

On the bosom of the Atlantic Ocean

The

Ancient and Modern History

Of The

Maritime Ports of Ireland.

By Anthony Maemion.

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It is by commerce and manufactures, and the consequent remunerative employment of the population, that Ireland can be raised to that elevated place in the scale of nations, to which it is so eminently entitled by its commanding position on the globe and its immense natural resources.

The Author.

As Natural History takes precedence of those events in which man has acted so prominent a part, no matter how ancient the date or how important the results have been, it may not be uninteresting, in the first instance, to give some idea of the geographical situation and advantages of that country to which this work is especially devoted. Ireland is one of the largest and the most westerly island in Europe ; it is delightfully situated on the bosom of the Atlantic Ocean, “ an emerald set in the ring of the sea,” and lies between 51° 12' and 55° 20' north latitude, and 5° 20' and 10° 30' west longitude. It is separated from Great Britain on the east and north-east by St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea ; and on the west and south-west its commodious harbours stretch out wide into the Atlantic, as if to invite the new world, which lies directly opposite, to consummate an alliance with the old. From Missenhead in the south to Fairhead in the north it is 241 Irish or 306 statute miles in length, and its greatest breadth is about 185 miles. Its surface contains 20,808,271 statute acres : of which 630,825 are under water, 374,482 covered with plantations ; 13,464,300 are cultivated, 42,929 under houses in towns ; and 6,295,735 are waste. The longest day in the northern extremity is 17 hours and 12 minutes, and in the southern 16 hours and 25 minutes. Although situated in so high a degree of north latitude, the air is mild and agreeable, caused in some degree, no doubt, by its lying in the path of the Gulf Stream, or those warm ocean currents that beat and circulate around its shores ; still the climate is more variable than in any other country in Europe, the natural consequence of the island being exposed to the prevailing winds from the continent of America, which imbibe the humid yet genial atmosphere of the vast Atlantic, unbroken in their course by the interposition of any other land. Notwithstanding, diseases incidental to a moist climate are seldom felt by the natives ; and in some of the southern localities the air is esteemed more conducive to health than in those favoured spots recommended to invalids by the faculty in France and Italy. The number of lakes and rivers with which the country is beautifully diversified may also contribute to that salubrity and freshness of the air which not only invigorates the physical but also the mental faculties, producing that lively and cheerful disposition for which the Irish are so much esteemed. They may also be instrumental in maintaining that perennial spring or unfading verdure over the face of the country from which it has not been inappropriately styled “ The Green Isle.”

The most considerable of the lakes are Lough Neagh, one of the largest in Europe, comprising in extent 98,255 acres, its greatest depth in the centre being 45 feet ; Lough Erne, spangled with its innumerable islands ; Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly, in Ulster ; Lough Corrib, Lough Mask, Lough Con, Lough Ree, and Lough Allen, in Connaught ; Lough Ogram, Lough Culan, Lough Carra, Lough Lene, and Lough Derg, in Munster ; Lough Ennel, Lough Hoyle, and Lough Derreverragh, in Leinster. The petrifying quality of the waters of Lough Neagh is one of those natural phenomena which gives ample exercise to the reflection and speculation of the experimental philosopher. Wood deposited for a certain period in this lake becomes stone by the total change of its internal configuration. Circumstances connected with this lake would lead to the conclusion that it had its origin in a volcanic irruption, but whether it occurred in the time of Partholanus, or in the sixth century, according to the Earl of Bristol, Bishop of Derry, who states, that in a monastery on the continent a manuscript exists giving an account of a fearful earthquake which then threw up the rock of Toome, and impeded the course of several rivers, which uniting, formed both Lough Neagh and Lough Erne. There is also a legend connected with a holy well which overflowed its bounds in a mysterious manner, and inundated that tract of land which now forms the Lough. Towns, palaces, and temples were swallowed up, and the subject is thus beautifully alluded to by Moore : —

“ On Lough Neagh’s banks at the fisherman strays,
When the cold dear eye’s declining,
He sees the round towers of other days
In the waves beneath him shining.”

Lough Lene (the name in the Irish language for the Lake of Learning), but now better known as the Lakes of Killarney, being distinguished by the upper, the middle or Torc Lake, and the lower, which is the most extensive ; the three being connected by a narrow channel. They are situated in the county Kerry, and are commanded on the east and south by the mountains of Mangerton and Torc ; on the west by that of Glenna (beautiful Glenna) ; and on the north the country is level, stretching towards the town of Killarney, which lies north-east. It is beyond the powder of the artist’s pencil, or the poet’s imagination, to give even an idea of these charming lakes ; they were celebrated ages ago for their romantic beauty and soft-bewitching scenery, and were styled the tenth wonder of Ireland. The surrounding mountains are covered from their apex to their base with oaks, yew trees, evergreens, and the arbutus, which, although only a shrub in other countries, becomes here a tree, and grows to the height of twenty feet. It bears leaves evergreen like those of the laurel, but towards the extremity they are purple ; its flowers hang in clusters like grapes, are white and of an agreeable flavour. These present in their different stages of vegetation a delightful variety of colours, and form an amphitheatre which revives all the charms of spring in the depth of winter. The report of cascades falling from these mountains to mingle with the waters of the lake below are repeated by a thousand echoes, and contribute considerably to the charms of this delighted retreat.

The Giants Causeway, which is situated on the north coast of the island, is another curiosity which probably has no parallel in the works of nature or of art. Its form is nearly triangular, and extends from the foot of an adjacent mountain into the sea, 600 feet of which is discernible at low water. It consists of innumerable pentagonal, hexagonal, and heptagonal pillars, but irregular, as there are few of them whose sides are of equal breadth. In thickness they are not more uniform, varying from 15 to 26 inches in diameter ; they all touch by equal sides, and are so contiguous that it is difficult to perceive the jointures. Neither are they uniform in height, as some form a smooth and others an uneven surface. They consist of many unequal pieces, from 12 to 24 inches in length; these pieces are jointed into each other by

concave and convex surfaces highly polished, as are all the sides of the pillars which come in contact. This colonnade is in some parts 32 and in others 86 feet above the level of the sea, but its foundation has never been ascertained. One of the pillars had been broken to the depth of eight feet in the earth, and its figure was found to be the same as above the surface. A difference of opinion has long existed among the learned as to whether this causeway is the work of nature or of art. Those who support the former view contend that, according to Euclid, a united and continued surface can only be formed by six equilateral triangles, four squares, and three hexagons, and that these rules of art are not observed in this causeway, which is composed of polygons of unequal sides, although they exactly adapt themselves to the opposite side of the adjoining pillars, which can only be attributed to the workings of nature directed by a superior intelligence. They also contend that the junction of the pieces which form the pillars cannot be the work of art, for in all other pillars, ancient or modern, the jointures are made by plain surfaces, and it cannot be conceived how the articulation of the stones which compose these pillars could have been effected without a number of utensils at present unknown to art. On the other hand, it has been supposed that the causeway had been formed by man, that the ancients possessed superior knowledge and ingenuity in many branches of art to which the moderns are strangers, and that it is not at all improbable that they were acquainted with such implements as enabled them to form these pillars in their present original and fantastic shapes. There are some also of opinion that the causeway at one time extended across the Channel even to the coast of Scotland, where, it is said, some traces of it are to be found. If such a continued raised way ever did exist, it must have been antecedent to the Flood, and may have taken its name from the circumstance of there being then, according to the sixth book of Genesis, "Giants on the earth." But since the waters created by that great event have settled in their natural channels, it is very improbable that it could either be formed or exist in such a sea.

The principal rivers are the Shannon, the Suir, and its tributaries, the Nore and the Barrow, the Blackwater, the Lee, the Boyne, the Liffey, the Bann, and the Lagan. The Shannon is the most extensive river in the United Kingdom, having its source in Lough Allen, and passing through the centre of the kingdom disembogues itself into the Atlantic Ocean. The Suir is also a noble river. But these and the other rivers will be more fully described in the history of the respective ports where they form a junction with the sea.

The island abounds with lofty mountains, promontories, and capes. Of the mountains, the most considerable are—the Mac Gillicuddy Reeks, Mangerton, and the Galtees, in Munster ; Slieve-gullion and the Mourne-range, on the north-east coast of Ulster ; the Carlingford, Cooley, Slieve Bloeme, and the Wicklow Mountains, in Leinster ; and Knock Patrick, in Connaught. Previous to the Ordnance Surveys Mangerton was considered the highest mountain in Kerry, but by these it has been ascertained that Carran-Tuel, one of the Reeks, is not only 717 feet higher, but that it is the loftiest mountain in Ireland, being 8410 feet above the level of the sea ; while Slieve Donard, the largest of the Moume-range, is only 2796 feet, being 614 feet less than Carran-Tuel, but 97 feet higher than Mangerton. The latter mountain, however, possesses attractions of a very peculiar character. On the summit is a lake, the depth of which is unfathomable. It is called in the Irish *Paulle Iferon*, the hole or opening to hell ; but it is more generally known as the Devil's Punch-bowl. Its waters appear nearly as black as ink, caused, no doubt, by the peat soil and the shade of the perpendicular rocks that surround it. The water even in summer is intensely cold, and still it has never been known to freeze in winter. It is supplied from springs in the mountain, and when it overflows, which often happens, it forms a cascade that is precipitated with great force into the lake below. The most important promontories are Missenhead, Sheepshead, and Crowhead, on the south coast ; Brandonhead on the west ; and Fairhead on the north : these are seen at an immense distance out to sea, and are good landmarks for vessels coming from the various points of the

compass. Cape Clear, the Fasnet Rock, and the Blasket Islands are well calculated for similar purposes.

A great proportion of what is termed the waste land consists of marsh and bog, as well as mountain, which is, however, valuable in supplying a majority of the inhabitants with fuel, even in that part of the country where traces of coal in abundance have been discovered, but are left unexplored.

The soil is fertile in the extreme, producing all kinds of cereal and vegetable crops ; but combined with the mild and humid atmosphere, and a lengthened spring, it is peculiarly adapted for the cultivation of flax, a product so necessary for the support of its extensive linen manufacture. The pasturage is considered the best in Europe for grassing purposes, and Irish beef is held in high estimation, and some few years ago the English war navy was exclusively supplied with it : the butter also that it produces, for quantity and quality, cannot be excelled. Ancient Bede calls it “ a land teeming with milk and honey ;” and that even in his time the vine was extensively cultivated in Ireland with success. This fertility was so esteemed throughout Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries, that Donatus, then Bishop of Fesula, near Florence, describes Ireland in such glowing terms that it must then have enjoyed superior advantages over all other countries. His composition is thus translated by Dr. Dunkin : —

“ Far westward lies an isle of ancient fame,
By Nature blest, and Scotia is her name ;
Enrolled in books, exhaustless is her store
Of veiny silver and of golden ore.
Her fruitful soil for ever teems with wealth,
With gems her waters, and her air with health ;
Her verdant fields with milk and honey flow.
Her woolly fleeces vie with virgin snow ;
Her waving furrows float with bearded corn,
And arms and arts her envied sons adorn.
No savage bear with lawless fury roves,
Nor ravenous lion, through her peaceful groves ;
No poison there infects, no scaly snake
Creeps through the grass, nor frog annoys the lake :
An island worthy of its pious race,
In war triumphant, and unmatched in peace.”

Frogs, it is said, were unknown in Ireland before the reign of William III. Nature has so ordained it, that the soil will not endure any venomous creature. It is true that snakes and lizards are partially found in Ireland, and that serpents will live in it, but they no longer retain their venomous properties, which appear inseparable from their nature in all other countries except the Island of Crete. This exemption from noxious reptiles is by some attributed to a blessing conferred by Moses on Goadhal Glas, the progenitor of Milesius, at the time he conducted the Israelites through the Red Sea, which was to descend to his posterity and the country they were destined to govern ; but this is inadmissible, as Moses and Ghadhal Glas were not cotemporaries. The popular opinion is, that Ireland obtained this privilege through the intercession of St. Patrick ; but it is more than probable, that, from the nature of the climate or the soil, or both combined, the country was always free from poisonous reptiles, as St. Patrick never was in Crete, and yet that island is equally exempt from them. And long before the arrival of the Saint in Ireland, it was called the Sacred Isle, most likely from the circumstance of its enduring no venomous creature.

Having given, briefly, a sketch of the position and some of the natural advantages that the country enjoys, it will now be necessary to describe the physical and mental endowments of its inhabitants. The Irish, according to Lombard, are “large and well-built;” that they should be so is only natural, considering that those manly and vigorous exercises which tend to strengthen the nerves and invigorate the body were always practised by them. Hunting, horse and foot racing, wrestling, hurling, football, and other similar exercises, are still their accustomed amusements. The ancient military exercises of Tailton are attributed to Lughha Laimh-fheada (the long-handed), one of the Danaan kings, who instituted them in honour of Tailte, the queen of Eochaidh, the last monarch of the Belgæ, who, after his death, married a Danaan chief, and, from her many accomplishments, was selected to instruct the youthful prince Lughha. The games were proclaimed fifteen days before the 1st of August, the anniversary of her death, and continued fifteen days after. From them the month of August is still called *Lughnas* or The commemoration of Lughha. These exercises were similar to those said to be introduced some centuries later by Romulus, at Rome, in honour of Mars, by the name of *Equiria*. They were adopted by the Milesians, and continued until after the Anglo-Norman invasion. Camden represents “the Irish as warlike, and remarkable for the just proportion of their limbs, and so pliant are their muscles, that their agility is incredible.” Goode, an English priest, who studied in Ireland, and wrote in the sixth century, says, “the natives are distinguished by strength and agility of body; by a greatness and elevation of mind; possessed of acute genius; warlike, and prodigal of life; patient of labour, cold, and poverty; amorous in disposition; hospitable to strangers, constant in their attachment, implacable in their hatred; light of belief, greedy of glory; impatient of contempt and injury, and ardent in all their actions.” “Of all men,” says Stanihurst, “the Irish are the most hospitable in their nature, and the most beneficent; the most patient of labour; the most warlike; and are seldom found to bend under the weight of misfortune and distress.” These are flattering testimonials, derived from sources not over-partial to the Irish; but the character of no people stood higher than theirs in general estimation previous to the subjugation of the country by the Anglo-Normans—and, considering the ages of oppression and political degradation that they have since endured, it is gratifying to find, that the present race have degenerated so little from the fame of their ancestors. Had they been fortunate enough to have preserved their independence, there is little doubt, that at the present day Ireland would have held an elevated rank in the scale of nations.

The learned of all ages have been in some degree divided in opinion as to when and by whom the island was first discovered, colonized, or inhabited; and to resolve this question, reference must be had to the earliest period of authentic history subsequent to the Flood. In the tenth chapter of Genesis it is recorded, that Japhet, the son of Noah, had seven sons, Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Thyras. After the dispersion of Noah’s sons and their progeny on the plain of Shinar, and that a confusion of languages was ordained, the posterity of Japhet not only peopled Europe, but a considerable part of Asia also. That of Gomer inhabited Gaul and Germany; the descendants of Magog occupied Scythia; Madai and Javan settled in Greece; Tubal possessed Spain; Meshech, Italy; and Thyras, Thrace. The children of Magog, the progenitor of the great Scythian nations, are not recorded by the sacred penman; but all those chronicles that are deemed most authentic,—as, the Book of Invasions, the White Book, and the Book of Conquests,—agree in giving him three sons, Baath, Jobhath, and Fathochta. Jobhath was the ancestor of the Bactrians, Parthians, and Amazons. Fathochta was the progenitor of Partholanus, and consequently of the Nemedians, Firbolgs or Belgæ, and Tuatha de Danaans; but Baath was the father of Phœnius, the founder of the Milesian race.

From this it would appear, that the first settlers in Ireland, as well as those who succeeded them and contended for supremacy in the island, were all descended in a direct line from

Magog ; while Britain derived its aborigines from Gaul, and were, consequently, descended from Gomer. But these, and all the other circumstances of ancient history, either written or oral, sacred or profane, tending to give Ireland an early colonization from the East, or that represented inhabitants as renowned for learning, piety or valour, through so many ages of its history—have been all denounced as mere chimera or monkish imposition by three sceptical pedagogues who have appeared within the last century, with pretensions to enlighten the world as to ancient history. *These great men in their own estimation* were— John Macpherson, a Scotch doctor of medicine, who published a work in 1757 “ On the Origin, Antiquities, &c., of the Piets, British and Irish Scots ;” James Macpherson, his relative, the author of “ Ossian’s Poems ;” and Dr. Ledwich, a reverend LL.D., member of several learned societies, and author of “ The Antiquities of Ireland,” as the title-page to that book denotes. The first of these, Dr. Macpherson, presuming on the circumstance of North Britain being called Scotland even to the present day, contends that it was the far-famed Scotia of the ancients ; and that as the other quarters of the globe were peopled from Asia, the Caledonians must have first settled in North Britain, and from thence colonized Ireland : although there is no portion of Irish history clearer than that several migrations of Irish Scots took place, who settled in Albany, from which the country obtained the name of Scotia Minor. These Albanian Scots, however, were invariably opposed by the Picts, until Feargus, in the reign of Murtoth, grandson to Niall the Great, united a portion of the Picts with the Albanian Scots under his sway, and Murtoth, to add greater solemnity to the coronation of Feargus, and to impress his new subjects with the conviction that the monarchy was to exist permanently in his family, sent him the famous Liagh Fail, or Stone of Destiny, on which he and his successors were subsequently crowned ; and they extended from time to time the frontiers of their kingdom, until Kenneth, the son of Alpin, subverted the Pictish monarchy, and was styled King of the Albanies ; that is. King of the Picts and Scots, which was subsequently changed to that of Scotland. The Liagh Fail, or Stone of Destiny, was originally brought into Ireland by the Damnonii, and fell into the hands of the Milesians after the conquest of the country. Their monarchs, from that time to its being sent to Feargus, comprising a term of fifteen hundred years, were invariably crowned on it, it being a received opinion, that a monarch of the Scythian race would govern wherever this stone was preserved. Hector Bœtus notices this prophecy, which, translated from the Irish, runs thus :—

“ 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.”

Previous to the Christian era, it is said that this stone emitted sounds resembling thunder when any of the line of Milesius was crowned on it ; but the coming of the Messiah, which destroyed all pagan superstition, deprived it also of its soniferous virtues. These sounds, however, were, no doubt, caused by the arts of the Druids, and wore, therefore, likely to be continued until the establishment of Christianity in the Island, when the Catholic hierarchy superseded them in all their sacred functions. This stone was carefully preserved by the descendants of Feargus in the Abbey of Scone ; where, up to the time of Robert Bruce, the kings of Scotland were invariably crowned on it. Edward I., who had previously destroyed all records and monuments that were likely to inspire the Scots with the spirit of national independence, aware of the great veneration this stone was held in by them, had it removed to Westminster Abbey, and placed under the inauguration chair, where it still remains, and is known by the name of Jacob’s Stone, from a supposition that it is part of the patriarch’s pillar. Queen Victoria, and all the monarchs of England since the reign of Edward I., have been crowned over it. It is, of course, inconsistent with common sense to attribute any superstitious power to this stone ; but popular opinion has powerful influence over the destinies of a nation. “ The Romans were invincible as long as they believed their city to be eternal.

Mahomet commenced by persuading a few Arabian enthusiasts that their swords were to subject the world to the Alcoran, and in less than a century the Turkish empire was established from the banks of the Euphrates to those of the Nile." It is also curious to observe, that after the transmission of this stone to Scotland the glories of the Milesian monarchy in Ireland gradually declined ; and the Stuarts, after being deprived of it, held but an uncertain tenure of the Scottish crown until it was united with that of England in the person of James I. Swift must have had such casuists as the Macphersons and Dr. Ledwich in his mind's eye, when he wrote his inimitable verses on St. Patrick's Well in Trinity College becoming dry in 1726. He personifies the Saint thus —

“ Thee, happy Island, Pallas call'd her own,
When haughty Britain was a land unknown ;
From thee with pride the Caledonians trace
The glorious founder of their kingly race.
Thy martial sons, whom now they dare despise,
Did once their land subdue and civilize.
Their dress, their language, and the Scottish name,
Confess the soil from whence the victors came.
Well may they boast that ancient blood which runs
Within their veins, who are thy younger sons.
A conquest and a colony from thee,
The mother country left her children free :
From thee no mark of slavery they felt.
Not so with thee the base invader dealt :
Invited here to vengeful Murrough's aid,
Those whom they could not conquer they betrayed.
Britain, by thee We fell, ungrateful Ialo,
Not by thy valour, but superior guile.
Britain, confess with shame this land of mine,
First taught thee human knowledge and divine ;
My prelates and my students sent from hence,
Made your sons converts both to God and sense.
Not like the pastors of thy ravenous breed,
Who come to fleece the flock and not to feed.
Oh ! had I been apostle to the Swiss,
Or hardy Soot, or any land but this.
Combined in arms they had their foes defied.
And kept their liberty, or bravely died.
Thou still with tyrants in succession curst,
The last invader trampling on the firsts
Nor fondly hope for some reverse of fate.
Virtue herself would now return too late.
Not half thy course of misery is run,
The greatest evils yet are scarce begun :
Soon shall thy sons, the time is just at hand.
Be all made captive in their native land.
When for the use of no Hibernian born
Shall rise one blade of grass or ear of corn.
Base mongrels ! to yon Isle your treasures bear.
And waste in luxury thy harvest there ;
For pride and ignorance a proverb grown.
The jests of wits, and to the Court unknown—

I scorn thee ! spurious and degenerate line,
And from this hour my patronage resign.”

James Macpherson, in his Introduction to the “ History of Great Britain and Ireland,” confirms the Doctor’s presumptions, and attempts to palm on the public poems which he asserts were translated by him from the original of Ossian, a Caledonian bard, son to Fingal, King of Scotland, neither of whom ever had existence except in the fertile imagination of the author ; it being made manifest, that he surreptitiously extracted and translated the greater part of them from the poetical effusions of the ancient Irish bards, and with consummate audacity metamorphosed many of their Irish into Caledonian heroes. Dr. Ledwich, not content with supporting the scepticism and cajolery of the Macphersons in rejecting the authenticity of ancient Irish history, actually devotes a whole chapter of his hook on Irish Antiquities to show, that no such person as the Irish apostle Saint Patrick ever existed. These three worthies, being unable to produce any authority or data, attempt to support their speculative conjectures by a sophism, “ that the authority of a thousand learned men is not equal to one solid argument ; nor the belief of several great nations more, in many instances, than popular error.” The Macphersons, who, to court the favour of English patronage, and fan the flame of English prejudice, with true Scotch sycophancy, concocted this futile and disingenuous attempt to undermine that ancient historical structure, that had stood the test of so many ages, and which the Irish, although goaded by domestic broils, and struggling beneath the pressure of foreign domination, had clung to, in the fulness of their pride, with undeviating attachment. While Dr. Ledwich, by his fulsome compliment to the Irish Catholics, terming them “ a liberal and enlightened people, not likely much longer to be amused with fictitious legends, or pay *their adoration* to ideal personages, and that a scriptural, rational, and manly religion is alone calculated for their present improvement in science and manners,” shows the cloven foot, and clearly demonstrates the object he had in view in his assiduity to prove St. Patrick an ideal character. The learned Dr. Milner, in his thirteenth letter of inquiry into the Antiquities of Ireland, extinguishes Dr. Ledwich and the whole brood of sceptics who adopted his opinion. “ It is” said he, “ for the sake of depriving the Irish Catholics of their original faith that Dr. Ledwich takes so much pains to deprive them of their great apostle who preached it to them. The fact, however is, the Irish Catholics are really too much enlightened to become the dupes of such wretched artifices. After having baffled the machinations, and withstood the persecutions of almost three centuries in support of the religion once for all delivered to them by the Saints—namely, by St. Patrick and his disciples, in one of the golden ages of Christianity, they are not likely to make a compliment of it now to the cajolery, the declamation, or the sophistry of Dr. Ledwich.”

But to return to those ancient learned authorities on which alone reliance can be placed for the first discovery of Ireland, as well as the name or names by which it was by them designated. It has been already stated, that Ireland owed its early colonization to the descendants of Magog, and that Phœnius, the son of Baath, was ancestor of the Milesians. He was called Farsa, or the Sage, from his having acquired a knowledge of the different languages that prevailed consequent on the confusion of tongues that originated at Babel. He selected for his territory that country situated on the east coast of the Mediterranean, which derived its name from him, and was called Phœnicia. The Phœnicians, as well as the descendants of Fothochta, who had settled in the maritime parts of Greece, and along the African coasts of the Mediterranean, early devoted themselves to seafaring purposes. The form and construction of the ark which had so signally saved their progenitors must have made a strong impression on their retentive faculties, and have taught them the utility of naval structures. But if they had not the recollection of the ark as a model, the buoyancy of timber would have convinced them of the facility of removing from one place to another by water, and the doubling of capes and headlands required but little experience. It is recorded, that when new

countries were discovered, even at the earliest period, the inhabitants on the coasts used wicker baskets covered with hides, in which they rode in the most tempestuous seas. Those, therefore, who contend that Ireland could not have been peopled at so early a period of history, from regions so remote, and with means so inadequate for so long a voyage by sea, and that, consequently, it must have received its primeval inhabitants from Gaul, or the more contiguous shores of Britain,—do not reflect, that the transmigration of man from one country to another by land was more difficult and dangerous than by water. Impenetrable woods, precarious subsistence, savage beasts, and still more savage men—incessant labour and fatigue were to be encountered by land, which rendered the perils by sea far preferable. Josephus, who must have had better means of information than what modern times afford, in describing the colonization of the world by the posterity of Noah, states, that “ they passed by sea to many places :” and, Tacitus asserts, that the first colonizing expeditions were performed by water and not by land. The ancients, too, at a very remote period, had a much greater knowledge of navigation than they generally get credit for in modern times. Sesostris, King of Egypt, who, according to Du Fresne’s Chronology, reigned 626 years after the Flood, and about three centuries after the arrival of the first colony in Ireland, fitted out fleets of such magnitude, that they sailed through the Straits of Babelmandel, from the Arabian Gulf to India ; that they doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and returned through the Straits of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea.

The Phœnicians also had early devoted themselves to nautical and commercial pursuits. Their ships were to be seen in the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the Atlantic ; and the Scriptures even record the long voyages that the ships of Hiram, King of Tyre, and those he equipped for Solomon, were accustomed to perform, and the wealth they brought back in return for those products they carried to foreign parts. It is, therefore, more than probable, that these enterprising navigators at an early date discovered Ireland ; and that through their means alone, from its secluded position in the Atlantic, was it made known to the rest of the world. The Phœnicians were jealous of their trade, and slow in communicating its secrets to other nations, and, consequently, the sources from which it was derived. It is very likely, that the island was long known to them before the time of Alexander the Great, when Aristotle wrote ; and mention is first made of the two western isles under the names of Albion and Ierne. The Phœnicians certainly kept their trade in tin, which they derived from the *Cestrimunidas*, or Tin Isles, now the Scilly Islands, secret from the rest of the world for a considerable time. As Ireland, or, as it was then termed, the Sacred Isle, inhabited by the *Hibernii*, was described as only two days’ sail from these islands, they no doubt visited it also ; but whether they obtained tin or gold, which were subsequently found in the island, with other precious metals, there is now no means of ascertaining ;—traces, however, remain of mines being worked there at very remote periods, as, for instance, the coal mines of Ballycastle unquestionably were.

About one thousand years before Christ, according to the most learned authorities, Hanno and Himilco, the celebrated Phœnician navigators, undertook their first voyage of discovery, and after passing the Straits of Gibraltar, while Hanno proceeded to the south, Himilco steered his course along the north-west coast of Spain, in the old track of the Phœnician voyagers, between Gades and Galicia, and then sailing across the ocean to the Scilly Isles, and thence to Hibernia, which he found thickly inhabited, and its seas crowded with hide-covered boats or currahs. He also describes the turfy nature of the soil and the mildness of the climate. Ireland was then, and has been from time immemorial, designated the Sacred Island. On his return to Carthage, Himilco deposited a record or journal of his voyage in one of the temples there, written in the Phœnician language, and which Avienus says he examined in the fourth century.

It would appear, from this record, that Ireland was a populous country when Himilco visited it, which was seven or eight hundred years before Britain was known to the Romans. It is absurd, therefore, to suppose that it could have been colonized by that island, which centuries afterwards was but slowly peopling itself. And no stronger proof can be adduced that the Irish did not consider themselves to be of Gallic extraction either, than that they used the term *Gaul* to designate a foreigner, while *Gael* signifies an Irishman, and (according to the learned antiquarian, Charles O'Connor) should be spelled *Gadhel*, the *dh* being quiescent. That there exists a strong resemblance at the present day in the manners and customs of the people, and even in the features and costume of the women in particular, inhabiting the east coast of Ireland and those of Normandy and Picardy, is unquestionably the fact ; and that some words corrupted from the Irish language in sound and meaning are similar to those of the French ; but then it must be considered that the Anglo-Normans of the pale had settled in that part of Ireland, and were originally from those provinces of France, and therefore these circumstances cannot affect in any degree the origin of the ancient Irish.

From their relative positions on the map, it is highly probable, that, while Britain derived its population from the opposite coast of Gaul, Ireland was indebted to Celtic Spain for its aborigines. The general and compulsory migrations of the Celtic tribes from the time of Joshua were towards the west, and there can be no doubt that a portion of these people took refuge, on the western coasts of Spain, and that in after times Phœnician colonies established themselves there also as an intermediate point admirably situated to promote that extensive commerce which they then almost exclusively enjoyed.

The Irish themselves contend that Galicia, on the western coast of Spain, was the quarter in which their progenitors sailed and colonized Ireland. Certainly, relations of affinity and commerce were very early established between the two colonies, and their proximity to each other would lead to such a conclusion. The distance from Port Ortegal on the Spanish, to Cape dear on the Irish coast, which lie opposite, being north and south of their respective countries, is only one hundred and fifty leagues, two-thirds of which, as far as the island of Ushant, may be seen in clear weather from either side of the land. But no doubt that opinion has reference to the expedition from that coast under Heber and Heremon, sons of Gollamh, surnamed *Mile Espaine*, or the hero of Spain, from which they derived the name of Milesians, or *Clanna Mile*, the posterity of the hero, whose descendants in an uninterrupted line governed Ireland to the invasion of the Anglo-Normans.

As the object of the Milesians, however, was the conquest of the country, and that they found an immense resisting force to oppose them, the inference is, that it had been colonized some centuries previous to that event. And when it is considered that a monarchy existed in Egypt in the fourth, and that Sesostris in the sixth century after the Flood, had acquired the art of equipping vessels capable of performing such distant voyages, it is not at all improbable that Partholanus might have arrived from Greece in the island at the early period insisted on by the Irish historiographers.

That great discrepancies in dates have occurred as regards Irish history, as well as that of every other nation, is indisputable ; but that is not surprising, when it has been ascertained, that there have been no less than one hundred and forty learned opinions on the distance of time between the creation of the world and the birth of our Saviour: some making it only 3,616 years, and others extending it to 6,484, while the chronology in the Bible places it in the 4,004th year after that event. The descendants of Japhet took possession of the European isles as early as the days of Phaleg, who was born one hundred and one years after the Flood, and descended in the fourth generation from Shem, as recorded by Moses, who says,—“ By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands ; every one after his tongue, after

their families, in their nations.” Now the Grecian were some of the most considerable of the isles of the Gentiles ; and, when navigation was so well known two hundred years later, why should not Ireland have then received her first settlers from thence ? In the absence of all data or other information from any authentic source, is it just, is it rational, on mere surmise or conjecture, to treat those authorities as fabulous which describe so minutely and chronologically the first colonization of the island by Partholanus and his posterity, and subsequently by the Nemedians, Belgæ, and Danaans, previous to the arrival of the Milesians ? Divested of a portion of that poetical and romantic imagery with which early Irish history is clothed—the Egyptians, the Greeks, or the Romans, do not furnish materials so genuine for their own.

It has been already shown that Ireland was known to the Phœnicians at a very remote period indeed, and it must have been also to the Greeks, although they were not so commercially disposed as their neighbours ; as Orpheus of Crotona, who lived in the time of Cyrus the Great, and wrote his poem of the Argonauts five hundred and forty-three years before Christ, and Aristotle, in his Treatise on the World, make mention of it by the name of *Jerna*. Juvenal, Pomponius Mela, and Solinus, call it *Iuverna*, Ptolemy, *Iuernia*, and Diodorus Siculus, *Iris*. Gildas Badonicus, who visited Ireland to consult the doctors of philosophy and theology, called it *Iren*—hence by the words *Irenses* and *Iri* are understood the Milesians and Irish. It was called *Ierne* by Claudian, Strabo, and Stephen of Bizance ; and the *Insula-Secra* or Sacred Island, by Rufos and Festus Avienus. Plutarch calls it *Ogygia* : it was usual for the poets to give the name of *Ogygium* to whatever was very ancient. Cæsar, Pliny, Tacitus, Orosius, and all the Latin writers call it *Hibernia*. The etymology of this name is doubtful. Some think it is derived from the Iberians, a people of Spain ; or from Iberus, a river there ; or Iberia, the ancient name of Spain. But others derive it from Heber or Heremon, the sons of Milesius. The island was known to the English for six or seven centuries previous to the conquest by the name of Ireland. Keating says, that from its first colonization it was called *Inis Alga*, or the Noble Island, and *Inis Fail* from the stone of destiny, Liagh Fail, on which the Milesian monarchs were crowned. It was also known by the name of *Eire*, Fodla, and Banba, from three queens who married the three Danaan brothers, monarchs of Ireland. The name *Eire* was, and still is most in use, the inhabitants being even to this day known by the name *Eirinachts*, or natives of *Eire*, in Latin *Erigena*. Hence John Scot, an Irishman, and a writer of the ninth century, took the name of *Scotus Erigena*. Camden and the Abbé MacGeohagan, think *Eirin* is the same as *Eire*, from which the etymology of the words *Ierna*, *Iuverna*, *Iris*, *Hibernia*, and Ireland are derived.

Ireland has also been called *Scotia*, and the Irish *Scots*, which some suppose have been derived from *Scota*, the relict of Milesius, who accompanied her sons in their invasion of Ireland, and lost her life in the first engagement between them and the Danaans. It is more probable, however, that not only the island, but the lady herself, who is said to have been a daughter of the king of Egypt, took the appellation from *Kinca Scuit*, derived from her husband’s Scythian origin, as it appears that another daughter of the Pharaohs married Niul, the son of Phœnius, their great ancestor, whose name was *Scota* also. Some writers suppose the name, from its coincidence, is applicable to the present kingdom of Scotland, but nothing can be more inconsistent with fact : even Dr. Macpherson is obliged to admit that the Scotch themselves in the sixth and seventh centuries acknowledged their descent from the Scots of Ireland. Eumenes, Ammianus, and Claudian, represent the Scots as the inhabitants of that country called *Ierne*. In the fifth age, Paul of Orosius, in his description of Ireland, says it is inhabited by Scots. In the sixth century Gildas, a British author, says, that Britain was ravaged by two savage nations, the Scots who came from the west, and the Picts from the north. In the seventh century Isidorus Hispalensis represents *Scotia* and Ireland to be the same. Jonas Abbé and Adamnanus, Abbot of Hy, who wrote the life of St. Columba, affirm

that he was born in Ireland, and that the island was inhabited by a nation of Scots. Eginhard, secretary to Charlemagne, in his annals, brought down to 812, says, that the Norman fleet and array having attacked Ireland, the island of the Scots, a great number of the Normans were slain in battle, and the rest shamefully fled and returned home. This century produced innumerable testimonies of Scotia and Ireland being the same country. According to Fabius Ethelwerdus, and the Anglo-Saxon annals, Alfred the Great, in 891, invited three learned Scots of Ireland to his court for the purpose of diffusing learning in his dominions, at that period in a wretched state of ignorance. Their names were Dufslanus, Macbothus, and Magilmumenus ; the latter of whom, says the writer, was highly versed in literature and the arts, and a celebrated doctor among the Scots. An ancient author of the life of St. Kilian describes Scotia, which is also named Ireland, as an island in the ocean possessing a fertile soil, but still more celebrated for the great saints it has produced : among whom are enumerated St. Columba, possessed by Italy ; St. Gal, by Germany ; and St. Kilian, by whom teutonic France has been rendered illustrious. Humfredus, a Welch writer, says, that the Scotch themselves, and others, well know that the Scots are the offspring of the Irish, and that the Welch call them both by the name of Guidhil or Gadeliana. Capgravius writes that the kingdom of Ireland was anciently called Scotland, whence came the Scots who inhabit Albany, which joins a part of the greater Britain, and is now called Scotland. The learned Usher says, that before the Scots and Albanians became one people in the ninth century, no author can be produced who designates Albany by the name of Scotia. And MacGeohagan observes, that when the English commenced calling the Scots of Ireland by the name of Irish, (in Latin *Ire* or *Irenses*) and the island by the name of Ireland, (and both were adopted by the, Germans, French, Spaniards, and other continental nations,)—the name Scotland was insensibly appropriated to Albany, which, however, was for sometime called *Scotia Minor*, to distinguish it from Ireland, or *Scotia Major*. In addition to this long list of authorities who bear testimony to Ireland being formerly known by name of Scotia, is that of a celebrated Scotch writer, Buchanan, who, in the second volume of his History of Scotland, affirms, “ that all the inhabitants of Ireland were originally called Scots—as Orosius testifies, and our annals relate—that the Scots of Ireland removed more than once into Scotland, and were denominated Albanian Scots ; and when they called themselves Albini, their neighbours gave them the name of Scots, which clearly proves their origin from the Hibernians.”

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