infuriated mind, that there was still a dreadful path open to revenge and redress. He sailed to Bristol, then the ordinary point of communication between the two countries, "having in his company no other man of marke than Awliffe O'Kinade, and about sixty persons." When he arrived at Bristol, he lodged for a time in the house of Robert Harding, at St Augustin's; and, in a few days, travelled to France to bring his complaint before Henry.

Henry was at this time, 1168, resident in the province of Aquitaine. Thither Dermot proceeded. "He appeared before the king in a most shabby habit, suited to the wretched condition of an exile. He fell at his majesty's feet, and emphatically bewailed his own miseries and misfortunes. He represented the malice of his neighbours and the treachery of his pretended friends; he suggested that kings were then most like gods, when they exercised themselves in succouring the distressed," &c.;\* and was received by the king with the kindness and pity, which his story of wrongs seemed to call for. It is generally agreed, that this politic prince must have been pleased with an incident which, judiciously used, was most likely to promote his own long-cherished designs on Ireland. His hands were, however, otherwise engaged at the time. His French nobles, secretly encouraged by the French king, were nearly in a state of insurrection; and he was, at the same time, involved in a harassing and perilous contest with his clergy. Still resolving to avail himself, as well as he might, of the occasion, he adopted a most wary and dexterous course. He accepted the proffered allegiance of Dermot, and gave him a letter of credence to his English subjects, announcing that he had taken Dermot under his protection and favour; and granting license to whoever of his English subjects might be disposed to aid him in the recovery of his dominions. The advantages of this course are obvious, but they will appear in the progress of events.

Dermot returned to England elated by his success. Again he found his way to Bristol, where he had already secured friends, and was also likely to receive the surest intelligence of affairs in Ireland. There arrived, he lost no time in publishing Henry's letter, and urging his grievances, with the more substantial recommendation of promised advantages and possessions to those who should be induced to embark in his cause. It is however thought that by this time, circumstances of his true history had reached Bristol, and much abated the general impression in his favour, which had been the effect of his previous representations. He found every one whom he addressed cold to his urgent representations: and after continuing for a month engaged in unavailing exertion to awaken an effective sensation in his behalf, he became weary of delay; and thinking his cause forgotten by king Henry, he resolved to change his course, and endeavour to engage the self-interested feelings of powerful individuals. Such he found in Richard, earl of Chepstow, commonly known by the appellation of Strongbow. To him, he now repaired with the offer of his daughter's hand and the succession to his kingdom of Leinster, if by his exertions his power might be restored.

\* Cox.



The proposal was embarrassing to the earl. The offer was tempting to his ambition—but he felt the doubtful and politic character of Henry's conduct: he was perplexed by scrupulous objections, and wavered for a considerable time. The letter of the king seemed scarcely to warrant the magnitude of the request—that a subject of the English crown should levy an army against a neighbouring country. Meanwhile, Dermod reiterated his offers, and with plausible amplification set them in the most attractive prominence before the thoughts of the ambitious earl. Strongbow suffered himself to be prevailed on—and entered into a contract to land in Ireland in the ensuing spring, with a large force, provided he might obtain special permission for this purpose from king Henry.

Dermod now conceived his purpose secured. To return to Ireland with the greater secrecy, he betook himself to St David's in South Wales. Here, as in Bristol, he found a friend in the church. He was received by the bishop with that ready hospitality and commiseration which his munificence had earned from the ecclesiastical orders.

Here he gained two important allies in the persons of Robert Fitz-Stephen, and his half-brother Maurice Fitz-Gerald.

Fitz-Stephen had before this been inveigled into a rebellious plot by a Welsh chief; but, on deliberation, becoming fully aware of the criminality of the undertaking, he showed so much reluctance, that the revolting chief, Rice Fitz-Griffith, had him confined to prison, where at this period he had lain for three years. He now represented to Fitz-Griffith, that the present opportunity was one which might enable him to pursue his own interests without opposing his designs. His entreaties for liberation, were seconded by the bishop and Maurice Fitz-Gerald. Fitz-Griffith yielded, and a covenant was made between Dermod and the brothers, by which they were to land with all their followers in Ireland, for the furtherance of his claims, and in return to receive from him the town of Wexford with a large adjoining tract of land.

"Such," says Leland, "was the original scheme of an invasion, which in the event proved of so much importance. An odious fugitive, driven from his province by faction and revenge, gains a few adventurers in Wales, whom youthful valour or distress of fortune, led into Ireland in hopes of some advantageous settlements. Dermod who, no doubt, encouraged his new allies by the assurance of a powerful reinforcement of his countrymen, was obliged to affect impatience to depart and to provide for their reception. He paid his vows in the church of St David, embarked, landed in Ireland, passed without discovery through the quarters of his enemies, arrived at Ferns, and was entertained and concealed in the monastery which he himself had erected: waiting impatiently for the return of spring, when the English powers were to come to his assistance."\* Of this expectation, the report was industriously spread; and while it animated the flagging zeal of his friends and adherents, it made concealment, yet so necessary to his safety, impossible. The crowds who flocked to receive, from their old master, the most authentic confirmation of the news, had the dangerous effect

\* Leland, i. 21.



of attracting general attention. Unable to maintain the secrecy so much to be desired, the assumption of an attitude of defiance, or at least of confidence, seemed to be the safer alternative. There was, at least, a probability that nothing very decisive could be effected by his enemies, before the arrival of the English. Under this impression, and feeling the urgency of his friends, as well as yielding to his own impulse, he assumed an attitude of defiance, and took possession of a portion of his own territories.

His enemies were too alert to allow much advantage to be drawn from this rash effort. They had been surprised by his unexpected re-appearance in the field, and were alarmed by the report of a foreign invasion. Roderic collected a force, and, with his trusty friend O'Ruark, entered the territory which had thus been seized by Dermot. The event was quickly decided. Dermot, terror-struck at the approach of his inveterate enemies, and having no adequate means of resistance, fled before their appearance, and with his little force concealed himself in the woods. Here he received encouragement from the strength of a position favourable to the action of a small party; and summoning resolution to maintain a front of opposition, he engaged in repeated skirmishes with detached parties of the enemy, in which the advantage seemed doubtful, and valuable lives were lost on both sides. This game could not, however, be long protracted against a superior power—and Dermot, with the facility of one to whom solemn engagements were as idle wind, proposed to treat, offered abject submission, but implored, in pity to fallen royalty, to be allowed to hold ten cantreds of his province, in absolute dependence on king Roderic. To give the most perfect appearance of good faith to the proposal, he offered seven hostages to the monarch, and a hundred ounces of gold to O'Ruark, for oblivion of past wrongs. His submission was accepted, on the terms which he proposed. Roderic, hurried by the pressure of his affairs in other quarters, willingly released himself from the interruption of an affair seemingly so little important, and withdrew his forces and attention from the wily traitor, on whose conduct so much depended.

Dermot, now released from the fear of his enemies, and freshly enraged by his new humiliation, may well be supposed to have indulged the anticipations of coming vengeance on the objects of his hate and fear. But he could not also repress his eager impatience at the delay of his English allies, nor avoid recollecting the caution and prudence—the waverings and coldness of manner, which had so often reduced him to despair of succour from his English acquaintance. Abandoned to suspense, he became uncontrollably impatient; and at last despatched Maurice Regan, a confidential friend and dependant, in the quality of ambassador, to hasten the coming of his allies, and if possible to increase them, by active solicitations and liberal promises.

The English knights were already advanced in their preparations. Robert Fitz-Stephen had collected his force: thirty knights, sixty men in armour, and 300 archers, chosen men, and, considering the nature of the service, in themselves a formidable power, embarked early in May, 1169,\* and came to a creek called the Bann, near Wexford city.

\* Leland makes it 1170—we follow Ware.

With these also came unattended, Hervey de Montmorres, as an emissary from his uncle earl Strongbow,—the object of his coming was to inspect the circumstances of the country, and estimate the prospects of success, for the information of the earl. This party sent notice of their arrival to the king of Leinster, and encamped for that night on the shore. The next morning, they were reinforced by Maurice Prendergast, a brave Welshman, who, with ten knights and 200 archers, arrived on the same landing-place.

Dermot received the summons with loud delight, and lost not an instant in hastening to meet them. The next evening he encamped with them at the sea-side, and the following day they marched to Wexford, a distance of twelve miles. On their way, they were joined by Dermot's illegitimate son, Donald Kavanagh, with 500 Irishmen. On their arrival at the suburbs of the city, they were encountered by a party of "about 2000 of the inhabitants." The inhabitants of Wexford were descendants of the united races of Danes and Irish, but chiefly perhaps of Danish blood. These brave men, in their first impulse, had little calculated the terrific odds which they should have to encounter in the small but highly-trained band, which now menaced their city and native land. The glittering mail and marshalled array of Norman valour and discipline, must have presented a spectacle of imposing novelty to their unaccustomed eyes. Their shrewdness was not slow to draw correct inferences from the splendid but portentous array which stood before their walls in the stern repose of military discipline and valour—and having for a moment wavered, they changed their resolution, and, setting fire to the suburbs, they retired hastily within their walls. Fitz-Stephen lost no time in pressing the advantage of their panic, and led up his force to the assault. The garrison recovered from their momentary panic, and made a defence worthy of a more fortunate result. The enemy was for a moment repulsed with the loss of eighteen men. This loss enraged the high-spirited English, and surprised their Irish allies. Fitz-Stephen was, however, resolved to leave no refuge for retreat: before he renewed the assault, he led his party to the shore, and set fire to the transports in which they had arrived two days before. The next morning, having ordered divine service in the camp, after it was performed with due solemnity, he drew up his force with doubled circumspection and care. His little party was wrought into a high impatience of their recent disgrace, and each man resolved to conquer or die in his rank.

To this result, however, matters were not allowed to come. The English, though resolved, had received from failure a lesson of caution; and the besieged were little encouraged by a success which was nothing more than an escape from a stronger foe. They had hitherto been accustomed to see battles decided by the effect of a single onset, and were less daunted by the prowess which their new enemies had shown the day before, than by the stern composure with which they now took their position before the walls—like men more determined on the event. There was in consequence much hesitation, and a divided feeling within the walls; and while many urged steps of resistance, others, more wise or timid, proposed overtures of peace. Among these latter the clergy, friendly to the cause of Dermot, and taught to ex-



pect, from the success of the English, many advantages and immunities, were more particularly on the alert. The result was a flag of truce to the besiegers, who received and accepted from the city an offer of surrender, with a return to its allegiance to king Dermot. These proposals seemed reasonable to all. The jealousy and vindictive animosity of Dermot himself remained unappeased, and three days passed in superfluous negotiation. By the influence, however, both of his English allies and the clergy, all was smoothed; and Dermot, to show his faithfulness and honour to the English, without delay fulfilled his promises to Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald, by granting them the lordship of the city, with two cantreds of adjoining territory. And to oblige earl Richard, he bestowed on Hervey de Montmorres two cantreds lying between Wexford and Waterford. These three English knights were therefore the first of the British settlers in Ireland.\*

From Wexford king Dermot led his allies to his town of Ferns, where the soldiers were rested, and the knights feasted for three weeks. There was, meanwhile, a full concourse of his repentant subjects coming in to the king from every quarter of the province. The capture of Wexford, and the presence of the English, diffused a general sense of the inutility and danger of further disaffection from the royal cause, and, with few exceptions, restored the province to its allegiance. Dermot was thus enabled to add considerably to his force, and to maintain, in the presence of his English friends, an appearance of authority and power more in accordance with his pride and royal pretensions. The utmost allowance having been now made for rest and preparation, some further advance was to be made; and in this Dermot was decided as much by personal enmity as by policy. Donald Magilla Patriek, the prince of Ossory, had not only revolted to his enemy, the king of Connaught, but having obtained possession of the person of his only legitimate son, either as a hostage or a visitor, on some jealous pretence had him seized and ordered his eyes to be torn out—under the operation of which cruel order the young prince had expired. Dermot's implacable resentment was now consulted by an immediate advance into the district of Ossory. The terror of the English arms had travelled before them, and the report of their approach spread consternation through Ossory. But the brave prince, Donald, only thought of his duty and interest; and, collecting his best force, resolutely prepared for the formidable invader. Having marched to the frontier of his province at the head of five thousand men, he took up a strong and seemingly impregnable position among the defiles of the woods and the natural entrenchment of a vast and intricate morass; and there disposing his forces to the utmost advantage, undauntedly awaited the enemy. The enemy was soon at hand, and but imperfectly aware of the real dangers they had to encounter. Their onset

\* On this event Mr Moore observes, "This tract of country is now comprised in the baronies of Forth and Bargie, and it is not a little remarkable, that the descendants of its first settlers remained, for ages, a community distinct, in language and manners, from the natives. Even to a recent period, a dialect has continued in use among them, peculiar to these baronies, and which, judging from the written specimens that remain of it, bore a close affinity to the Anglo-Saxon."—*Hist.* ii. 216.



was violent, and, on firm ground, would have borne down all thought of resistance. But the Ossorians, secure in their quagmires against the floundering charges of their antagonists, sustained their violence with surprising firmness. The circumstance, however, threw these brave men off their guard; in the heat of the fray, and triumphing in successful resistance, they overlooked the secret of their strength, and suffered their native ardour to impel them rashly forward to the firm and equal plain, whither the more trained and deliberate tactics of the Anglo-Norman foe retreated for the purpose of leading them into this fatal error. With a steady precision, only to be attained by the most perfect discipline, the English turned in their seeming flight, and charged with resistless power on the triumphing and tumultuary Ossorians, who were scattered with dreadful slaughter back, until they once more reached the security of their marshy fortifications. Here they were secure; and the English, in their turn, carried forward in the confusion of pursuit, insensibly involved themselves among the marshy defiles, where it was impossible for heavy cavalry to act or even move without imminent danger. Dermod, more experienced in the localities, or probably informed by the natives of his own party, quickly apprised his allies of their danger. The Ossorians soon became aware of the same circumstance; and, thinking the invader within their power, began to re-assemble with a courage that was perceived by their countrymen in the opposite ranks. These also were now alarmed by the motions of their English allies, which, in their ignorance of disciplined warfare, they attributed to fear. Under this misapprehension, they now separated themselves from a body who, they said, could run like the wind; and Dermod, seeing their movement, was led to fear that the Wexford men were about to change sides and go over to the Ossorians. In the meantime, the English knights calmly took the necessary steps to repair the error of their position. Repeating their former evolution, they assumed the appearance of a confused and hurried retreat; which, again exciting the ardour of the Ossorians, they were still more tumultuously pursued. Placing a small ambush behind a grove by which they passed, they gained the firm fields; and, securing sufficient room for their purpose, a second time they wheeled short upon their unwary pursuers, who were instantly turned into a confused flight,—and, being intercepted by the ambush that had been placed between them and the morass, sustained a severe slaughter. In this the troops of Dermod joined; and the men of Wexford, decided by the fortune of the day, were not slow in lending the assistance which they would as readily have lent to the Ossorians, had the victory been on their side. A rapid flight soon terminated the slaughter, but not before three hundred of the men of Ossory were slain, whose heads were collected and brought by his soldiers as a grateful offering to the animosity of king Dermod. Dermod, in whose mind vindictive passions seem to have been more strong than policy or ambition, received them with a transport which, in the description of Cambrensis, suggests the image of a fiend rather than a man. Passionately clasping his hands, he dared to thank heaven for the grateful sight; and, deliberately examining the bleeding heads, and turning them over one by one, revelled in the

gratification of demoniac vengeance. At length the savage, discovering in the bleeding heap the features of a well known face, with a frenzied eagerness drew it forth; and, to the disgust and consternation of the surrounding circle of Irish, fastened his teeth on the unconscious and ghastly visage of his Ossorian foe. This shocking story is omitted in the summary narrative of his servant, Regan. The different historians, who repeat it from Cambrensis, manifest more or less disinclination to receive it without qualification. None, however, reject it; and, we must confess that, considering it to be too obviously in harmony with the whole of Dermod's character, we have suppressed our strong dislike to repeat a tale so revolting to every sense of humanity.

The English leaders proposed to retain possession of the field, and to follow up the victory they had obtained, by the complete reduction of Donald's power in Ossory. Without this, the victory was but a useless waste of life, and they were also liable to be harassed in their return by pursuit. Such was the obvious suggestion of policy and prudence. But to king Dermod policy and prudence were but secondary; and he had supped full on the horrors of revenge. He had defeated and triumphed, burnt, despoiled, and wasted; and was now desirous of an interval of rest, and the secure triumph and feasting of his kingly seat at Ferns. Thither, in spite of remonstrance, he led back his force; and there he was, as he must have expected, attended by a fresh concourse of submissive vassals, who congratulated him on his returning prosperity, and renewed the faith for which it was his only security.

From Ferns he made several incursions against such of the lesser chiefs as still held out. But the prince of Ossory, having nothing to expect from submission to one whose hostility was personal, and, perhaps collecting "resolution from despair," was, in the meantime, preparing for a more desperate effort of resistance. Having entered more fully into the detail of the first engagement with the army of Donald, it may be felt the less necessary to dwell on the particulars of the next. Donald fortified himself with a strong entrenchment and palisade of wooden stakes upon the path of his enemy. On this the valour and resources of the native forces of Dermod were, for three days, allowed to exhaust themselves in vain assaults; the English, waiting for a fair occasion, ended the tumultuary conflict by one decisive charge, which carried the entrenchment and won the day. Dermod's mind, submissive and fawning in adversity, was now, with characteristic consistency, rendered overbearing and insolent by success. He began to feel himself a king, and the dispenser of slight and favour among those who followed his standard; and, though a sense of prudence repressed his overbearing temper, where he knew its indulgence must be unsafe, yet he could not so far repress his insolence as to avoid giving frequent offence to persons who probably saw through and despised the baseness of his character. Those whose services he had retained by strong pledges of interest, might be expected to smile in secret scorn at the slight or flattery, which they valued alike at their proper worth. Maurice de Prendergast, however, bound by no compact and recompensed by no stipulated reward, now began to feel that his service was treated with neglect, and that



his repeated solicitations and remonstrances were met by an insolent attempt to undervalue his alliance: his patience was at last wearied, and he showed some disposition to abandon one who thus repaid his services with slight. The Wexford men, strongly disaffected to Dermot, saw and encouraged this inclination, which they strengthened by their artful representations, and easily converted into a resolution to join the prince of Ossory.

This incident revived the courage of Donald, and made him determine on assuming the offensive, and attempting an incursion into the territories of king Dermot. Prendergast, more sensible of the inadequacy of any force he could command for such a purpose, dissuaded him from the vain effort. This was the more necessary, as a fresh arrival from England had now repaired the loss occasioned by his defection.

Prendergast soon discovered the error of the step he had taken. He received information that there was a secret design, the intent of which was first to secure his service, and then repay it by taking the lives of himself and his small party,\* and he resolved to retire to Wales. Donald remonstrated to no purpose, and then determined to have recourse to violence. "The men of Ossory," writes Regan, "persevering in their malicious treason against Prendergast, assembled two thousand men together, plashed a place through which he was to pass; whereof, by good fortune, Maurice having intelligence, acquainted his companie with the danger. After mature deliberacione, it was resolved, that no knowledge shuld be takin of the intended treason, and to make stay in Kilkenny for a few days, and in the meanwhile to send messengers to Donald's seneschall, to lett hym knowe, that they were contented to serve the kyng of Ossory, if it pleased hym, half a year, or a quarter longer, which offer Donald gladlie accepted. The Ossorians, hearinge that Maurice had made a new agreement with the kyng, abandoned the place where they lodged. Maurice hearinge that they wer dislodged, about midnight rose out of Kilkenny, and continued upon a swift march until he came to Waterford, where they founds mean to imbarque themselves for Wales, but not without some difficultie, for one of the English had slain a cittizen whyche enraged the people, but Maurice Prendergast by his wisdome appeased the tumult."†

The first landing of the English, and the events which immediately followed, were not so far different from the ordinary feuds and provincial wars of a country, which seems to have been the home of perpetual discord, as to be at first very clearly traceable to their results. But Roderic, who from the beginning felt his private interests menaced by the success of his known enemy, the king of Leinster, now began to perceive that his monarchy was likely to be endangered by the course of events. This he was not left to infer. Dermot, in the highflown insolence of conscious power, now avowed his pretensions to the king-

\* The character of Donald is not implicated in this design. Maurice Regan, from whose fragment this memoir is drawn, adds, "but Donald would by no means assent to that."

† Regan.



dom. The honour of Roderic was also pledged to the vindication of the rights of his faithful partisan, the chief of Ossory. Under these motives, he resolved to make those vigorous efforts which, when impartially viewed and referred to their real objects and the actual spirit of that age, carry with them all the heroism, though not the romance, of national valour. He summoned his tributaries, and raised his standard at Tara, where he reviewed his assembled forces; from thence he led them to Dublin. Here, we learn from the ancient annals of the country, he found in this vast national force symptoms of weakness, enough to convince him that there was little or no hope of any proportional result. Many were likely to betray him for the promotion of their private views—some from envy—some from resentment of former wrongs—some from fear of an enemy, of whose deeds they had perhaps received inflated descriptions—every disposition was shown to thwart his measures; and all the ordinary and easily-distinguished symptoms were perceptible, of that disaffection which, if it find no opening for a traitor's blow, is sure to take the first cross-road to part company. Roderic had long been aware of the fact, that many of the assembled chiefs were in secret the adherents of the rival house of Hy-Niall. Acting on suspicions, the grounds of which could not be mistaken, Roderic dismissed his northern tributaries on the ostensible grounds, that the occasion did not warrant so considerable a force. His own troops, with those of O'Ruark, Thomond, and a few of Dermod's disaffected tributaries, he retained—a force, numerically taken, far superior to those he should have to meet; yet when the vast preponderance of discipline, arms, and continued success are weighed, far insufficient to give confidence to a mind not under the influence of infatuation.

Roderic nevertheless acted with vigour and a steady and deliberate sagacity, which made the most of the circumstances. He saw demonstrations on the part of the enemy, which indicated apprehensions of the event, and he resolved to avail himself of a seeming strength, the weakness of which he too well understood.

In the mean time Dermod, easily elated by success, and yielding with equal proneness to dejection, communicated to Fitz-Stephen his unmanly fears. These the steady courage of Fitz-Stephen repelled. He told the feeble chief, that “a brave leader should not only show personal valour in the field, but preserve that steady resolution which can brave the extremities of reverse. That true courage, unaffected by fortune, was always ready to meet and obviate the most trying perils with composure and the resources of a collected mind. At worst, a glorious death was the last resource of an undaunted spirit.” With these and such remonstrances, in which he most justly expressed the character of his own steady and heroic spirit, Fitz-Stephen vainly endeavoured to communicate heroism to the feeble and abject Dermod, who, though personally courageous, was utterly devoid of the spirit which was thus appealed to. It was, therefore, the next essential consideration to take the most immediate measures for the defensive course, which, although prompted by timidity, was not without its recommendation to the cautious prudence which governed all the movements of the English. The English retired to Ferns, and entrenched

themselves in an inaccessible position among thick impervious wood, and deep morasses. Here they quietly awaited the approach of Roderic.

Roderic surmised the advantages, and saw the difficulties which these circumstances appeared to offer. While the strength of the position of the English made assault ridiculous, it yet implied a sense of weakness. There was a seeming opportunity to avert the menaced calamity by wary policy while the risk of war was at best but doubtful. He resolved to proceed by remonstrance and persuasion, and communicating with Fitz-Stephen, exposed the injustice of the cause, and the unworthiness of the person to whom he had prostituted English valour. Fitz-Stephen readily penetrated the true policy of these overtures, and concluded that conscious weakness alone would, under the circumstances, have dictated them. He knew the real frailty of the brave monarch's best resources, and could not resolve either to abandon his own fortunes, or be false to his plighted engagements, and he at once rejected the offers and reasoning of Roderic. The conclusion of his letter is curious for its characteristic and quaint significance. "To what end is your embassie? If Rotherick give council, we need it not; if he prophesie, we credit not his oracle; if he command as a prince, we obey not his authority; if he threaten as an enemy, a fig for his monarchy."

Roderic next appealed to the fears of Dermot, who, now supported by the courage and decision of his brave allies, rejected his overtures with equal resolution. He then prepared for a vigorous effort against the English, which, in the opinion of Leland "might have confounded all their expectations, deterred their countrymen from any like attempts, and prevented the momentous consequences of this apparently insignificant invasion. The future fate of Ireland hung on this critical moment, and it was at once decided, for Roderic listened to the suggestions of his clergy, and rather than hazard an engagement, consented to treat with a prince whose perfidy he had already experienced." Such is the representation of the most impartial and moderate historian that Ireland has yet produced. But it abounds with manifest inconsequences. The "critical moment," though it brings the event, does not as necessarily bring with it the efficient resource. Nor, if it be admitted that Roderic's entering into a compromise on that occasion carried with it fatal consequences, can it with equal reason be insisted on, that he had the choice of any other course. So far as his own immediate acts admit of inference, it was his rash design to attempt the forcing of the position of his enemy; and there can be no doubt that he would have in this but consulted the dictates of policy and resentment. It did not require a prophetic anticipation of "seven centuries" to come, or of vague sensations of national impressions yet unborn, to stimulate a breast affected by far other and far nearer passions. It was the fate of Roderic to stand at the helm when the tempest was too strong for mortal hand; no prudence or courage could have withstood the adverse concurrence of circumstances with which he had to contend; and it seems to us surprising, with what flippant facility writers of great general fairness allow their pens to glide unthinkingly into reflec-



tions, the absurdity of which is exposed by nearly all the details of the statement to which they are appended. There is no extraordinary difficulty in the correct appreciation of the difficulties of Roderic's situation. The vast inequality of real military force may be omitted—from that at least he never shrunk; but he had, in fact, no power at his command: his army was a mere pageant, his chiefs were only to be leagued by their private objects, and were, if these required, far more willing to combine against their monarch, than to follow him in a common cause. The common interest was little known—there was no community of feeling, or if such had existence, it was lost in the eager strifes and contentions of provincial politics. Provincial feuds and jealousies—the disaffection of many—the fears of some—the disunion of all, imperfectly traced in the meagre records of that dark age, appear to the modern historian as dim shadows in the distance of time, which he may notice or not, just as he is inclined to colour actions which have derived their chief importance from after events. It is indeed easy for modern patriotism to play its graceful harlequinade on the tombs of those who, in that deep, anxious, and fatal conflict (if they will have it fatal), were the anxious and deeply interested actors; and who, without being deficient in courage or earnestness in *their own concerns*, were governed by fatal and unconquerable influences now imperfectly conceived. The disunion of the chiefs of the country may be truly set down as fatal to the cause of resistance; but this was their essential characteristic—the idiosyncrasy of the land.

Roderic arrayed his forces for the storm; and he endeavoured to awaken the ardour of his followers by an address well adapted to rouse their patriotism and courage. He represented the injustice of Dermod's aim, and the crimes of his life. He pointed out the dangers likely to follow from the power of the new comers; adverted to former instances of similar effects, and cited examples of similar dangers averted by brave resistance. "While these strangers are but few in number," he concluded, "let us stoutly issue out upon them. The fire, while it is but in embers and sparkles, may easily be covered with ashes, but if it break into flames, it is hard to be quenched.... Wherefore, cheer my hearts, we fight for our country and liberty; let us leave unto our posterity an immortal fame; let us press on and lustily assault them, that the overthrow of a few may be a terror to many; and that it may be a warning to all future potentates not to attempt the like again." Such was the bold and specious rhetoric, which the brave monarch directed to most reluctant hearers. The real difficulties, and the true dangers of action, were as apparent to his chiefs as they were to his own sagacity; they were not, like him, impelled by the powerful sense of having fame and dominions at the hazard. The clergy—by profession the advocates of peace, and by interest concerned to protract a contest by the result of which they were likely to be gainers—were active in influencing the minds of his camp, as well as his own. He soon perceived that an effective attack was hopeless—that the consequence of defeat must be ruin. The alternative was a matter of necessity as well as prudence, and he chose

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it: unable to resist effectively, he resolved to temporize. New proposals were offered to the king of Leinster; and by the mediation of the clergy, after some time, a treaty was concluded, in which every thing was conceded that Roderic had a right to demand. Dermot consented to acknowledge his supremacy, and to pay him the usual service of a subject prince—giving up his son as a hostage. A secret article secured the more general object of Roderic, and showed the perfidy of Dermot: he engaged, on the reduction of Leinster, to dismiss his English allies; and, it is added by historians, resolved to observe this treaty no longer than might suit his purposes.

He was now at liberty to pursue, undisturbed, his schemes of vengeance and aggrandizement. Dublin was selected as the first object of attack. This city was chiefly inhabited by Ostmen, who were at this time the chief commercial inhabitants of the country. These foreigners sate loosely from the sway of the native kings, which they resisted or acquiesced in as circumstances rendered expedient. Dermot bore them especial hate for the spirit with which they had frequently repelled his aggressions. Nor was his dislike without a more especial cause. His father had so irritated them by oppression, that when they caught him within their walls, they slew and buried him with a dead dog. They from that time revolted and acknowledged no government but that of their countryman, Hesculph MacTorcal. Fitz-Stephen was at this time detained near Wexford, by the necessity of erecting a fort for the security of his own possessions. Dermot, with his Irish, and the remainder of his British allies, advanced into the territory of Dublin, which he laid waste with slaughter and conflagration, till the terrified citizens were forced to appease him by a prompt submission, which, at the instance of Fitz-Gerald, was accepted.

It would be tedious and unprofitable to enter on all the minor changes and events which led to no apparent result of any interest, in a work not directly pretending to a historical character, beyond what its professed object demands. Dermot, now fully reinstated in his power, might have allowed the disturbances he had raised to settle into comparative calm. The English would gladly have availed themselves of the peaceful possession they might have been allowed quietly to retain; their English countrymen showed no eagerness to join them; and king Henry, if under these assumptions he would have found inducement to come over, would have met the shadow of submission, and the proffer of free allegiance, which must have left things pretty nearly as they were. The arbitrement of war alone could transfer the rights of the native chiefs, and afford the sanction of necessity for the further oppressions which are the sure followers of continual strife. But Dermot's views, expanded by the elevation of confirmed power, consulted only his inflamed ambition, and the unremitting vengeance of his heart. Another step lay before him—too easy to be deferred—which must place his foot on the neck of Roderic, his ancient and hated foe. He represented to his British allies the justice of his right, the wealth and magnificence of the prize. The dominions of Connaught, he said, would afford the richest and fairest settlements to those who should assist him in recovering the possession which had been wrongfully

usurped from his family. The English yielded to his reiterated persuasions, but strongly insisted that their force was insufficient for an undertaking of such magnitude. They urged his strenuous efforts to gain additional assistance from England, as the only sure support against all impediment and resistance. By their advice, he renewed his application to earl Strongbow, who possessed the means to lead over a sufficient force to effect the purpose.

Earl Strongbow, fully apprised of the advantages he might hope for from compliance with the repeated invitations and offers of Dermot, was embarrassed by the necessity of obtaining leave from king Henry. Henry was reluctant to permit private adventure to advance too far without his own co-operation; it was indeed well to have the pretext raised, and the way securely tried; but the gradual occupation of the country by adventurers, by no means squared with the views of this ambitious and far-seeing monarch. A consent so ambiguous as to admit of question when expediency might require, was the most that earl Richard could obtain; but it was enough for a will ready to precipitate itself on its object: the earl departed, with the resolution to understand the king according to his own purpose.

The season retarded his operations for some months. But he employed the interval effectively, and completed his preparation against the spring. He now sent Raymond le Gros, the near kinsman of Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald, as an advanced guard, with a force of ten knights and seventy archers, accompanied by Hervey of Montmorres, who had returned to Wales, and now returned with a small train. This company landed near Waterford, at Dundolf.\*

Here they secured themselves with a sufficient entrenchment. As soon as their landing was known, there was a tumultuary muster of the men of Waterford and Ossory, who marched against them; these were joined by Mac Kelan of Offelan, and O'Rian of Odrone. The company of Raymond did not exceed an hundred men. He had collected into his little fortification all the cows in the surrounding districts; and seeing the besiegers too numerous to be attacked without much unnecessary risk, at the same time resolving not to endure the inconveniences of a lingering siege, he hit on a device which, considering the irregular character of the besiegers, was not ill-judged. While the men of Waterford and their allies, to the number of many thousands, were deliberating on the most effectual means of securing the handful of adventurers which fortune seemed to have placed within their grasp, of a sudden the gates of the little fortress expanded, and a frightened herd of black cattle rushed forth with hoof and horn, and burst with resistless impetuosity on the disorderly multitude. The undisciplined ranks scattered on every side in that confusion and disarray which, of itself, is enough to carry terror to the fiercest hearts. Before the first effects of this disorder could subside, while all were yet scattered in the wild tumult of dismay, a still fiercer enemy was among them—Raymond and his thirty knights were spreading wide avenues of slaughter among the unresisting kernes. A thousand were slain, and

\* Downdonnel. Regan.

seventy taken prisoners. But the victory of Raymond was sullied by cruelty. In the fray he had lost a dear friend, and in his fury he ordered all his prisoners to be put to death.\*

While Raymond le Gros yet continued in his fort at Dundonnel, earl Strongbow, embarking at Milford, August 1170, on St Bartholomew's eve, arrived in the bay of Waterford with fifteen or sixteen hundred troops, among whom, we learn from Cambrensis, were two hundred knights, and at once resolved on the siege of that city, which was at this time governed by Reginald and Smorth, two petty Danish chiefs. Strongbow's first step was probably the sending for king Dermot, but Regan and Cambrensis differ as to the period of his arrival; the first, with whom we are inclined to concur, making it to have taken place before, the latter after, the taking of the city. Another difference here occurs between our authorities—Cambrensis giving the command of the assault to Raymond, who, by the silence of Regan, would seem to have had no share in this affair. Omitting the consideration of this difference, the siege of Waterford was begun on the following day. After meeting some severe repulses from the walls, a house was noticed which projected over an angle of the wall, and was supported by props from the outside. By cutting down the props, the house came to the ground, and left a breach through which the besiegers poured into the town. Resistance was of course at an end, and a fearful slaughter was interrupted by the humane interposition of king Dermot, whose dark history seems brightened with this sole redeeming gleam of beneficence. Immediately on the cessation of the tumult and terror of the recent siege, the nuptials of Strongbow and Eva were solemnized in Waterford.

It was now agreed, between Dermot and his son-in-law, to march against Dublin, which had recently shown strong signs of returning disaffection, and against which also the wrathful enmity of Dermot had not yet been satisfied. With this resolution they went to Ferns, to remain until the completion of the necessary preparations. They were, in the mean time, apprised that Roderic had succeeded in raising a levy of thirty thousand men to intercept their approach to Dublin; and that, with this view, he had "plashed and trenched all the places through which the earl and Dermot must have passed."†

There was no result decisive enough for this narrative. The exhibition of the invading force, now swelled to upwards of four thousand English, was fully sufficient to convince the leaders of the native force of the utter absurdity of an attack, which, from the open line of march sagaciously chosen by Strongbow, should have been made without those advantages of defile and morass, without which every such attempt had hitherto failed. After three days of desultory skirmish, in which they became confirmed in this opinion, they compelled their disappointed leader to dismiss them. Roderic, who must himself have felt the just-

\* Such is the account of Regan. Cambrensis represents the circumstance differently, and Leland gives weight to his statement by adopting it. According to this account, Raymond pleaded for the prisoners, who offered their ransom; but the arguments of Hervey prevailed for their death.

† Regan.



ness, went home to mature more extensive preparations, and to secure more trusty allies.

Dublin was soon invested by Dermod and the English; and Maurice Regan, the writer of the narrative from which this memoir is chiefly drawn, was sent to summon the city to surrender, and to demand hostages for its fidelity. The citizens could not agree, and the treaty was interrupted: the time assigned for it was spent in vain altercations, until Miles de Cogan, who was stationed at a more assailable point, without consulting the earl, gave the signal for attack; the citizens, who were expecting a treaty, were surprised by the sight of the enemy pouring into their streets in the fury of a successful assault. It is needless to multiply the details of slaughter and devastation. Lawrence O'Toole, the archbishop of Dublin, did honour to his humanity and patriotism on this occasion, by the energy of his exertions for the rescue of his fellow-citizens; throwing himself between the heated conquerors and their trembling victims, he denounced, entreated, persuaded, intercepted the blows, and dragged the prostrate citizens from beneath the very swords of the assailants.

Earl Strongbow was now invested with the lordship of Dublin, and appointed De Cogan his governor.

From Dublin, the confederates marched into Meath, where they committed the most furious devastations; the result of which was a message from Roderie, who had not yet acquired sufficient strength to take the field, commanding Dermod, as his subject, to retire. He was reminded that he had been allowed to recover his territories according to a treaty, the stipulations of which he had violated by continuing to employ foreigners in the oppression of the kingdom; and that, unless he would immediately return to the observance of his engagements, it would become necessary to visit his obstinacy on the life of his son, who was the hostage for his faith. Dermod, who was devoid of natural affection, was content to sacrifice paternal duty to ambition, and sent back a scornful and irritating answer. He re-asserted his claim to the dominion of Connaught, and professed his intention not to lay down his arms until he should have established his right. His son was the victim of his faithlessness and the barbarism of the time.

Dermod, immoderately elevated by his successes, now ventured to try his force by leading an army of his own troops into the territory of his ancient enemy, O'Ruark; and, in consequence, he met with the deserved penalty of his rashness in two successive defeats. This is the last adventure, of any importance, in which he seems to have been personally engaged.

His death, in the following winter, threw a temporary damp on the spirit of his adventurous allies. The Irish annalists, in their natural dislike to the memory of one whom they represent as the first who shook the prosperity of his country, attribute his death to the immediate stroke of Divine retribution, granted to the intercession of all the Irish saints. According to these records, Dermod died of a lingering and offensive disease, which drove from his agitated and despairing couch the last consolations and tender offices of his kindred and servants. His death took place at his residence in Ferns, in

the month of May; on which event, the succession to his kingdom of Leinster devolved, both by inheritance and treaty, on Strongbow.

## Earl Strongbow.

DIED A. D. 1177.

RICHARD DE CLARE, third earl of Pembroke, earl of Strigul, lord of Chepstow in England, earl of Ogir in Normandy, &c., &c., prince of Leinster in right of his wife, and lord-lieutenant of Ireland under Henry II., bore the surname of Strongbow, by which he is familiarly designated, from his father, Gilbert, who obtained it for his remarkable skill in archery. At the time of king Dermot's flight into England, Strongbow was out of favour with king Henry; his estate had been wasted by dissipation, and being yet not past the prime of his life, he was, by disposition as well as from circumstances, prepared to throw himself upon any course which might employ his valour and repair his fortunes.

Accordingly, he applied to king Henry on that occasion, for permission to embark in the undertaking proposed by the fugitive king of Leinster; and, as we have related in our memoir of king Dermot, received an ambiguous answer, the design of which he probably understood, and construed according to his own purpose. He nevertheless had the precaution to defer the execution of his design, until the event of Fitz-Stephen's expedition might offer some decided estimate of the chances of success. It is also probable that he found some difficulties arising from the impoverished condition of his finances.

At length, affairs in Ireland having taken the course already stated, in August, 1170, when all was ready for embarkation at Milford, he had the vexation of receiving from king Henry a peremptory message, forbidding the projected enterprise, on pain of the forfeiture of his possessions and honours. It is probable that Strongbow had not much to lose, and it is certain that his expectations were at the highest point; he felt that the splendid success for which he hoped might well enable him to appease the politic anger of the king, perhaps to defy his power, surrounded as Henry was by other cares likely to fill his hands for a long time. He had gone too far to recede without dishonour; and, having resolved to brave all consequences, he affected to doubt the purport, and question the authority of the royal mandate; so, dismissing all further consideration, he embarked and came, on the eve of St Bartholomew, into the port of Waterford.

On the capture of Waterford, he married Eva, daughter to the king of Leinster; and, having passed some days at Ferns, he assisted at the siege of Dublin, as already mentioned, and was invested by his father-in-law with the lordship of that city. From this there is no occurrence important enough to be repeated from the former memoir, until the death of king Dermot, from which we again meet the onward progress of the events in Strongbow's life.

Immediately previous to king Dermot's death, the English adventurers were much depressed in their hopes by an edict published by

king Henry, prohibiting the transportation of men, arms, or provisions to Ireland from any English or Welsh port; and, on pain of attainder and forfeiture, commanding all English subjects, of every order and degree, to return home before the ensuing feast of Easter. Strongbow, who knew the character and policy of Henry, immediately despatched his trusty friend, Raymond le Gros, to Aquitaine, where Henry then resided. Raymond made such excuses on the part of Strongbow, as most probably satisfied the king; but, thinking it necessary to repress and retard the progress of the adventurers until he should himself have leisure to follow up the conquest of Ireland, he gave no distinct answer to the reiterated solicitations of Raymond, whom he thus detained from day to day, until an incident occurred which, for a season, so wholly engrossed his mind as to prevent the consideration of any other affair of moment. This was the murder of Becket, which involved his peace of mind, and hazarded even the safety of his throne, in a most hapless contest with his people, clergy, and the court of Rome.

In this interval the affairs of Strongbow and his fellow-adventurers bore a most unpromising aspect; and Dermot's death, in the midst of their trouble, came to heighten their perplexity. On this occurrence, the native Irish fell away from them, with the exception of Donald Kavanagh (Dermot's illegitimate son), Awliffe O'Carvy, and Mac-Gely, chief of Firbrynn.

This gloomy aspect of affairs was quickly interrupted by a torrent of dangers, which accumulated around them with a rapidity and power that menaced inevitable ruin. First, they were surprised by the unexpected return of the Danish governor, Hesculf, with a powerful body of Ostmen, which he had levied among the Scottish isles. Strongbow was, at this time, absent at Waterford, and had left the city under the command of Miles de Cogan.

The Ostmen had landed, without opposition, under their captain, John Wood; they were all selected and trained soldiers, and armed "after the Danish manner, with good brigantines, jackes, and shirts of mail; their shields, bucklers, and targets, were round and coloured red, and bound about with iron; and, as they were in arms, so they were in minds, iron-strong and mighty."\* This formidable force, having landed from sixty transports, marched direct against the eastern gate of the city. The attack was impetuous, and found no proportionate force to resist it. De Cogan was taken by surprise; yet the natural steadiness of English soldiers offered resistance enough to protract, for a considerable time, the violent and sanguinary struggle which heaped the gate with dead; so that, when his force, thinned by the fall of numbers, were on the point of being overpowered by the superior force of the Danish troops, time had been secured for a manœuvre which turned the fortune of the fight. Richard, brother to De Cogan, issued with a select party from the southern gate of the city; and, coming round to the quarter of assault, charged the rear of the besieging army. The effect was not so decided as at once to end the struggle; their numbers were still too formidably over-balanced by the be-

\* Giraldus.



siegers. It, however, so far threw them into disorder, that the efforts of the English became more decisive, and their superiority of firmness and discipline began to tell with redoubled effect, so that the confusion of the besiegers, momentarily increasing, ended at last in a headlong flight. The English were now joined by some Irish allies, of whose disposition they had been hitherto doubtful, and the Ostmen were pursued with great slaughter to their ships. Wood was slain. Hesculf was taken. It was first decided to hold him to ransom; but he imprudently boasted of the extent of his preparations for the next attack, and of his resolution, before long, to crush the power of his captors; and this perilous bravado cost him his life.

But a trial still more severe was yet to be encountered. In the general supineness of the Irish chiefs—altogether devoid of all ideas of a national cause, and only alive to the call of their separate petty interests—one chief alone was, by the accident of his more extended interests, awake to the dangers which menaced the foundations of his monarchy. Roderic—ill seconded by any corresponding sense on the part of his chiefs, of whom the greater number were ready, at any moment, to desert or oppose him for the slightest object, whether of fear or gain—was yet ever on the watch for the moment of advantage against his Norman foes. He had fully learned the vanity of all expectation from the result of any resistance, less than that of an overwhelming national force; he was now aware of the juncture of circumstances, which promised to cut off all further aid from the English, who were thinned in numbers, and nearly destitute of supplies; and he resolved to avail himself of the occasion.

He was nobly seconded by Lawrence O'Toole, the archbishop of Dublin, whose assistance was rendered effective by the commanding influence of his talents and virtues. He hastened from province to province, roused the spirit, and awakened the fears of the divided chiefs. He solicited and obtained the powerful alliance of Gotred, king of Man, who came with thirty vessels into the harbour of Dublin, which they placed under blockade. The confederacy, thus excited, seemed for the first time equal to the emergency. Roderic, with his provincial force, encamped at Castleknock; O'Ruark and O'Carrol at Clontarf; O'Kinsellagh occupied the opposite shore; the chief of Thomond took his position at Kilmainham; Lawrence himself took arms and headed his troop. This formidable armament was perhaps more to be dreaded from the mere consequences of its *vis inertiae*, than from any active exertion of its power of offence; it was divided by separate commands, and still more by the diffusion of a spirit of private jealousy; most of its chiefs entertaining more dislikes and fears of one another, than hostility to the common enemy.

The besieged, for two months enclosed by this seemingly formidable alliance, were reduced to difficulties of the severest kind. The dearth of provisions increased daily; the men grew distempered, and lost their spirits and vigour; a little further protraction of their present condition would have left nothing for the enemy to effect. Their misery was aggravated by an account of the distress of Fitz-Stephen, who lay in the utmost danger of being seized by the people of Wexford.

Strongbow called a council.\* It was agreed that their situation was too desperate for further resistance, and they resolved to treat with Roderic on any fair and honourable terms. The speech attributed by Regan to Strongbow, may be cited as descriptive of the circumstances:—"You see with what forces our enemies besiege us; we have not victuals to suffice us longer than fifteen days; a measure of wheat is now sold for a marke, of barley for half a marke; wherefore I think it best that we presently send to the king of Connaught to tell him, that if he will rise and depart from the siege, I will submit myself to him, and be his man, and hold Leinster of him; and I am of opinion that Lawrence, the archbishop of *Dublin*, is the meetest man to negotiate this business." Lawrence was applied to, and willingly engaged to bear the proposal of the earl to Roderic; but soon returned with an answer, of which some writers suspect him to have been the framer. The supposition implies a baseness which we cannot credit, notwithstanding the low morality of the age; and we think the answer more likely to have come from Roderic, of whose position it was the natural suggestion. Lawrence entered the council of the English with the stern composure of his character, and delivered, with firmness, an answer which he may honestly have approved. It was this:—That all the forts held by the English should be immediately surrendered to Roderic, and that the English should depart before an appointed day, and leave the country henceforth free from their claims and usurpations; on refusal of which, Roderic threatened to assault the city, "making no doubt to carry it by force." This proud answer amazed the earl and his council: they sat for some moments silent and perplexed. At last Miles de Cogan started up and advised an immediate sally, himself offering to be the leader. The proposal was received with acclamation, and they immediately broke up their sitting to execute it. The following was the disposition of their little force, as stated by Regan:—"The vanguard was assigned to Myles de Cogan, consisting of two hundred; Raymond le Gros, with other two hundre, commanded the battle; and the erle, with two hundre, marched in the reare. In this interprize, full of perill, they used not the aid of their Irish soldiers; for neyther in their fidelity nor in their valour reposed they confidence, saving only of the persons of Donald Kavannagh, and Mac Gely, and Awliff O'Carvie, of whom they wer assured. Unto Finglass they directed their march. When they approached the enemies' campe, who wer careless and secure, not mistrustinge any suche attempt, Myles de Cogan, to encourage his souldiers—"In the name of God," said he, "let us this day try our valour upon these savages, or dye like men;" and therwithall broke furiously into the camp, and made such slaughter as all fled before hym. Raymond, callinge upon St David, furiously rushed in amongst his enemies, and performed wonders; and so did the erle Richard; but especially Meyler Fitz-Henry's valour was admired at bye all men.

\* The officers present at this council are mentioned by Maurice Regan:—Robert de Quincy, Walter de Ridleford, Maurice de Prendergast, Myles de Cogan, Myles Fitz-Henry, Myles Fitz-David, Richard de Maroine, Walter Bluett, and others, to the number of twenty.



In Boynhill of the enemies were slain more than one hundreth and fifty; of the English there was only one footman hurt. This overthrow so discouraged the Irish, as the siege was nearly abandoned; and in the enemies' campe store of baggage was gotten, and such quantities of corn, meale, and pork, as was sufficiaunt to victuall the citty for one whole yere."<sup>\*</sup>

Thus, by a single effort, was dissolved a league, the apparent power of which fully justified the haughty imposition of terms proposed by Roderic, through the archbishop of Dublin. Strongbow was now at liberty to proceed to Wexford to the succour of the unfortunate Fitz-Stephen. This brave man had, for a long time held out with a resolution and skill which rendered vain the most furious efforts of his assailants. At length they had recourse to a stratagem, which might be excused on the plea of utter barbarism, were it not frightfully aggravated by the more atrocious perjury. They demanded a parley, in which, assuming the tone of friendly sympathy, they assured Fitz-Stephen that Strongbow had been defeated, and that Roderic was now on his march to Wexford, with the resolution of storming his fortress and putting his garrison to the sword, and that Fitz-Stephen himself was more especially the object of his vengeance. They had resolved that under these dreadful circumstances, he should not be left ignorant of the danger that awaited him; they could not assist, but they would countenance and facilitate his escape. Fitz-Stephen hesitated. His garrison amounted to about a score of persons; the besiegers were at least three thousand. Their improbable professions of regard seemed to throw an air of doubt over their whole story. To remove all further hesitation, they produced the bishops of Wexford and Kildare in their robes, and bearing the cross, the host, and some relics; laying their hands on these, the perfidious barbarians confirmed their falsehood by an oath. Fitz-Stephen, completely duped, without further question, delivered himself and his hapless associates to the mercy of these miscreants. They instantly cast him into chains; and, disarming his men, exhausted on them every torture they could devise. In the midst of this inhuman employment, they received intelligence of Strongbow's approach; on which they set fire to Wexford, and decamped with Fitz-Stephen and the surviving prisoners.

In the meantime, Strongbow had not been allowed to reach his destination without the usual share of adventures. For a while he marched on without the appearance of a foe, until he reached a narrow pass between vast bogs in the district of Hidrone, in the county of Carlow. Here O'Ryan, the lord of the place, placed an armed force in ambush to intercept him in the most difficult part of this passage. On the arrival of the English at this point, they were unexpectedly attacked by an impetuous burst of these uncouth assailants, who broke in among them with hideous outcries, and, for a moment, threw them into confusion. They even succeeded so far as to beat Meyler Fitz-Henry to the ground, and it was not without much difficulty that he was extricated from their fury. At this moment an

\* Regan.



arrow, discharged by a monk, killed O'Ryan, when the enemy fled as wildly as they had advanced. The earl regained the plain with the loss of only one young man.

It is a tradition that, on this occasion, Strongbow's only son was so terrified at the sudden rush and savage appearance of the Irish, that he turned and fled to Dublin, where he reported the death of his father and the destruction of his entire force. When undeceived from this error, he appeared before his father to congratulate him on his victory: the earl had him seized and condemned to death. It is even added that he slew him with his own hand. "This tradition," observes Leland, "receives some countenance from the ancient monument in the cathedral of Dublin, in which the statue of the son of Strongbow is continued only to the middle, with the bowels open and supported by the hands; but, as this monument was erected some centuries after the death of Strongbow, it is thus of less authority. The Irish annalists mention the earl's son as engaged in several actions posterior to this period."\*

Strongbow, on his arrival at Wexford, had the mortification to learn, by a deputation from the Irish, that Fitz-Stephen remained in their hands, and that any attempt to molest them in their retreat, would cause them to strike off his head. He felt the risk, and, with vain regret for his friend, turned towards Waterford.

At Waterford, he found himself soon involved in the inextricable web of Irish feuds. These are not in themselves sufficiently remarkable to be described with the detail of history; it may be sufficient to say, that some of the chiefs of the neighbouring districts, by artful misrepresentations, endeavoured to league him with their petty hostilities, and to make his power instrumental to their private animosities and ambitious designs. From Waterford he proceeded to Ferns, where, for some days, he remained in the exercise of royal authority.

He was, however, not long allowed to plume himself in the state of royalty. His uncle, Hervey de Montmorres, whom he had deputed to king Henry, now landed at Waterford, bearing letters and messages from his friends in England, strongly urging that he should not lose a moment in presenting himself before the king. Of the necessity of this, Strongbow was himself fully sensible, and resolved to set out without delay.

We have already mentioned the troubles in which Becket's death had involved the king. From these it had required all his eminent courage and sagacity to deliver him. But he was now free to follow the impulse of his ambition, which had long contemplated Ireland as an enviable accession to his dominions. With this view he had, so far back as 1155, procured a bull from pope Adrian IV., who was an Englishman, authorizing the conquest of Ireland; this, with its subsequent confirmation by a breve from pope Alexander, he had suffered to lie by till a favourable juncture of circumstances might render it available. The season was now arrived, and the king entered with alacrity on his preparations. His first steps, however, were calculated to mislead expectation. He began by disclaiming all countenance of the

\* Lel. i. p. 61, note.

\* proceedings of the English adventurers, and summoned Strongbow to his presence, to answer for his unauthorized proceedings.

But he not the less prepared for the meditated enterprise by an extensive levy of money and forces. Mr Moore observes, that "from the disbursements made for the arms, provision, and shipping of the army, as set forth in the pipe roll of the year 1171, still preserved, it would appear that the force raised for the expedition was much more numerous than has been represented by historians."\*

Henry at first refused to see Strongbow, but, on the mediation of De Montmorres, admitted him to an audience. Affecting a high tone of offended majesty, he allowed himself to be appeased by the concessions of the earl, who yielded up his Irish acquisitions, and, in return, was restored to his English and Norman estates, with large tracts of Irish territory, to be held in perpetuity under the English crown. This arrangement was ratified by a formal instrument, by which Dublin and its adjoining districts were ceded to the king, together with the maritime towns and places of strength acquired by Strongbow. By these concessions, he was restored to favour, and allowed to attend the king to Pembroke, where he resided during his preparations.

Meanwhile, a last effort was made by O'Ruark against the garrison of Dublin, commanded by Miles de Cogan in the absence of the earl. The attack was vigorous, and repelled with some loss; but with the usual fortune of all the efforts hitherto made by the Irish against their invaders, the first repulse was a decided and sanguinary defeat.

The report of Henry's approach excited no sensation among the Irish. The little spirit of resistance which might yet remain was much damped by the uniform failure of all the efforts which had been successively made against the English. The vast accession of strength which these were now to gain by the approach of the royal army, must have been felt to render all resistance unavailing. But, in addition to this, a lulling impression was produced by the specious manifestations of the king. He professed to come over to assert his unquestioned sovereignty against invaders, who had usurped his power and made war upon his subjects. Devoid of all sense of national existence, each petty chieftain thought of his own interests alone, and looked either with apathy, or with the malignity of some private resentment, on the probable dissolution of their own monarch's power.

His preparations being complete, the king embarked at Milford, and on the 18th October, 1171, landed at Croch, near Waterford. His force amounted to 500 knights, with about 4000 men, distributed in 400† vessels.

There was, on the intelligence of his landing, a general movement through the country, among those whom his arrival impressed with fear or expectation. The Wexford men, who had detained Fitz-Stephen,

\* In the following note on the above extract, Mr Moore gives some curious particulars. "Lynch, *feudal dignities*, &c. Some of the smaller payments, as given by this writer, are not a little curious. Thus we find 26s. 6d. paid for adorning and gilding the king's swords; £12 10s. for 1000 pounds of wax; 118s. 7d. for 569 pounds of almonds, sent to the king in Ireland; 15s. 11d. for five carts."—*Moore*, ii. 248.

† "240" Ann. Ulst.—quoted by Leland.



came and delivered him up, with themselves, their lands, and allegiance to the disposal of the king. They represented their zeal as proved by the seizure of "a traitor to his sovereign," who had, without warrant, "slaughtered their people, seized their lands, and attempted to establish himself independent of his liege lord." The king received them with expressions of favour, and declared that he would inquire into the crimes of Fitz-Stephen, whom, in the meantime, with his wonted double policy, he reprimanded and confined until he had compelled the concession of his acquisitions as the price of favour and freedom. On the same occasion, Strongbow made a formal cession of Waterford, and did homage for his principality of Leinster. Dermot Macarthy, prince of Desmond, was the first of the native princes who submitted. On the next day after Henry's arrival, he came in, and surrendering the dominion of his capital city of Cork, Henry received his oath of fealty, confirmed his subordinate rights, and placed a governor and garrison of his own in Cork. From Waterford he marched to Lismore, and thence to Cashel, near which he received the submission of O'Brien, prince of Limerick. It is not necessary here to state the repetitions of the same proceeding, accompanied by similar circumstances, which attended the successive steps of his progress, at every stage of which he was met by the submission and homage of the neighbouring princes and chiefs, which he received with a conciliating deportment, and secured by garrisons and governors. Among their names, as mentioned by Giraldus, that of O'Rourke arrests the attention of the reader. Roderic alone exhibited, in the manner of his submission, some indications of reluctance. He came no nearer than the Shannon, "which divideth Connaught from Meath," where he was met by Hugh de Lacy and William Fitz-Adelm, who received his oath of allegiance, by which he declared himself tributary to England.

The king kept the festival of Christmas in Dublin, near which he had erected a palace of wattles for his residence. He was here attended by most of the native chiefs, whose astonishment at his magnificence is thus described by Giraldus:—"When they saw the great abundance of victuals, and the noble services, as also the eating of cranes, which they much loathed, being not before accustomed thereunto, they much wondered and marvelled thereat, but in the end, they being by the king's commandment set down, did also there eat and drink among them."

During his stay, Henry assembled a synod at Cashel, composed chiefly of the Irish prelates, in which many canons were decreed. To notice these distinctly would lead us farther into the province of church history than the purpose of this memoir admits of. Matthew Paris mentions a lay council at Lismore, where "the laws of England were gratefully accepted by all, and confirmed by the solemnity of an oath." Henry next proceeded to Wexford, where he passed the remainder of his stay in endeavouring to strengthen his hold on the faith and allegiance of his principal English officers who were to remain in the country; and, above all, to secure himself against the power and influence of Strongbow, to whom his jealousy was the source of much trouble and vexation during the rest of his life.



The absence of all news from England, owing to the weather having been so unusually tempestuous, that for some months no ship approached the Irish coast, had for some time much depressed the king's mind. At last, about the middle of Lent, ships from England and France brought intelligence of the fresh revolt of his ungrateful children, and also of the arrival of the papal legates to place his kingdom under an interdict for the murder of Becket. These perplexing accounts admitted of no delay; ordering his forces to Waterford, where his fleet awaited him, he embarked for England on the 17th of April.

It is to be regretted that this able and sagacious monarch was not allowed, by the course of events, to remain until he had completed the structure of which he imperfectly laid the foundation. The quiet submission of the natives, with the sound method of equalizing and soothing policy by which it was obviously the king's intent and interest to cement this newly acquired dominion with the mass of his kingdom, by the only just and effective tie of a full intercommunity of interest and laws, might be expected to have ultimately placed the interests of the island on the securest foundation. Yet, however we may arrive at this conclusion, and concur with those who are of opinion that such would have been the most desirable result for the country and for the body of the people; at the same time the general course of experience, from the history of similar changes, and especially the process which had so recently altered the constitution and transferred the power and property of England, warrants the added conclusion, that the continued attention of the king to Irish affairs—while it much enlarged the basis of popular right, and much advanced the prospects of civilization—by a succession of arbitrary interferences on slight pretexts, would have made much more extensive transfers of the property of the country. Fresh settlers would soon have brought with them new demands on his bounty, and desires of extended settlement; and causes of exasperation would not have failed to furnish pretexts for a more iron-handed subjugation. The course of events depends little on the intent of the hand which sets them in motion; strong necessities, which arise from the cross winds of seeming chance and the complex currents of human passions, impel the subsequent course of policy with forces which it is easier to speculate on than to govern. Slight grievances would have produced discontents, which the direction of a more arbitrary power would have settled more tranquilly, but more sternly.

As circumstances turned out, the jealousy of the king was not directed towards the natives, of whose power of resistance he made small account. But he felt afraid of the power of Strongbow, which, from the extreme smallness of the English settlement, was likely (if allowed) to grow into an ill-balanced and preponderant authority, in which the temptations to disaffection would be strong. To control this, Henry effected on a small scale, that which, if circumstances had induced and warranted, he would have effected to a more serious extent. He raised up several others into power, dignity, and wealth, with extensive allotments of land, and great privileges and immunities. He gave Ulster to De Courcy, and Meath to De Lacy, and several grants in like manner to others, whom, in the course of these memoirs, we shall have distinct occasions to notice.

Earl Strongbow was thus placed in the mortifying position of a subordinate, where he must have felt that he had the first claim, both by right and rank. He retired to Ferns, for the marriage of his daughter to De Quincy, to whom he gave large grants of lands. But De Quincy was not long suffered to enjoy his honours; Strongbow being obliged to march into Ophaly to compel the payment of his tribute, his force was attacked in the rear, and De Quincy, with many others, slain, before order could be restored.

But the eclipse of Strongbow's favour, quickly passed away. King Henry became the object of a powerful confederacy. The unnatural rebellion of his unruly sons was joined by many foreign potentates, who were jealous of his greatness, and hostilities began to menace him from every side. Among other steps for his defence, he was obliged to draw forces from Ireland. Strongbow was foremost in this moment of emergency, and displayed such zeal and efficiency, that Henry trusted him with the government of Gisors. The effects of this step were highly detrimental to the interests of the Irish settlement: the absence of the troops and chief leaders excited a general insurrection of the native chiefs, which we shall again have to notice more fully.

These troubles were heightened by dissensions among the English leaders who remained, and matters were proceeding to a dangerous length, when Henry resolved to send Strongbow over, as the only person whose authority was likely to have weight with all. Having communicated this design to Strongbow, the earl, aware of the jealous temper of the king, proposed that he should have a colleague joined in commission with him; by this he also hoped to be able to turn aside the jealousy of his rivals and enemies. Henry would not consent to the proposal of a colleague, but gave his consent to have Raymond le Gros employed in any service he might think fit. He also granted to Strongbow, on this occasion, the town of Wexford, together with a fort erected at Wicklow.

On landing in Ireland, Strongbow quickly found himself immersed in distresses of no light order. Obligated to send off Fitz-Stephen, De Prendergast, De Lacy, De Cogan, and others, with a considerable force for the service of Henry, with a weakened army he had to contend with the increasing opposition of the Irish chiefs. The soldiery were on the point of mutiny, from their discontent with the command of Hervey de Montmorres, and at last positively refused to march or obey orders, unless under the command of their favourite leader Raymond. Strongbow was obliged to comply; and, in order to propitiate discontents justly excited by their pay having been allowed to fall into arrears, he sent them on an expedition into Ophaly, where a rich plunder was to be expected. Raymond led them into Ophaly, where they met with no resistance; and not long after obtained a slight success in the field over Malachy, prince of Desmond, which had the good effect of restoring alacrity and confidence to his army.

This beneficial effect was in some degree counteracted by the combined incapacity and rashness of Hervey de Montmorres, who, jealous of the success, fame, and favour of Raymond, was anxious to do something to raise his own character. He availed himself of the pliability of Strongbow, whose mind being rather fitted for the field than for the



council, disposed him very much to be led by the suggestions of others : and proposed to him a specious plan of operations to suppress the turbulent spirit of the Munster chiefs. The only result of this plan, was the surprise of a body of Danish troops, who had been injudiciously ordered to march from Dublin to join the English. O'Brien allowed them to march as far as Thurles, without meeting any indication which might awaken their vigilance. Here they encamped, in the carelessness of perfect security, and, when they least expected, found themselves defenceless and in the power of an armed force, which burst into their encampment, and, without resistance, slaughtered four hundred men with their leaders.

The incident was productive of the worst consequences. Strongbow himself, alarmed by a disaster so little to be anticipated, retreated into Waterford. The Irish chieftains rose in arms ; and, at a preconcerted signal, Donald Kavanagh, who from the beginning had sided with the English, now thinking that this reverse left an opening for him to lay claim to his father's province, withdrew his fidelity, and asserted his right to Leinster ; while the brave king of Connaught, hoping at last some prospect of union and fidelity from this show of zeal, once more exerted his activity in an endeavour to combine the chiefs, and give method and concert to their efforts.

Strongbow, in this emergency, became sensible of the necessity of Raymond's services. He had offended this eminent soldier by the refusal of his sister ; he now sent to solicit his presence, and made the lady's hand the price of conciliation. Raymond came, and brought with him a well appointed force from Wales. Collecting thirty of his own relations, with a hundred horse and three hundred archers, he embarked in twenty transports, and landed at Waterford.

It was agreed between Strongbow and Raymond, to march without delay to Wexford. Departing, they left a small, but as they thought sufficient, garrison behind them. The event was nearly fatal to this body. The townsmen of Waterford were secretly disaffected to the English, and thinking they had now a fair opportunity to seize on the town, they concerted their measures for this purpose. The garrison took no precautions against an enmity of which they had no suspicion ; but acted as if among friends. Their commander crossed the Suir in a boat with few attendants ; his whole party were suddenly assailed and murdered by the boatmen, who, it is to be supposed, went prepared for the purpose. This horrible deed was the signal for massacre ; the bloody tidings were scarcely echoed from the observers on the shore, when the English were simultaneously attacked, and all who were unarmed, without distinction of age or sex, became the helpless victims. Of the garrison many were in the citadel, and many who were abroad contrived to join them. Arming themselves, they sallied forth into the streets, and soon reduced the rabble, who had attempted to besiege them, to sue for quarter and invent excuses for their treason.

Strongbow in the meantime staid in Wexford. Thither his sister Basilia had repaired, with a splendid retinue from Dublin, and was married to Raymond le Gros. The rejoicings were suddenly arrested by the startling intelligence that Roderic, still indefatigable in an ill-supported opposition, had passed the Shannon at the head of the



combined army of the Irish chiefs, and entering Meath had expelled the English, and devastated the land to the walls of Dublin. There was a sudden stop to the festal proceedings; Raymond was compelled to change his festal weed and softer cares, for a sterner attire and purpose. He marched to Dublin, resolved to meet and crush the confederacy which had thus inopportunately called him to the field. But with the usual inconsistency of such confederacies, the impulse of the chiefs, who had no common object, had exhausted itself in the ravage of a province; and Roderic was left alone before the enemy had time to come up. Disappointed and depressed by this further evidence of the hopelessness of the cause, in which he felt himself alone, he endeavoured, by a judicious retreat, to save his own small party.

Strongbow, with Raymond, arrived in time to convert the retreat of some of the numerous parties, which had thus fallen asunder, into a destructive flight. They restored the English settlement, and had the forts rebuilt at the cost of Tyrrel, who governed there for Hugh de Lacy.

Many circumstances now occurred which seemed to give some assurance of union and prosperity to the English; but in the midst of these events, Strongbow's death took place in Dublin, after a tedious and painful illness, in the month of May, 1177. Raymond, apprized of this event by a letter from his wife, hurried privately to Dublin, and, with the archbishop, Lawrence O'Toole, solemnized his funeral. Strongbow was interred in Christ church, to which he had (with other English leaders) made considerable additions.\*

The following description has been transmitted by Giraldus, of his person and character:—

“Earl Strongbow was of a complexion somewhat sanguine and spotted; his eyes grey, his countenance feminine, his voice small, his neck slender, but in most other particulars he was well formed and tall; liberal and courteous in his manners; and what he could not gain by power, he frequently obtained by an insinuating address. In peace he was more disposed to obey than to govern. His state and authority were reserved for the camp, and were supported with the utmost dignity. He was diffident of his own judgment, cautious of proposing his own plans of operation; but in executing those of others, undaunted and vigorous. In battle, he was the standard on which his soldiers fixed their eyes, and by whose motions they were determined either to advance or to retreat. His temper was composed and uniform; not dejected by misfortune, nor elated by success.”

\* “Laurence, archbishop of Dublin, Richard, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Strigul, Robert Fitz-Stephens, and Raymond le Gros, undertook to enlarge this church, and at their own charges built the choir, the steeple, and two chapels; one dedicated to St Edmund, king and martyr, and to St Mary, called the White, and the other to St Laud.”—*Harris's Ware*.

## O'Ruark, Prince of Brefni.

DIED A. D. 1173.

THE reader who has read the memoir which has commenced this series, in which we have given an outline of the history of the English invasion, will have been fully possessed of the incidents which give O'Ruark a claim on his notice, as one of the main actors in this momentous revolution; and we may be excused for not breaking the continuity of narration, which it has been our study to preserve, by reverting to the early events of this period.

Outraged by the infidelity of his wife, and the libertinism of the prince of Leinster; compelled also by the necessity of his position, in the very centre of the seat of a conflict for territory which lasted through the remainder of his life; he was a party in every contest and confederacy by which the English might be unfixed from their acquisitions.

We shall therefore here merely relate the circumstances attending his death.

Although the province of Meath had been granted to De Lacy, yet, by virtue of arrangements made by Roderic, O'Ruark was still allowed to retain possession of the eastern territory of this province. Unsatisfied with a portion of his ancient possessions, and apprehending, not without reason, the effect of further encroachment, he repaired to Dublin and demanded redress from De Lacy. A conference ensued, which led to no accommodation. Another meeting was appointed, which was to take place on the hill of Tara. This was in accordance with the ancient custom of Ireland, by which differences between chiefs were to be settled by a meeting in some place distant from the dwelling of both, where neither might have any advantage of force; and on some open hill, where the danger of treachery might be more easily guarded against.

Cambrensis and, after him, most of our authorities mention, that the night before this conference was to take place, Griffith, the brother to Raymond le Gros, had a dream, in which he thought he saw a flock of wild boars rushing upon De Lacy and his uncle Maurice Fitz-Gerald; and that one more fierce and monstrous than the others was about to kill them, when he saved them by slaying the monster. Alarmed by this dream, which was the natural result of the workings of an apprehensive understanding, excited by the interest of the occasion, and the restless alertness of youth, Griffith the next morning would have dissuaded the English chiefs from the meeting. De Lacy was not to be deterred by a dream, although the issue which it seemed to forebode was always the highly probable end of such meetings. Griffith, however, was not so easily dispossessed of the apprehension thus awakened in his mind. He selected seven associates, all distinguished for valour, and repairing to the place of meeting, he approached the spot where the conference was to be held, as near as the arrangements of the parties would admit of; and while the conference went on uninterruptedly, they rode about the field affecting to engage

in chivalric exercises. For a little while all went on with temper, although without any approach to amicable agreement, between O'Ruark on one part, and De Lacy with Maurice Fitz-Gerald on the other. Suddenly O'Ruark, under some pretext, retired some way from where they stood, and, when at a safe distance, made a signal. It was instantly answered by the sudden appearance of an armed party who came rapidly up the hill. They were already upon the English lords, before the attention of Griffith's party was caught by their appearance: De Lacy and Maurice had therefore to fight for their lives.

So rapid was their approach that De Lacy, whose back was turned, was taken by surprise. Maurice Fitz-Gerald saw his danger, drew his sword, and called out to warn him; but O'Ruark, whose party had in the meantime surrounded them, rushing at De Lacy, attempted to strike him with his battle-axe before he could put himself in a posture of defence; the blow was fortunately warded off by his interpreter, whom it laid on the ground. De Lacy was twice struck down, but a stroke which would have ended his life was warded off by Fitz-Gerald, whom the chance of the struggle brought near. A few seconds were enough for this rapid and violent action; another instant might have been fatal; but Griffith and his gallant party were now on the spot, and the assailants were endeavouring to escape. O'Ruark ran towards his horse, which stood close by where he had left it on first alighting to the conference; he was just in the act of mounting, when the spear of Griffith passed through his body. His party was then attacked and put to flight with some slaughter. His death removed a serious obstacle to the ambition of De Lacy. This incident occurred in 1173.

### **Maurice Fitz-Gerald.**

DIED A. D. 1177.

THE origin of this illustrious ancestor of a race whose history is for ages identified with that of Ireland, is derived by the heralds from Otho, a noble descended from the dukes of Tuscany, and contemporary with king Alfred. The family are supposed to have come over with the Normans into England, and finally to have settled in Wales. Dugdale, however, affirms that Otho was an English baron, in the reign of Edward the Confessor; but this inconsistency between the two accounts, may be simply due to the confusion of the common name of two different persons, both probably of the same race. Of the latter person of this name, it is said that he was father to Walter Fitz-Otho, who in 1078 was castellan of Windsor, and appointed by William the Conqueror warden of the forests of Berkshire, being then possessed of two lordships in that county, three in Surrey, three in Dorsetshire, four in Middlesex, nine in Wiltshire, one in Somerset, and ten in the county of Southampton.\* He married the daughter of a Welsh chief or prince, Rywall-ap-Cotwyn, by whom he had three sons, Gerald, Robert, and William.

\* Lodge, i. 55.



Of these, heralds have had much discussion, without being able to settle the seniority. "Gerald, the eldest son, in the earl of Kildare's pedigree," observes Lodge, "being made the youngest in the earl of Kerry's, drawn in the year 1615, and attested by Sir William Seager, garter king of arms, who is followed by his successors, Dugdale and Austis, for which they assign this reason, viz., *That the appellation of Fitz-Walter was given to this Gerald, because he was the younger son.* To controvert this is to encounter great authority; but we think it deserves an inquiry, how the consequences of his being a younger son, can be drawn from his having the appellation of *Fitz-Walter*? The custom of that age warrants us to affirm the contrary, and to assert that the eldest son (*especially*) assumed for his surname the Christian name of his father, with the addition of Fitz, &c., of which many instances occur in this very family; and this continued in use till surnames began to be fixed about the time of king Edward I."\* We do not consider the question material to be settled here, and quote so far for the sake of the incidental matter.

On the revolt of a Welsh prince, Fitz-Walter was employed by Henry I. to reduce him to submission; and on his success, was appointed president of the county of Pembroke, and rewarded with extensive grants in Wales. From this he settled there, and married Nesta, the daughter of a Welsh prince. The history of this lady offers a curious illustration of the lax morality of the 11th century. She had been mistress to king Henry, by whom she had a son; she was next married to Stephen, constable of the castles of Pembroke and Cardigan; and lastly, to Gerald Fitz-Walter. The fortune which united her descendants in the common enterprise which forms the main subject of this period, is not less remarkable; for Meiler Fitz-Henry, Robert Fitz-Stephen, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald, were thus related by the mother's side.

Maurice came over with Fitz-Stephen in 1168, and took a principal part in all the successes and hardships which followed. When Henry paid his visit to the island, at his departure in 1173, he left Maurice as governor conjointly with Hugh de Lacy. In discharge of this important trust he performed many important services. It was during this administration that the occurrence of O'Ruark's attempted treachery and violent death, already related, took place.

The affairs of Henry became, at this time, deeply involved. The repeated rebellions of his turbulent and ungrateful sons were becoming more formidable as they became more influentially connected with foreign politics, and supported by the power and political intrigue of his enemies. He was menaced by a dangerous war, which made it necessary for him to draw away his Irish forces, with the most experienced and trustworthy of their leaders. Among these, Maurice was thus removed from the scene where his wisdom and valour were so much required; and it was not till 1176, that he was again brought back by the earl of Pembroke. From this nobleman he received large grants in Leinster, among which was a renewal of the king's grant of the barony of Ophaly, and the castle of Wicklow.†

\* Lodge, note 55.

† Then Wykenlooe.—Lodge.

Maurice died in the autumn of the following year, 1177, and was buried in the Grey Friars, near Wexford; he left four sons, and one daughter. Of these, Gerald was the elder; the second, William, left a daughter, through whom the barony of Naas descended to the lords Gormanstown.

## Robert Fitz-Stephen.

DIED A. D. 1182.

IF it were our object to relate the history of this entire period under the head of a single life, the fittest for selection would be that of Robert Fitz-Stephen. But there are few particulars of his eventful and active course, which are not mentioned in their place. By maternal descent he was brother to the Fitz-Geralds—the mother of both having been Nesta, the daughter of Rees ap Tudor, who after an illegitimate union with Henry the First, was married first to Stephen (*Custos Campe Abertivi*), by whom she had Fitz-Stephen, and then to Gerald the son of Otho, and castellan of Windsor.

The lands in Ireland granted to Fitz-Stephen were, first, a share in two cantreds near Wexford, granted by Dermot M'Murrough between him and Maurice Fitz-Gerald, on the capture of Wexford. The city of Wexford shortly after fell into his possession; but this he was forced to give up to king Henry, as the price of his liberty, when, by a most base perjury, with the connivance of two bishops, Malachy O'Brin and John O'Hethe, he was cajoled into a surrender of his person, into the hands of those who besieged him in his castle of Carrig.

His services were afterwards requited, by a grant from the king to himself and Miles de Cogan, of the kingdom of Cork, from Lismore to the sea, with the exception of the city of Cork. This grant was to be held of the king by a service of sixty knights. The settlement, on being claimed, was disputed by the native chiefs of the province, who, with great justice, submitted that they had not resisted king Henry, or committed any act to which the penalty of forfeiture could be attached. The remonstrance was too obviously just, not to be allowed some weight. Fortunately for the peace of this district, neither party was possessed of the means of resistance: a few slight skirmishes satisfied each, that no decisive result was likely to follow the appeal to force, and a compromise was made to the satisfaction of the new grantees. By this agreement, the English chiefs were allowed to hold seven cantreds near Cork, the remaining twenty-four being retained by the native chiefs.

Fitz-Stephen's life had been one of great exertion and vicissitude. His old age was one of severe afflictions. Miles de Cogan his kinsman and friend, and his son Ralph Fitz-Stephen, who had not long been married to Miles' daughter, were, on their way to Waterford, engaged to pass a night at the house of a native, of the name of Mae Tire. This vile miscreant had been on terms of friendly intimacy with his victims, and, considering their wealth and power, it is probable that he had obtained their confidence, by having received kindness from their families. Nothing had occurred, it is evident, to lessen their reliance

on the friendly hospitality of their host, at whose instance their journey had been undertaken, and by whose special invitation they were his guests. The particulars cannot with any certainty be described, but it is certain that, in a moment of confiding security, they were assassinated, with five followers, in the house of their perfidious host.

This event excited terror amongst the followers of the English knight, and an ill-warranted sense of triumph among the natives. The account quickly spread, and became the signal for war and tumult; Macarthy of Desmond, who yet retained the title of king of Cork, collected his followers and laid siege to the city of Cork. Fitz-Stephen, overwhelmed by his recent calamity, was little capable of resistance. In this affliction his friends had recourse to Raymond le Gros, who, coming from Wexford by sea, with twenty knights and one hundred archers, compelled Macarthy to submission. Poor Fitz-Stephen, received no consolation from this service. A life of severe toil and vicissitude, had worn his strength; he had been heavily afflicted by the loss of another, it is said, his favourite son: this last trial overcame him, and his rescuer found him deprived of reason.

On his death, the Carews laid claim to his estate. But Ware writes that the claim was set aside on the ground of Fitz-Stephen's being illegitimate. The plea on which legal decision can have been grounded, is likely to have some foundation; but it seems inconsistent with the concurrent testimonies of history, which agree in representing his mother Nesta as having been married to Stephen. The facts are, however, not directly contradictory; and it must be admitted, that in the statements of the annalists of the period, accuracy is not the principal recommendation.

## Raymond le Gros.

DIED A. D. 1184.

RAYMOND FITZ-GERALD, called, from his large person and full habits, Le Gros, was the son of William Fitz-Gerald, and grandson of Gerald of Windsor, and the bravest of the first adventurers who, in the 12th century, sought and found fortune in this island. From the beginning his courage and prowess were signalized by those hardy and prompt feats of valour which, in the warfare of that age, when so much depended on personal address and strength, were often important enough to decide the fortune of the field. And there is hardly one of the combats which we have had occasion to notice, which does not offer some special mention of his name. We shall take up his history a little back, among the events we have just related.

When Strongbow had been summoned to attend the English monarch, the command of the forces in Ireland was committed to the care of Montmorres, to whom Raymond was second in command. This combination was productive of some jealousy on the part of Montmorres, which led to ill offices, and ripened into mutual animosity. Montmorres was proud, tenacious of the privileges and dignity of his station, and felt the acrimony of an inferior mind excited against one,



whose soldier-like virtues and brilliant actions rendered him the mark of general admiration and the idol of the soldiery. Montmorres was an exactor of discipline on slight occasions, and appeared more anxious to vindicate his authority, than to consult the comfort, interest or safety of the army; while Raymond, on the contrary, showed in all his acts and manners the most ready and earnest zeal for the welfare and security of every individual. Frank and easy in his address, he preserved no unnecessary distance; and seemed more ready to endure hardship, and face danger himself, than to impose them on others.

The influence of these qualities, so attractive in a rude and warlike age, was not confined to the soldiery. Raymond's reputation stood at the highest among the leaders; and when Strongbow desired a colleague of the king, he at the same time named Raymond as the worthiest and most efficient of these adventurers. When Strongbow arrived in Ireland, he found the cry of discontent loud against Montmorres; and we have already related how Raymond's merit was enforced by the soldiers, who presented themselves in a body to demand him for their leader. The first exploit which was the result of his appointment, we have briefly mentioned. The troops destined for England, had been attacked after their embarkation, by the people of Cork. The assault was however repelled. Raymond having heard of the incident, was hastening with a small party of twenty knights and sixty horsemen to their aid, when his way was intercepted by Macarthy; a short struggle ensued, in which Macarthy was worsted and obliged to retreat, though with a force vastly superior. Raymond, with a large and rich spoil, entered Waterford in triumph.

Raymond had long entertained a passion for Basilia, the sister of Strongbow. But the earl had uniformly turned a deaf ear to his solicitations on this head. Raymond however now entertained the notion that his rising fame, his acknowledged usefulness, and the earl's own preference for him might avail to ensure a more favourable answer. But the earl, while he felt the full value of Raymond's services, did not much wish to place a leader of such popularity, and so likely to force his way to pre-eminence, on a level of advantage so near himself. He therefore received the overtures of Raymond with a coldness which gave offence to the pride of this brave warrior, who, with the resentment provoked by a strong sense of injured merit and unrequited service, retired hastily into Wales.

It was during his absence that the misfortunes, recited in the last memoir, arose from the precipitate ambition and incapacity of Montmorres, followed by the insurrection of the chiefs, and the bold but vain attempt of Roderic.

In his retirement Raymond was gratified by a despatch from the earl, entreating his prompt assistance, and offering him the hand of Basilia, with his other demands, viz., the post of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster. The triumph of Raymond was indeed decisive; the incapacity of his rival and enemy was the cause of the disasters which he was thus called upon to repair: his merit was amply vindicated from the slight it had sustained, and acknowledged by the gratification of his utmost wishes. Collecting a well-appointed and brave though small force, he came over and landed in Waterford.

We have already related the main particulars of his marriage in Wexford, and with it the interruption of his happiness by the iron call of war. On this occasion he received a large grant of lands, as the dowry of his wife, and was made constable and standard-bearer of Leinster.\* The spontaneous dispersion of the Irish confederacy followed.

Raymond was next sent to besiege Limerick. The city had been seized by the prince of Thomond, and was at this time in his possession. Raymond, with six hundred chosen men, marched to besiege it. Arriving at the banks of the Shannon, his advance was checked by broken bridges and a broad and dangerous stream. In this emergency two knights volunteered to try the way, and, entering the river where appearances were most favourable, they made their way across in safety; but, on their return, one was swept down the current and lost. A third knight, who had followed, passed safely, but remained in danger from the near approach of the enemy. There was some hesitation among the troops; when Raymond spurred forward from the rear, entered the stream, and called on his men to follow. The example of their chief gave confidence; and, without further hesitation, the whole body advanced into the rough and rapid waters, and, with the loss of two men, gained the opposite bank. The reader will best conceive the bravery of this exploit from its effect. The enemy—rough, hardy, and inured to the hardships of exposure and strife—were so astonished at the feat, that they fled without a blow. The English lost no time in this position, but at once pursued them; and, after a considerable slaughter of the fugitives, they obtained possession of the city without further resistance.

This success confirmed the fortune and fame of Raymond; but the envy of his rival was not asleep. Montmorres appears to have belonged to that low order of minds which shrink from open enmity, and adopt the safer and more cowardly alternative of carrying on their schemes under the hollow cover of a perfidious friendship. Such, if we are to credit Cambrensis, was the circuitous path followed by Hervey, who may perhaps have consulted other feelings, but certainly pursued revenge in seeking the advantages and opportunities of a near alliance with his rival. He married the daughter of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, the uncle of Raymond, and thus at once placed himself within the circumvallation of domestic confidence. He was not long before he availed himself of this position for the basest purposes. He despatched secret messengers to Henry, informing him of the dangerous course of Raymond's ambition, and assuring him, on the authority of a near kinsman, that his aspiring temper knew no limit short of the independent sovereignty of the kingdom; that for this purpose he studied the arts of a factious popularity; that he had secured Limerick, and propagated a secret feeling of disaffection to the king and devotion to himself through the whole army.

The consequence of representations thus proceeding from so authoritative a quarter, and backed by so many seeming confirmations, alarmed the cautious mind of Henry; he therefore, without delay,

\* Leland, i. 109.



sent over four commissioners, of whom two were to conduct Raymond to the king, and the others to remain in order to watch the conduct of Strongbow, and obtain a general insight into the dispositions of the other leaders.

Raymond was at no loss to comprehend the whole machinery which had been set in motion against him. He declared his willingness to wait on the king. But while delays arose from the state of the weather, which prevented the ships from leaving port, an account came that the prince of Thomond had laid siege to Limerick; and that the garrison was in want of provisions, and, if not quickly relieved, must perish by famine or the enemy. This emergency was rendered critical by the illness of Strongbow. The earl, nevertheless, mustered his troops, and made the necessary preparations for their march. When all was ready, the soldiers refused to proceed without their favourite leader, under whom alone they had been accustomed to march to certain victory. The commissioners were consulted; and, seeing the necessity, consented that Raymond should take the command. But Raymond refused. It became, therefore, necessary for the earl and the commissioners to descend to the most earnest and pressing solicitations, to which he at length yielded with seeming reluctance and real triumph. The malice of his enemy had but given additional *eclat* to his fame.

He marched at the head of an army composed of eighty knights, with two hundred horsemen and three hundred archers. With these, a native force, under the prince of Ossory, swelled his numbers.

At his approach the prince of Thomond abandoned the siege, and coming to meet him, occupied a defile through which the path of the English lay; there, posting his men according to the well known tactics of the country, he awaited the approach of Raymond. The English leader soon obtained a view of the ambuscade, and calmly prepared to force his way through a position of which the dangers were so great and apparent, that it diffused terror and doubt among his allies. This sense was increased by the cool and deliberate deportment, and tranquil preparations of Raymond: the steady composure, too, of the English soldiers was little to be understood by the ardour of the Irish temperament. The prince of Ossory, under this fallacious impression, thought fit to address a remonstrance to the English knight. He bluntly informed Raymond that he had no alternative between destruction and victory. He pointed out his unprotected situation in the case of defeat; and told him, with a frankness which marks the low civilization of this period, that, if the day went against him, his Irish allies would instantly join the enemy for his destruction. Raymond received the exhortation with a stern smile, and answered it by commanding an immediate onset. The Irish received the attack with their native spirit, but with the result to be looked for from the superior arms and discipline of the assailants; they were driven with great slaughter from their intrenchments, and scattered in utter and irretrievable rout and confusion over the country. So great was this confusion, and so far did it spread, that the whole of Munster felt the shock. O'Brien, hitherto implacable in his enmity, saw the danger of allowing hostilities to proceed under such an aspect of circumstances. He proposed an interview with Raymond.



It happened, at the same time, that the king of Connaught, who had for some time begun to see plainly the folly of sacrificing his own province for the liberation of chiefs who would not be delivered by him—resolved to leave them at last to their fate, and to save the poor remains of his monarchy. For this purpose he sought the English camp, and arrived on the same day that O'Brien came in for the like purpose. Raymond had thus the honour of receiving the oaths and hostages of these two most respectable and formidable of the native princes; and by one signal action bringing the war to a termination with greater advantages than had yet been obtained.

A tragic romance in the family of a Munster chief—Macarthy of Desmond—afforded a fair pretext for continuing his operations in the field. Cormac, the eldest son of Macarthy, rose in rebellion against his father; and having thrown him into prison, seized possession of his territories. Macarthy had sworn allegiance to the king of England, and now claimed the protection of the English general, with promises of ample advantages, should he, by his means, obtain his freedom and power. Raymond unhesitatingly complied. Entering the territory of Desmond, he soon made it appear to the rebellious and unnatural Cormac that there was no resource short of unqualified submission. He yielded—his father was released and reinstated in his possessions: and Cormac thrown into the same dungeon which he had assigned to his father. Here the fate he amply merited was not long deferred. The gratitude of Macarthy was attested by a liberal grant to Raymond of territories, which he transmitted to his posterity; while an abundant supply for the wants of his army, gave an importance to this service in the estimation of the army and the commissioners.

It was at this period, that he received from his wife a letter, containing the following mystic enunciation:—

“ Know, my dear lord, that my great cheek tooth, which was wont to ache so much, is now fallen out; wherefore, if you have any care or regard of me, or of yourself, come away with all speed.”\*

This communication, implying the death of Strongbow, was easily interpreted by Raymond, who set off without delay. The situation was one of great emergency. The troops were felt to be necessary, for the preservation of the English province thus deprived of its governor; and Raymond felt the mortifying sense, that their removal would be the signal for the native chiefs to renew their hostilities, and seize on the unprotected city. There yet was no alternative. In this situation, it occurred to him to make an experiment on the generosity and fidelity of the chief of Thomond. Sending for this prince, he assumed a confidential manner, and told him that as he was now become one of the great barons of the king, it was fit that he should receive, as such, a mark of confidence, suited to the high dignity of the rank: with this view it was now, he informed him, resolved to intrust him with the charge of Limerick, that he might have occasion to approve his attachment, and to merit added honours.

But Raymond had met with his superior in the game which he now

\* Girald. Cox. Hanmer.

ventured to play. The secret triumph of the Celt was concealed under the impenetrable aspect of simple faith, and by professions of cordial gratitude and lasting attachment. Without the slightest symptom of reluctant hesitation, he took the oaths required for the safe custody and faithful restoration of the town. Raymond, felicitating himself on the success of his expedient, now proceeded to march out of the town. He was scarcely over the bridge, when it was broken down at the other end; nor had he proceeded much farther, when he saw the flames arise in different quarters.

This occurrence was reported to the king, it is said, with the hope of exciting a prejudice against Raymond in his mind. But the effect was different. He is reported to have observed, "that the first gaining of Limerick was a noble exploit, the recovery of it still nobler; but that the only act of wisdom was the manner of its abandonment."

On the death of Strongbow, the council in Dublin, acting on a just sense of expediency, chose Raymond as his successor in the government, and their choice met the sanction of the king's commissioners. But the jealousy of the king had been too effectually worked upon by the artful misrepresentations of interested and angry enemies. He resolved to intrust the government to William Fitz-Adelm, whom he now sent into Ireland with twenty knights. With him he sent John de Courcy, Robert Fitz-Stephen, and Miles de Cogan, as an escort, with ten knights to each. With these came Vivian, the pope's legate, and Nicholas Wallingford, an English priest, bearing the brief of pope Alexander, in confirmation of the king's title to the sovereignty of Ireland.

Raymond received the new governor with the respect due to the king's representative, and delivered up the forts, towns, hostages, &c. On this occasion it is mentioned, by several of the Irish historians, on the authority of Cambrensis, that the new governor looked with a malignant eye on the numbers and splendour of Raymond's train, and turning to those who surrounded him observed, that he should soon find means to curtail this display.

He kept his word as far as he could, and Raymond was one of the English settlers who felt the weight of his oppressive government. His public career appears to have terminated from this: his name no more occupies a place in the history of the period. It appears that he lived in retirement on his property, near Wexford, and left his wife still living at his death. About five years after the period of Fitz-Adelm's arrival, we meet him once more in arms, with his wonted valour and success, in aid of his uncle, Fitz-Stephen, who was in danger of being attacked by superior numbers in Cork. As this event had place in 1182, and was quickly followed by occasions in which he could not have failed to be a party, we may venture to assume that his death happened within the next two years.

## Hervey de Monte Mariscoe.

DIED A. D. 1179.

THIS person, the ancestor of the lords Mountmorres, and one of the first adventurers who came over with Strongbow, who was his uncle; was descended from the noble and ancient family of Mount Morency. His family came into England with the Conqueror, and had grants in Wales.

He received large grants in Ireland, in the counties of Tipperary, Wexford, and Kerry, "some of which," says Lodge, "are still vested in his family, but the greater part were carried by intermarriages into the houses of Ormonde and Leinster."\*

When Strongbow went over to the assistance of king Henry in Normandy, Hervey was appointed, jointly with Raymond le Gros, to the command of the English army in Ireland. The particulars of this command may be found in our memoir of Raymond. Hervey was unpopular, and Raymond much regarded; so that, although second in command, he soon acquired a preponderance which soured the temper of Montmorres and produced division between these leaders. It may be observed that the causes of dislike to Hervey on the part of the soldiery are rather honourable to him than otherwise, a chief discontent was his preventing them from indiscriminate plunder, for which they claimed licence in consideration of insufficient pay, and also his being severe in discipline. These jealousies were productive of consequences likely to be injurious to the English interest; and coming to the notice of Henry, they led to a different arrangement, by which his rival was joined in commission with Strongbow, who was sent back to Ireland.

In 1175, Hervey married Nesta, the daughter of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, and cousin to Raymond, an alliance which must have materially strengthened his interests, though disgraced by his perfidious conduct towards this latter eminent person.†

In 1179, he founded the abbey of Dunbrody, of the Cistercian order, in the county of Wexford—though Ware may be right in asserting that this abbey was not founded till 1182. In the year 1179, he retired from the world and became a "brother in the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Canterbury, but he was buried at Dunbrody, where a stately monument was erected to his memory."‡ His large estates passed to his brother Geoffrey, whom we afterwards meet as lord justice in Ireland, in the following century.

\* Lodge, iii.

† See p. 289.

‡ Lodge.



## Hugh de Lacy.

DIED A. D. 1186.

THE reader is already aware that, on the 14th October, 1172, king Henry landed at Waterford with a train of four hundred knights. Among these was Hugh de Lacy, a Norman by descent, and high in the favour and confidence of the king.

In his arrangements for the purpose of counterbalancing the rising power of Strongbow, we have mentioned already that Henry raised several of his knights into power and possession: amongst these De Lacy was the foremost. The grant of Meath, and the government of Dublin, conjointly with Maurice Fitz-Gerald and Robert Fitz-Stephen, laid, on broad foundations, the long-continued power and importance of his family.

He was immediately after left chief governor of Ireland; and during the season of his administration, had the adventure with O'Ruark, mentioned in our notice of that chief.\*

De Lacy married a daughter of Roderic O'Conor, king of Connaught, the effect of which was to cause his recall in 1180. His government had, however, given satisfaction. He had preserved order, and materially strengthened the English settlement. He had by this time also, built many well-situated castles: castle Dermot, Leighlin, Leix, Delvin, Carlow, Tullaghphelim, and Kilkay.

In three months after, therefore, he was restored, and, as well as we can collect, continued till 1184. He was during this time as active and efficient as at first, and raised forts as numerous in Leinster as before in Meath. He employed the bravest adventurers, where their valour and activity might be as a safeguard to the bordering settlements, and administered justice impartially and mildly. The natural effect of such conduct was, to raise his authority in the country; his rivals, taking the usual advantage of this, again contrived to rouse the jealousy of Henry, and in 1184 he was displaced, and De Braosa sent in his room. It was during this interval that the romantic career of John de Courcy commenced under the auspices of De Lacy, to whose government his military prowess was an efficient support.

De Braosa's misconduct soon awakened Henry to a sense of the impolicy and injustice of the change which had superseded the vigour and experience of Hugh de Lacy; and he would have been once more reinstated, but a fatal and atrocious outrage deprived the king of his services. The impolicy of De Braosa had involved the settlement in commotion; incursions into Meath had done considerable mischief within the territories of De Lacy; and he was himself, with his characteristic ardour, engaged in repairing his forts. It was his custom to superintend, and occasionally to take part in the work, a practice

\* There is some difference among historians, as to the identity of the native chief concerned in this adventure. Cox names O'Meloghlin—but we have relied on the judgment of Leland.

explained by the rough and manly habits of his age, when all sorts of physical exertion were familiar in the highest rank. One of the forts he was thus engaged with, was founded on the site of an ancient abbey at Dorrowe, or Derwath. The respectable prejudices of the people were shocked by the profanation of a site, rendered sacred in their eyes by the recollections it bore. This feeling fermented among a multitude, until it awakened the fanaticism of one among the workmen; excited to a high degree by this insane affection, he resolved on the murder of the knight. For this purpose, he concealed a battle-axe under the ample folds of his mantle, and, when De Lacy stooped down, either in explaining his orders, or to make some exertion, he seized the occasion, and with a blow struck off his head. This event happened about 1186.

His death was the signal for fresh outbreaks; and Henry, feeling the strong necessity of a vigorous arm in the torrent of commotion and resistance, appointed De Courcy to the government.

### Donald O'Brien, Prince of Thomond.

DIED A.D. 1194.

THIS chief is famous among the Irish writers, and was popular in his day. He occupies an equal place in the history of the troubles of this period, and in the annals of the Irish church. He was among the first of the Irish princes who submitted to the English—a step for which his character has suffered some unjust reprehension, from the inconsiderate nationality of some of our most respectable authorities. To enter on the subject here would involve us in needless repetition, as we shall have occasion to weigh the force of such opinions, once for all, in our life of Roderic O'Connor, who, in the same manner, has been grossly misrepresented.

Donald succeeded, on the death of his brother, to the kingdom of Thomond, in 1168. To this he soon added the kingdom of Ormond, which he took from his brother Brian, whom he deprived of his eyes; he thus became sole chief of north Munster. Two years after, he became involved in hostilities with Roderic O'Connor, against whom he was assisted by Fitz-Stephen, an alliance by which the English gained a footing in Munster. In the following year, he took the oath of allegiance to king Henry; but, conceiving soon that he was likely to lose his independence, and to have his territory endangered—or, more probably, taking up a tone of opposition from the surrounding chiefs—he appears, in 1173, engaged in repeated struggles with the English. In this year, he destroyed the castle of Kilkenny, and made various destructive incursions upon the English lands. In 1175, he was dethroned by Roderic, and his brother raised to his throne; but, on making submission, he was, in the following year, restored.

He died in 1194, king of all Munster. He left many sons, and is celebrated by ecclesiastical writers. His monastic foundations were many;\* among these the most important to mention are the cathedrals

\* Lodge, i. 14.

of Limerick and Cashel. The latter of these occupied the site of the king's palace, and included the venerable ancient structure called Cormac's chapel, which was, from the new erection, allotted to the purpose of a chapter house.\*

## Roderic.

DIED A. D. 1198.

WE shall offer not more than a brief outline of the life of Roderic. All the incidents of his eventful reign which can now have much interest for any one but the antiquary, have been fully related in the preceding memoirs, in their more important connexion with the main events of this period of Irish biography. That which is peculiar to the history of a native chief, belongs to an order of events and a state of society in which few can feel any interest, and of which the record is meagre and of doubtful authority. Yet the often slighted memory of the last of Ireland's monarchs demands the tribute of a memorial from the justice of the impartial historian. It is difficult to do historic justice to the memory of a name which has been the subject of unwarranted reproach or slight, according to the patriotism or the timidity of different writers, whose disrespectful comments are not borne out by the facts they state. To these statements we have no objection to offer; but when, in the course of these memoirs, they have come before us in the order of narration, we have been so free as to divest them of the tone of misrepresentation, from which even Leland—who sat down to the undertaking of Irish history in the most historical spirit—is not free. The ruling national spirit of our age is faction, to which we might apply all that Scott says of a softer passion:

“ In peace it tunes the shepherd's reed,  
In war it mounts the warrior's steed.”

In peace or war, amity or opposition, praise or condemnation, party spirit is diffused through all the functions of society. Few speakers or writers seem to have retained the clearness of vision which can see facts and the actions of men, unless through the medium of the system of politics with which the mind is jaundiced in the heat of party: a mist of liberalism, or of toryism, sits like an atmosphere round every alert and intelligent actor and thinker; and nothing is looked on but as it seems to bear relation to the creed of either party. If any one have the fortune (or misfortune) to have preserved that intellectual indifference which seldom, perhaps, belongs to the highest order of minds; there is still the fear of opinion, and the respect for individuals, to draw the judgment aside, and to draw from fear the concession to which opinion gives no sanction—a weakness the more dangerous, because there is no modern history, and least of all our own, in which a rigidly impartial writer can avoid alternately drawing down the reprehension of either party; nor can any one, with perfect impunity, presume to

\* Moore.



redeem historical composition from some of the worst defects of an electioneering pamphlet. There is yet, in the history of the period to which Roderic belongs, an error still more prejudicial, founded on the same principle in nature.

Dr Leland, after some comments on the subject of the following memoir, in which we can hardly believe him to have been quite sincere, adds a reflection, which contains the true answer to all such strictures on the lives of ancient men. "It would be rash to form the severest opinion of this [the military] part of his conduct, as we are not distinctly informed of the obstacles and difficulties he had to encounter. The Irish annalists who record his actions were little acquainted with intrigues of policy or faction, and little attentive to their operations. They confine themselves to the plain exposition of events; tell us of an insurrection, a victory, or a retreat; but never think of developing the secret causes that produced or influenced these events."\* But in addition to this fair admission, there is a weightier and more applicable truth, from its nature less popular, yet not less to be admitted by every candid mind. It is this—that the progress of historical events, and the changes of circumstances in the social state, develop and mature new feelings, which in their accumulated effects at remote intervals, amount to a serious difference in the moral nature of the men of different periods. The social state, with all its divisions of sect and civil feud, is now so far cemented into one, that a moral impulse can be made to vibrate through all its arteries, and awaken the intensest national sympathy, on any subject that can be extricated from exclusive locality. Certain opinions have grown into feelings of human nature, and have taken such deep root in the mind, that it has ceased to have the power of dismissing them, even when they are not applicable. Among these is the strong impression of sect, faction, country, and common cause, which are principles developed, not only by civilization, and by reflection or moral culture, but by even those accidental circumstances which may happen to diffuse a sense of common interests, or admitted relation, or in any way create a community. They who look on the past, as most will, only through the medium of the present; who see their own impressions reflected upon the obscure distance of antiquity, and mistake them for the mind of the remote rude ancestors of the land; must find a very pardonable difficulty in realizing to themselves the fact, that in the period of king Roderic, there was no community, no national cause, no patriotism, in the operative social elements of Ireland. Such notions belonged to poetry, or figured in the periods of rhetoric, and were perhaps recognised as fine sayings by the hearers, and meant for nothing more by the speakers. But they had no foundation in the actual state of things. The common complaints of the people had not yet been taught to offer themselves, in one voice, to a common government. National questions had not suggested national individuality, or a recognised common cause cemented the hostile and restless strife of petty kings into a country. "We know," says Leland in continuation, "that Roderic led great armies against Dermot and his English allies; but they were collected by inferior chiefs, many

\* Leland, i. 165.

of whom hated and *envied* him. They were not implicitly obedient to their monarch; they were not paid; they were not obliged to keep the field; but were ready to desert him on the most critical emergency, if the appointed period of their service should then happen to expire.”\* Such was the state of Roderic’s power over a force composed of separate leaders, mutually at strife amongst themselves, and only to be leagued in resistance to himself. The people they severally led, had no notion of any country but their district, or of any cause but the interest of the petty toparch who ruled them with an iron rule of life and death. They had neither property or freedom, or (be it frankly said) *national* existence. Nor was there any reason distinctly in their apprehensions, why the Dane or the Saxon, should be more to be resisted, than the hereditary faction of the neighbouring district. Their very annalists, who must have had more expanded views, exhibit but a doubtful glimmer of any higher sentiment.

In this state of opinion, which also may serve to explain in part why the conquest of Ireland was not completed by Henry, the fair observer will see ample vindication of the alleged remissness of O’Conor, against the unfounded reflections of some of our historians, and the angry opprobriousness of others. Of the civil leaders of that stormy period, Roderic alone seems, by the ample extent of his interests, to have been led to views beyond his age and national state.

Another general observation must have presented itself to any indifferent reader of the various accounts of sieges and fights, which we have had occasion to notice, that no difference of numerical force was sufficient to ensure the result of a battle to the Irish leader. In their notices of these engagements, all the writers state clearly, yet with a seeming unconsciousness, the true causes of any slight check which the invaders appear to have received in their earliest encounters with the native force. The well-laid ambush, the unsteady and yielding footing of the morass, the mazy and uncertain perplexity of thickets, the crowded and confused outlets of towns: all these afforded to a brave and active population, slightly armed and accustomed to desultory warfare, advantages sufficient against the arms and discipline of their enemy. In not one instance, does there occur the slightest incident to favour the supposition, that in a pitched battle on open and firm ground, any superiority of numbers that could be brought to bear, would have been enough to secure a victory such as the interests of Roderic would require. If we make a supposition, taking our standard from the most decided event we can fairly assume—the slaughter of the company of Armoric de St Lawrence—it will appear, that two hundred men were sufficient for the slaughter of a thousand of the native force, when surrounded, *fighting singly*, and at all imaginable disadvantage. Had the two hundred been a thousand, they would, on the same assumption, have slain five thousand of their antagonists: but the same assumption, would not in this case be admissible. For the power of a company increases by a law different from that of numerical increase: no imaginable number could stand ten minutes against a thousand men killing at the same rate. At

\* Leland, i. 165.



that time the most decided resistance was from a force far more advanced in arms than the native Irish—the Danes had built, inhabited, and defended the principal towns. In the long interval between this period and the battle of Clontarf, their progress in civilization, and in the various arts of peace and war, had made a considerable progress; while the natives had been either stationary or retrogressive—the pastoral habits of the country not being favourable to advance. Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Downpatrick, Limerick, were Danish; wherever a stand was made, which exhibited a remote possibility, any approach toward the balanced contest of civilized warfare, the Danes were more or less the chief parties in the conflict. But there was no such approximation to equality; and however the party historian, anxious to flatter an amiable national pride, may gloss over facts, it must have soon become apparent to those whose fortunes hung trembling on the scale, how slight were their chances. The appearance of their formidable preponderance of numbers may have imparted a momentary fear to the Normans: for such is the irresistible impression which connects the idea of power with multitudes. And this impression too, must have been aggravated by the calamities of a protracted warfare; decline of health and numbers, with an exhausting penury of food, during a siege in which the combined power of the nation was at length brought to bear, and all seemed to desert the hardy little band of adventurers but their own indomitable and resistless energy. But a single charge, a slight reverse, against which disciplined habits would have rallied, or even sincere good-will to the cause among the leaders, repaired—at once dissipated the cumbrous and imposing, but really impotent, leaguer; and left the abandoned monarch to save himself for better days, if such might be in store for his hapless country.

Such is a cursory retrospect of the combination of efficient causes which controlled one, who, so far from being properly the subject of imputed censure, was the last and firmest among those on whom fell the duty of resistance in that dark day of Ireland. He had been distinguished as an enterprising and successful leader, under those circumstances of *equal trial* which have always been the ground for the fair estimate of character: from this may be safely inferred, that had equal arms, discipline, and field tactics, placed him on the level of a possible resistance, the same conspicuous qualities must have been as apparent. On the other hand, a new combination of circumstances arose, such as to afford no presumption which could satisfy any one but one hurried on by an enthusiastic fancy in the calculation of success; and the accumulation of uncandid “ifs” is loosely arrayed to throw an undeserved slight on the monument of a brave but unfortunate hero, who was not only the last who stood forward in the breach of ruin, but when all had yielded, and every hope was past, alone preserved his sceptre, and transmitted to his province the power to be still formidable amid the ruins of the land.

Roderic O’Conor was the son of Tirlogh, already mentioned (p. 244). He was born about the year 1116. On the death of his father, in 1156, he succeeded to the kingdom of Connaught; and on the death of Murtagh M’Lochlin, the monarchy reverted to his family, and he was recognised as king of Connaught and monarch of Ireland, 1166, at



the mature age of fifty; and "with great pomp and splendour was proclaimed king in Dublin."\* In the next year, from the same valuable authority, we learn that a great meeting was called by him at Athboy: "to it went the nobles of Leth Chuin, both clergy and laity, and the nobles of the Danes of Dublin, thither went the comarba of St Patrick, Cadhla O'Duffay archbishop of Connaught, Lawrence O'Toole archbishop of Leinster, Tiernan O'Rourke lord of Brefny, Donchad O'Carrol lord of Oriel, and the son of Dunslerly O'Heochadha king of Ulidia, Dermot O'Melachlin king of Temor, and Reginald lord of the Danes of Dublin." The whole amounted to 19,000 horsemen..... "At this assembly many good laws were enacted." His accession to power was, as has been related in our notice of Dermot M'Murrough, attended by the commencement of the misfortunes of that unworthy prince, which led to the expulsion from his throne, and the hapless resource by which he repaired his broken fortunes. The fallen O'Rourke was raised from a state of humiliation and a miserable subjection to the insults of a tyrant who hated him because he had injured him, by the powerful weight of the hereditary friendship of O'Conor. And in redressing the injuries of his friendly tributary, Roderic was not inattentive to the interests of his kingdom. Constantly in the field, he left no interval of peaceful neglect for the turbulent insubordination of his restless tributaries, or the ambition of his rivals: but pursued a course of active, firm, and judicious policy in the field, and wise and beneficent civil administration and legislative enactment, which secured him the respect of the great body of the chiefs and clergy. Without reaching an elevation of principle—a moderation or clemency altogether beyond his time and country—without being free from the vindictive ferocity, or the arbitrary rule of a barbaric prince; he was all that posterity can claim from the virtue and knowledge of his age. But his character was soon to be put to a test, to which none could have submitted without a soil—the power of a civilized people,

"An old and haughty nation, proud in arms,"

and to leave a history obscured by circumstances beyond his control, to the prejudice and the exasperated nationality of after times.

In the year 1171, "a battle was fought in Dublin between Miles De Cogan, and Asgall, son of Reginald king of the Danes of Dublin; many fell on both sides, both of the English archers and of the Danes, among whom was Asgall himself, and Houn, a Dane from the Orkney isles. Roderic O'Conor, Tiernan O'Rourke, and Murchad O'Carrol, marched with an army to Dublin to besiege the city, then in the possession of earl Strongbow and Miles de Cogan. They remained there for a fortnight, during which time many fierce engagements took place between them."† A siege of Dublin, garrisoned by superior forces, was at the time as desperate and dangerous an undertaking as can well be conceived. Roderic, after the repeated trials of the force mentioned in the annals, must have begun to perceive the

\* Annals, translated for the *Dublin Penny Journal*, by J. O'Donovan.

† Annals of the Four Masters, by J. O'Donovan.—*Ib.*

inadequacy of his present preparation. He pursued the step most likely to lead to advantage, in distracting the attention and cutting off the resources of the enemy. He marched into the country of Dermot for the purpose of carrying off and burning the corn of the English. His force soon melted away. Feeling that they were unequally matched against superior advantages, and depressed in spirit by the appearance of continued danger and toil without any personal interest, they demanded their dismissal on the expiration of the term for which they were bound to serve. O'Connor had no choice but to lead away the small residuary force which he could command, in order to return afresh when a competent army could be raised. Shortly after this he raised a sufficient force to march against Leinster, for the purpose of cutting off the resources of the invaders; which he did to an extent that was soon after sensibly felt by them when besieged in Dublin. By the patriotic efforts of the venerable archbishop O'Toole, he was again enabled to take the field, and the English were shut up in Dublin by the greatest force which it had hitherto been found practicable to collect. Strongbow nearly reduced by famine, and daunted by the appearance of an overwhelming power, proposed terms which would have raised the power of Roderic on a firmer basis than the Irish throne had ever yet held. But by the communion of a more advanced wisdom in the person of his friend and counsellor Lawrence, and also by the natural progress of human opinion, Roderic had acquired higher and more patriotic views than had hitherto enlightened an Irish prince. He repelled the offer with a stern reply; and chose to abide by his advantage. But his ardour carried him away from the path of prudence. He forgot the frail and evanescent material of the army he led. He did not calculate on the experience of their coldness to a cause in which they only saw the interests of two rival chiefs or leaders concerned. Strong persuasion had worked their spirit to a certain point of union, but it fell short of the resolution required to face an enemy whom they had begun to deem irresistible. A well-timed sally ended the delusion.

Henry landed in Ireland, with a force which set resistance at scorn. The chiefs, showed their true view of the expedient course, by coming in unhesitatingly with submission. One only held aloof—one only showed a front of defiance, with which Henry, having no doubt the best information, did not think it wise to cope. One chief treated with Henry as a king, extorted and maintained his title and his sovereign power by treaty, and, in fact, handed it down to his sons. And this was Roderic. But this was not all; as a sovereign he retained the sword, and while there was the slightest ray of hope, he never forgot resistance to the spoiler. His enemies enlarged the basis of their power; but meanwhile, the Irish were advancing in military discipline, for which their aptitude was, as it is now, very remarkable. In 1176, the Four Masters inform us "The Earl Strongbow marched his forces to plunder Munster, and Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, hastened to make resistance. When the English heard intelligence of Roderic's approach to give them battle, they invited the foreigners of Dublin to their assistance, who with all possible speed marched to Thurles, where they were met by Donal O'Brien at the head of the



Dalcassians, by a battalion from West Connaught, and by a numerous and select army of the Clanmurry under Roderic. A furious engagement ensued in which the English were at last defeated.”\*

Shortly after, conceiving that the time was at length arrived for the expulsion of the English, Roderic led a force into Meath, levelled the forts of De Lacy, and wasted to the gates of Dublin. On this we extract a few lines from Mr Moore’s learned and eloquent work, both as suitable to our view, and because it exhibits strongly the manner in which the patriotic ardour of the historian leads him to overlook the inconsistent language which attacks the conduct of this monarch for not performing confessed impossibilities. Having mentioned the seeming emergency of the position of Strongbow, he proceeds: “But added to the total want in Roderic himself of the qualities fitted for so trying a juncture, the very nature of the force under his command completely disqualified it for regular or protracted warfare; an Irish army being, in those times, little better than a rude tumultuous assemblage, brought together by the impulse of passion or the prospect of plunder, and, as soon as sated or thwarted in its immediate object, dispersing as loosely and again as lawlessly as it had assembled.” Now, if it be considered, that no inference can be brought to justify the depreciating view which so many able writers have concurred in forming of Roderic, unless from his failure to effect the object of his wishes with a force *confessedly* inadequate—it looks a little like wandering into a circle of a very vicious kind, to attribute any failure to the defects of his own character. The conduct of Roderic was throughout enforced by the most rigid necessity; and as it is hardly to be expected that he should have entered into the whole poetry of modern patriotic antiquarians, so it could still less be demanded that, with his tumultuary assemblage, disaffected leaders, imperfect command, and formidable enemy, he should be able to enact the summary exploits, which are so easy to the rapid and decisive quill of his critics.

After long grappling with adverse fortune, in his fifty-ninth year, convinced that he had nothing to depend on for resistance, and not actuated by “a desperate spirit of patriotism” [which alone] “might have urged him still to persevere;” Roderic showing a sagacity, as clear as his protracted resistance with inadequate materials had shown a heroism, wisely and considerably resolved to preserve his province from ravage, by a dignified submission on a most favourable treaty. With this view he sent Lawrence, whose instrumentality of itself carries with it approbation, to negotiate with Henry. A council was summoned by Henry to meet Lawrence, with the archbishop of Tuam and the abbot of St Brendan’s, who were Roderic’s ambassadors. By the terms of the treaty settled at this convention, it was agreed, “That the king of England concedes to the aforesaid Roderic, his liege man, the kingdom of Connaught, so long as he shall faithfully serve him, that he shall be king under him, prepared to render him service as his vassal. And that he may hold his kingdom as well and peacefully as before the coming of the king of England

\* Dublin Penny Journal.



into Ireland, on the condition of paying him tribute. He was also to have the whole of the land and its inhabitants under him, on condition that they should faithfully pay tribute to the king of England; and that they should hold their rights on peaceably, so long as they remained faithful to the king of England, paying him tribute and all other rights through the hands of the king of Connaught—saving in all things the rights of the king of England and his.” This treaty, of which we have loosely paraphrased the first article, consists of four. The second, stipulates, that if any of the Irish chiefs should be rebels against the king of England, or withhold their tribute, the king of Connaught should compel or remove them; or if unable to do so, that in such case he should have assistance from the king of England’s constable. In the same article it is stipulated, that the king of Connaught was to pay one hide out of every tenth head of cattle slaughtered. The third article exempts, from the force of the previous articles, certain towns and districts already held by or under the king of England by his barons. And by the fourth and last it was provided, that those who had fled from the territories under the king’s barons, were at liberty to return, under the same conditions of tribute or service to which they had been formerly subject, &c. &c.\* The importance of this treaty, as it affects the subject of this memoir, is, that it strongly manifests the respect paid to his vigour of character by the sagacious Henry, who was not a person likely to yield a hair’s-breadth of sovereignty which he could easily secure or retain. He was, it is true, deeply involved in the troubles of domestic faction and rebellion, and could not have personally pursued the conquest of Ireland to its completion. And his distrust of his barons was so easily awakened, that it is probable, he thought it safer to compromise with the Irish monarch, and keep up the countercheck of a native power against their ambition, than to allow any deputed government raise itself into an independent form and force, in the absence of opposition, and from the growing resources of the whole united power of the country. This may undoubtedly take something from the force of any inference favourable to our view of Roderic: yet it still exhibits the result of a persevering resistance, crowned with substantial success, where every other power and authority was compelled to yield. Something was conceded and something trusted, to one who alone never, from the beginning of the contest to the end, laid down his arms or gave up the cause, till he was left alone—till late experience ascertained that he had no adequate means of resistance, and that his tributaries were not to be depended on in the field—till they of his own household were leagued against him; and until it became most respectable, as well as considerate to his province, to secure an honourable and nearly equal treaty, than to keep up a discreditable and unprincipled war, of which one result alone seemed probable—the depopulation of his provincial realm.

From this there is nothing recorded worthy of further commemoration, in the life of a monarch whose firm and vigorous, as well as sagacious policy both as king and leader, until the setting in of a new order of events—baffled and set at nought alike the virtues and

\* Cox. *Hibernia Anglicana*.

resources of his country—might have helped the impartial historian to form a truer and kinder estimate of his conduct under trials against which he had no effectual strength but the perseverance against hope and under continual failure, for which his conduct is distinguished. He could not have concentrated the selfish, lukewarm, contentious, and disaffected chiefs at Ferns or in Dublin, into the compact, disciplined body of patriots, of which they had not one amongst them. One mistake he made. He did not, in the clash of petty oppositions and through the dust of the petty factions of his country, discern in its proper character and real magnitude, the new danger that was come upon his country; he did not see that it was time to abandon old rivalry, and to adopt a course of conciliation and combination, to give even the remotest prospect of resistance to the universal invader; instead of this he looked on the new foe, as simply one among the turbulent elements in the cauldron of perpetual feud, nor did he discern his error until the contest had assumed strength, and an extensive system of preparatory measures was impracticable. Again, he did not yield in time: an earlier submission would have saved more. But we will not extend these useless reflections. He felt and acted, not according to the feelings and opinions of modern patriots, yet very much in the same general temper; engrossed by the game of circumscribed passions and policies of the moment, he could not enlarge his comprehension at once to the compass of another spirit and another order of events.

Roderic, at an advanced age, worn out with the labours and vexations of a long life embittered by the ingratitude and turbulence of his children, retired into the monastery of Cong, where he lived in peaceful obscurity for twelve years, till 1198, when he died at the age of about eighty-two.

The character of Roderic has been summed with historic impartiality by a descendant of his blood: "In his youth, Roderic had failings, which were under little control from their neighbouring good qualities. Arrogant, precipitate and voluptuous; the ductility of his temper served only to put his passions under the directions of bad men, while its audaciousness rendered him less accessible to those, who would give those passions a good tendency, or would have rescued him from their evil consequences. His father Turloch the Great, endeavoured to break this bold spirit, by ordering him at several times, to be put under confinement. He bore this indignity, in the first trials, with the ignoble fortitude which flows from resentment: in the second, reflection came to his aid, and grafted that virtue upon a better stock; what engaged him to be wholly reconciled to his father, and forget the over-rigorous severity of his last imprisonment. Bred up in the camp, almost from his infancy, he became an expert warrior; and although licentious in private life, yet he never devoted to pleasures those hours which required his activity in the field or his presence in the council. In a more advanced stage of life his capacity opened, and gave the lead to his better qualities, in most instances of his conduct. Affable, generous, sincere; he retained a great number of friends, and he had the consolation, of being served faithfully by the worthiest among them, when every other good fortune deserted him. Years and experience took their proper effect on him; and the rectitude of



his measures had a greater share than fortune, in raising him above all his cotemporaries, in the esteem of the public, when the throne became vacant, on the fall of his predecessor in the battle of Litterhim. The crazy civil constitution, of which he got the administration, necessarily created him a number of avowed, as well as secret enemies. He reduced the former by his power: and the obedience of both had but little force, at a time when it ought to have the greatest. He had to do with some powerful men, who were of that species of subjects, that can never be gained to the public interest, unless they are gratified in their own way; a hard measure in all conjunctions, and what in some cannot possibly be complied with, as in the case before us. In his adversity, when this faction deserted the nation and him, his constancy in the public service shone forth in all its lustre, without any alloy from revenge, temerity, or despair; the usual concomitants of little minds, when stripped of power and left to their own natural strength. Fortitude, equanimity, and passive courage, dignified the last scene of his administration—independent virtues, which have their reward in every condition of life. His natural endowments were far from contemptible; yet he lived in an age no way favourable to the exertion of great parts, when even the greatest were smothered up in the ferocity of prevailing manners, or lost in the cloud of reigning ignorance. His abilities were as conspicuous as the times would permit, and perhaps more so than they could appear in an ulterior age of less barbarism; when the corruption, the treachery, and the meannesses of courts oppress but too often all the seeds of true genius, as well as of real virtue.”\*

### **Fitz-Adelm.**

DIED A. D. 1204.

THIS nobleman was descended from Arlotta, mother to William the Conqueror, by a first husband, Harlowen De Burgo. Their son Robert, earl of Cornwall, was father of two sons, John and Adelm—the latter of whom was father to this deputy; while from the other came the family of De Burgo.

William Fitz-Adelm was, as we have said, sent with a large train into Ireland, to take on him a government for which he seems to have had no fitness. He commenced his measures by a progress of inspection. A meeting of the clergy was assembled at Waterford, where Adrian's bull was read, and the king's title formally promulgated under the formidable salvo of ecclesiastical denunciations.

But the only weapon that the state of the land required was wanting. The chiefs soon perceived that the sword was wielded with a feeble hand, and began to make bolder and more successful efforts for the recovery of their power. Fitz-Adelm seemed to have little inclination or ability for resistance against the common enemy; but he had come over with a prejudiced mind; and he exerted all his authority for the oppression of those whom he wanted spirit to protect. One

\* O'Connor's Dissertations.



object only seemed to animate his conduct—extortion and circumvention, which he exercised on the English chiefs with a wanton freedom and indifference to the forms of justice, which could not have long been endured. The death of Maurice Fitz-Gerald left his sons exposed to the crafty influence of this governor; he prevailed on them to exchange their quiet residence in the fort of Wicklow, for the castle of Ferns, which was a kind of thoroughfare for the inroads of the native chiefs. In the same manner Raymond, Fitz-Stephen, and others, were, by a train of fraud and violence, as occasion required, compelled to make such exchanges as suited the rapacity or designs of the governor. The consequence was a spreading of discontent among the English of every rank. The leaders displayed their contempt and hate; the soldiers became turbulent and mutinous; while the Irish chiefs—who discovered in the venal governor a new and easy way to effect their objects—crowded round the court, where they found in the vanity, feebleness, prejudice, and corruption of the governor, the advantages over their old enemies, which they could not gain in the field. Every cause was decided in their favour; and it is alleged that Fitz-Adelm was induced by bribes to demolish works which had been constructed for the protection of the English in the vicinity of Wexford.\*

Such a government could not continue long under a monarch so watchful as Henry. Fitz-Adelm was recalled. They who wish to temper the statements which we have here abridged with an appearance of historical candour, say little of a redeeming character; and we cannot but think that the general dislike of his historians, is of itself warrant enough for all that we have repeated from them. He founded and endowed the monastery of Dromore. But it brought forth no historian to repay his memory with respect.

He was recalled in 1179, and Hugh de Lacy substituted. He received large grants in Connaught, and was the ancestor of the illustrious family of Clanricarde; and of the still more illustrious name of Burke—the noblest and most venerable in the annals of Ireland, if the highest claim to honour be acceded to the noblest intellect adorned with the purest worth. He married a natural daughter of Richard I., by whom he left a son—whom we shall have to notice farther on—and, having died in 1204, he was buried in the abbey of Athasil, in Tipperary, which had been founded by himself.

\* The language of Cox is strong and circumstantial:—

“This governor, Fitz-Adelm, was very unkind to Raymond, and all the Geraldines, and indeed to most of the first adventurers. He forced the sons of Maurice Fitz-Gerald to exchange their castle of Wicklow for the decayed castle of Fernes; and when they had repaired that castle of Fernes, he found some pretence to have it demolished. He took from Raymond all his land near Dublin and Wexford. He delayed the restitution of Fitz-Stephen to his lands in Ophaly, till he made him consent to accept of worse situated land in lieu of it. He made his nephew, Walter Amain (a corrupt beggardly fellow, says Canibrensis), seneschal of Wexford and Waterford, who received bribes from MacMorrrough of Kensile, to prejudice the Fitz-Geralds; and so mercenary was Fitz-Adelm himself, that the Irish flocked unto him, as to a friar, to buy their demands. At last having neither done honour to the king, nor good to the country, he was revoked, and in his room the king appointed Hugh de Lacy, lord justice of Ireland, to whom Robert de Poer, the king's marshal, governor of Waterford and Wexford, was made coadjutor, counsellor, or assistant.”

## William de Braosa.

DIED A. D. 1210.

THIS nobleman is entitled to notice among the eminent persons of the 12th century, for his signal misfortunes, rather than on account of his personal merits or historical importance. But the reader of the earlier periods of our history, can scarcely fail to be aware, that its most valuable remains are the incidents which carry with them some distinct notions of a time, when manners and the form of society were so widely different from any thing now known in civilized countries.

Philip of Worcester, as he is called by some historians of his age, was sent over by Henry II. in 1184, as lord justice in the room of Hugh de Lacy, and made himself obnoxious to all classes, by his exactions and tyrannical measures. He received from the king a grant of large tracts of land in the county of Limerick. These lands were afterwards confirmed to William, his nephew, by king John.

On the occasion of the well-known contest which he had with the Roman see, this feeble and tyrannical king was for a time reduced to the most abject condition of terror and suspicion, by the excommunication and interdict of the Roman pontiff. Under this influence, he endeavoured to secure the fidelity of his barons by hostages; and William de Braosa was among those from whom this security was demanded. The messengers came to his castle in England, where he at the time resided. King John had a little before excited universal disgust and indignation by the murder of the hapless prince Arthur; and when his messenger, in his name, demanded that De Braosa's children should be delivered up as security for his loyal conduct, he was answered by De Braosa's wife, that "her children should never be trusted to the murderer of his own nephew." To the timid and vindictive John, this was an offence beyond the reach of conciliation. De Braosa himself, shocked by the uncalculating vehemence of his wife, and rightly apprehending its consequences, reproved her before the messengers, and promised obedience. But it was too late; nothing less than his ruin could satiate the tyrant's anger: and sure means were at once adopted to effect it. A demand was made for the arrears due upon his Irish lands; this could not by any means be met with sufficient promptitude, and an order was issued for the seizure of his lands, castles, and person. De Braosa, who thoroughly knew that the show of a legal right was only designed as the cloak of vengeance, and that his capture must terminate in his death, fled at once with his wife and children to Ireland, where they found refuge under the protection of Hugh de Lacy, who defied the king's resentment.

The anger of John was infuriated by this unexpected obstacle; and he resolved upon an expedition into Ireland, for the avowed purpose of reducing the power of De Lacy and securing De Braosa. It was in June, 1210, he arrived in Dublin. The Irish princes flocked round to do him homage, but the Lacies fled with De Braosa into France.

De Braosa, in the meantime was obliged to leave his wife and



children concealed in Ireland, as their removal would have been inconsistent with the despatch, privacy, privations, and hardship of so long and hasty a flight. The king soon became apprized of these circumstances, and gave orders for a strict search through the country. In this distressing situation, the wife of De Braosa soon began to perceive that Ireland could afford no secure concealment; and, issuing forth from her retreat, she attempted to flee with her children, into Scotland. The unfortunate lady was soon overtaken by the bloodhounds of the tyrant's vengeance and brought back. The name of right was again adopted and abused. She was asked for the payment of her husband's debts to the king; and, having no means for their payment, was immediately sent over to England, where she was committed to Bristol castle. Here her sufferings and afflictions cannot be related on the faith of authentic history; but there is ample scope in the known circumstances for the conception of a sad interval of affliction and terror. Want also, it is said, lent its desolating horrors to a mother surrounded by the little ones on whom her offence had drawn suffering. But we are not warranted in giving credit to the monkish writers, who were likely to have exaggerated the crime of John: the account of Matthew Paris represents her to have perished with her children from want. The *Collections* of Ware are, however, said to contain proof to the contrary,\* as it appears that a grand-daughter of De Braosa was married to Geoffry de Canville, an English baron. An incident, given on the authority of Speed, is more likely to have happened: in her extreme distress, this unfortunate lady addressed herself to the queen, and endeavoured to conciliate her protecting kindness by an extraordinary present, from her Irish lands, of four hundred cows all white but the ears, which were red. Whether or not there is any thing in this description to shake the credit of the story, we cannot judge; but if the present was offered, it was certainly rejected: the royal breast, with a strong contrast of nature to the attribute of Divine mercy, loved vengeance more dearly than sacrifice. De Braosa for a moment forgot his own fears in the horrors of his family's situation; and, venturing over to England, made overtures for the liberation of his wife and the forgiveness of king John,—but all to no purpose, and he was quickly compelled to save himself by flight. He soon after died in France. Of his wife no more is mentioned; and, though we may doubt the blacker features of her story, we can hardly suppose less for her, than that her life was shortened and rendered hapless by her afflictions.

### De Courcy.

DIED A. D. 1210.

THE lineage of John, baron de Stoke Courcy, derives its illustrious blood at the distance of six descents from Charles Duke of Lorraine, the son of Lewis IV. of France, who reigned in the twelfth century.

\* As quoted by Leland, i. p. 191.



His ancestor Richard, son and successor to the first baron, accompanied William the Conqueror to England, where he distinguished himself at the battle of Hastings, and obtained large grants in the division of the spoil. Among these was Stoke, in the county of Somerset, which thence obtained the name of Stoke Courcy. His son Robert, was steward of the household to Henry I. The next descendant, William, also bore an office of power in the royal household; but having no issue, was succeeded by his brother Robert, whose son William died in 1171, and was succeeded by the celebrated warrior who is the subject of the present memoir.\*

Sir John, baron de Stoke Courcy, served Henry II. in all his French wars; but our information as to the detail of the earlier portions of his history, is neither full or satisfactory. Among the circumstances which have any distinct relation to the after course of his life, may be mentioned a friendship contracted with Sir Armoric de Valence, who married his sister, and was the brave and faithful partner of his adventures in Ireland, where, like him, he also became the founder of an illustrious Irish house. These two knights became sworn brothers in arms, in the church of "Our Lady" at Rome, where they pledged themselves by a solemn vow to live and die together, and to divide faithfully between them the winnings of their valour. This vow they observed through a long course of service in France and England. At last they were destined to have their fidelity proved, with equal honour, in a trial of sterner dangers and more rich temptations.

In 1179, after Strongbow's death, De Courcy came to Ireland with Fitz-Adelm, whom Henry sent over as deputy-governor. Fitz-Adelm's conduct soon excited among the other English knights and nobles who either accompanied him, or were previously settled, a very general sense of dislike and indignation by his arbitrary usurpations, exactions, and selfish grasping system of policy.

Of these De Courcy took the lead in discontent and in the energetic vigour with which he expressed his feelings, and adopted a course of free and independent conquest for himself. He appealed to his friends and companions in arms against the policy of the governor, which, both cowardly and tyrannical, deprived them of their rights and bribed the natives into a cessation of hostility. He represented that, by a grant from the king, he held a patent to possess whatever lands he might conquer; and promised to share freely with those who might prefer a gallant career of enterprise, to disgraceful inactivity.

Among the warriors of that iron age of chivalric habits and accomplishments, none stood higher than De Courcy in valour, nor could many have been found to rival one who has left a name which stands alone with that of his heroic contemporary the monarch of the lion heart, among authentic characters rivalling the poetic exaggerations of romance. His strength, far beyond the ordinary measure of the strongest class of strong men, was accompanied by an iron constitution, and a courage that held all odds of peril at scorn. With these, we can infer that he had a buoyant and imaginative conception, which gave to enterprise the form and attraction so congenial to romance. The ardour of his manner, and the general admiration of his associates for

\* Lodge, vi. 36.

personal qualities so congenial to their time and habits, prevailed with many, private friendship with others. A small force was thus secured to follow his fortunes into 'Ulster, which had not yet been attempted by his countrymen. Of these, the chief were his companion and brother in arms Armoric, and Robert de la Poer, a young soldier who had lately begun to attract notice as a brave knight, with twenty other knights, and about five hundred men-at-arms.

The first enterprise was near Howth, where they met with a severe check, but obtained the victory with some loss of lives. This fight is chiefly remarkable from the circumstance that, De Courcy being sick, Sir Armoric commanded, and was after the battle invested with the lordship of Howth, which still remains with his descendants.

Sir John with his small force now continued his northward march. It may be recognised as an incident illustrative of his character, that he appropriated to himself a prophecy of Merlin, that the city of Down was to be entered by a stranger mounted on a white horse, with a shield charged with painted birds. According to this description he equipped himself, and so accoutred, proceeded to his destination. After four days' march he reached Down, where he was quite unexpected. Nor were the inhabitants apprised of the approach of these formidable strangers, until their rest was at an early hour broken by the ringing of bugles, the clash of armour, and the tramp of heavy cavalry in their street. Violent consternation was followed by the confusion of precipitate flight. In this distress, Dunleve their chief, had recourse to Vivian, the legate, who in his progress through the country was at this time in Down. Vivian was not slow in remonstrance with De Courcy, to whom he strongly represented the injustice of an assault on people who had already submitted to Henry, and were ready to adhere to their pledges, and pay their stipulated tribute. His remonstrances, backed by the most urgent entreaties were vain. The stern baron listened with the courtesy of his order and the deference of piety to the dignitary of the church, and pursued a course which he made no effort to justify. He fortified himself in the city of Downpatrick, and made all necessary preparations to secure his possession. The legate's pride and sense of right were roused by the contempt, and the unwarrantable conduct of the knight. Though his commission had been to persuade peaceful submission, he now changed his course, and warmly urged resistance to unjust aggression. He advised Dunleve to have recourse to arms, and exert himself to protect his people and redeem his territories from a rapacious enemy. Dunleve followed his advice, and without delay communicated with his allies. In eight days a formidable power was collected. Roderic sent his provincial force, which, with the troops of Down, amounted to ten thousand fighting men. These, with Dunleve at their head, marched to dispossess the invader. To resist these De Courcy could muster at the utmost a force not quite amounting to seven hundred men. To attempt the defence of the town with this small force, when he was at the same time destitute of the necessary provisions and muniments of a defensive war, would be imprudent: to be shut up in walls, was still less congenial to his daring and impatient valour. Feeling, or affecting to feel, a contempt for the perilous



odds he should have to encounter, he resolved to lead forth his little host and stake his fate on a battle. Still recollecting the duty of a skilful leader, he neglected no precaution to countervail the superiority of the enemy by a judicious selection of position and a skilful disposition of his men. He divided his whole force into three companies. His cavalry amounted to one hundred and forty, behind each of these he mounted an archer, and placed the company, thus rendered doubly effective, as a left wing under the command of his friend Sir Armoric. On the right, and protected by a bog, Sir Robert de la Poer, commanded one company of foot. De Courcy at the head of another occupied the centre. The English had thus the advantage of a marsh on the right, while their left was strongly protected by a thick hedge with a deep and broad fosse.

The attack was made with the fierce impetuosity of Irish valour. Prince Dunleve led forward his horse against those of Sir Armoric, thinking thus to cause a confused movement which might enable his main force to act. The English cavalry were immovable; and the obstinacy of the attack had only the effect of increasing the slaughter of their worse-armed and less expert assailants. The bowmen acted their part so well, that few of those whom the English lance spared, escaped their arrows. Many were pierced, more thrown by their wounded horses. When the quivers were spent, the archers were found no less effective with their swords. After a most gallant resistance, the Irish retired with dreadful loss, and De Courcy with De Poer immediately charged the main body of the enemy, which had now come near his position. The fight now increased in fury. The Irish uttering tremendous yells, fought with all the fierce abandonment of desperation; the strength and composure of the English were tried to the uttermost; they trampled on heaps of the dying and the dead, amidst a tumult which allowed no order to be heard; and the old chronicler describes, with terrible fidelity, the mingled din of groans and shouts—the air darkened with clouds of dust, with darts and stones, and the splinters of broken staves—the sparkling dint of sword and axe, which clanged like hammers on their steel armour. The slaughter was great on both sides, and continued long. At length, that steadiness which is the best result of discipline, prevailed. The Irish suddenly gave ground; and from the pass in which the fight had raged till now, retreated confusedly and with fearfully diminished numbers into the plain. Sir Armoric now saw that it was the moment for a charge from his cavalry. After an instant's consultation with his standard-bearer, Jeffrey Montgomery, he gave the word for an onward movement; a moment brought his company into collision with the Irish cavalry, which, under the command of the brave Connor M'Laughlin, had retired in tolerable order during the late confusion of the battle. The shock was still fiercer than the former. This brave company, aware of the discomfiture of the main body, fought with desperation; Sir Armoric was twice unhorsed, surrounded and rescued during the short interval which elapsed while De Courcy was bringing up his now disengaged company to aid him. In this encounter it is related, that when Sir Armoric was down the second time, and fighting on foot with his two-handed sword, many of his troopers leaped to the ground, and snatching up the weapons of



the dead which were thickly strewed under their feet, rushed on and kept a ford in which they fought, and cleared it from horse and man till De Courcy's band was up. The approach of De Courcy now decided this singularly fierce and obstinate, though unequal fight. The Irish, without waiting for a new collision, turned and fled, leaving to the conquerors a bloody field. Amongst the many fierce engagements which we have had to notice, none was more calculated to display the real character of the force on either side. On the part of the Irish, there was no want of spirit or personal valour. Superior arms and, still more, a steadier firmness and a more advanced knowledge of tactics, decided the victory in favour of a force numerically not quite the fourteenth of their antagonists.

De Courcy, by this seasonable success, was now left to secure his ground and effect his plans for a time in security. He parcelled out the lands among his followers, and built his forts on chosen situations, and made all the essential arrangements for the complete establishment of his conquest.

The following midsummer, the forces of Ulster were a second time mustered to the amount of fifteen thousand men, and hostilities were renewed with the same eventual success. A battle took place under the walls of Downpatrick, in which De Courcy gained another victory against tremendous odds of number, but with the loss of many men, among whom were some of his bravest leaders. Sir Armoric was severely wounded, and lay for some time bleeding under a hedge, where he endeavoured to support his fainting strength and subdue a parching thirst by chewing honeysuckles, which flowered profusely over his head; at last he was carried away by four men, having left much blood on the spot where he had lain. His life was little hoped for some days. In the same fight his son Sir Nicholas Saint Lawrence, was also as severely wounded, so as to leave for a time little hope of his recovery.

Notwithstanding these sanguinary failures, the spirit of Ulster was not subdued. With their native supple shrewdness, the surrounding chieftains changed their game from stern resistance to that wily and subtle cordiality of profession, which even still seems to be one of the native and intuitive resources of their enmity, when repressed by superior power. They thus gained no small influence over the natural confidence of De Courcy's sanguine spirit. From him MacMahon won the most entire confidence. By solemn protestations, he assured him of the most faithful submission and service, and engaged him in the pledge of gossipry, which was, among the Irish, understood to be most binding. In consequence, De Courcy completely duped, entered into a confidential intercourse with this bold but wily and unprincipled chief;\* and intrusted him with the command of two forts, with the territory they commanded. The consequence was such as most of our readers will anticipate. MacMahon waited his opportunity, and levelled the forts to the ground, in a month after he had received them in keeping. De Courcy soon discovering this proceeding, sent to learn the cause of this breach of trust. The Irish chief replied that "he had not engaged to hold the stones of him, but the lands;

\* Girald. Hammer, &c.

and that it was contrary to his nature to dwell within cold stones, while the woods were so nigh." De Courcy's resentment was inflamed by a reply of which the purport was not equivocal. He instantly called out his little force, and entering MacMahon's land, swept away the cattle in vast droves before him. This movement was the precipitate impulse of revenge, and cost him dearly.

The number of the cattle was so great, that it was necessary to divide them into three droves, each of which was committed to a company. The force was thus most perilously divided, and each division compelled to proceed in the utmost confusion and disarray; a space of three miles separated the van from the rear. To complete the dangers of this ruinous and nearly fatal march, their way lay through the narrow passes of a bog, and was every where intercepted by deep mires, with thick copses on either side. In these the enemy, to the number of eleven thousand, took up their ambush, in the certainty of a full measure of vengeance on their invaders. They adopted their precautions with the most fatal skill; the position and circumstances were precisely those adapted to their habits. They so divided their force, that when they burst with sudden fury from their concealing thickets, the three companies of the English were separated by two considerable forces of their enemy. They were further embarrassed by the cattle, which, taking fright, rushed impetuously through them, trampling down and scattering their unformed ranks, so that all the character of military organization was effaced, and they presented themselves singly to the rushing onset of thousands. Such was the fearful combination of disadvantages, from which it is hard to explain how a man could have come out alive.

De Courcy and Sir Armoric rushed from the woods to endeavour to seize on the true position of affairs. . They saw each other at the distance of a quarter of a mile. Each of these brave warriors had contrived to extricate some of his companions. They turned to approach each other. As they came on, De La Poer was seen at a small distance from Sir Armoric; he had also been endeavouring to disengage himself from the press, but in the attempt was surrounded by a crowd of the enemy, who were pulling him from his horse. Sir Armoric (whose niece he had married a few days before) rushed to his rescue; the party who had seized him gave way; but their shouts brought from the bushes a considerable force, who now blocked up the way between De Courcy and Sir Armoric. With desperate slaughter, and with some loss, they cut a passage to each other, and seeing that the ground was impassable for horses, they alighted and endeavoured to extricate themselves on foot from the surrounding bogs. Loaded with the weight of their massive accoutrements, it was no easy task to make way through mosses and quagmires which might well task the utmost activity of more lightly equipped pedestrians. They were instantly pursued. De Courcy was quickly overtaken by one Sawyard with a party. He turned on them with his two handed sword, and being bravely seconded by a few persons who were with him, the Irish assailants were driven off, leaving a hundred and twenty dead on the spot. Another chief came quickly on with several hundred followers, and again compelled De Courcy to have recourse to



his fatal weapon, of which one hundred and eighty victims attested the prowess. Last of all, MacMahon came rushing breathless up; a stroke from a son of Sir Armoric intercepted his career, and laid him on the ground. The nearly fainting English took advantage of the pause of terror and surprise occasioned by the result of these slaughtering stands: their foes fell back to a safe distance from where they stood, "few and faint, but fearless still," having lost the fight, yet dearly won the honour of that dreadful day. They were allowed to retreat; and as night fell, De Courcy led them to a secure fort of his own. Here they were enabled to take rest and refreshment after their toil. The enemy resolving to secure the advantage they had gained, encamped at the distance of half a mile: thus menacing them with a distressing siege, for which they were utterly unprovided.

As the darkness fell, the watch fires of the enemy shining in vast numbers, starred the horizon for a wide extent with lights that lent no cheerfulness to the aspect of reverse; and the distant noises of triumphant revellings, sounded like insult to the pride of the knights who had but escaped from the carnage of that day. But at midnight, Sir Armoric with characteristic vigilance and fertility of expedient, after awaking from a short sleep, conceived a desire to steal forth and look out upon the revellers of the hostile encampment. For this purpose he cautiously awakened a few of the trustiest of his followers, and soon, without interruption, came near enough to the enemy to perceive that they were feasting or sleeping, and quite free from the fear of an enemy. He returned speedily, and rousing De Courcy, proposed a sally. He informed him that by the cabins of the enemy he could judge them to amount to five thousand; but that it was quite evident, that if they did not now make good their way through these, they should have no future chance, as the numbers of the enemy were likely to increase. These reasons were convincing; but the English were seemingly in the lowest stage of weariness, and many of them disabled from their wounds. It was nevertheless agreed on that they could not expect so good a prospect of deliverance; and when Sir Armoric had done speaking, De Courcy's mind was resolved, and his plan formed for the assault. He ordered two men to mount his horse and Sir Armoric's, and taking all the other horses that remained between them, to drive them furiously across the encampment, while himself with his knights and men-at-arms, following close in the rear, might serve them with a still more effective retaliation of the stratagem of the morning. Every thing turned out according to these directions, the horses galloped fiercely among the drinkers and the sleepers, who scarcely suspected the nature of the disturbance when sword and spear were dealing rapid and irresistible destruction on every side. Five thousand were slain, and only about two hundred collected their faculties time enough to escape. Of the English, but two were missing. De Courcy was by this fortunate stroke, enabled to supply the wants of his men. He was also, for some time at least, secure from further molestation, and sent to Dublin and elsewhere among his friends for reinforcements and other supplies.

We shall not here pause in our narrative, to detail two other fights which occurred in the same period of our hero's life. An extract from



Hanmer's *Chronicle*, may tell the most personally interesting incidents of a fierce and sanguinary fight, in which De Courcy was himself in the most imminent hazard which we meet in the strange romance of his adventurous course. The peculiarity of the battle, which took place near Lurgan, was this: that upwards of six thousand Irish, were staid in their flight by an arm of the sea, "a mile from the Lurgan, on the south side of Dundalk," where there was no advantage of ground, and, of course, far less than the usual advantages from superior discipline. As the sense of a desperate necessity makes the coward daring, so it imparts steady and stern composure to the truly brave: in this position of the utmost extremity, says our authority, "there was nothing but dead blows; the foot of the English drew back, Sir John Courcy, their leader, was left in the midst of his enemies, with a two-handed sword, washing and lashing on both sides like a lion among sheep. Nicholas [St Lawrence] posted his father Armoric, who was in chase of the scattered horsemen of the Irish, and cried, 'Alas! my father, mine uncle Sir John is left alone in the midst of his enemies, and the foot have forsaken him.' With that Sir Armoric lighted, killed his horse, and said, 'Here my son, take charge of these horsemen, and I will lead on the foot-company to the rescue of my brother Courcy; come on fellow-soldiers,' saith he, 'let us live or die together.' He gave the onset on the foot of the Irish, rescued Sir John Courcy, that was sore wounded, and with cruel fight in manner out of breath; at sight of him the soldiers take heart, and drive the Irish to retreat."

The result of this action was rather in favour of the Irish; and it was followed shortly after by another, of which we can find no satisfactory description, but that it is represented by the Irish annualists as unfavourable to De Courcy. Yet there was, we learn with certainty, no interruption to his arms, sufficiently decided to arrest the progress of his conquest of Ulster, where he maintained his settlements against all efforts to disturb them.

After some time, an intermission of these hostilities allowing his absence, De Courcy thought it high time to visit England, and endeavour to secure his interest with the king. Henry, pleased with the progress of his baron's arms, created him lord of Connaught and earl of Ulster. On his return he had to fight a severe battle at the bridge of Ivora, the result of which was such as to secure a continued interval of quiet, which he employed in strengthening his government, securing his possessions, and making many useful arrangements for the civilization of the natives. He erected many castles, built bridges, made highways, and repaired churches; and governed the province peacefully to the satisfaction of its inhabitants, until the days of king John's visit to Ireland.

In 1186, as has been already related in a former notice, the king recalled prince John from the first brief exposure of that combination of folly and imbecility, which afterwards disgraced his reign. Eight months of disorder were, so far as the time admitted, repaired by the selection of a wiser head and a stronger hand. The brave and wise De Lacy had fallen the victim of an ignoble, but it is believed, insane murderer; but king Henry, seeing the approach of new dangers and

resistances from a people thus irritated by acts of oppression, and strengthened by the absence of all prudence, thought the adventurous valour and rough strong-headed sagacity of De Courcy, the best resource in the urgent position of his Irish conquest.

De Courcy's first step was a stern exaction of prudent vengeance for the murder of his predecessor. He proceeded with energy and prompt vigour to the business of repelling the encroachments and repressing the hostilities which had, during the previous year, again begun to spring up on every side, to an extent, and with a violence, which had begun to shake the foundations of English power. Fortunately, for his purpose, incidental circumstances, at this time, had begun to involve the most powerful of the native princes in mutual strife, or in domestic dissensions. The aged Roderic was driven by his ungrateful children from his throne. The chiefs of the Maclaughlin race, were destroying each other in petty warfare, and the practice of seeking aid against each other from the English settlers, gave added temptation, and more decisive issue to their animosities.

To rest satisfied with merely defensive operations, formed no part of the spirit of De Courcy. The state of Connaught was not unpromising, but it was enough to attract the heart of knightly enterprise, that it was the most warlike province of Ireland, and had yet alone continued inviolate by the hand of conquest. He collected a small, but as he judged, sufficient force, and marched "with more valour than circumspection, into a country where he expected a complete conquest without resistance." He soon learned his mistake, though not in time altogether to prevent its consequences. He received certain information that Connor Moienmoy, the reigning son of Roderic, was leagued against him with O'Brien, the Munster chief, that their force was overwhelming, and much improved in arms and discipline. Under such circumstances, his further progress, without more suitable preparation, was not to be contemplated, even by the rashness of knight-errantry. De Courcy resolved to measure back his steps. He had not proceeded far on his retreat, when he was met by the alarming intelligence, that another large army had taken up a difficult and unassailable position on his way; there remained no choice, and he retired to the army he had recently left. Here he found the confederate force of Connaught and Thomond, drawn up to the best advantage, in order of battle. Little hope seemed left, but much time for doubt was not permitted ere he was attacked. Charge succeeded charge, from an enemy confident in numbers—brave to desperation—improved in discipline, and encouraged by the weak appearance of the invaders' force. Their charges were calmly met, and after each they recoiled with diminished ranks; but De Courcy's little force was also beginning to be thinned, and, under the oppression of numbers, fatigue itself might turn the odds. It was necessary to cut their way through the armed mob. This they at last effected with vast and bloody effort, in which some of De Courcy's bravest knights were slaughtered.

By this event, the Connaught men had the glory of compelling the retreat of their invader, and preserving inviolate the honour of that unconquered province. Repelled from this design, De Courcy made amends by a combination of firmness and vigilance, which, with the



assistance of the popularity acquired by his knightly fame and open generous temper, awed some and conciliated others, and still maintained with universal honour the authority of his master through the country.

Affairs were in this position when the brave and sagacious king Henry, worn by successive shocks of anger, vexation, and wounded feeling from the conduct of his unnatural children, breathed his last in the town of Chinon, in France. On the succession of Richard, the feeble and impolitic John, who thenceforward began to exercise a more absolute interference in Irish affairs, was won by the insinuations of the younger De Lacy to supersede De Courcy, and appoint himself to the government of Ireland. De Courcy did not fail to express his indignation at the insult, and thus laid the foundation of an enmity, which was soon to lead to a fatal reverse in his prosperous fortunes. He now resolved to attend to his own interests alone, and retired to the cultivation of his territory, in his province of Ulster. Here, soon perceiving the urgent necessity of strengthening himself against the fast rising power of fresh confederacies, he sent to call for the assistance of his dear friend Armoric St Lawrence. St Lawrence obeyed the call, but in marching through the province of Cathal O'Connor, met with a fatal disaster, which we shall have to notice in his memoir.

For some time De Courcy went on strengthening himself in Ulster, and although he met with occasional checks from time to time, still, by the most indefatigable watchfulness and valour, he not only maintained the ascendancy of his arms, but was even enabled to avail himself of the weakness of John's government. He assumed an independent position, not only denying the authority of the king, but impeaching his character, and questioning his title to the crown. In this course of conduct he was for some time joined by his rival, Hugh De Lacy. But the perpetually shifting aspect of the political prospect in Ireland, appeared at length to assume a turn favourable to the power of John. The Irish barons, were mutually contentious, and, like the native chiefs, involved in perpetual strife with each other. De Lacy grew jealous of the growing power of De Courcy, whose superiority he could not help resenting. He reconciled himself by flattery and submission to the king, and exposed the danger of allowing a revolted subject to go on gathering power, and affecting the state of independent royalty. He was thus enabled to awaken a keener and more vindictive spirit in the breast of this base tyrant. The murder of the hapless prince Arthur, which had excited a universal sensation of abhorrence, drew from the generous and romantic ardour of the rough but high-spirited warrior, the most violent expressions of indignation and disgust. These were, by his rival, conveyed to the royal ear. John was enraged, and immediately summoned De Courcy to do homage for his possessions. De Courcy refused with scorn, to submit to the mandate of one whose authority he denied. A commission to seize his person was intrusted to De Lacy and his brother Walter, who, well pleased with the commission, which thus gave a specious appearance of right to their vengeance, proceeded alertly to their office.

De Lacy led his troops into Ulster, and coming to an engagement with De Courcy, was obliged to retreat with loss. But he, soon becom-



ing conscious of the impossibility of resisting the power of the English troops, which he knew must gradually collect into a force beyond the utmost of his means, resolved to temporize with his enemies. But private resentment was underhand at work; and his overtures were met with stern and unconciliating demands of submission. In this strait, he offered to justify himself by combat with De Lacy, who refused on the plea of his own high office, and De Courcy's being a subject, and a proclaimed traitor. He likewise also offered a large reward for the seizure of De Courcy, "alive or dead." But De Courcy stood so effectually on his guard, that there seemed to be little likelihood of success on the part of his enemy. At length De Lacy contrived a communication with some servants of De Courcy, who declared their fear of seizing the person of a hero, for whose strength, they affirmed, no match could be found; but they represented that he might be surprised on a particular occasion, which they thus described:—"On good Friday, yearly, he wears no arms; but passes the whole day in the churchyard of Down, wandering alone, and absorbed in devotional meditation." The hint was not thrown away on careless ears. Good Friday was at hand, and when it came, a spy, sent for the purpose, ascertained that the earl was in the place described, unarmed, alone, and by his absent eye and unsettled gait, little contemplating the meditated snare. A troop of horse rushed round the scene of sacred retirement, and the dismounted troopers crowded in upon the astonished knight; two of his nephews had been led by the tumult to the spot, and now rushed forward with heroic self-devotion to the rescue of their valiant uncle; De Courcy was not wanting to himself in the emergency. Seizing on a wooden cross which presented itself to his grasp, he laid about him with vigour and effect. Thirteen of his assailants fell beneath an arm, not often equalled in power: but his brave nephews lay dead beside him, and, wearied with his efforts, the valiant John de Courcy was at last overpowered, and led away bound and captive, into the hands of his bitter enemies.\*

He was cast into the Tower, where he remained, until an incident occurred, the facts of which being misrepresented by contemporary report, have also led historians to commit the common oversight of denying the whole. The facts, as they are most simply related, are not, it is true, easily reconciled with other more authentic facts and dates. Yet we see no reason, therefore, to affirm that the account is wholly gratuitous. The most unembarrassed statement we can collect, is as follows:—

In the year 1203, there was an active and successful effort made by the French king, to strip John of his Norman dominions. The contest was marked by imbecility and slackness on the part of John, which provoked first the earnest remonstrances and then the indignant desertion on the part of his barons. Still his Norman subjects, and still more the English, showed all willingness to second any vigorous effort of the king to reinstate himself in his rights. The king used this disposition to obtain money, which he lavished in extravagance: content-

\* Lodge throws a doubt on this romantic story on the authority of a record in the Tower, from which it appears that De Courcy surrendered himself. See Lodge, vi. 143, for the whole of this document.

ing himself with threats and remonstrances against Philip, who held him in just contempt, and being exalted by success, increased in his pretensions. The Normans were under a pledge to acknowledge his sovereignty, if not relieved within a year, not yet expired; to divert resistance, and perhaps at worst, to make room for compromise, he claimed the princess Eleanor, sister to the late Duke of Brittany, for his second son, with all the English dominion in France for her dower. The demand was absurd, and created remonstrance and complaint: the negotiation, which had till then been carried on, was abruptly broken off, and John's ambassadors returned into England. Shortly after their departure, and early in the following year, the king of France sent a knight into England to proclaim the justice of his cause, and in accordance with the notions and common usage of the age, to maintain the affirmation with his lance. The knight came and proclaimed a challenge against all who should impeach the actions or the pretensions of his master. It is probable that this knight did not expect his challenge to be taken up; at all events it was a matter of no political importance. But the English court justly felt that the vaunt should not be suffered to pass unanswered, and took it up as a question of sport in which the national pride was in some degree concerned, rather than as a serious matter. The court of John was, however, as likely to be anxious about a trifle, as if Normandy were the stake, and the king was earnest in the quest of a champion. The chivalry of England, ever the first in honourable enterprise, had champions enough, had the cause, the occasion, and the ruler, sufficient respectability to excite their sympathy. They were not asked; the fame of De Courcy was known; he was in the king's power, and there was little doubt as to the effect of the inducements, of freedom and restoration, when held out as the result of his becoming the champion of the royal cause. De Courcy had been some months in the Tower, when these circumstances occurred. He was sent for, and when he entered the presence, all were strongly impressed by the iron firmness of his gigantic port, and the undaunted freedom of his gait and countenance. "Wilt thou fight in my cause?" asked king John. "Not in thine," replied the Earl, "but in the kingdom's right, I will fight to the last drop of my blood." The king was too eager for the fight, to quarrel with the distinction, and De Courcy's imprisonment was relaxed in rigour; his diet improved; and his arms sent for to Ireland. But the circumstances becoming the talk of the day, the prodigious feats of De Courcy were everywhere narrated, with all the usual exaggeration. The French champion became from day to day more damped by these communications, until defeat appeared certain. At last, unable to contend with the apprehension of shame in the presence of the English court, and those of his countrymen who were sure to attend, the champion slunk away and concealed his disgrace in Spain. It was on this occasion that the privilege was granted to De Courcy, which yet remains as a standing testimony in his family. To the profuse proffers of king John's gratitude or favour, he replied by expressing his desire, that he and his posterity should retain the privilege to stand covered on their first introduction to the royal presence. This incident, the tradition of the day has so ornamented with the trappings of romance, and this with so



little regard to possibility, that it cannot now be received by the historian with any trust. Yet tradition has also its laws, and the wildest improbability may, when reduced by their critical test, be found so far in harmony with the time, person, and general character of events, that it may safely be affirmed to contain a large residue of real fundamental truth. Admiration always exaggerates and builds tall and goodly fabrics on disproportionate grounds. Yet even in these, if they are invented near the life of the actor, even the very exaggeration is mostly true to life and character. Every one is aware of many instances of the construction of this class of fictions. The main incidents are mostly disjoined from more vulgar circumstances which are omitted, altered, and replaced by other seemingly unimportant circumstances, which are simply used because the story can no more be told without them, than a picture be painted on the empty air. That which is adapted to raise wonder, is soon exaggerated to increase a sensation which the teller has himself ceased to feel. Again, the sayings and acts which are scattered along the memory of a life, will be seized on and made tributary to some special story. The violation of historical probability is long allowed to pass, because few hearers are precise enough to notice it; for it seems a general rule of the story-loving community, that no part of a story needs be true but the peculiar incident for which the tale is told. We begin to fear the charge of refining, and therefore we will pass to the subsequent facts of the tale.

Our authority goes on to state, that sometime after De Courcy being in France, serving in the English army, king Philip expressed to king John a curiosity to witness some proof of the strength of which he had heard so much; on which De Courcy was brought forward to satisfy this desire. A helmet was placed on a stake, and De Courcy stepping up to it, with a stroke of his ponderous two-handed sword, cleft the helmet and fixed the sword so deeply in the stake, that no one but himself could draw it out. Sir Walter Scott describes the feat, which he gives to Richard in "the Crusaders." Nor is it so marvellous, as on this ground to call for doubt. That the particular scene described ever occurred is, for other reasons, very unlikely. But the feat was one of the reputed trials of strength at a time when the fullest development of strength, was the business of life. The whole tale, taking it even with some minor embellishments which we here omit, has this value, that it is founded probably on the real facts of De Courcy's life, and certainly on the impression of his character, which probably remained distinct enough until it became imbodied in many a tale and written memorial not now to be had. That De Courcy was cast into the Tower, is not a fact confirmed by authentic history, and the meeting of the kings is still less likely. These are not, however, essentials to the characteristic incidents of the narration. The question about Normandy was not *settled* in the beginning of 1204, when De Courcy must have been in England, and this is the time assigned for the challenge. Again, king John two years after led a force into France, when he recovered parts of Poietou, and concluded a truce for two years with Philip. If these coincidences and the true spirit of the period be allowed for, the romance



dwindles into an ordinary occurrence in which, however historical scepticism may ask for proof, there is assuredly nothing improbable.

The remainder of De Courey's history is buried in much obscurity. He began to settle into the quiet of ease and the torpor of age. It required the prominent importance of a warrior or a statesman's actions, to fix a lasting stamp on the traditionary records of the time. He is supposed to have died in France, about 1210.

His Earldom of Ulster was retained by De Lacy; but Henry III. granted the barony of Kinsale, to his successor (son or nephew), some years after. This title has descended in the posterity of the noble warrior, for 600 years.

## Sir Armoric de St Lawrence.

DIED A. D. 1189.

It is one of the conditions of a period—of which the record that remains, approaches nearer to the character of tradition than regular history—that its persons are rather to be seen through the medium of the events in which they were the actors, than in the light of distinctly personal memorials. When in our transition down the current of time we come to the worthies of our own period—we must ever find the deepest interest in that portion of our inquiry, which brings our curiosity nearest to the person—and makes us best acquainted with the moral and intellectual constitution; the feelings and the motives of the object of our admiration or contempt. The earliest indications of the philosopher, the poet, the orator, or the statesman—the Boyle, the Goldsmith, or the Burke; are not too simple for the rational curiosity which would trace the growth and formation of that which is noble and excellent in the history of consummate minds. Nor will the personal fondness with which enthusiasm, is so apt to dwell on the simplest record of that which it admires or venerates, be easily contented with the utmost effort the biographer can make to infuse into his persons that characteristic reality, which like faithful portraiture ever depends on the nice preservation of minute and nearly evanescent lineaments.

It is with a painful consciousness of the unsatisfactory nature of our materials, to satisfy this condition of successful biography, that we have laboured through the heroes of this eventful period. Of these some, it is true, are to be regarded but as links of history, only important for the facts that carry on the tale; and of these the biographies are to be read, simply as the narrative of the public movements in which their fortunes or their vices and follies render them the prominent agents. Thus, while we are compelled to expend pages on the base Dermot, a scanty page will deliver all that we are enabled to add, to the facts already mentioned in the last memoir, of Sir Armoric de Valence. United inseparably with his valiant brother in arms, so that to relate the achievements of either, was necessarily to give the history of both; we have, in our memoir of De Courcy, been compelled nearly to exhaust the scanty materials for the biography of the noblest and most

chivalrie hero of a romantic age. The original name of Sir Armoric's family is said to have been Tristram: the subsequently assumed name of St Lawrence is not very clearly accounted for. A member of the family which he established in Ireland, is said to have gained a battle near Clontarf on St Lawrence's day; and from that event to have taken the saint's name, in consequence of a vow made before the battle. The sword of this warrior yet hangs in the hall at Howth. We have already mentioned the first battle gained by Sir Armoric on his landing near Howth, and the consequent grant of the lordship of that district, still in the possession of his descendants who bear the title of earl and baron of Howth. His subsequent career, as the companion of De Courcy, we cannot here repeat without needless repetition. Through the whole of these years of imminent peril, and fierce exertion, and formidable escape, he was as a guardian and guiding spirit to the more fierce and headlong impetuosity of his redoubted brother-in-law. In the moment of dangerous extremity, his faithful rescue; in perplexity, his wise counsellor—as remarkable for the caution of a leader, as for the heroic fearlessness of a knight: in those awful moments of defeat when all but life and honour seemed lost, the ever wakeful and sagacious discoverer of the redeeming opportunity, or the daring last resource, which turned the fortune of the field. Enthusiastic like his heroic brother in arms, but without his impetuosity; as daring, without his grasping ambition; as scornful of baseness, without his harsh and stern rudeness: Sir Armoric's whole course, shining even through the blurred line of the meagre annalists, conveys a resistless impression of high knightly valour and faith, calm, resolute, and devoted. He showed, in his last heroic field, one of the most noble on record; the same calm intrepidity in resigning his life to a high yet punctilious sense of honour, that brave men have been often praised for exhibiting in self-defence.

In the reign of Richard, while De Courcy was superseded by his rival De Lacy, and anxious to strengthen himself in Ulster against the rising storm which in its progress so fatally overwhelmed his fortunes, he sent a messenger to Sir Armoric who was engaged in some slight enterprise in the west. Sir Armoric returned on his way, to come to the assistance of the earl, with a small force of thirty knights and two hundred foot. The report of his march came to Cathal O'Connor, who instantly resolved to intercept him, and collected for this purpose a force which left no odds to fortune. He laid his measures skilfully; and this, it will be remembered, was the science of the Irish warfare. He took up a concealed position, and by the most cautious dispositions for the purpose, prevented all intelligence of his intent or movements from reaching Sir Armoric. He came on unsuspecting danger and having no intimation of any hostile design; his scouts went out and brought no intelligence, and all seemed repose along the march, until he came to a pass called the "Devil's mouth." Here it was at once discovered, that a vast force lay in ambush to intercept his way. That there was no alternative left but a soldier's death for the two hundred foot soldiers which composed his army, was instantly comprehended by all present: for these, flight was impossible and resistance hopeless. The force of O'Connor was at least a hundred to one. The fatal in-

ference seemed to have different effects on the little force of Sir Armoric: the foot, with stern and calm desperation, prepared for their last earthly expectation of vengeance; the thirty knights, seeing that there was no hope in valour, expressed their natural desire to retreat. Their hesitation was observed by the devoted company of foot, who looked on their more fortunate companions with wistful sadness. Their captain, a brother of Sir Armoric's, came up to him, and in pathetic terms remonstrated against the intended movement of his cavalry to desert their comrades in this trying hour.

Sir Armoric's high spirit was but too easily moved to follow even the shadows of honour and fidelity; and he resolved at once to share in the dark fate of his unfortunate soldiers. He instantly proposed the resolution to his thirty knights, who yielded to the energy of their leader's resolution and consented to follow his example. Sir Armoric now alighted from his horse, and kneeling down, kissed the cross upon his sword; the next moment he turned to his horse, and exclaiming "Thou shalt not serve my enemies," he ran it through with his sword: all followed the example of this decisive act, which placed them at once in the same circumstances with their fellow soldiers. Sir Armoric, lastly, sent two youths of his company to the top of a neighbouring hill, enjoining them to witness and carry a faithful account of the event to De Courcy.

The knights now took their places among the foot, and the devoted band advanced upon the Irish host. The Irish were astonished. Altogether ignorant of the more refined barbarism of chivalric points of honour, they knew not how to understand the spectacle of devoted bravery which passed before them, but imagined that the English came on in the confidence of a seasonable reinforcement. Under this impression they hesitated, until the scouts they sent out returned with assurance that the whole enemy they had to encounter consisted of the little band of foot who were in their toils. They now gave the onset: the English were soon enclosed in their overwhelming ranks. With their gallant leader, they were slain to a man; but not without giving a lesson of fear to the enemy, which was not soon forgotten. Cathal O'Connor, some time after, described the struggle to Hugh De Lacy. He did not believe that any thing to equal it "was ever seen before:" the English, he said, turned back to back and made prodigious slaughter, till by degrees, and at great sacrifice of life, every man fell. They slew a thousand of his men, which amounted nearly to five for each who fell in that bloody fight. Such was the death of Sir Armoric Tristram de Valence.

### **Hugh O'Nial of Tir Owen.**

A. D. 1215.

OF the secondary class of Irish chieftains, who lived in this period, nothing is distinctly known, but as their names are occasionally brought into historical distinctness by their occurrence in the feuds, battles,



and rebellions of the time. Amongst these casual notices there occurs much to excite regret that more abundant and distinct information cannot be found in any unquestionable forms; as it must be admitted that, unless in the point of military skill, the little we can discover of their actions may bear a not discreditable comparison with the most renowned and successful of their invaders. The characteristic features are, indeed, in some respects, so different, that such a comparison can hardly be made without the suspicious appearance of over-refining. But a closer inspection must remove something of this difficulty; because, when we scrutinize the conduct of our English barons to find the true indication of the virtues ascribed to chivalry, unfavourable allowances are to be largely made for the action of influences arising from their position as conquerors, holding their territories by continued violence, engaged incessantly in small yet irritating hostilities, possessed of enormous power, and tempted by constant opportunities to enlarge it. If, among the native chiefs, there occurs little that can be viewed with less reproach, equal allowances must be made on the score of the similar pernicious influences; while some indulgence must be thrown into the scale for the natural workings of pride and resentment. The comparison, indeed, has little to recommend it; its best points, on either side, are scarcely to be ranked under the predicament of virtues; but the lower the level on the scale of civilization, to which either side must be referred, the more signal are the examples of prudence and honour of which individual instances occur from time to time.

The main difference consists rather in the different means which we have of attaining to any thing of distinct knowledge of the personal history of the individuals of either class. The Irish chiefs have their record in a class of writers who, of all that ever held the pen of history, have left least information to after times. Barely confined to the dry mention of a fact, in the fewest words, and without description or detail, their accounts are nothing more than the brief entry of a chronological table. It is only incidentally that their names and actions occur in the diffuse page of Cambrensis, who, with all his misconceptions and prejudices, is the only historian from whom either the detail or colour of the time can be known, so far as regards Irish history. Of the English barons, we have abundant means of tracing the genealogy and verifying the biography in the more distinct records and documents of the English history of the same period; while of the Irish, we can only pretend to be so far distinct as their intercourse with the English barons places their names and actions in a clear point of view.

Such are the reasons why we have found it convenient to confine our plan, so far as respects these illustrious persons, to such of them as have a prominent place in the history of the English; and of these, to that portion of their history which thus appertains to the history of the settlement.

Among these, a prominent place cannot be denied to the O'Nials of Tyrone. Of these, as the first we meet whose name occurs in this period, may be mentioned the chief of Tyrone, who had nearly fallen a victim to the cause of Cathal O'Conor, when he was deprived of his kingdom by De Burgo, in favour of his rival Carragh. To the cir-

circumstances of this part of his we shall have to revert;—worsted in the field by De Burgo, he was deposed by his angry subjects, and another chieftain of his family elected.

This chieftain fell in the action, which soon followed, with the people of Tir Connel; but a considerable time elapsed before O'Nial regained his rights. In this he succeeded by means easily conjectured, but of which we have no detail; and some time elapses before we again meet him on the occasion of king John's visit to Ireland, in 1210. On this occasion, it is mentioned that he refused to present himself before the king, unless on the condition of being secured by two hostages for his safe-conduct. The terms of his submission to the English crown were then settled apparently to his own satisfaction, and he was peaceably dismissed; but, with the characteristic uncertainty of his countrymen, he no sooner found himself secure in his own territory, than he dismissed all idea of submission and spurned a demand of hostages from the king. The consequences of this boldness were averted by the timidity and feebleness of John, whose spirit was not roused by a bold defiance from the chief, as he marched through his territory. His chastisement was committed to the garrisons on the frontiers of the English districts, but the force, on either side, was too nearly balanced for any decided result; and this the more so, as the English, few in number and unprepared for extended operations, were confined to the defensive. O'Nial had the advantage of selecting the occasion and point of attack, and generally contrived to obtain some petty advantage, too slight to have any consequence, but sufficient to be exaggerated by the pride and jealous enthusiasm of his people and the magnifying power of report, into the name of victory. With the aid of the neighbouring chiefs, more decided results might have followed from the pertinacious hostility of this spirited chief; but the neighbouring chiefs were engaged in mutual strifes and animosities.

The next incident in which he is to be traced is in a combination with Hugh de Lacy, in which he gave assistance to that ambitious and turbulent chief, in his attempts to possess himself of some territory belonging to William, earl Marshall. Not many years after, his influence is apparent in the election of Tirlogh O'Connor, on the death of Cathal—an election which was defeated in favour of another brother, of which we shall have occasion to speak.

Of the death of Hugh O'Nial, we have no means of fixing the precise date; but from those we have noticed, the time of his appearance on the scene of Irish politics may be somewhat between 1190 and 1215.

There are some curious remains of the ancient rank and grandeur of this family, of whom we shall have to notice some of the descendants. The *Dublin Penny Journal*, to which we have already been indebted for valuable information on Irish antiquities, gives a woodcut of the coronation chair of one of the branches of this family—the O'Nialls of Castlereagh\*; and in the same place mentions, that “there was, and probably still is, another stone chair on which the O'Nialls of Tyrone, the chief branch of the family, were inaugurated. It is marked in some

\* Vol. i. p. 208.—The monument here mentioned has been purchased by R. C. Walker, Esq. of Rath Carrick.



of our old maps, under the name of the “stone where they make the O’Nialls.” In the same page of this work, there is also a curious representation of the ancient arms of the family:—a “bloody hand, from an impression of the silver signet ring of the celebrated Turlogh Lynnoch. It was found, a few years ago, near Charlemont, in the county of Armagh.”\*

## Meiler Fitz-Henry.

DIED A. D. 1220.

MEILER FITZ-HENRY, the grandson of king Henry I., and one of the original adventurers under Strongbow, was amongst the bravest and most distinguished of these hardy soldiers of fortune. There were few of the most trying perils and signal enterprises, which have been related in the course of these lives, in which this illustrious warrior did not bear a distinguished part.

He comes more distinctly under our notice in 1199,† when he was appointed by king John to succeed Hamo de Valois, as chief governor of Ireland—a situation to which he was recommended by his valour, moderation, and justice. He was but ill supported in his administration, and consequently was compelled to remain for some time almost inactive, while the south and west were torn by the dissension and turbulent schemes of both the native chiefs and English barons.

It was at this time that William de Burgo, invested with the custody of Limerick, took advantage of this and other circumstances to raise himself into great power, and with singular caprice to interfere with the succession of the Connaught princes—pulling down Cathal and Carragh by turns, according as flattery and promises swayed his inconstancy, as will be seen in our memoir of Cathal. At last Meiler raised an efficient force, and, by his prudence and conduct, obtained decided advantages over these contending chiefs—conciliating some and repressing others by the unusual demonstration of vigour in the government. He formed an alliance with Cathal and O’Brien, obtained a cession of two-thirds of Connaught, and deprived De Burgo of Limerick. The king invested him with the rents and profits of the Connaught districts thus acquired by the voluntary cession of Cathal, for the purpose of improving this territory.‡

He was recalled to England in 1203, and succeeded by Hugh de Lacy; but came over again in 1205. It was in the interval that the reverses of De Courcy, already related, took place. And it was at the period of his return, that the tragical history of the unfortunate De Braosa occurred.

Meiler Fitz-Henry died about 1220, and was interred in an abbey of his own foundation at Conal. Cox, Leland, and other historians call him son of Henry I., we rather presume, from not having thought it worth while to calculate the probability, upon so trifling a point.

\* Vol. i. p. 208.

† 1200. Cox.

‡ *Ex Arch. Turr. Lond.* quoted by Leland at length.



Gordon calls him grandson, and Mr Moore, in his history, says "another of the descendants of the fair Nesta, and nephew of Maurice Fitz-Gerald." This is unquestionably the correct statement. Nesta was married in 1112, to Gerald of Windsor, after having first been mistress to Henry, and lastly married to Stephen. If therefore Meiler had been the offspring of the first of these connexions, he should, *at the lowest*, be 110 years of age at his death, and not less than 61 when he is described as a gallant young warrior, distinguishing himself by his personal prowess in the field. This is on the nearly impossible allowance of two years for the three successive alliances. Our peculiar office will excuse this unimportant statement.

## Cathal O'Conor.

DIED A. D. 1223.

ON the death of the last of Ireland's monarchs, there was for some time a violent and bloody contention for the provincial throne. Connor Moienmoy was elected, but immediately after met with his death by the hand of one of his brothers, who in his turn was slain by the son of Moienmoy; and the province was again plunged into contention, until at last the vigour and interest of Cathal O'Conor, a son of Roderick, succeeded in fixing him upon the throne.

Cathal was a prince of active and warlike temper, and had already acquired renown by his personal prowess, and by the many homicides which had gained him the title of the bloody hand. He soon increased his popularity by the demonstration of military ardour, and by his loud declarations and active preparations against the English settlers. He spoke with confidence of their expulsion, and promised the speedy restoration of the monarchy. These threats were rendered not chimerical, by the dissensions of the Irish barons and the weakness of the government; and many other native chiefs, impressed by the vigour of Cathal's preparations, consented to act in concert with him. With this view, long standing animosities were laid aside, and treaties of amity and co-operation were entered upon to support a leader who spoke the language of patriotism, and came forward in the common cause. Among these the princes of Desmond and Thomond were the most prominent; their mutual enmity, imbibed by the constant encroachments of neighbourhood, was adjourned, and they agreed to join in the support of Cathal.

The first fruit of this new combination, was that affecting and tragic battle at Knockniag, near Tuam, in which the renowned knight Armoric de St Lawrence, with two hundred foot and thirty horse, were surrounded by Cathal's army and slaughtered, at the cost to the victor of a thousand men.\*

Little creditable as this event was to the arms, the generosity, or even common humanity of the Irish prince, it had the effect of exciting the ardour and the emulation of his allies. O'Brien, the prince of Tho-

\* See page 322, where the particulars are given.

mond, raised a considerable force, and soon met the English on the field of Thurles, where he gained a slight victory. Such advantages were not of a decisive character; won by surprises, and by the advantage of overwhelming numbers, they had no weight in the scale of general results; they gave impulse to these excitable but inconstant and unsteady warriors; and while they had the effect of leading them on to aggravated misfortunes, they caused to the English infinite inconvenience, which eventually were compensated by increased acquisitions. The only result of O'Brien's victory was an increase of vigour, caution, and determination on the part of the enemy, who extended their depredations into the territory of Desmond, and multiplied their forts to an extent that struck general alarm into the Irish of that district. The Irish annalists are supported by the abbot of Peterborough in the affirmation, that the English practised great cruelties on the family of O'Brien when, not long after his death, they penetrated into Thomond.\*

Cathal was soon apprized of their progress, and of these unusual atrocities with which it was accompanied. He entered Munster at the head of a numerous force. The English retired at his approach: they had no force adequate to the encounter. Cathal followed up the advantage thus gained by destroying their forts, "to the surprise," says Leland, "and admiration of his countrymen, who expected nothing less than the utter extirpation of their enemies, from a young warrior in all the pride of fortune and popular favour."† Cathal's judgment was however far inferior to his courage and activity, and his means of continued opposition lower still. Having executed this incomplete achievement, he retired to his province and left the contested territories to the more deliberate arms and steadier valour of the English. They were not however in this instance allowed to profit by his negligence, as Macarthy of Desmond interrupted their attempts to reinstate themselves in the same territories; this brave chief leading his army to meet them on their return, gave them a decided overthrow in the field, and followed up his success with a prudence, activity, and skill, which compelled them to evacuate the county of Limerick. The result of this bold and decisive step was to secure this territory for some years longer, until the city of Limerick was granted in custody to William de Burgo, who quickly gained possession of it, and thus effected a settlement which threatened all Munster.

In this juncture, Cathal was rendered inactive by the increasing distractions of his own province. He had no prudence to enable him to satisfy the exaggerated expectations to which his fiery courage had given rise. The admiration occasioned by his first active steps had subsided into disappointment; and as the loud applause of popular excitement died away, the longer-breathed murmurs of enmity, jealousy, disappointed ambition and revenge, like sure and steady bloodhounds, began to be heard louder and louder in his own province, and around his court. A vigorous and daring rival collected and concentrated these elements of faction. But Carragh O'Connor found a surer and shorter way to supplant his rival than in the intrigues of a court, or in reliance on the fickle and divided hostility of the natives. He ad-

\* Leland.

† Ib. i. c. 5.



dressed himself secretly to De Burgo. Cathal had pursued, with some success, a course which necessarily led to a dangerous hostility with De Burgo. The claims of this powerful baron in Connaught were such as Cathal could not be presumed to acquiesce in: but Carragh promised to invest the baron with all the lands to which he laid claim by the grant of John, and thus engaged his powerful aid against Cathal.

Under the guidance of De Burgo, the enterprise was conducted with a celerity which outran all intelligence of their movements; and Cathal, surprised in his court, was obliged to consult his personal safety by flight. Carragh was thus, without a blow, put into possession of the throne of Connaught. The exiled prince took refuge with O'Niall of Tyrone. The surrounding chiefs were filled with surprise and indignation, at the success of an outrage equally atrocious in its object, and dangerous in its means. A powerful confederacy was formed to redress a wrong which thus called with equal force upon their prudence and humanity. But now by experience aware of the inutility of coping in the field with an English baron of the power of De Burgo, they adopted the expedient which, though in the first instance dangerous, was in theirs an essential part of prudence, and entered into treaty with De Courey and De Laey, whom they easily prevailed on to join their league. The two armies, led by De Burgo on one side, and on the other by De Courey and De Laey, soon met; the English force on either side gave obstinacy to the combat, and it was after a struggle of some duration, and contested with great valour and much loss on either side, that at length the troops of De Burgo and his ally obtained a decided victory. Thus was Cathal seemingly as far as ever from redress, and Carragh's usurpation confirmed to all appearance by success.

O'Niall of Tyrone was reduced to a condition equally deplorable with that of Cathal. His English allies were yet smarting from their recent defeat, and now involved in troubles of their own; but he had still a considerable faction in Connaught, and he did not desert himself. De Burgo had now raised himself to great power, and had completely broken down all opposition from the Munster chiefs. He assumed the tone of independent royalty, and showed a vigour, promptitude, and boldness in all his measures, which made him more peculiarly accessible to any appeal which either flattered his pride or excited his ambition and cupidity of acquisition. To him Cathal now secretly applied. With much address he detached him from his rival's interest, by the most specious promises and representations, and so effectually won upon his pride and generosity, that he persuaded him to declare in his favour against the prince he had so recently set up in opposition to him. Carragh was little prepared for this formidable emergency: a battle was fought which was quickly decided against him, and he fell overpowered by numbers; and Cathal was restored by the conqueror, whom he repaid with the ingratitude which his fickle caprice and avidity of possession richly deserved. Nor was De Burgo at the moment in a condition to enforce the fulfilment of his promises. The faction of Cathal had been strong, and his enemies were now under his command: De Burgo was quickly compelled to retreat with precipitation, to avoid an unequal contest. He would



have returned with a fresh army, but other troubles awaited him. The English governor, Fitz-Henry, had raised a strong force, and was on his way to Munster for the purpose of chastising his arrogant assumption of independence; and the Irish chiefs of Munster, glad of the occasion to suppress a formidable enemy, whom they feared and hated, and willing also to conciliate the English government, offered their services to Fitz-Henry, and were accepted. Among these chiefs Cathal also came. He saw the opportunity to put down a powerful and relentless enemy, who would be content with nothing short of his ruin. De Burgo was soon besieged in Limerick, and compelled to submit. The Irish chiefs, long harassed by factions and by the growing pressure of the barons, were happy to seize the favourable moment to secure their own power and possessions on the best foundation. Cathal consented to surrender to king John two-thirds of Connaught, and pay one hundred annual marks for the remainder, which he was to hold as a vassal of the crown.\*

This secure arrangement placed Cathal, with other chiefs who had availed themselves of the same opportunity, under the protection of the crown, and we do not hear much of him further. On the Irish expedition of John in 1210, he appears among the chiefs who on that occasion presented themselves to offer homage, or renew their engagements to the king; and some time after, we find him receiving, on application, the protection of the crown against John de Burgo, who was encroaching upon his lands.

This latter occasion presents perhaps the fairest general view that can be collected from events, of the true position of affairs in this island, at the latter end of king John's reign.

The English barons, possessed of great wealth, far from control, and engaged in the pursuits of territorial acquisition; having also a contempt for the native chiefs, and living at a time when the principles of right were little understood, and forcible usurpation sanctioned by the highest examples of recent history and all the habits of the age; armed too with power, which soon learns to trample upon all considerations, they did not with much care resist the constant temptation to encroachment, where there was no effective resistance. Anxious for one object, the extension of their possessions, they easily found excuses to extend their just bounds, and crowds of the natives were thus stripped of their possessions. This evil was more prevalent in Connaught, where the power of the De Burgo family was greatest, and where there was least counterbalance in any native power. The greatest control upon these aggressions appears to have existed where both the English settlers and the native chiefs were the most numerous, and the distribution of power and property more equal; a constant succession of small intrigues and contentions led to less decided and permanent results. The inferior native chiefs also, were less compelled to offer to the English arms and policy a front of resistance such as to bring on their eventual ruin as the only means of quieting their opposition; and consequently, where kings and powerful provincial rulers, or proprietors were stripped of their vast possessions in the

\* Archives, Turr. Lond., quoted by Leland.

struggle of conquest and resistance, most of the minor proprietors had the means of consulting their safety by a submission which was preserved by no scruple beyond the presence of immediate danger; or by a crafty alliance with those who might otherwise have been formidable foes. But to the greater chiefs such courses of safety were not permitted. The opinion of their provinces was to be respected. O'Niall of Tyrone was deposed by his subjects, because he suffered a defeat; and Cathal, defeated in the same battle, was perhaps only exempted, by the misfortunes which had already reduced him to the condition of a suppliant and a fugitive. When, however, he was, by the course of events compelled to cede two-thirds of his territory, and pay a rent for the remainder, as the voluntary price of protection, it not only exhibits the formidable nature of the dangers by which he was menaced; but may be regarded as a virtual deposition. He was undoubtedly prostrated by the force of events, which could only be arrested in their course by submission, and from the pressure of which he was left no protection, but an appeal to the king of England. This appeal, it was the policy of the English government for every reason to receive with encouraging favour, and although there hung between the Irish complaint and the throne a cloud of misrepresentation and ignorance of the state of the country, yet until some time after when other causes began to interfere, such complaints were sure to elicit the required interposition. There had at this period fully set in a long struggle between the barons and the crown, which although occasionally interrupted by the vigour of some reigns, never ceased until it terminated in the restriction of both these powers, and the development of a third; and it was as much the interest of the English king to repress the licentious turbulence and spirit of usurpation of the barons, as it was on such occasions the obvious demand of justice. It is also apparent, that there was an anxious jealousy excited at this period, by the vast accumulation of power, possession, and consequence acquired by some of the greater settlers—and the tone of independence which was the occasional consequence. On no occasion were these results more apparent, than upon the complaint of Cathal O'Connor, under the fierce encroachments of John de Burgo. The O'Conors who had been in the first struggle the most dangerous opponents, had also been by far the most ready to preserve the conditions of their own engagements, and although undoubted instances of the contrary occur, yet in that age of loose conventions, their family presents the most honourable examples of the steady preservation of faith and an observance of sacred engagements which claimed trust and protection from the English crown, and manifest in this race, a spirit enlightened beyond their period. The reader will perhaps revert to the seemingly perfidious conduct of this very Cathal, when reinstated by De Burgo; and unquestionably if referred to the morality of an enlightened age, such must be its description. But we do not so refer it; the faith of treaties and the solemn acts between kings and states was fully understood—it was an indispensable principle of the very existence of nations. But in that age of robbery and spoliation, the rights of individuals were on a different footing; Cathal looked on De Burgo, as a plunderer who had inflicted on him the deepest injury; and consid-



ered it not unjust or dishonourable to circumvent him into an act of reparation, for which no gratitude was due. It would be tampering with the most important principles, not to admit the violation of even such engagements to be quite unjustifiable on any principle; but the crime was of the age, the virtue of the individual. The faith of Cathal was, it is true, rendered doubtful by the force of constraining circumstances: he had little choice of resources. His powers of offence or defence were annihilated. Oppressed by De Burgo, he appealed to the throne. Against this appeal his oppressor advanced misrepresentations of his motives; but the case was too palpable, and the insidious representations of his enemies were disregarded. King John directed his lord justice and other faithful subjects in Ireland to support O'Connor against his enemies; and further ordered that no allegations against him should be received, so long as he continued true in his allegiance to the crown.\*

Under this powerful protection the remainder of Cathal's life presents no further incident for the biographer: he seems to have been allowed to continue in peaceful possession of his remaining rights till 1223, when he died.

## Richard, Earl Marshall.

DIED A. D. 1234.

IN 1219, William Marshall, earl of Pembroke, and lord protector of England, died; and with him expired the hope and promise of the feeble Henry's reign. His authority was divided between Hubert de Burgh and Peter de Roches bishop of Winchester, whose power and influence were afterwards fatal to his unfortunate and spirited son, whose fortunes we are about to relate. The lord protector had extensive estates in Ireland, and, consequently, took a very active interest in its concerns. His character was highly respected by the chiefs, as well as by the English settlers; and he used the influence and authority which he thus possessed, to preserve the peace of the country, and keep an even balance between the parties, whom opposite objects and interests had excited to mutual suspicions and aggressions.

On his death he was succeeded by his eldest son William, in whose short career began that fatal working of cupidity and bitterness, which terminated in the tragic death of his brother and successor. De Lacy, unsubdued by adversity, saw in the earl's death an opportunity to regain a considerable tract of possession, to which he considered himself to have a claim. At that period the court of equity, for the adjustment of such claims, was the field of battle. The young earl Marshall came over for the defence of his property; and the flame of civil war was thus kindled between these two rival chiefs. The strife was of considerable duration and varied fortune, while its main result was the suffering of the people through the large and populous districts of Meath and Leinster, as each chief carried devastation into his rival's

\* Rymer.



boundaries. Neither party gained any decided advantage; and the contention ended in a suspension of hostilities, of which both were tired.

William died in 1231, and was succeeded by his brother Richard. He was a person of a stern and uncompromising virtue: he was on this account feared by the king, and still more by his ministers.

In the mean time, Peter de Roches, bishop of Winchester, who had been obliged to fly the kingdom under the ascendancy of his rival, Hubert de Burgh, had, on the retirement of this powerful baron, again returned and succeeded to his power and unpopularity. Hubert had been stern and tyrannical, but there was in his character a lofty and uncompromising fidelity to the sense of a trust; and he was rigorous in guarding, at all hazards, the power and prerogative of a feeble king against the encroachments of the fierce and turbulent baronage. De Roches possessed the stern, exacting, and arbitrary spirit, without the virtue of De Burgh. He encouraged the king's disposition to oppress his barons, and place his entire confidence in foreigners, until at last the affections of the aristocracy became alienated, and opposition to the claims and even the rights of the throne grew into a predominant disposition which involved the king in endless contention. It was in this state of things that Richard Marshall succeeded to the possessions of his brother William. De Roches and his master were justly alarmed at such an accession to the discontented baronage. The masculine virtues, the vigour, sagacity, and unflinching firmness of Richard were known, and they resolved to prevent his taking possession of his estates. They failed; and as a next resource, he was charged with a treasonable correspondence with France, and, on pain of perpetual imprisonment, commanded to leave the realm within fifteen days.

Richard complied; but his course was bent into Ireland, where his pretensions were still higher and his power and possessions greater than in England. The descendant of Strongbow and the native princess of Leinster found numerous friends in the national feeling of the Irish; and he was quickly enabled to return to England and seize on his paternal castle of Pembroke by force. The timid monarch and his imbecile government gave way, and conceded the investiture of his title and estates. The matter might have rested here. But their fears of earl Richard were not without foundation. The feebleness of the king, and the oppressive government of his insolent favourites, provoked the opposition of the barons; and Richard, whose bold and haughty spirit placed him at the head of the remonstrants, was, ere long, by their defection, left to support alone a dangerous contest against the power of the crown. In this position, there was no alternative between submission or recourse to arms; the first would be certain and ignominious death, but it was the spirit, not the fears, of earl Richard which chose the bolder course. He retreated into Wales, and there finding allies, he declared his purpose of maintaining his castles and estates by arms. A struggle ensued, in which the king's party met with continued disgrace from repeated failures and defeats. The cause was popular, for it was in fact the cause of his peers; and Richard conciliated respect by his conduct and forbearance. He affected to respect the king's person, and treated his English adver-

saries with lenity, while he denied quarter to the foreign soldiers who were employed against him. Wise and moderate men saw the progress of this contention with regret and apprehension, and strongly urged the prudence of a just and conciliatory compromise; but the imperious and violent De Roches was deaf to the remonstrances of prudence. He was not, however, deserted by the cunning which will sometimes effect by crime what wisdom pursues by fair and honest means. A royal bribe diffused treachery through the Irish baronage, and a well-concerted scheme brought the intended victim within their power.

A suspension of arms was contrived in Wales, and earl Richard was secretly apprized of a conspiracy to seize upon his Irish lands. Alarmed by the report, he availed himself of the truce to embark for Ireland with fifteen attendants. In the mean time, letters were sent to the principal Irish barons, which—in addition to some statements which gave a colour of right to the plot—suggested the course to be pursued, and offered the territories of the earl as the price of co-operation. Earl Richard arrived. He was waited upon by De Marisco, who, with well-feigned commiseration for his wrongs, urged upon him a bold course of open hostility against the king in Ireland, where he might hope to carry success to the height of his utmost ambition. The Irish barons had been directed to secure the person of earl Richard; but this they could have little hope of effecting without a protracted struggle of which the decision might be taken from their hands by either a compromise or the interference of an English force. To involve him in a perfidious alliance afforded a safer and surer prospect of securing the spoil of their victim, by some well-timed treachery. Such was the design according to which De Marisco urged him on into a course in which his success or failure might equally be the means of his ruin. The earl accordingly entered with vigour and success on a course of military operations. He seized on several of his own castles, and took possession of Limerick, after a siege which lasted four days; he subsequently seized several castles both of the king's and such barons as were not in the scheme, or whose part was opposition. Of these the enmity was as affected and insincere as the friendship: all were but acting their parts. De Burgo, the Lacies, and other hostile lords, fled before his approach with pretended fear. He was thus infatuated by the notion of an imaginary strength, and gradually deceived into a rash confidence, which brought him into the toils of his enemies.

The hostile barons desired a truce, and promised that if they were not succoured by the king before a certain time to be settled in conference, they should consider themselves free from the unwilling necessity of maintaining hostilities, and would willingly and peaceably relinquish the island to the earl. The earl's ambition was fired by this proposal, and he at once agreed to meet them; but De Marisco insidiously represented that they might only desire to gain time, and advised him to refuse the truce.

In compliance with their desire, earl Richard met the barons on the plain of Kildare; and, according to this advice of De Marisco, sternly refused to allow of any cessation of arms. The barons were



prepared for this reply: earl Richard was astonished by the fierce declaration, that arms should then decide their differences on the spot. He had now no alternative, and prepared for this unexpected trial with his native spirit and firmness; but, when all seemed ready for the onset, his fatal adviser and perfidious ally, De Marisco, rode up to him, and, with the utmost composure of countenance and tone, advised a surrender, and declined taking any part, saying that it was impossible for him to engage against his kinsman, De Lacy; and, having uttered this cruel speech, he instantly marched away, with eighty followers whom he had prepared for his purpose, leaving the unfortunate earl with fifteen, to defend his life against an hundred and forty chosen men. Nothing now remained for the ill-starred but high-spirited victim of this singularly contrived course of deceitful tactics, but to meet his fate in the spirit of the romantic law of chivalry, which made it disgraceful to turn his back on an armed enemy. With resolute composure he turned to his younger brother, who had attended him to the field, and, taking a solemn but affectionate leave, entreated him to retire from a scene to which his tender age was not yet inured. There was no long time for preparation: the barons themselves were held back by a sense of the shameful character of the exploit in which they were engaged; but their followers rushed on against the small party, who, standing firmly, awaited the shock with the resolution of men prepared to die. It was soon perceptible that, although the resistance they met compelled them to strike at many, their efforts were solely aimed against the person of Richard. He fought long and stoutly, and, with the help of his faithful attendants, brought many to the ground; but all human power was vain against such overwhelming odds. His little array was broken through; he was surrounded, unhorsed, and struck at on every side; and at last, while defending himself with that brave composure which so long made him a match for many, he received a dagger in the back, where he was undefended by his armour, and instantly fell to the ground. The object of his enemies was gained. They raised their victim in a fainting state, and tenderly conveyed him, yet alive but mortally wounded, to a castle of his own, now in the hands of Maurice Fitz-Gerald; there, according to their expectation, he expired in a few days. His death, when the manner and circumstances of it were known, excited in England resentment and consternation. In addition to the base and cowardly scheme by which he was betrayed, a rumour went about that his recovery was prevented by bribing the surgeon who attended him. This atrocity is but too consistent with the previous facts, to be rejected on the score of improbability. An Irish agent, who had the indiscreet vanity to confess that he had a principal part in the earl's death, was assassinated. The combined clamour of the people and discontent of the English peerage, alarmed the king. With mean and cowardly hypocrisy he feigned the deepest sorrow for earl Richard; lamented the inestimable loss of so hopeful a subject, with much insincere and unavailing praise of his great worth; and ordered his chaplains to perform a solemn mass for the repose of his soul. The penetration of the nobles was not baffled by these insincere demonstrations. The shock of this base murder ran through every rank, and excited general horror and aver-



sion against its known contriver. It was not allowed to subside by any prudent abstinence from tyrannical aggressions on the lives and properties of the barons. The cloud of their discontent concentrated, and became perceptibly loaded with danger; so that, when the archbishop of Canterbury took up the grievances of the barons, it was felt and understood to be an expression of the national feeling. This brave and patriotic churchman threatened excommunication as the penalty, if the king should delay to dismiss De Roches and all his foreign creatures; and the king, compelled to yield, for a time suffered the country to be governed according to law.

In Ireland, the indignation of all but those immediately concerned in the crime was not less. The descendant of MacMurrough was regarded as the sovereign of Leinster. The citizens of Dublin made themselves heard in the English court, and Henry was fain to silence their clamours by a letter expressive of the most liberal good intentions. In the mean time, the conspiring lords hastened to profit by their crime, and divide the spoils of the murdered earl. His brother, Gilbert, had pursued the same course of opposition to Henry: who was already re-entering on the same oppressive and unpopular habits: his marriage with the daughter of the Scottish king had excited his vanity, but he wanted the qualities which made earl Richard formidable, and quickly found himself obliged to sue for the king's pardon and favour. By powerful intercession he succeeded, and was allowed to take possession of his estates. Maurice Fitz-Gerald was influenced by his fears to clear himself by a solemn oath of having had any part in the murder of the earl; and proposed to show his sincerity by founding a monastery to maintain continual masses for the good of his soul.

### Hugh de Lacy.

DIED A. D. 1234

ON the death of his father, of the same name, Hugh de Lacy succeeded to his possessions; and, in 1189, he was appointed deputy by king John, in place of John de Courey. In our life of this brave warrior, we have already related the cruel wrongs he sustained by the caprice of that bad man and most unworthy prince. Of these wrongs Hugh de Lacy was the instrument and the principal instigator. In conjunction with his brother Walter, he was employed to seize on De Courey, but, after a struggle, was defeated by him. What he failed to effect by force of arms was, however, effected by treachery. De Courey was seized, as has been related, and sent to the tower in London.

On the death of De Courey, Ulster was granted to De Lacy, and served to increase the already dangerous power and authority of that family. Shortly after, he was called away to England to the assistance of John, and his brother, Walter, entrusted with the government in conjunction with the archdeacon of Stafford. Meiler Fitz-Henry succeeded; but, in 1208, Hugh was once more appointed to the government.

His power had now assumed a dangerous character; and king John

was, in the midst of his perplexities at home, alarmed and irritated by accounts of the insubordination of the Lacies. At war with his barons, menaced by France, under the contempt and indignation of Europe, excommunicated by the pope,—resentment against De Braosa, and the haughty baron who, in the confidence of his power, attempted to screen him from his revenge, was the governing impulse of his actions. Hugh de Lacy took the unfortunate De Braosa under his protection, and king John was not ashamed, in the keenness of his revenge, to assign the necessity of reducing this outlaw and his adherents as the reason for his expedition into Ireland.\*

On his arrival in Dublin, the chiefs thronged in to do him homage, and the general aspect of submission was such as to afford no encouragement to the refractory. Hugh de Lacy, justly fearing the consequences of the resentment he had excited in the implacable breast of John, and well aware of the serious and strong charges which his oppressions and robberies were sufficient to justify, resolved not to await the blow of justice enforced by vindictive animosity, but with his brother Walter, and his *protégé* De Braosa, fled into France.

In France, their adventures and the hardships they suffered, though by no means improbable, partake of the character of romance. In the hurry of their flight, and perhaps also from the imperfection of financial arrangements in that age, these great and affluent nobles were unable to secure any provision for their subsistence while abroad. They were quickly reduced to the lowest state of destitution, and driven to the necessity of supporting themselves by labour. It will occur to the reader that their names alone should have been sufficient to secure for them the commiseration and aid of the generous nobles and charitable ecclesiastics of France. But the revelation of their names and character, would also expose them to the malice of their numerous enemies, and quickly guide the keen-scented pursuit of vengeance. They found a refuge and the means of life in the service of the abbot of Saint Taurin, who retained them as gardeners.† Leland supports this relation by observing that De Comines “was witness of some of the noblest lords of England degraded by their misfortunes to the condition of lacquies, during the contests of York and Lancaster.”‡

The attention of the abbot was, it is said, soon attracted to the demeanour of his new retainers. Low as the age was in intellectual cultivation, it was an age of manners and formalities; it was also an age of pride and lofty thoughts: the apparent difference between the knight and the menial was far wider than in the present state of society. This difference was still more apparent in the bold and haughty nature of Hugh de Lacy. The abbot quickly suspected that his menials were persons of no ordinary rank and consequence. His curiosity, or probably his better feelings were excited, and he questioned them closely; the inquiry drew from them a full confession of the truth; they told their names, and detailed the history of their misfortunes. Their narration awakened the sympathy and benevolence of the good abbot, and he exerted him earnestly in their behalf. John’s peculiar position

\* Rymer, Leland, i. 187.

† Speed, Hanmer, Leland.

‡ Lel. i. 191.



very probably was such at the time, as to give weight to the intercession of a high and influential ecclesiastic; and historians attribute his forgiveness of the Lacies to the abbot's representations. After some demur, he at last suffered them to resume their possessions, exacting from Hugh 4000 marks for Ulster, and from Walter 2500 for Meath. The Lacies proved their gratitude to the abbot by knighting his nephew, and investing him with a lordship in Ireland.

King John's visit to Ireland was upon the present occasion marked by measures of considerable prudence, and, if laws and ordinances were alone enough to ensure civil order and national prosperity, adapted to heal the most prominent disorders of the country. He divided Leinster and Munster, into the provinces of Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Uriel, Caterlogh, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, and Kerry, to which he appointed civil officers, as in the English counties.\* He left an abstract of the English laws sealed and signed by himself in the exchequer in Dublin, and ordained that they should thenceforth be observed in Ireland. After this he appointed bishop Gray lord justice, and returned into England.

The next mention of any interest we find of the Lacies, occurs in the first year of Henry III. From a writ cited by Cox,† it would appear that Hugh de Lacy, although pardoned by king John, still took care, and doubtless with justifiable prudence, not to put himself within the tyrant's power. "Another writ," says Cox, "under the test of the earl Marshall, was sent to Hugh de Lacy to invite his return; in this writ, (which runs in the name of the king) his majesty condescends to expostulate with Lacy, that he (the king) ought not to be blamed for his father's unkindness to Lacy, and assures him that he shall have restitution and protection, if he would come back; and upon receipt of it, Lacy did very readily comply with the king's desire."

This writ is further explained by another paper, published by Leland, from which the following extract contains the evident confirmation and extension of the same liberal policy:—"And whereas, we have heard that some resentment hath arisen between our lord and father aforesaid, and certain nobles of our realm, and for some time subsisted, whether with cause or without cause, we know not; our pleasure is, that it shall be for ever abolished and forgotten, so as never to remain in our mind; and in order that the effect may cease with the removal of the cause, whatever resentment was conceived, or subsisted against him, we are ready and willing to the utmost of our power to atone for, by yielding to all persons what reason shall suggest, and the good counsel of our subjects direct, abolishing all evil usages, from our realm, and by the restoration of liberties and free customs so as to recall the gracious days of our ancestors, granting to all our subjects what each may fairly and reasonably claim. For this purpose, know ye that a council being lately convened at Bristol, in which were present all the prelates of England, as well bishops and abbots as priors, and many as well earls and barons, they did homage and fealty to us, publicly and generally; and receiving a grant of those liberties and free customs first demanded and approved by them, departed in

\* Cox.

† Cox, 56; from Brady's Append. 153.



joy, ready and willing to do our service, each to his particular residence."\*

Far from the centre of authority, and endowed with enormous possessions, the Irish barons could not, in the state of constitutional jurisdiction then existing, be easily made amenable to control; they had the licence attendant on an unsettled state, as well as that inherent in the feudal institutions. Law and charter, were as yet but declaratory of the progress of opinion, and of the growth of that civil wisdom which must precede improvement. The Irish barons possessed on a narrow scale the powers of sovereignty, without its constraints. The monarch of a nation acts in the eye of the world, and is influenced by the power, wisdom, and virtue of his nobles; the tyrant noble, exercises his petty despotism over the mindless level of a province, from which the voice of complaint and suffering could only receive influential weight from the fear or the humanity of the chief. The sword of justice (literally its instrument of authority then) could reach but a little way in the confusion of the times; nor was it, in those days of violence and usurpation, easy to find justice uncontaminated by the motives of private ambition and passion. In such a state of things it was that the Lacies were formidable as enemies or to be desired as friends by the sovereign himself. They lived in an endless train of dissensions and intrigues, wars, oppressions, and spoliations, which the law had not force to control, and at which the government found it necessary to connive, unless where circumstances made the opposite policy the more expedient means of conciliating the most efficient servants. On this principle, the barons were more frequently employed to counterbalance each other, than made in any way amenable to the law of justice. Justice slept when deeds of the most fearful tyranny were perpetrated, but was sometimes compelled to awaken by the passions which accumulated in the course of a political intrigue. Of this nature was that execrable conspiracy of which the unfortunate Richard, earl Marshall, was the victim, and in which Hugh de Lacy, who claimed a part of his territories, bore a share. We have already given a full account of this disgraceful transaction.†

It only remains to mention that Hugh de Lacy, and his brother Walter, died about the year 1234; and leaving only daughters, their great possessions went to other families. Hugh's daughter was married to Walter de Burgo, who thus acquired the earldom of Ulster. The two daughters of Walter de Lacy were married to Lord Theobald de Verdon, and to Geoffry Genneville.‡

## Richard de Burgo.

DIED A. D. 1243.

AMONGST the greater names by which the annals of this period are illustrated, few are more entitled to our notice than Richard de Burgo. He was the son of Fitz-Adelm, of whom we have already given a

\* Leland, 198.

† Page 335.

‡ Cox.

sketch, by Isabella, natural daughter to Richard I., and widow of Llewellyn, prince of Wales. He succeeded by the death of his father in 1204, to the greater part of the province of Connaught, the grant of which was confirmed to him by king John, for the yearly rent of 300 marks; and again by Henry III. for a fine of 3000 marks. This grant was afterwards enlarged by a subsequent transaction in the year 1225, when the lord justice Marshall was directed to seize the whole of Connaught, forfeited by O'Connor, and to deliver it up to Richard de Burgo, at the rent of 300 marks for five years, and afterwards of 500 yearly. From this was excepted a tract, amounting to five cantreds, reserved for the maintenance of a garrison in Athlone. These grants appear to have been slowly carried into effect; in the first instance, they were no more than reversions on the death of Cathal O'Connor, who still continued to hold a doubtful and difficult state in his paternal realm. His restless and turbulent spirit soon afforded the pretext, if it did not impose the necessity, of proceeding to more violent extremities; but his death in 1223 made the claim of De Burgo unconditional.

This, nevertheless, did not deter the native chiefs from proceeding in pursuance of custom, to the election of a successor; and Tirlogh O'Connor, brother to Cathal, was invested with the royal name and pretensions. This nomination drew forth the interference of the government, at the time in the hands of De Marisco. But the hostilities of this governor were rather directed against the disaffected Irish prince, than in support of the already too powerful settlement. De Marisco having led a powerful force into Connaught, expelled Tirlogh, and set Aedh a son of Cathal in his place. Aedh, however, availed himself of the power thus acquired, for the purpose of resisting the power by which he was set up; and a contention ensued, in the result of which he met his death in some tumultuary affair between his people and those of De Marisco. Tirlogh re-assumed his claims; but Richard de Burgo had by this time succeeded De Marisco in the government of the country, and was thus armed with the power to right his own cause effectually. He deposed Tirlogh: but instead of directly asserting his claim to a paramount jurisdiction, he thought it more consistent with his ambition to act under the shadow of a nominal kingly authority, and accordingly placed Feidlim O'Connor, another son of Cathal, on the throne. His expectations were, however, disappointed by the spirit and sagacity of his nominee: Feidlim resisted his exactions, and refused to lend himself to his plans of usurpation and encroachment. De Burgo, indignant at this return for a seeming but selfish kindness, and stung by disappointment, avenged himself by the appointment of a rival prince of the same line, and marching to support his nomination, he contrived to make Feidlim his prisoner. Feidlim escaped, and collecting his friends and adherents, he defeated and slew the rival prince.

At this time Hubert de Burgo, uncle to Richard, fell into disgrace. He had for a long period, by the favour of these successive monarchs, been one of the greatest subjects in the kingdom—perhaps in Europe. He was chief justice of England, and had also been created earl of Connaught, and lord justice of Ireland for life. He was now displaced

from his offices, and as Richard had been appointed in Ireland by his nomination and as his deputy,\* he was involved in the consequences of his dismissal, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald appointed lord justice of Ireland.

The power and authority of Richard de Burgo were probably not seriously affected by the change: but the complaints of Feidlim O'Connor, representing his own wrongs and also the dangers to English authority which were likely to arise from the uninterrupted machinations of so turbulent and powerful a baron, had the effect of alarming the fears of Henry III. In consequence, a letter was written to Maurice Fitz-Gerald, of which the consequences will hereafter be more fully detailed. De Burgo was placed in a state of hostility with the English government; and king Feidlim his enemy, by a commission of the king, appointed to act against him.

Such a state of things under the general system of modern governments, when the relative position of king and subject are guarded by a proportionate difference of powers and means, must have terminated in the speedy ruin of the subject thus circumstanced. On the growing fortunes of De Burgo it had no effect. His uncle too returned into power, and shortly after we find Richard acting under his commission against earl Marshall, as already described.

On the return of his uncle to power, the king had been content to remonstrate with De Burgo, on his alleged disloyalty. He received him into favour, and gently intimated his advice, that for the time to come he should be found careful to observe such orders as he might receive, and in guarding against even the suspicion of disloyalty. De Burgo seems to have been little influenced by this remonstrance. He contrived to gain the lord justice to his side; and easily finding some of those lawful excuses, which never yet have been found wanting for any occasion, they joined in the invasion of king Feidlim. The pretence was the suppression of insurrections; and under this pretence, they contrived to seize on large tracts of territory. Feidlim repeated his complaints, and the king sent an order for his redress to Maurice Fitz-Gerald; but a war with Scotland having commenced, and the king having ordered the attendance of Fitz-Gerald and the Irish chiefs, English and native—grounds for delay arose, and the storm was averted from De Burgo. He thus went on in the improvement of his circumstances, already grown beyond the limits of a subject. In 1232, we find an account of his having built the castle of Galway; and still growing in power and territorial possession, in 1236, he built that of Lough Rea. He now affected the state of a provincial king, and kept a train of barons, knights, and gentlemen, in his service, and about his person.

In 1242, he went, accompanied by a splendid suite, to meet king Henry in Bourdeaux, but died in France in 1243.†

He was married to Hodierna, daughter to Robert de Gernon, and by her mother grand-daughter to Odo, son of Cathal O'Connor, known by the appellation of Crovderg, king of Connaught. By her he left Walter de Burgo, his successor, and two daughters, of whom

\* Cox, p. 60.

† Lodge, i. 119.



one was married to Theobald Butler, ancestor to the Ormonde family; the other to Henry Netterville, ancestor to Lord Netterville.\*

## **Maurice Fitz-Gerald.**

BORN A. D. 1195—DIED A. D. 1257.

THIS eminent person was the grandson of the first leader of the same name, of whom we have already presented the reader with a sketch. His father, Gerald, was styled baron Ophaly; and, as he is said to have died in 1205, and Maurice was put in possession of his honours and estates in 1216, it is to be presumed that it was on the occasion of his coming of age. In 1229, on the disgrace of Hubert de Burgo, Maurice was appointed lord justice of Ireland, in the room of Richard de Burgo. The principal public incidents of his administration at this time, were the contests between Feidlim O'Connor and De Burgo, and the hapless and shameful death of earl Marshall. These we have already related.

This last-mentioned event excited great indignation in Ireland, and threw much imputation on his government. Gilbert, the brother and successor of the murdered earl, for a little time incurred the anger of Henry III. He had married the daughter of Alexander, king of Scotland; and, possessing his unfortunate brother's pride and spirit, without his ability, he was quickly led into a course of opposition which ended in his disgrace. He was, however, restored to favour by the mediation of the king's brother. Maurice Fitz-Gerald on this, thought it prudent to seek a reconciliation with him, and passed over to England to obtain the royal influence for his purpose. He there exculpated himself before Henry and his court, by a solemn oath, that he had no part in the death of Richard, earl Marshall; and proposed, for the sake of amity and peace between the families, to found a monastery, with monks to offer up continual masses for the soul of the murdered earl. It was also on this occasion that Feidlim O'Connor came over in person to look for redress at the English court, against his enemy, Richard de Burgo.

The account of sudden commotions in Ireland hastened the return of Maurice; on his approach they subsided into a calm.

In the following year, 1244, king Henry had levied a powerful army to make war on Alexander, king of Scotland; but the cause of quarrel being removed, he was advised to seize the opportunity to reduce the Welch to obedience. On this occasion the king sent to Maurice, to attend him with such aid as he could bring from Ireland. The delay was considerable enough to give the king some discontent, which he seems to have treasured up for a future occasion. Maurice led over his forces, accompanied by Feidlim O'Connor. Passing the island of Anglesey, they landed and laid waste a part of the island; but, while they were moving off with the spoil to their ships, the inhabitants collected and came on them by surprise. They had no force

\* Lodge.

equal to the emergency, and were obliged to drop their burthens and make the best escape they could.\* They then made the best of their way to the king, and remained with him until he had reduced the Welch and strengthened his garrisons in that country; after which Maurice returned into Ireland. On his† return he found the country in a state of insurrection. The deaths of Hugh de Lacy and Richard de Burgo, with the absence of the lord justice, seemed to afford an occasion for gaining some advantage to O'Donel, who overran Ulster and committed great waste. Maurice marched against him; and, with the aid of Feidlim O'Conor,‡ easily reduced O'Donel and restored peace to that district. He also forced O'Neale to give hostages, whom he§ secured in his castle of Sligo. Other important services are mentioned by historians.

But Henry had been dissatisfied at the tardy succour which he had received in his Welch campaign; or, as is far more likely, some turn of court intrigue operating to the prejudice of the absent—Maurice was superseded, in 1245, by Sir John Fitz-Geoffrey, son of Geoffrey de Montmorres. This change revived the turbulent designs of the Ulster chief, and Sir John was speedily involved in hostilities which occupied his entire administration. It was only by the dissensions of these restless chiefs that he was enabled to subdue this obstinate toparch; the jealousies and enmities of the neighbouring chiefs afforded willing aid against a powerful and perhaps oppressive neighbour.

Maurice died on the 20th May, 1257, in the habit of St Francis, and was buried at Youghal, in a friary of his own foundation.§ Lodge mentions that this friary was built in consequence of a very slight incident. “Being about to build a castle in the town, and the workmen who were digging the foundation, on the eve of some festival, requesting a piece of money to drink his health, he directed his eldest son to give it, who, instead of obeying, abused the workmen; at which he was so concerned that he altered his design, and changed the castle into a friary, taking upon himself the habit of the order.”||

## Theobald Walter.

DIED A.D. 1206.

THE prominence in Irish history of the family of Theobald Walter, gives him a title to notice beyond the claim of many whose deeds and renown, in this period, have necessarily occupied a more considerable space in our pages. An old writer of the last century makes the remark, that “a family has a right to preserve its whole line from oblivion, which has produced one man worthy of a history.” Such a right, if admitted, is confirmed in the line of Walter, by many an illustrious claim.

Antiquaries and heralds are not agreed in their accounts of the ancestry of this family. It is traced—without certainty, yet with no

\* Cox. † Leland; Lodge and Cox say, with the aid of Desmond Hugh MacRory.

‡ Camden.

§ Lodge.

|| Ibid.

inconsiderable probability—from the Dukes of Normandy, through Richard, a follower of the Conqueror, whose name is on the roll of Battel Abbey; and who, on the score of kindred, as well as service, received the earldom of Clare. From Herveius, the grandson of this nobleman, the genealogy of the family runs clear from conjecture; he was the father of Theobald.

It is generally agreed that Theobald accompanied Henry II. into France, on the occasion of the persecution which that monarch underwent on account of the assassination of the turbulent and intriguing Becket. When the king came to Ireland, in the following year, he attended him thither.

His services, on that occasion, cannot easily be distinguished, as he does not appear to have had any military command. But they were, perhaps, not of the less importance in the council of his master, or in the detail of civil offices, which, though little important in the historic page which is occupied with gross results, are yet, in the current order of affairs, the source of influence and the basis of events; it is plain, there must have been high favour, and the dignity of hereditary station. The office of chief butler, in the English court, appears to have descended, for some generations, in the family; and that of chief butler in Ireland seems to have been a simple recognition of the claim.

This dignity was some time after bestowed by Henry on Theobald, with large Irish possessions. It was the duty of the office to attend on the kings at their coronation; and at the feast, upon that occasion, to present them with the first cup of wine. In addition to this, and probably as appendant to the office, Henry granted him the prisage of wines.\* By this he had a right to two tons of wine in every ship “which broke bulk in any trading port in Ireland, and was loaden with twenty tons of that commodity, and one ton from nine to twenty, &c.”† This grant was renewed through many reigns, and continued in the house of Ormonde till late in the 18th century.‡

During his life, he was appointed to several offices both in England and Ireland, and is mentioned as having endowed several charitable and religious foundations. His possessions in England were small, and probably in Lancashire, where he was sheriff in the reign of Richard I. and that of king John. His grants in Ireland were ample. Among those which Lodge enumerates, we find the castle and town of Arklow, to hold by the service of one knight's fee.

He married the daughter and heir of Robert de Vavasor, and left one son, Theobald, with a daughter. In 1204, he gave, it is said, “two palfreys” for licence to go to England, where he died in 1206, and was buried in Wothenev abbey.

\* Lodge, iv.

† Ib. Note, p. 3.

‡ Life of James, Duke of Ormonde.



## Feidlim O'Conor, Prince of Connaught.

SUCCEEDED A.D. 1228.

ON the death of Cathal O'Conor, a son of his, named Tirlogh, was elected by the people; he was expelled by the lord justice, De Maurisco, or Montmorres, and Aedh, a son of Cathal, established in his place. Aedh was soon after slain by a most unfortunate misapprehension, of which the following account is given:—Aedh had involved himself in hostilities with the English; and, having no effective means of resistance, was quickly reduced to sue for terms: attending on Montmorres for this purpose, a quarrel arose between his attendants and those of the English baron, in which he was slain. Of this incident, a version by no means improbable is given by some of the annalists:—On his visit to Montmorres, the king of Connaught, Aedh, met with very kind attentions from the wife of one of the English attendants, who offered him the refreshment necessary after his journey, to enable him to appear before the English governor. Aedh, after the fashion of his own country, showed his gratitude by kissing his benefactress. The simple warmth of the Irish manner—which even still is observably marked with the emphasis of a fervid and enthusiastic nature, such as often to give the tone of strong passion to slight courtesy—made a fallacious impression of jealousy upon the cooler and more matter-of-fact perceptions of the English husband, who judged according to the more quiet manners of his own country. He probably watched for the opportunity of revenge, and there could not be one more convenient than the confusion of a riot, easily excited among the class to which it is ascribed. The assassin was immediately discovered, and executed by order of Montmorres.

Tirlogh assumed the sovereignty; but Richard de Burgo, who had himself a claim to succeed Cathal, for reasons not stated, thought proper to raise Feidlim to the succession. Such apparently was the course most favourable to his plans of self-aggrandizement. The obstacles his ambition feared were more likely to arise from the suspicions of the king of England, and the vigilance of his governors, than from a small provincial ruler, whom he considered as existing only by his favour, and whose name and authority he might hope to use as the mask and instrument of his designs. He was, however, mistaken in his choice.

From Feidlim, De Burgo received a lesson which belonged peculiarly to the experience of his time. Feidlim was a prince of very uncommon spirit and sagacity, and quickly saw and seized on the advantages of his position;—these are so obvious, that we may assume them safely. It must have been plainly apparent that by a tame submission to De Burgo, he could be nothing more than an instrument in the absolute power of that encroaching baron, who simply raised him to occupy a nominal right over territory which he found it dangerous to seize at once, until it should be effected by slower and more safe degrees, by means of a

succession of arbitrary and oppressive acts. Sooner than submit to such an abject and precarious footing, Feidlim preferred to hazard all; but he had caution and foresight equal to his boldness. He justly reckoned on the troubles in which the turbulent ambition of De Burgo would quickly and frequently involve him; and relied also on the steady character of the English protection, could it once be obtained, free from the capricious intervention of the barons and their dependents. He formed his plans accordingly.

He commenced by resistance to oppressive and unjust demands. De Burgo, who was little likely to acquiesce in resistance from one whom he considered as the creature of his will and convenience, at once marched against him, and made him prisoner. Feidlim had the good fortune to escape. Still more fortunately for him, Hubert de Burgo, the English justiciary at this time, fell into disgrace; and, in consequence, his nephew was deprived of the government, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald appointed in his stead. Feidlim, with ready sagacity, seized upon the favourable moment. Aware of the insufficiency of any means of resistance in his power, and reckoning justly on the effects of De Burgo's discredit, he made a pathetic and forcible appeal to the king, in which he set forth, in strong terms, the known fidelity of his father, Cathal, and his own—the extensive cessions they had freely made—the strong pledges of protection they had received—and the unjust and insatiable rapacity of De Burgo. To these considerations he added a strong description of his disregard of the royal rights in Ireland—his seizure of the king's forts—his depredations and military inroads upon his faithful liegemen—and his general assumption of powers altogether inconsistent with the fidelity of a subject. To this representation he added an earnest request to be permitted to repair to England, and cast himself at the foot of the throne, that he might more fully explain the crimes of De Burgo, and his own wrongs. This judicious step of O'Connor was successful. Henry was surprised at an account so different from those with which he had been duped, according to the consistent and fatal policy of his Irish barons and ministers, whose immunities were extended and their crimes concealed by continued misrepresentations to the crown. Of O'Connor, he had been given to understand that he had led an army of Connaught men into the king's lands, and had been defeated with the loss of 20,000 men. This monstrous falsehood induced Henry to act with caution. He wrote to O'Connor, directing him to defer his journey till he had, with the concurrence of the lord deputy, endeavoured to take the castle of Melick from De Burgo; after which service, when the province of Connaught should be peaceably settled, and delivered up to the lord deputy, he might be admitted to his presence, and his cause fully heard. In the mean time, the king wrote to Fitz-Gerald, apprizing him of this letter, and desiring him to employ trusty persons to ascertain the truth. This answer of the king's effected the immediate purpose of O'Connor, as it recognised him as a vassal, and authorized him to act against his oppressor. The consequence was, that he was allowed to enjoy his province without further present molestation, under the sanction of Henry's support. The gratitude of Feidlim was shown by loyalty and active service: in 1244 he accompanied Maurice Fitz-Gerald, with an Irish force, against



the Welch. The circumstances are mentioned in our notice of Fitz-Gerald.

Of Feidlim there is nothing further worthy of remark to be distinctly ascertained. His life had been a succession of struggles, in which his energy, courage, and sagacity, were unremittingly employed, to maintain possession of the little that remained of his ancestral dignity and possessions. The comparative peace of the remainder of his life may be inferred from the silence of historians. The time of his death is not specified.

## Walter de Burgo.

DIED A.D. 1271.

OF Walter de Burgo we have little notice of a nature strictly personal. Eminent, in his own day, for power and enterprise, his actions are scantily recorded; and the events in which he bore an active part, are but indistinctly to be collected from the history of the darkest age of Ireland. With a few exceptions, such is the common character of this long and perplexed period. It presents a lengthened succession of confused and obscure, yet strikingly tempestuous and destructive scenes, of which the incidents are rendered impressive by their frightfully peculiar uniformity, and their dark breadth of infliction and suffering. But the separate agents are only to be seen, like the moving figures in some remote conflagration, as the bursts of ravage and ruin happen from time to time to cast a gleam upon them. We are, therefore, for the remainder of this period, compelled to carry on our chain of persons and events by memoirs, in many of which little can be related of the individual. These the reader will however find to contain the main events of their time, or some appropriate notice of such questions as they suggest.

Walter de Burgo succeeded his father, Richard, already mentioned. By his marriage with the heiress of De Lacy, he acquired the earldom of Ulster. His contests with the O'Conors have been noticed.

During his time it was that the effect of the absence of any fixed and independent authority in the country began to be more fully understood by the native Irish; and a general desire began to be felt, among those who bordered upon the English settlements, for the advantages of English law. The difficulties attendant on such a change were greater than can now be easily allowed for; and, while we accord with the general principle assumed by those historians who exclaim against the injustice or impolicy of denying the boon so long and anxiously sought, we must adhere to our opinion, already expressed, that it is very doubtful whether it could have been acceded to without depriving the pale of the only protection they had against their inveterately hostile neighbours. The opposition of the English was founded on two distinct classes of motive—one of which was unjust and impolitic, the other necessary and hardly to be dispensed with; and the obviousness of the first has prevented historians from suffi-



ciently noticing the second. That the greater barons would object to a constitution, the effect of which should soon be to set bounds to encroachment, usurpation, and arbitrary violence, is natural and not to be either defended or denied. Had there been no record, it might be inferred from the common analogy of human conduct; but though there were those who would have withheld justice, it by no means is to be inferred that the measure required was politic, prudent, or such as to ensure the object proposed. We need not enter upon the nice question, as to the possibility of governing any people in any state, by any constitution whatever; for such is the absurdity of the assumption. The operation of law must be essentially modified by the habits of a nation; for on the degree of its conformity with these, must depend the question how far it is a system of freedom or constraint. The law which is a security to the industrious, peaceable, and honest, must be a severe oppression, however necessary, to the riotous, the idle, and the dishonest. But if two races, oppositely distinguished by these respective qualities—an extreme case, which we assume for illustration—should chance to be combined under the same constitution, the difficulty must be much enhanced; the effect must be, to a certain extent, the same as the insane and rash measure of attempting to quiet a country in a state of insurrection, by depriving the respectable and orderly of their means of resistance, and leaving the disaffected without control—a dastardly policy too often resorted to by public administrations. The Irish were at that time, and it implies no reproach, not to be governed by English laws, and only to be restrained by the retort of arms and the sense of their own personal safety. A law of equal justice would in the state of the country have been just barely efficient to control the industrious, the timid, and the weak, with a superfluous constraint; it would have had no effect upon the demeanour of the natives, unless so far as it was their safety and convenience, and would have been quickly converted into the stalking-horse of robbery and sedition. The duty of the English government, which was first to protect the settlement, would thus have, to some extent, deprived it of its own protection; as the law designed to protect Irish life and property against English aggression, would have been by no means reciprocal. Having expressed these doubts, we have as little hesitation in concurring with the generality of historians, in imputing the resistance made to this extension of English law to the iniquitous ambition of the barons. The Irish chiefs had, in their first cession to the English crown, made it an express stipulation that they were to retain the ancient laws and customs of the country. But in this respect experience changed the view of such of the Irish as inhabited the borders of the pale; and we may admit that those who sought the protection of the English law were, many of them, governed by the most wise and allowable policy. In the reign of Henry III. it was frequent for the most peaceable and civilized among the native chiefs to sue for and obtain a patent, specially securing to the applicant the rights of an English subject. These grants were numerous, as can be ascertained by their records. The reader of Irish history, whenever such questions recur, will do well to call to mind that the Irish, in actual contact with the settlement, were comparatively but a

small proportion. The inequalities of jurisdiction, in a small settlement thus surrounded by an Alsatian sanctuary for outrage of all kinds, would be quite inconsistent with the lowest civil order.

At the same period, the disorders of the Irish barons were so great, their interests so complicated together, and their conduct therefore so little to be depended on, that king Henry adopted the plan of sending over governors, unconnected with the country and its settlers, who might thus be expected to act with independence of local and partial influences and interest, and to consult only the good of the country, and the will of the king. Of these, the names follow each other in brief and quick succession, indicating thus, says Leland, "distraction in English councils, as well as an irregular and disordered state of things in Ireland."\*

Among the Irish chiefs whose names prominently recur in this time, the warlike race of Macarthy is conspicuous. Irritated by the pressure of the Geraldines in the south, they took arms, and gained a decisive victory, in which many of this English family were slain. In the course of this war they affected to be at peace with the English government; and at the very time of this victory, received a new deputy, who landed on their coast, with all marks of respect, and allowed him to proceed peaceably to his government. Elated with their success, they proceeded to further hostilities, and attacked some Irish septs which had incurred their hostility. In the course of these steps they were brought into collision with the real or supposed rights of De Burgo. He took arms against them; and, meeting them in the field, gave them a defeat which scattered their power. In this their leader was slain; and it was followed up by an inroad into their country, in which he spread devastation, and compelled them to submit and give hostages for the observance of the conqueror's conditions. By this event, the Geraldines were once more enabled to lift up their heads; but De Burgo, whose interests were those of a rival, did not quietly acquiesce in this consequence, and a long and sanguinary feud ensued. In the course of this, De Burgo obtained an advantage from the lawless violence of his opponents. The Geraldines, resenting the supposed partiality of the lord deputy's interference, seized his person, and sent him, with a son of De Burgo and others, prisoner to one of their castles. This act drew down upon them a more combined and formidable power, and gave to De Burgo's violence a lawful character. But the ambition and the violence of these powerful barons knew no prudence or moderation. De Burgo pushed his advantages in Connaught, until he roused the resentment of Aedh O'Connor, the successor of Feidlim, who rose in arms and gave him a signal defeat. His death followed soon after, in 1271, at his castle in Galway.†

\* Lel. i. 228.

† Lodge.

## Earl of Kildare.

DIED A. D. 1316.

JOHN, the eldest son of Thomas Fitz-Gerald, lord Ophaly, was the first earl of Kildare. The most remarkable event in which he is directly concerned, is the dispute with Vesey, the lord justice, which ended in a large accession to his possessions, and ultimately in his promotion to the title. Though the circumstances of this quarrel are by no means of historical importance, yet Cox's narration of them is for many reasons interesting; we shall therefore extract some of the very quaint and amusing speeches which this writer has put into the mouths of the contending parties.

"The lord justice," writes Cox, "hearing many complaints of the oppressions the country daily received, which he thought reflected on him, and insinuated his maleadministration, therefore to disburthen and excuse himself, he began, in misty speeches, to lay the fault on the lord John Fitzgerald's shoulders, saying (in parable wise) 'that he was a great occasion of these disorders, in that he bare himself in private quarrels as fierce as a lyon, but in these public injuries as meek as a lamb.' The baron of Ophaly, spelling and putting these syllables together, spake after this manner:—

" 'My lord, I am heartily sorry, that among all this noble assembly you make me your only butt, whereat you shoot your bolt; and truly were my deserts so hainous, as I suppose you wish them to be, you would not cloud your talk with such dark riddles, as at this present you have done; but with plain and flat English, your lordship would not stick to impeach me of felony or treason; for as mine ancestors with spending of their blood in their sovereign's quarrel, aspired to this type of honour, in which at this day (God and my king be thanked) I stand; so your lordship, taking the nigher way to the wood, by charging me with treason, would gladly trip so roundly on my top, that by shedding of my blood, and by catching my lands into your clutches, that butt so near upon your manners of Kildare and Rathingham, as I dare say are an eyesore unto you, you might make my master, your son, a proper gentleman!'

" 'A gentleman!' quoth the lord justice, 'thou bold baron, I tell thee the Vescies were gentlemen before the Geraldines were barons of Ophaly; yea, and before that Welch bankrupt, thine ancestor (he meant Sir Maurice Fitz-Gerald), feathered his nest in Leinster. And whereas thou takest the matter so far in snuff, I will teach thee thy syripups after another fashion, than to be thus malapertly cocking and billing with me, that am thy governour. Wherefore, albeit thy taunts are such as might force the patientest philosopher that is, to be choakt with choler, yet I would have thee ponder my speech, as though I delivered it in my most sober and quiet mood. I say to the face of thee, and I will avow what I say unto thee, that thou art a supporter of thieves, a bolsterer of the king's enemies, an upholder of traytors, a murderer of subjects, a firebrand of dissension, a rank thief, an



arrant traytor, and before I eat these words, I will make thee eat a piece of my blade.'

"The baron, bridling with might and main his choler, bare himself as cold in countenance as the lord justice was hot in words, and replied in this wise:—

" 'My Lord, I am very glad that at length you unwrap yourself out of that net wherein all this while you masked. As for mine ancestor (whom you term bankrupt), how rich or how poor he was, upon his repair to Ireland, I purpose not at this time to debate; yet thus much I may boldly say, that he came hither as a buyer, not as a beggar—he bought the enemies' land by spending his blood. But you, lurking like a spider in his cobweb to entrap flies, endeavour to beg subjects' livings wrongfully, by despoiling them of their innocent lives. And you charge me with malapertness, in that I presume to chop logic with you, being governour, by answering your snappish *quid* with a knappish *quo*. I would wish you to understand (now that you put me in mind of the distinction), that I, as a subject, honour your royal authority, but as a nobleman I despise your dunghill gentility. Lastly, whereas you charge me with the odious terms of traytor, murtherer, and the like, and therewithal you wish me to resolve myself, that you rest upon reason, not upon rage; if these words proceed from your lordship as a magistrate, I am a subject to be tried by order of law, and am sorry that the governour, who ought, by vertue of his publick authority, to be my judge, is, by reason of private malice, become mine accuser.

" 'But if you utter these speeches as a private person, then I, John Fitzgerald, baron of Ophaly, do tell thee, William Vescie, a singe-sole gentlemen, that I am no traytor, no felon; and that thou art the only buttress by which the king's enemies are supported; the mean and instrument by which his majesties subjects are daily spoiled; therefore, I, as a loyal subject, say traytor to thy teeth; and that shalt thou well understand when we both shall be brought to the rehearsal of these matters before our betters. Howbeit, during the time you bear office, I am resolved to give you the mastery in words, and to suffer you, like a brawling cur, to bark; but when I see my time, I will be sure to bite.'

After these "biting speeches" had passed, and a considerable ferment was raised on both sides, lord Ophaly came to the determination to bring the quarrel before the king, and went to England for this purpose, whither he was quickly followed by Vesey. Lodge, with more probability, represents them both as having been summoned by the king. The king now fixed a day for the hearing of their quarrel. They met before the council. Being placed on their knees before the throne, Vesey was commanded to begin. He accused his enemy of being the main cause of all the troubles in Ireland; for such he observed was his authority with the Irish, that all their actions were governed by his will. He attributed the numerous depredations which were daily committed to his secret suggestion or command; accused him of attending at disaffected and seditious meetings, and of encouraging rebellion, and then exclaiming against the governor himself for not preserving order. He then complained of the insult-

ing and outrageous language which he offered in answer to his own peaceable and moderate rebukes for such conduct; and concluded by pledging himself in a few days to bring forward and prove charges of the utmost criminality against him.

Lord Ophaly listened with cool and scornful intrepidity to these vague charges, and when his accuser had concluded, he “prest himself somewhat forward,” to reply. He ridiculed the dilatory conduct of Vesey, in having suffered such accusations to sleep for so many years, and at last having brought them forward in so crude and indefinite a form; so that while he accused him in general terms of being the main cause of all the Irish disorders, he did not specify a single act of disloyalty on his part. As for his menace of treasonable accusations at a future day, he laughed it to scorn, and compared his enemy to the philosopher of antiquity who proposed to teach an ass to speak in seven years, provided he might be allowed to live so long; knowing that within that time, the king, who had menaced his life, or himself, or the ass, would probably die. He himself, he observed, would not, like his adversary, lose his errand on the way, and having come before his majesty forget or retract any thing he had spoken in Ireland. He then accused Vesey of corruption, and of excluding himself and all the best nobility of Ireland from his presence, while “an Irish cow could at all times have access.”\* He significantly alleged that a cow, a horse, a hawk, a silver bell, were the real operating motives of his conduct, and the cause of all the disorders in Ireland; and that the nobility were accused, to cover his own treasonable connivance at rebellions. He appealed to the obvious reason of the case, and observed that no one could be so far imposed upon by representations so evidently opposed to the most notorious facts. That the lord justice, having the royal army and treasure at his command, and all the authorities of the country at his beck, should not be able, if he so willed, to look out “such bare breeched brats as swarm into the English pale.”† He concluded this dexterous reply with a challenge, thus reported by Cox: “‘But so much as our mutual complaints stand upon the one his yea, and the other his nay, and that you would be taken for a champion, and I am known to be no coward, let us in God’s name leave lying for varlets, berding for ruffians, facing for crackers, chatting for twatlers, scolding for callets, booking for scriveners, pleading for lawyers; and let us try with the dint of sword as becomes martial men to do, our mutual quarrels. Wherefore, to justifie that I am a true subject, and that thou Vescie art an arch-traytor to God, and to my king, here in presence of his highness, and in the hearing of this honourable assembly, I challenge the combat.’ Whercat all the auditory shouted.”

The challenge was accepted, the day fixed, and much preparation made for an occasion so much in accordance with the taste and spirit of the time. But the expectation of the court was disappointed: when the day came, Vesey was in France, as Cox quaintly says, “Vescie turning his great boast to small roast, began to cry creak, and secretly sailed into France.”‡

\* Cox.

† Ib.

‡ Holinshed, Cox.



On being apprized of his flight, king Henry bestowed his lordships of Kildare and Rathangan on his adversary, observing, that "albeit Vesey had conveyed his person into France, yet he left his lands behind him in Ireland."

Notwithstanding this event, the probability is that the accusation of Vesey was just: his attempt to trace to their source the disorders of the country, led to a more distinct notice of the oppressions and disloyalties of the barons, than was satisfactory to these powerful nobles. And it is in the highest degree probable, that if the prompt and dexterous conduct of lord Ophaly had not cut the matter short by an appeal at that time unlikely to be rejected, that the most serious charges would have been substantiated on undoubted evidence. This supposition is confirmed by the subsequent conduct of Fitz-Gerald on his return. The whole of this narration is impugned by Leland, who gives no authority, and substitutes an account far less probable in its circumstances. According to this, the proceedings were entered into, and after being carried to some length, annulled as irregular; and that Vesey voluntarily resigned his manors, because his right, which appears to have been valid, was contested by the co-heiresses of his wife.

Fitz-Gerald, on his return, conducted himself in a manner too consistent with the accusations of Vesey. Amongst other violent proceedings by which he endeavoured to enlarge his vast possessions, he made war on De Burgo, whose person he seized and imprisoned. Continuing this war, he carried his violent proceedings to an extent that rendered all connivance impossible; he was impeached in form, and obliged to appear before the king and give security for his future peaceable conduct.

From this the tenor of his history changes; in 1296, and in 1301, we find him assisting the king in Scotland. In 1307, he also distinguished himself by his services in conjunction with his son-in-law Edmond Butler (soon after lord Carrick) against the rebels in Ophaly.

During this lord's time, the principal factions in Ireland were those of De Burgo and his own, who were engaged against each other in hostilities, only interrupted by the occasional influence of the government, or by the accident of circumstances, which from time to time occurred to divert their activity from mutual strife, to the service of the king. On these occasions, the royal service was materially promoted by their jealous anxiety to outshine each other in their force, equipments, and actions.

The last year of his life was one of violent disturbance in Ireland. It was the year of the Scottish invasion, which we must reserve for other lives to which its details more properly appertain. This lord was, however, among those who first gave a check to the invader Edward Bruce, brother to the king of Scotland, by giving him some severe defeats. In consideration of these services, as well as to secure his loyalty, king Edward II. created him earl of Kildare, by letters patent, dated 14th May, 1316.\*

He died in the same year, and was interred in the Franciscan friary

\* Lodge.



of Kildare. He was married to a daughter of lord Fermoy, and had four children. Of these, Thomas John succeeded him; Joan was married to Edmond Butler, lord Carrick; and Elizabeth to the ancestor of the Netherville family.

## Second Feidlim O'Connor, Prince of Connaught.

DIED A. D. 1316.

THIS unfortunate prince was most probably the grandson of the prince of the same name already commemorated in this volume.\* Of his personal history we know no more than the particulars which belong to the general history of the period. But these are such as to fix his claim to a separate notice.

On the invasion of Ireland by the Scots, under the command of Edward Bruce, in 1315, Feidlim joined De Burgo with his provincial force. He was about twenty-two years of age, high spirited and distinguished for his military ardour, but rash and inexperienced. He was probably impatient of the domineering influence under which he was controlled by the power and pride of the De Burgos, and was therefore the more open to the secret seductions of Bruce. To him Bruce represented the disgrace of his dependent condition; he reminded him of the ancient power and honour of his illustrious line; and promised to reinstate him in all the possessions of his family as fully as they had been possessed by the greatest monarch of his race; for this purpose he conjured him to desert his oppressors, and the enemies of his family and nation, and to join him in driving them from the island. Feidlim, easily seduced by this romantic notion, sought a pretence to detach himself from the earl of Ulster. Such a pretence was nearer than he would have wished.

Taking advantage of his absence, Roderic, a near relation, possessed himself of his territories. He, too, entered into a communication with Bruce, and promised to assist him and put the province of Connaught under his sovereignty, if he were himself fixed securely in possession of the powers and territories of the rightful prince. His offer of service was accepted; but he was at the same time warned of the danger which would follow from division, and entreated to leave Feidlim's possessions undisturbed, until the expulsion of the common enemy should leave them at liberty to discuss their respective claims. Roderic, who was perhaps aware of the hollowness of this politic counsel, and that he had no claims suited to such a discussion, gave no heed to the advice, and proceeded with vigour and success to obtain his objects. He found no difficulty in compelling or influencing the septs to give hostages for their faithful adherence to his interest; and when Feidlim had arrived to protect his own rights, he found that he was late. His march too had been interrupted and beset by the Northern septs, who looked upon him as an ally of their enemies, and when he had reached a safe position, he was no longer at the head of an

army; his remaining followers were few and discouraged, and he was without the means of supporting them.

He was soon followed by De Burgo, whose force did not enable him to meet Bruce in the field. But even with this reinforcement, Feidlim was not strong enough to bring matters to the issue of force.

At this time Sir John Birmingham was appointed commander in Ireland; and considering Feidlim as the ally of the English, he immediately joined him with a body of English troops, and he was reinstated in his possessions by an engagement in which his rival was defeated and slain.

The first use this unfortunate prince made of his deliverance, was such as indeed to deserve the fatal consequences which he soon incurred. He was no sooner freed from the presence of his deliverers, than he threw off concealment, and openly declared for Bruce.

The penalty followed soon upon the crime. William de Burgo and Richard de Birmingham were detached into Connaught, to chastise his defection. He had given much assistance to Bruce, and done great mischief to the English in repeated incursions upon their settlements; in these he surprised at several times, and slew Stephen of Exeter, Miles Cogan, William Prendergast, and other brave knights.\* A powerful force of English troops now hung, like a distant thunder-cloud upon the horizon, and Feidlim was in a position of emergency which might have damped the fiercest valour of his race. Feidlim's courage was in no way damped; he prepared to meet the danger with a spirit worthy of a better cause, and marched forward to give battle to the enemy. They met near Athenry, a town within eleven miles of Galway; and an engagement ensued, in which Feidlim was slain. This battle was fatal to his race, who never again recovered their importance and authority. It was also the most sanguinary that had taken place since the arrival of the English: the slain on the part of the Irish are said to have been about 8000, and there seems no reason to doubt the statement.

### Edmond, Lord Carrick.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1299.—DIED A. D. 1321.

THIS nobleman succeeded his brother Theobald, in 1299, and was thus the sixth in succession from the first of that name, whose coming to Ireland we have already detailed.† He was knighted in 1309 by Edward II., and obtained great honour in that year for his success, in concert with Thomas Fitz-Gerald, against the insurgents in Connaught and Ophaley. In 1312, he was lord deputy, and suppressed the depredation of the Byrnes and Tooles. In 1314 he was lord justice in Ireland, and rendered himself conspicuous for his prudence and activity in the preparations which were made against Bruce's invasion. It was at this time that he was created earl of Carrick-Mac-Grifine, in the county Tipperary, by patent dated at Lincoln, 1st September, 1315, with

\* Book of Clonmacnoise, Leland.

† Page 343.

large grants, to which other extensive possessions in the county of Waterford were added in a few years after. In 1320, he went on a pilgrimage into Spain, to visit the shrine of St James of Compostella; and on his return, died in London, 13th September, 1321, and was interred at Gowran, in the county Kilkenny.

He was married to a daughter of the first earl of Kildare, by whom he had five children; his eldest son James succeeded him.\*

## Second Earl of Kildare.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1316.—DIED A. D. 1328.

THIS nobleman was appointed as leader of an army of thirty thousand men, which was levied to meet Bruce. But his dispositions were rendered vain by the interference of lord Mortimer, who came over with a considerable force to assume the command, and sent orders for the postponement of active operations till his arrival. The delay was fatal to the occasion, as Bruce took advantage of it to avoid an engagement for which he was not in condition.

This earl was lord justice in 1320, and was again appointed in 1326. He died in this high station, in 1328, in his castle at Maynooth, and was buried in the Franciscan friary of Kildare. He married a daughter of Richard de Burgo; by her he had three sons, of whom Richard succeeded him.

## Sir John Birmingham.

DIED A. D. 1329.

SIR JOHN BIRMINGHAM'S ancestors had a castle in the town of Birmingham, from which their name is derived. The English branch continued to possess the lordship of this place until the reign of Henry VIII., when, says Lodge, "Edward Birmingham, the last heir male, was wrested out of that lordship by John Dudley, afterwards duke of Northumberland." William de Birmingham, who lived in the reign of Henry II. and Richard I., is supposed to have been the common father of both branches. It is yet doubtful amongst antiquaries, whether it was his son Robert or himself, who came over with Strongbow. We shall not discuss the point: whichever it may have been, he obtained ample grants from Strongbow. From this adventure is traced with more certainty Pierce de Birmingham, the first lord of Athenry, who was a distinguished nobleman in the reign of Henry III. His grandson Peter, the third lord, was father† to the eminent person whom we are to notice here, who was the second son. He is justly entitled to a conspicuous rank among the most eminent persons of his time. His most illustrious achievement was the termination of the disastrous war consequent on Bruce's invasion, to which we

\* Lodge.

† Lodge, Archdall.



have been compelled partially to advert in other lives. We may now proceed to its detail.

It will not be necessary to detail the incidents of Scottish history which led to Edward Bruce's descent on the Irish coast. The death of Edward I. freed the Scotch from the pressure of a formidable enemy. Robert Bruce, after a long struggle with adversity, was, by the issue of the battle of Bannockburn, placed in secure possession of the Scottish throne.

The Irish were also soon apprized of the feebleness of the English prince, and were seized by a strong desire to avail themselves of the opportunity to throw off the yoke. To effect such a purpose, it was, however, necessary to bring a force into the field adequate to struggle with the formidable power and valour of the English barons. Robert Bruce, who was at the time, without opposition, ravaging the northern frontiers of England, seemed an obvious resource upon such an occasion. To him, therefore, the chiefs of Northern Ulster applied. They represented the wrongs they had sustained, and were sustaining, from the inveterate enemies of his family, person, and nation; they must also have pleaded the ready assistance which he had in his own difficulties found from them; they reminded him of the near consanguinity of the two nations, and finally offered to receive a king from Scotland, should they first be liberated by his valour.

There were also reasons of a strong and peculiar nature, which operated to give ready effect to such an application. The juncture was seemingly favourable, and Robert Bruce was, by his nature, character, present situation, and tried experience, admirably adapted to succeed in such an enterprise. But other circumstances had been working, to prepare the way for the application made by the Irish, which gave a different turn to the event. The brave monarch to whom their offer was made had a brother, as enterprising and valiant as himself, to whose fiery and impetuous valour he had been indebted for success in many an arduous danger, and who had shared all his fortunes and sufferings, through the long and trying struggle which placed him on the throne. Edward Bruce was restless, violent, enterprising, and ambitious; a character which, though not unfitted to the nature of the warfare in which his youth had been passed, was scarcely compatible with the calm and peaceable subordination, which was so much the interest of his royal brother to preserve in his small and turbulent monarchy. Among the fiery, proud, and contentious elements of the Scottish aristocracy, a character like that of Edward was always to be feared. He was as rash and inconsiderate, as he was ambitious; and having so long been placed, by the emergencies of his brother's life, and the importance of his military services, in a station approaching equal command, he did not think it unreasonable to desire an equal share in the government of the kingdom. Such a proposal must have filled the breast of king Robert with disquietude, if not with alarm: however appeased by reason or concession, the wish itself was full of danger. King Robert, it is said, assured his brother of the succession, in case of the failure of issue male; but the proposal of the Irish chiefs came happily to relieve him from the difficulty, and he offered to place his brother at the head of an army, and to fix him on

the throne of Ireland. The time was favourable to this undertaking; Ireland was seemingly defenceless; the English were divided and weakened by dissension; the Irish chiefs were favourable; and England not in a condition to offer any very efficient resistance. The great monarch, whose wisdom and valour would have made such an enterprise formidable, was succeeded by a feeble prince, whose incapacity was betrayed by the uncontrolled disorder and misadministration of every province of his kingdom, which made him the subject of universal contempt. The project was full of golden promise, and Edward Bruce was easily tempted by the glittering bait.

Some historians speak of a premature attempt of Bruce's, the result of his impatience, which, not being proportionably seconded, was repelled. It will, however, be enough here, to detail the particulars of the main effort which worked so much woe in this island, and is connected mainly with the subject of this memoir.

It was in 1314, the seventh year of king Edward II., when lord Edmund Butler was deputy in Ireland, that Edward Bruce made his appearance with three hundred transports, containing six thousand Scots, on the north-eastern coast. Having effected a landing, he took forcible possession of the castle of Man, and took the lord O'Donnell prisoner.\* Soon after, he landed his entire army, and was joined by the greater part of the native chiefs of Ulster, with such forces as they could command. They freely swore fidelity to his cause, and gave their hostages. He commenced hostilities without loss of time. It was thought necessary to begin by striking terror through the country; and his operations were of the most violent and desolating character: fire, waste, and a nearly indiscriminate slaughter were diffused among the northern settlements of the English. His barbarian outrages were heightened by the savage animosity of the natives. The castles of their English neighbours were levelled to the ground; their towns destroyed by fire; and the whole settlement depopulated. The terror of the spoilers went before them, and consternation was spread through every part of the English pale. Amongst the greater English barons disunion prevailed; and it is not improbable, that they were more intent on the consideration how this invasion might be made instrumental to their private animosities or cupidities, than on the means of averting the general calamity. As has been already noticed, De Burgo rose in defence of his own possessions, which were the first to suffer from the enemy's attack; but any force that De Burgo could command, was far below the demand of the emergency. The prince of Connaught was won from his alliance by the insidious flatteries of Bruce; and he was left to the support of his own proud and courageous spirit. The lord deputy came to his aid; but unwilling to be indebted to the English government, which he had always treated with contempt, for his safety, he declared his own forces sufficient to repel the enemy. The feebleness of the government is indicated by the fact, that the lord deputy yielded to this boastful rejection, and left him to a struggle for which he was manifestly unprepared. Bruce had advanced into Louth, but was compelled, by the scarcity of provisions, to fall back

\* Cox.



into Ulster. De Burgo followed, and coming to an engagement, on the 10th of September, was defeated with great loss. This defeat was, however, not sufficient to paralyze the activity of De Burgo, and he was still enabled to harass the enemy.

The operations of Bruce were materially weakened and retarded by an inconvenience which was, in some measure, the result of his own improvidence. The waste committed by his army quickly made provisions scarce, and before long grew to a disastrous dearth, to which the failure of his enterprise is mainly attributable. He found it necessary to retire into Ulster, until he might make more efficient provision, and increase his force for an advance.

During this interval, a relation of Feidlim O'Connor's took advantage of his absence to usurp his rights. Feidlim was quickly re-instated in his possessions by Sir John Birmingham, but immediately after declared for Bruce. His example was followed by many other chiefs, who had till then rested neuter. The chiefs of Munster and Meath joined their forces. The clergy declared for Bruce, and loudly called to arms. Bruce was crowned at Dundalk; and to add to this formidable conjuncture, the king of Scotland landed with a fresh and powerful force in Ireland. This sagacious prince soon saw enough to damp his ardour for the field: the subsistence of an army, even under the most favourable circumstances, was at the time a main obstacle to such enterprises; the support of the Irish was little to be counted on; the resistance of the English, though tardy, would be formidable; and a sagacious eye could perceive, that while the Scottish force was daily becoming less efficient, the hostile power was slowly gathering from afar. The first step to be gained by the English was embarrassed by many difficulties: it was hard for the lord justice to bring an army into the field; but if this were once effected, the odds would be fearfully against any force that could be brought to oppose them. It was, besides, no part of king Robert's plan to waste his life upon an enterprise made painful by distressing dearth of means, and beset with incalculable difficulties and impediments. He was satisfied with having cheered his proud and hotbrained brother to perseverance, and having effected this purpose, he retired. He left his army with his brother, who was thus enabled to assume a more formidable posture. Among his adherents were many of the degenerate English, of whom the De Lacies and their numerous followers were the chief part.\*

He laid siege to Carrickfergus. This town resisted to the most distressing extremities of weakness and famine; but the vast increase of the besieging force now rendered further resistance hopeless, and it was compelled to surrender. Bruce was next obliged to march southward.

The appearance of danger was imposing; a strong and numerous army, led by a renowned warrior and joined by the Irish nation, was not without extreme infatuation to be lost sight of in petty animosities. It became at last evident that the safety of the whole was at stake; and the common danger began to infuse unanimity and loyalty among

\* Leland.



the English barons. The chiefs of the powerful Geraldine branches of Kildare and Desmond united their efforts with lord Edmund Butler. The government, excited by the emergency and by the zeal of the barons, seconded their exertions. The battle of Athenry gave a favourable impulse to the hopes of these leaders, and a discouraging check to the body of the Irish chiefs who were leagued with Bruce. Bruce was not of a temper to be discouraged by the discomfiture of an Irish army. He marched to Dublin. There the citizens set fire to their suburbs; and, retiring within the walls prepared for a resolute defence. In the hurry of these operations, the cathedral of St Patrick took fire. Bruce, unwilling to lose time in so doubtful and tedious a siege, proceeded on through Naas, Castle-Dermot, and the towns on that line, burning and plundering as he went. He was guided by the Lacies, who had a little before caused themselves to be tried and acquitted of any participation in his hostile operations, and received the king's pardon. Bruce continued on unchecked in his march of devastation and plunder by Limerick, through Ossory to Cashel, and thence to Nenagh, directing his fury most chiefly against lord Edmund Butler's estates in the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary.

There was at this time a meeting of the English barons at Kilkenny; they had, with much difficulty, collected an army, said to amount to thirty thousand men, but still scarcely to be depended on in a seriously contested engagement, as it was made up of a mixture of all classes of persons who could be collected. The operations of this force were checked by the arrival of lord Mortimer, who wished to command them in person. Bruce found his forces too much weakened for a direct encounter, and led them back to Ulster.

The English were not provided for a long pursuit through an exhausted country, and the new deputy dismissed his forces and repaired to Dublin to renew his preparations upon a more adequate scale. Here the barons were once more convened; and the earl of Ulster, who had been imprisoned by the lord mayor, was released at the instance of the lord deputy.

The next step of the governor was to reduce the Lacies in Meath, and to regulate the province of Leinster, through the disorders of which the English subjects had long been reduced to the severest extremes of suffering and depression. The famine, arising from the long continuation of a wasting internal war, had now reached its height. All provisions had risen to the most exorbitant prices, and numbers were dying from mere want. But the proceedings of the government gradually infused vigour and organization into the councils of the English, and the court of England had begun to take more active steps for their security. The pope was applied to, and the sentence of excommunication was denounced against all the enemies of king Edward of England. In this curse the Bruces were included by name; the Irish clergy were also either included or menaced, and a two years' truce was commanded between the Scots and English. To this the Irish chiefs replied, by the representation of the grievous wrongs and oppressions they had sustained from the English, which were, they said, so intolerable, that they were compelled, as a last resource, to invite the Scottish prince to protect and rescue them from

their oppressors. Their representations, which were probably not much beyond the truth, made an impression on the pope, who transmitted it to king Edward, with a strong remonstrance, advising him to redress the grievances of the Irish, that they might thus have no excuse for revolt.

Bruce gave little heed to these denunciations. His condition admitted of no long protraction of the war; his only chance was in the advantage of the present moment, and in the difficulties which his enemies found in bringing an efficient army into the field. His own army was beginning to melt away, under the severity of its wants and fatigues. The resources of the country were exhausted by the ravage of destruction and the cessation of culture. All the various horrible and disgusting resources of starvation had been tried; the last hideous resource of desperate self-preservation, even in its most revolting extreme, had been had recourse to—the living fed upon the victims of disease; a still increasing famine was widening its fatal desolation round their marches and encampments; and disease, the sure companion of famine, was ravaging through Ulster. Dissension, too, began to revive among his Irish friends: four thousand Irish fell in mutual conflict in Connaught.

The lord justice was summoned into England; in his room Alexander Ricknor, archbishop of Dublin, was made deputy; he appointed Sir John Birmingham general of the English. Bruce advanced towards Dundalk with three thousand men, the remains of a gallant army. Birmingham advanced to meet him with a small but select force of fifteen hundred English.

Both parties were eager for the decision of the field. The Scotch were weary of a protracted warfare, with famine and disease, which had grievously thinned their numbers, and were likely to exterminate them; they had probably looked for a different issue—an easy conquest, with the rich spoils of the ejected English. These had, on their part, still keener motives to excite their ardour. They must have resented the intrusion of the Scotch upon their hard won acquisition, and felt that the protracted disquietude and danger arising from the presence of so formidable a foe, must now be brought to a decided end. Each army was equally confident of victory. The tried valour of Bruce gave confidence to the Scots, who listened with military ardour to his cheering exhortations. The bishop of Armagh walked through the English ranks, represented the justice of their cause, and promised absolution to those who should fall.

The fight began, and was for some time maintained on both sides with the steady valour of those two brave nations. But the Scots, though numerous, were exhausted by their fatigues and sufferings; they were soon compelled to give way before the unbroken strength and spirit of the English. Bruce was slain, but the accounts of his death are not quite consistent. Most of our historians represent him as having been slain in the onset by Maupas, a brave English knight, who rushed forward to meet him in the ranks; but another account, more circumstantially related, places his death immediately before the battle, while the two armies were yet encamped half a mile asunder. According to this latter account, Maupas was a burgher of Dundalk:



having disguised himself in a fool's dress, he entered the Scottish camp, and seeking out Bruce, he dashed his brains out with a leaden plummet.\* He was instantly cut to pieces. When Birmingham received intelligence of the event, he at once took advantage of the confusion it must have caused, and commanded an attack. Both accounts agree that Bruce was slain by Maupas, whose body was found stretched over him. This incident cannot be reconciled with the last mentioned accounts, as it seems to imply a state of confused resistance and hurried flight; for it is nearly impossible that the respect of the Scots would have suffered the body of his slayer to lie across that of their general, if there was a moment for the deliberate notice of such a circumstance. Maupas's heir was rewarded with forty marks per annum. Bruce's head was sent to king Edward by Birmingham, who was created earl of Louth, by a patent dated 12th May, 1319,† with a grant of the manor of Atherdee in that county.

The same year he gained another victory, in Connaught, over O'Connor and MacKelly, in which 500 Irish were slain. In June, 1321, he was lord justice in Ireland, with a fee or salary of 500 marks. In 1322, he conducted a large force into England, to join the king in his intended war with the Scots.‡

In 1325, he founded the Franciscan friary of Thermoy. He was at length murdered by the Irish in Louth, on Whitsun-Eve, at Ballibeagan in 1329,§ with many of his kindred and name, to the amount of 200 persons. He was the most able leader among the Irish barons of his day. He was married to a daughter of the earl of Ulster, by whom he left three daughters:||

## Maurice, First Earl of Desmond.

CREATED A. D. 1329.—DIED A. D. 1356.

‡ IN 1329, this nobleman was created earl of Desmond, at the same time that his son-in-law, Edmund Butler, was raised to the earldom of Carrick, by Edward II.; by the same patent, the county of Kerry was confirmed to him and his heirs male, to hold by the service of one knight's fee. He took an active and efficient part in the war against Bruce.

It is mentioned that some time in the year 1327, Maurice (not yet earl of Desmond) took offence at Arnold Poer for calling him a rhymer, and declared war against him. Maurice was joined by the Butlers and Birmingham; and many of the Poers and Burkes, who sided with them, were slain or driven out of Connaught, and their lands despoiled. The Fitz-Geralds and Butlers increased their force, and committed such ravages that the country was thrown into the utmost alarm. Complaints were made to government; these were met by professions on the opposite side, of the most just and moderate intentions. They met at Kilkenny, and sought a charter of pardon;

\* Lodge. † Ib. ‡ Ware's Annals. § Lodge. || Ib.



of this the lord justice took time to consider, but died before he made up his mind.

It was after this that the promotion of Maurice to the earldom took place. He was become the most powerful subject in Ireland; his services were many, but not distinguished enough for special notice here. The unhappy state of the country was such as to render the wars of chiefs, and the devastation of septs and districts, a thing too frequent for description; we can only select such instances as illustrate the period.

He was summoned by Sir John Darcie, the lord justice in 1330, to take the field against the Irish insurgents, with a promise of the king's pay. He gained a victory over the O'Nolans and O'Murroughs, ravaged their country, and compelled them to give hostages. It was on this occasion that he first introduced that grievous abuse known by the name of coigne and livery, afterwards so productive of oppression and complaint. An arbitrary exaction for the maintenance of soldiers would, at any time, or however limited by strict discretion and rule, be felt as a grievance; but in those days of licentious and unprincipled spoliation, the evil must have been increased by that reckless and grasping spirit of extortion and violence, to which life and the rights of property were trifles. This oppressive resource was quickly adopted by all the barons, and contributed more to repress the prosperity of the English settlers, on whom its burthen fell, than all the dangers and disasters they experienced from the hostility of the Irish. It originated in the penurious policy of the English court; the drain of an incessant war was sustained by no adequate supply from England, and the remedy was but too obvious, and too much a matter of necessity. The soldiers were now supported by quartering them upon the inhabitants of the district they were sent to protect: under the pretence of this necessity, the passions, cupidity, and reckless licence of a rude soldiery, abandoned to its own discretion, soon made the remedy more formidable than the evil: the English settler was quickly made to feel the insecurity of a condition so far worse than defenceless, as the false protector, armed with the licence of power, was more surely fatal than the known enemy. In their despair, numbers fled over to the Irish, whose ranks they strengthened, and with whom they soon became assimilated in language and manners. From this fatal date, the decline of the English interest was progressive for two centuries. The English were no longer a compact body, united by common interest and the sense of mutual dependence and protection; the little security to be found was in the protection of the enemy.

From the energy at first derived from this dangerous resource, Desmond acquired a vigour and efficiency in the field, not to be sustained by more regular and just means, and gained several victories on a larger scale than was commonly known in these petty wars.

A still more unwise measure of the English court, which had a very material influence on the fortunes of Desmond, demands our particular attention, as the commencement of those hapless discontents, which, perhaps, above all other causes, contributed to the decay of the English settlement.

Edward III., engrossed with projects of aggrandizement, and look-

ing to the utmost resources of men and money that his dominions could supply for the prosecution of his military enterprises, while he had little time or thought for the troubled state of Irish politics, was irritated both at the disorders and the unproductive state of that country; and not considering how mainly these were the consequences of his own neglect, came to an angry and precipitate resolution to proceed by violent and extreme steps to the termination of its disorders, instead of the just and obvious policy of supporting, and at the same time controlling his Irish barons. In place also of protecting, and bringing into subjection, the native chiefs—and thus, by a well tempered union of conciliation with irresistible force, gradually bringing the whole together into one with the rest of his dominions—he abruptly adopted a system, at the same time harsh and oppressive, while it was inefficient and not to be put into practice without such efforts as would be sufficient to carry sounder measures into effect.

This precipitate policy was hastened by events which must be admitted to have placed in a strong point of view the degeneracy of the settlers; and on a superficial consideration, appeared to call for the remedial means chiefly adopted. On the murder of the earl of Ulster, which occurred in 1338, a confused and angry movement took place among the Irish baronage; some espousing the cause of order and justice, while the turbulent and degenerate habits of others were thus brought to light. Many of the great settlers were become virtually Irish chiefs, and in a state of tacit hostility to the laws and interests of the English settlement. But the greater barons acted with due regard to justice: Desmond seized and imprisoned Fitz-Maurice, the lord of Kerry, who sided with the Irish of Munster and Kildare, and exerted himself with equal vigour and effect for the preservation of the king's authority in Leinster.

Edward angrily imputed these disorders to his Irish government and barons, and adopted a course of which the injustice and folly cannot be too strongly branded by the historian. He declared all suspensions of debts due to the crown\* to be null, and ordered them to be strictly levied without delay. Many of the greater officers he dismissed; of some he seized the estates; but these and other measures of severity, some of which might be regarded as useful reforms, were trifles compared with the crowning absurdity and injustice of one ordinance, which we here insert verbatim.

“The king to his trusty and beloved John Darey, justiciary of Ireland, greeting:

“Whereas it appeareth to us and our council, for many reasons, that our service shall the better and more profitably be conducted in the said land by English officers having revenues and possessions in England, than by Irish Englishmen married and estated in Ireland, and without any possessions in our realm of England; we enjoin you, that you diligently inform yourself of all our officers greater or lesser within our land of Ireland aforesaid; and that all such officers beneficed, married and estated in the said land, and having nothing in England, be removed from their offices; that you place and substitute

\* Unless those under the great seal.



in their room other fit Englishmen, having lands, tenements, and benefices in England; and that you cause the said offices for the future to be executed by such Englishmen, and none other, any order of ours to you made in contrariwise notwithstanding.”\*

Such was the first instance of a course of blind and irrespective policy of which Ireland has too often been the subject—a cruel, unjust, and short-sighted half-measure, which contemplated the pacification of a half barbarian country by trampling upon the interests and feelings, by damping the loyalty and paralyzing the powers of that class in which the better part of the wisdom, virtue, civilization, and civil order of a people must ever reside; and without whose assent and co-operation no government can have permanence, unless by the most iron despotism of force. To have carried this grievous injustice into effect, it would be necessary to suppress altogether the native and English aristocracy, and crush the nation down into the prostrate level of military law; for a government, proceeding on the systematic contempt of a proud and wealthy aristocracy, cannot, even in these more orderly times, subsist in peace. There was then no *populace* to be worked on by the varied artifices of modern policy, so as to create a spurious and frail support, which, though dangerous to society and fatal to the power that leans on it, can yet be made, in our times, available for the maintenance of power,—this perilous element did not then exist. To set aside the aristocracy of a nation was a gross oversight, and this soon was made to appear: it had immediate and permanent consequences.

The first consequence was the most violent aggravation of the evil, by rousing the injured barons to resistance. The next and saddest was a spirit of national animosity and jealousy between two permanent factions thus called into existence—the old settlers and the English by birth.

The powerful Irish barons were at once placed in opposition to the crown; it was no struggle for power or possession, but for the honour and the rights of their order, in which slackness would be a disgrace and crime. Desmond took the lead; the barons of the Geraldine race seconded him with zeal and energy. Sir John Morris, an English knight, without any pretension either from fortune or ability, was appointed governor; and the irritation to the pride of these great chiefs, thus insulted, was productive of immediate consequences. Desmond at once made the circuit of his adherents and connexions, conferred with the nobility, and roused the zeal and excited the fears of the towns; so that when the parliament was expected to assemble in Dublin, the lord justice heard with alarm of a convention of the prelates, nobles, and commons of the land, assembled at Kilkenny.

It is observed by Leland that the English annalists give a scanty and insufficient account of this assembly—of which Cox and Campion give three short sentences, purporting remonstrance against the inefficiency and corruption of the English governors; but Leland, whose success and diligence in searching out the original documentary evidence of Irish history, places him among the chief of our historians,

\* Quoted by Leland.



cites a document found among the close rolls of the 16th year of Edward III., which he considers as the undoubted act of this assembly. Of this petition we give Leland's abstract, which indeed leaves no doubt as to its occasion and source:—

“The petitioners begin with representing the total neglect of fortifications and castles, particularly those of the late earl of Ulster, in Ulster and Connaught, now in the king's custody, but abandoned by his officers, so that more than a third part of the lands conquered by his royal progenitors were regained by the Irish enemy; and by their insolence on the one hand, and the excesses of his servants on the other, his faithful subjects are reduced to the utmost distress. Other castles, they observe, had been lost by the corruption of treasurers, who withheld their just pay from the governors and warders; sometimes, obliged them in their necessities to accept some small part of their arrears, and to give acquittance for the whole; sometimes substituted in their place mean and insufficient persons, contented with any wages they were pleased to allow; sometime appointed governors to castles never erected, charging their full pay and disbursing but a trifling part; that the subject was oppressed by the exaction of victuals never paid for, and charged at their full value to the crown, as if duly purchased; that hostings were frequently summoned by the chief governor without concurrence of the nobles, and money accepted in lieu of personal service; treaties made with the Irish, which left them in possession of those lands which they had unjustly seized; the attempts of the subjects to regain them punished with fine and imprisonment; partial truces made with the enemy, which, while one country was secured, left them at liberty to infest the neighbouring districts; the absence and foreign residence of those who should defend their own lands and seignories, and contribute to the public aid and service; illegal seizures of the persons and properties of the English subjects;—all these, with various instances of corruption, oppression, and extortion, in the king's servants, were urged plainly and forcibly, as the just grounds of discontent.

“But chiefly, and with particular warmth and earnestness, they represent to the king that his English subjects of Ireland had been traduced and misrepresented to the throne, by those who had been sent from England to govern them—men who came into the kingdom without knowledge of its state, circumstances, or interests; whose sole object was to repair their shattered fortunes; too poor to support their state, much less to indulge their passions, until they had filled their coffers by extortion, to the great detriment and affliction of the people; that notwithstanding such misrepresentations, the English subjects of Ireland had ever adhered in loyalty and allegiance to the crown of England, had maintained the land for the king and his progenitors, served frequently both against the Irish and their foreign enemies, and mostly at their own charges.”

From the same author we learn that the answer of Edward was gracious; he consented that the grants should be restored, and the pardons of debts valid, until these causes should be duly investigated. He was preparing for his expedition into France—a circumstance which must have much influenced his answer; and he applied for their assistance, by leading their forces to join his army.

But the spirit he had raised was not to be so put down; his conciliatory reply was not adequately followed up by measures adapted to allay the pride and jealousy he had raised. It was a little thing to tell the proud Irish baron that he was not to be robbed under the sanction of royal authority, when the selection of governors was still such as too faithfully to reflect the most insulting features of the offensive ordinance.

The measures of Edward were, however, judiciously carried into effect; and the first consequences must be described as beneficial. Ufford, an Englishman of vigour and talent, was sent over, and enforced the laws of civil order with a high and equal hand. The system of policy was one which demanded more than ordinary vigour to enforce, and Ufford went to work with prompt and decisive energy. He ordered the marchers to their stations; forbade private wars, or coalitions with the enemies of the pale. He summoned Desmond to Dublin to attend parliament; but Desmond despised the call, and summoned a parliament of his own. Ufford forbade the attendance of the Irish nobles and commons; and, collecting his forces, marched at once into Munster, and seized on the territories of Desmond, whom he thus compelled to a reluctant submission: with equal alertness he attacked, seized, and imprisoned Kildare. Desmond was released on the bail of the earls of Ormonde and Ulster, and twenty-four knights; but the uncompromising severity of Ufford disheartened him, and he did not appear.

The brave Ufford died on the 9th April, 1346;\* Sir John Morris was again appointed, and acted with more lenity; but an insurrection broke out in Ulster, and the king sent over first Darcy, and then Walter de Birmingham. Desmond now took courage to re-appear upon the scene. He was received with friendly warmth by Birmingham, who sent him to England to plead his own grievances and justifications to the royal ear. The occasion was fortunate; Edward thought of this and all things as they might affect his own projects, as he was preparing to embark for France. Desmond was retained in his service, and attended him with a considerable train into France, receiving promises of the most prompt redress and restoration. He was present at the siege of Calais; and the favour of the king produced for some time a most beneficial effect on the discontented baronage of Ireland.

During this time, Desmond received one pound per day for his expenses, his own estates being under forfeiture. In 1352, they were restored, with those of other barons who had been dispossessed by Ufford; and Ireland continued so quiet for some years, that there is no special record of any interest, until the administration of Sir Thomas Rokeby, whose strict honour and integrity are celebrated by all historians; but he did not understand the feelings and complicated interests of the country he was sent to govern: and troubles which again broke out in Ulster, made it necessary to make a more effectual appointment. Desmond was now in favour, and appeared, from his power, connexion, and warlike temper, to be the best suited to meet the

\* Cox.



emergency of the occasion. To him the government was committed. But, unfortunately for the country, he did not live to fulfil the expectations raised by the firm and vigorous commencement of his administration. He died in the beginning of the year 1356, and left the reputation of being "so just a man, that he spared not his own relations when they were criminal."\* No small eulogium in such a time.

Desmond died in the castle of Dublin, and was interred in the church of the friars' preachery of Tralee.†

He was thrice married; by his third wife, daughter to the lord of Kerry, he left a successor, Gerald, the fourth earl of Desmond.‡

## Sir Robert Savage.

FLOURISHED A. D. 1353.

It is perhaps the peculiar character of this period of our biography, that while it has more than the ordinary proportion of names, rendered eminent by rapid rise, great actions, and weighty importance in their generation, there is comparatively little or no personal record of the illustrious persons who bore them;—*stat nominis umbra*, might be taken for their common motto. To have a history, even in the most vague and general acceptance of the term, it was necessary not only to be famous in their day, but to be so identified with the whole of the tissue of our national history, that the events of the age may be stated as the life of the individual. Hence it is that, while numerous names are rendered eminent by the circumstances of a long descent, and wide-branching families which can trace their fortunes to the valour and wisdom of ancestors who lived in this period, we are yet obliged to confine our notices to a small selection of names mostly within a few great families. The history of Ireland for many centuries, is, in fact, little more than a history of the Geraldines and Butlers, of the De Burgos, Birminghams, and other illustrious settlers. But of the great Irish chiefs so renowned in their day—the O'Nials, M'Carthys, O'Briens, O'Donnells, and O'Conors—it has been with some difficulty that we have been enabled to connect some scattered notices to diversify our pages. Lives constructed regularly according to the rigid notion of biography, strictly personal in their main details, have been quite impossible even in those cases in which the materials are the most favourable. These reflections may be received as a preface not inappropriate to the following scanty notice of Sir Robert Savage. The incident it contains is highly characteristic of the age in which it occurred, and will afford the reader one of those occasional gleams of the moral and civil state of that period, which should not be lost.

"About this time," writes Cox, "lived Sir Robert Savage, a very considerable gentleman in Ulster, who began to fortifie his dwelling with strong walls and bulwarks; but his son derided the father's providence and caution, affirming that a castle of bones was better than a castle of stones, and thereupon the old gentleman put a stop to his

\* Cox.

† Lodge.

‡ Ibid.



building." Some of the neighbouring Irish had made a plundering excursion into the territories of this stout old knight of Ulster; he promptly assembled his own people, and collected assistance from his neighbours, with the intent of chastising the affront, and perhaps repairing the losses he must have sustained. But with a cool deliberation worthy of the warrior who deemed that his valour needed no bulwarks, he thought it would be paying too serious a compliment to an enemy he despised, to go without his supper on their account, and gave orders to have a plentiful supper prepared for himself and his companions at their return from the fatigues of the day. One of the company, not without reason, surprised at this premature provision for a moment of which his fears suggested the extreme uncertainty, observed that it was not unlikely that his hospitable forethought might turn out to be for the advantage of the enemy. Sir Robert replied in the true spirit of Hibernian wit, bravery, and hospitality, that he had better hopes from their courage; but that he should feel ashamed if his enemies even were to find his house inhospitable and devoid of cheer. His valour was crowned on this occasion with a complete and decisive victory, sufficient even to fulfil his son's architectural project; as by the historian's account his party slew three thousand of the Irish near Antrim, and "returned joyfully to supper."

The story is probable enough, though the numbers of the slain are likely to be exaggerated; for unless some unusual accident operated in his favour, this particular either implies a larger force than a person of less than the highest authority could well have commanded; or the revolting supposition that Sir Robert and his friends exercised their valour upon a defenceless crowd, whom it should have been sufficient to repulse with the loss of a few prominent ringleaders. It is pretty evident, that such slaughters rarely took place in the many encounters we have had from time to time to notice; yet in these the chief leaders of the English were engaged with large bodies of the Irish, whose skill in retreat was hardly less than the skill and discipline of the English in the attack. It must be observed, that such a result should have found a more distinguished place in the history of the time.

Of more importance is the view which such incidents afford of the dreadful state of the country, where a slaughter, considerable enough to warrant such an exaggeration (if such it be), can be mentioned as a cursory incident, insufficient to call for any detail. The true horror of a state in which there seems to have been an unrestrained licence of private war on every scale, according to the means or objects of the individual, is not easily placed in the deep shade of enormity and terror which its real character demands. It was a fearful field for the exercise of all the worst and most terrific excesses of human vice and passion, and must have led to all the disorders incidental to a disorganized state of society. The power to encroach and usurp, to trample and to tyrannize, will seldom remain long unused, or be wanting in full and sufficient excuse for the perpetration of enormities without bound, but that which must limit all human exertions. Unfortunately for the more numerous and less civilized classes who are the eventual sufferers from such collisions, they have too easily, even in more civilized eras,

been led to provoke inflictions which have the plea of justice and the fury of resentment. The warrior who considered bones as a safer bulwark than stones, could not in this disordered state of things long remain without a trial of his maxim, likely to be fatal to himself or his assailants. We do not hazard these reflections for the purpose of a ridiculous censure on deeds so wholly unlike the events of modern times. It is easy, were it to any purpose, to find excuses—in man's nature, the manners of the time, and the existing circumstances—both for the aggressions of the Irish and the sanguinary retaliations of the English. It is their excuse that they were ungoverned by law, the sole preserver of civil order. The crime was that of an age in which invasion and robbery in every form and upon every scale, seems to have been sanctioned by opinion, and scarcely condemned by law. The Irish septs, if they could not justly complain, might fairly retaliate; the history of the time is composed of such sanguinary retaliations: in these, it would be hard to trace the wrong to its source; the process does not belong to justice. When on the other hand, the settlers were not protected in their rights, they can scarcely be blamed if they protected themselves by violence which could not fail to be stimulated by fear, anger, party animosity, and all the bitter and inflaming instincts, which soon add force to human strife from whatever cause. Power is a fatal trust to human breasts, whether lodged with the many, with the few, or with one; and hence the high perfection of that state in which the power resides in the law alone. Such a state in its perfection is of course ideal; but it is the consummation of the true principles of civil government, and only ideal because perfection does not belong to human things. Ireland appears to have presented a frightful exemplification of every social evil which can befall a nation; they told upon her with awful effect, and have left traces never yet effaced by the firm, equal, and resistless force of constitutional civil control.

Had the English been supported, fully established, and at the same time controlled, by the monarchs who even in the pale possessed little more than a nominal power, all would have proceeded with a demonstrably progressive course, hand in hand with the English monarchy, toward the same high perfection of civil order. Instead of the English settlers having sunk into the barbarism which ages of disorganization had caused in this island, the Irish chiefs would have rapidly risen to the level of the English civilization of the period, and the country would have become what unfortunately it is not yet—a province of Great Britain, having not only the same laws, but what is as essential to its civilization and prosperity, the same religion, manners, and national feelings. Leland, indeed, has ventured an affirmation which he has not succeeded in maintaining, and been followed as rashly by others, to whom it seems not to have occurred in writing Irish history, to look into the contemporary history of England, before they ventured comparative assertions. Leland dwells with a strong pencil on the disorders of the social frame of England, in the reign of Edward III., and having described the slavery of the mass, the power and tyranny of the barons, the oppressions and exactions of the monarch, he somewhat loosely ob-



serves, that "the whole picture both of the English and the native inhabitants of Ireland, is exactly delineated." Looking only at the broad features of this delineation, no very decided objection lies against the comparison; but its merit is certainly not exactness. The disorders already described in this and every preceding period of Irish history, find no exact parallel for frequency, duration, magnitude, or actual character, until we look back to the Saxon heptarchy, when petty robbers, under the name of kings and chiefs, contended with the sea pirates of the north, in inflicting all conceivable oppressions on a savage population. The crimes and contentions of the Irish chiefs of either race (we include the Norman with the Irish and Danish) which form the substance of our narrations, may, it is true, be paralleled for violence, for flagitiousness, and for their more immediate consequences, with those which darken the page of Anglo-Norman history. When the great oppress the feeble, when armed provinces or fellow-citizens meet in the field, or scatter waste and devastation through provinces, the sufferings and evils are nearly the same, whatever may be the spirit and occasion. But it is widely different when the after consequences are to be deduced. Then, the institutions and the mind of a nation is to be looked into with minute and critical scrutiny, and the political frame of the country must be examined, not merely with regard to its grosser effects, but with respect to its direction and tendencies. The political springs of the English disorders were different, the social frame on and from which they operated wholly so, the spirit of the people different, that of the barons different, that of the monarchy a distinct and peculiar principle. The state of manners, knowledge, and the arts of life too, was widely dissimilar, and exercising an hourly influence on the whole system, not to be appreciated distinctly without much close study. We must, to avoid lengthened dissertation here, take a shorter course. The following main differences lie on the surface.

In Ireland, all the contests were those of *individuals* contending for their *several purposes*—to acquire territory—to revenge insult or wrong—to rob, murder, or protect and defend. The chief and the baron were to all intents so many bandit leaders, each looking to preserve his own domain of spoliation inviolate. There was no general constitution contemplated, no abstract element recognised, no *principle* contended for. The chiefs did not unite to repel the Norman barons, the Norman barons did not (with some exceptions in extreme cases) combine to maintain or to control the usurpations of a higher power. We find no proud vindication of the laws of the realm, expressing the sense of an assembled estate, no field of Runnymede, or spirited and virtuous remonstrance, *nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*, to show that, although the English barons tyrannized in their several spheres (as *men* will ever when they can), yet there was a *corporate* sense, a public feeling, and a common cause; that, in a word, *principles* were at work. At that age, the *people*, in the present sense of the word, had scarcely existence in either country. But already in England, this third element of society was infused into the spirit of the mass, and corporate interests began to form, and become the centres of a growing constitutional force. If there was oppression, it was



the result, not of *mere licentious disorganization*, but of a *system*, the best that could have existed at the time; and there is a wide difference between a vicious order of things, and the total absence of any order. The people were slaves, and were fit to be slaves; but there were processes at work which were to raise their condition both morally and politically by co-ordinate steps. A systematic contest between the monarch and his barons for power, had the necessary effect of raising a third, and after them a fourth class into importance. The growth of wealth, the development of finance, as well as the struggles between the throne and aristocracy, were permanent principles essentially pervading the entire working of the British nation from the beginning of the monarchy perhaps, certainly of the Norman race of monarchs. These worked uniformly and progressively, and produced permanent and diffusive effects. They were aided by every occasional cause. The wars of the contested succession between the families of York and Lancaster, and the contentions between the kings and the Roman see, can easily be shown to have operated in accelerating the main tendencies of the nation, toward the political balance so peculiarly the character of its laws and institutions.

The disorders of society must in every state be marked with similar characters, the same low instincts, passions, appetites, and agents are being brought into leading action in all. When it comes to blows, the moral and intellectual capacities of man are quickly thrown aside; when crowds are put in motion, the most perfect military discipline is insufficient to suppress the temper that leads to the utmost atrocity. It is needless to refine on this fact of human nature. But it does not require any subtilty of refinement to perceive the wide difference between the worst results of military oppression, and the movements of perfect anarchy, of violence ungoverned by any principle, and having no object but those very oppressions which were the accidents of British civil wars.

### Richard de Burgo, Earl of Ulster.

A. D. 1326.

RICHARD, the second earl of Ulster (called, from his complexion, the red earl\*), was educated in the court of Henry III. He was the most powerful subject in Ireland. In 1273, he pursued the Scots into Scotland, and in return for a most destructive incursion in which they effected great devastation in this island, he killed many men and spoiled many places. For this exploit he was made general of the Irish forces in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Gascoigne.† He made many wars in Ireland, raising and depressing at his pleasure the native chiefs of Connaught and Ulster. He gradually attained to such an eminence, that his name was mentioned in all commissions and parliamentary rolls before that of the lord lieutenant. He attended on the king in all his expeditions into Scotland.

\* Lodge.

† Ib.

His foundations of monasteries and castles are numerous and widely scattered. He founded a Carmelite monastery at Loughreagh, and also built the castles of Ballymote and Corran, in Sligo, with a castle in the town of Sligo; castle Connel on the Shannon near Limerick; and Green castle in Down, near Carlingford bay. He closed a long and active public life, by giving a magnificent entertainment to the nobility assembled at a parliament held in Kilkenny; after which he retired to the monastery of Athasil, the foundation and burial place of his family. There he died in the same year, 1326.

## Arnold de la Poer.

CIRC. A. D. 1327.

AMONGST the most distinguished warriors who came with earl Strongbow to this island, none was more eminently distinguished for personal valour and the lustre of his exploits in the field, than Sir Roger le Poer, great-grandfather to lord Arnold. He had the government of the country about Leighlin, where he was assassinated. He left a son by a niece of Sir Armoric de St Lawrence, who was the grandfather of the subject of our present memoir. All the intermediate ancestors, from the first, were brilliantly distinguished in their several generations by those actions which, however illustrious, are unhappily the too uniform burthen of the page of our history. Lord Arnold's life presents an honourable variety of less conspicuous but more intrinsically noble distinction; he is here selected for commemoration on account of the creditable part he bore in resisting the power of a superstitious and persecuting church, and the honour of having been a martyr to the cause of mercy and justice. We shall therefore briefly notice the previous events of his life, in which he had his full share in those transactions of which we have already had, and still have to detail so much, and hasten to the last melancholy tribute which is justly due to his memory.

The first remarkable event of his life was a single combat, in which he was, in his own defence, compelled to slay Sir John Bonneville, who was the assailant, as was proved at his trial before a parliament held in Kildare, in 1310, the year after the circumstance.

In 1325, he was made seneschal of the county and city of Kilkenny, an office of high trust and dignity in those days, though since degraded both in rank and functions, and in our own times existing as the foulest blemish on the distribution of justice in this country.

In 1327, he excited a tumultuary war in Ireland, by calling Gerald, earl of Desmond, a rhymer. Of this we have already taken notice in the memoir of that eminent person.

Among the gloomy characters which have appropriated to these periods in which we are now engaged, the name of "dark ages"—the most awful both on account of its causes and consequences, was the cruel and arbitrary system of church despotism maintained by persecution. At a period when the original institutions of Christianity lay buried under a spurious superstition, developed out of all those very cor-

ruptions of human nature, for which the gospel was designed to contain the remedy—the church, for the maintenance of its usurpations, had begun to protect its own groundless dogmas and spurious sanctity with an hundred-fold strictness. The primitive church was content to expel from its communion the idolater and the obstinate impugner of its fundamental doctrine: but the church of the darker ages, setting at nought this fundamental doctrine, yet assuming a character of more rigid and authoritative control of the conscience, guarded its own heresies with the rack and faggot of the inquisition. Opinion, reason, research, were hunted down with the cry of heresy and the bloodhounds of the hell-born inquisition; and a fearful tyranny, reared in moral and intellectual darkness and pillared by cruelty, was rapidly extending itself over all the kingdoms of Europe. Candour must admit that of the popes, the majority would have restrained this horrid system within the limits which their own policy required; but the vindictive principle in human nature, when it becomes combined with either superstition or any other passion of a permanent nature, and capable of affecting the multitude, readily kindles into fanaticism. And an instrument of power will seldom fail to be abused for the purposes of individual resentment or ambition.

In Ireland, where the authority of the Roman see had received slow admission, and was not for a long time after this established, the prudence of the Roman cabinet would have refrained; but the rancour of the *odium theologicum*—a term which has survived its correct meaning—burned the more fiercely in the breasts of individuals. A bishop of Ossory, fired no doubt by the report of the portentous novelty of the continental institution of the *auto da fe*, seems to have conceived the liberal and patriotic project of introducing it into Ireland.

In the midst of its distractions, and amid the wild and sanguinary confusion of a state closely bordering on utter anarchy, the island was suddenly horror-struck with the cry of heresy. Alice Ketler, a lady of rank, was the first victim of a charge, which, notwithstanding some circumstances that seem to refer it to the bigotry of an individual, it is yet not easy to avoid regarding as part of a systematic contrivance. The peculiar accusation was at least well adapted to the purpose of conciliating the sense of the multitude, ever easily brought round to any height of error or crime. A persecution for mere opinion is only popular when fanaticism has been fully kindled; but one for witchcraft, the horror of vulgar superstition, would be likely to win the support of opinion and public sentiment, and pave the way for the whole flagrant legion of St Dominic. Accordingly, this unhappy lady was accused in the spiritual court of Ossory, of the formidable crime of witchcraft; she was alleged to have stamped the sacramental wafer with the devil's name, and to have possessed an ointment to convert her staff into the flying broomstick of a witch. On this charge, one of her people was executed and her son imprisoned. The charge failed, but the accuser was resolved not to miss his object. The charge of heresy, which doubtless had been kept back to be an insidious aggravation, was brought forward, and Mrs Ketler was, on this charge, tried and condemned to the stake.

It was then that the lord Arnold de la Poer, being, as we have



mentioned, the scneschal of Kilkenny, humanely interfered. The resource of bishop Ledred was prompt and terrible;—lord Arnold was himself assailed with the fatal charge. He appealed to the prior of Kilmainham, who was chief justice; the same accusation was extended to the prior. Lord Arnold, thus deprived of every resource, was left in prison in the castle of Dublin, where his death took place before he could be brought to trial.\* The prior of Kilmainham, Roger Outlaw, proved the falsehood of the accusation; but it is said that lord Arnold, having died “unassailed,” was left for a long time unburied.

As we shall not return to this disagreeable incident, we may here complete the account by adding that the archbishop of Dublin wisely and humanely determined to arrest in its commencement, the introduction of this new and fearful shape of calamity into Ireland. He assailed the fanatic of Ossory with his own weapon, and charged him with heresy. Ledred was obliged to fly, and made an impotent appeal to the Roman see.

## Mortough O'Brian.

A. D. 1333.

MORTOUGH O'BRIAN, in common with every person of the name who finds a place in our pages, was descended from the hero of Clontarf, and was inaugurated king of Thomond in 1311. After undergoing many perilous vicissitudes in the party wars of his own family, he was obliged to fly, in 1314, from Thomond. He found a refuge in Connaught with the Burkes and Kellys, by whom he was humanely received and hospitably entertained. After undergoing some further troubles and reverses, he at last succeeded, in 1315, in fixing himself in the secure possession of his provincial territories. In 1316, he was chosen by the English of Munster to lead them against Bruce, and at their head he obtained some partial victories, which won him honour, and contributed both to protect Munster and weaken the Scotch. He enjoyed his sovereignty in peace till 1333, the year of his death.

## Edmund de Burgo.

A. D. 1336.

EDMUND DE BURGO, the fourth son to Richard the second earl of Ulster, was made *custos rotulorum pacis*, in the province of Connaught. He is however only mentioned here on account of the horrible manner of his assassination by a relative of his own, Edward Bourk Mac-William, who contrived to fasten a stone to his neck, and drown him in the pool of Lough Measgh—a deed which occasioned frightful confusion, and nearly led to the destruction of the English in Connaught.

\* Lodge.

From this unfortunate nobleman descended two noble families whose titles are now extinct, the lords of Castle Connel and Brittas.\*

## William de Burgo, Earl of Ulster.

A. D. 1333.

THIS nobleman was married to Maud, third daughter of Henry Plantagenet, earl of Lancaster, and by her had a daughter who was married to Lionel, duke of Clarence, third son of king Edward III., who was in her right created earl of Ulster and lord of Connaught. By her he became possessed of the honour of Clare in Thomond, from which came the title of duke Clarence, which has since been retained in the royal families of England. Lodge, from whom chiefly we have taken these particulars, mentions in addition, that the title Clarencieux, of the king of arms for the south of England, is similarly derived; for when the dukedom of Clarence escheated to Edward IV., on the murder of his brother George duke of Clarence, he made the duke's herald a king at arms, under the title of Clarencieux. The early death of this unfortunate nobleman, might seem to exempt the biographer from the task of noticing a life, which could be little connected with the political history of the period; but the circumstances of his death, in themselves marked by the worst shades of daring licence and treachery, appear to give a frightful testimony to the consequences of misgovernment.

Leland mentions, on the authority of Rymer, that "the only measure now taken for the regulation of Ireland, was that precarious and inglorious one of treating with the adversaries of government." Leland might with truth have used stronger language. This resource was to Ireland, as it has ever been wherever it has been resorted to, the fatal cause and beginning of disaster and decay: a compromise which must in every case expose either the feebleness and fear, the incapacity or the corruption of the administration, could have no consequence but the promotion of those disorders which it was intended to correct. They who seek even the most justifiable object by the commission of crime—and this is the most favourable case—will not be tied to order by any consideration of pledges. But the then government of Ireland had to deal with a degenerate race, far gone in the decline of an imperfect civilization, and self-justified in the most perfidious deeds of outrage, by a combination of grievances partly real and partly fictitious. The history of every transaction which had occurred during the five generations which had elapsed since Henry II. had tended to prove, that there was among the Irish of those generations, an assumption that no pledge was binding, no deception dishonourable in their dealings with the Norman race. It was obvious that no bargain could bribe the assassin and the robber from their spoil, if the booty offered a reward beyond the bribe. The marauder would naturally look to secure both, or calculate at least the gain between them. Actuated by no principle

\* Lodge.

but the desire of acquisition or the thirst for revenge, the powerful native chief readily assumed the specious tone of good faith and honour, and frankly pledged his forbearance or protection, until he received the reward; it then became the consideration, and the only one he cared to entertain, what course his interest might prescribe. The reward was to be viewed but as an instalment of concessions to be extorted by future crimes; the pledge, the treaty, the oath, were given to the winds that have ever blown away such oaths. Of this fatal policy we shall have again to speak; its present consequence was general disorder and licence.

The earl of Ulster was murdered by his own servants, in June, 1333, in the twenty-first year of his age, at a place called the Fords, on his way into Carrickfergus. This atrocity is supposed to have been caused by the vindictive animosity of a female of his own family, Gyle de Burgo, whose brother he had imprisoned. She was married to Walter de Mandiville, who gave the first wound, and attacked him at the head of a large body of people. His death caused a great commotion among the people of Ulster, who rose in large bodies in pursuit of his murderers, and killed three hundred of them in one day. His wife fled with her infant daughter to England, and very vigorous steps were taken to bring every one to justice who was accessory to the murder. In all public pardons, granted at the time by government, a clause was added, "excepting the death of William, late earl of Ulster."\*

Some of the results of the earl's death have a curious interest, and some a painful one: the decline of the De Burgo family was a consequence, and with it that of the English settlers on the Ulster estates. The feebleness of the administration operated to prevent the legal occupation of the territories of the murdered earl, by the king as guardian to his infant daughter; they became, therefore, the object of contention between the members of the family and the descendants of the house of O'Niall, their ancient possessor. The consequence was a bloody and destructive war, fatal to the English settlers; who were, notwithstanding much detached resistance, and many a gallant stand, cut up in detail by numbers and treachery, until few of them were left. In Connaught, two of the most powerful of the De Burgo family seized and divided the vast estates of their unfortunate kinsman; and in the means by which they maintained this wrong, have left another testimony of the licentious anarchy of the time, and of its main causes and character. An usurpation against the law of England was maintained by its renunciation. With it they renounced their names, language, dress, manners, and every principle of right acknowledged in their previous life; and instead, adopted the costume and character of Irishmen, and assumed the name of MacWilliam, Oughter, and Eighter. They were followed in this unfortunate and derogatory step by their dependents, and thus spread among the Connaught settlers, a deterioration of character and manners, from which they did not soon recover.

A policy of compromise has the fatal effect of rendering the whole administration one of false position and impolitic expedient. It must

\* Lodge.



revolve between helpless concession and rash violence. And such was the Irish government of Edward, which plunged the island in disorders from which it has been but recently beginning to emerge, amidst a doubtful and dangerous undulation. The unfortunate distinction which at once threw the insult and injury of doubt upon the loyalty of the English settlers, by an edict which forced them into the condition of enemies, followed and completed the steps of ruinous impolicy.

## James, Second Earl of Ormonde.

BORN A. D. 1331—DIED A. D. 1383.

THE second earl of Ormonde was born at Kilkenny, October, 1331, and by his mother was descended from Edward I., that lady having been the daughter of Humphrey Bohun, earl of Essex, by the princess Elizabeth, the king's seventh daughter. From this he was commonly called the "noble earl." A still nobler appellation was given by the respect of his countrymen; to whom he was known by the popular title of "James the chaste;"—won, it is said, by his known character for modesty and virtue.

His guardianship was committed, by king Edward III., to the earl of Desmond, for the sum of 2,300 marks, in 1344, at which time he was in his thirteenth year: this wardship, however, was forfeited by Desmond's rebellion in the following year, and afterwards committed to Sir\* John Darcy, when he came over as lord justice. Sir John married him to his daughter; and, as he was but fourteen when committed to him, the marriage was perhaps early enough to account for some part of the virtue for which he is commemorated. He received large additions to his estates from both Edward and Richard; and, in 1359, was appointed lord justice of Ireland, but in a short time was recalled, and the earl of Kildare appointed as his deputy. One of the many characteristic features of this immediate time, was the rapid change of governors; that which we here mention was the eighth within ten years previous.

In 1360, he returned and distinguished himself honourably against the Irish in Ulster, Munster, and Leinster. But the disorders of Ireland had now arisen to a height which appeared to demand strong measures; and Edward came to the determination of sending over his son, the duke of Clarence, whose large Irish possessions made it expedient that his interests should be personally attended to. To this prince, therefore, the government was to be committed, with a force sufficient to command respect and submission. Nothing that could conduce to the efficiency of this measure was omitted save one—the just and rational conception of the nature of the step, and of the conduct necessary to effect it. The measure was prudent in design, and the preparations were vigorous and adequate; 1500 English soldiers, the counsel and assistance of Ormonde, with the earl of Stafford, Sir John Carew, Sir William Windsore, and other eminent captains and coun-

\* This person is the same called Sir Rodger, by Cox, p. 122.

sellors, were attached to the prince's army, with pay proportioned to their respective commands; that of the prince was thirteen shillings and four pence per day, that of Ormonde four shillings, with allowance for knights and soldiers under his orders. There can be little reasonable doubt, that a measure of this nature was necessary to secure the English settlers and reduce this distracted island to order; and that if carried into effect with vigour and prudence, and with a due regard to its only rational object, it might have been the means of changing the whole fatal and disastrous course of Irish history into a peaceful progress towards national order and prosperity. But the councils of Lionel were perverted by ignorance of the true condition of the country, and an unfortunate disregard to policy, prudence, or any wise or just object. Party distinction, the constitutional canker which has blighted the growth of Ireland, was then already far advanced in its accursed development. Springing naturally from the animosities of rival races—left too long to work unchecked by any pressure of a governing authority—it was now to receive a fresh impulse from the hand that should repress it. It was not then as thoroughly understood as it has since become, through a hapless experience, that distinctions between classes, however little founded in nature or fact, may become the means of national convulsions more violent, extensive, and lasting, than want, oppression, and all the evils which tyranny can inflict. The Irish policy of Edward, if the name of policy can be given to the hasty expedients of inconsiderate anger, was characterized by this hapless oversight. Instead of seasonable conciliation, accompanied by the stern and unbending control which alone gives weight and effect to conciliation—men being in this, as children, easily satisfied with those to whom they must bend, and impossible to be appeased by any length of concession when they are allowed to tyrannize—Edward himself entered into the feelings of party, and adopted the most irritating and insulting distinctions in his ordinances and proclamations; and though repeatedly compelled to retract and explain away his laws, still returned to the same impolitic and ignorant distinctions. The first acts of Lionel throw a strong light on this policy, as they clearly manifest the mist of prejudice as to Ireland which surrounded the English court. The recent prejudice amongst the middle classes in England, which is expressed in the popular cant phrase, “the wild Hirish,” is far more founded in certain realities than the pernicious prejudice which dictated lord Lionel's first step: by a proclamation, he forbade all the old English settlers, or any of the king's subjects of Irish birth, from approaching his camp. Such a proclamation suggests, and must have suggested the question, *what he came for?* and was equally adapted to excite resentment and awaken distrust. It is probable that it would have leagued the Irish barons against him, but that they felt themselves secure in their knowledge of the result of the prince's imprudence; and it may be, that from their retirements they looked with a vindictive satisfaction on the consequences of an offence which must bring its own punishment.

Deaf to counsel, and listening only to the suggestions of those whose ignorance and prejudices confirmed his own, prince Lionel traversed the country to attack the chief of Thomond. He was alike ignorant



of the ground through which he was to march, and of the species of warfare he was to encounter; and his youthful confidence was blindly urged on by the presumption of those who had never before seen the country. The immediate consequences were such as might be presumed. The Irish hovered about his camp, and practised on his little army all the well known resources and stratagems of their desultory warfare;—making sudden attacks and eluding all resistance; cutting off stragglers or detached bodies; intercepting supplies, and occupying dangerous passes. His soldiers, unaccustomed to fight an invisible enemy and receive blows that could not be returned, hampered in their movements and contracted in their provisions, became discouraged and malecontent. Numbers deserted, and numbers were slain by surprises—of which one was nearly fatal.

Prince Lionel recovered from his mistakes and retrieved his errors—so far as battles won and honours gained could retrieve so lasting an injury. But the results of this could not be immediately understood; and the insult seemed to be wiped out with its consequences, when the prince, sensible of the mistake he had committed, did tardy justice to the offended feelings of the Irish barons. They were called by proclamation to his standard, and Lionel turned the scale in his favour. It is no part of our present design to enter into the account of wars, unattended with any permanent result or special interest. The natural effects of military success followed—a season of quiet and the honours and flatteries attendant on success in arms. Justice requires that it should be added, that the prince's conduct was personally unexceptionable; he preserved discipline, and restrained those abuses which make war so much more dreadful to the quiet inhabitants of a country which has the misfortune to be the seat of war, than to those who are defeated in the ranks.

He was recalled into England, but a subtle poison was left in the nation's heart. The terms "English by birth" and "English by race," were become party terms with all the fatal power of names. King Edward saw what could not be now concealed, and he adopted the laughable resource of forbidding the freedom of speech—"He commanded that no English subject, born in England or in Ireland, should make or cause dissension, raise debate or contumely, under the penalty of imprisonment for two years."\*

Prince Lionel was succeeded by the earl of Ormonde, who, in the mean time, had very much distinguished himself by his valour, prudence, and activity. In 1362, he gained a great victory over MacMurrough at Teigstaffen, in the county of Kilkenny, in which six hundred of the Irish force were slain.† He now, on being made lord deputy, received from king Edward permission to purchase land to the amount of £60 per annum, notwithstanding the statute that no officer should purchase within his own jurisdiction.‡

Ormonde was soon superseded by the return of the duke, who did not remain long; and on his departure, committed the imprudence, so often recurring in the history of the time, of intrusting the administration to a person without rank or property. In the next three years,

\* Leland, from Rymer, tom. vi. p. 442.

† Lodge.

‡ Cox.



therefore, disorders rose to their usual height, and the dissensions among the English became serious and alarming. These dissensions, the chief cause of the calamities of Ireland, called out for immediate interference, and in 1367, lord Lionel was again sent over. This prince, who was not deficient in virtue or prudence, had now acquired some adequate idea of the condition of the country he came to govern. He saw as far, perhaps, as the knowledge of the times permitted, into the true interests of the country; and, although his measures fell far short of the purpose, yet it must be allowed, that, so far as they went, they were rightly conceived. He saw the necessity of reforming the destructive abuses which had crept into the English pale, which was degenerating into the total barbarism of the surrounding septs; and for this purpose a parliament was convened, and the STATUTE OF KILKENNY passed. The statute was beneficial and necessary; but it was only remedial to certain abuses which no legal enactment could repress more than transiently, while their causes remained in a vicious state of things. An impolitic distinction was preserved even in the language of this statute. The Irish laws, customs, and connexions, which had been so pernicious in their effects upon the English, were prohibited. But in these measures they overlooked the necessary effects of the close contact of two races so essentially distinct in national character and customs—the temptations to their assimilation; and, above all, the small effect which enactments can have in a lawless state of society. No wise provision was therefore made to reverse the fatal process that was in operation—to civilize the Irish, instead of vainly aiming to arrest the degeneracy of the English, while all its causes remained. A law to arrest contagion from a permitted contact, could have no beneficial result; nor could any permanent good be effected by any measure, which left two contending races, having different laws and degrees of civilization, to exercise on each other the alternating influences of contention, or of more permanently injurious alliances. There could be no prudence in any course of policy which fell short of the reduction of the Irish to English law. Next to this, undoubtedly, we must admit the wisdom of a statute which restrained the connexion which degraded the English; it had a temporary good effect, and was long looked on as a beneficent and wise measure. A summary of its provisions will give the clearest view of the state of things it was designed to amend.

The preamble declares the degeneracy of the English, whom it describes as having become mere Irish in language, manners, customs, and dress, by their alliance with the Irish and adoption of their laws. It proceeds in several enactments to remedy these evils; condemning and making penal the use of Brehon law: intermarriage, fosterage, and gossipage with the Irish, were made treasonable offences. The use of Irish language and dress, or the adoption of Irish names, or of Irish manners or customs, were subjected to the penalty of forfeiture or imprisonment. Disputes were ordered to be tried by the English law alone, and any admission of Irish jurisdiction was declared treasonable. To permit the Irish to graze on their lands, or to nominate them to ecclesiastical preferment, was subjected to severe penalties. It was also forbidden, under heavy penalties, to entertain the bards,

travelling minstrels, or story-tellers. Other enactments of more obvious policy, guarded against the oppressions which were practised under the sanction of the military levies, and wardens were appointed to control and regulate the exactions on the score of military preparation. It seems to have been inferred by some writers, that this statute was designed to apply to the whole of the country; but, not to consider the objection which is drawn by Leland from a consideration of the actual jurisdiction of the king of England—an argument of small weight—the intent, terms, and whole sense of the statute, contradict such a notion, which confounds the *distinction* which it is the essential purpose of the statute to maintain. A law to prevent certain affinities with the Irish, could not, by any rational interpretation, comprehend them.

The truth of most immediate importance to the estimation of such measures is this, that the presence of an authoritative governor, whose personal weight and influence were sufficient to conciliate respect, was sure to be attended by order, and the cessation of the more aggravated crimes and disturbances which the return of a feeble and inefficient administration was always sure to restore. Thus was prosperity occasional, and degeneracy progressive; each successive governor found a more desperate and difficult state of things to encounter; and other fatal resources began to be systematically adopted. These we shall have to notice but too often and too long.

In the year 1372, Ormonde was made constable of the castle of Dublin, with a fee of eighteen pounds five shillings per annum. He sat in the parliament summoned by Richard II. In 1381, he had a commission to treat with the rebels, and grant safe-conducts in order to reform them and promote peace. He died at Knoctopher, in the county of Kilkenny, in 1383, and was buried in the cathedral of St Canice, in the city of Kilkenny.

### **Maurice, Fourth Earl of Kildare.**

DIED A. D. 1390.

NOT to re-enter upon the petty distractions in which this eminent warrior took a leading part—the wars with O'Dempseys and O'Mores, and other lesser Irish chiefs, whose insurrections he suppressed—it may be considered as a title to a niche among the illustrious of his age, that he attended king Edward III., at the siege of Calais, and was knighted for his valour in the high station of command to which he was appointed by the sagacity of that warlike monarch. In 1350, he was appointed to the government of Ireland, with the annual fee of £500. After this he was successively appointed again, in 1371 and 1375.

In the reign of Richard II., he was summoned to meet him in parliament, at Castle-Dermott, Dublin and Naas. We shall here avail ourselves of this memoir, to give a brief sketch of the Irish history of this ill-fated and weak monarch, whose character appears to less disadvantage in this country than in England.

At the accession of Richard, two principal evils marked the decline,



and menaced the existence of the English colony in Ireland. The greater proprietors had begun to absent themselves from their Irish estates, and the native chiefs had not only to a great extent resumed the possession of the territories which they or their fathers had anciently held, but were even enabled to exact from the English no small revenue, as the price of forbearance and protection.

The settlers, in this state of things, were loud in petition and remonstrance; and various well-directed, but unfortunate or insufficient remedies were tried. It is unnecessary to dwell on the successive nominations of governors who did not govern, or whose short sojourn had no result that can be called historical. The administration of Sir Philip Dagworth might be expanded into a frightful picture of oppression and extortion, under the sanction of authority. But unhappily we want no such examples. The earl of Oxford was appointed with kingly powers, and for a time governed by his deputies.

Sir John Stanley was next deputy, and was followed by the earl of Ormonde. Both conducted the confused and sinking interests of the country with prudence and spirit; and the consequences were such as to exemplify the important necessity of the presence of such men. The powerful O'Neill soon surrendered, and entered into engagements of submission and loyalty.

These advantages were not equivalent to their cost. Applications for money on the pretence of Irish affairs, became a grievance, and the subject of frequent remonstrance. On the other hand, the petitions of the Irish became louder and more urgent. The duke of Gloucester volunteered his services; they were accepted. Preparations were made; and, from the weight of the duke's character, for spirit and ability, the best consequences were not unreasonably anticipated. But suddenly, when all was ready, the king announced his intention to undertake the expedition in person. This resolution has been attributed by some writers to fear of the talent and ambition of his uncle, by others, with more apparent justice, to mortified vanity. His application to be elected emperor of Germany, drew from the electors a charge of incapacity; they refused to weigh the claims of a prince who could not recover the dominions of his ancestors in France. Richard was resolved to repel the imputation by heroic enterprise, but discreetly selected Ireland as a field more appropriate to his abilities. Ample preparations were made; and, in October, 1394, he landed at Waterford, with four thousand men at arms and thirty thousand archers, an army sufficient, in competent hands and with rightly aimed intentions, to place the fortunes of Ireland on the level of a secure and prosperous progress to civil tranquillity, order, and liberty. He was attended by the duke of Gloucester, the earls of Rutland, Nottingham, and other persons of distinction and rank.

Resistance was, of course, not for a moment contemplated. The Irish chiefs contended in the alacrity and humility of their submission; but there was no presiding wisdom in the councils of Richard—all the ability was on one side. The chiefs made ostentatious concessions of all that was required, but which really amounted to nothing. Truth and the faith of treaties were wanting. They proposed to do homage, to pay tribute, and to keep the peace; and these specious offers



satisfied the feeble understanding of Richard. This weak and vain monarch—softened by their flatteries and seeming submission, and impatient to secure a nominal advantage—shut out from his mind the whole experience of the past, which left no shadow of doubt on the absurdity of any hope that such pledges would be regarded a moment after they could be broken with impunity. The supposition that they were sincere was an unpardonable imbecility. The stern and clear-sighted father of this infatuated prince would, under the same circumstances, have at once seen and consulted the interests of both English and Irish, and acted with a just and merciful rigour. He would have flung aside with merited disregard, the artful offers of a pretended submission, and for ever placed it beyond the power of any chief or baron to enact the crimes of royalty on the scale and stage of plunderers. Instead of receiving pledges, he would have dismembered territories extensive beyond any object but military power. Whether or not, in effecting this essential object, this rigorous king would have consulted expediency without regard to justice, we cannot determine; but of this we are convinced, that the measure required might have been effected without any wrong. It would be easy to show, that a distinction between actual property available for domestic, social, and personal expenditure, and extensive territorial and fiscal jurisdiction, might have been made the basis of a settlement as equitable as the intent of the king might have admitted. The policy of Edward would, it is probable, have secured the prosperity and peace of the country, on a surer, though, according to our view, less equitable basis, by allotting the estates of those robber kings to English settlers. But whatever view a more deep consideration of the state of affairs might have suggested, one thing admits of no question. The territorial jurisdiction of the Irish chiefs was equally inconsistent with the improvement of the Irish, or the peace of their English neighbours. It was a state equally incompatible with progress or civil order; and although it may be made a question, what right a nation has to invade the country of another, under any circumstances but retaliation—yet it is a question, which, if not rendered absurd by the history of every civilized nation, is surely set at rest by established tenure. The English colony was settled not merely by usurpation, but on the faith of treaties and voluntary cessions, as well as cessions by conquest; the claim which it had to its possessions, was not inferior to any other. Considering this, there can be no doubt, according to the severest view of national equity, that a neighbouring territory, existing in a state of *continued aggression*, assuming the *rights of forcible* exaction, could have no claim to any justice but that which resistance and the privileges of armed interference give. Such privileges are rigidly commensurate with the necessity of the case.

The occasion was one which admitted of a just and lenient policy, and such alone seems to us to have been called for. The whole nation might have been reduced to one policy and government, and all its factious chiefs deprived of the very name of power. It is easy to see and point out the disadvantages to be apprehended from any course; but it was a time pregnant with change and the seeds of change, and the question which lay open, was the settlement most likely to put an

end to disorder and secure permanent good. An occasion was lost which could never come, unless with the most deplorable train of national calamities. In a state of order, it is unsafe and unjust to tamper with the rights of persons—the error of modern times: rebellion, which is a state of crime against established rights, is attended by the forfeiture of all right, and war is attended by the rights of conquest; on either supposition, it was the time to enforce these rights for the common good.

The Irish chiefs made such specious excuses, as are always ready for credulous ears, and offered submission in every form. They did homage on their knees—unarmed, uncovered, and ungirdled, and received the kiss of peace from the lord marshall. They resigned all lands which they held in Leinster, pledged themselves to military service, and were bound by indenture to adhere to the treaty thus made. But the weak king engaged to pay them pensions, and gave them leave to make conquests among “his enemies in other provinces,” thus annulling the little value of this nugatory agreement. Seventy-five little kings thus submitted, all of whom were the absolute despots of their own small dominions, and spent their lives in the business of petty wars and depredations.

Richard, fully satisfied with his exploits, completed the favourable impression which his power and magnificence had made, by holding his court in Dublin. There he indulged his vanity in a weak and profuse luxury. The Irish chiefs flocked to his court, where they were received with ostentatious kindness; and disguised their wonder and admiration, by a well-assumed deportment of grave and haughty dignity. Four of the principal chiefs were, with some difficulty, prevailed on to allow themselves to be knighted. They expressed surprise that it could be thought that they could receive additional honour from a ceremony which they had undergone in their youth, after the manner of their fathers. O’Niall, O’Conor, O’Brian, and M’Murehard, were induced to submit to receive the honour in due form from king Richard. On these, knighthood—then the most honourable distinction, though now sadly fallen from its rank—was solemnly conferred in St Patrick’s cathedral; after which they were feasted, in their ceremonial robes, by the king.

Richard was immediately after obliged to return to England. The Irish chiefs were urged to perform the only part of their promises which had any meaning. But the single motive which had weight with them was gone; they temporized a little, and then refused. Oppression and hostility recommenced their old round, and things relapsed into their wonted condition.

These disorders quickly rose to their height. De Burgo, Birmingham, and Ormonde, exerted themselves, and gained great advantages, which were more than counterbalanced by a defeat, in which many of the king’s forces, among whom were forty gentlemen of rank and property,\* were slain by the O’Tooles. The earl of Marche, who was left by Richard in the government, proceeding rashly, and in perfect ignorance of the country, was surprised and slain.

\* Cox.



Kildare took a prominent part, and distinguished his valour, activity, and fidelity through the whole of these proceedings. He was rewarded for his services, and the great expenses he had incurred were reimbursed by the grant of a rich wardship in Kildare and Meath, of the estates of Sir John de Loudon; and subsequently by the grants of several Irish manors in the county of Dublin, to be held for ever of the crown *in capite*.\* He died in 1390, and was buried in the church of the Holy Trinity, in Dublin.

### Gerald, Fourth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A. D. 1397.

THIS earl is not only memorable for the prominent place he held in the troubled events of Irish history, during his long life—a distinction more unusual graces the history of his life. He was among the learned men of his age, and obtained the popular title of the poet. Considering the state of poetry then, the honour is doubtful; but Gerald was evidently a person of some taste and talent. He is said to have been well versed in mathematics, and was thought by the people to be a conjuror. He was lord justice in 1367, and distinguished for diligence and success in preserving the peace of the districts where his property lay. His death was, in some degree, suitable to his popular reputation for magic: in 1397, he went away from his camp, and was seen no more. The conjecture, that he was privately murdered, admits of little doubt.

### Thomas, Sixth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A.D. 1420.

THE history of this most unfortunate nobleman might, without any departure from its facts, be easily dilated into a tragic romance. This is, however, not our design. A brief outline must be sufficient; and will add to the conception of the unhappy state of manners and morals, for which we have chiefly selected the statements of the more recent memoirs.

Thomas, the sixth earl of Desmond, succeeded his father John, who was drowned in leading his army across the ford of Ardfinnan, in the river Suir, in 1399. He was left a minor and very young, and became an object of dark plots and manœuvres to his uncle James, an ambitious, active-spirited, and intriguing character. The license of the times was such as to leave the weak at the mercy of the strong; and for those whose craft or prudence were insufficient to protect them, there was no safeguard in law, and little refuge in the affection or honour of those who might despoil them safely. But there seems to have been in this family a singular prevalence of ambition, tur-

\* Lodge, Archdall.



bulence, and tendency to lawlessness, that might at first sight lead the careless observer to infer the existence of some family idiosyncrasy of temper, that incessantly urged its members on some lawless or eccentric course. But the fact is—and though an obvious fact, it is worth reflection—that the remote and comparatively Irish connexion and property of this great branch of the Geraldines, must have had the main influence at least in the determination of this temper. The tendencies of the mind are the results very much of circumstances, acting in such a manner on a few elementary dispositions, as often to produce from the very same dispositions the opposite extremes of character. From hence the dark enigmas of human conduct and the injustice of human judgments.

Thomas, earl of Desmond, appears to have been a weak but not unamiable person, and devoid of the firmness and craft which his time and situation required. To make these effects the more unfortunate, his uncle chanced to be unusually endowed with the qualities in which his nephew was wanting. Lawless, audacious, crafty, and ambitious, it seems to be a matter of course that he should contemplate the facile and weak nature of his youthful kinsman as an object of speculation; and that, seeing the possibility of setting aside one so exposed to the approach of guile, so accessible to folly and indiscretion, he should have long made it a principal object of scheme and calculation. Such, indeed, are the strong moral inferences from the facts.

The occasions thus sought could not long be wanting, and it is probable that they were well prepared for. The unfortunate youth, in one of his hunting excursions, was driven by the weather to take shelter in the house of a tenant of his own, named M'Cormac. There he fell violently in love with Katharine M'Cormac, the beautiful daughter of his host. He made his passion known; but the virtue of Katharine was proof against such addresses, as it was customary for persons of her degree to receive from those of the earl's princely quality. At this remote period, it is impossible to say by what intermediate practices the circumstance may have been improved by his enemies—how far underhand agency may have worked on the girl or on the young lord. No supposition is necessary to account for the impulse of romantic passion, the self-reliance of beauty, or the firmness of female virtue; but we must confess a disposition to suspect a more artful and complicated chain, because such is also but too derivable from the position of all the parties of this romance of antiquity.

Whatever was the working of circumstances, the facts are certain. Thomas married the fair Katharine M'Cormac. The consequences quickly followed, and were so far beyond the probable effects of such an act, that they seem to justify the suspicions which attribute the whole transaction to an intrigue. The outcry of his dependents, followers, and relations, immediately arose, to a degree of animosity not quite to be accounted for from the fact or the prejudices of the time. A time so lawless, of morals so coarse, and manners so unrefined, was not likely to produce so violent and universal a sense of resentment on account of a misalliance, humiliating to the pride of family, even though such a feeling was the best developed sentiment

of that barbaric age. Such may indeed have been the fact; but it seems to demand too much allowance for any supposable public feeling.

\* James, the ambitious uncle, of course assumed the tone of one deeply offended and outraged by a match so derogatory to his family. It seemed but natural for him to vent his spleen, to express his contempt and indignation, to lament the family honour stained in its representative, and the followers and subjects dishonoured in their leader. There was a fertile topic of popular indignation in the elevation of a dependent to the invidious distinction of a superior, to be worshipped and honoured by those who were her superiors and equals. And every one is aware, for it is the main lesson of modern history, that no sentiment can be too trivial, or opinion too fallacious, to convulse the public mind if managed with sufficient address. The ferment swelled on and became inflamed to fury under the dexterous influence of the crafty and specious James. A formidable party was soon raised, and the unhappy youth was obliged to escape from his own territories. Probably the opinion of the large majority of orderly persons was in his favour: but orderly people are too passive to produce any public effect; the voice of the public is seldom heard above the uproar of the unprincipled and disorderly—the froth and scum that floats upon its surface. A few turbulent spirits were enough for the earl; and when the unfortunate youth had not prudence and firmness to stand his ground and fight his own battle, these daily increased; and the feeling became general because it was unopposed.

Thrice earl Thomas ventured back in the vain hope that the clamour had died away, and each time he was obliged to fly from a fiercer appearance of hostility. His uncle openly took the lead in enmity; and at last so effectually terrified him, that he was compelled to save himself by a formal surrender of his title and territories.

There could be indeed little regard to law, or any principle of justice, at a time when such a surrender was formally made in the presence of some of the noblest and most dignified persons then living. The earl of Ormonde was a witnessing party to the transaction. One consequence of this, however, was the just stipulation by which the son of the young earl was endowed with the manors of Moyallow, Broghill, and Kilcolnan.\*

The deposed earl went to conceal his shame and grief at Rouen, in Normandy. There he died in 1420. His son, Maurice, was ancestor to the Fitz-Geralds of Broghill; and John, his second son, to the Adairs of Ireland and Scotland.†

## James, Seventh Earl of Desmond.

DIED A. D. 1462.

THE circumstances related in the previous memoir form a consistent portion of the history of James, the succeeding earl of Desmond,

\* Lodge.

† Ibid.



and settle the propriety of following them up with the remainder of his life. This must now be briefly done. His first care was to obtain a parliamentary confirmation of a title thus unfairly acquired. This was not a matter of any difficulty. His popularity, it will be easily understood, was great in Ireland; for the elements of his character were of the most popular kind—craft, audacity, and restless turbulence. He was a dangerous enemy and a useful friend. He gained the favour of the English sovereigns by his activity and success in quelling such disturbances as were not raised by his own ambition. He was favoured by the earl of Ormonde, who stood high with the kings of the house of Lancaster. From him he obtained the seneschalship of his lordships of Imokilly, Inchicoin, and the town of Youghall. On the 12th of June, 1438, Robert Fitz-Geoffry de Cogan granted to him all his lands in Ireland, being half the county of Cork; of which, by virtue of a letter of attorney, he took possession in the year following.\* Of this transaction, a probable conjecture is, that the grant was forged. It was prejudicial to the legal claims of the De Coureys and Carews. Thus raised to wealth and territorial power beyond the rank of a subject, he lived in kingly though rude splendour, and exercised uncontrolled a regal power over these large territories. To screen himself the more effectually from all question, he kept aloof from the seat of administration, and employed his influence at court, through the friendship of the earl of Ormonde, so effectively as to obtain, in 1444, a patent for the government of the counties of Limerick, Waterford, Cork, and Kerry,† with a licence, on the ground of this duty, to absent himself during life from all parliaments, sending a sufficient proxy; and to purchase any lands he pleased, by what service soever they were holden of the king.‡

He married a daughter of Ulick de Burgo (MacWilliam Eighth), by whom he left two sons and two daughters, and died in 1462. He was buried in the friary at Youghall.

## Art M'Murchard.

DIED A. D. 1422.

OF the Irish chieftains at this period, any information to be obtained is unsatisfactory; and we are compelled to pass them in silence, from the very desultory nature of our information. We have already had occasion to name M'Murchard amongst those Irish chiefs who were knighted by king Richard.

It is unnecessary to detail the circumstances which so soon brought Richard back to Ireland, 1399; here alone he found even the shadow of honour or success. At this period, M'Murchard is represented as heading a strong force of his country against the English. His pride and sense of independence were deeply offended by the submissions he had been compelled to make; and neither the vows of allegiance and fealty, the pension of 80 merks, the honour of knighthood, nor even the

\* Lodge, 67.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.



considerations of prudence, were sufficient to control his impatience to fling off the imputation of a yoke, and wash out the stain of submission, by the unconscious guilt of perjury and shame of falsehood.

For any open course of resistance on the battle-field, he had not, however, sufficient means. He therefore had recourse to the well-known system of light-heeled, though not unsoldier-like tactics of flying and ambushed war that had so often perplexed and endangered the soldiers of Fitz-Stephen and Strongbow. With a force of three thousand men he took his post among the woods. The English, as they approached, were surprised with the apparition of a well appointed army drawn up along the forest edge, and seeming by their soldier-like order, and intrepid front, prepared to offer immediate battle. The appearance was illusory. As the English captains drew up their troops in order of battle, their enemies melted away into the darkness of the woods.

This incident elated Richard, who celebrated his triumph by the creation of several knights; among whom was Henry of Lancaster, whose father was at the moment preparing dethronement and disgrace for the feeble Richard, while he was vapouring about the fancied discomfiture of an enemy who despised him.

Richard ordered a large body of peasants to open a lane through the impervious woods; and, when this insane order was executed, he had the childish temerity to lead his army into a defile, aptly contrived for the destruction of its designer. The English troops were soon entangled in the miry passes of a labyrinth of thickets, lined with invisible enemies—of hollow morasses and impeded ways, where it was as hard to return as to proceed. At every point of disorder they were assailed with sudden irruptions of the enemy, who rushed out into the entangled and struggling crowd with astonishing force and noise, and cast their darts with deadly effect. Under such circumstances, any force of ordinary numbers must have fallen a sacrifice to the rashness of their leader. The army of Richard was too strong to be beaten under any disadvantage by a tumultuary crowd, whose strength was the concealment from which they made attacks which were rather directed to cut off stragglers, than to make any impression on the main host. There was, therefore, no hope of gaining any decided advantage; and the chiefs of M'Murchard's army were most of them impressed with a sense of the danger of provoking the hostility of the English to extremities. Many of them came of their own accord, to make their peace with Richard; they appeared with halters round their necks and threw themselves at his feet to implore for pardon and mercy. Richard's anger was quickly appeased through the easy approach of his vanity. M'Murchard was formally summoned to submit, but the summons was deprived of its authority and dignity by the accompaniment of large offers. M'Murchard was, in his own way, as vain as his antagonist; and he saw the increasing distresses of the English. Richard had, in his thoughtless impetuosity, neglected to observe, that the scene of such long-continued wars and disturbances could not supply the wants of his army. This oversight was not lost upon the sagacity of M'Murchard, who anticipated the sure consequences, and was thus encouraged in the course of resistance he had pursued. There seems indeed to

have been throughout, a struggle between pride and prudence in the mind of this chief; he saw his advantages, but seems to have hesitated in their use—whether to obtain a beneficial compromise, or to win the name of a heroic resistance. The temptation to this latter vain course was very great. There was a dearth amounting to famine in Richard's camp: his men were perishing from want—the horses were become unfit for service—a general discontent possessed the army—the very knights complained of hardships unattended with the chance of honour. It became a necessity to change their quarters. M'Murchard saw the advantageous occasion which was unlikely to recur, as Richard's distresses must end with his arrival in Dublin. The plunder of some vessels, laden with a scanty supply of provisions, by his own soldiers, decided the king; and the Irish chief who wavered to the last moment, now sent in to desire a safe-conduct, that he might treat for peace. The duke of Gloucester was sent to meet him and settle the terms. The meeting has been described, by a historian of the time, with graphic precision; the description, though assimilated to caricature by some touches of grotesque truth, affords a curious gleam of the social state of the Irish of that generation, and is equally interesting for the lively portrait it gives of the ancient barbaric chief: the ostentatious and flourishing extravagance of barbarian vanity cannot be mistaken, and the portrait is altogether full of uncouth nature and truth. The Irish king darted forth from a mountain, surrounded by the forests which concealed his forces; he was mounted on a strong and swift horse, and rode without stirrups. A vast mantle covered his person with its ample folds, but did not conceal the strong mould of his tall and well-proportioned frame, "formed for agility and strength." As he approached with the rapidity of a warrior about to charge, he waved proudly to his followers to halt; and, darting the spear which he grasped in his right hand, with the display of much force and skill, into the ground, he rushed forward to meet the English knight, who stood more entertained than awed by this formidable exhibition of native energy.

The treaty ended in nothing; the prudence of M'Murchard was uncertain and wavering, his pride and prurient haughtiness were in permanent inflammation. The hero outweighed the statesman, and he could not resist the opportunity for a display of kingly loftiness. He offered submission, for such was the purpose of his coming, but he refused to be shackled by stipulation or security. His insolence quickly terminated a conference in which no terms could be agreed upon, and each party returned to their own camps.

M'Murchard had now plainly involved himself in a condition of which, in the ordinary course, ruin must have soon followed. The king was infuriated; and an adequate force, intrusted to a leader of ordinary skill and knowledge of the country, would soon have deprived him of every rood of territory. But circumstances, stronger than the arms and pride of M'Murchard or the anger of Richard, now interfered.

Richard remained in Dublin, and was engaged in the arrangements for the vindication of his authority, and the indulgence of revenge. But his power was come to its end; and he was already devoted to the hapless fate which he was meditating for an inferior. The continued



prevalence of stormy weather had for some weeks prevented all intelligence from England; at length it came, and he learned that he was ruined.

The story of his return, and the sad particulars which followed, belong to English history, and are known to the reader.

Of the subsequent history of this chief we find but occasional tracks at remote intervals. In the following reign, during one of those occasional fits of vigour which a little retarded the decline of the English pale, his obstinate disaffection received a transient check. He exulted in the reputation of having alone, of all his fellow-countrymen, held out against the force and power of the English, and having foiled the power of the king at the head of thirty thousand men. This was the more galling to the English, as his territory lay within the pale. He was the only chief who refused to make submission to the duke of Lancaster; and as such submissions were in few instances more than nominal, he found no difficulty in seducing many of the others to join him. At the head of these he defied the government. Stephen Scrope, who was at the time deputy to the duke, called a parliament in Dublin, which was adjourned to Trim, to consider the best means for the defence of the country. The Irish barons Ormonde, Desmond, the prior of Kilmainham, and other nobles and gentlemen, joined such troops as they could collect, and marched against M'Murchard. The whole force of these leaders was but slight, and the Irish chief was enabled to present a formidable resistance. The first encounter was seemingly doubtful, and the little army of the English was compelled to give way before the impetuous onset of M'Murchard's host; but the steadiness of the English soon turned the foaming and roaring current of a tumultuous onset, and the Irish fled before them. O'Nolan and his son were taken, and many slain. But the English were prevented from following up their fortune. Accounts reached them on the field of other disturbances in the county of Kilkenny: they were obliged to make a forced march against O'Carrol, whom they slew, with eight hundred of his men; but M'Murchard was nothing the worse. A defeat was nothing to the Irish chief while he could save himself; his army was a mob that easily collected and scattered.

The power of the English was now far on the wane; their moments of vigour were desultory, and their effects were more than counteracted by the lengthened intervals of neglect and weakness. Henry IV. appears to have been both careless and ignorant about the interests of the Irish settlers; and the wisdom and valour of the best governors and deputies, were unable to obtain more than a respite from the ruin that was coming on with uniform progress.

Talbot, lord Furnival, came over; and to show, in a very forcible point of view, what might be done by skill and prudence with adequate means, without any force but what could be raised among the inhabitants of the pale, he managed by judiciously directed and alert movements to repress the insubordination of the Irish chiefs. And there cannot be a more unequivocal test of the efficacy of his conduct, than the submission of M'Murchard, who gave up his son as a hostage.

The remainder of M'Murchard's life was probably spent in quiet. In 1423 we find his successor, Gerald Kavenagh, succeeding to his



pension of eighty merks; and infer that his death must have occurred about the same time.

## Walter, Ninth Lord Louth.

DIED A. D. 1428.

THIS baron was a conspicuous actor in the period in which we are now engaged. His actions might supply us with many curious and interesting details, had we not resolved to pass through the history of this century with the least possible detail, and to confine ourselves to a few leading events, which we must refer to the lives of the several persons who bore the chief part in them.

This eminent nobleman was popularly called Walter *More*, which Lodge interprets, "the Great."\* We rather suspect, however, that the Irish idea of greatness was confined to stature; at least such is certainly the ordinary application of the term "More." He was ninth in succession from the illustrious warrior, Sir John Birmingham, who gained the battle of Athenry, and defeated Bruce. He was appointed sheriff for life of Connaught. He commanded, with Sir Thomas de Burgo, the force which gained a victory in 1397, over M'Conn, and slew nine hundred of his men. He died 1428, and was buried at Athenry.

## James, Fourth Earl of Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1451.

As we approach the decline of English power in Ireland, the variety of names diminishes; and the only persons whose character, station, or personal remembrance entitles them to notice, at least to any distinct notice, will be found chiefly to fall under one of the two great races of Geraldine and Butler. Of these even, little is personally known that would be worthy of a distinct memoir, were it not that it is only by these memoirs that we are enabled to connect the history of the century now past, with that of a later period.

The history of James, fourth earl of Ormonde, has indeed a close and prominent connexion with that of his age. He was a man of considerable learning and ability, and was distinguished by an unusual share of royal favour. He was ward to Thomas, duke of Lancaster; by which fact it is ascertained, that he was yet a minor when appointed to the government of Ireland as lord deputy. In this capacity he held a parliament in Dublin, in which the statutes of Dublin and Kilkenny were confirmed.

In 1412, he accompanied the duke of Clarence into France, and rose into great favour with king Henry V., who began his reign in the same year. He seems to have remained in the English court until 1419, when king Henry sent him over as lord lieutenant of Ireland. Imme-

\* Lodge, iii. 41.

diately on landing, he held a parliament at Waterford, which granted the king two subsidies and seventy marks to himself. The pale was at the time kept in a state of terror by the septs of the O'Keillys, M'Mahons, and M'Murroughs. Ormonde marched against these and scattered their forces; in consideration of which services he received the sum of five hundred marks more, from the same parliament.\*

The country had been for some time plunged into great distractions, not only from the increasing turbulence and encroachment of the surrounding septs; but there had been also serious discontents raised among the English of the pale, by a measure of the English court which may have been necessary, but was effected with inconsiderate violence. The poverty of the Irish, with the troubled state of the country, had the effect of driving numbers into England in search of a peaceable subsistence. This thronged resort brought with it many evils, particularly that of numerous troops of idle persons, who, failing to obtain bread by fair means, sought to live by begging and theft. It therefore became necessary to suppress the evil by some public measure. The parliament of England enacted a law by which this intercourse was forbidden, and all Irish adventurers were ordered to return home. The execution of this law was indiscriminate and insulting; students, and the children of the most respectable Irish families, although exempted by special provisions of the statute, were insolently driven from the inns of court. The same execrable policy was extended to Ireland; the administration became fenced round by illiberal prepossessions against every one of Irish birth, and the pernicious distinctions engrafted in the reign of Edward III., were ripened to the full maturity of their deleterious influence in that of his grandson. A petition was resolved upon, by a parliament held in Dublin, in the fourth year of king Henry V., who had just returned from the battle of Agincourt.† The Irish chancellor refused to authenticate this petition by the great seal; and by this cruel and impolitic refusal it need not be explained how the most dangerous and violent discontents were excited. It is probable that in this juncture the high influence of Ormonde was used with the king, and that the monarch was thus made sensible of the injustice of the harsh policy of the Irish government. It is also not unlikely that the service of fifteen hundred brave men of the pale, under the command of the warlike prior of Kilmainham, Thomas Butler, had weight with a military monarch. Ormonde was then sent over with full powers, to inquire into, and redress all complaints. His conduct was, under these circumstances, liberal and gracious, and was met with a thankful spirit by the Irish parliament. Their liberal grants we have already stated. Their petition was revived, sealed, and transmitted. We are not enabled to ascertain what notice it received; but we extract Leland's summary of its contents as the briefest abstract we can offer of the state of the country at this time:—

“ The petition, which is still extant, contains a pathetic representation of the distresses of his subjects in Ireland, harassed on one hand

\* Lodge, from MS. annals in Trin. Col., Dublin.

† Leland, ii. 12, from Rob. Turr. Berm.



by the perpetual incursions of the Irish enemy, and on the other by the injustice and extortion of the king's ministers. The king's personal appearance in Ireland is most earnestly entreated, to save his people from destruction. As the Irish, who had done homage to king Richard, had long since taken arms against the English; notwithstanding their recognisances payable in the apostolic chamber, they beseech his highness to lay their conduct before the pope, and to prevail on the holy father to publish a crusade against them. The insolent opposition of Merbury to their former petition, is represented as a heinous offence, for which they desire that he may be cited to answer before the king. Stanely and Furnival, by name, are accused of the most iniquitous practices, for which they pray redress and satisfaction; and while honourable mention is made of the conduct of Crawly, archbishop of Dublin, as well as of their present governor—who they request may receive the royal thanks for his generous declarations to parliament—all the governors and officers sent from England, are represented as corrupt, rapacious, and oppressive; secreting and misapplying the revenue intrusted to them; defrauding the subject, and levying coyn and livery without mercy. The unreasonable exclusion of their students from the inns of court, the insufficiency and extortion of the officers of the exchequer, the number of absentees, and other matters of grievance are fully stated. They pray that those who hold of the king *in capite*, may not be exposed to the hardship of repairing to England in order to do homage, but that the chief governor be commissioned to receive it; that their commerce may be defended, their coin regulated, their churches supplied with faithful pastors, without such delays as they had experienced from selfish and designing governors. But above all things they urgently entreat that trusty commissioners be appointed to inspect the conduct of the king's officers sent into Ireland; plainly declaring that such a scene of various iniquities would be thus discovered, as were utterly abhorrent to the equity of the throne, and utterly intolerable to the subject."

The administration of Ormonde, was productive of much, though not permanent benefit to Ireland. His vigour and activity repressed the growing encroachment of the surrounding septs, and for a while deferred the total decline into which the pale was rapidly sinking. The general incapacity, ignorance, and interested conduct of the governors—the neglect of England and the degeneracy of the English settlers, who were become Irish in manner, custom, and affinity—contributed, with the increasing power of the native chiefs, to hasten the approaches of the melancholy period of national affliction and degradation, long approaching and now at hand. From such a state there were occasional and transitory revivals, which were just sufficient to indicate what was wanting to the restoration of the colony. The artful and ambitious earl of Desmond, who in his need had found a friend in the earl of Ormonde, contributed much, by his encroaching spirit, and the haughty isolation by which he kept up an independent state, to increase the difficulties of the time. A spirit of hostility grew up between these two powerful nobles, which was productive of much evil to their country, and of much trouble to Ormonde. The earl of Desmond, availing himself of the weakness of government, resisted his



efforts for the public good; or when occasion offered, endeavoured to bring him into discredit by intrigue, and seems to have been his constant opponent through the opposite changes of favour and disfavour. And from this appears to have arisen the chief vicissitudes of his personal history.

Lodge mentions that he was knighted in the fourth year of Henry VI., together with the king, by the regent, John duke of Bedford. And he adds, that this occurrence took place "before he attained his full age"—an affirmation which cannot be reconciled with the other circumstances here mentioned, with their dates from the same writer, even though we should take some liberty with these dates, to reconcile them. According to these, his first commission as lord deputy occurs in 1407, at which time, though still in his minority, he must at least have arrived at man's estate. Henry VI. was born in 1421 or 1422, when, on the lowest allowance, Ormonde must have been twenty-four years of age; that is allowing that he was lord deputy *at ten*. Adding nearly five years, we have the fourth year of Henry's reign, when Ormonde must have been, by the same allowance, twenty-eight. This error is rendered still more inextricable by the assertion, "after which, returning into Ireland, he accompanied the deputy Scrope, in his invasion of Macmurrough's territory." Now, this latter circumstance is placed, by Cox and Leland, in the year 1407, when he may have certainly assisted; but eighteen years before the period assigned. We should have set down this entanglement as a typographical error, substituting VI. for IV., as Scrope was deputy, and marched against M'Murchar, in 1407, the seventh or eighth year of Henry IV., when all the particulars were likely to have occurred. But this conjecture is baffled by the addition that he received the honour from the duke of Bedford, "the king's uncle and regent,"\* who was appointed regent during the minority of Henry VI. All this is still further involved in difficulty by the complaint of Ormonde's enemies in 1445, "that he was old and feeble;" for if he is then assumed to have been sixty-five, he would have been of full age in 1407.

We are inclined to presume that the truth must be, that he was knighted by king Henry IV., previous to his coming over as lord deputy. The incident is of slight importance; we have dwelt upon it as a good illustration of the difficulty of being accurate, and of the perplexity often attendant on investigations, the importance of which cannot be considered equal to the time and labour lost in their prosecution.

At the death of Henry V., Ormonde was lord lieutenant of Ireland. He was continued but for a short time after the accession of Henry VI. The minority of this monarch, then but nine months old, led the English government, among other precautions against the danger of the existing claims of the house of York, to remove the heir of that family out of view, by sending him to Ireland. In pursuance of this policy, Edmund, earl of Marche, was sent, in 1422, as lord lieutenant; but his government was quickly terminated by his death. He died of the plague,† in his own castle of Trim, and was succeeded by lord

\* Lodge.

† Cox. Ware notices this as the fourth pestilence in Ireland.—*Annals*.

Talbot, in 1425. But in the following year, he was superseded by Ormonde, who, in his turn made way for Sir John de Gray, who was succeeded by lord Dudley, Sir Thomas Stanley, Sir Christopher Plunkett, and others, with their deputies in rapid succession; during which, his own name occurs in its turn, at short intervals, until 1443, when he comes again more prominently on the scene.

At this time he was sent over with the privilege of absenting himself "for many years, without incurring the penalty of the statute of 3 Rich. II."\* against absentees. It was at this time that he entered into strict alliance with the earl of Desmond, and contributed to raise him to a height of power, wealth, and influence, which were afterwards, with a fatal efficiency, directed against himself. Desmond, it appears, won his favour by joining him against the Talbots, then fast rising into authority. The vast grants and privileges thus conceded to Desmond, may be seen in our notice of that nobleman.

The vigour of Ormonde's administration, and his uniform adherence to the princes who, during this period, sat upon the throne, had raised many enemies against him. With this, he seems to have exercised his privileges with high and decisive energy, and perhaps too frequently to have allowed his measures to be governed by feuds and private friendships. This lax policy is, however, in some degree to be justified by the notions and practice of his age. By degrees a combination was formed against him, and representations, which we should not undertake to reject, were made to the English court, complaining of his being incompetent from age—of his partial appointments—his indulgence to the nobles whose parliamentary attendance he dispensed with for money—and lastly, for the wrongful imprisonment of subjects, for the sake of their ransom.† On these grounds they petitioned for his removal. This complaint of a powerful party, led on by the perfidious Desmond, who had been exalted above the condition of a subject by his friendship, gave serious alarm to the earl of Ormonde. He called a meeting of the nobility and gentry at Drogheda, to whom he made an appeal which was answered by a strong testimony to the uprightness and efficiency of his administration. We do not enter into its details for the same reason that we have passed lightly over the details of the complaint. They may both be regarded as the natural language of party spirit in all times; mostly having on each side strong grounds in truth, well mixed with misrepresentations often undesigned, often the contrary. The most satisfactory test of the truth of either charge or defence, must be drawn from the state of public affairs; so far as they may be assumed liable to be affected by the conduct of the public functionary. In the absence of this criterion, the rank and respectability of the parties, affords the best general ground of conjecture. Adopting such a criterion, we should incline towards a favourable judgment of this eminent nobleman.

The representations of his enemies had elicited, from the English court, an order for his attendance to answer for his alleged misconduct. His bold and frank appeal, with the declaration of a large body of the most reputable of the Irish nobles and ecclesiastics, caused

\* Cox.

† Ib.



a suspension of this order. But the earl of Ormonde, with a magnanimous disregard of the secret and base underworking of a low faction, took no further care to guard against the designs of his enemies;—the faction went on, and gathered influence and weight. The same charges continued to be repeated, without meeting any answer; and the factious workings of those who made them increased into a state of popular turbulence, which it was impossible for one so involved as the earl of Ormonde to resist. His recall, therefore, became a matter of expediency not to be averted.

He was, accordingly, recalled, and lord Talbot sent over with seven hundred men. His arrival was greeted with clamour and insurrection. The English barons were leagued with the Irish chiefs in opposition to his government, thus affording, if it were necessary, the best vindication of the innocence and integrity of Ormonde's administration. Talbot commenced with vigour and efficiency, and quickly repressed or reduced the factious barons and rebellious chiefs—seizing on many, and putting some, especially of the Birminghams, to death.

His government was not, however, conducted on the most judicious or salutary principles. He kept the peace thus restored, by throwing himself into the hands of the popular faction, by which the earl of Ormonde had been persecuted; a faction which, more than any other cause in its own time, tended to precipitate the ruin of Ireland—the main disorders and sufferings of which, then, as well as before and since, have been mainly the result of a factious resistance to the operation of those principles on which civil order and national prosperity depend. If we admit that much evil has also arisen from causes of an opposite nature, we must at the same time insist, that such causes were the necessary result of those to which we have adverted. One extreme is resisted by another. There is mostly no other available resource.

At his return to England, Talbot had so far adopted the passions or prejudices of the party with which he acted, that he accused Ormonde of treason. The accusation was re-echoed with virulent animosity. The archbishop of Dublin seconded the representations of his brother, with a treatise on the maleadministration of Ormonde. The prior of Kilmainham added his voice, and challenged him to the combat. But Ormonde's character was unaffected by this clamour of malignity and envy: the clamour of faction had little weight against him, beyond the sphere of its own sound and fury. The king of England interposed, and for the time rescued the earl from an unworthy persecution: to this, historians attribute the attachment of the family of Butler to the Lancastrian race.

The great and celebrated dissensions between the houses of York and Lancaster were, at this time, in their beginning. They had been long anticipated in their causes by the fears and the wisdom of all who were capable of political observation. Their effect on Ireland was considerable and pernicious, and they occupy the attention of our historians, as fully as that of the writers of English history. They are, however, too well understood and known, to require that we should here enter into any detail; it will be enough to mark, as we pass along, the influence of the political occurrences of England on the state of Ireland. The same apprehensions which occasioned the



commission of the earl of Marche were still in force, but with added weight and justice. The feeble monarch who sat upon the British throne was surrounded with much increased difficulties and dangers; there was no vigour in his character or government to repress the animosity and ambitious restlessness of contested claims to the succession. The eagerness of party was already anticipating the vacancy of the throne; and intrigue was busy in spreading disaffection and complaint. The rights of the earl of Marche had devolved upon his cousin Richard, whose abilities made him formidable, while his worth and amiability made him the object of general regard. He had been sent to succeed the duke of Bedford in the government of France, where he had gained credit by the prudence and efficiency of his administration of affairs. His return to England was hailed by the wishes of his friends, and the fears of the rival house; and the contest, so soon to stain the country with its best blood, was loudly and openly carried on by clamour and intrigue.

The complaints of Ireland suggested the prudent measure of sending him over as governor. The measure had specious advantages according with the views of either side. It was an apparent advantage to the Lancasterian party, to occupy his ambition, and deprive his party of their head. But the appointment was accompanied with powers which, if dexterously used, might become dangerous. A considerable revenue, the power of raising a military force on full authority, sufficient pretext, and beyond the reach of immediate observation, were the amount of this prince's stipulations; to which was added the privilege of naming a deputy, and returning at pleasure.\*

His first reception was doubtful, but the weight of his pretensions, and the splendour of his appointments, quickly turned the feather scale of public feeling in his favour. The advances of every party he received with frank and conciliatory affability, and ready kindness of manner. His Irish dependents crowded round him from his ample estates in Meath; and the Irish chiefs were agreeably surprised and captivated by attentions which they were unaccustomed to meet. He studied to receive and address them in accordance with their notions of their own rank and importance; and all parties were soon united in zeal and affection for his person. His deportment to the lords was also governed by a politic impartiality. Ormonde, who was known to be the political adherent of the house of Lancaster, was treated with kindness; and Desmond, whose overgrown power was maintained by a barbarous independence, yielded to the attractions of his manner and address. He had a son born in Dublin, afterwards the unfortunate George, duke of Clarence, to whom these rival barons were invited to stand sponsors, an honour correctly appreciated by the courtly experience of Ormonde, but which excited the pride of the ruder Desmond, whose inexperience attached to the selection a high dignity and notions of exalted trust and honour. Historians seem to imply, that the effect of this excitement led to increased insolence and oppression in the south. Cox, whose chronology is a little confused on the point, mentions a petition from the inhabitants of Cork, complaining of

\* Cox.

grievances, which he attributes mainly to the tyranny of Desmond. He gives this petition at length,\* observing, that historians assign a later period, but infers from its direction to the earl of Rutland and Cork, that it must have been at the present. The petitioners complain of the absence of the great proprietors, of the mischiefs accruing from their private wars, and of the want of protection from the robberies of the surrounding natives. They entreat for inquiry—for leaders—and offer to rise against their enemies, if properly countenanced and assisted. Cox connects this petition with certain laws enacted in the first parliament held by the duke, of which he specifies the provisions; but we cannot perceive the application, as, however usefully conceived, they are quite inadequate, and without any specific direction to the causes of complaint.† One provision is mentioned, the general operation of which, might go to remedy the evil: by this the land was charged with the furnishing and maintenance of its proportion of military force for the defence of the pale. A clause, also, forbidding the maintenance of retainers to an extent that required to be supported by exaction, must also, in its operation, have materially contributed to lessen the evil.‡

One occurrence in this parliament is more strictly within the scope of this notice. Notwithstanding the absence of all present factious motives in his favour, by which an interested display of respect might be elicited in favour of Ormonde, an address of thanks was voted to the king for having supported him against the injustice and malice of his enemies. The current of party was, at the moment, running high in the opposite direction, and we cannot help regarding this incident as an extraordinary tribute to the worth and uprightness of Ormonde.

A still more remarkable proof of this respect occurred shortly after. The intrigues of the duke's faction in England appear to have hit upon a curious expedient, not altogether singular, however, in its nature, to test the state of public feeling, and rally the efforts of his friends. An Irishman named Cade, was induced to assume the name of Mortimer, and set up pretensions to the crown. Suspicion fell on the duke of York, and thus afforded him a fair pretext for appearing in person on the scene. He left Ormonde deputy, thus either manifesting his confidence, or paying an honourable deference to the public weight of his character. This selection was shortly after confirmed by the title of lord lieutenant, by the king's appointment. Ormonde's presence in England became necessary, and he appointed John Mey, the archbishop of Armagh, as his deputy,§ in the year 1451.

In the following year, he may be obscurely traced among the petty wars of this island. His death took place on his return from an expedition against an obscure chief of the name of O'Mulrian. He was buried in St Mary's abbey, near Dublin.||

He was remarkable for his attainments, and the knightly polish of his manners. He cultivated history, more especially in that peculiar department connected with antiquities. He endowed the college of Heralds with lands, and was prayed for at their meetings, until the

\* Cox, 162. † Ib. ‡ Leland. Cox. Davis. § Cox. Leland. || Lodge.



reformation.\* By his first wife, who was daughter to Gerald, the fifth earl of Kildare, he left three sons, who were in succession earls of Ormonde.

## John Cade.

DIED A. D. 1450.

JOHN CADE, known in English history by the more familiar name of Jack Cade, is said to have been an Irishman. He offers an extreme instance of an occurrence, common enough in the history of every age, of an obscure person, without any natural qualification to distinguish him from the ignoble multitude, raised by accident, his own uncalculating folly, and the unprincipled artifice of party, into a short-lived notoriety, a bloody death, and an ignominious recollection in history. His story, though connected with events which we are obliged to notice, more properly belongs to English history; it is too familiar to detain us. Set up by the Yorkists to gauge the current of party feeling, the mock representative of royal claims, he was exposed to the deadly animosity of the opposite party, without any protection from his own. His story is so far instructive, as it exhibits an instance of the facility with which notoriety can be gained, and mischief done, under the pretence of reform of abuses and the redress of public grievances.

Under the name of Mortimer, this ancient reformer withdrew into Kent, and collected together multitudes under the pretence of redressing public grievances, and easing the people of their burthens. The king sent to inquire into the cause of the tumultuary proceedings of the people; and two petitions were presently sent to the parliament, which show clearly how little reasonable cause of complaint existed in that period. The result was the levy of fifteen thousand men, which the king himself led against the rebels. Cade retreated in seeming alarm, but waited in ambush at a wood near Sevenoak, under the hope that Henry would fall into the snare. The king, quite content with the glory of "having found no foe to fight withal," turned back to London, and sent a detachment commanded by Sir Humphrey Stafford, in pursuit of Cade. This force fell into the ambush, and was, with its leader, cut off to a man.

Cade, elated by his success, marched towards London; and was joined by a multitude on the way. London opened her gates, and Cade entered in triumph. He repaid the complaisance of the citizens by giving orders against the outrages which were to be apprehended from the ragged regiments at his command. Hearing that lord Say was in town, he ordered him to be seized and beheaded. To quiet the fears of the Londoners, he removed to a post without the city, on the Surrey side of the Thames, from which he regularly entered every morning. But some of his rabble having committed disorders in the city, the citizens availed themselves of the excuse, and one morning Cade found himself shut out. A violent battle ensued, which lasted

\* Lodge.



till night without decided advantage on either side—a truce till morning was agreed on. But the archbishops of Canterbury and York, who had taken refuge in the town, having obtained intelligence that the rebels were beginning to show signs of wavering and of being wearied with the adventure, drew up and published a general pardon, by proclamation, in Southwark. The effect was instantaneous on every man who heard it: the mighty rabble, glad to be relieved from the fears which were beginning to seize upon them, melted away, and when morning came, the unfortunate Cade found himself alone. He fled into Sussex—a reward of a thousand marks was set upon his head—he wandered into Kent, and was found by a gentleman of that county, lurking in his garden. This gentleman's name was Alexander Iden. Shakespeare has seized upon the incident, and, as he has always done with historical incidents, adhered as closely as possible to the facts. Iden, on questioning the unknown trespasser, soon ascertained his name and character. It is probable that Cade was not aware of the reward, and that he freely revealed his name, and urged his claim to commiseration and relief. Iden's loyalty was, however, better informed. He slew Cade, and brought his body to London, where his head was exhibited on London bridge.

He was called captain Mend-all by the mob. So far as any general moral can be attached to the incident of a name expressive of feelings and objects, it seems to convey the common impulse of the uninformed crowd of all times, to imagine that all the evils to which their lot is liable, can be mended by the instrumentality of brute violence; and to place their implicit reliance on any one who will appeal to their own prejudices, assert wrongs, and promise redress. Such promises, and such persons, will ever have weight, until the people shall arrive at sufficient intelligence fully to comprehend a very superficial truth: that the numerical strength of a country, though, so far as God permits, it can pull down and destroy, it can build up nothing; it can cast down rights, but it can secure none for itself. The evils of which the multitude mostly complain, are seldom those under which they suffer; and will ever arise in aggravated forms from the remedies they would adopt. The peasant who simply imagines, that, by the result of some violent change, he will convert the little precarious tenure of his few roods into an absolute possession, is wholly ignorant of the objects and powers of his leaders, and the real character of popular faction, the infallible produce of which is despotism. Before the golden dream of his much abused simplicity can be realized by any possible turn of human affairs, the inequalities of human intellect and ambition must cease. There must be no craft, no falsehood, no triply woven web of ambition, perfidy, and specious pretension. The power of fraud and eloquence, the illusion of prejudices, the inordinate desires that wait on influence, the profound ignorance and simplicity of the moveable surface of society, must all come to an end; and then the wishes and desires of the people, becoming limited to their real condition, will cease to betray them into the sacrifice of the comforts they might have, if they did not fling them away in looking for unattainable objects.

## James, Fifth Earl of Ormonde.

BORN A. D. 1420—BEHEADED A. D. 1461.

THIS nobleman succeeded in 1451 to his father's title, estates, and political connexions. In 1449 he was created earl of Wiltshire. In 1450 he was one of the commissioners for the custody of Calais. In 1453 he was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland for ten years. He seems to have been very distinguished for his activity and the confidence of the king. He was joined with the earl of Salisbury and other noblemen to guard the seas, receiving the tonnage and poundage to defray their expense. In 1455 he was appointed lord high treasurer of England. He was present at the battle of St Albans, and when the Yorkists gained the day, escaped by divesting himself of his armour; but king Henry recovering his authority, he was reinstated in office. He was, in 1456, made keeper of the royal forest of Pederton, in Somersetshire; and of Cranbourn chace, in Wilts and Dorset. He fitted out five ships against the earl of Warwick. At the battle of Wakefield, in December, 1460, when the duke of York was slain, this earl of Ormonde commanded one wing of the royal army. In the next year, however, he was taken in a bloody battle fought at Towton, in Yorkshire, and, with many others of the English nobility, beheaded by order of Edward IV.\*

## O'Conor, Chief of Offaly.

DIED A. D. 1465.

OF this person, the descendant of a line of princes, we obtain one of those casual glimpses which, for the most part, is all that can be attained of those whose names have not found a place in the history of the English pale.

He had accompanied his father, in 1451, in a predatory incursion into Kildare. Their party was surprised and scattered by an English company under the command of a knight named Fitz-Eustace. His father being thrown, his horse escaped, and he was in imminent danger of being taken by his pursuers, who were fast approaching. O'Conor, with a generous contempt of danger, dismounted and offered his own horse, which the father, with a disinterestedness worthy of such a son, refused to accept: the son persisted to press, and the father to refuse, and neither would be saved at the cost of the other. At last the escape of the father became impossible; and his stern command was obeyed when obedience itself had become a dangerous duty. By an exertion of great steadiness and activity the son escaped. His father was released when it appeared that the incursion was *bona fide* in pursuit of *prey*.

\* Lodge.

Once more the same O'Connor appears about ten years after, exhibiting the same generosity of character. In the government of Thomas, eighth earl of Desmond, this nobleman received a defeat from a powerful combination of the septs of Meath. The Irish had a prejudice in favour of Desmond, whose title and family had acquired nationality in their eyes. O'Connor, who was among the principal leaders of the Irish, saw and availed himself of the feeling. He recollected the mercy by which his own father had been released; and being also connected by gossipry, or some such old Irish tie, with Desmond, he interposed to obtain his freedom. Calling him by the title of brother, he took possession of him, and led him away with many of his followers, to a safe distance from his captors, where he set them all at liberty.\*

### Thomas, Eighth Earl of Desmond.

BEHEADED A. D. 1467.

THIS nobleman, the same mentioned in our last notice, was appointed lord deputy to the duke of Clarence, in 1463. His character appears to have a considerable resemblance to that of his father—encroaching, ambitious, and fond of the savage and semi-barbarous independence to which he had been trained. After the death of James, earl of Ormonde, an act was passed by the triumphant Yorkists for the attainder of many of his family. His brother escaped to Ireland with many followers; who, being proscribed in England, hoped to find refuge under his protection in Ireland. He soon collected a formidable force, and levied war against the deputy, Sir Rowland Fitz-Eustace. The earl of Desmond collected twenty thousand men, and after some checks, attributable to his want of military skill, came to an engagement, in which he gave them a defeat which completely scattered and subdued them.

In consequence of this great service, Desmond was appointed deputy. His success in the field, and the elevation which followed, were too much for his weak and proud mind. Attributing all to his own valour, spirit, and greatness, his indiscretion was inflamed to a rash confidence, which was increased by flattery. His large territories swarmed forth a crowd of enthusiastic Irish, who, considering him as their countryman, were themselves elated with the pride of his glory and power, and fed his eyes and ears with daily admiration. But his conduct was not the less subject to the scrutiny of rivals, who, while jealous of his favour, were resentful of a success of which they felt his character to be undeserving. This is indeed the most bitter sting of jealousy: men seldom admit a sentiment of envy, when they admit answerable merit.

It was immediately after that he received the deep mortification of a defeat, of which the result has been related in the notice last before this. In addition to the defeat, he had the mortification to be obliged

\* Leland.



to compromise matters with O'Brien, the southern chief, by allowing him to retain his conquests, and a pension of 60 marks from the city of Limerick. He now became the object of loud accusation, and his enemies began to shake his power on every side. His rash wars and disgraceful treaties, his Irish friendships and connexions, his oppressions, and the intolerable insolence of his pretensions, were registered against him in malice. He, by his conduct, added weight to the machinations of his enemies; and at last, by a rash quarrel with the bishop of Meath, he made a powerful enemy, who collected the complaints of his enemies, and carried them to the English court.

Desmond's great popularity was, however, sufficient as yet to sustain his imprudence. He held a parliament in Wexford which passed an address to the king, in which his successes were magnified, and his failures and follies suppressed. With this he went to England, and was received favourably by king Edward. His enemies were obliged to treasure their malice for a season, and he returned in high favour to his government.

His conduct on his return was in some respects more cautious. He was more studious of the English interests, and made many regulations favourable to them.

But matters were working for his ruin. Holinshed notices a tradition, that when in England he had, with his characteristic incaution, expressed some remarks reflecting on the family of the lady Elizabeth Gray, in a conversation with the king, who was at the time bent on making her his queen. This the king afterwards told her, and Desmond was never forgiven. In aggravation of this offence, he was in the habit of sneering when she was spoken of in company, and frequently called her a "taylor's wife." Her pride and her fears were equally excited. Her marriage with the king was an object of discontent to the English nobility; and she exerted herself with industrious malice for the ruin of one whose indiscretion had nigh been fatal to her ambition, and might yet injure her family. The occasion soon presented itself. Her father was to be raised to sudden honours; and having been made earl of Rivers, was to be further promoted by the high office of lord constable. The earl of Worcester held the office, but willingly resigned it, and was in recompense appointed lord deputy in Ireland. It is thought that in coming over, Worcester was privately pledged to the adoption of the queen's resentment; and the supposition is affirmed by his conduct.

His appointment excited Desmond's resentment, and we may infer that it was rash and outrageous. It was alleged that he intended to set up for the independent sovereignty of Ireland. Many of the new deputy's acts were in themselves calculated to excite his anger, and shock his pride. Among others, his treaties were cancelled, his friends prosecuted, and his enemies supported. The parliament was adjourned to Drogheda, where it might be unbiassed by the influence of his supporters, and an act of attainder was passed against him.

Habitual impunity, and the confidence acquired by long continued command, made Desmond bold. He could not conceive himself to be in danger. His immediate step was one of singular daring: he at once, without any reflection on the subject, repaired to the earl of

Worcester to justify himself: he was seized without delay, and instantly beheaded.

### **John, Sixth Earl of Ormonde.**

DIED A. D. 1478.

THIS earl was attainted for his faithful adherence to the Lancastrian monarch. Edward IV., however, restored him in blood. He is memorable as the most finished gentleman of his day. Edward IV., himself eminent for manners and accomplishments beyond the rudeness of his age, said of him, "that he was the goodliest knight he ever beheld, and the finest gentleman in Christendom; and that if good-breeding, good-nature, and liberal qualities were lost in the world, they might all be found in John, earl of Ormond."\* He was master of most living languages of Europe, and had been employed by Edward IV. as his ambassador to every court.

He did not marry. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he died, 1478.

### **Sir Mlick de Burgh.**

DIED A. D. 1429.

THIS person was eminent for his great power, and for his activity and success in arms against the Irish septs. As it is our design to contract this portion of our history, we shall only say of his exploits, that they were as distinguished as those of most others who took part in the confused and petty warfare of which we have already had to detail so much; and as little worthy of historical detail. He married a daughter of the famous earl of Warwick, and died in 1429.

### **Thomas, Seventh Earl of Kildare.**

DIED A. D. 1478.

WE have already had occasion to advert to the chief political events of this nobleman's life under our notices of his illustrious contemporaries. He was, in 1460, deputy to the unfortunate duke of York. In 1463, he was lord chancellor. In 1467, he was attainted, with the earl of Desmond, and Edward Plunket; but had the good sense to escape from the bloody fate of the former of these eminent persons. On this occasion, while the rash confidence of the earl of Desmond, betrayed him into the hands of the lord deputy, who ordered off his head without hearing the representations to which he trusted, Kildare made his escape, and, appealing to the justice of Edward IV., was not

\* Lodge.

only restored, but on the recall of the earl of Worcester, was made deputy in his room.

Into his administration we need not specially enter. By his advancement, the Geraldine faction were restored to their ascendancy and the interests of the great rival house of Butler suffered a temporary depression. Kildare's opponents were put down with a high hand, and his dependents and connexions promoted. Faction was acquiring at that time a destructive energy and organization, which we shall hereafter have occasion to notice more expressly.

So high was the power of this great earl, that the restoration of Henry VI. did not shake him in his seat. It was at this time that he first set on foot a remarkable scheme of combination for the defence of the English. It was improved afterwards in 1474, when an association of thirteen lords and gentlemen was authorized by parliament, under the denomination of "The Fraternity of St George." Of these the earl of Kildare was the principal; they were to meet on St George's day every year, to express their loyalty and adherence to the English government. Their captain was to be annually chosen on this anniversary meeting: he was to command a force of two hundred men, one hundred and twenty mounted archers, and forty men at arms likewise mounted, with an attendant to each. For the maintenance of this force, they were empowered to levy twelve pence in the pound upon all merchandise sold in Ireland except hides, and the goods of freemen in Dublin and Drogheda. They were also empowered to make laws for their own regulation and government; and had authority for the apprehension of outlaws, rebels, &c.\*

Meanwhile the earl of Ormonde, the political opponent of Kildare, was by the admirable prudence of his deportment, and the winning address of his manner and conversation, advancing into favour in the court of Edward; and under the protection and countenance of this accomplished nobleman, his numerous connexions and dependents were labouring to undermine Kildare. Their efforts were at last successful, and an enemy appointed in his place. He shortly after died, in 1478, and was buried in All Saints, near Dublin.†

## Sir Christopher Plunket.

DIED A. D. 1445.

THIS person was distinguished in the warfare of his time, under Henry VI. and Edward IV. Having been sheriff of Meath, he is said to have hurt his fortune by services which surpassed his means. This appears by a grant of 20 marks from Henry VI., dated 1426. In 1432, he was appointed deputy to Sir Thomas Stanley: Camden asserts to the duke of York. The real foundation of his fortune was a marriage with the daughter of Sir Lucas Cusack, lord of Killeen, Dunsany, &c., in the county of Meath. In consequence he became lord Killeen. He founded a church at Killeen, with four priests to pray

\* Stat. 14 Edward IV. Leland.

† Lodge.



for the souls of himself and his wife. He died in 1445, his eldest son succeeding to the title of Killeen, and his second, it is probable, to that of Dunsany. Camden mentions that the title of baron of Dunsany was conferred on Sir Christopher Plunket, the issue of the second son of the person here mentioned. From this statement it seems therefore probable that the elder Sir Christopher dying, left these two lordships with their appurtenances, to his two elder sons, one to each, thus founding the two families of Fingal and Dunsany. The fact derives interest from the position of the demesnes of their modern representatives, which, from a little distance, appear to be one; the two castles being the principal objects of the prospect, on the side of the same hill, in the county of Meath.

Sir Christopher, lord of Killeen and Dunsany, died in 1445, and was buried in the church of Killeen.\*

## Gerald, Eighth Earl of Kildare.

DIED A. D. 1513.

THE eighth earl of Kildare may be considered as the most eminent Irishman during his long life, the events of which period may therefore be most conveniently, and with the least prolixity or confusion, brought together in our notice of him.

His mother was Joan, daughter to the seventh earl of Desmond. His elder sister married Henry MacOwen O'Neile; by which he was closely connected through life with the family of O'Neile, and was uncle to Con O'Neile, who married his daughter. He succeeded his father in 1478, and was appointed lord deputy to the duke of York. The king, however, was led to recall this appointment, by his prejudice against the barons of the Irish pale. There was unquestionably some ground for the suspicion that these noblemen, continually involved in factions, enmities, and alliances, could scarcely govern with the impartial temper necessary for the restoration of order and tranquillity: and the connexions of the Geraldine lords were more peculiarly obnoxious to such suspicion. The O'Neiles, who were in this generation identified with the Geraldines of Kildare, had for some generations been among the proudest and most untractable of the native chiefs. The earl was dismissed and lord Grey was sent over in his place. This hasty act roused the pride, resentment, and fear of the Irish barons. They were bent on resistance: some informality in lord Grey's commission seems to have afforded the excuse. Kildare denied the authenticity of the king's letter of dismissal, which was only signed with the privy seal; and a lamentable contest, in the highest degree adapted to bring the English government into disgrace, now followed. The two rival governors proceeded to hold their parliaments; and that held by Grey annulled the acts of that by the earl of Kildare. The Irish barons, as well as the officers of state, sided with Kildare. On the death of the duke of Clarence, which vacated

\* Lodge.

Grey's appointment, they took advantage of the circumstance to elect Kildare, according to an ancient law of Henry II., confirmed by a statute of Richard II. Grey's parliament still resisted, and the confusion arose to such a height that it was thought necessary by the king to summon Kildare and other principal persons, to give an account of the nature and causes of such perplexed and disorderly proceedings. Grey resigned; and king Edward, who, probably by this time, had learned the necessity of a more powerful agency than he could afford to employ in the administration of Irish affairs, affected to be satisfied with the representations of the Geraldine faction, and reinstated Kildare. He came back armed with ample powers, and liberal allowances, and superseded lord Gormanston, who had been appointed in the interim. He held a parliament on his return, in which Con O'Neile, his son-in-law, was naturalized.

The government of Kildare was such as to support his pretensions and serve the English; his ability and active vigour soon appeared: he preserved peace and order more by his extensive family power and influence, than by the small force he was allowed by the court of England, and more probably by his favour with the Irish than either. The heads of the Geraldine race had long been regarded by the natives as their own chiefs, and had thus, in a measure, become naturalized among the septs. He defended the pale with unusual vigour, and, at the same time, entered with spirit and interest into the affairs of the natives, and continued with uninterrupted prosperity through the remainder of Edward's reign, and that of his successor.

Edward IV. died in 1483 (April). Richard III. had too much to attend to, to think of Irish affairs, so that no alteration was thought of. The parliaments held by Kildare were subservient to his influence, and he was enabled to act with great promptness and success in all he undertook. One parliament in Dublin gave him a subsidy of thirteen shillings and fourpence on every plowland for the expenses of his military proceedings.\*

The accession of Henry VII. was not received with popular favour among the Geraldine faction, who had always been the warm adherents of the rival branch of York. There was, therefore, felt a very general sensation of surprise at the continuance of Kildare, and other Yorkist lords in office. It is highly probable that Henry was, by his residence abroad during his exile, prevented from entering to the full extent into the remoter ramifications of faction. However this may be, there is reason enough to agree with many writers on the period, who censure his neglect. He left an ample field unguarded in the hands of his numerous enemies, for the shelter and promotion of their secret intrigues. Kildare's party seemed elated by an oversight which they attributed to their own importance and power, and were suffered to go to remarkable lengths of excess and daring, until they were betrayed by indulgence, and tempted by their factious predilections, into a course, which seriously risked the prosperity of this eminent nobleman.

The conduct of Henry VII. was impolitic, and little adapted to sink

past enmity into oblivion: he was mean, cold, avaricious, and uncunctious, without the enlarged foresight that might, either by policy or kindness, have suppressed the power, or soothed the prejudices of his enemies. He allowed himself to be influenced by his own factious feelings: without disarming, he evinced hostility and disfavour to the Yorkists. But the effects of these unpopular dispositions were fermented into a generous indignation by his cruelty to the young earl of Warwick, and still more by his unworthy conduct towards his queen—the representative of the house of York, and the hope of this party. The mother of this slighted wife and insulted daughter of Edward IV., a princess celebrated for her active spirit and her talent for intrigue, had been materially influential in the course of events which placed Henry on the throne. She now bent all her faculties and animosity towards revenge.

The wary and apprehensive suspicion of Henry was excited by the numerous indications of such a state of things; his friends and his creatures were alert, and a plot was soon suspected on reasonable grounds, though its definite intentions and agents were yet mysterious. His attention was directed to Ireland; he recollected, or was reminded that it had ever been the ready refuge of the enemies and opponents of his house, and that Kildare had been a zealous partisan and servant of the house of York. He was indeed surrounded by the enemies of Kildare. It was in the second year of his reign that, under the influence of these suggestions, he summoned Kildare to court on the pretext of desiring to consult with him on the state of Ireland. The earl was too well aware of his real objects, to be willing to obey the summons; he had justly appreciated the cold craft of Henry—he also felt that his ear and countenance were possessed by his own bitter enemies, and resolved not to put himself in their power. He convened the Irish barons, and obtained an address to the king, representing the danger of his leaving the country, until certain precautionary measures should be adopted. On the strength of this, Kildare deferred his departure, and the king pretended to be satisfied.

The history of Lambert Simnel is generally known to every one: a wicked and mischievous farce, of which the most remarkable scenes were acted in Ireland. Every reader of English history is aware of the blundering plot, in which this poor youth was made to personate the young earl of Warwick, whose person was widely known and in the actual custody of the king. To avoid the many embarrassing consequences of so absurd a pretension, it was thought advisable that he should first appear in Ireland, where any suspicion on the score of identity was less likely to be raised, and where the faction, which was numerous and enthusiastic, might gather to a head without observation.

Simnel arrived in Dublin, was received with enthusiasm, crowned with a diadem taken from a statue of the virgin, in Christ church, where a sermon was preached by the bishop of Meath; the ceremony was attended by the lord deputy, the chancellor, treasurer, and other state officers. From church he was carried in state, after the ancient Irish fashion, on the shoulders of “Great Darcy of Platten,” and held his court in Dublin, in all the state and authority of a king. The



credulity of the people was satisfied, and the royal imposture was hailed with a general overflow of enthusiastic loyalty: at the same time, it is not likely that many beyond the lowest rabble were deceived; there can be no doubt that Kildare and his party looked upon Simnel merely as the instrument of their own resentment, ambition, and factious feeling; to be used for the depression of Henry's cause, and the promotion of that of the claimants of the rival house. There seemed to be two obvious courses; one to decoy Henry into Ireland—the other, to march an army into England. By the first, the Yorkists would be enabled to make head, and to pursue their operations with less interruption in that country: the second assumed the extensive existence of a conspiracy in England, and the immediate co-operation of a preponderating force. Looking on either alternative, the plan appears to us to be little short of insanity. This, however, may be said of the whole history of such insurrections; to the retrospect of history, they seem to be the result of an infatuation that is always hard to account for, until it is remembered how little experience has to do with the political movements of faction, and how rashly passion and ambition overlook difficulties and exaggerate advantages.

The English adherents of Simnel, who were strangers in the country, were in favour of making Ireland the scene of the struggle; but the Irish barons were aware of the fallacy of their assumptions. The pale was at the time contracted to a few miles of territory; beyond its boundaries, any support they might expect to find, was not likely to be either sincere or effectual. To this is to be added the difficulty of maintaining their force in an impoverished country, and we should also infer the reluctance of the Irish people to have their own lands and homes the scene first of military exaction, and then, should matters take an unfavourable turn, of military execution and the total revolution of power and property which might be effected on the spot by an enraged victor.

A little before, the rebels had received a large accession of force by the exertions of the duchess of Burgundy, who sent over two thousand Germans, under the command of Martin Swart, an experienced leader. With these the earl of Lincoln, and the lord Lovel, with many English gentlemen and followers, had come over to Ireland to swell their confidence, and add to their distressing expenditure.

With this force, it was resolved to pass over into England, and throw themselves on the popularity of their cause. This was undoubtedly increased; but the king had, in the mean time, exercised that prudence and precaution, which were so much wanting amongst his adversaries. He deprived disaffection of its flimsy pretext, by the open exhibition of the true earl of Warwick; and made his levies with promptitude, carefully selecting the flower of the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, which were favourable to the earl of Broughton and other rebel lords. Kildare remained in Ireland to attend to the government; but his brothers, lord Thomas and lord Maurice, of whom the former was chancellor, and resigned his seals for the purpose, accompanied the expedition. It was placed under the command of lord Lincoln, and landed at Furness some time about the end of May, 1487. They were joined on their landing by Sir Thomas Broughton,

and marched through Yorkshire to Newark,\* in the sanguine hope of being joined by the people in their progress. In this they were sadly disappointed. The king's precautions had been such as to conciliate popular good-will; and there was a general prejudice against a king, however legitimate, who was thus brought in as an invader by the force of Dutch and Irish. Consequently their course was looked on by the people with cold and silent curiosity, and every one shrunk back from their advances. The country through which they had thus inconsiderately marched, had but recently been instructed by the dispersion of a rebel party, and quieted by the presence of the king. The rebels were sadly discouraged by this reception, but it was no time to turn, and they pursued their way toward Newark. It was now their hope to surprise this place. King Henry advanced to meet them at the head of a strong and well appointed force. On the 16th of June, the van of his army, led by the earl of Oxford, came up with the rebels near the village of Stoke. He also procured from the pope a bull of excommunication to be pronounced at will against the rebels. On the 11th of June both armies met, near the village of Stoke, and a battle was fought in which both sides exerted themselves with the utmost bravery and perseverance. The Irish troops, however, were sadly degenerated from the training of their fathers, whose arms and discipline gave a uniformity to the victorious progress of Strongbow and his companions; they had fallen into the habits of the native septs, and now came like them, naked of defensive armour, and chiefly armed with swords and light javelins, or bows of the Irish construction, which were nearly useless against any but a half-naked antagonist. The Germans were the main force of the rebel army, and, for a long time, kept the victory doubtful; the Irish fought with desperate fury, but when by degrees their steadier allies were cut to pieces, they were obliged to give way, and after a murderous conflict, which lasted for three hours, were routed with tremendous slaughter. The Germans, with their brave leader were all slain. The lords Fitz-Gerald, with other Irish leaders, were also the victims of their infatuation, and left their bodies on this bloody field. More than half of the whole body of the rebels were slain, and the loss of the English was very great. Sir Thomas Broughton was also slain, and the lord Lovel was never after heard of. Some of the old historians relate a strange romance, of which, taking all the circumstances, the probability is sufficient. The lord Lovel had been seen escaping from off the field; the slain had also been examined—no pains were of course neglected to find him; his life was forfeited, and it was little consistent with the fears or vigilant activity of Henry to leave any spot unsearched; but all search was vain, he was nowhere to be found. It might be expected that his lady might have some tidings from his retreat, and his people and friends must, sooner or later, have begun to look for some account: but neither enmity nor love had the fortune to penetrate the mystery of his concealment: the time came when the jealousy of the king must have gone to sleep, and his appearance might have been ventured, but the generation passed away, and lord Lovel was seen no more. In two

\* Cox.



hundred years after, some labourers employed at Minster Lovel, in Yorkshire, the mansion of this ancient lord, discovered a chamber under ground, which had, perhaps, been contrived for concealment. There they found, seated on a chair, and leaning over a table, by which it was supported, the skeleton of a man, which was supposed to be that of the rebel lord.\*

The remainder of this rebellion was soon disposed of. Simnel was taken and allowed to live and reflect disgrace on his adherents, in the capacity of a scullion in Henry's kitchen; from which he was afterwards raised to the post of falconer.

Henry sent letters expressive of his thanks to the citizens of Waterford, who had adhered to his cause. The archbishops of Cashel and Tuam, and other prelates who had kept aloof from rebellion, were commissioned to pronounce ecclesiastical censures upon the archbishop of Armagh and other prelates who had taken part with the rebels and their puppet king. The Irish barons became sensible of their folly, and were looking with reasonable apprehension to the consequences: but Henry had still a delicate course to pursue: he had perceived the consequences of his unpopular conduct, and now desired to conciliate popular opinion, and to reconcile the affections he had alienated. He had not the means to settle Ireland by a thorough conquest, or even to keep up a force sufficient for its preservation, and had the sagacity to perceive, that if it was to be preserved, it must be by means of the power existing among the great Irish barons themselves. In such a juncture, Kildare alone possessed the power and influence necessary for the support of his authority, and it would be necessary altogether to root out the Geraldine interests by a destructive war, or by conciliation to avail himself of their authority. The house of Butler was, at the time, in no condition to support him; Desmond would probably side with his Geraldine kindred.

The views of the king were seconded by the circumstances in which Kildare was placed. This great nobleman was, of course, not wanting to himself; he pursued the politic course of frank avowals, and promises of submission; he was answered with an assurance that the king's favour should depend upon his future conduct. He was continued in the government, and instructed to support the king's authority, and maintain the tranquillity of the pale. Although this concession strongly indicates the great power of Kildare, he was not yet clear of the consequences of the king's jealousy, or of the invidious hostility of individuals, to which his recent conduct had in some measure exposed him. The king was not content to leave it to be understood that his interests were left unprotected by himself; it quickly occurred to a mind so cautious and wary, that the ambition of Kildare would be strongly tempted by the notion that the king was at his mercy in Ireland. Under these or such impressions, he sent over Sir Richard Edgecumbe, for the ostensible purpose of receiving submissions and giving pardons, but he sent him with a force of five hundred men, to make his presence respected, and impress a salutary awe. The effect of this measure was different on different persons. Edgecumbe re-

\* Carte. Bacon.



ceived the submissions of many at Kinsale, and then sailed to Waterford, where he complimented the citizens on their fidelity. Lastly, he sailed for Dublin, where, arriving on the 5th of July, he was received, with all humility, by the mayor and citizens. Kildare was absent on some expedition. On the 12th he arrived, and sent the lord Slane and the bishop of Meath to Edgecumbe, to invite him to a conference at St Thomas' court, where he himself was lodging. Edgecumbe repaired to the place, armed with haughtiness, and wrapped in diplomatic sternness, probably expecting to find in Kildare the same ready submission which he had hitherto found in others. But Kildare knew too well the secret of his own greatness to lower his high pretensions so far; he met the cold reserve of Edgecumbe with a courtesy as cold. He heard his representations and overtures—discussed them freely—and consented to give the assurance of homage, fealty, and oaths of fidelity; but refused to yield to certain further proposals, of which the import has not transpired.\* The parties separated without coming to an agreement: but met again and renewed the discussion. Kildare persisted in withholding his concurrence to any terms beyond those offered by himself; and the commissioner found it expedient to acquiesce.

The consent of Kildare being thus obtained, he was joined in the oaths of allegiance and fidelity, by the lords Portlester, Trimleston, Dunsany, &c.,† who were absolved from the ecclesiastical censures which had been pronounced upon them. This absolution was proclaimed on the following Sunday, in a sermon preached by Payne bishop of Meath.‡ This seems curious, as Payne is mentioned among the bishops thus absolved: Ware enumerates by the bishops of Dublin, Meath, and Kildare, who lay under the same censures, and were similarly pledged and absolved. On this occasion, the full reconciliation and pardon of Henry was signified to Kildare by a golden chain; and, a few days after, Kildare delivered a written certificate, under his seal, declaring his promise of future fidelity.

Kildare was continued in the government, a measure, marked by the cool and unimpassioned prudence of the king's character. The most common allowance for the earl's regard to his own interest, as well as the solemnity of the pledge he had made, might be felt to ensure his fidelity for some time at least; and it could not be doubted, that his great power and authority in Ireland, marked him as the fittest person to keep down its fermenting spirit, and preserve the allegiance of its proud and irritable, as well as restless and turbulent barons. The result was all that could reasonably be hoped for: Kildare exerted himself with vigour and efficient success; he invaded M'Geohegan's country, and reduced its principal fortress, and wasted the territory of Moy-Cashel.§ Lodge mentions that at this time he received from Germany six musquets, a rarity at the time, with which his guard were armed when they stood sentry before his residence in Thomas' court.

His enemies were, meantime, on the alert. The archbishop of Armagh strongly represented the danger of allowing a subject so powerful and ambitious to rule all things at will, and offered to counterbalance his authority by accepting the troublesome office of chancellor.

\* Leland.

† Ware.

‡ Ware.

§ Lodge.

His representations were met by counter statements on the part of Kildare, who was not remiss in his own defence. For this purpose he sent over Payne, the bishop of Meath, as his emissary to the court. Henry was not one to act on the suggestion of such representations. He was yet so far influenced by the speciousness of the allegations on either side, that he summoned over Kildare, with the principal lords of either faction, that he might be the better enabled to judge from a more near observation of their dispositions and representations, as well as to confirm the good and deter the evil designs which he might thus ascertain. The result was favourable to Kildare. The calculating disposition of Henry is curiously illustrated by the strong practical reproof of their late disaffection, which he contrived upon this occasion. He received them at Greenwich, and having expostulated with them in a kind and condescending tone on their recent ill conduct, he invited them to a banquet, at which they assembled, many of them triumphing in their easy restoration to honour and royal favour. Their exultation was probably damped by the appearance of one of the attendants by whom they were surrounded: this was no other than Lambert Simnel himself, the puppet to whom they had bowed their necks but a few days before. The sensation of mortification was, it may be conceived, strongly felt; fear, too, notwithstanding the recent act of grace, insinuated itself, as they looked with uneasy glances at the confidant of so much disloyalty and so much secret intrigue. But their fears were vain: the king had not stooped to extract the guilty *minutiæ* of indiscretion, from a source which his pride, as well as policy, had affected to despise. A more judicious policy followed this seasonable humiliation with kindness and royal munificence.

The earl returned to his government with renewed lustre, and armed with plenary authority. The whispers of faction had been silenced, the more violent demonstrations of invidious feeling repressed by his success, the most powerful barons were his personal adherents and friends; his own force was sufficient, also, to meet hostile movements, which were uniformly partial in their extent and purposes. And it was still more favourable to his government, that few of the Irish chiefs were sufficiently disengaged from their own contentions, to be at leisure to pay much attention to the events of the settlement. His kinsman, Desmond, in the south, and O'Niall in the north, were active in their several spheres to keep up the distractions of those whose quiet might be dangerous to the slowly recovering prosperity of the pale.

In this state of things, another adventurer appeared on the scene. The rivals of king Henry's claim were far from acquiescing in the general consent of the kingdom. A repetition of the same manœuvre which we have detailed, was soon contrived and repeated with greater caution. The name of Richard, duke of York, was again assumed by a youth of the name of Warbeck, who was sent out of the way, into Portugal, until the favourable moment for his appearance should occur. In such a conjuncture, King Henry, did not think it advisable to risk the renewal of the former dangerous plot, by the continuance of the same actors on the scene of public affairs in Ireland: Kildare was displaced, and the duke of Bedford appointed—the archbishop of Dublin being selected as his deputy. The consequence was, for the time, of



serious disadvantage to Kildare, and to all the lords of his family and faction. It would occupy far more space than the scale of this work admits of, to detail, with any minuteness, the circumstances of the many changes of reverse and prosperity in the busy and eventful life of this eminent nobleman, by far the most remarkable Irishman of his time. This interval of disfavour, though not of long continuance, had the effect of depressing many of his friends, and restoring many of his enemies to a position in which they could again be troublesome. Of these none require to be specially noticed but the Ormonde family, who, having now been for a long time in a condition of adversity, were beginning again to lift up their heads in the sunshine of court favour, and to regain their ascendancy in Ireland. The parliament assembled by the new deputy, was mainly composed of enemies to Kildare: their chief object seems to have been the mortification of himself, and the depression of his party. All these were called to the severest account for proceedings long past, the delinquencies of whole lives were ripped up, and the arrangements of a long season of power and influence were reversed.

The landing of Warbeck soon followed, but was not in the same degree eventful as the former attempt of a similar nature. Much disaffection was excited, and many animosities inflamed; but the inhabitants of the pale had not yet quite forgotten the lesson of caution they had so recently received, and if they had, their condition was, at the time, unfavourable to insurrectionary movements. A wet summer and autumn caused a grievous dearth in the land, which was followed by a dreadful malady common at the time, known by the name of the sweating sickness; it was probably a repetition of the same pestilence which had visited this island in the year 1348, after making its ravages in most parts of Europe; and again appeared in 1361, 1370, and 1383.\* Under such circumstances, no decided movement in Warbeck's favour was made; Desmond declared for him, and Kildare, it is alleged by historians, showed signs of following the same course. Fortunately for this earl, Warbeck received an invitation from the French king, who wished to use him as a means of annoyance against Henry. He departed, and pursued his adventurous and tragic fortunes; "one of the longest plays of that kind that hath been in memory, and might, perhaps, have had another end, if he had not met a king both wise, stout, and fortunate."† Having first landed in 1492, he was hanged in Tyburn, November, 1499.

Meanwhile king Henry was perplexed by the various and contradictory statements which reached him from Ireland. He at last ordered the deputy to attend him that he might communicate the full

\* The pestilence of 1485 is described by Polydore Virgil, from whose description a curious account may be found in Ware's *Annals*.—*Ad. An.* 1491.

It is curious that Ware mentions the plague of 1491, to have followed the appearance of a "blazing star." Such was the philosophy of his day. The incident was perhaps present to Milton's imagination in his description of a comet—

"That fires the length of Ophiucus, huge  
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair  
Shakes pestilence and war."

† Bacon.



detail of all the transactions during his administration. The archbishop went over, but added little to the king's information on Irish affairs. The answers of the bishop were more indicative of his virtue and simplicity, than of his political competency. The king was favourably impressed by his conversation, and treated him with distinguishing favour.

The faction of Kildare were alarmed. Kildare himself resolved to plead his own cause with the king, and without delay repaired to England. His representations were, however, at this time, unfavourably received; the king's ear was prepossessed by his enemies. Though it is probable that most of his statements came gradually to work in his favour, as after events confirmed their truth, or at least gave them a colour of probability. He was now ungraciously rebuked, and told that the charges against him were many, and required to be tried in Ireland. He was commanded to attend Sir Edward Poynings, the new deputy, to that country.

Poynings landed at Howth, about the end of September, with nearly a thousand men, and accompanied by several ecclesiastics who were appointed to fill the most important civil offices. Not long after, resolving to act with vigour, he collected all the force that could be drawn together, in which he was assisted by the earl of Kildare, and James Ormonde, the enemy of Kildare. With this force he marched into Ulster, where he ravaged the territories of the O'Hanlons and others, who were known to be disaffected to the English government. These exploits are not worth relating, as they had no result. The Irish knew better than to afford them the advantage of a direct collision of force, they allowed them to wreak a violence which could not be resisted, on the produce of the earth, and the rude dwellings of its inhabitants; but the people melted from before their march into the unexplored recesses of the forests and bogs. The most important facts, were the still increasing suspicions which, by the malice of his enemies, were thrown upon the earl of Kildare. Kildare was undoubtedly discontented, and with good reason; for he was not only deprived of station and authority, but wrongfully accused, and likely to be condemned without a fair and open hearing. He was one of the many instances of the low and corrupt state of public justice in his age: if a great man was suspected, a sort of tacit judicature of espionage and intrigue, conducted by the basest agents and with the worst motives, was set on foot; every representation, coloured by vindictive feeling, was heard by suspicion; and if the plea of the accused was heard at all, it was by singular good fortune. And yet this abuse was chiefly due to the inordinate ambition and unconstitutional power of the nobles thus persecuted: the exclusion of justice was their own. In the instance of Kildare, the wrongs under which he had suffered, were by no uncommon, or even improbable inference, made the ground of increased suspicions; it could not be believed that his loyalty was sincere, and he was accused of secretly fomenting the designs of Malachy O'Hanlon. At the same time, unfortunately many of the powerful Geraldines gave reason enough to confirm these accusations; and a brother of the earl's, by seizing the castle of Carlow, brought these suspicions to a decision.

A parliament was presently assembled, in which, among other acts, some of which we shall hereafter notice,\* the earl was declared a traitor; and soon after sent to England.

He was thrown into the Tower, where he was allowed to remain nearly two years without a hearing. At length in 1496, he was allowed to plead before the king. He was accused of conspiring with, and abetting the designs of the king's enemies; of conspiring with O'Hanlon to slay the deputy; of causing the seizure of Carlow castle; of the exaction of coigne and livery and other such usual charges of the time. The scene which took place is described with much distinctness, by many writers, and if we take into computation nothing more than actually was answered against these allegations, the whole scene is inexplicable. But it is in the very highest degree likely, that the whole truth had in the meantime transpired, and the character and history of Kildare reached the king through more unsuspecting channels. And it may be not unreasonably inferred that when Kildare was brought forth to plead before the king, that the whole had been pre-arranged. His enemies were now to be confronted with him, and he was advised by the king to be provided with good counsel, "yea," said Kildare, "the ablest in the realm," at the same time seizing the king's hand with rude simplicity, "your highness I take for my counsel, against these false knaves."† His accusers were now heard at length, but the king had been made more distinctly aware of the circumstances, and was enabled to perceive the futility of most of their charges, and to infer with certainty, the fact of a most inveterate and malignant conspiracy against the earl.

Among the many accusations which had been with industrious enmity raked together for the present purpose, the greater part were so far serviceable to Kildare, as they were such as plainly exposed the motives of the accusers. They were such charges as might be brought against all the nobles of Ireland; or such as affected the interests or passions of the accusers only. None of any consequence were such as could affect the interests of the king. Kildare's manner of defence was such as to impress a conviction of his sincerity and honesty, and evidently suggested to the king, the idea that he was likely to be the truest, as well as the most efficient servant to be entrusted with his Irish interests. When he was charged with having burned the church of Cashel, he interrupted the witnesses, "you may spare your proofs," he said, "I did burn the church, for I thought the bishop was in it." Charges thus met by one who seemed to despise his accusers, and to fling on their accusations a high unconscious defiance, became ridiculous. Kildare treated his enemies as if they had been standing their trials in his own castle, and seemed as if he only thought of clearing his wounded honour before the king. The king saw that he was incapable of the craft and intrigue that had been imputed to him, and made up his mind accordingly. When the bishop of Meath

\* The acts of this parliament were the first written in English; the previous Irish parliaments having had their acts written in French.—*Ware's Antiquities*.

† Leland, Cox, Ware.



ended a violent harangue, by saying, "all Ireland cannot govern that gentleman,"—"that gentleman then shall govern all Ireland," was the answer of king Henry.\*

The earl was now restored to his honours, and to favour, and consulted by the king on the state of Ireland. Among the first-fruits of this reconciliation, was the pardon of Desmond, and of the Irish subjects who had favoured Warbeck. Kildare's return as deputy, was more decidedly of advantage to the king's interests, and to the subjects of the pale, than any of the late measures. For though some excellent laws had recently been made, the state of the country required expedients stronger than law which implies a state of subjection and civil order. Kildare's decision and energy of character, together with his great power, gave him an efficiency that no one else could pretend to: and he entered on his administration with a strong zeal for the king, for whose protection he was grateful.

He lost no time, on his arrival, but marched at once against O'Brien, and then marched on through Limerick, and Cork, in which latter city he placed an effectual garrison. In the north his arms were equally successful. His kinsman Con O'Niall, was friendly to the English interests, and exerted himself with ability and success, and Kildare returned to Dublin after having quieted the country by the force and terror of his arms. His prudence, generosity, and moderation, were as distinguished as his success in the field. He reconciled himself to the bitter enemies over whose hostility he had so lately triumphed. Among these the archbishop of Armagh, and Sir James Ormonde, may be distinguished. A meeting with the earl, at the desire of Sir James, in Christ church, for the purpose of explanation, led to a dangerous riot, of which we shall presently relate the particulars.

The decisive government, and the vigorous military conduct of Kildare, caused great discontent among his opponents: every effort was made to impede his activity and damp his zeal. He seemed to have but one object in view, and exerted himself with such earnest and successful care and activity, that his administration did more to bring back the prosperity of the pale, than any efforts that had been made for the two preceding centuries.

We may select a few of his principal enterprises during this administration. He marched in 1498 into Ulster, to the assistance of his nephew, Tirlogh O'Niall. Tirlogh's father Con, had been murdered by Henry his brother, who met the same fate from Tirlogh and Con, sons of Con. It seems, however, that the enemies of Tirlogh's branch were on the alert to interrupt his accession to his paternal rights. The earl was joined by O'Donnel and other native chiefs, the friends of Tirlogh, and soon set all to rights. He besieged the castle of Dungannon, and compelled Art O'Neal to submit and give hostages.†

After his return from this expedition, another to Cork took place in the October of the same year. He compelled the inhabitants both of Cork and Kinsale to swear allegiance, and bind themselves both by indenture and hostages, and left an effectual garrison in Cork.‡

\* Leland, Cox, Ware, Lodge.

† Cox. Ware's Antiquities.

‡ Ibid.



Having returned and held a parliament in Dublin, he next, in the beginning of 1499, marched into Connaught, where there was much disturbance. There he took and garrisoned the castles of Athleague, Roscommon, Tulsk, and Castlereagh.\*

He next held a parliament at his own castle of Castledermot, in the county of Kildare, where he made several useful regulations. Amongst other measures he obtained for the king, an impost of a shilling in the pound on all wares and merchandise, except wine and oil.† An enactment is also mentioned to enforce the use of saddles among the nobility, and to compel them to wear their robes in parliament.

Another violent disturbance broke out in Ulster in the following year (1500); and the earl marched into the country with speed, and quickly reduced it to order. He took the castle of Kinard and gave it into the custody of his nephew Tirlogh O'Niall, and marching to Cork, he appeased the disaffected spirit which was beginning to show itself again, by a mixture of severity and kindness. He enlarged the privileges of the city, but he hanged the mayor.

On the 18th February, Gerald, eldest son to the earl, was appointed lord treasurer of Ireland—a fact which may serve to confirm the impression of his high favour and influence at this period of his life. This favour, while it helped to repress the hostility of his numerous enemies, added fuel to their malice, and at last the general ill-will began to grow to a head. This effect had been retarded by the circumstance that the barons were unaccustomed to act in concert, having been hitherto singly equal to maintain their own quarrels with the king's deputies and give disturbance with impunity. The great authority and active conduct of Kildare, had made it dangerous to rebel; and there was no other Irish baron or chief could venture even a demonstration of hostility. Slowly, however, the sense of a common malice went round, and a combination was formed under the leading of Ulick, lord Clanricard, a powerful noble whom Kildare had thought to secure by giving him his daughter in marriage. From this, however, grew the pretext for dissension: Ulick slighted his wife, and the earl resented his daughter's wrong.

Lord Clanricard was joined by O'Brian, O'Carrol, and many other powerful chiefs, and they levied an army which the annalists and historians describe as the largest that had been collected since the days of Strongbow. Kildare, notwithstanding the great risk of staking the fortune of his house and the stability of his government on the event of so formidable a struggle, drew together his own forces. He was joined by the lords Gormanstown, Slane, Delvin, Killeen, Dunsany, Howth, Trimleston, &c.; with these he marched into Connaught. The armies met on the 19th August, 1504, at Knocktow, near Galway. For some hours the fight was maintained with equal success and much bloodshed on both sides; at last, Clanricard's men gave way and were put to flight with enormous slaughter. The lowest statement

\* Cox. Ware's Antiquities.

† Cox dissents from Ware, as to the date of this impost. But the difference is not material.

(probably the most correct) makes the loss of the defeated party 2000\* men, the book of Howth states it 9000, but this Ware considers to be a mistake. Many prisoners also were taken by the English party, among whom were two sons of Clanricard. Galway and Athenry surrendered to the conqueror who laid waste the country of O'Carrol on his return.

The result of this victory was alike fortunate for the earl and beneficial to the pale, now once more beginning to show signs of revival. Kildare celebrated his triumph by giving thirty tons of wine to his soldiers. He despatched the archbishop of Dublin to carry the account to king Henry, who in recompense gave him the order of the garter.

From this, Ireland enjoyed an unusual interval of tranquillity. But in the years 1504 and 1505, this blessing was balanced by a plague of awful violence and duration. Its effects were aggravated by a famine, consequent on a wet summer and autumn.

In these and the following years, Kildare exercised his authority in peace and honour. In 1508, he held a parliament from which he obtained a subsidy for the king of 13s. 4d. from every 120 acres of arable land.†

In 1509, he was obliged to invade Ulster, but met with no resistance. The same year king Henry VII. died, and Kildare was confirmed in his government by the young king. From this his usual success attended him until his death, which happened in 1513. As he was marching against O'Carrol, he was seized with illness at Athy, the effect of a wound from a shot received some time before from the O'Mores of Leix, and died after a few days' illness, on the 3d September. His body was carried to Dublin and interred in Christ's Church, where he had built Mary's chapel the year before.

He is deservedly praised by all the historians who relate his actions, as the most efficient and useful governor that Ireland had known to the time of his death. His private ambition and party feeling were during his lengthened administration, made always subservient to the interests of the country. His ever prompt activity kept down the spirit of insurrection by timely resistance; and the stern decision of an uncompromising temper, made him an object of fear to the disaffected and of reliance to his friends.

He was thrice married. His first wife died of grief in the year 1495, while he was a prisoner in England; after which he married an English lady, the daughter of Oliver St John, in the county of Wilts. He left a numerous issue by each, and was succeeded by his eldest son Gerald.

\* Ware says 2000 ; Cox, four ; and adds, "it is prodigious that not one Englishman was hurt in this mighty battel."

† Ware's Antiquities. Cox, &c.

## Sir James Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1518.

• SIR JAMES ORMONDE was the illegitimate son of John, sixth earl of Ormonde. As Thomas, the seventh earl, chiefly resided in England, Sir James, who was evidently a person of a very ambitious and enterprising temper, was at the head of the Butler faction in Ireland. His name frequently appears among the most prominent of the turbulent chiefs of his time. He was among the most violent and dangerous as indeed the most powerful of the enemies of the last noticed earl of Kildare. He was left under the protection of Thomas, the seventh earl, his father's brother, who succeeded to the earldom in 1478. He was brought up at the English court by his uncle, and grew into great favour with the king. He seems to have been intrusted with the management of the earl of Ormonde's party in Ireland, where he was soon appointed by the king to offices of trust and authority. In 1498 he is often mentioned as lord treasurer of Ireland. His persevering enmity against the earl of Kildare was shown both by numerous attacks on his friends, and also by accusations and intrigues at the English court. We have already adverted to his meeting in Dublin with the earl for the purpose of explanation: it may be mentioned here more fully, as the best marked incident of Ormonde's history, and as very characteristic of the civilization of the time in which it occurred.

The power of the earl of Kildare had reached a height which imposed on the boldest of his enemies a necessity of conciliation. Sir James Ormonde complained to the earl by letter or messenger, of the calumnies which had been spread to his prejudice, by which he was falsely represented as an enemy to the king's government, and desired a fair hearing that he might justify himself; to this the lord deputy consented, and Sir James entered Dublin at the head of a large body of armed men, and encamped in an abbey in the suburbs, named St Thomas' court. There was at the time a strong prepossession against Sir James, as an exacting and oppressive leader, and his appearance at the head of such a force raised a considerable ferment among the citizens, who feared some treacherous intent and meditated resistance. While this disposition was spreading and acquiring heat, Sir James was carrying on a communication with the lord deputy, to prevail upon him to consent to the meeting he had proposed. As his promises were fair, and the proposals specious, at least, Kildare consented, and a meeting in Patrick's church was fixed.

They met according to this appointment within the cathedral, while their retainers stood without. During their conference, which is said to have been quickly embittered by mutual reproaches, angry words were exchanged between their parties who stood outside. From words the quarrel grew to blows. In their fury, the soldiers of Kildare conceived the notion that this factious tumult in which they were involved, was a scheme of Sir James Ormonde, either to murder the earl, or to seize on the city. Under this, or some such impression, a body of archers



forced their way into the church. Their sudden rush threw Sir James into a violent alarm; he imagined that it was a preconcerted scheme to assassinate him, and ran to the chapter house, into which he entered and secured the door. For a few minutes the confusion must have been very great: the fury of the archers appears in the description of the annalist: "The citizens in their rage imagining that every post in the church had been one of the soldiers, shot hab nab, at random, up to the rood loft, and to the chancel, leaving some of their arrows sticking in the images."\* Kildare, whose intentions were free from any deceit, felt that his honour was at stake, and instantly rebuked his people: following Sir James to the chapter house door, he assured him that no harm should happen him. Ormonde desired his hand upon the promise, and a hole was made in the door for the purpose. But when this was done, Ormonde was struck by a suspicion that it was designed to make him stretch out his hand through the door, and then strike it off, and refused to run this risk. The lord deputy ended the doubt by putting in his own hand: on this Sir James unbarred the door, and they embraced one another in sight of the angry crowd. Thus this strange alarm was quieted; and Sir James, suppressing as he might his excited animosity, they became seemingly reconciled; but, probably, parted greater enemies than ever.

The effect of this incident is said to have endured even beyond the lives of the two persons between whom it occurred, and created a sense of dislike which was long kept up in their posterity.

On the death of the earl of Ormonde, Sir James contrived to take possession of his estates, which, by his great influence and authority with the whole Butler faction, he was in these lawless times enabled to maintain against Sir Pierce Butler, the rightful claimant. It does not appear that Sir Pierce had entered into any immediate course for the recovery of his rights thus usurped. He is mentioned in the peerage as being the direct descendant from Richard, the youngest son of James, third earl of Ormonde.† So remote a degree, though it cannot lessen a right, the creation of positive law, has certainly the effect of lessening the sense of it.

Such is ever the effect of lapse of time, or of any deviation from customary order, because men judge by habit rather than by computation. But at that period, the sense of legal rights was scarcely superior to the claim of usurpation maintained by force; which was still made specious by a confused notion of the rights of conquest. It was the unhappy consequence of this undefined state of personal rights, that usurpation brought with it murder and private war as the resources of justice. Pierce Butler, reduced to great distress by poverty, was also in personal danger, and obliged with his wife to take refuge in the woods. Stanihurst mentions, that so great was their want, that his wife, a daughter of the great earl of Kildare, being advanced in her pregnancy, was reduced to complain of the poorness of her diet, and to say that she was no longer in a condition to live on milk, and entreated her husband that he would procure some wine. To this Sir Pierce answered, that she should "have wine enough

\* Cox.

† Lodge, Archdall.

within twenty-four hours, or feed *alone* on milk." On which, taking his page with him, he went forth to lie in ambush for the usurper of his rights.

The following day as Sir James Ormonde was on his way between Dunmore and Kilkenny, with six horsemen, he was suddenly assailed by Sir Pierce, who rushed upon him from his lurking place, and before he could receive any aid from his followers, ran him through with a spear. This occurrence probably took place in August, 1518. In Ware's *Annals* it is by some unaccountable error placed in 1497: but as the reader may recollect, the seventh earl of Ormonde lived till 1515. It is indeed highly probable, that the error was committed by his son, by whom the *Annals* were arranged from his father's papers.

Sir James Ormonde was known as a person of great ambition, craft, and courage; an excellent soldier, and famed for the use of "his weapon." His favour with the king was in a great measure owing to his valour and activity against Sinnel. By his murder, Sir Pierce recovered his rights, and became eighth earl of Ormonde.

## Maurice, Tenth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A.D. 1520.

THE earls of Desmond, although possessing power, influence, and extent of territory inferior to none of the great barons of English race in Ireland; yet from the remoteness of their possessions, had latterly been less concerned in the affairs and changes of the pale. As the intercourse of the English became more contracted with the decline of their power, and the diminution of their territory, the lords of Desmond became comparatively isolated in the remote province of Munster; and began to perceive the wisdom of keeping their power and persons safe from the arbitrary jurisdiction of the royal governors. The seizure and sudden execution of the eighth earl, father to the Maurice who is here to be noticed, may have much contributed to teach this lesson. The consequence was, that although they occasionally joined in insurrectionary movements, yet they neither exerted themselves prominently, nor were strictly called to account.

Maurice was son to Thomas, the eighth earl, of whom we have already made mention.\* On the execution of Thomas, he was succeeded by James, the ninth earl, elder brother to Maurice. But this James, after twenty years, spent in honour and prosperity, was murdered by his own servants, in his house at Rathkeale, in the county of Limerick, in the year 1487. Maurice succeeded. His first care was to take the plotter of the murder, Shane Mantagh, whom he put to death.

Maurice, though incapacitated from personal exertion by lameness, being obliged to be carried in a horselitter, was called *Bellicosus*, for his warlike character and successes. In 1487, he gained two

battles, sufficiently remarkable to be noticed by most Irish annalists and historians. In one of these he defeated and slew Murchard O'Carrol, chief of Ely, with his brother. In the other, he in like manner, defeated and slew Dermid Macarthy of Desmond—victories which though not gained in the English cause, yet as Leland remarks, contributed to the security of the English pale.

In 1497, he joined Warbeck, and besieged Waterford; but was obliged to raise the siege. Soon after he made a formal submission to the king, who was probably more pleased by the submission, than offended by the crime; he not only forgave Desmond, but granted him "all the customs, cockets, poundage, prize wines, of Limerick, Cork, Kinsale, Baltimore, and Youghall, with other privileges and advantages."\*

Maurice died at Tralee, in 1520, where he was buried in the house of the friars' preachers. He left an only son, who succeeded him.

## Donald O'Donell, Chief of Tirconnel.

DIED A.D. 1456.

THIS descendant of an ancient Irish race, at this period, beginning to take a more prominent place in the annals of Ireland, was elected chief of Tirconnel, in 1454. His competitor Rory O'Donell, was dissatisfied at the choice of the sept. In some time the chief was made prisoner by O'Doherty, and confined in the castle of the Island. Rory now thought that so good an opportunity of rectifying the election of his race, by a method at that time not unfrequent in Irish elections, immediately collected his friends, and betook himself to the place with the design to slay the chief. He set fire to the gate and stairs of the tower, and, but for an accident, the result of his over zeal, was in a fair way to effect his purpose. O'Donell, who saw the proceeding from within, very excusably devised a plan to interrupt his kinsman's patriotic enterprise; he prevailed on his keepers to take off the irons with which he was bound, and immediately betook himself to the top of the tower: there he stood in view of his enemy. Rory was gratified by a sight, which gave him assurance, that the victim of his princely ambition was in his power: he therefore approached in eager haste to urge his people, and inspect the state of the interior, that his rival might not live a moment longer than could be helped. But his rival, was at the same moment busy with notions of nearly the same kind: in the midst of his sanguinary eagerness, as he gazed on the subsiding flames which delayed his vengeance, poor Rory's ambition and resentment were suddenly annihilated by an enormous stone which descended from his rival's hands and stretched him lifeless at the base of the smoking tower. The chief did not live long to fulfil the promise of a reign so well begun. He died in 1456.†

\* Lodge.

† Sir W. Betham's *Irish Antiquarian Researches*.



## Hugh Roe O'Donell.

A.D. 1505.

HUGH ROE O'DONELL was more successful, than the unfortunate person of his race, whose fate we had to describe in our last notice. He succeeded to the chieftainship in 1461, by deposing Tirlogh, who had succeeded Donell in 1456. A quarrel between his sons led to his own deposition in 1497, when he was succeeded by his son Con: but Con's usurpation was brief; his violent death, a few months after, placed his father again at the head of the O'Donells. He filled this honourable station till 1505, when he died in the 78th year of his age.\*

## Gerald, Ninth Earl of Kildare.

THIS earl, it has been already mentioned, was, in 1503, during his father's life, appointed treasurer in Ireland, but did not succeed to the earldom till 1513, when his illustrious father died. He was the only son of his father's first marriage with the daughter of lord Portlester.

His father's death caused much perplexity; it removed the terror and authority of his great name: excited the hopes of the enemies of the pale, and threw a damp over the courage of its friends. The force too which he had collected, at once melted away. Under these discouraging circumstances, no expedient seemed to offer so ready a prospect of relief, as the nomination of his son and successor, Gerald, now lord Kildare. He was nominated lord justice by the council, until the king's pleasure should be known. The king appointed him lord deputy. He followed the active example of his father, vindicating the peace of the country by prompt and successful expeditions into each district in which any demonstration of a hostile character called for his interference. He drove the O'Mores into the woods in 1514, and on his return attacked the O'Reillys, who had made an excursion against the English—he slew Hugh O'Reilly, and razed the castle of Cavan. In the following year he went over to England, leaving lord Gormanston deputy in his place. On his return he convened a parliament. At this, it appears that the bills thought necessary were prepared in England, and sent over with directions that no other business should be entered upon by this parliament. The discussion of these bills, the preparation of which seems to have been a chief object of Kildare's visit to England, occupied a considerable time—at least the parliament was continued to 1517, by successive prorogations.

In 1516, this earl passed a year of signal activity. He invaded Imaly, slew Shane O'Toole in battle, and sent his head, after the manner of the time, a barbarous trophy to the lord mayor of Dublin. Ware mentions one of the numerous prophecies which, from time to time,

\* Sir W. Betham's *Irish Antiquarian Researches*.

have amused the native credulity of the simple, but imaginative Irish. This old prophecy foretold, that in the year 1516, the Irish nation, being at the lowest ebb of its prosperity, was to become then powerful and warlike. "The author of a book," writes Ware, "called the *People's Welfare*, gives a touch of this prophecy; it is extant under the title of *Ireland's Pandar*."\* Ireland has had Pandars enough to administer such illusions in the same name, and under a like pretence;† but this was a work of great research and practical knowledge, of which the views were founded on extensive and just observation, and quoted as of considerable authority. We shall have to notice Panderus again. He is supposed to have lived from Edward IV. to Henry VIII.

In 1517, Kildare pursued his successes in Ulster, in battle, foray, skirmish, and siege; discomfiting the Magennises, taking Dungannon, and bringing back an ample spoil to Dublin. These successes were sadly qualified by the loss of his countess, the lady Elizabeth de la Zouche, who died soon after his return. This lady is mentioned by Ware as "commendable for her excellent qualities." She was interred at Kilcullen, near her lord's mother, (Alison Eustace.)

Many circumstances, seemingly slight in their nature, were working to the disadvantage of this earl. The great rival family of Butler were again represented by a person of ambitious and intriguing temper. We have already mentioned, in our notice of Sir James Ormonde, how Sir Pierce Butler, having been excluded from his rights, recovered them by the assassination of the wrongful occupant. This Sir Pierce, now the earl of Ormonde, with the usual policy of his courtly race, pursued his ambition more by cultivating the grace of the English monarch and his minister the great Wolsey, than by playing the more dangerous and uncertain game of provincial hostilities and alliances pursued by his rivals. He stood high with the king and his minister, and was, it is mentioned, strongly instigated by his wife—herself a Geraldine, and probably opposed to her kinsman with the implacable animosity of family hate—to undermine the favour of Kildare. This earl was, like most of the lords of his race, more apt to lead his faction to the field, than to bow with supple grace before the tyrant of the English court, or administer dexterous flatteries to the accessible infirmity of Wolsey.

To Wolsey, the character, conduct, and services of Kildare, were represented unfavourably; the representations were, it is likely, not without truth, but they were one-sided and partial. The services of Kildare were probably regulated on the common principle of public service, as it was understood in those days—that is, with great latitude. In performing their public duties, the Irish barons did not lay aside their private interests: nor indeed was this quite possible. The whole tissue of the affairs of the island were interwoven with those of the leading barons of this great family. Nor could the earl of Kildare, without a political suicide, separate his interests as chief from his duties as viceroy. It must, therefore, have been easy for factious hostility to find matter for charges like these—1st, "That he had enriched himself and followers by unjust seizure of the king's revenues and

\* Ware's Antiquities.

† Panderus "Salus Populi."

crown lands; and 2d, That he had alliance and correspondence with divers of the Irish, enemies to the state.”\*

Though the earl was acquitted of the express charges, when in 1519 he was summoned over to England, yet the work of enmity was not the less effective; for by means of the exposure of the policy by which Ireland was governed, and the confused state of its interests, it was made plainly apparent to the English council that there were great objections to the administration of any Irish baron. It was, therefore, now resolved to send over Thomas, lord Surrey, lord high admiral of England, with a sufficient armed force to subdue and awe the insurgent chiefs.

During his stay in England, the earl married the lady Elizabeth Gray, daughter to the marquis of Dorset. This match secured him a powerful influence at court, and had long the effect of counteracting the hostility of his enemies. He was directly taken into the king's favour and accompanied him into France, where he was present at the celebrated field of the cloth of gold, held between the French and English kings in the same year.

To pursue the remainder of his political course, without a violent interruption to the history of the country, we must now state some particulars concerning the administration of lord Surrey. He was the son of the first duke of Norfolk, whom he afterwards succeeded as second duke. He came to Ireland on the 23d of May, 1520, with an army of a thousand men, and a lifeguard of one hundred. His first contest was with Con O’Niall. O’Niall had probably a natural sense of hostility towards the successor of his kinsman, Kildare, and acted with the design to make him uneasy in his seat, and by raising as much disturbance as he could, help to work out the proof of the useful proposition, that none but the earl of Kildare could preserve the peace of the country. It seems to have been his hope to take the new governor by surprise; but the alertness, and military promptness of Surrey prevented him, and he felt it necessary to retreat into Ulster. His conduct is traced to the suggestion of Kildare, and the correspondence of this earl's enemies is filled with such complaints. It is indeed evident, that this was the interest of the earl at the time, and there is sufficient proof that he thought so himself. In common with the other great lords of the pale, he derived much of his power, and all his political weight from the cultivation of alliances of this nature. The English of the pale were protected, governed, and oppressed, by means of a power which, while it was wielded by their own lords, was yet thoroughly Irish in its composition. They were, consequently, become unwarlike in their habits, and unprovided with proper arms. Their great barons, holding, in fact, the place and power of great Irish chiefs, and regarded in this light by the natives, contrived to avail themselves of the double advantages of this twofold position. Their power and possessions had a foundation, in a great measure, independent of the English interest. The armies they led, like those they opposed, were tumultuary; they were sufficient to collect the plunder of a district, and to neutralize hostilities for the moment, and they sought no more.

\* Lodge.



In the confusion thus preserved, lay the secret of their strength: the individual was above the law. An English force adequate for the purpose, and adequately maintained, would quickly end this state of turbulent confusion and arbitrary licence. Thus, while the prospect of such an interference could not fail to be welcomed with delight by the large class which was altogether dependent on tranquil industry, and subject to the varied eddies of this whirlpool of perpetual movement, it could not be regarded with any complacency by the earl of Kildare. It may therefore be admitted, on the ground of such documentary or inferential proofs as have been advanced by historians, that he adopted, at once, the obvious, yet rash and dangerous course of exciting hostility against Surrey's government. Accordingly, this nobleman soon found sufficient indications of this influence. His time and resources were lamentably wasted in enterprises which had no important result. At considerable cost, and frequent danger of his life, he traversed hostile provinces, and pursued the insurgent chief to his tower; but a submission and an empty pledge ended the affair, until it next became the marauder's convenience or pleasure to ride out on a party of plunder. The king had exhausted his father's accumulated hoards, on the gorgeous tinsel of the fields of Ardres, and wrote to his lieutenant in Ireland, that "Considering the scantitie and dearthe of vitailles in those parties, the horsemen cannot conveniently live upon their wages at the said rate, [the allowance of government for their support,] therefore be he contented that ye suffer them to take *cune and livery*, after the ancient accustomable manner there used, &c."\* Such was the oppressive, unpopular, and illegal resource on which the government was thrown. From the same document it appears, that the complaints against Kildare had formed the chief substance of the representations of the Irish government. The king acknowledging the complaint, tells the lord lieutenant and council, that, "as touching the sedicious practisis, conspiracies, and subtle driftes of the erle of Kildare, his servantes, aiders, and assisters, we have committed the examination and trial of that matier to the moost Reverend Fader in God, our right entierly beloved Counsaillour, Chancellour, Cardinal and Archbishop of Yorke, &c., &c."†

The whole interval of Surrey's administration was a succession of perplexing alarms, and fatiguing, and often dangerous marches, in which the object to be attained was by no means adequate to the fatigue and danger. In one of his expeditions, lord Surrey had the vizor struck off from his helmet by a shot fired from a thick wood as he passed; and he was perhaps soon anxious to escape from a warfare in which fatigue and danger were to be thus endured without fame or honourable success. The greatest success was to bring the insurgents to the encounter; dangerous in the lurking places, into which they seemed to melt away at the approach of an English force; if they were caught in the field, it was but the slaughter of a barbarous rabble, and had no consequence. The war was one of depredation and burning, and not of arms. The chiefs had comparatively little to lose; hostilities began on their side with a knowledge of the consequences,

\* Letter from Henry VIII.—*State Papers*.

† *State Papers*.

and a sufficient preparation to save themselves from them. They could drive away their cattle at the approach of the enemy; and, when any serious danger appeared, it was time enough to propose peace, swear allegiance, and observe the engagement so long as was convenient. Many of these chiefs excused their hostilities by pleading the influence of Kildare; and there is much reason to suspect, that the excuse was not without better proofs than mere assertions. A letter from Kildare to a chief of the name of O'Carrol, is quoted by Leland, as having been given to Surrey in proof of this earl's practices. It does not, however, bear the degree of evidence which the historian's statement seems to imply. The letter was not itself forthcoming when demanded by Surrey; but after much pressing and urgent persuasion, the contents of the letter were recollected and sworn to by Donogh O'Carrol. The following is the form of this person's deposition:—"He [Donogh O'Carrol] saith that in Easter week last past, the abbot of Monastri-cow, called Heke, brought a letter to O'Carrol, out of England, on the behalf of the earl of Kildare, wherein was written these words: 'There is no Irishman in Ireland I am better contented with than you; and whenever I come into Ireland I shall do you good for any thing that ye shall do for me; and any displeasure that I have done to you, I shall make you amends therefor. Desiring you to keep good peace to Englishmen, till an English deputie come there; and when any English deputy shall come thither, do your best to make war upon Englishmen there, except such as be towards me, whom ye know well yourself.'"

Surrey's representations, founded mainly on such evidence, had the effect of prepossessing the English monarch and his minister against Kildare; and when this lord lieutenant was recalled, after two years' continuance in the country, he was commanded to commit the administration to the earl of Ormonde, the rival and enemy of Kildare. Surrey's government had been productive of much good; for though he had not been enabled to remedy the vicious state of the country's laws and customs, or to put a stop to the numerous abuses which depressed and retarded the prosperity of the pale, still the mere abstinence from wrong, and the cessation of partiality, oppression, and misgovernment in the seat of administration, were felt as great and rare blessings, which shed lustre on his government, and caused regret at his departure.

The elevation of an inveterate enemy to a position which empowered him to encroach on his rights, and endanger his power, made Kildare's presence in Ireland necessary. Ormonde had the will, and many pretexts for the persecution of the Geraldine faction; and there were even territorial questions liable to be raised between these powerful earls, which it would not be well to leave undefended. Kildare returned; his influence was increased by the unpopularity of his rival. The government of Pierce earl of Ormonde was unpopular, and Kildare soon found that he might, with safety, avow his enmity. At first, he had evidently resolved to preserve appearances. His character had been shaken by the complaints of Surrey, but Ormonde was himself

\* State Papers, Vol. ii. Part III. p. 45.



involved in the whispers of faction, and liable to be denounced by his victims or his enemies. Having begun, therefore, by efforts to support the deputy, Kildare soon began to enter on the more congenial course of factious underworking, so familiar to the time.

The dissensions between the earls were brought to an issue by an accidental circumstance. James Fitz-Gerald, a relation and friend of Kildare, meeting a favourite servant of Ormonde's on his way to Kilkenny, slew him. The earl of Ormonde, in his anger, transmitted a complaint to the English court, which was retaliated by the complaints and accusations of Kildare. Commissioners were appointed to try the merits of the allegations on both sides in Ireland. Here Kildare had, however, a twofold advantage; his faction in Ireland, and his wife's powerful relations in England, combined to turn the scale of judgment. By the first, the selection of the commissioners was influenced; and by the second, if necessary, the representations and testimonies must have been affected. The commission decided for him. His triumph was completed by the recall of his adversary, in whose place he was appointed as lord deputy. The whole of this transaction was evidently preconcerted in England; the commission was managed by the marquis of Dorset, and the commissioners, Sir Ralph Egerton, Sir Andrew Fitz-Herbert, and James Denton, dean of Litchfield, were appointed, and their instructions provided for the event by directing that Kildare, on his acquittal, should be named deputy in place of his accuser. This view is confirmed by the fact, that the indenture between the king and the earl bears date prior to this transaction.\*

The triumph of Kildare was swelled by the joy of his numerous and powerful faction; but circumstances soon arose which involved him in trouble and danger. The earl of Desmond, whose remote position, rather than any inferiority of power, kept him apart from the main course of Irish affairs, had, it is stated by all the old historians, entered into a treasonable correspondence with the king of France, who was at the time at war with Henry; but peace being made between the kings, this correspondence was thus exposed. Kildare was ordered to march into Munster, and to apprehend Desmond. This was, however, a command opposed to all Kildare's principles of action and politics. Desmond was his kinsman, his ally, next to himself too, the most powerful and popular chief in Ireland. Formal obedience could not be avoided; he marched against Desmond, but there was a secret understanding between these great chiefs, and nothing was done in earnest. Kildare turned on his march to assist his kinsman O'Niall, against O'Donel. He also attacked the Birnes to serve Desmond. A letter of his to Desmond had been intercepted by his sister, the wife of Ormonde, and is said to have been used against him.† The recent publication of the state papers of this reign by government, has placed before us a more detailed and expanded view of these transactions than we can allow ourselves to enter upon, or than the interest of the period would justify. The principal charges occupy mainly

\* Cox.

† This is verified by Kildare's own admission. See State Papers, Vol. III. Part ii. p. 121.



the several representations on either side; forming alliances with the king's enemies, seizing on the king's land, or withholding his rents and subsidies. These statements were such as to have inevitably prejudiced both parties, and it is probable that the king and English council were fully impressed with a conviction which had so often before been the inference from similar brawls, that the country should be governed by an English governor only. Kildare's account of the letter represents it as written and intercepted long previous to the recent transactions with Desmond. He asserts that it had been seized by his own sister, Ormonde's wife, on the occasion of his messenger, a Fitz-Gerald, having slept at her house; that lord Ormonde had used it against him on the commission, when the commissioners had set it aside as proceeding "of no evil intent." This account may be the truth, but it is also very likely that the letter had a distinct bearing which cast an unfavourable light on the recent accusation. The earl was recalled to answer the charges against him. From the mass of letters and articles of charge against Ormonde, we will extract a portion of one short letter, less formal and more characteristic than the long documents which precede it.

"Kildare to Henry VIII.\*

\* \* \* \* \* "In my most humble maner beseeching your grace not to regard such untrue surmises of myne adversaries, till the truth bee tryed; trusting, and knowing right well, that I never did be-thought any thing whereby I should deserve your moost drad displeasure, where unto I was not only bound by my duty of allegiance, but also for that in my youth I was brought up in your service, and when I came to discretion, it pleased you to make me your tresurer, and consequently [subsequently] your deputie, and gave me landis to the yearely value of 100 markes. My first wife [Elizabeth Zouch] was your poor kinswoman; and my wife now [Lady Elizabeth Gray] in like maner. And in all my troubles before this, by untrue surmises against me, ye were good and gracious unto me, which ought enough suffice to bind, to owe unto your grace, my true and faithful service. And though there were no such cause, yet could I find in my heart to serve your grace before all the princes in the world, as well for the great nobleness, valiant prowess and equity, which I ever noted in your most noble person, as also for the vertuous qualities wherein ye excell all other princes. And besides that, I do know right well, if I did the contrary, it shulde bee the distruccion of me and my sequel for ever. As knoweth Almighty God, who ever have you in his tender tuicion. From my manor of Maynoth, the 17th daye of August [1525]."

Kildare was called to stand his trial in the following year (1526), and had a narrow escape. The articles of his impeachment were, that 1st, He had disobeyed the king's command by not taking the earl of Desmond. 2d, That he had contracted alliances with Irish enemies. 3d, That he had caused certain good subjects to be hanged, for no other reason than they were friends or favourites to the family of the

\* State Papers, Vol. iii. p. 125.

Butlers; and lastly, that he held private intelligence with O'Niall, O'Connor, and other Irish lords, to make an inroad into Ormonde's territories.\* In spite of the very strong and numerous charges contained in the letters and memorials of Ormonde, some of these charges impress the idea, that evidence of any very serious delinquency must have been wanting. The charges, most of them appear to be revivals of accusations long disposed of by the commission already mentioned. On these charges, Wolsey contrived to obtain a sentence of death against Kildare. Kildare, however, knew the true source of this decision. The lieutenant of the Tower was his warm friend, and it was agreed that he should repair to the king, as if to take his commands on the affair. There was little time to lose; Kildare was, most probably, to be beheaded in the morning early. It was late, and there was perhaps much uncertainty as to the king's being reached at the hour of midnight. Fortunately for Kildare, no such difficulty occurred: his friend stated the fact, and asked the king's pleasure. The king was much affected and surprised; the cardinal, to make the matter sure, had kept it from his knowledge, and this malicious privacy, was now favourable to his intended victim; Henry might easily have been talked into a very opposite feeling; his tyranny was the result of deliberation, his better feelings were the impulse of the moment; these were now quickened by indignation, for he saw through the conspiracy, and his arbitrary temper, prompt whether in good or evil, suggested a decided course. He forbade the execution, and prohibited any further proceeding against the earl. He took off his ring and gave it to the lieutenant to bear to Wolsey as a token of his authority. The interposition of his friends had now time to work, and the earl was liberated on their security, that he would appear when called upon to answer such charges as should be made against him. His securities were the marquis of Dorset, the countess dowager of Dorset, and several members of the family of Grey, with Sir Henry Guilford, John Abbott, and Sir John Zouch. Cox gives a curious and highly characteristic report of the speeches of Wolsey and Kildare, on the trial above referred to; but as they seem altogether unauthentic, and still more because they are too long, we omit to extract them. Cox doubts this whole account of the earl's condemnation, and he may be right enough. He asserts that there is no authority for it.

It is certain that Kildare was taken quickly into favour with the king. An extract from a letter, written by archbishop Inge and lord chief justice Birmingham, to Wolsey, dated 3d February, 1528, throws some additional light on the king's great partiality towards this earl. It also exhibits the strength of his party, and his great power in Ireland. "Thabsence of thise bothe lordes hathe greatlie enhaunsed and cou-raiged our souveraine lordes Hirish and Englisshe rebelles; whereby the londe is alway in danger, and wolde be ferr more, werr nat the feree of their retourn.

"And now, within this thre or foure daies, there is privey reapor-te, that therll of Kildair, for som his mysdemeanours of late, is committed unto the tour. If it so be, the seid erll is mervellous, and hathe

\* Ware.



been unknowen to us and other divers the kinges true subjectes, of this his londe. In consideration wherof, it was never so great nede to provide for defens of this poor londe, in our daies as nowe; for the vice deputie\* is nat of power to defend the Englisshrie; and yet the poor people is ferr more chargid and oppressed by hym, than they have been, th<sup>e</sup> erll of Kildair being here. He hathe no great londes of his owne, and the kinges revenues, besides the subsidie, is skante ynowe to pay the kinges officers ther ordinarie fees; and the subsidie may nat be hadde, till it be grannted by perliament, without the whiche the deputie hathe full litle to manteyn his chargies. Th<sup>e</sup> erll of Kildair coude help hymself, in taking advantage of Hirishmen, better then any other here."

The state of affairs in Ireland was such as to cause serious alarm in the pale and among the members of the administration. On his departure, the earl had committed the government to his brother, the lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald of Leixlip: the annalists briefly tell us that he was removed; and his removal may be regarded as a fresh demonstration of the enmity of the faction opposed to the earl. Richard Nugent baron Delvin was substituted; but he was soon found to be unequal to the difficulties of a situation, which demanded at the time extensive power and influence. O'Connor Fally, the ally and kinsman of the Geraldines, made an irruption into the pale, and carried off a large prey into Offaly; on receiving information of this, Delvin ordered the stoppage of his pension, claimed by O'Connor as due upon certain plough-lands in Meath. A meeting was proposed at Sir W. Darcy's castle, near Ruthven; but O'Connor, whose réal object was far from a desire of accommodation, contrived an ambuscade, by which he intercepted the deputy, and made him a prisoner. The historical writers on this period state, that lord Ossory (Ormonde) was now appointed in place of the imprisoned lord, and that he used every effort for his deliverance, but without effect. It is certain that considerable efforts were made by the earl of Ossory and his son, for the deliverance of Nugent; and we think it likely, that the correspondence from which this fact appears must have misled the historians; they inferred the appointment of lord Ossory from the authoritative position in which he appears during the transaction of so important a negotiation. But it seems nearly certain, from a letter of the Irish council to Wolsey on the occasion, that Thomas Fitz-Gerald was appointed by them; and it is also little probable that he would enter with any sincerity into the negotiations for the liberation of Nugent; O'Connor having probably acted as the friend of the earl, and partisan of the Geraldines.

O'Connor's claim is mentioned in the letter of the Irish council, from which our information is drawn; and from this document it appears, that they had urged the payment of his pension. This claim is also mentioned by Inge and Birmingham, in a letter to the duke of Norfolk, in which they state, that there had been continual contention on the point, "sithe the earl of Kildare left this."† Lord Butler, son to lord Ormonde (Ossory at the time), mentions in a letter to archbishop Inge, his own visit to O'Connor's house, where he slept and was,

\* Richard Nugent, lord Delvin.

† State Papers.



with some difficulty, permitted to speak to Nugent, in presence of the O'Conors. He then mentions, that he contrived to bring away Cahir O'Connor (who was "to be the next O'Connor"), as a protection, and that he brought him with him to his father; at his father's, they prevailed on him to promise to join their party, if his brother would not "be conformable to reason." O'Connor's chief stipulation was, that the king should not suffer the earl of Kildare to take revenge on him for taking part in the king's quarrel. Lord Butler adds, "surely, my lord, many great wise men that I have spoken with, since this misfortune happened, think precisely that it comes through the abetment of the earl of Kildare, his counsellors and band; and that they look for much more mischief, if that you see not this substantially ordered. Therefore, my lord, at the reverence of God, look substantially at this matter, and beware whom you trust that you have trusted of this band [party]. I have many things to say to your lordship, that I dare not write," &c. It would be a vain accumulation of parallel authorities to extract the abundant passages of an authentic correspondence which exhibit the sufficiently evident state of party feeling on either side. One sentence from a letter written at this time by the duke of Norfolk, probably contains the most important commentary upon the whole of these transactions. "The malice between the earls of Kildare and Ossory, is, in my opinion, the only cause of the ruin of that poor land." It is also obvious, from another letter written to Wolsey, by the same nobleman, that his opinion was for sending over Kildare, as the best course under the circumstances.\*

Wolsey's own opinion seems to have been formed on something of a compromise between the extreme opinions of the opposite parties; he advised the commission of the administration to the Butlers, but still so as to communicate the impression to the Irish, that Kildare, who was nominally still deputy, should soon be sent over. For this reason, also, he would not advise that this earl should be discharged of the office; and further, that he thought it expedient to impress him with a sense of responsibility. It is evident through the entire of the long paper,† from which this opinion is taken, that he attributes the main disturbances to the influence of Kildare. The following extract may satisfy the reader:—"Thies folowing bee the causes, whiche movethe the saide lorde cardinall to thinke, in his pore judgement, that the erle of Kildare shuld not bee put from his rome at this tyme, but the same to bee deferred, untill a more mature consultation were taken and had therein; soo that, upon his discharge, substanciall direction ymmediately mought bee taken for the defence of the said lande, in thavoiding of suche perill and dannger, as mought folowe.

"The firste cause is, that syns the harveste and collecte is nowe at hande, by reason thereof, no provision canne bee sente from hens, in tyme for the withstanding thereof, but that it suld bee in the powre of the Irishe rebelles, combined to gidder, to distroye and devaste the hoole Englishery, if, by good wisdom, dexteritie, and pollicie, they bee not conteyned by dulce and faire meanes, and somme hope of the erle of Kildares retourne: for it is greatly to bee fered, that the said

\* Letter to Wolsey. *State Papers*, Ib. p. 135.

† *State Papers*, Ib. p. 136.

erle of Kildares kynnysfolkes, servanntes, and suche other wild Irishe lordis (with whome the said erle hathe, and hathe had, intelligence), if they shall perceiue that he is clerely excludid from his office, and in the kingis displeasure, they shall peradventure, for revenging thereof, secing they may nowe commodiously, in maner without resistance, doo the same, over ronne the hoole Englishe boundes and pale, and doo suche high displeasure, as woll not, withoute an army royall, and mervailous great expensis, bee redubbid or repayred hereafter; where as they, being in somme hope, and not in utter disperation of the said erles retourne, there is some apparence that they woll forbere from doing the said extreme hurtis, and soo, by such meanes, the said dangers maye bee wisely put over, till other better provysion shall bee made and devised for withstanding of their malicious attemptates.

“The second cause, why there shuld bee none other deputie made at this tyme thene, is, that as long as the said erle of Kildare is not dischargid of his rome, he shalbe aferd that any thing shuld bee done or attemptid, to the great hurte of the Englishery, by those that he hathe intelligence with, or any others, supposing that the same mought be layed and arrected unto his charge; forasmoeche as he standeth onerate, as yet, as the kingis deputie of that lande: where as he, being thereof discharged, shall litle or nothing care, what may comme of the said land, or what hurte or dammage bee inferrid thereunto.”

Lord Ossory was soon after sent over as deputy; and the lord chancellor having died of the sweating sickness, which was this year (1528) very prevalent and fatal in Ireland, a creature of Wolsey's was appointed, with the well understood purpose of giving all annoyance possible to the earl of Kildare. The earl on his part, sent over his daughter, lady Slane, to stir up O'Niall and O'Conor, his friends and kinsmen, to oppose and thwart the lord deputy. She was, as Cox observes, “unhappy in being successful;” having thus caused great confusion and devastation,\* which ultimately told with nearly fatal weight against the earl himself.

For the present, however, affairs began to wear a favourable aspect for Kildare. For although his practices were thoroughly known to all parties, and fully understood by the king, they had not the effect of prejudicing his reputation with the council, or of causing any serious displeasure in Henry's mind. His misdeeds were consistent with the principles of the age, and practised by his rivals and opponents according to their power. The one question looked upon was expediency, and Kildare's great power for good or evil, suggested the trial of making him a friend, and securing his good offices by favourable conditions. In pursuance of this object, the king determined to liberate the earl, and send him over with Sir William Skeffington, who was in 1529 appointed deputy to the duke of Richmond. The duke was made lord lieutenant, and held the office for life. Though it was thought inexpedient to intrust the earl with the government, or in any way to increase powers already too large for the peace of the country, yet his

\* Letter from Ossory to Wolsey.—*State Papers*, p. 143. See also the letter which follows from lord Butler, and the Paper of Instructions from the deputy and council, p. 145.



pride was to be conciliated, and his good offices secured. The instructions to Skeffington were prepared accordingly; particular stress is laid upon the importance of keeping the peace between "the king's well beloved cousins, Kildare, Desmond, and Ossory," as a principal means to preserve the peace of the country, and consult its interests. Amongst these instructions in which the deputy is desired to call a parliament—to get a subsidy before its sitting, to charge the lands of the clergy, to repress military exactions—he is also specially desired to assist the earl of Kildare in his enterprises.\* The paragraph is worth extracting. "And whereas therle of Kyldare hath made faithfull promise unto the kynges highness to employe and endeavor hym selfe, to the uttermost of his power, for the annoyance of the kynges sayd rebellious subjectes of the wyld Irishry, as well by makynge excourses upon them as otherwise; farasmuche as the men of warre, now sent oute of this realme with the sayde deputie, shall move in suche ease, doo right good stede to the sayd erle, in such exployttes as he shall make, whene the sayde deputie shall not fortune to proceede therunto hym selfe, shall, at the requisicion of the sayd erle, send unto hym the sayd men of warre, or as many of them as he shall requier for makynge of suche exployttes, reserving a convenient number of them to remayne and attend upon hym selfe; and the proffyttes of suche imposicions, that is to say, of bestes or other thyng, that at an entre or exployte shalbe imponed or had, by way of patysment or agreement upon thenemyse, to be alwayese the moyte answered to the kynges highnes, to thandes of the sayde undertresawrer, and the other moyte to renue to therle of Kyldare, yf he shall make thexploite, and putt the imposicion, and to his company not havynge the kynges wages, to be ordred and divided by his discrecion, as hath bene accustomed."†

The arrival of Kildare excited among his friends and powerful party, a sensation of great joy. He was, together with the deputy, received by a procession of the citizens, near St Mary's abbey.‡ His conduct was, for some time, conformable to the expectations of the government. He probably aided the deputy in an invasion of the O'Mores; and in the following year (1531), he certainly accompanied him in an expedition into Ulster.

The habits of Kildare were factious; he was not likely to submit with much patience to have his predilections and animosities curbed by one whom he must have regarded as an inferior: it was not long before ill-will began to grow up between him and the deputy, who appears to have soon entered into a friendly understanding with the earl of Ossory. The death of Wolsey, which occurred in the year at which we are arrived, gave also an impulse to the ambition of Kildare. Both he and the deputy now commenced their efforts to undermine each other in the favour of the king. With Skeffington was joined the Butler faction, and their various correspondence, which, if quoted here, would appear as the repetition of the same characteristic complaints and charges of which the reader is now fully aware, must have at length produced a strong prejudice against the earl in the English council. He became at last so impatient, that he could no longer be

\* State Papers.

† *Ib.*, Vol. ii. p. 150.

‡ Ware.



content to suffer their efforts for his overthrow to pass unresisted. His enemies were superior in the game of intrigue, cabal, and private diplomacy: his character was framed for less artificial courses, and in going over to speak for himself, Kildare undoubtedly best consulted his own interests; with the warm and arbitrary temper of Henry, which often led him to act with independent decision on the impulse or conviction of the moment, the frank and hardy simplicity of the earl was likely to have more influence than those refined and courtly arts, of which experience had taught him the true value.

He went over in 1532, and so managed matters at court, that with the help of his English friends he prevailed to have Skeffington removed, and himself appointed deputy in his place. He was as usual welcomed with acclamations in Dublin, when he received the sword from the hands of his enemy. Instead, however, of recollecting the example of his father, and the experience of his own life, and confirming the advantages he had gained by a prudent self-control, and by conciliating enemies for whom he was no match at their own game, the earl acted with precipitate rashness, and only recognized his character as governor, as the means of success in the party hostilities into which he threw himself with increased infatuation of spirit. He made a furious incursion into the districts of Kilkenny, and committed devastation on Lord Ossory's lands; he encouraged the O'Nials in an attack on the English villages in Louth. The clamour of an irritated and increasing faction grew louder, and their accusations more weighty. Against this menacing juncture of affairs, Kildare's power and spirit rather than his discretion maintained him for a while. He was not solicitous to gain friends, and carried all his objects with a high hand. He married his daughters to O'Connor Faly, and to O'Carrol, and the alliances which thus strengthened him in the country, helped to confirm the reports of his accusers.

He called a parliament in Dublin, in the May of the next year 1533. Its acts were not important; when it was over he invaded the country of Ely O'Carrol, at the desire of his son-in-law, Ferganim O'Carrol, who asserted himself to be the chief of that district. In this affair Kildare received a bullet in the thigh. Ware tells that on this occasion, a soldier who was standing near observed the earl show some signs of pain, and said, "My lord, why<sup>\*</sup> do you sigh so, I was myself thrice shot with bullets, and I am now whole." "I wish," replied the earl, "you had received the fourth in my stead." A letter in the state papers from "Cowley to Cromwell," adverts to a report prevalent at this time that the "lord of Kildare was shot with a hand gun through the side under the ribs, and so lyeth in great danger."

In the year 1533, a deputation was sent over to England, from the Irish council, with representations of the state of the country, and private instructions to lay every thing amiss to the charge of Kildare. This commission was trusted to John Allen, Master of the Rolls. The written instructions are published in the *State Papers*, and convey a just notion of the low state of the pale at the time. We shall therefore enumerate the heads of complaint, from that document. It begins by stating that "the lande" is fallen into such decay, that the English language, dress and laws are not used, except within a com-

pass of about twenty miles. This evil is attributed first and chiefly to taking of coyne and livery, "without order, after men's own sensual appetites;" also "cuddies' gartie, taking of caanes for felonies, murders, and all other offences." Secondly, the disuse of arms among the English, who formerly practised archery, and kept stout English servants able to defend them; instead of which they had now in course of time fallen into the custom of employing native servants, who could "live hardily without bread and other good vietuals;" they also preferred Irish tenants, because they could make them pay higher rents, and submit to "other impositions," which English husbandmen could not afford to give. Thirdly, it is alleged, that the lords of the pale, instead of retaining soldiers in their castles at their own cost, for the defence of the pale, that they kept them at the expense of the king's poor subjects, on whom they were a severe burthen. Fourthly, they complain of the "liberties," kept by the great lords, by which the king was defrauded of his revenues. A still more injurious abuse, was the payment of "black rent," to the native chiefs for their forbearance and protection, by which they were encouraged in violence, and enriched at the expense of the English. To this complaint it is added, that when they committed their robberies on the king's subjects, and were pursued by an English force, the lords deputy instead of restoring the property thus recovered to the people who had been plundered, kept it to enrich themselves. Fifthly, they attribute these evils to the appointment of Irish deputies, and also to the frequent change of deputies. Sixthly, the negligence in keeping the king's records. Seventhly and lastly, they complain of the king having lost and given away his manors, lordships, &c., so that he had not left any resources in the country for the maintenance of his government. This paper of instructions is signed by the bishops of Armagh, Dublin, Meath, Kildare, the abbots of St Mary's abbey, and Thomas' court, and by lords Gormanstown, Trimleston, &c. In an annexed paper, they propose answerable remedies for all these abuses; and among other things state, that "there is grown such a rooted dissension between the earls of Kildare and Ossory, that in our opinions it is not likely, and the experience of many times proved manifesteth the same, to bring them to good conformitie, especially if either of them be deputie, or aspire to that roome." Such was probably the hint on which Allen was to speak; and such were the various topics on which the earl was assailable.

These representations were backed by an ample correspondence in which the same complaints and suggestions were urged with the added weight of private communication. Among the documents appertaining to this time, is a lengthened statement not inappropriately called a "boke," by the writer, which sets the disorders of the period in the strongest light. Amongst other things, it states with considerable force the evils arising from the great power acquired by Kildare. We shall have to recur to this document hereafter.

The result of all these representations to Kildare was unfortunate. He received an order to go over into England, that he might answer the charges against him. Kildare was alarmed; he sent over his wife to stir the zeal of her own powerful kindred in his behalf, to have the



order revoked. In the meantime he found some pretence in the disordered state of affairs to delay his own journey. The subterfuge was however of no avail; he was again ordered over, and directed to commit the government during his absence to some one for whose conduct he could be answerable. Even in his fear, the habitual care of his own power was uppermost in Kildare's mind: he garrisoned his castles and armed them from the king's ordnance, in defiance of an express prohibition. His greatest and most fatal error, was the committing the government to his own son, the lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald, a youth without experience, and not above twenty-one years of age. The fatal consequences to the earl, the numerous members of this great family, and to the unhappy youth himself, must be separately related. Excited to rebellion by the artifice of his father's enemies, a few months closed his rash career. The earl died of grief in the Tower, in the chapel of which he was buried, 12th December, 1534.\* An act of attainder was passed against him and his family, but his son Gerald was afterwards restored to the title and estates.

The college of Maynooth was founded by this earl in 1521.

### Lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald.

BORN A. D. 1513.—BEMBEADED, A. D. 1536.

As the best continuation of the history of the events mentioned in the previous memoir, we shall here subjoin some account of the brief and tragic career of the unfortunate Thomas Fitz-Gerald, son to the powerful earl last noticed.

On the earl's departure for England, he committed the government to lord Thomas, his eldest son, not yet more than twenty-one years of age. The act was in the highest degree rash and fatal; but the earl did not neglect to give his son such prudent advice, that if it be not recollected how wide is the distinction between sensible reasoning and prudent conduct, one may wonder that the giver had not acted more prudently himself.

This imprudent commission might have been attended with no ill consequences, if the youthful deputy had no enemies to deal with, but those of the pale; for he was brave, alert, and possessed of no small military talent. But the danger of his situation arose from those who should have been his friends and trusty advisers; the powerful faction which had undermined the earl, were now prepared to follow up the blow, by taking advantage of the inexperience and impetuosity of his son. They began with artful attempts to provoke his temper by petty slights, and it became evident to the youth that there was a cabal raised against him in the council. A few trivial anecdotes are told by Cox, which have their place at this stage of his history. At a banquet, he met with Allen, Master of the Rolls, a bitter enemy of his father's; the conversation turned upon heraldry: in its course, Allen turning to the deputy, said, that "his lordship's house gave a marmo-

\* State Papers, lxxxvi.



set, whose property it was to eat her tail; to whom the deputy replied, that he had been fed by his tail, and should take care that his tail did not eat him." On another occasion he kept the council waiting for some hours, when the archbishop of Dublin at last grew impatient, and asked if it were not a pretty matter that they should stay so long for a boy. Lord Thomas who was at the moment entering the room, overheard the remark, and told the council that "he was sorry they should stay so long for a boy."\*

It did not require much observation to apprise lord Thomas that he was surrounded by watchful and malignant enemies, who would let pass no occasion to injure him. His father's strong injunctions, might nevertheless have restrained him within the path of prudence, had not his enemies, or indiscreet friends originated a false report, that his father was put to death in the Tower. It was added, that his five uncles were also to be seized and executed, and that the same fate was designed for himself. To favour this report, it is affirmed, letters were written and sent in different directions, and it was perhaps by contrivance, that one of these fell into the hands of Deluhide, lord Thomas's confidential adviser. The young Geraldine rushed into the snare, if such it was, and at once flinging aside deliberation and every purpose but revenge, he associated himself with O'Niall and O'Conor the fast friends of his family, and resolved on the most violent and immediate measures. Summoning together such of his followers as could be collected, he rode through the city at the head of 140 armed cavalry (in shirts of mail), to Dame's gate, where he crossed the river, and proceeded straight to Mary's abbey, where the council were sitting at the moment. Attended by these followers, he entered the chamber and sternly took his seat, his disordered appearance indicated repressed passion and an angry purpose; and as the foremost of his followers were pressing into the chamber, the members of the council began to shew signs of alarm. Lord Thomas sternly commanded his followers to be silent, and addressed the council with a fierce calmness of tone and manner. He told them that notwithstanding his wrongs, he would act as a soldier and a gentleman, and that he did not mean to use to their hurt the sword that had been intrusted to him. That he now came to return it. That it had a pestilent edge bathed in the blood of the Geraldines, to whom it now menaced farther injury. That he came to resign it, and would thenceforth use his own. That he warned them that he was become their enemy, and the enemy of the king, whom he renounced and declared war against from that moment. "I am none of Henry's deputies," he concluded, "I am his foe, I have more mind to conquer than to govern, to meet him in the field than to serve him in office: if all who have been wronged by him, would unite, as I trust they will, he should learn of the treatment due to tyranny and cruelty, such as never have been exceeded by the most infamous tyrants in ancient history."† Some such step was expected from lord Thomas, and it is possible that the consternation produced by this speech, was nothing more than the anxiety which some present may have felt for their personal safety. And the historians who

\* Cox.

† Cox, Holinshed.

describe the scene, appear to agree, that the speech which is attributed to Cromer, the chancellor, was insincere. It was perhaps, partly fear, and partly policy, that suggested the answer of the chancellor, when lord Thomas returning him the sword of state was turning to depart: but it is to be recollected, that Cromer had been the friend of the Geraldines. We are therefore not inclined to set down altogether to political finesse, the affecting appeal which this state officer is said to have addressed to the rash youth. Catching the young lord by the wrist, with streaming eyes and affectionate emphasis Cromer reminded him of the affectionate terms on which they had ever been. And then solemnly warned him against the rash delusion of imagining that any force he could bring together and support in the field, could avail against the strength of the kingdom and the power of the king. He suggested the uncertainty of the report of the earl's death. He urged the sacredness of the kingly character, and reminded him of the uniform fate of rebellion.

These obvious suggestions had little effect on the young lord, though urged with great force of language, and earnestness of manner.

While the chancellor was thus addressing the impatient young lord, his rude followers who did not understand the English language, looked with wonder at the speaker, and listened to his oration "which he set forth with such a lamentable countenance, as his cheeks were all blubbered with tears."\* Some of them supposed he was preaching, others that he was spouting heroic verse in praise of lord Thomas, the pride and glory of the Geraldines. No sooner was the supposed song or sermon ended, than Denelan, lord Thomas's bard took up the strain, and thundered out the praises of his lord, in all the sounding modulation and figurative affluence of the Irish tongue. He celebrated his courage and high blood, his personal beauty and magnificent appearance, calling him by the popular name of silken Thomas, from the richness of his attire, and that of his train whose armour was embroidered with silk, and concluded by telling him significantly, that he delayed too long there. Lord Thomas was more alive to flattery, and the sense of admiration than to fear or reason: but it is not necessary to assume with some writers, that his purpose was in any way affected by this uncouth stimulus. His high-flown confidence in the power of his family, was enough to repel reasons grounded on their insufficiency for rebellion: he knew the insincerity of those before whom he stood, and felt that he had gone too far to retract with safety: scorning to be cajoled, he made a brief and stern reply, and flinging the sword on the council table, he left the chamber with his followers. The chancellor who had been so pathetic in attempting to dissuade him, now lost no time in writing and despatching an account to king Henry, by his own servant Thomas Brode, as we learn from a letter of baron Finglas, written to Cromwell at the same time.† Orders were also sent to the mayor to seize him as he passed through the city. But this was a command which there was no force to execute: the city had been nearly depopulated by the plague. The archbishop Allen, and baron Finglas took refuge

\* Cox.

† Finglas to Cromwell.—State Papers, Let. 75.



in the castle, and lord Thomas proceeded to raise the surrounding country, with the resolution to make himself master of Dublin. He next looked round for allies, and endeavoured to strengthen his cause to the utmost. He sent an ambassador to the pope, and one to the king of Spain, he also wrote a pressing letter to lord Butler, son to Lord Ossory, and his cousin, to engage his assistance. To this young lord he proposed, that they should conquer the whole island, and share it between them. Lord Butler wrote him in reply, a letter of friendly but yet rough rebuke. Saying, that in such a quarrel, "I would rather die thine enemy, than live thy partner," and advising him, that "ignorance and error with a certain idea of duty, have carried you unawares to this folly, not yet so rank but that it may be cured." On receiving which letter, lord Thomas immediately proceeded to invade his lands about Kilkenny. In this district he committed much destructive ravage, and then returned toward Dublin. It was his design to lay siege to the castle. The inhabitants of the city were far from being favourable to his cause: they largely contributed to supply the castle with provisions. Lord Thomas in his resentment, directed Fingal, from which they drew their chief supplies, to be plundered. The citizens attempted to rescue the prey, as a party of the marauders passed by Kilmainham. But they were worsted in the attempt, with the loss of 80 citizens. Availing himself of the consternation thus produced, lord Thomas sent word to the city, that though he could destroy them, he would be content to spare them, if they would allow him to besiege the castle. The mayor and corporation were perplexed, they had no desire to yield, but the danger of resistance seemed rather formidable. In this strait they sent information of their condition to the king, and advised with the constable of the castle. This officer did not think they could prevent the siege, and stipulated for a liberal supply of men and provisions. The mayor sent in 20 tons of wine, 24 tons of beer, 2000 dried ling, 16 hogsheads of beef, 20 chambers, and an iron chain for the drawbridge.

The possibility of falling into the hands of the lord Thomas, awakened the fears of his enemy the archbishop Allen. Should the castle be stormed, his life might be seriously endangered in the insolence of victory: little moderation was to be anticipated from the late scene in the council chamber. Under this alarming impression, Allen resolved to escape into England, where alone he could find security from the threatened danger.

Awaiting the concealment of darkness, on the evening of the same day, Allen got on board a vessel near Dame's gate, and as he felt himself on the waters perhaps gratulated himself on his escape from the fiery Geraldine and his ruffian band. He was roused from his dream of security, by the information that his vessel was stranded, and could not be disengaged from the sands, near Clontarf. A fact which may indicate the precipitation of the fear which had urged him to sail without the tide. It is, however, said that the pilot was a Fitz-Gerald, and it is probable that the mishap was contrived. Allen was highly alarmed, his enemies were not far off, and while he calculated the probability of falling into their hands, he thought with regretful longing of the castle, from the shelter of which he had rashly fled. The only



resource left, was a village called Artayne,\* not far from the shore where he was forced to land. There he might still hope for a short concealment, until the means of escape should offer. But unhappily for this hope, the report of his being there was straight conveyed to his enemies. Early the next morning, the lord Thomas with two of his uncles, John and Oliver, were at the door of the hut in which he lay. Two men, John Zeling and Nicholas Wafer, were sent in for him. These ruffians found archbishop Allen on the bed where he lay trembling in the agony of a terror which but too justly estimated his danger; and seizing him with savage violence, dragged him out in his shirt upon the road. Naked and trembling, he threw himself on his knees before his enemies, and with a suppliant voice and countenance, begged pity for the love of God on a Christian and an archbishop.

What followed has received different constructions. The lord Thomas turned away, saying to his followers "take away the clown," on which they fell upon the poor old man and beat his brains out.

Such was the end of this unfortunate prelate. To suppose that his murder was intended by lord Thomas, is hardly consistent with the impression made by his general character; though proud, impetuous and rash, he was not without generosity, and the common sense of humanity. Yet the combination of circumstances is such as to suggest a less favourable decision: it is hard to believe that he did not know his followers well enough to be aware of the consequence of his own words and actions; or, that they would have had the gratuitous audacity to murder an old priest, before their chief, without any order or distinct understanding to that effect. If the lord Thomas's manner was sufficiently equivocal to countenance the mistake of his meaning, we should be inclined to call the ambiguity intentional. Nor should the aggravating circumstances, of the age, rank, profession and helpless condition of the sufferer, weigh so far as to repel these suspicions. Against this, it is enough to recollect the cause of the young Geraldine's resentment: the supposed execution of his father had driven him into rebellion, and he probably saw in Allen the chief instrument of his death. If such was his impression, revenge would appear a sacred duty, and the terrors of the victim were but the needful demands of vindictive feeling. This is a true, though fearful aspect of human nature. We are still, however, not compelled to have recourse to this conclusion. The two uncles, whose characters we know not, may have given the private order or signal. Nor is it quite impossible, that the impression that Allen was the cause of their lord's death, may have induced the murderers to imagine that the service would be acceptable, and they knew that it could be done with impunity. The following is the statement of Robert Reilly, who assisted in the murder, made on his examination when he had delivered himself up to government. "The lord Thomas, accompanied by J. Fitz-Gerald, and about 40 others, went to Artayne, where the archbishop lay, at the house of Mr Hothe, and there the prelate was murdered. But whether it was by lord Thomas's command or not, he

\* State Papers.

could not say. But he admits, that on the same day, he was sent by Fitz-Gerald to Maynooth, with a casket which his master had taken from the bishop. And that lord Thomas afterwards sent one Charles his chaplain to the bishop of Rome, to the intent (as he had heard) of obtaining absolution for killing the bishop."

The murderers were excommunicated, and a copy of the sentence was sent to aggravate the suffering of the unhappy earl of Kildare in his imprisonment. It is published at full length in the *State Papers*, from a copy addressed for "Mr Lieutenant, at the king's Tower, London."\*

Lord Thomas's party next took lord Howth and Mr Luttrell prisoners in their own houses; and being permitted by the mayor, according to the arrangement already mentioned, he proceeded to besiege the castle. For this purpose he detached 600 men, under the command of Field, Zeling, Wafer, &c., who planted two or three small cannon (called falcons) near Preston's inns, against the castle. Having obtained possession of many of the children of the citizens, they threatened to expose them in their trenches, if the castle guns should be turned that way.

It was in this interval that lord Thomas himself, with O'Niall and others, went to fulfil his menace to lord Butler, by invading the county of Kilkenny, which they laid waste to Thomastown. We have already mentioned the result. The Butlers were defeated, and lord Butler wounded.

In the mean time, alderman Herbert, who had been sent over by the corporation of Dublin to the king, returned with an assurance of immediate aid. On this, the citizens took courage, and ordered their gates to be shut. The rebels, whom they had admitted in their fears, now attempted to escape. Some swam the Liffey, but the greater part were secured.

On hearing this, lord Thomas left Kilkenny and summoned the force of the pale. He seized on many children of citizens who were at school in the country.†

He also sent an expostulation to the city, reproaching them with their breach of agreement and demanding the liberation of the prisoners. But his reproaches and demands met with equal disregard. He, therefore, attacked the castle from Ship Street, but was repelled by the fire of its battery. He then moved his position to Thomas Court, where he pulled down the street and made a gallery for the protection of his men. He burnt the New Street, and planted a gun against Newgate, which shot a man inside through the gate. His men were, in turn, severely cut up by the enemy's fire, and they were very much irritated by the success with which their fire was returned by Staunton, the gaoler of Newgate. An instance is mentioned of the skill of Staunton. Seeing one of the enemy taking aim at the loop-hole, from which he had been firing, he shot him through the head before he had time to fire; then rushing out by a postern, he brought in the gun of the fallen rebel before any attempt could be made to prevent him. This so enraged the troop of lord Thomas, that they brought fire and attempted to burn the gate.

\* *State Papers*, lxxxi. p. 217.

† Cox.



The citizens, after a little, began to perceive that lord Thomas was not sincerely supported by his men, who had been most of them compelled into the service. Headless arrows were shot over the walls, and other signs of remissness appearing, a sally was resolved. A report was first spread that succours had arrived from England; and before the artifice could be detected they rushed with sudden impetuosity through the burning and smoking ruins on the enemy. Fitz-Gerald's army scattered away before the attack. One hundred were slain and his cannon taken.

After this misfortune, it is likely that lord Thomas had not much confidence in the result of a message to the city, proposing "that his men who were prisoners should be enlarged; that the city should pay one thousand pounds in money, and five hundred in wares; to furnish him with ammunition and artillery; to intercede with the king for his pardon, and that of his followers." To these demands, of which the last should of itself have made the rest seem frivolous, the city answered by its recorder, "that if he would deliver up their children they would enlarge his men; that they were impoverished with his wars, and could not spare either wares or money; if he intended to submit, he had no need of artillery and ammunition, if not they would not give him rods to whip themselves; that they expected he would request good vellum parchment to engross his pardon, and not artillery to withstand his prince; that they promised all the intercession they could by word or letter."\*

Lord Thomas agreed with the citizens on these terms. It was all he could do at the moment. He thus recovered his men. Having given and received hostages, he raised the siege, and sending his men and military stores to Howth, he went to Maynooth, and left directions for the storing and fortifying the castle against a siege: and then speedily returned to his little army near Howth. In the meantime a landing had been effected by a party of English, who, with an imprudence not easily accounted for, had been separated from the main detachments under Sir William Brereton and Skeffington, at the same time entering the bay with a sufficient, though small force, sent over in aid of the pale and city. The small party, commanded by two captains Hamerton, amounted to 180 men; on their way to Dublin they were met by the lord Thomas, and a sharp encounter took place, in which they were all slain or taken. Lord Thomas was wounded in the forehead by one of the Hamertons. Encouraged by a success, from which considering the disparity of numbers and arms, no very satisfactory inference could be soberly drawn; he now led his men to the heights of Howth in the vain hope to prevent any further landing of the English by a feeble cannonade from a scanty and inefficient battery. He seems to have forgotten the other coast of the bay: the firing only served to prevent Sir William Brereton from attempting a useless and dangerous collision, and probably informed him of the fate of the previous party. It is mentioned that Rouks, Fitz-Gerald's pirate, took one ship laden with English horses: but he could not prevent the English from landing at several points. Sir William Brereton and Skeffington landed without

\* Cox.



opposition, and marched into Dublin, where it is needless to describe how gladly they were received. Their arrival was felt on both sides to amount to a decisive change of their respective positions. Lord Thomas must have felt his hopes expire when from the height on which he stood, he caught the distant acclamations of the city, which in its weakest moment had defied him.

Many circumstances, however, were unfavourable to the active exertions of the deputy Skeffington, and protracted the rebellion. Skeffington was himself ill—the winter was at hand—it was late in October—and the present state of the rebels required more distant and extended operations than the season or the strength of the English force permitted. Under these circumstances the deputy confined his operations, and awaited further supplies of men. He only marched to Drogheda, on the report that it was besieged by lord Thomas; and remained there about a week.

The winter passed without any decided event; but the suffering of the pale was unusually severe, from the activity of the rebels, to whom no adequate resistance could be made. Lord Thomas, himself, went into Connaught, to engage the aid of the western chiefs.

It is said that the citizens of Dublin and the English troops were much discontented at the inactivity of Skeffington, whose illness produced debility of mind and body. Early in March, however, active steps were resolved on, and Sir William Brereton was appointed to command a party against the strong castle of Maynooth. On his way he had an encounter with the rebels, and defeated them with great slaughter; and on the 16th March he invested Maynooth. He raised a strong battery against the north side of the castle, and sent in a summons to the garrison to surrender, with offers of pardon and reward. His summons and offers were rejected with scornful derision, and he opened his fire upon the walls. The castle was well supplied and garrisoned, and fortified with walls of immense solidity. The artillery of the time was comparatively inefficient, and that of Brereton not of the best. A fortnight passed, and no considerable impression was made; so that it became a matter of doubt and strong apprehension that the lord Thomas might be enabled to relieve the castle before they could obtain possession of it. Fortunately a result which must have led to a continuance of this pernicious war, and to a vast increase of slaughter, was prevented by an act of perfidy, which, if it has seldom been paralleled, has never been exceeded.

The castle was commanded by Christopher Parse, the foster brother of lord Thomas, and bound to him not only by the common pledges of important trust and obligation but by every tie of gratitude and sacred understanding of affection and duty. This base wretch, with a cowardice or venality disgraceful even in a bad cause, had conveyed to Skeffington an intimation that he would put the castle in his hands for a sum of money and certain other stipulations. Skeffington consented, and came off to the besieging army to take possession. Parse took advantage of a small success gained in a sally of the garrison, and probably preconcerted, to make them all drunk at night; and while they were in this condition, he gave the signal to the English, who, meeting no resistance, scaled the walls and took possession without resistance.

The spoil of the castle was very rich, for it was the best furnished castle in the island. Brereton planted his standard on the turret, and in the afternoon Skeffington entered the walls. It now remained to discharge his obligations to the traitor. Parese, triumphant in success and solicitous to receive his reward, was not slack to present himself before the lord deputy. A few minor matters were first attended to. Two singers came and "prostrated themselves, warbling a sweet sonnet, called *dulcis amica*;" their harmony won the favour of the chief justice Aylmer, at whose request they were pardoned. The deputy next addressed himself to Parese, and told him, that the service he had done in saving charge and bloodshed to the English was so great, that he thought it should be taken into consideration; and for this purpose, it was desirable first to ascertain what benefits he received in the service of Fitz-Gerald; Parese in his eagerness swallowed the bait; only intent on magnifying his own merits and importance, he detailed the advantages he had reaped from a long course of unremitting generosity, kindness, and affectionate confidence, and unconsciously unmasked the heartless baseness of his conduct and character, to his revolted and loathing hearers; he was lord Thomas' foster brother, he owed his whole importance and all he possessed to his munificence, and was placed by his confiding regard in the first place of trust and honour among his people; "and how Parese," said the deputy, "couldst thou find it in thy heart to betray so kind a lord?" Parese stood confounded—he had forgotten himself too far—he felt the load of contempt that breathed around him, and perhaps, for there is pride without honour, he wished so foul a deed undone. He was not long allowed to ponder on his position. "Go," said the lord deputy to an officer, "see him paid the price of his treachery, and then, without a moment's delay, see his head cut off." Parese had the coolness to say, "Had I known this, your lordship should not have had the castle so easily." The deputy was silent, but a person who was present exclaimed, "Too late," and this exclamation passed into a popular saying, "Too late, says Boyce."\*

Of this latter incident, the official account of the lord deputy and the council take no notice. It is not unlikely that, considering the game of complaint and misrepresentation that seems to have so deeply played on either side, that it was deemed expedient to sink an incident that lowered the honour of a success which was necessary as a set off against the charge of dilatoriness and inefficiency. The description contained in this despatch, may be received as a correct outline of the facts of the siege. The deputy only forgot to mention that the garrison was drunk while he was performing his gallant *coup de main*. For the same reason he denied himself the honour of his severely equitable dealing with the traitor. But we see no reason to doubt the story of the annalists. The reader is fairly entitled to both. Here is the official account.

\* Cox.



“The lord deputy and council of Ireland, to king Henry VIII.

“May it please your moost excellent highness to be advertised, that I, your deputie, with your armye in thes parties, the 14th day of Marche last past, beseaged the castell of Maynuth, which by your traitor and rebell, Thomas Fitz-Geralde, was so stronglie fortified, booth with men and ordenannce, as the liek hath not been seen in Irelande synes anny your moost nobell progenitors had furst domynion in the lande. Ther was within the same, above 100 habill men, whereof wer 60 gonners. The 16th day of the said monith your ordenannce was bent upon the north-west side of the dungeon of the same castell, which ded bairter the tope therof on that wise, as ther ordenannce within that parte was dampned; which doone, your ordenannce was bent upon the northe side of the base corte of the said castell at the north-east ende wherof ther was new made a very stronge and fast bulwark, well garnished with men and ordenannce, which the 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22d dayes, of the said monith, ded beat the same, by night and daye, on that wise, that a great batery and a large enterie was made ther; whereupon the 23d day, being Tewsday next before Eister day,\* ther was a Galiarde assaulte gyven betwixt fower and fyve of the clocke in the morning, and the base corte entered. At which entery ther was slayne of the warde of the eastell aboute 60, and of your grace’s armye no more but John Griffen yemen of your moost honorable gaurde, and six other, which wer killed with ordenannce of the castell at the entree. Howbeit, if it had not pleased God to preserve us, it wer to be mervelled that we had no more slayne. After the base corte was thus wonne, we assaulted the great castell, which within awhile yielded; wherin was the dean of Kildare, Cristofer Parys, capitaine of the garysone, Donough O’Dogan, maister of thordenannce, Sir Symon Walshe, priste and Nicholas Wafer, which tooke tharchbishop of Dublin, with dyvers other gunners and arehers to the number of 37; which wer all taken prysoners, and ther lifes preserved by appoyntment, untill they shulde be presented to me, your deputie, and then to be orderid, as I and your counsaill thought good. And considering the high enterprise and presumption attempted by them ayenst your grace’s crowne and majestie, and also that if by anny meane they shuld escape, the moost of theym beyng gunners, at some other tyme wold semblablie elliswhear, aide your traitors, and be example and meane to others to doo lykewise, we all thought expecient and requisite, that they shulde puttò execution, for the dread and example of others. According wherunto, the Thursday following, in the morning, they wer examyned, and ther depositions written; and after none the same day arrayned before the propeest marshall, and capitaines, and ther, upon ther awne confessions, adjudged to die, and ymmediately twenty-five of them heeded, and oon hanged. Dyvers of the heedes of the principalles, incontynentlie wer put upon the turrets of the castell. We send your highness here inclosed theeffect of ther depositions, amonges which there is a priste, which was privay with the traitor, deposeth that the Emperor promised

\* In 1535, Easter day fell on the 28th of March, which fixes the date of this despatch.



to send hether, against your grace, 10,000 men, by the first day of Maye. And the kinge of Scottes promised to yeve aide to your rebell lykewise. We doo advertise your highnes therof, in discharge of our duties, to thintent serche may be made of the furder circumstance therof; not doubting but if anny soche thinge be intendid by themperor, or kinge of Scottes, your highnes hath some intelligence therof, and will provide for it accordingly; for onles aide be sent hither from owtward parties, this traitor shalbe pursued to his adnoyannce and destruction, to the best of our powers we trust to your grace's honor. Albeit thenhabitanntes of this lande have an imagination and doubt, that he shulde hereafter obteyne your grace's pardone, as his antecessors, dyverse tymes, in lyke caases ded, which if, at anny tyme, he shulde, wer ther undoyng, as they say. The same causeth dyverse of theym to adhere to hym, and others not to doo soche service, as they ells wolde."\*

The capture of Maynooth decided the fate of lord Thomas. By the aid of his friends in the west, he had collected a force of seven thousand men. Immediately on the report of this important success of the English, this army began to fall away, and he was soon reduced to a few hundreds: a force insufficient for any purpose but pillage. Even with this handful of men, the young Geraldine's spirit of infatuation did not yet desert him; obstinate to the last, he came into the vicinity of Clare. The lord deputy advanced to Naas: there he took one hundred and forty of the Irish. Presently being apprized that the lord Thomas was on his march to meet him, he very cruelly ordered them to be put to death. The rebels soon came in sight, but as a marsh, not to be crossed in the presence of an enemy, lay between, he directed a hot fire of artillery, which soon dispersed the remnant of their force. It was the last the unfortunate lord Thomas could bring together. Still, however, with a pertinacity which strongly shows the rashness and infatuation of his disposition, he persevered in hostilities which could have no object unless the pride of constancy in ill. He exerted himself to collect small parties, and carry on a desultory and marauding hostility. At Rathangan he caused a drove of cattle to be driven near the town to draw out the English: they fell into this trap. Believing the cattle to be a fair booty, numbers of the garrison came out unarmed to drive them in. The Geraldine party awaited their approach, until they came near their place of concealment, when they leaped forth, and few of the English escaped. On another occasion, he sent some of his people, disguised in the dress of English soldiers, to give information that his party were burning a village near Trim. On which the garrison in Trim sallied out, and, falling into an ambush, prepared for them, the greater part were slain.

The unfortunate youth soon retired into Munster; the pale and its vicinity were fast becoming unsafe for him. Lord Grey was sent after him; but no result could be looked for, from the weekly skirmishes in which a few rebels or soldiers were slain. Lord Thomas easily kept himself out of the reach of seizure, but it was become difficult for him

\* State Papers, No. 87, page 236.

to live; and the crisis was arrived when he should either yield on terms, or be a hunted robber without means, or the prospect of a termination to his misfortunes. Under such circumstances, a parley was proposed, and lord Thomas surrendered to lord Grey at discretion, but implored his good offices with the king. Lord Grey carried him to Dublin, from whence he was embarked for England. He was confined in the Tower, where, it appears from the following letter that, his sufferings were very severe.

“ Lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald to Rothe.

“ My trusty servant, I hartely commend me unto you. I pray you that you woll delyver thys othyr letter unto Obryen. I have sent to hym for £20 starling, the which yff he take you (as I trust he woll), than I woll that you com over, and bryng it onto my lord Crumwell, that I may so have ytt. I never had eny mony syns I cam in to pryson, but a nobull, nor I have had nothyr hosyn, dublet, nor shoys, nor shyrt, but on; nor eny othyr garment, but a syngyll fryse gowne, for a velve furryd wythe bowge, and so I have gone wolward, and barcfote, and barelegyd, dyverse tymes (whan it hath not ben very warm); and so I shuld have don styll, and now, but that pore prysoners, of ther gentyl-nes, hathe sumtyme gevyn me old hosyn and shoys, and old shyrtes. This I write onto you, not as complaynyng on my fryndes, but for to show you the trewthe of my grete nede, that you shuld be the more dylygent in going onto Obryen, and in bryngyng me the before said £20, wherby I myght the soner have here mony to by me clothys, and also for to amend my sclender comyns and fare, and for othyr necessaryes. I woll you take owte of that you bryng me for your costes and labur. I pray you to have me commendyd onto all my lovers and frendes, and show them that I am in gude helthe.\*

“ By me, THOMAS FITZ-GERALD.

(Superscribed) “ To my trusty and well loved servant, John Rothe.”

It appears that lord Thomas confidently anticipated mercy. But this anticipation must seem weak to the reader of the foregoing detail: his rebellion was sadly aggravated by the combination of circumstances. His father's character cast an unlucky reflection on the crimes and follies of a son who had thus impetuously rushed into rebellion. The monarch, who was justly incensed against the conduct of his father in a place of high authority and trust, was not likely to look with much indulgence on the commission of this trust to a rash youth of twenty-one; and from the frantic folly with which this youth flung all consideration of fidelity and duty aside, and rushed from the seat of honour, authority, rule, protection, and justice, to the downright betrayal of his father's honour, and his own trust, he could not be a safe person to represent the most powerful house in Ireland, nor would his pardon be the best example of royal mercy in such a time. Further, whether or not lord Thomas was a consenting party to the foul murder of archbishop Allen, so it was believed, and so ran the sentence of the Roman see, pronouncing him accursed for the crine. There were some high features of gene-

\* State Papers, letter clviii. Vol. ii. p. 502.



rosity and heroism in his character, but he was a traitor in the eyes of justice, which does not, and cannot dive into men's motives, or weigh their secret virtues in the balance against their crimes perpetrated in the eye of day. In those evil times, in which the licence of great chiefs was the chief cause of the sufferings of the pale, it was rather the error of justice to be lenient; and the impunity of outrages like those of this unfortunate young lord, would be a fatal precedent in a country which had still to learn that murder and rebellion were not virtues but crimes.

The lord Thomas was arrested, on his way to Windsor, by order of the king; and on the 3d of February, 1537, he was executed at Tyburn, with five of his uncles.

In denying that his suffering has any claim on the historian's compassion, we must add, that the justice of that execrable tyrant by whom he was ordered to his fate, was probably the result of no purer principle than revenge. We cannot demand much of the reader's "valuable indignation" in behalf of good men who were hurried to an ignominious and unworthy end, four hundred years ago; their account has long been balanced, and posterity has troubles of its own. But nothing can throw a clearer light on the furious and bloodthirsty violence of Henry VIII., than the indiscriminate murder of five noble Geraldines, brothers to the ninth earl of Kildare. Of these, two were unquestionably guilty and met a just death, had it not been inflicted by the foulest treachery; but the other three were notoriously innocent, and opposed to the whole proceedings of their nephew. These lords were taken by a detestable artifice, and executed without trial, or even the form of inquiry. Lord Grey was commissioned to take them, he invited them to a feast, and from the feast they were transferred to the bloody scaffold. Three of them in the confidence of innocence, and the unconsciousness of a charge; all thinking the blow past, and the tyrant's vengeance appeased. The tyrant may, it is true, be said to have had some forecast in his fury; he asked his council if he might not now seize all the lands of the country into his own hands, and conquer the whole of it for himself. Fortunately, for the descendants of many a noble house, he was better advised. But his rage against the Geraldine branch of Kildare had been long kindling, and was not to be appeased by a sacrifice less than extermination. One only, a youth of twelve years, escaped, and with difficulty was saved from the vengeance of Henry. As this youth lived to act a very distinguished part in his own generation, we shall have to notice him further on.

### James, Eleventh Earl of Desmond.

DIED A. D. 1529.

OF this powerful nobleman it will be enough to mention, that he lived in great power and wealth, apart from the politics, and remote from the power of the English government. These circumstances naturally operated on a proud and insubordinate spirit, and he entered into two treaties with the foreign enemies of England, which would have been fatal in their result to any other nobleman of the pale; but



from the penalties of which, Desmond was protected by his remote southern position, which reduced the power which the English deputies could exercise over his conduct, to something merely nominal. Of these rebellions, the first was in conjunction with the king of France, in 1523, and was terminated and detected by a peace made between Francis and Henry. The second was a similar correspondence with the emperor Charles V., who sent an ambassador to him to move him to rebellion. This embassy was, however, rendered abortive by the earl's death, in August, 1529. He was succeeded in the earldom by an uncle, who had been his enemy.

### Edward, Fourth Lord Dunsany.

KILLED A.D. 1521.

THIS lord attended Gerald, eighth earl of Kildare, to the famous battle of Knocktow, in Connaught, in 1504; and was, in his own day, distinguished as a valiant warrior. He attended lord Surrey in his campaign, in 1521, in pursuit of O'Carrol and O'Connor, and contributed to the victory by his personal bravery; but, carried on by his military ardour, he ventured too far in the pursuit, and, being unsupported, was slain.

### Cormac M'Carthy, Lord of Muskerry.

DIED A. D. 1536.

OUR notice of this ancient chief must be confined to a few authentic facts.

The family of which he was one, was among the most eminent in the south of Ireland, having extensive territories in Desmond. Antiquaries trace his pedigree through thirty-five descents to Oilioll Olum, king of Munster in the 2d century. His father, Cormac Ladir, ruled as lord of Muskerry for forty years; during which, he built the castles of Blarney, Kilcrea, and Carricknamuck, with several abbeys and churches. He was fourth in descent from Cormac M'Carthy More, who probably died 1353 and was the chief of the M'Carthys in his own time. His direct representative, in the period of our present notice, ruled under the title of M'Carthy More, in Kerry, between Dingle bay and Kenmare river; and Cormac, the subject of this notice, was lord of Muskerry, in the county of Cork.

He is mentioned by Ware under the name of Cormac M'Carthy Reagh the younger, to distinguish him from M'Carthy Reagh of Carbery in the same county; and in the government correspondence he is frequently mentioned under the appellation of Cormac Oge.

Ware mentions the efforts of William Rokeby, archbishop of Dublin, and "other delegates," to make peace between Cormac and his powerful neighbour James, earl of Desmond, as having failed; as Desmond, while the negotiation was pending, invaded the country of Cormac,

which he burned and pillaged. Upon this, Cormac entered into confederacy with Thomas of Desmond, the earl's most inveterate enemy, and afterwards his successor in the earldom; with this aid, and that of M'Carthy of Carbery, he defeated the earl at Cluthar and Moor abbey, slaying 1440 foot, and 480 horse with three or four Fitz-Geralds, the earl's near kinsmen. Ware places this battle in 1521, but a note appended to the lord lieutenant's letter to the king, in the *State Papers*, shows very clearly, from a comparison of dates, and other circumstantial considerations, too slight to be extracted at length, that the battle took place in 1520.\* In the letter here referred to, the consequences of such a victory are mentioned as the subject of apprehension. But it is added, that Cormac was, of all the Irishmen of the land, save O'Donel, the most inclined to "fall into English order."

This appears to be confirmed by the circumstances afterwards stated by Surrey, in a letter to the king, in which he mentions that the earl of Ormonde had brought his friends Cormac Oge, and M'Carthy of Carbery, who were "of his band;" and they then gave their pledges to keep the peace toward Desmond, and to be ordered by the lord lieutenant in all causes of contention which might arise between them. To this, Surrey adds his testimony to the good character of these M'Carthys. "They be two wise men, and I find them more conformable to good order, than some Englishmen here. I have motioned them to take their lands, and to hold them of the king's grace, and they will be content so to do, so they may be defended."†

He is shortly after mentioned by Surrey, as a "sad wise man," who was very desirous to become a subject. He also applied through the same channel, to be created a baron: but this desire does not appear to have received the notice it deserved from king Henry. Cormac's entire conduct was such as to prove a disposition to conform himself to the English laws, and to be on good terms with the deputy. Surrey mentions among the reasons for compliance with his application, "surely he is substantial of his promise, and, without any safeconduct, hath come to me tendering his service, and is very willing to conform himself to the English order." It had, indeed, become an obvious opportunity for the extension of the English jurisdiction, as this inclination was beginning to be very general; but it was not adopted, and the line of disunion from which so much evil had arisen was kept up long beyond the time when it might have been obliterated.

Cormac was, as we have stated, the friend and faithful ally of Ormonde. He was also connected with James the thirteenth earl of Desmond, who married his daughter. Another daughter of his was married to M'Carthy of Carbery, nephew to the earl of Kildare.

Cormac M'Carthy, in consequence of these alliances, is frequently mentioned as taking a prominent part in the military transactions of the English, and may, in this respect, be regarded as the most distinguished native of his time. He died in 1536.‡

In the beginning of the 14th century, a branch of this family migrated into Scotland, and spread into several illustrious families.

\* State Papers, Vol. II. Part iii. p. 8.

† State Papers.

‡ Ib., cxxxi. p. 332.



From one of these—George M'Cartney of Auchinleck, who, in 1649, removed into the land of his ancestors—descended the modern family of the lords M'Cartney, in the Irish peerage.

## **Alick de Burgh, First Earl of Clanricarde.**

DIED A. D. 1544.

THIS nobleman was a distinguished person in his day. His services were, however, as well as the main incidents of his life, too local in their character to claim a place in this advanced period of our work. We notice him chiefly as the founder of the important provincial towns of Roscommon, Galway, Loughrea, Clare, Concashel, Ballyforwer, and Leitrim; which achievements, more valuable than glorious, and more permanent in their results than memorable in the record of history, may show the vast extent of this great lord's territories. He was seized in fee of Clanricarde, consisting of the baronies of Loughrea, Dunkellin, Kiltaragh, Clare, Athenry, and Leitrim. In 1543 he surrendered, and obtained a re-grant of these territories from Henry VIII., who, at the same time, created him earl of Clanricarde; conferring on him, many other grants and privileges. He died in the following year, leaving one son, Richard, his distinguished successor, whom we shall have to notice under the reign of queen Elizabeth.\*

## **Pierce, Eighth Earl of Ormonde.**

DIED A. D. 1539.

As the political history of the generation in which we are immediately engaged, has been sufficiently noticed in the life of the ninth earl of Kildare, and his unfortunate and guilty son, we may now confine ourselves within brief limits in the remaining contemporary lives. The incidents purely personal that remain to us, in the annals of the 16th century, are few; and of the most prosperous and greatest man, if he had but the discretion and virtue to avoid a life of rebellion, or party war, and a bloody death, there can be little said beyond the meagre notice of the herald's book.

We have already stated† how this nobleman and his lady, a sister of the ninth earl of Kildare, were reduced to a condition of the most deplorable privation, and compelled to conceal themselves in some lowly dwelling among the woods, till, driven by the complaints of his wife, and his sense of wrong, he surprised and slew the usurper, and thus regained his estates and honours.

His family had, by the result of a series of political events, most of which have been noticed under their proper heads, been depressed in power and party importance in Ireland. This disadvantage was to some extent, counterbalanced by court favour, and that social im-

\* Lodge. Archdall.

† Life of Sir James Ormonde, p. 423.



portance which results from polished manners and liberal accomplishments; in which respect, the members of this illustrious race, appear constantly in advance of their times, and seem to have transmitted through many descents, a vein of more refined humanity, than the historian may otherwise trace in the 15th and 16th centuries. The earls of Ormonde were in these ages more frequently to be found high in the councils and favour of the English monarchs, while the two great branches of the Geraldines, present, on the other hand, a uniform affinity for the Irish habits, and a strong tendency to factious movements. Their position and vast possessions in part account for these tendencies; but on a lengthened comparison carried through many generations, the singular uniformity becomes observable; the immense pride—the reckless activity—the love of popularity—the insubordinate temper, breaking out with nearly similar results in each successive generation, and ripening into the same successes and disasters, appear to assume the character of family features. The opposite dispositions may be traced in the great rival race of the Butlers. They were, it is true, in common with all the illustrious persons of the period, rude in their knowledge, and inequitable in their notions of right; but they were refined beyond their age and country, and their faults were of the age, while their virtues were their own.

This earl was strongly urged by his lady, herself a Geraldine, to regain the political weight in Ireland, which his family had lost. But there was little hope of affecting this object by force of arms, or by the arts of Irish popularity. This earl was more versed in the ways of courts, than in the factions of the pale. He had, however, recourse to the weapons of a courtier, and we have seen the result in the history of his great but unfortunate rival.

When lord Surrey was sent over as lieutenant, the earl of Ormonde was active, efficient, and distinguished in promoting the success of his various expeditions against the O'Tooles, O'Carrol, and other native chiefs. His character is set in a strong point of view, by the friendship of Surrey, who appears to have relied on his counsel in all important matters, and to have set high value on his conversation. This is made evident by his many letters to the king, and to Wolsey, in which he freely praises his conduct, and shows anxiety for his interests. In a letter to Wolsey in 1520, he writes, "beseeching your grace to cause thankful letters to be sent from the king's grace to the earl of Ormonde, as well for his diligence showed unto me at all times, as also for that he showeth himself ever, with his good advice and strength, to bring the king's intended purpose to good effect. Undoubtedly he is not only a wise man, and hath a true English heart, but he is the man of most experience in the feats in war of this country, of whom I have at all times the best counsel of any in this land. I would the earl of Desmond were of like wisdom and order."\* It is stated on strong authority, that although bearing the title of Ormonde, he was not fully recognised as such, until 1528, although in the patent by which he was appointed lord deputy of Ireland, dated 6th March, 1522, he was denominated "Petrus Butteler comes Ormonde," without qualification.†

\* State Papers, xiii. 58.

† *Ib.*, iv. 38.

He was, during the time of Surrey's administration, involved in a party war with the earl of Desmond, and great efforts were made by government for their reconciliation.

The most remarkable incident to be noticed in the life of this earl, is perhaps the treaty which was for some time in agitation for the marriage of his son with Anna Boleyn, the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, and afterwards the unfortunate queen of Henry VIII., and mother of queen Elizabeth. Happy had it been for the lady, at least, had this treaty been carried into effect. The subject appears to have occupied considerable attention; it is thus mentioned in a communication to Wolsey, from Surrey and his council: "And where, at our being with your grace, divers of us moved you to cause a marriage to be solemnized between the earl of Ormonde's son, being with your grace and Sir Thomas Boleyn's daughter. We think, if your grace caused that to be done, and a final end to be made between them, for the title of lands depending in variance, it should cause the said earl be better willed to see this land brought to good order."\* The variance here alluded to, was one of long standing, and arose from the circumstance of Thomas, seventh earl of Ormonde, having had two daughters, and no male issue; in consequence of this, his large English estates, £30,000 a-year, according to the present value of lands, went to his two daughters, while his Irish estates went with his title to the male heir. The parties were not, however, themselves, satisfied about their rights; one of the co-heirs married Sir William Boleyn, who seems to have thought himself entitled to the Irish properties and honours. The marriage was approved by the earl; but did not, as the reader is aware, take place. The dispute was shortly after settled by a compromise. Sir Thomas Boleyn was created earl of Ormonde, and earl Pierce received the title of Ossory. About ten years after, on the death of Sir Thomas without issue, the title of Ormonde was restored to the earl of Ossory.

When Surrey, after remaining two years in the Irish government, was recalled, the earl of Ossory was, by his recommendation, appointed lord deputy. His conduct was such as to obtain for him in 1524 the office of lord treasurer, in Ireland. In 1528, he was again elected lord deputy by the council, and received many valuable testimonies of approbation also from the king. In 1537, he received a grant in confirmation of his extensive Irish estates to himself and heirs. The estates mentioned in this give some notion of his wealth. Among other estates, were the names of Gowran, Knockfert, Knocktopher, Kilkenny, Glashan, Carrick, Thurles, Nenagh, Roscrea, &c. &c.†

This earl was distinguished for his manly and honourable dispositions, which were generally respected; he was sagacious, and firm in council; a pleasing companion in private society, and a brave warrior in the field. He deserved the high praise of having exerted himself successfully for the improvement of the manners and condition of his people about Kilkenny, at a time when other eminent lords only thought of augmenting their estates and retaining power by unprincipled faction, and sanguinary wars. In conformity with this good disposition,

\* State Papers.

† Lodge.



the earl of Ormonde was exemplary for the zeal and devotion of his religious observances. It is told of him, that every year, for a fortnight previous to Easter, he retired for the purpose of self-examination and holy exercise, to prepare himself for the reception of the sacrament at that festival.

It must be admitted, that in the long and angry contests between him and the earl of Kildare, he was not behind that earl in hostility; but it was a time when there was no choice between these fierce, and not very elevated contests of faction, and the total abandonment of every right. The following letter to his son, lord Butler, then with the king, may convey some notion of his own view of his position, and is otherwise of interest:—

“Ormonde to lord Butler.

“In my loving maner I recomende me unto you, and lately hath had relacion, that certain of the counsaill, by the deputies meanes, have written over thider, to have the kinges letters addressed to me, prohibiting me to take any Irishe mens part. Whereupon, ye most ever have good, seeret, and diligent espyall, lest the kinges letters be so optayned, whiche then wold not oonly bee grete prejudice to me, and to you in tyme commyng, but also great discorage to all myne adherentes to continue any anytie to me, or you hereafter. Now, ye may perceiue the parcialitie of theym, that so certified, being ordred and conducted therin, as the deputie wolde have theym; and during my being in thauetoritie, they never certified any of therl of Kildares apparaunt mysorder, or transgression, in any maner. Shewe the kinges grace, and my lord cardynall, of the soden wilfull invasion doon by the deputie upon O’Kerole, long after the date of the kinges letters now directed; wherof I have rather certified you by a frere of mowskery. Wherupon ye must devise in my name, to the king and my lord cardinall, as my trusty servaunt, Robert Couley, shall penn and endite.

“As for thindentures, they bee enfrenge by the deputie, and in maner no point observed; and as for my parte, I will justifie, I have truly observed theym, to my gret losses, in suffring my adherentes and servauntes distruccions. The deputie, now afore Ester, did set suche coyn and livery in the 3 obedyent sheres, that mervaile it were to here two litell townes of myne, called Castell Warning, and Oghterarde, with any other towne, did bere 420 galloglas. For 4 myles the poor tenauntes be so empoverysshed, that they cannot paye my rentes, and the landes like to bee clere wast. Now, lately he hath sente out of the eschequier a writ to Waterforde, that all maires and bailliffes, that were there sens the furst yere of our souverain lord that now is, shold appere in 15 Pã\* to geve accompt, before the barons, for al maner the king duties, revenues, and poundage there; whiche is doon for a cantell to put me to losses and my heires. For Waterford hath a sufficient discharge, but oonly for my halff of the prises, and the £10 annuite, with the 20 markes to the churche; and as for the price, and £10 of annuite, I must see theym discharged. Wherfore, ye must

\* Quindena Pascha.



labour to gette an especiall patent of the king of all the prises in this land, according to my graunte, made to myne anncesters by his most noble progenitours, and specially in Waterford, and the £10 of annuitie, without any accompt-making; with this clause, "absque aliquo compoto," &c. If it bee not had, it will be moche prejudice to you in tyme commying; for this is doon to dryve you ever from the principall wyne, and the said annuitie, and not to have your prises till ye have a discharge out of theschequer, from tyme. In any wise, slepe not this matier, and if ye do, the most losses and trouble wil be yours in tyme commying. Immediat upon the receipt herof sende for Robert Couly, and cause hym to seche remedies for the same; and, if James White bee not commying, let hym endeavor hymself to obteigne it. Furthermore, I desire you to make diligent hast hyther with the kinges licence; for surely, onles I see your tyme better employed in attendance of my great busynes, then ye have doon hither, I wolbe well avised, or I do sende you any more to your costes.

"Written at Kilkenny, the 22d daye of April.\*

(Superscribed) "To my son, James Butler, with the kings grace in England."

This illustrious earl died in 1539, and was buried in St Canice's church, Kilkenny.

## Con O'Nial, First Earl of Tyrone.

DIED A.D. 1558.

THE name of O'Nial has a place of no mean distinction in every chapter of the history of Ireland. But it is the main difficulty of the present portion of our labour, that while events, scarcely historical in their nature, are crowded together on every page, we have, on the contrary, a lamentable absence of all the personal detail which might be looked for among records so minute and frivolous, that they seem rather to be the material for personal than for national history. The descendants of these renowned Irish kings, the heroes of the poets and chroniclers of our first period, appear in the subsequent periods as the actors in some slight transaction, or persons of some curious tale, and disappear without any satisfactory trace of their previous or subsequent course. It is mostly, only from the change of name, that it is to be inferred, that the father has died and the son succeeded. This obscurity, instead of diminishing, increases as we advance to later ages; so that it is easier to give the full details of the history of the hero of the nine hostages than of his descendant, who flourished among the sons of little men at an interval of thirty generations.

In every reign, the representative of the Tyrone O'Nials, is found among the more powerful opponents of the pale. Often the leaders of formidable insurrections of the native forces; often yielding and swearing fealty; often again in arms, and among the enemies or pensioned

\* State Papers. Letter xl. p. 118.

protectors of the pale. They assume, however, in the reign of Henry VII., a new character, by their alliance with the princely house of Kildare. As the authentic portion of the family history of this race is confined to notices insufficient for the purpose of biography, we shall here mention a few particulars about some of the immediate ancestors of the first earl of Tyrone. Con O'Niall was married to the sister of the eighth earl of Kildare; and, from the time of that great man's elevation to the administration of Irish affairs, he gave his powerful support to the English. He was, in 1492, murdered by his brother, Henry, who, in turn, was murdered, in 1498, by the sons of his victim, Con and Tirlogh. This Tirlogh was thus raised to his father's rights. In 1501, he had a battle with the Scots, near Armagh, whom he defeated, slaying about sixty soldiers,\* and four captains. "A son," says Ware, "of the laird of Aig, of the family of the MacDonnells, and four sons of Colley MacAlexander." As this battle was on Patrick's day, it is doubtful how far it can be properly regarded as an affair of enmity. We find no account of the death of this chief: but he was succeeded, within a few years by Art O'Niall, whom we find receiving aid from the earl of Kildare, in 1509, when he was seized and imprisoned by the rival branch of the O'Nialls. Of Art we have nothing very memorable to tell: he died in 1519, and was succeeded by his brother, Con Boccagh, who was raised by popular election. This chief was not long at the head of his sept, when Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, was sent to Ireland as deputy, in 1520. Con was, at the time, engaged in an incursion into Meath; but, hearing that Surrey was on his march against him with an overwhelming force—a thousand English, and the select men of Dublin—he became discouraged, and retreated into Ulster. Thither Surrey did not think fit to pursue him, as he was quite unprovided for so prolonged a campaign; and he therefore returned to Dublin. O'Niall, however, clearly saw, that he had not himself any force to be relied on, if the English governor should think fit to follow into the north; with this feeling, he sent letters to Surrey, offering entire submission, on the condition of being taken into favour; and offering to serve the king faithfully. To this Surrey agreed; he had, indeed, little if any choice. O'Niall was not aware of the penurious means allowed for the maintenance of the Irish government, by Henry VIII. The celebrated field of the cloth of gold, was held in the same year, with all its well known circumstances of lavish cost; but the liberality of Henry was confined to his pleasures, and his love of ostentation. There was, however, good reason to fear the wisdom and military talent of Surrey, who, notwithstanding his difficulties contrived in August 1520 to march into O'Niall's country, on which O'Niall came in, with other Irish chiefs of the north, and submitted; or as king Henry describes it in his own communication to Surrey, "according to their natural duty of allegiance, have recognised us as their sovereign lord," &c. Sir John Wallop had been sent over with this intelligence to the king, who in answer states to Surrey, the advice of his council upon the government of Ireland, that the Irish chiefs should be dealt with by "sober waies, politique drifts, and amiable perswasions, rather than by

\* Cox.



rigorous dealing, comminations, or any other enforcement by strength or violence; and, to be plaine unto you, to spende so moche money for the reduccion of that lande, to bring the Irishry in apparance oonely of obeisance, &c., &c., it were a thing of less policie, less advantage, and lesse effect.”\*

It is more to our present purpose that we find in the same letter a direction to lord Surrey to knight O’Niall, “and other such lords of the Irishry, as ye shall thinke goode.”† A complaint seems to have soon after (1521) been made to the English court, of O’Niall, representing him as engaged in a formidable conspiracy for the destruction of the English, by the aid of a Scottish force; and urging, as the only resource against this, the necessity of a strong English force being sent over. It was answered in the paper of instructions sent over by the king, that the king’s engagements to foreign powers, and his “manifold quarrels with France, made it inconvenient.” This is, however, followed by a letter from the king, in which he states, that having caused all inquiry to be made in Scotland, and for other reasons assigned, there is no ground for any apprehension of immediate hostility from O’Niall. It appears certain from the same document, that O’Niall had expressed his gratitude to the king himself for the honours conferred upon him; and the probability, suggested by every gleam we can obtain of his personal conduct, is, that he became a true if not a zealous supporter of the English. In 1523, he appears bearing the sword of state before the lord deputy.

In 1525, O’Niall became involved in a war with Manus O’Donell; he was assisted by his kinsman, the lord deputy; but while engaged in an incursion in O’Donell’s lands, his own was invaded by Hugh O’Niall, the chief of the rival house. On this they concluded a peace with O’Donell, and marched against Hugh O’Niall, whom they defeated and slew.‡

A very few years after, Con O’Niall seems to have been engaged in opposition to the English of the pale; and, in 1532, committed devastations which considerably injured his kinsman, the earl of Kildare, who was then deputy and was suspected of having contemned this conduct. Two years after, he engaged in the disturbances, which have been already detailed in the life of the deputy’s son—so well known under the appellation of Silken Thomas. By his conduct in the “Rebellion of Silken Thomas,” he drew upon himself the especial attention of deputy lord Grey, in 1539, when his territories were invaded and sustained severe loss.

It was in the year 1538, that the peace of lord deputy Grey’s administration was disturbed by the very energetic efforts of the Roman see against the progress of the reformation. Of these, we shall speak fully, under a more appropriate head. Our present purpose is to mention a communication from that see to O’Niall. A Franciscan friar, who was sent over for the purpose of exciting the native chiefs to arms, was seized. Among his papers was found the following letter written in the name of the council of cardinals by the bishop of Metz:—

\* Letter from Henry VIII. to Surrey.—*State Papers.* † *Ib.* p. 66.

‡ Cox. Ware.



“MY SON, O’NIALL,

“Thou and thy fathers were ever faithful to the mother church of Rome. His holiness, Paul, the present pope, and his council of holy fathers, have lately found an ancient prophecy of one saint Lazerianus, an Irish archbishop of Cashel. It saith, that the church of Rome shall surely fall when the Catholic faith is once overthrown in Ireland. Therefore, for the glory of the mother church, the honour of St Peter, and your own security, suppress heresy, and oppose the enemies of his holiness. You see that when the Roman faith perisheth in Ireland, the see of Rome is fated to utter destruction. The council of cardinals have, therefore, thought it necessary to animate the people of the holy island in this pious cause, being assured, that while the mother church hath sons of such worth as you, and those who shall unite with you, she shall not fall, but prevail for ever—in some degree at least—in Britain. Having thus obeyed the order of the sacred council, we recommend your princely person to the protection of the Holy Trinity, of the Blessed Virgin, of St Peter, St Paul, and all the host of heaven. Amen.”

O’Niall, already irritated by the lord deputy’s warfare upon his territory, and easily inflamed by representations so adapted to his character—which did not fail to reach him through many efficient channels—entered with violence into the views suggested by the Romish emissaries. He was joined by Manus O’Donell, and many other of the native chiefs. The clergy exerted themselves to the utmost of their power to inflame the pride of the chiefs, and the passions of all; and a strong confederacy was quickly raised. At the head of the formidable insurrection thus levied, Con O’Niall marched into the pale, committing ravage, and denouncing vengeance against the enemies of St Peter, and the chiefs of the holy island. Their hostilities terminated in destruction and plunder. Halting near Tara, O’Niall reviewed his numerous forces; after which they separated to their provinces congratulating themselves on an amount of spoil, which in their eyes constituted victory over their enemies.

In the mean time, lord Grey, though unprepared either to repel or take advantage of this inroad, was not idle. He collected his force, far disproportioned in number, but still more preponderant in material. He obtained a small reinforcement from England—the citizens of Dublin and of Drogheda flocked with ready zeal to his standard—and the inhabitants of the pale, whose resentment and scorn had been excited by the depredations and unwarlike conduct of O’Niall and his confederacy, showed more than their usual alacrity in contributing their exertions for their own defence.

When joined by Sir William Brereton, lord Grey led his army into Meath where he came up with a considerable body of the Irish insurgents, on the banks of a river at a place called Bellahoa. There was danger and difficulty in passing, but little in routing the host of Irish chiefs. The accounts of these encounters, though sufficiently authentic as to the main result, are yet too perplexed in most of their incidents to enable us to offer any detail that we feel to be satisfactory.

O’Niall appears to have pursued a temporizing course, the policy of which was to gain time and ward off immediate consequences, by

professions, treaties, and pledges, to which he attached no weight and which deceived nobody who knew the Irish chiefs; they were yet entertained with some appearance of trust by the English court, and also gave a temporary pretext to his supporters and friends. When he possessed the means of resistance he respected no pledges; but when discomfited, his ready refuge was submission. Hence, the numerous treaties and the broken appointments, which it would be alike tedious and unprofitable to particularize. In the year we have been noticing, we are enabled to ascertain from the correspondence published by the State Paper committee,\* that he occupied a large share of the attention of government, of which the above remarks will be found to be a faithful description. We, therefore, pass to the year 1542, when a more decided turn in the course of this powerful chief's life took place.

In a letter, dated the 24th August, 1542, the lord deputy and council acquaint the king that O'Nial had come to Dublin offering to go to England to visit the king, if they would supply him with money for the purpose; and affirming his own entire want of means, and adding, that "considering his good inclinations which were beyond all men's expectation," they would endeavour to supply him for this important purpose. O'Nial made his visit, and was most graciously received; his arrival was, however, preceded by a communication, expressive of due penitence for all his past offences, with strong professions of submission for the time to come. Asking pardon, and "refusing my name and state, which I have usurped upon your grace, against my duty, and requiring your majesty of your clemency to give me what name, state, title, land, or living, it shall please your highness; which I shall acknowledge to take and hold of your majesty's mere gift, and in all things do hereafter, as shall beseem your most true and faithful subject."

King Henry created him earl of Tyrone, and gave him the "country of Tyrone." The patent limits the earldom to Con O'Nial for life, with remainder to his son Matthew intail male. Matthew was by the same instrument created baron Duncannon. This Matthew was an illegitimate son; and his right of succession was forcibly disputed by other members of the family, which disturbed the old age of his father, and renewed the troubles of the country. A paper written by the secretary Wriothesly is quoted in the volume of *State Papers*, from which we have chiefly drawn this notice, gives some curious details of O'Nial's investiture. "A paper remains in the hand-writing of secretary Wriothesly, noting the presents to be made to O'Nial on this occasion, among which were robes of state, and a gold chain of the value of £100. And it appears by the register of the privy council, that the earl of Oxford was summoned to attend the king at Greenwich, on Sunday, 1st of October, to make a sufficient number of earls for O'Nial's investiture to that dignity; and, that as a further mark of favour, Mr Wiatt and Mr Tuke were, on the 3d of October, appointed to conduct the earl of Tyrone, [&c. &c.] on the morrow to do their duties to the young prince Edward." The earl, on this occasion, renounced the name and style of O'Nial, engaged that he and his

\* State Papers, from 1538 to 1540, Vol. ii.—State Papers, vol. ii. Paper ccclxxix.



followers should assume the English dress, manners, customs, and language, and submit to English law. This arrangement may evidently be looked on as the commencement of a most important revolution in the state of Ireland; as it was followed by a like submission under all the same conditions on the part of other great chiefs, whom the gracious reception experienced by O'Niall encouraged to pursue a course, of which the honour and advantage was now becoming yearly more and more apparent. The course of events had been, during the whole of the reign of Henry, such as to show that sooner or later all pertinacious opposition to the progress of English dominion must be swept away; and although, as ever happens, the bulk of proprietors and petty chiefs looked no further than the shape and colour of the passing moment, sagacious or informed persons, whose means of knowledge were more extensive, saw and acted on the principle of securing themselves against changes likely to come. The dream of regaining a barbarian independence was roughly shaken.

The new earl—and he was at the time at the head of the native chiefs, for power and possession—was on his return sworn of the privy council in Ireland. O'Brien, O'Donell, Ulich de Burgho, and Desmond, soon followed, made the same renunciations, and received the same favours.

The next occurrence, of sufficient moment for notice, exhibits the advantageous operation of these arrangements, upon the state of the chiefs who had thus submitted. The earl of Tyrone, and some others among the Ulster chiefs, having fallen into disputes amongst themselves, instead of entering on a brawling war to decide their difference by the plunder and murder of their dependents, they came up to Dublin to lay their complaints before the lord lieutenant and council.

The earl of Tyrone seems, however, to have fallen under suspicion not long after. In 1551 (5 Ed. VI.), he was detained in Dublin for some months by lord lieutenant Crofts, on the apprehension of disturbances in Ulster. It is evident that the ties of ancient habit and hereditary pride must have long retained an influence beyond the force of any other; but the earl was now become an old man, and probably felt the civilizing influence of that prudent season of life. Younger hands, too, were already grasping for his honours and possessions; and the growing force of British law must have assumed the aspect of a shelter and security against the unregulated violence of native ambition and turbulence. The occasion of the earl's embarrassment with the lord lieutenant, was in fact the result of contention among his descendants, and the unjust and dangerous disposition which he had made of the succession to the inheritance. Matthew, lord Duncannon, his recognised heir, was not only an illegitimate son; but common rumour, and the general opinion of the people, had long questioned his paternity, and it was said that he was the son of a smith. Indignant at a preference so questionable, the legitimate sons of the earl began to plot against the baron Duncannon, and soon succeeded in estranging from him the affection of the earl. Duncannon conceived the safest and surest resource would be to make common cause with the government. For this purpose he complained to the lord lieutenant.



ant, assuring him that his father and his brothers were leagued with the hope of throwing off their allegiance to the king, and re-asserting their independence. Upon this it was, that the earl was detained in close custody in Dublin. The other sons flew to arms, and attacked the lands of Matthew lord Duncannon, which they plundered and laid waste. Matthew was assisted by the English; but the deputy, in reliance upon the Irish lord's force, sent insufficient aid. The consequence was, a defeat sustained in an encounter with the brothers, John and Hugh, with a loss of two hundred slain. The war, (if we may so name it,) was, however, long kept up, and we shall have to notice its consequences under another head.

The earl of Tyrone does not further appear in any important transaction. This contention in his family clouded the prosperity of his latter days. He seems to have rested his affections on Matthew, baron Duncannon, who, it is probable, was not his son; and it was with impatient resentment he witnessed the successful encroachment of John O'Niall, whose active and turbulent disposition allowed no rest to Ulster. At length, having contrived to seize the person of Matthew, he put him to death. The old earl, who had put his whole heart into the contest, died of the shock.

## **Murrough O'Brien, First Earl of Thomond, and Baron Inchiquin.**

DIED A. D. 1551.

AMONG the great Irish chiefs who joined in surrendering their claim to native dignities and to ancient hereditary tenures and privileges, which it became at this period both unsafe and inexpedient to retain, none can be named more illustrious, either by descent or by the associations of a name, than Murrough O'Brien. There was none also among these chiefs to whom the change was more decidedly an advantage. The O'Briens of Thomond had, more than any of the other southern chiefs, suffered a decline of consequence and power, under the shadow of the great house of Desmond—with which they were at continual variance, and of which it had for many generations been the family policy to weaken them by division or oppression. It is mentioned by Lodge in his *Collectanea*,\* that it was the custom of the Desmond lords to take part with the injured branches of the O'Briens, with a view to weaken the tribe; and, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the house of Desmond was the first in Ireland for the extent of its territories, and the influence derived from numerous and powerful alliances.

Murrough O'Brien had obtained possession of the principality of Thomond by a usurpation, justified by the pretence of the ancient custom of tanistry, by which it was understood that the succession was determined by a popular election of the most worthy. By this ancient custom, so favourable to the strong, Murrough set aside his nephew,

\* Quoted by Archdall.

whose loss, however, he compensated, by resigning to him the barony of Ibrackan. The possession thus obtained by a title, which had long been liable to be defeated by means similar to those by which it was acquired, he prudently secured by a precaution, at this time rendered effective by the policy of the English administration, and countenanced by the example of his most eminent native countrymen.

He submitted to the lord deputy, who advised him to proceed to England. In pursuance of this advice, O'Brien repaired to England, and made the most full renunciation of his principality, and all its appurtenant possessions, privileges, and dignities, into the hands of the king. He further agreed and bound himself to renounce the title of O'Brien—to use whatever name the king should please to confer—to adopt the English dress, language, and customs. He also engaged to cultivate his lands—build houses, and let them to proper tenants who might improve the land—to renounce all cess or other exaction, and keep no armed force without the express permission of the deputy. He further covenanted to be obedient to the king's laws, to answer to his writs, and aid his governors according to the requisition. He was to hold his lands by a single knight's fee. There is among the *State Papers*, published in 1834, one which purports to contain an abridgment of the "requests" of O'Brien and some of the other chiefs associated with him in this transaction. The following is the part relative to O'Brien:—

"First, he demandeth to him and to his heirs male, all such lands, rents, reversions, and services, as I had at any time before this day, or any other [person] to my use, which is named part of Thomond, with all rule and authority to govern all the king's subjects, and to order them in defence of the said country, according to the king's laws, and with all royalty thereto belonging; reserving to the king's majesty the gift of all bishopricks, and all other things to the crown or regality appertaining.

"Where the council of Ireland hath given him certain abbeys lately suppressed, he requireth the confirmation of that gift by the king's majesty, to him and to his heirs male.

"Item. That the laws of England may be executed in Thomond, and the haughty laws and customs of that country may be clearly put away for ever.

"Item. That bastards from henceforth may inherit no lands, and that those which at this present do inherit may enjoy the same during their lives, and after their death to return to the right heirs lawfully begotten.

"Item. That there may be sent into Ireland, some well learned Irishmen, brought up in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, not being infected with the poison of the bishop of Rome, and to be first approved by the king's majesty, and then to be sent to preach the word of God in Ireland.

"Item. Some place of small value near Dublin, where he may prepare for his horses and folkis, if he shall be commanded to resort to parliament or council at Dublin."\*

Such were generally the demands made by O'Brien, of which we

\* State Papers, cccxciii. vol. iii.



have already mentioned the result. He was created earl of Thomond, with remainder to his nephew Donogh O'Brien, whom he had dispossessed by the law of tanistry, but who must, in the eye of English law, have been looked on as one defrauded of his right. As, however, this arrangement could not be quite satisfactory to Murrough, he was at the same time created baron Inchiquin, with remainder to the heirs of his body.

We have already given an extract descriptive of the ceremony of the creation of these Irish earls: a more detailed description which we have since met will not be thought superfluous by the reader who is curious upon the subject of ancient manners:—

“First, The queen’s closet at Greenwich was richly hanged with cloth of Arras, and well strawed with rushes. And after the king’s majesty was come into his closet to hear high mass, these earls and the baron aforesaid, [Murrough O’Brien, Donogh O’Brien, and William de Burgh] went to the queen’s closet, and thereafter saeing of high mass put on their robes of estate, and ymediately after, the king’s majesty being under the cloth of estate, with all his noble council, with other noble persons of his realm, as well spiritual as temporal, to a great number, and the ambassadours of Scotland, the earl of Glencairn, Sir George Douglas, Sir William Hamilton, Sir James Leyremonthe, and the secretary for Scotland, came in the earl of Tomonde, led between the earle of Derby and the earle of Ormonde, the viscount Lisle, bearing before him his sword, the hilt upwards, Gartier before him bearing his letters patent, and so proceeded to the king’s majestie. And Gartier delivered the said letters patentis to the lord chamberlain, and the lord chamberlain delivered them to the great chamberlain, and the lord great chamberlain delivered them to the king’s majesty, who took them to Mr Wriothlesly, secretary, to reade them openly. And when he came to “*Cincturam gladii*,” the viscount Lisle presented to the king the sword, and the king girded the said sword about the said earl bawdrickwise, the foresaid earl kneeling, and the lords standing that lead him. [This ceremony was repeated for the next earl, Clanrikard.] That done, came into the king’s presence the baron [Donogh O’Brien, the nephew] in his kirtle, led between two barons, the lord Cobham, and the lord Clinton; the lord Montjoye bearing before him his robe, Gartier bearing before him his letters patents in the manner aforesaid, &c., &c. [the king handing these to Mr Paget to read out], and when he came to “*Investimus*,” he put on his robe. And so the patent read out, the king’s majesty put about every one of their necks a chain of gold with a crosse hanging at it, and took then their letters patent, and they gave thanks unto him. And then the king’s majestie made five of the men that came with them knights. And so the earls and the baron in order, took their leave of the king’s highness, and were conveyed, bearing their letters patent in their hands to the council chamber, underneath the king’s majesty’s chamber, appointed for their dining place, in order as hereafter followeth: the trumpets blowing before them, the officers of armes, the earl of Thomond led between the earl of Derby and the viscount Lisle, &c., &c., to the dining place. After the second course, Gartier proclaimed their styles in manner following:—



“*Du Treshault [tres haut] et puissant Seigneur Moroghe O'Brien, Conte de Tomond, Seigneur de Insewyne, du royaume de Irlande, &c., &c.* The king's majestie gave them their robes of estate, and all things belonging thereunto, and paid all manner of duties belonging to the same.”\*

This earl was in the same year sworn of the privy council. He married a daughter of Thomas Fitz-Gerald, the knight of the valley. He died 1551, and was succeeded in the barony of Inchiquin by his eldest son, according to the limitations of his patent, while the earldom went, by the same provisions, to his nephew's family.

## Bernard Fitz-Patrick, Second Baron Upper Ossory.

DIED A. D. 1550, OR A. D. 1551.

THE reader of ancient Irish history may recollect to have met the name of M'Gil Patrick, prince of Upper Ossory, among the most valiant opponents of the first settlers in the 12th century. A still earlier recollection carries us back to the famous field of “Ossory's plain,” where the ancient warriors of Munster were crossed upon their homeward march from the battle of Clontarf, by Magilla-Patrick and his men, and subdued their generous enemies with the noblest display of heroism that history records.†

The grandfather of the baron who is the subject of this notice, is also commemorated by an amusing anecdote, which is repeated by all the Irish historians. In 1522, this chief sent an ambassador to Henry VIII. with a complaint against Pierce, earl of Ormonde. The ambassador met king Henry on his way to chapel, and delivered his errand in the following uncouth sentence: “*Sta pedibus, Domine Rex! Dominus meus Gillapatricius me misit ad te et jussit dicere, quod si non vis castigare Petrum Rufum, ipse faciet bellum contra te.*”

The son of this chief, Barnard Fitz-Patrick, made his submission in 1537, to the commissioners of Henry VIII. They entered into indentures with him to make him baron of Cowshill, or Castleton, with a grant of the lands of Upper Ossory, at the annual rent of three pounds to the king, which agreement was carried into effect by a patent, dated 11th June, 1541. His first wife was a daughter of Pierce, earl of Ormonde, the “*Petrum Rufum*” of his father's complaint. By her he left a son, Barnaby, who succeeded him as second earl; and who was eminently distinguished for bravery, and for his prudent and honourable conduct as a public man.

This nobleman was the distinguished friend and favourite of Edward VI., who wrote him many affectionate letters, still extant, while he was in France, where he served as a volunteer in the king of France's army. Afterwards, when he returned from France, he signalized his valour in England, in Wyat's insurrection; and in 1558 was knighted

\* State Papers. Note to paper cccxvi. † Page 218 of this volume.

by the duke of Norfolk for his distinguished services at the siege of Leith.

An extract from a letter of the lord deputy Sidney to the Irish council, written while he was at Waterford, affords an honourable testimony of this lord: "Upper Ossorie is so well governed and defended by the valour and wisdom of the baron that now is, as—saving for surety of good order hereafter in succession—it made no matter if the county were never shired, nor her majestie's writ otherwise current than it is, so humbly he keepeth all his people subject to obedience and good order."\* Under this impression, so honourable to the lord of Upper Ossory, the lord deputy made him lord lieutenant of the King's and Queen's counties, and the neighbouring country; throughout which the same good order was preserved, so that the turbulent chiefs of those districts were thoroughly repressed.

One of those chiefs whose insurrectionary sallies he had for many years controlled, Rory Oge O'More, having burnt Naas and other towns, was proclaimed by the government. As the baron of Upper Ossory was his most formidable foe, this chief made a characteristic effort to destroy him: he sent a person to the baron, who pretended to give him private information of the movements of O'More, and described the place where he might be surprised with a large prey and a small force, among the woods. The baron knew the rebel chief's character, and the ways of the country, and suspected the truth. The information was not, however, to be neglected, so he took with him a strong party, and when he approached the woods, he sent in thirty men to try the way. O'More seeing this, thought to mask his real force by appearing with an equal number, leaving the rest of his men in ambush. This well devised manœuvre was, however, defeated by the impetuosity of the baron's men, who instantly charged the enemy and scattered them; in the confusion O'More received a sword through his body, and was despatched. The reward of a thousand marks had been offered for O'More's head; this sum was offered to the baron by the council, but he refused to accept more than one hundred marks as a reward for his men. This occurrence happened in 1578.

In the following year, the baron attended the lord deputy into Munster against James Fitz-Maurice; in consideration of which, Lodge tells us, he received a pension with other compensations which showed a high sense of his services. Sir Henry Sidney, in his instructions to his successor, lord Grey, mentions the baron of Upper Ossory, with a few more, as "the most sufficient and faithful" persons he found in Ireland.

This baron died 1581, leaving a daughter only; on which his title and estates passed to his brother Florence, to whom he also left by will all his "wyle stooode," "his armour, shirts of mail, and other furniture of war, saving that which served for both the houses of Borriedge and Killenye, which, after his wife's decease or marriage, he wills to remain for the furniture of those two castles constantly. He leaves to him likewise half his pewter and brass; all his tythes in Ossory (except those of Aghavol bequeathed to his wife), all the plate left him by his father," &c., &c.†

\* Quoted by Lodge.

† Lodge.

## Sir William Brabazon.

DIED A. D. 1552.

IN August, 1534, Sir William Brabazon was appointed vice-treasurer and receiver-general of Ireland; and was for the eighteen years following the most distinguished person there for his eminent services, and his brave and steady conduct in various trying situations.

In 1535, he distinguished himself greatly by his resistance to the destructive proceedings of lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald, in the country round Naas. Allen and Aylmer, in a joint letter\* to Cromwell, mention that but for Brabazon's conduct on that occasion, the whole country from Naas to the gates of Dublin, had been burnt; "which had been a loss in effect irrecoverable."

The following year, O'Connor Faly made a destructive inroad upon Carbery, in the county of Kildare, but was at once checked by Sir William Brabazon and the chancellor, who marched into Offaly, where they committed equal devastation in the lands of O'Connor who was thus compelled to return home, on which a peace was presently concluded.

In 1539, Brabazon was, with the chancellor and master of the rolls, appointed a commissioner for receiving the surrenders of the abbeys, and the granting of the necessary pensions for the maintenance of the abbots and fraternities by whom they were surrendered. And in 1543, he was appointed lord justice. At this time the king's style was altered from lord to king of Ireland, and the new official seals were sent through him to the respective officers by whom they were held.

He was again called to the government in 1546, and maintained his character by successful expeditions in which he reduced a dangerous combination of O'More and O'Connor Faly, whose territories he laid waste, forcing O'Connor to seek refuge in Connaught.

On the accession of Edward VI., being nominated of the Irish privy council, at the special desire of that king, who, at the same time, expressed his sense of his long and eminent service, Brabazon suggested the effective repair and occupation of the castle of Athlone, and had the charge of this measure, so important to the province of Connaught, committed to himself. The military importance of this place had been recognised so early as the reign of John, when the castle is said to have been built. Standing on the only part of the Shannon, where this river is fordable for thirty miles; and commanding the territories on either side, this town obviously presented the most important advantages for a magazine, and central position in the western country. Under Brabazon, repairs were made, and additions, which were continued in the reign of Elizabeth. This service was rendered difficult by the strenuous opposition of the neighbouring Connaught chiefs.

In 1549, Brabazon was again called to the head of the Irish go-

\* State Papers, Paper xcv. p. 260.



vernment by the election of the council, and during his administration performed many important and laborious military services, among which may be specified his expedition against Charles Kavenagh M<sup>c</sup>-Art, whom he proclaimed a traitor, and having got £8000, and four hundred men from England, he attacked him in his own lands, and dispersed his soldiers with considerable slaughter; so that Kavenagh was soon after compelled to come to Dublin and submit himself to the council, publicly renouncing his title of M<sup>c</sup>Murrough, and surrendering large tracts of his estates.

Sir William Brabazon died at Carrickfergus in 1552. His heart was buried with his English ancestors in Eastwell, and his body in St Katherine's church, Dublin, where there was a long Latin inscription upon a monument, which has been removed in rebuilding the church; and an English inscription summing the above particulars, upon his gravestone. He was ancestor to the earls of Meath.

### James, Ninth Earl of Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1546.

THE ninth earl of Ormonde took a prominent part in the Irish affairs of his time, long before the death of his father, in whose memoir we have already had occasion to notice him. He was, for many years, the great support and prop of his father's declining age, whom we can ascertain by his letters, recently published in the *State Papers*, to have placed much reliance on his zeal and judgment; at times, maintaining his character in the English court against the whispers of court intrigue; at other times, supplying by his youthful activity and valour, the activity which his father's infirmities did not always allow.

We have already mentioned his spirited and noble answer to a letter from his unfortunate and guilty cousin.\* We have also mentioned, that in 1532, seven years before his accession to his father's honours, he was appointed lord high treasurer of Ireland for life. In 1535, he was appointed admiral of the kingdom, and the same year was created viscount Thurles. He was also appointed joint governor with his father, over Kilkenny, Waterford, and Tipperary; and in the following year distinguished himself by the suppression of disturbances raised in Munster by James, the young earl of Desmond, whose father having died the same year, he was led by inexperience, inordinate ambition and evil counsel, to launch into the rebellious course so native to his family, and so fatal to many of them. Lord Butler, then lord Thurles, was sent against him, and proceeded with the spirit and prudence of his character, to the attack of his territories about Limerick; he also seized his castle at Lough Gur, and converted it into a fortress against him. We here give the reader one of his own letters on this occasion, which has been preserved in the chapter-house, and recently published:†—

\* Page 443.

† State Papers, cx.

“ Lord Butler to Cromwell.

“ Please it your goodness to be advertised, that I have of late addressed mine other letters to you, containing my proceedings in the west parts of this land, immediately after the winning of Dungarvon, to which my journey, if the lord deputy had spared me one of the battering pieces (God being my leader) undoubtedly such service might have been done with so little charge, that the king’s highness should have been therewith pleased and well contented. But as it chanced, with such company as I then had of my own, with the good assistance of Stephen Appany, captain of 100 spears, I rode forth to Youghal, Cork, and Limerick, and had, of the young pretended earl of Desmond, such reasonable offers at his coming in, that I suppose these many days the lords and captains of that country were not so testable to good order, like as more amply appeareth in my former letters. Sir, of truth, the lord deputy\* minding to have his service and proceedings the better advanced, and blowen out by the report of my lords, my father and me, instantly desired us to put our hands to a letter (devised by himself) in his recommendation [commendation]; which letter, I suppose, is sent forth by him unto the king’s grace. And albeit, my lord, my father’s service or mine was never much commended by his advertisement, yet partly of courtesy, and also trusting he would then with better will have lent me one of the said battering pieces, I put to my hand, and so did my lord, my father, at his return from Waterford, trusting also to have had the said piece to serve against the Breenys. I reckon it no great wisdom, nor yet matter of honour, where any man procureth another to be his herald. And for my part, God and the king knowith my true heart, to whom I humbly commit the construction of my poor service. And since there now repaireth unto his grace, Sir John Saintlaw, who never spared for pain of art and charge to do his grace good service worthy of remuneration, I commit unto his breast the report of my proceedings, and shall most heartily desire you to thank him for the loving approved kindness I have always found in him towards my lord, my father, and me. The king’s grace, and he himself, being so pleased, my desire is that he may return hither again, since I have at full perceived his diligent service to be such, as if he return not, I shall have great lack of him, as knowith God who ever preserve you. At Waterford, 17 day of October, 1535.

“ Your assured kinsman,

(Signed)

“ JAMES BUTLER.”

(Superscribed.) “ To my right honourable cousin, and most loving friend, master Cromwell, the king’s secretary.”

Lord Butler’s patent, by which he was created lord Thurles, had not yet passed. But it is remarked in a note on this letter, that neither he, nor Grey, or viscount Grane, who were ennobled, or advanced at the same time, seem to have assumed their titles “ either in their signatures, or in the style by which they were addressed.”†

\* Skeffington.

† Note to paper exl. p. 249.

In consideration of his many and great services, large grants were made to lord Butler in the years 1539 and 1542; of these several were manors which had belonged to the earl of Kildare. In 1539, his father died, and he succeeded to his honours, &c. in the same year he was sent against the Connaught insurgents. In 1543, he had a commission along with Ormonde and Desmond, to make levies through Tipperary, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, to take, imprison, or protect, according to his judgment and the purposes of his commission. Among other commissions, in this busy period of his life, he was sent into Scotland in command of the Irish forces sent over to join the earl of Lenox, and others, in prosecution of a war which had various parties and purposes, but had been promoted and joined by king Henry for views of his own in the year before when he had a considerable force at his disposal. In this year the invasion languished, and the English and Irish were withdrawn without having effected any important service. On this occasion, lord Butler, then ninth earl of Ormonde, is mentioned to have levied 1500 of his own followers—being a number equal to that levied by the deputy, St Leger, for the king.\*

In 1546, this illustrious nobleman was lost to his time and country in the flower of his age. Having publicly accused the deputy, St Leger, of high treason, the deputy retorted the charge, and both were summoned to England. While residing there he was poisoned, with several of his servants, at Ely house in Holborn. The entertainment is said, by Ware, to have been given him by his own people—the poison was, in all probability, accidental. The number who were poisoned is mentioned by Lodge to have been thirty-five; Ware says, his steward and sixteen servants. The earl was buried in the church of St Thomas of Acres: but his heart was brought over and buried in the cathedral of St Canice, Kilkenny. We add an extract of his will, which has interest. After the directions concerning his burial, he devises that “My sonne and heyre, being in the prince’s graces court, shall have my basin and ewer, which I have here, a silver pot, a salt, a new boll, a trencher, and a spoon of silver. Item, my wife (Joan, daughter to the 11th earl of Desmond), to have my best bracelet of gold sent her for a token. Item, to my lord chancellor of England, my new gilded goblet with the cover, for a token. Item, master Fitz-William, to have a new boll of them that were lately made, for a token, &c., &c.”†

He was succeeded by his eldest son, Thomas, viscount Thurles.

## Richard, Viscount Mount-Garret.

DIED A. D. 1571.

THIS distinguished person was next brother to the last noticed earl of Ormonde. His life was spent in active services, and he was, in recognition of these, in 1550, created viscount Mount-Garret, by king Edward VI. He was, during the reigns of Edward and Mary, keeper

\* Ware’s Antiquities.

† Lodge.



of the castle of Fernes. He was, also, honourably employed in several important commissions, and other offices of public trust in queen Elizabeth's reign; and died in 1571, when he was buried in St Canice, Kilkenny, in a tomb, says Lodge, "Whereon is his effigies in armour, with his feet resting against a dog, &c."\*

## James, Fifteenth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A.D. 1558.

THIS earl succeeded his father Thomas, who died of extreme old age in 1536. It is perhaps a just inference which we have no means to verify, that this earl was himself far advanced in life at the period of this event. Immediately on his accession he followed the example of his illustrious ancestors by attempting an insurrection in Munster. James, viscount Thnrles, (afterwards 9th earl of Ormonde,) was immediately dispatched against him by lord Grey, and soon reduced him to submission—wasting his lands, and seizing on his castle of Lough Gur, which, as we have already mentioned in our notice of that nobleman, he fortified and garrisoned against its lord. Desmond submitted, and gave pledges to be a faithful servant to the king, and to do right to the rival claimant of his earldom. He had strongly, on this occasion, expressed to Grey his wish to submit and his fear of the consequence. The lord James Butler, it seems, pretended a claim in right of his wife Joan, daughter and heir to the 11th earl of Desmond. On this account it was, that in the correspondence of James Butler, this earl of Desmond is always called "the pretended earl." On the subject of this claim, Desmond observes that it was to be apprehended, lest by a submission to English law his enemy's claim might be unjustly preferred, "lest by the favours of the other, he and his blood shall be put from their inheritance, which they have possessed, he saith, from the conquest."† The deputy in the same communication recommends Desmond to favour on strong prudential grounds, both as the best means of repressing the natives, and also as a counterbalance to the growing power of the house of Ormonde, now freed from the rivalry of the other great branch of the Geraldines, by the recent hapless events in that family.

This view is corroborated strongly by part of a letter afterwards written 1542, by lord deputy St Leger to Henry. We extract the passage which is interesting for the authentic sketch it presents of the actual state of these parties in the reign of Henry VIII.:—"It may also please your majestie, that where it hath been to me reported, that the said M'Cowley, lately the master of your rolls here, should article against me that I went about to ereet a new Geraldine band (probably here referring to lord Thomas's rebellion); meaning the same by the erle of Desmond. The truth is, I laboured most effectually to bring him to your perfect obedience, to my great peril and charge; and this, gracious lord, was the only cause. I saw that now the erle of Kildare

\* Lodge.

† Gray's letter to Cromwell. State Papers, clx.

was gone, there was no subject of your majestie's here meet nor able to way (weigh) with the erle of Ormonde, who hath of your majestie's gifte, and of his own inheritance, and rule given him by your majesty, not only 50 or 60 miles in length, but also many of the chief holds of the frontiers of Irishmen; so that if he or any of his heirs should swerve from their duty of allegiance, (which I think verily that he will never do,) it would be more hard to daunt him or them than it was the said erle of Kildare, who had always the said erle of Ormonde in his top, when he would or was like to attempt any such thing. Therefore I thought it good to have a Rowland for an Oliver, (&c. &c.)”\*

It was probably on these grounds that Desmond was encouraged to look for favour and protection from the king. To this course he was strongly moved; both by the representations of the deputy and by Henry's favourable reception of Con O'Niall, then created earl of Tyrone. Under these and such influences Desmond sailed from Howth in the summer of 1542, bearing recommendatory letters from the lord deputy St Leger; and was received with great honour by the king. On the same occasion he was also appointed lord high treasurer in Ireland, and enjoyed the post during this and the two following reigns. He was sworn of the privy council, and deputy St Leger by the king's authority, granted to him and his heirs male St Mary's abbey to hold by the fifth part of a knight's fee: with the condition of forfeiture in case of rebellion.†

From this he remained in prosperity and honour till his death in 1558, at Askeaton, where he was buried in the Franciscan Friary.

## Maurice Fitz-Gerald, or Black Maurice.

KILLED A. D. 1565.

MAURICE FITZ-GERALD, brother to the earl just noticed, was, by the gift of this earl proprietor of Kerry Currihy, in the county of Cork. When 80 years old he attempted an incursion upon the lands of the Macarthy's of Muskerry: he was driving off his prey when he was met, and his party overpowered by one of the Macarthy's, who took him prisoner. While Macarthy continued the pursuit, he left Maurice under the custody of four men, who put him to death. He was father to James of Desmond, afterwards distinguished in the great rebellion of Gerald, 16th earl of Desmond.

## Sir Anthony St Leger.

DIED A. D. 1559.

THE name of St Leger is upon the roll of Battel Abbey; the brave Sir Robert St Leger, warrior, came to England with king William,

\* State Papers, cccxv.

† Lodge.

and it is said handed him first on shore in Sussex. The descendants of this knight frequently appear on the scene of public events, both in England and Ireland, before the illustrious person whose fortunes we are now to trace, became the founder of an Irish family. The St Legers were, for many generations, settled in the county of Kent; and several individuals of the family appear, during the course of the 15th century, to have held offices lay or clerical in Ireland.

Sir Anthony was sent over by Henry VIII. as one of the commissioners for setting the waste lands upon the marches of the English pale, for 21 years, to such tenants as would improve them, and on such rents as might appear fair to demand, &c., with certain conditions framed to extend the pale and preserve the English character of its inhabitants. This commission is historically important, for the distinct view which it affords of the state of the pale in the year 1537. We shall, therefore, have to notice it farther on in detail. It may be here enough for the reader to know, that the commission carried an inquest, by means of juries, into the several districts of the pale; from the returns of this the result is a most frightful picture of exaction and petty tyranny, under the odious names of Coyne and Livery, and other pretences of extortion all prohibited by law. Surveys were also made of several estates of the greater proprietors; regulations of the most judicious character were decided upon in conformity with these, and intrusted to this commission to carry into effect. For this purpose they were armed with very considerable authority, and executed their commission with vigour and effect. They made sufficient inquiries as to the parties concerned in lord Thomás Fitz-Gerald's rebellion to produce a salutary fear, while they refrained from an injudicious severity, which might excite disaffection. They let to farm the king's lands, reserving the annual payments due to the exchequer; and they reconciled the earl of Ormonde to the lord deputy.

Having executed his commission, St Leger returned to England, where he remained till 1540. When he was sent over as lord deputy, and was sworn on the 25th of July, he brought over with him a commission, appointed for the further prosecution of the measures already mentioned, which they forwarded materially by a survey of the crown lands. An order was transmitted to the master of the rolls and the archbishop of Dublin, to have the goods of every description, which had been the property of the late lord deputy Gray, appraised and delivered into the custody of the new deputy, to hold for the king, and use during the royal pleasure. Gray, one of the ablest, most active, and in every way serviceable governors Ireland had yet known, was, on his return to England, by means of the malicious intrigues of his enemies and the reckless tyranny of Henry, most iniquitously accused, tried, and condemned. His conduct on the occasion was an instance of the difference between active courage and passive fortitude: so vigorous in military command, so brave in the field, his firmness was not of that high order that accompanies the hero into the horrors of captivity, and supports him against the wantonness of the tyrant's cruelty: his spirit sunk under the terror of Henry's brutality—which he had probably been accustomed to fear and shrink from; and he refused to defend himself. He was condemned and executed. He



was more resolute to face death than the tyrant's bluster, and met his fate with heroic calmness. The principal charge against him was the suffering the son of Kildare, a youth of ten, to be saved from the general slaughter of his family.

St Leger successfully exerted himself to infuse activity, and control the direction of every department and functionary of the government. He sent the marshal of Ireland, Sir William Brereton, to receive the submission of the earl of Desmond. Brereton died at Kilkenny. But the earl came to meet the deputy at Cahir, in the following January, and tendered his submission which was accepted by St Leger. This submission was confirmed by the delivery of the earl's son, Gerald, as an hostage. This earl also renounced the privilege of the Desmond lords, to absent themselves from parliaments, and not to enter walled towns: a privilege which, the reader may recollect, was granted in 1444, to James the 7th earl. This transaction had been a considerable time in agitation. Among the State Papers of the year 1538, a letter from St Leger, written during the time of his commission (already noticed), mentions that the earl had delivered a hostage and a written engagement. And another letter, written by lord Ormonde in the same year, mentions evidently with a view to injure the deputy, (Grey.) "And after my lord deputed of his own motion, went with four of his company to James, earl of Desmond, and persuaded him, after such a fashion, that he desired him for the love of God to deliver him the hostage, considering that he have written to the king's highness, that he had the same; otherwise, that he was like to be utterly undone, . . . . . and hereupon he had the hostage given him, who promised, that after he had shewed the same, that he should be delivered (back) without any hurt, losses or danger, as he was true knight; which matter was done in Thomen, O'Brien's country."

On the 13th June, 1541, Sir Anthony summoned a parliament in Dublin, in which it was enacted that king Henry and his successors should from that time bear the title of kings of Ireland.\* Several enactments were also made for the administration of justice in questions affecting property; and an application was made to the king for permission to hold the following session of the same parliament at Limerick, on account of the salutary effect its presence might have on the earl of Desmond and other chiefs in that vicinity.† At this parliament also, Meath was divided into East Meath and West Meath, for the convenience of county jurisdiction.

It was also in the same year, and in the administration of Sir Anthony, that O'Niall, and a number of other Irish chiefs, made their submissions, and swore fidelity to the English crown. In 1542, the king granted to Sir Anthony, in recompense for his many services, the site and precinct of the monastery of Grany, in the county of Carlow, with several other lands and profits in different parts of Ireland.

In 1543, Sir Anthony was summoned over to England to give a full account of his government, and of the state of Ireland. His account was considered so satisfactory, that he was created a knight companion

\* This was followed by a coinage of groats, twopenny and penny pieces, for Irish circulation, having a harp on the reverse.—*Lodge*.

† State Papers, cccliii. p. 311.

of the order of the garter, and sent back as lord deputy. After four months' stay in England, he landed in Ireland, June, 1544, and was received with every mark of the public regard which had been conciliated by the justice of his administration. It had been throughout his principle to support the weak against the injustice of the strong; and whenever the case admitted, he usually took occasion to dissolve every ancient convention which gave a pretext for tyranny: of this may be mentioned as an instance, his decision between O'Niall and O'Donell, by which he set O'Donell free from his oppressive subjection to O'Niall, substituting a moderate and defined annual rent.

Sir Anthony, in common with every other lord deputy, had to bear the vexatious consequences of the jealousy of the greater proprietors. Of these the earl of Ormonde was then at the head. The depression of the Geraldine faction, and especially of the house of Kildare, had given a great preponderance to the Butlers whose hereditary prudence had preserved them from the incitements by which other chiefs had been tempted into many a fatal step. Sir Anthony, feeling strongly the great want of means which limited and defeated his best efforts, seems to have determined to increase the revenue by tributes to be levied upon the country. The allowance from England\* was quite inadequate, and the Irish revenue was insufficient to supply the deficiency. The means adopted by St Leger were, however, unpopular, and gave a handle to the factious hostility of the earl of Ormonde. This earl, after offering all the resistance in his power, at last accused the deputy of treason: the deputy retorted the accusation, and both parties were summoned over to England, and their accusations investigated by the privy council. But they were found to be vexatious, and both parties were dismissed.

Sir Anthony returned and resumed his government, which was continued to him at the accession of king Edward VI. In the following year his activity was employed by the restlessness of the Irish chiefs. These petty insurrections are in few cases worth detail. O'Conor Faly and O'More received a sanguinary overthrow from his arms, while they were plundering the county of Kildare; the O'Byrnes were attacked and dispersed. And some time after, receiving a reinforcement from England, of 600 foot and 400 horse, under captain general Bellingham, he invaded Leix and Offaly, and proclaimed O'Conor and O'More traitors. Their followers were routed and dispersed; and being left defenceless, these two powerful chiefs were reduced to the necessity of coming in with their submission. Sir Anthony took them with him to England, where, by his desire, they were pardoned, taken into favour, and had handsome pensions. The high sense entertained of these services of Sir Anthony, was shown by large English grants: he received a grant of the manor-house of Wingham Barton, Bersted, an appendant to the manor of Leeds Castle, with the fee of one of the parks of Leeds Castle, with two manors, Eastfarbon and Bentley, in the county of Kent, where his own property lay.

In the mean time, Edward Bellingham, who had already distinguished himself in Ireland, was sent as lord justice; and St Leger

\* £5000 per annum.



remained in England till 1550: he then returned to Ireland with instructions to call a parliament. On this occasion, the annalists mention one of those incidents which were at this time becoming more frequent, and which must impress the reader with a sense of the growing improvement of the condition of the settlement. Charles Kavenagh MacArt came before this parliament with his submission, consenting not only to renounce the title of Macmurrough, but giving up large tracts of land, and submitting to the limitation of his powers as chief or "captain of his nation."

On the 6th of February, an order for the reading of the liturgy of the church of England came over, in the name of Edward VI. On which the lord deputy convened an assembly of the Irish ecclesiastics of every order, to which he intimated the king's pleasure. To this announcement, Dowdal, the archbishop of Armagh, offered the most resolute opposition. The deputy, nevertheless, determined to carry the point: he was supported by Browne, archbishop of Dublin, and the other prelates; and on the following Easter Sunday, the English liturgy was publicly read in Christ Church. Dowdal was deprived, and withdrew from the kingdom, and the primacy was annexed to the see of Dublin.

Soon after, Archbishop Browne having some discontent against the deputy, had recourse to the common complaint of treason, which was then resorted to on the most frivolous grounds as the most efficient instrument of party hostility, and strongly indicates the weakness of government, and the low civilization of the aristocracy and prelacy of the time. St Leger was recalled to clear himself. And as he was again sent over by queen Mary, it is to be inferred that the charges of the archbishop were merely vexatious. He was not, however, allowed to hold the government long. Queen Mary, with a feeble intellect and a tender conscience, influenced by her own superstition and the craft of others, soon displayed that inflamed spirit of persecution which for a time filled the kingdom with horrors till then and since unknown: and a change of policy beginning in England, where it was opposed to the spirit of the nation, was quickly extended to Ireland where it was congenial. The Irish nation, the last to adopt the errors of the church of Rome, were as slow to turn from them at the dictate of a prince. And it is not likely that under the new government, a deputy, who, like St Leger, had mainly contributed to effect the changes of the last two reigns, could be acceptable to either queen or people. He had seized the abbey lands for Henry—carried into effect important regulations of church preferment—persuaded the Irish chiefs to renounce the church of Rome, and enforced the English liturgy. And such merits could not fail to be unfavourably recollected. His high reputation as a governor made it, however, inexpedient to remove him without some shadow of complaint. A complaint in keeping with the spirit of his accusers was found. It was represented that in the former reign he had aimed to ingratiate himself with the government by ridiculing the sacred mystery of transubstantiation. On this ground he was recalled in 1556. He defended himself so well, from various charges which his enemies brought against him, that his friends in Ireland looked for his return. But he adopted a wiser course. Having obtained a discharge



from all future service in Ireland, he retired to Ulcomb in Kent, the seat of his ancestors, where he died in 1559.

## Gerald, Tenth Earl of Kildare.

BORN A. D. 1525—DIED A. D. 1585.

WE concur with Lodge in reckoning this nobleman the eleventh earl of Kildare. The reason is sufficiently conclusive. The attainder which for a time extinguished the title and honours of this illustrious branch of the Geraldines, was not passed for a year and a half after the death of the ninth earl; during which time the young lord, his eldest son, though in rebellion, was not yet attainted, or by any legal act deprived of his rights.

Gerald was yet but ten (Cox says thirteen) years of age at the time of the execution of his half-brother, the lord Thomas. As the rage of Henry VIII. blazed with indiscriminate fury against the family of Kildare, there could be no doubt that the capture of the youth would at the least be attended with serious danger. The oblivion and secret miseries of a dungeon was the least to be expected from a king who had butchered his five uncles, of whom three were notoriously innocent of the crime alleged. Gerald was, fortunately for him, at the habitation of his nurse at Donoure, in the county of Kildare, and lying ill of the small-pox. The nurse, apprized of his danger, committed him to the zeal of Thomas Leverous,\* foster-brother to his father, who carefully conveyed him in a basket into Offaly to lady Mary O'Conor, his sister. There he remained until his recovery. The search after him had, however, begun, and his continuance there might be dangerous to his protectors; concealment was rendered difficult by the system of espial and tale-bearing which characterized the intriguing chiefs of the time. The child was removed upon his recovery to Thomond, then least accessible to the English, and from thence to Kilbritton, in the county of Cork, to his aunt, Eleanor Fitz-Gerald, who had married Macarthy Reagh, and was at the time a widow. To ensure protection for her nephew, this lady consented to marry O'Donell, chief of Tyrconel, in 1537, who was himself a widower, and had that year succeeded his father Odo in the chieftainship. With this chief the aunt of Gerald stipulated for the protection of her nephew. But O'Donell was not to be trusted: his lady soon discovered that he was fickle in his politics, destitute of affections, and that he was engaged in secret negotiations with the English government. It is probable that she was enabled to discover some proof of an actual design to betray her nephew; but it is certain that there was enough of ground for such suspicions, to satisfy her that it was no longer safe to continue in his power. She therefore sent Gerald away privately into France, having given him 140 pieces of gold, for his travelling charges. Having thus secured his safety, she had no longer any reason to remain with the unworthy husband she had married solely for Gerald's sake, and

\* Afterwards bishop of Kildare.

consulted her indignation and contempt by leaving him: O'Donell never saw her more. Her nephew was long and anxiously sought for, though after the first burst of king Henry's fury, it is unlikely that any harm would have happened him. On this point, the following extract is at least worth notice. It is taken from a paper written by St Leger and the other commissioners joined with him in 1537, and we should think speaks from authority:—

“Item, whereas young Fitz-Gerald, second sonne to the late earl of Kildare, hath withdrawn himself from the king's majesty without ground or cause, his grace nothing minding, to the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald, but honour and wealth, and to have cherished him as his kinsman, in like sort as his other brother is cherished with his mother in the realm of England: we require the said lord James of Desmond to write unto the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald, advising him in like sorts, as his uncle the lord deputie hath done, to submit himself to the king his sovereign lord. And if he will not do so at this gentle monicion, then to proceed against him and his accomplices as against the king's rebels and disobedientes. Item, if the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald do at the monicion of the said lord James of Desmond, submit himself and come to the said lord James of Desmond, upon certificate thereof to the said commissioners made, we the said commissioners concede, that the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald shall have the king's most gracious pardon for his said absenting, and for all other offences done to our said sovereign lord, and to be from thenceforth taken as the king's true and loving subject.”\*

From this document it should be inferred, that the course most obvious, safe, and beneficial for young Gerald, then about fifteen years of age, would be a surrender of his person. The first fury of the king's resentment had, in the course of two intervening years, been cooled; and a youth who could have as yet incurred no personal hostility, might have reckoned with certainty on the just indulgence thus held out in a formal and public pledge. But he was in the hands of advisers and protectors who saw the whole matter in a different light, and who had other views for him. His situation made him the subject of political intrigues, and his own friends were also strongly actuated by religious feeling in refusing to submit him to the tuition of Henry.

Fitz-Gerald arrived safely at St Maloes,† and was from thence sent to the king of France. There had lately been a peace concluded, and it was probably according to some of the articles of a treaty that Sir John Wallop, the English ambassador, demanded that he should be delivered up. The king of France, unwilling to comply with this demand, temporized with the ambassador, and suffered Gerald to escape towards Flanders. The ambassador received some immediate intimation of this, and lost no time in having him pursued. He was overtaken by Sherlock, the person thus employed, at *Valenciennes*: but the governor of the town, made aware of the king's favourable intent, and probably acting upon instructions, arrested Sherlock. Gerald thus escaped to Brussels. Here, too, he was pursued, and claimed by

\* State Papers, vol. ii.

† Cox.



the messengers of the same ambassador; he was therefore compelled to make his escape to Liege. At Liege he was befriended by the emperor, who granted a hundred crowns a-month for his expenses, and recommended him to the bishop's protection.

At Liege he remained safely for half-a-year, at the end of which time he had the good fortune to be placed in security from all further attempts on his freedom. Cardinal Pole, his kinsman, and the enemy of Henry VIII., sent for him and had him conveyed to Rome, where he took every means to have him educated according to his rank and future expectations. It is mentioned, that he placed him under the care of the bishop of Verona, the cardinal of Mantua, and the duke of Mantua, in succession, and gave him an allowance of three hundred crowns a-year, to which the duke of Mantua made the like addition. At about the age of seventeen, he was removed by his friendly protector to his own immediate superintendence, and had apartments in his palace in Rome. "The cardinal," writes Hooker, "greatly rejoiced in his kinsman, had him carefully trained up in his house, interlacing, with such discretion, his learning and studies, with exercises of activity, as he should not be after accounted of the learned for an ignorant idiot, nor taken of active gentlemen for a dead and dumpish meacocke. If he had committed any fault, the cardinal would secretly command his tutors to correct him; and all that, notwithstanding he would in presence dandle the boy, as if he were not privy to his punishment. And upon complaint made, he used to cheek Fitz-Gerald his master openly, for chastising so severely his pretty darling."\* Here, his education being completed, when he was twenty years of age he was allowed to enter the service of the knights of Malta, in which he quickly obtained military distinction. The knights of Malta were engaged in continual war against the Turks, and were in the habit of making frequent descents on their coasts, from which they often carried away plunder to a considerable amount: in this service young Gerald not only won great distinction, but also much wealth. The cardinal rejoiced in his success; made a large addition to his allowance, and recommended him to the service of Cosimo, the duke of Florence, by whom he was appointed master of the horse. His conduct and character recommended him to the great duke of Tuscany, by whom he was appointed master of the horse—an office which he held for the following three years.

Holinshed mentions, that while he was in this service, he met with an accident which harmonizes well with the vicissitudes of his life. Having made a visit to Rome for his amusement, he was hunting in company with the cardinal Farneze, when his horse came suddenly upon a concealed pit, twenty fathoms deep, and, with his rider, plunged headlong down and fell to the bottom. Fortunately for young Gerald, he was light, alert, and self-possessed. After going down to a great depth, the fall of the horse was slightly impeded by some bushes or roots, or perhaps creepers, which had, during the lapse of ages, grown down to that depth: he had the thought to grasp at them. The horse reached the bottom with full force, and was killed instantaneously by the

\* Sup. to Holinshed's Chron. vol. vi.



shock: Gerald held fast by the roots, until his arms grew so weary that he could hold no longer: he then let himself down, little hoping to escape the fall; fortunately he had not far to go, and lighted safe on the dead carcase of his horse. The situation was still unpromising enough. There was no possibility of ascending; and he stood there, up to his ankles in water and in a hopeless condition, for about three hours. Providentially he had taken with him a dog, which, after hunting about for him a long time to no purpose, at last traced him to the chasm into which he had fallen. Stopping there, the faithful and sagacious creature set up a long howling, and never stopped until he drew the attention of some hunters of the same company. Being thus discovered, he was soon extricated by a rope and basket. Cox, who tells the story from Hollinshed, rejects it as "a little monkish." It may be in a great measure fictitious, but has assuredly nothing otherwise monkish in its object or construction.

While such was the course of his life abroad, he seems to have been the object of continued anxiety and unremitting contention both among friends and foes at home. The O'Donells, O'Nials, and other Irish chiefs, were loud in menace and expostulation; and a letter from John Allen to Cromwell, in 1539, mentions the threat of these chiefs, "that if the king's majestie will not restore young Gerald to all the possessions and pre-eminence that his father had in this land, they will do what they can, if they may have opportunity, to put him in by force."\* By a letter from Brabazon, of the same date, it appears as if there then existed a suspicion that Gerald was actually in the kingdom, and consequently a strange ignorance as to his real place of abode; though, if we do not impute the same ignorance to nearly all Irish historians of this period, there is no reason to suppose that he returned to Ireland for many years from his first escape, until long after the death of king Henry. One thing is certain, that his capture was considered as an object of the first importance, not only, as Brabazon expresses it, "lest this said Gerald Fitz-Gerald may play the like part (with others of his party and kinsmen) when he may," but also, on the ground that if he were once taken, their power would cease. These notices, and many other to the same effect, which from time to time occur through the correspondence of the chief Irish officers with the English court, indicate undeniably that an importance was attached to this young nobleman, which by no means appears in Ware, Cox, Leland, or any others of the various historical writers whom we have had occasion to consult.

In 1544, five years after the mention above referred to, this impression seems to be much augmented, and a long letter, exclusively on the subject, is written from the Irish lord justice and council to king Henry. It informs him, that by letters from Waterford, the council is informed that young Gerald is at Nantes, on his way from Italy to invade Ireland, and that he was there awaiting a navy and army, to be supplied for the purpose by the French king. This information evidently occasioned great alarm to the council, who express their conviction of the inadequacy of any means of resistance in their power, or that of

\* State Papers, vol. iii.

the city of Waterford, against which the expedition was supposed to be directed. This report seems at the same time to have been transmitted to the English council, whose communication to the Irish council seems to have reached Ireland before the despatch here noticed had been sent off. The information appears to stand chiefly on the authority of W. de la Cluse, a person dwelling in "Bridges," whose father seems to have kept a house of entertainment for the Irish resorting thither; and also certain Wexford men, who being prisoners, were offered their freedom on the condition of joining in the service of Gerald Fitz-Gerald. The Irish council express their opinion that the invasion would be more likely to take place in the country of the Macarthies, near the city of Cork; not only of its being more directly in their course, but also on account of the circumstance of one of the Macarthys being son to his aunt Eleanor.\*

From the whole tenor of the government correspondence, during the latter years of Henry VIII., it is certain that Gerald was for a considerable time the subject of much anxious fear, expectation, and vigilance both to his friends and enemies; but, notwithstanding a few doubtful affirmations to the contrary, we should infer that he prudently kept aloof, and avoided committing himself in any proceeding which must have had the sure effect of barring for ever the remotest possibility of his restoration to his family honours and possessions. The death of Henry VIII., in 1546, must have been felt to be the promise of better days to this young lord. But we cannot, with any certainty, trace the favourable turn which his affairs may have taken from this time till 1552, when he was taken into royal favour, and restored to very considerable portions of the estates of his father. In two years more he was created earl of Kildare and baron Offaly; and is from this date found taking an active part in the various measures of the English government for the reduction of rebellious chiefs, and the pacification of the country.

In 1557 he is mentioned as having joined with the lord lieutenant, Sidney, in his campaign against Mac Donnell, a Scot, who had invaded the north of Ireland at the head of a strong party of his countrymen. Besides the earl of Kildare, the lord lieutenant was accompanied on this expedition by the lords Ormonde, Baltinglass, Delvin, Dunsany, and Dunboyne. There was no engagement, as the Scots scattered before them, and took refuge in the woods.

In 1561 he persuaded his kinsman O'Neale, then engaged in rebellious proceedings, to submit to the queen; and generally conducted himself with a prudent regard to the interests of the government. The events of the remainder of his life are, however, such as to fall more appropriately under other heads, as at this time the troubles of the pale rose to a dangerous height, and long continued, during the restless life of the celebrated Shane O'Neale, and the rebellion of the sixteenth earl of Desmond, both of whom we must notice at some length. Though Gerald's lands were restored, and his titles conferred anew by creation, yet it was not till 1568 that the act of attainder against his father's blood was repealed, in a parliament held in Dublin. He was

\* Married to Macarthy of Carbery.



at this period of his life frequently intrusted with the defence of the pale, especially in 1574. In 1579 he joined Sir William Drury against the Spanish force which landed in Kerry, to support the earl of Desmond's rebellion; notwithstanding which services, he was, in the following year, arrested on suspicion of corresponding with the Leinster rebels, and sent with his son, lord Henry Fitz-Gerald, to England, where they were thrown into the Tower. On trial, he was fully acquitted. He was one of the lords present in Sir John Perrot's parliament, in 1585, in which year his death took place. The following summary of his will is given by Lodge. "He left £100 to erect a monument over his grave, and the like sum to buy some jewels, to be given to the queen from him, as a token of his humble and dutiful loyalty to her highness. Bequeathes to his wife, as a token of goodwill and remembrance, a jewel, called an agate, which he bought lately, and a piece of black tuft taffaty, containing thirteen yards. To his brother, Edward, his best vest of gilt and graven bolls, with a cover. To his son and heir, Henry, all his gold buttons, hat, and capbands of gold, silver, and pearl; footclothes and horse furniture; gilt rapiers and daggers, with their girdles and hangers; shirtbodies, shirts of mail, armour, artillery; three of the best suits of hangings of tapestry, or cloth of arras; and all his stud, except three store mares, to his second son, William: leaves other legacies. Wills that his wife should take care of all his old servants that served him in Ireland, for some of whom he leaves a liberal provision; and appoints his son, Henry, and son-in-law, lord Delvin, executors."\*

### Sir Edmond Butler.

DIED ABOUT A. D. 1580.

SIR EDMOND BUTLER was the second son of James, ninth earl of Ormonde, and possessed the manors of Roscrea and Cloughgrenan. In 1562 he was intrusted with the government of the county of Carlow, while the lord deputy was engaged in the north against Shane O'Neill. In 1567, in consideration of his active and distinguished services, he was knighted, and had a grant for the return of all writs in the contracts of Oremon, Ely-ogerth, and Ely-ocarrol, in the county Tipperary. Notwithstanding this course of distinguished and honourable loyalty, by means not now to be discovered in the confusion of our annals and the want of private history, he was warped into a dangerous course, together with two of his brothers. With these he raised a rebellion in Munster, and was declared a traitor. Before matters had proceeded to a decisive length, his wonted prudence prevailed, and he submitted and surrendered his estates, on which he and his brothers received the queen's pardon. After this he distinguished himself, in the following year, 1574, against the O'Mores, then the principal native enemies of the pale. As no further mention of his name occurs, it cannot be ascertained, from any authentic docu-

\* Lodge.



ment, at what precise period his death took place. According to Lodge, he died at Inistioge, and was buried among his ancestors at St Canice, in Kilkenny.\*

## Captain Richard Browne.

KILLED A. D. 1570.

RICHARD BROWNE was a younger son to Anthony, first viscount Montague, in England. He came over to Ireland, in the service of queen Elizabeth, at the head of an independent company. When Connaught was pacified by Sir Henry Sidney, Browne settled at the *Neale*, in the county of Mayo, and was appointed high sheriff of the surrounding country. In this office his conduct, spirit, and useful activity soon became honourably distinguished: he exerted himself to the utmost to reclaim the degenerate English, as well as the natives, to order and civilization. His efforts exposed him to the dangers arising from the brawls and factions, which it was his constant study to put an end to, and he was slain by the natives while engaged in these arduous and dangerous duties. We cannot ascertain the year, but have ventured to put down 1570 as undoubtedly not far from the period. He was succeeded by his son, Josias, and was ancestor to the earls of Altamont.

## Thomas, Sixteenth Earl of Kerry.

BORN A. D. 1502—DIED A. D. 1590.

THIS eminent lord succeeded his brother, Gerald, in the earldom. His youth was spent in Italy. He was bred in Milan, and early entered the German service. On his brother's death, the inheritance was seized by one of the family, who was next heir, on the failure of next of kin in the direct line. The matter might have remained thus, and the wrongful possessor allowed to obtain that protection which time must ever give to possession, but most of all in that age of unsettled rights; but fortunately for him, he was timely remembered by his nurse, Joan Harman, who was not prevented by the infirmities of old age from proceeding with her daughter in search of her foster-child. Having embarked at Dingle, she landed in France, and from thence to Italy. After overcoming the many difficulties of so long a journey, with her imperfect means and ignorance of the way, she found her noble foster-son; and, having given him the needful information concerning the state of his affairs, she died on her way home.

Lord Thomas came over to take possession of his estate and honours. For two years he had to contend with the resolute opposition of the intruder who relied on the circumstance of his being less known in

\* Lodge.

the country from having passed his life abroad. The intruding claimant was himself, it is likely, misled by the local character of his own acquaintance with society. In two years the claim of justice prevailed, and in or about the year 1550, in his forty-eighth year lord Thomas Fitz-Maurice obtained full possession of his rights.

He was treated with distinguishing honour and confidence by Philip and Mary; who, in a letter apprizing him of their marriage, desired his good offices in aid of the lord deputy, to assist in rectifying the disorders which had been suffered to increase for some years in their Irish dominions. His course for many years, was thus one of loyal duty, and honoured by the royal favour, although its incidents were not such as to call for our special notice. Among these it may be mentioned, that in the parliament of the third year of Philip and Mary, he sat as premier baron; but in that of the fourth year of the same reign, lord Trimleston was placed above him. But in 1581, when in his 79th year, he was led into rebellion, by the example of the times and the seeming weakness of the English. The lord deputy, supposing that the quiet of Munster was secured by the flight of the earl of Desmond and the death of John of Desmond, dismissed the larger proportion of his English forces. In consequence of this dangerous step, the earl of Kerry and his son, moved by their discontents against the deputy, broke into rebellion. They began by proceeding to dislodge the English from their garrisons, which they effected to some extent by the boldness and dexterity of their movements. First attacking the garrison of Adare, they slew the captain and most of the soldiers. They next marched to Lisconnel, in which there were only eight soldiers, as the place was supposed to be protected by its strength and difficulty of access. The entrance to this castle was secured by two gates, of which, upon the admission of any person, it was usual to make fast the outer before the inner was unbarred. Taking advantage of the circumstance, the earl bribed a woman who used every morning early to enter these gates, with a large basket of turf, wood, and other cumbrous necessities, to let fall her basket in the outer gate, so as to prevent its being closed without delay. During the night he contrived to steal a strong party into a cabin which had very inconsiderately been allowed to stand close to the gate. All fell out favourably. The woman dropped her load, and, according to her instructions, uttered a loud cry; the men rushed in, and the porter was slain before he was aware of the nature of the incident, and in a few moments more not a man of the garrison was alive.\*

Encouraged by this success, the earl marched to Adnagh, which he thought to win by another stratagem. He hired for the purpose a young girl of loose character, who was to obtain admission, and when admitted, to act according to the earl's contrivance, so as to betray the fort. The capture of Lisconnel had, however, the effect of putting the captain on his guard. He soon contrived to draw from the young woman a confession of her perfidious intent, after which he caused her to be thrown from the walls.†

From this the earl proceeded to range through the counties of

\* Hooker.

† Ib.

Waterford and Tipperary, in which he committed waste, and took spoil without meeting any resistance.

The deputy receiving an account of these outrages drew together about four hundred men, and marched into Kerry; and coming to the wood of Lisconnell, where the earl was encamped with seven hundred, an encounter took place, in which the earl's army was put to flight and scattered away, leaving their spoil behind them. The earl, with a few more, escaped into the mountains of Sleaulagher. Marching on into the estates of Fitz-Maurice, the lord deputy seized and garrisoned the forts and strong places. Another severe defeat, which soon followed, completed the fall of the earl, who found himself unable to attempt any further resistance. He then applied to the earl of Ormonde, to whom he had done all the mischief in his power, to obtain a pardon for him. The earl of Ormonde had the generosity to intercede for him, and he was pardoned.

The remaining events of his life have nothing remarkable enough to claim attention. He lived on in honour and prosperity, till the close of his eighty-eighth year, when he died at Lixnaw, on the 16th December, 1590. He is said to have been the handsomest man of his time, and also remarkable to an advanced age for his great strength.

### **Robert, Fifth Lord Trimleston.**

DIED A. D. 1573.

THE first lord Trimleston was Robert Barnewall, second son to Sir Christopher Barnewall, of Crickston, in Meath, who was chief justice of the king's bench in 1445 and 1446. The ancestors intermediate between this eminent person and the fifth lord, had most of them acted their part in the troubled politics of their respective generations with credit, and were eminent in their day. We select the fifth lord for this brief notice, as he is mentioned in terms of high eulogy by the chroniclers. In 1561, he was joined in commission with the archbishop of Dublin and other lords, for the preservation of the peace of the pale, during the absence of lord deputy Sussex. Hollinshed gives the following account of him:—"He was a rare nobleman, and endowed with sundry good gifts, who, having well wedded himself to the reformation of his miserable country, was resolved for the whetting of his wit, which nevertheless was pregnant and quick; by a short trade and method he took in his study to have sipt up the very sap of the common law, and upon this determination sailing into England, sickened shortly after at a worshipful matron's house at Combury, named Margaret Tiler, where he was, to the great grief of all his country, pursued with death, when the weal of the public had most need of his life." His death happened in 1573: he left no issue, and was succeeded by his brother Peter.



## Richard, Second Earl of Clanricarde.

DIED A. D. 1582.

RICHARD DE BURGO, son and successor to Ulick the first earl of Clanricarde, was commonly called *Sassanagh* by the Irish. The first exploit, for which he is commemorated, is the capture of Cormac Roe O'Connor of Offally, who had for some time previous given great trouble to the government, and very much disturbed the quiet of the pale. He was on this account proclaimed a traitor by the government; in consequence of which he became so much alarmed for his safety, that he came into Dublin on the 18th November, 1548, and made his submission. He was pardoned by the deputy: but on recovering from his alarm, his restless and turbulent spirit, incapable of subordination, soon returned to the same troublesome and dangerous course.

It was therefore found necessary to proceed to rougher extremities, and he was taken prisoner by the earl of Clanricarde, who sent him to Dublin, where he was put to death.

In the following years, the chiefs of his race in the west appear to have been involved in party wars among themselves and with the neighbouring chiefs. In the year 1552, he took the castle of Roscommon by stratagem;\* and in the following year, being at war with John de Burgo, he invaded his lands, but was compelled to retire by the appearance of a stronger force; Daniel O'Brien having marched to the aid of John.

It is mentioned by Lodge that he was lord lieutenant of Ireland, and that with the assistance of Sir Richard Bingham, he gained a victory over the Scots at the river Moye in 1553. It is singular that we find no notice of this event in Ware's *Annals*, in Cox's *Hibernia*, in Hooper who writes with so much minute detail, or in Leland who was little likely to pass a event so remarkable. But it is more worthy of notice that the same combination of names and circumstances takes place at a later period, in which five or six years after the death of this earl, his son, then earl of Clanricarde, obtains distinction in a great victory gained by Bingham over 3000 Scots at Ardnary, on the river Moye. As this event occurs thirty years after the date assigned by Lodge, while the incidents are precisely the same, there is some difficulty in accounting for the oversight; and the more so, as the incident is again repeated in its proper period by Lodge, in his notice of the third earl. It is, however, mentioned by Ware, that in 1558 this earl gained a great victory over the Scots when they were called in to the assistance of "some families of the Bourkes," with whom he was at war. To this Leland thus alludes, "The Scottish adventurers in the meantime, as the decision of the war in Tirconuel left them no military employment in Ulster, entered into the service of some turbulent chieftains of the west; but before they could raise any considerable disorders, were suddenly attacked by the earl of Clanricarde, who defeated and pursued these pestilent invaders, to the almost total destruction of their body, &c."†

\* Lodge.

† Leland, ii.

The latter years of this earl seem to have been disturbed by the dissensions of his unruly sons, who not only quarrelled amongst themselves, but rebelled against their father. The earl was thrice married, and these sons were, perhaps, bred up with no kindly feeling among themselves. At his death in 1582, he was succeeded by Ulick, his eldest son, whose legitimacy was disputed, but confirmed.

### Donald O'Brien.

WE have already had occasion to mention the most remarkable event in the life of this ancient chief, in our notice of his nephew, the first earl of Thomond; whose father his own elder brother slew in 1553, and usurped his inheritance: but was obliged by the interposition of the government to resign it to Conor O'Brien the rightful heir, who was then created earl of Thomond.

It was not long, however, before Donald O'Brien's discontent at an arrangement, to which nothing but superior force could have compelled him to assent, broke out into open violence. On this the lord deputy Sussex marched into Limerick and took the castles of Clare, Clonroad, Bunratty, of which he delivered the latter to the earl of Thomond. On this occasion an amusing and characteristic fiction is told by Sullivan, which we transcribe from Cox. The lord president having, according to Sullivan, enticed Donald into Limerick on the promise of allowing him to pass out again freely from the gates, contrived to turn him out from a wrong gate, so that the river Shannon separated him from his army: and then immediately sent the young earl of Thomond to take possession of the country. In this disconsolate situation Donald had no resource but to take shelter with his horse in a poor and lowly cabin, so miserably unpromising in its appearance, that his horse, who was, it may be presumed, also a high-bred beast, and touched with the unruly spirit of the age, refused to enter a hovel so far inferior to his breeding and pretensions. In this delicate juncture, while the generous steed of O'Brien was yet tossing his head in chivalric disdain at the door, where his master thought it no disgrace to enter—his scorn was allayed by the sensible admonition of O'Brien's page, who whispered in his ear, that his master, O'Brien, was to lodge for the night in that very cabin: and represented that he might very well lower his crest and crupper to keep his master company. On this delicate and seasonable hint, the noble beast "being well bred, did very civilly comply in matters of ceremony." But though his good sense and respect for his master thus repressed his pride, a fresh difficulty arose when it came to the demands of a nice and pampered appetite. "When he came to supper, he was at a loss, for he was used to feed on wheat, and could not conform to country entertainment, until the foot-boy whispered him once more, that his master, O'Brien, who fed upon an oaten cake, commanded him to eat the same, and then the horse laying aside all further conceit, very meekly eat his supper like the rest of the company." Of the horse there is nothing further recorded. His master was compelled to fly the country and continue for five years in exile.

He returned about 1563, and received lands from his nephew: he was also taken into the king's favour, and led from thenceforth so quiet and respectable a life that no further mention of his name occurs.

## Henry, Twelfth Earl of Kildare.

BORN A. D. 1564—DIED A. D. 1597.

THIS nobleman, born in the year 1564, was the son and successor of Gerald, of whose life, marked by singular vicissitudes and changes of fortune, we have already given some account. Though living in a period when the political consideration of the great and powerful class to which he belonged was beginning to decline with the extension of the power and efficiency of the government; and where it became the condition of great fame to be notorious for crime and misfortune, yet he maintained in the wars of his troubled age, the character of his distinguished line. Of the events in which his name might be brought forward, we shall here only notice the last. He was in his 33d year, when he was called upon to attend the lord deputy Borrough into Ulster.

The country was involved in rebellion which started up on every side; and lord deputy Borrough, who was but new in his office, had made a month's truce with O'Niall, which each party employed in preparation for further hostilities. When the truce was expired, the deputy forced his way through a difficult pass near Armagh, which the Irish had, with their wonted skill, fortified by interweaving the boughs of trees and blocking the way with trunks of others which they felled for the purpose. Having conquered this obstacle, the deputy marched towards the fort of Blackwater, which he quickly carried by assault. The English were returning thanks to God for their success, when they perceived a strong body of Irish advancing upon them rapidly from the neighbouring wood. They quickly stood to their arms and received the fierce onset of the Irish, who were, however, repulsed, and disappointed as they came. The English suffered little loss: but among the slain, were two foster-brothers of the earl of Kildare. The earl's grief was inconsolable, and he died shortly after of a broken heart.\*

## Thomas, Tenth Earl of Ormonde.

BORN A. D. 1532—DIED A. D. 1614.

IN placing the life of this illustrious Irishman in the present period, it becomes necessary to explain a disposition which may otherwise seem to be a violation of the arrangement which we have adopted; viz., to place our notices according to the death of the persons noticed. We should, however, here observe, that this most convenient general rule has been, all through the previous portion of our work, subject to

\* Ware's Annals, Cox, Lodge.



another more important, though less definite principle of arrangement. We have endeavoured, in all the more extended and strictly historical memoirs of contemporary persons, to place them according to the order of the events in which they were mainly concerned; as it is evident that, by this means, the historical order would be best preserved. Thus our arrangement has been in reality one compounded on both these considerations; and, we may observe, adopted more as a convenience than as a restriction. In the present instance, as in a few more which follow in the close of the period, it will be accordingly observed, that although this earl, together with the first earl of Cork, &c., continue to live into the reign of James I., yet all the great events of their lives fall within the reign of queen Elizabeth, in such a manner that, were we to place them in our next period, we should have to travel back into the history of this—a violation of order which would be something more than formal.

The tenth earl of Ormonde, was born some time about 1532; and, as he was thus but fourteen years old in 1546—the time of his father's death—great precautions were taken to preserve his property against the encroaching and freebooting spirit of the age. For this purpose it was ordered that the lord justice should draw the English army, at his command, towards the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary; and it was also ordered that the government of these counties should be committed to his family. He was himself brought up in the English court, and was one of the most favoured companions of the young prince Edward, with whom he was educated. At the age of fourteen, he was made a knight of the Bath, at the coronation of this king. It is also mentioned that the king ordered the lord deputy to increase his allowance to the sum of 200 marks.\* When he attained his nineteenth year, he obtained by the same favour a year's release of his wardship. He begun his military career at the same time with distinguished honour. It is briefly mentioned, after these incidents, by the antiquarians, that he accompanied the duke of Somerset in his expedition against the Scots. This requires some explanation; for though the Scottish war alluded to certainly was continued in the same year, yet it is as certain that it was not commanded by the duke of Somerset, who first declared war, and led an expedition into Scotland, in 1547, when Ormonde was but fifteen years of age. In the following years, the command of the armies sent against the Scots was intrusted to the earls of Shrewsbury and Northampton. But military training, at that period, formed so principal a part in education, that there is no improbability in supposing the military career of this earl to have commenced even so early. These conjectures are confirmed by the mention that he distinguished himself by his bravery in the battle of Musselburgh; better known in history as the battle of Pinkey, which took place 10th September, 1547. In this battle the Scots were defeated by the English, under the duke of Somerset, with the loss of 14,000 men, of whom 800 were gentlemen. The war was engaged in to compel the Scots to deliver up their young queen, who had been contracted to Edward VI. when they were both children.

\* Collins, Lodge.

He obtained still higher distinction in his twenty-second year, when he commanded a troop of horse against the rebels headed by Sir Thomas Wyatt. This rebellion is supposed to have been caused by the discontent of the English at the marriage then on foot between Philip and Mary. The chief conspirators were the duke of Suffolk, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Sir Peter Carew, who agreed with each other to raise their several counties of Cornwall, Kent, and Warwickshire. Through the indiscretion of Carew, the plot was soon detected. Carew escaped into France; the duke was seized before he could stir to any purpose; and Wyatt was left to pursue his desperate course alone. Of this course we shall only mention the terminating circumstances.

Wyat approached London at the head of a force sufficient to cause great alarm in the court, and to give him high hopes of success. To the queen's messengers, who desired to know his demands, he replied that he demanded to have the Tower and the queen delivered into his hands, with such changes in the council as he should prescribe. Of course these demands were rejected, and Wyatt pursued his march toward London. When he had reached the borough of Southwark, he found the bridge so well fortified that, contrary to his expectations, he could not effect a passage. He was, therefore, obliged to continue his march to Kingston, ten miles higher up the river. Here, too, he met with another dangerous delay—the bridge was broken down, and he could not pass without having it first repaired. Having effected this, he passed over with his men, now increased to six thousand. He then set forward on his march to London; but a gun-carriage having broken on his way, he lost more time in repairing it. Two days were thus consumed when he reached London, at nine in the morning of the 3d February, 1554. The captain of the train bands who had joined him deserted, and gave information that it was his plan to enter the city by Ludgate. The earl of Pembroke and lord Clinton at first came to the resolution to attack him while entering the city, and a partial attack took place.

It was at this period of the affair, that the only occasion occurs in which the young earl could have displayed his valour. Hollinshed, who gives the detail at greater length than we can afford to follow, describes two skirmishes which took place near Hyde Park, and in Charing Cross. In the first of these it was mentioned that while Wyatt was marching on the "nether way," towards St James's, "which being perceived by the queen's horsemen, who laie on either side of him, they gave a sudden charge, and divided his battel [*army*, marching in column] asunder hard behind Wyatt's ensigns, whereby so many as were not passed before with Wyatt, were forced to fly back towards Brainford." It was in this charge that the young earl must have taken part. The body thus separated, after a vain attack on St James's, Westminster, attempted to rejoin their leader, and were again assailed in Charing Cross, and scattered after a short resistance and a loss of twenty men. In the course of this affair, it became apparent that he was entangling his army in the streets and lanes which lay on his way towards Ludgate, so that it became impossible for his troops to extend their front, or in any way act in concert. Sending orders to have Ludgate closed, the queen's commanders contented themselves



with fortifying and placing strong detachments in the streets through which he passed, so as to render all retreat impossible. In the meantime, Wyatt went on anticipating no obstruction, and imagining the whole of his remaining course sure, until he came to the gate. There his entrance was impeded, and he was forced to halt; and it was not long before he learned that he was strongly barricaded in on every side. His artillery he had in his confidence left under a guard in Hyde Park, and was now completely entrapped in the midst of enemies, who possessed every advantage they could devise for his extermination. In this dreadful emergency he was accidentally met by Sir Maurice Barkleie, who was riding unarmed near London, and entered into conversation with him. Barkleie advised him to surrender. Wyatt saw the necessity; and, resolved to seize on the occasion, he mounted behind his adviser, and, so says Hollinshed, rode to the court voluntarily to yield himself prisoner. He was sent to prison; and, after an attempt to implicate the princess Elizabeth, which he subsequently retracted, he was executed in two months after on Towerhill.

Thus early distinguished, this earl came over to Ireland, where his own affairs demanded his presence, and, having attained his twenty-second year, it was time for him to take possession of his estates, and assume the place appertaining to his family and rank in the councils of his country. He was not long settled in his possessions, before an occasion arose for his military spirit to obtain fresh distinction. In 1556, the province of Ulster was disturbed by a party of Scots, who besieged Carrick Fergus; and, although they failed in their design upon this town, obtained advantages in different quarters by associating themselves with the O'Donells, and other chiefs who in these party wars had gathered power, and were beginning to assume a dangerous attitude. In July, the lord deputy, Ratscliff, marched against them. He was accompanied by Ormonde, who commanded 200 horse, and 500 foot, raised by himself and maintained at his own cost. On the 18th of the same month, the lord deputy's army came up with the Scots, and a sharp conflict ensued, in which the Scots and the insurgents were defeated with a loss of 200 slain. In this engagement the earl of Ormonde and Sir John Stanley have obtained the principal honour from all historians by whom this affair is mentioned. The three following years were distinguished by great military activity; and, through the whole course of the marches and encounters during this period, this earl supported the same conspicuous character among the foremost in every bold and difficult enterprise.

These occasions are too numerous and too little detailed by historical writers, to be here dwelt upon. The uniform distinction of the earl through the whole, is amply testified by the strong indications of the approbation of the English government. In each year, his rise is marked by some honourable mark of the royal favour. In 1555, his patent was confirmed for the royalties and liberties of Tipperary—as also his hereditary patent for the prize wines. In 1557, he received a grant of the religious houses of Athassil, Jerpoint, Callan, Thurles, Carrick, &c., with all their hereditaments in the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny, and Waterford; the manor of Kilrush in the county of Kildare, &c., &c., to hold by the service of a single knight's fee, reserving



a rent of £49 3s. 9d., afterwards remitted by Elizabeth. The subsequent grants which he received from Elizabeth, fill more than a closely printed page of Collins and Archdall, from which the above are abridged.

Queen Elizabeth, in the first year of her reign, appointed this earl lord treasurer of Ireland, a post which he retained through his life. There is not a year in the first years of this queen's reign so eventful in Ireland, in which he did not bear a distinguished part, which amply maintain his claim to the foremost place in the councils and confidence of the government. To dwell on the most interesting of these events, would hereafter involve us in much repetition, as they form the material for the curious and striking history of the memorable insurgent chiefs of this reign, the Desmonds, O'Donell, and Shane O'Neill. But through the whole stormy tissue of rebellion, party war, and provincial disturbance, which seems in his time to be fast attaining its height of violence and frequency; whether as military commander or diplomatic pacificator, the earl's character appears alike eminently bright through the obscurity of the time. After being successively appointed to the most important offices of trust in every trying and difficult occasion, from 1559 to 1578, he was in the latter year made governor of the province of Munster, when he brought O'Sullivan More into subjection by force of arms, subdued Pierce Grace, Rory Oge, and the Mac-Swiney's, and took the earl of Desmond prisoner, with a slaughter of four thousand men and forty-six officers.

In 1581, his honourable career was rewarded by the high office of lord high marshall of England. He did not long continue in this exalted station; but his voluntary resignation is ennobled by the high and patriotic motive. He could not reconcile it to his sense of duty to retain a post of which the arduous and engrossing duties were such as imply an entire separation from his own country. He was allowed, upon his earnest suit, to resign; and in 1582, he returned with the appointment of general of Munster, and a supply of men. He, at the same time, obtained an addition of twopence a-day to the pay of soldiers employed in the Irish service, and by this means, much increased his popularity among the soldiers.

In Ireland his services were still called into action on each occasion, where activity, fidelity, and talent were required; and many instances occur in which these conspicuous qualities of his character are placed under requisition by the absence of the deputy, or by some occasion of unexpected emergency. In 1596, he was made a knight companion of the garter. He was appointed general of Leinster in 1597, when Tyrone's rebellion had assumed a formidable character; and subsequently in the same year, was made general of all her majesty's forces in Ireland. Nor was he long at the head of the military operations, when Tyrone applied to obtain a commission to treat with him, which was appointed; and a meeting having accordingly taken place at Dundalk, a truce for eight weeks was agreed upon, for the purpose of settling the terms of this great rebel's submission, by communication with the English government. These particulars we shall hereafter detail.

In January, 1600, the earl obtained a considerable victory over the Bourkes, whom he drove out of Ormonde. Redmond Bourke was forced,

with many of his men, into the Nore, where they were lost. On the following April, he went with the lord president of Munster to hold a parley with Owen Mae Rory O'More, who treacherously seized upon him; the lord president Carew escaped by the swiftness of his horse. Ormonde gave hostages for the payment of £3000, in case he should seek revenge.

After this, his conduct was not less distinguished by unremitting efficiency in his high station, until the death of the queen. She had ever retained the highest regard for him, and professed to consider him as her kinsman.\* King James, on his accession, renewed his commission as commander of the Irish army.

His biographers mention, that a little before this period he had lost his sight—a fact which, according to the dates of some of the enterprises above mentioned, compared with that assigned for his personal misfortune, would seem to imply, that he must, when blind, have continued to take the field against the rebels: as the period of about fifteen years before his death, assigned as the time of his blindness by Collins, Lodge, &c., would make it to have occurred in 1599. He died in 1614, in the 82d year of his age, and was buried in the choir of St Canice's church, Kilkenny. His monument cost £400.

Among the few personal details which have been preserved of this illustrious person, it is mentioned, that his reputation was high for great intellectual endowments. He was not less remarkable for the advantages of a graceful and striking exterior. The queen called him her black husband, and his countrymen called him Dhu or Duffe, from the darkness of his complexion. In Ireland he was at the head of all those who pretended to courtesy, hospitality, and magnificence. He was scarcely less renowned in England, and on the continent, as the model of all that was held becoming and honourable, in the soldier and in the gentleman.

\* Lodge.

✍ As this Work has now advanced beyond that period which most Irish historians have agreed in describing as having few and doubtful records, and no historical interest: the Editor thinks, that it may be satisfactory to those who are unacquainted with Irish history, to learn, that a considerable improvement in these respects, may be confidently expected in the forthcoming parts.

END OF VOL. I.







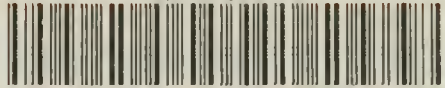


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