

Celtic Colonisation

from

Phases of Irish history

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*EVERY people has two distinct lines of descent
— by blood and by tradition.*

A certain amount of enthusiasm, culminating in what is called Pan-Celticism, has gathered around the recognition of this fact that the Irish, the Gaels of Scotland, the Welsh and the Bretons are Celtic peoples. So much favour attached to the name Celtic that in our own time the Irish language was, so to speak, smuggled into the curricula of the Royal University and of the Intermediate Board under that name. What ancient writers called *opus Hibernicum*, “Irish work,” is popularly known in Ireland as Celtic ornament. In the same way people speak of Celtic crosses, and there are even Celtic athletic clubs. There is no small amount of pride in the notion of being Celtic. It is somewhat remarkable, then, to find that throughout all their early history and tradition the Irish and the Britons alike show not the slightest atom of recognition that they were Celtic peoples. We do not find them acknowledging any kinship with the Gauls, or even with each other. In Christian times, their men of letters shaped out genealogical trees tracing the descent of each people from Japhet — and in these genealogies Gael and Briton and Gaul descend by lines as distinct as German and Greek. This absence of acknowledgment of kinship is all the more noteworthy because there is little reason to suppose that, before Latin displaced the Celtic speech of Gaul, the differences of dialect in the Celtic speech of Gaul, Britain, and Ireland were sufficient to prevent intercourse without interpreters.

From this ignorance of their Celtic kinship and origin we must draw one important conclusion. The extraordinary vitality of popular tradition in some respects must be set off by its extraordinary mortality in other respects. There must have been a time when the Celts of Ireland, Britain and Gaul were fully aware that they were nearer akin to each other than to the Germans and Italians, but this knowledge perished altogether from the popular memory and the popular consciousness.

It was re-discovered and re-established by a Scottish Gael, George Buchanan, in the sixteenth century. Buchanan, in his history of Scotland, published in 1589, dismissed as fabulous that section of the Irish and British genealogies that purported to trace the origin of each people, generation by generation, from Japhet. He was a man of great classical learning. No better refutation could be adduced of the notion that Bacon, who was a child when Buchanan wrote, established the inductive method of scientific proof than the clear and well-marshalled argument by which Buchanan proves from numerous Greek and Latin sources that the Gaels and the Britons were branches of the ancient Celtic people of the Continent.

An account of Buchanan’s discourse on this subject will be found in an article by me in the “Irish Review,” of December, 1913. Buchanan’s discovery seems to have lain dormant, as regards any effect on learning or the popular mind, for more than a century. In his argument he dealt rather severely with the statements of a contemporary Welsh antiquary, Humphrey Llwyd, and this controversy had probably the effect of sowing the seed of what may be called Celtic consciousness in the soil of Welsh learning. In Ireland, though Buchanan’s work was doubtless known and read, his theory of the Celtic origin of the Irish people and their lang-

uage, and of their kinship to the Britons and the Continental Celts, does not appear to have been thought worth discussion, so firmly established were the ancient accounts which attributed to the Gaels of Ireland a Scythian origin. Yet these ancient accounts, as I propose to show in the third lecture of this series, did not belong to the true national tradition, ran counter to tradition, and owed their invention to the Latin learning of Ireland in the early Christian period.

In 1707 the publication of the first volume of Edward Llwyd's "Archæologia Britannica" exhibits the first fruiting of Buchanan's theory, in the form of a sort of conspectus of the Celtic languages then extant, namely, the Gaelic of Ireland and Scotland, and the British languages of Wales, Cornwall and Brittany. From this time onward, the existence of a group of Celtic peoples may be taken as a recognised fact in the learned world. I do not know whether anyone has yet traced the early stages of the recognition of the same fact in Continental learning.

The Celtic languages now began to attract attention from outside. I ought, however, to note here that already for a brief period the Irish language had seemed about to extend its influence beyond the limits of its own people. It will be remembered that Edmund Spenser, during his residence in Ireland (1586-1598), made some small acquaintance with Irish poetry which was translated for him, and that he was pleased in some degree with its peculiarities. About the same time an English official in Dublin reports to his masters in London that "the English in Dublin do now all speak Irish," and adds that they take a pleasure in speaking Irish. A primer of the Irish language was composed by the Baron of Delvin for the special use of Queen Elizabeth, and a facsimile of portion of it may be seen in Sir John Gilbert's "National Manuscripts of Ireland."

The growing interest in Celtic literature among outsiders is exemplified in some of the work of the English poet Gray, who died in 1771. His poem of "The Bard," reflected, if it did not initiate, the notions long afterwards fashionable of the character of the Celtic bards and of the spirit of their poetry. Gray had the reputation in his time of being an antiquarian. He made an English version of the vision-poem on the battle of Clontarf from the Icelandic saga of *Burnt Njal*, and from this same poem part of the inspiration of his "Bard" is acknowledged by him to have been derived. Gray also wrote English versions of some Welsh poems, and the novelty of poetic expression which he borrowed here seems to have baffled for once the critical experience of Johnson, who contents himself with saying that "the language is unlike the language of other poets." "The Bard" was published in 1755, and, if I am not mistaken, its weird rhapsodical spirit contained the germ of the Celtic literary revival, for Gray's "Bard" may be regarded as the literary parent of Macpherson's "Ossian." In 1760, five years after the publication of "The Bard," appeared the first collection of Macpherson's pretended translations, entitled "Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland." The consequences of this publication are fitly described by Dr. Magnus MacLean: "The arrival of James Macpherson marks a great moment in the history of Celtic literature. It was the signal for a general resurrection. It would seem as if he sounded the trumpet, and the graves of ancient manuscripts were opened, the books were read, and the dead were judged out of the things that were written in them." In 1764 was published Evans's "Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards" — which supplied Gray with fresh material. In 1784 appeared "Musical and Poetical Relics of the Welsh Bards," and from that time onward the stream of translations from Welsh to English was fairly continuous. Notwithstanding the controversy that soon arose about the authenticity of Macpherson's compositions, their direct influence and vogue went on increasing for half a century. Among those who shared in the Macpherson craze were Goethe and Napoleon Bonaparte. In France, de Villemarqué published his "Chants populaires de la Bretagne," a collection of poems from the Breton. In Scotland, Macpherson had several imitators. In Wales, the new movement took shape in the

revival of the National Eisteddfod in 1819. In Ireland, the first fruits of Macpherson's genius are found in Walker's "Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards," published in 1786, and in Charlotte Brooke's "Reliques of Irish Poetry," published in 1789. The originals in this case were genuine, including a number of poems of the kind called, since Macpherson's time, Ossianic. [1] The English versions supplied by Miss Brooke were in close imitation of the style and diction of Macpherson. The same influence extends to Hardiman's "Irish Minstrelsy," published in 1831.

The expansion of the new Celtic consciousness is exemplified in the publication in 1804 of a tract in French on the Irish Alphabet by Jean Jacques Marcel. The first important philological treatise on the Celtic languages was published by the French philologist Pictet in 1837, dealing with "the affinity of the Celtic languages to Sanscrit." Next year, 1838, appeared Bopp's work in German, showing the relation of the Celtic languages to Sanscrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, German, etc. The Celtic literary enthusiasm was henceforth supplemented by solid scientific research.

In these particulars is presented, I think, a fairly accurate sketch of the wholly modern development of the Celtic consciousness. I wish to recall here the fact that from the earliest traceable traditions of the Gaelic people down to the time of George Buchanan, there is not found the slightest glimmer of recognition that the Celts of Ireland were Celts, or that they were more nearly akin to the Celts of Britain and the Continent than to any other population of white men. The second fact which I wish particularly to emphasise is that throughout all its history the term Celtic bears a linguistic and not a racial significance.

GREEK AND LATIN WRITERS ON PRE-CHRISTIAN IRELAND

THE earliest known mention of Ireland in literature appears to be found in a passage of the Greek writer Poseidonios which is quoted by Strabo. Poseidonios flourished about 150 B.C.

His information about Ireland is vague, and he says expressly and candidly that his authorities are not trustworthy. Whereas later writers erred in supposing that Ireland lay between Britain and Spain, Poseidonios says that Ireland stretched farther northward than Britain. We have nothing definite to tell about Ireland, he continues, except that the inhabitants are fiercer than those of Britain, being man-eaters and eaters of many kinds of food [we may understand perhaps that he supposed them to eat various foods not eaten by the Greeks]. They think it worthy to devour their own fathers who have died. Their marital customs are of the most unrestricted kind, disregarding even the closest ties of kindred. "This, however, we state as having no reliable testimony." For the custom of cannibalism, he says, is also ascribed to the Scythians, and the Celts and Iberians and many others are likewise said to practise it when reduced to great straits by a siege.

The name of Ireland, as quoted from Poseidonios, is Ierne, representing an old name Iverna. In Greek, as well as in the early Celtic language of Ireland, the sound of *v* or *w* had a tendency to disappear from words. I think, however, that the Greeks may have taken the name Ierne, without the *v*, direct from a Celtic source, for the dropping of the *v* or *w* sound in Greek took place earlier than the writing of the oldest extant Greek prose, and if the name of Ireland had been known to the Greeks at so early a time, we should expect to find mention of Ireland in early prose writers like Herodotus.

The next known writer who mentions Ireland is Julius Cæsar. The island Hibernia, he writes, is half the size of Britain, and as far distant from Britain as Britain is from Gaul. He calls Ireland Hibernia.

Strabo, who wrote in Greek in the first years of the Christian era, also thought that Ireland extended farther north than Britain, and that Ireland had a colder climate than Britain. This notion, I have already suggested, originated in the Latin name *Hibernus*, which as a Latin word meant “wintry,” and was substituted for the Celtic adjective *Ivernos*. The people of Ireland, says Strabo, are quite wild and have a poor way of living owing to the cold climate.

A somewhat later anonymous writer in Greek has more accurate geographical information, perhaps based on the brief statement by Cæsar, placing Ireland to the west of Britain.

Pomponius Mela, whose date is about A.D. 40, calls Ireland *Iuerna*, a name also used about the same time by Juvenal. It is a nearer approach to the Celtic form as used in Britain, which at the time was partly occupied by the Romans. Mela says that Ireland is hardly equal in size to Britain, but has an equal length of coastline opposite to Britain. Apparently he supposed Ireland to be a long narrow island, about as long as Britain from north to south, but less in breadth. The climate, he says, is unfavourable to the ripening of seeds, but there is such an abundance of excellent pasturage that cattle get enough food by grazing for a short part of the day and, if they are not restrained, they eat until they burst.

This is fairly accurate. The Irish climate is less favourable to the ripening of certain seeds, such as wheat, than the climate of neighbouring countries. It is not likely that any other seed but wheat is referred to, and we may take the testimony of Mela as evidence that wheat was known in his time to be grown in Ireland, but not so successfully grown as in other countries.

Mela adds : The inhabitants of Ireland are uncivilised and beyond other nations are ignorant of all the virtues, and extremely devoid of natural affection.

A little later, in Pliny’s time, the knowledge of Ireland among the Romans was far from being exact. Pliny, on the authority of Agrippa, gives the length of Ireland as 600 Roman miles, its breadth as 300. He thus doubles each dimension and multiplies the size of the island by four.

Tacitus writes that Agricola made special military dispositions on that side of Britain which faces Ireland ; and this he did more through hope than through fear, that is to say, rather in view of conquest than of protection. Ireland, he says, is situate between Britain and Spain. It is of smaller area than Britain. In soil and climate and in the character of its inhabitants it differs little from Britain. Its inland parts are little known, its approaches and harbours are better known through commerce and merchants. Agricola received one of its petty kings who had been expelled in a revolt and kept him, under the guise of friendship, against a suitable opportunity. From Agricola, I, says Tacitus, have often heard that Ireland could be conquered and held by a single legion with a moderate force of auxiliaries, and that this would be of advantage as regards Britain, if the Roman military power were established everywhere and freedom, as it were, were put out of sight. Later he writes that Agricola had led his forces to a point close to the Irish Sea when he was brought back by an outbreak among the Brigantes and thought it better to solidify the conquests he had already made than to undertake a new conquest.

The next writer in point of date is Ptolemy the Geographer, who flourished in the middle of the second century. Ptolemy names sixteen peoples, tribes or states, and gives their relative positions on the Irish coast. He names no people or state away from the coast. About half of the names can be authenticated from other sources. The others have been the subject of much fruitless conjecture. It is noteworthy that all the authenticated names belong to the eastern and southern coasts and that the names on the northern and western coasts are still names and nothing more. This shows that Ptolemy’s information came from sea-going traders. The northern and western coasts of Ireland are among the most stormy in the world and must have

been avoided in those days by ocean-going craft. Ptolemy names several estuaries, and from Irish writings we know that in early times estuaries were the favourite havens. Ships could run in by the main channel and could be grounded without injury on the sandy tidal banks. Several “cities” are likewise named by Ptolemy. These, no doubt, were places of assembly or royal towns — “oppida,” like Tara and Emania. None of them can be identified with any approach to certainty. Two bear the name *Regia polis*, and this I think is taken from Latin, meaning “royal city.”

On Ptolemy’s description are based one or two learned fancies which may almost be said to have become popular. One of these is that the ancient name of Dublin is Eblana. Ptolemy places a people named Eblani on the eastern side of Ireland and assigns them a city which he calls by their name, *Eblana polis*. This cannot be Dublin, for no trace has been found in Irish records or tradition of anything approaching in character to a city on the site occupied by Dublin until the Norsemen fortified themselves here in 841. We cannot give the name of either record or tradition to a fabulous poem appended to the Book of Rights, a poem which relates how St. Patrick visited and blessed the Norsemen of Dublin. The poem has this value historically, that it shows how far some of our medieval writers were ready to go in the audacity of their invention.

The location which Ptolemy indicates for the Eblani and their city is certainly farther north than Dublin, probably on the coast of Louth. As Ptolemy’s information was derived through traders, it is not unlikely that some of the places which he calls cities were ancient places of assembly. From the poem on the Fair or Assembly of Carman, we know that these were places of resort for traders from the Mediterranean who brought with them “gold and precious cloth” in exchange for products of the country. No doubt they timed their visits for the periodical assemblies, and from the same poem on the Fair of Carman and from other documents we also know that during the time of assembly the place of assembly bore the aspect of a city. In it at those times there was a great concourse of people of all orders ; there was a royal court ; a kind of parliament ; many sorts of public entertainment ; and a general market. Somewhere about the middle of County Louth one of these assemblies used to be held. It is called Oenach Descirt Maige “the Assembly of the South of the Plain”—probably the Plain of Muirtheimhne in the district of Dundalk. This place of assembly may have been the city of the Eblani named by Ptolemy, but the name itself has not been traced in Irish writings. Dublin lay almost certainly in the territory of the Manapii or of the Cauci, the two Germano-Belgic colonies about which I have spoken in the second of these lectures.

Another place of note which has taken its modern name straight out of Ptolemy’s description is the sweet Vale of Ovoca. A few years ago, a lively controversy about the name Ovoca was carried on by correspondence in a Dublin newspaper. One of the disputants undertook to show that the name consisted of two Gaelic words and meant “shadowy river.” The fact is that the river called Ovoca received the name in quite modern times from some resident or proprietor who had a moderate taste for the classics. He found the name in Ptolemy “Ὀβόκα ποταμον έκβολαι” the mouth of the river Oboca. It is one of the few river-mouths in Ireland named by Ptolemy, and must have been known to traders as a haven. The modern name Ovoca is Ptolemy’s Oboka mispronounced and does not belong to Irish tradition.

Pliny names several islands between Ireland and Britain, one of which he calls Andros. It seems to be the same place that Ptolemy calls Adros. I venture the suggestion that the proper form is Antros or Antron. At the mouth of the Garonne there was an island which bore the name Antros in the time of Pomponius Mela. Its modern name has become widely known as the name of its chief product, Medoc. In the river Loire, there was also an island named Antron, which became the site of a monastery and is now called Indre. Antros or Antron becomes 'Edar in Irish, and 'Edar is the Irish name of the Howth peninsula. Our forefathers use the terms for island as the names of peninsulas also, for example, Inis Eoghain and

Island-magee, just as they applied the term *loch* indifferently to an inland lake and to an inlet of the sea. In our ancient tales, Howth harbour is one of the most noted and most frequented of Irish havens, and so it is not unlikely to have received notice in Ptolemy's description.

Our next notice of Ireland is written by Solinus, about A.D. 200. He begins by repeating in other words what was already said by Mela : " Hibernia is barbarous in the manner of living of its inhabitants, but is so rich in pasture that the cattle, if they be not kept now and then from grazing, are put in danger from over-eating. There are no snakes." So we see that Solinus, writing two centuries and a half before St. Patrick's time, has robbed our national saint of one of his traditional glories. He is not the only one to blame. One of the Fenian lays tells how Fionn mac Cumhaill cleared the island of all serpents. Even Fionn cannot be allowed the credit without question, for it is evident there were no snakes in Ireland when the Fir Bolg supplied the Eastern World with Irish earth to protect cities from these venomous reptiles. Solinus goes on to say : " Birds are rare. The nation is inhospitable and warlike. The victors in combat smear their faces with the blood of their slain enemies. They make no difference between things lawful and unlawful. There is not a bee anywhere, and if anyone scatters dust or gravel from Ireland among beehives, the swarms will desert their combs." Here we have another variety of the snake-story. Possibly Solinus, in his reading, mistook the word *aspis*, the name of a kind of snake, for *apis*, " a bee," and adjusted the popular legend about the virtue of Irish earth to suit his mistake. " The sea," he continues, " which flows between this island and Britain is billowy and restless and throughout the whole year it is navigable only during very few days." Here perhaps we have the current explanation of Ireland's immunity from invasion by the Romans. Ireland, at all events, was still a country about which the Latin world was ready to accept travellers' tales from the untravelled.

The Irish appear in a new role, that of invaders of Britain, in a panegyric of the emperor Constantius Chlorus, written in A.D. 297. The same document and passage contains the earliest known mention of the Picts by that name. " The Britons," says the panegyric, " even then an uncivilised nation and accustomed to no enemies except the Picts and the Irish [Hiberni], still half-naked, readily yielded to the Roman arms and standards." In my last lecture, I have suggested that the overthrow of the old Ulster kingdom is the explanation of the later prominence of the Picts in eastern Ulster. The sudden emergence of the Picts of Britain as a war-like and aggressive people at the close of the third century is susceptible of a similar explanation. Under the Ulster kingdom, the Picts were subject to the Ulaidh. As the Ulaidh declined in power, the Picts became relatively prominent. So in Britain, before the Roman conquests, the Picts, I suggest, were subject to the Celts. The name Calédones or Caledonii, belonging to the principal people of southern Scotland during the early times of the Roman occupation of Britain, is a Celtic name. It is formed by adding a very usual termination to the Celtic adjective *caledos*, meaning " hard" or " hardy." Calédos was in fairly frequent use as a Celtic personal name. Seven instances are quoted by Holder from inscriptions. It is found in Irish, *e.g.*, in the term *caladcholg*, " a hard sword." It is the common Irish word for a landing-place from boats, originally no doubt having been applied to firm ground, as distinguished from swampy ground, on the banks of a river, and in this sense it has passed into Anglo-Irish vocabulary in the form " callow"—the " callows" of the Shannon. That the Caledonii did not belong to the old dark-complexioned population is the testimony of Tacitus, who says : " The reddish hair of the inhabitants of Caledonia and their large limbs indicate a Germanic origin." That this Celtic people at one time held sway in a region afterwards dominated by the Picts is witnessed by the placename Dunkeld in Perthshire. The older Gaelic name is Dún Cailden, *i.e.*, Dunon Caledonon, the stronghold of the Calédones. The Celts, who naturally would have been strongest in Lowland Scotland, were so weakened there, I suggest, by the Roman power, that they could no longer maintain their predominance over the Pictish population of the Highlands, and so, towards the close of the third century, the Picts emerge as new and formidable adversaries of Roman Britain on its northern frontier.

In the fourth century, the Irish are named by a new name in Latin writings. The earliest known instance of this name, Scotti, Scots, is found in a passage of the historian Ammianus with reference to the events of the year 360. "In that year," he writes, "the raids of the Scots and Picts, wild nations, had broken the agreed peace in the British provinces and were devastating the places near the frontier; terror was involving the provinces worn out by the accumulation of past defeats; the emperor, passing the winter at Paris and harassed by anxieties from one side and another, was afraid to go to the relief of his subjects across the sea lest he might leave Gaul without a ruler a prey to the Alamanni, who were already stirred up to cruelty and war." In this single passage a great deal is implied. We see the Western Empire now beginning to totter, its ruler's conduct shaped no longer by hope of conquest but by fear of disaster. We learn that on the British northern frontier some sort of terms had previously been made with the Picts and Scots, who were the aggressive party. We learn the manner of their warfare, which is similar to that of the Norsemen during the first half-century of their wars in Ireland. They make plundering raids across the frontier, not in small parties but in considerable force, defeating again and again the local defences, and no doubt carrying off booty and captives. It was in one of these raids, a few years after the date above referred to, that the boy Patrick was carried off and sold into slavery in Ireland.

In the year 365, Ammianus further records that "the Picts and Saxons and Scots and Atecotti harassed the Britons with continual afflictions." In 368, "the Picts, divided into two nations, Dicalydones and Verturiones, and also the Atecotti, a warlike nation of men, and the Scots, roving here and there, did many devastations." Later on, the writer of a panegyric on the emperor Theodosius asks, "shall I tell of the Scot driven back to his swamps?" And the poet Claudian, in a eulogy of the emperor Honorius, sings: "He has tamed the active Moors and the Picts, whose name is no nick-name, and the Scot with wandering dagger he has followed up, breaking the waves of the far north with daring oars"; and again, "Ice-cold Ireland has mourned the heaped-up corpses of her Scots." Praising the Roman general Stilicho, Claudian says: "The Scot set all Ireland in motion"; and later, referring to Stilicho's muster against the Goths in the year 416, he writes: "Came also the legion that protected the furthest bounds of Britain, that bridled the cruel Scot and scanned the lifeless face of the dying Pict tattooed with iron point."

In all these writings, from the first mention of the name Scots down to the fall of the Western Empire in the fifth century, the Scots are Irish raiders of Roman Britain. Whitley Stokes took the name Scottus to be cognate with certain Slavonic and Germanic words and to mean "master" or "possessor." But why should a people who until the fourth century were named Iverni or Hiberni acquire in the fourth century a new name meaning "masters" or "possessors"? It is not in the quality of possessors that they appear in the records of the time, but rather in the quality of dispossessors. Raiding, fighting, wandering, wasting, these are the occupations of the Scots in that age; and if they acquired a new name, it is to these occupations that we might expect the new name to have reference. Therefore, though it may appear audacious on my part, I venture on a different explanation.

A gloss on the name of St. Scoithín in the Festilog of Oengus says that he was named Scoithín *ar in scothad indechta dognid .i. dul do Ruain i n-oenló ocus toidecht uathi i n-oenló aile*, "from the scothadh of travelling that he practised, namely, going [from Ireland] to Rome in a single day and returning thence [to Ireland] in another single day." The verb *scothaim* or *scaithim* has a group of meanings all signifying a rapid cutting or striking movement. Dictionaries give the meanings "I lop, prune, cut off, strip, destroy disperse, scutch [flax], beat a sheaf of corn to make it shed its grain." *Scoth-bhualadh* means a light threshing; *scoithmeán*, a sieve for winnowing grain. *Scottus*, then, in this view, was originally a common noun meaning a raider or reaver, a depredator who worked by rapid incursions and retirements. It was probably a Gaulish word, for its earliest known use is in various inscriptions of Roman Gaul, in which it is used as a personal name. For example, an inscription of the year

224 records a votive offering by Marcus Quintius Florentinus and others, the children of Caius Quintius Scottus. Here Scottus is the distinctive byname of the father and is not found in the names of his children.

The old story about promiscuous marriages, which in Cæsar's time was told of the Britons, and later on, when Britain became better known to the Romans, was told of the islands of western Scotland, continued until the fifth century to be told of the Irish, who, like the Hebrideans, dwelt beyond the bounds of the Empire. St. Jerome writes that "the Scotti and Atecotti, in the manner of Plato's Republic, have wives promiscuously and children in common"; and again, "the nation of the Scotti do not marry wives of their own; as if they had read Plato's Republic and adopted the example of Cato, no wife among them belongs to a particular husband; but each according to his pleasure they live without restraint, as cattle live." There is no mention of these evil customs a half-century later when Saint Patrick tells how he won over the Scots and their children from Paganism, and the oldest traditions show that the pagan Irish followed the law of monogamy with as much fidelity as did the ancient Greeks and Romans. St. Jerome tells another story, this time on his own direct testimony: "In my early youth in Gaul I have myself seen the Scots, a Britannic nation, feeding on human flesh, and, when they might find herds of swine and cattle through the forests, [I have known them] to be wont to cut off the hips of shepherds and the breasts of women, and to regard these as the only delicacies of their food." Instead of Scotti, some texts of Saint Jerome have Atecotti in this place. It matters little, for all agree in adding the words *gentem Britannicam* "a Britannic nation." We have seen that the Atecotti were associated with the Scotti in raiding Roman Britain, and we must come later to the question, who were the Atecotti. St. Jerome's testimony is valuable on the point that these invaders of Roman Britain, whether Scotti or Atecotti, also roved about Gaul. We may take it that there were bands of them in the woods, in which he tells us they might have found swine and cattle to provide them with food, had it not been for their barbarous preference for special cuts of shepherd and shepherdess. He states that he was a boy at the time (*adolescens*). He does not say that he saw the barbarians in the act of catching and killing a shepherd or a shepherdess, and we may be certain that he did not, otherwise he would not have stayed on to see the preparation and consumption of the tit-bits. It has been suggested that he was probably accompanied by a very wise elderly woman who told him, as a precaution, the sort of people these roving banditti were, and that his childish imagination confirmed the tale. He may have seen the wandering islanders feasting round their fire in the forest, but how did he contrive to identify the viands? Once more, let it be said that tradition is old enough and history reaches far enough back to assure us that cannibalism, like promiscuous polygamy, was no custom of the inhabitants of Ireland or of Britain in the fourth century of the Christian era.

We have seen that Latin writers of this period make mention of the Atecotti, usually in conjunction with the Scotti. Some have assumed that the Atecotti were a branch of the Picts. So far as positive evidence goes, it is against this assumption. Ammianus speaks of the Picts, subdivided into two nations, Dicalydones and Verturiones, and then adds that "the Atecotti, a warlike nation," and the Scotti, were engaged with these in the work of devastation. This implies that the Atecotti, like the Scotti, were distinct from the Picts.

A verbal resemblance in the names led some Irish writers, from the close of the eighteenth century down to O'Curry, to identify the Atecotti with the Irish Aithech-thuatha, the ancient Rent-paying communities referred to in my third lecture. I do not think that the philologists will sanction the identification so far as it is based on verbal resemblance. The name Atecotti has not been found in any form in the native records of Ireland or Britain as the name of any nation or sub-nation or in the topography of either island. Nevertheless contemporary evidence during the second half of the fourth century shows that not only on the frontier of Roman Britain but also on the Continent there was a numerous and warlike collection of men known by this name. As in the case of the name Scotti, the conclusion I would draw is that

Atecotti was a name for a general class of men not for a particular nation, tribe, or political community. The name, in its best authenticated form, is a Celtic word, consisting of the adjective *cottos* preceded by the prefix *ate*. *Cottos* means “old,” or “ancient.” The prefix *ate*, which becomes *aith* or *ath* in Irish of the MS. period, means “back” or “again,” like the Latin *re*, and like this, too, it often has a strengthening or intensifying force. Thus, Atecotti may be taken to mean the very ancient, the primitive, the pristine folk; and so it is explained by Whitley Stokes. Who then were these very ancient people who were associated with the Scotti and were not identified with the Picts? We are reminded at once of the Irish traditions of non-Gaelic and pre-Gaelic communities which formed the main fighting strength of the kings of North Leinster and South Leinster, and of the non-Gaelic origin ascribed to Cú Chulainn, Fear Diadh, and to the kindred of Fionn mac Cumhaill and of Goll mac Morna. Of course, on this point we are far from complete certainty, but the probability, in my opinion, is that, when the Irish went to war in the fourth century, they still adhered to the politico-social distinction between the Gaelic ascendancy and the conquered plebeian race, and that this was the distinction between the Scotti and the Atecotti. The adjective *cottos* does not appear to belong to the vocabulary of Irish, but it is found in the various Brittanic dialects and was a frequent element in Gaulish nomenclature. The Atecotti, therefore, probably received their name not in Ireland but in Britain or Gaul. The view I put forward reaches, but by a different path, a similar conclusion to that adopted by the Irish writers who sought to identify the Atecotti by name with the plebeian communities of ancient Ireland, the Aitheach-thuatha.

Contact with the Roman military system reacted on the domestic condition of Ireland. To this cause we may ascribe the origin of the Fiana as a definite military organisation at a definite period. The word *fian* is collective, signifying a band of fighting men, not merely a band of men called out upon occasion for military service, but a permanent fighting force. From it is derived *feindid*, *feinnidh*, a professional soldier. Normally, the ancient nations depended in warfare on their citizen soldiers who in time of peace were engaged in the works of peace. The great imperial states, for their plans of conquest and dominion, or for the protection of their artificial realms, relied on standing armies. In the stories of the Ulster cycle, though, as we have seen, there are certain castes or communities with a special tradition of warlike service and efficiency, there does not seem to be any permanent military organisation. The cycle of the Fiana, on the contrary, is concerned with fighting men whose principal occupation is warfare. The two epic traditions are quite distinct. Chariot-fighting is characteristic of the Ulster tales. The Fiana fight on foot. The time to which the Fiana belong is the time of the conquests made by the Connacht kings in North Leinster, the time of Conn, Art, Cormac, and Cairbre Lifeachar—roughly speaking, the third century of the Christian era. During that century, the Britons were “accustomed to war with Irish enemies,” and the Irish therefore had opportunities of learning something of the Roman manner of warfare and military organisation. Again, to the third century and later belong those great earthen frontier walls in Ireland spoken of in the foregoing lecture. The erection of these walls, we may well believe, was inspired by acquaintance with the Roman frontier fortifications in northern Britain, constructed in the second century and in the early part of the third century.

Accustomed to military life, numbers of the Scotti and Atecotti took service under Roman commanders, especially under Stilicho, who enlisted troops wherever he could raise them to defend the Empire against the Goths. The time was during the last years of the fourth century and the opening years of the fifth. A number of Latin inscriptions on the Continent bear witness to the existence, in the later days of the Western Empire, of a military force in the Imperial service under the name of *Primi Scotti*—“the First Scots.” The majority of these inscriptions are found near the ancient frontier between the Roman Empire and western Germany, showing that the Scots or Irish were engaged to defend the line of the Rhine against the Germans. A few of the inscriptions are found in the interior of Roman Gaul.

About the same time, under the emperor Honorius and his general Stilicho, a number of distinct bodies — cohorts or regiments — of the Atecotti served in the Imperial armies. The military records known as *Notitiae Dignitatum* have mention of the following forces : Atecotti seniores ; Atecotti juniores ; Atecotti Honoriani seniores ; Atecotti Honoriani juniores ; and Atecotti Gallicani juniores ; to which by implication we must add Atecotti Gallicani seniores. All these were serving in the Western Empire, and in addition to these there was a body called simply Atecotti serving in the Eastern Empire. Those in the west formed part of a force which included also Moors, Germans, and others drawn from countries outside of the Empire. The general name for these troops appears to have been Honoriani, from the emperor Honorius in whose service they were enlisted. The chief military task of the Roman armies under Honorius was to resist the Goths who were threatening to overrun his dominions. The Spanish historian Orosius, who lived in Spain at that time, calls the barbarian forces of Honorius the Honoriaci, *i.e.*, he substitutes a Celtic form for the Latin Honoriani. (St. Patrick, a little later, uses a similar Celtic form Hiberionaci, instead of the usual Latin name Hiberni, for the Irish.) In 409, the year before the capture of Rome by the Goths under Alaric, the German nations of the Suevi, Vandals, and Alans overran southern Gaul as far as the Spanish borders. The passes of the Pyrenees were held at this time by the Honoriani. Orosius says that, on the approach of the Germans, the Honoriani in the Pyrenees made common cause with them, and shared with them in the invasion of Spain and the partition of the conquered territory. He adds that the Honorians were more clement than the Germans towards the conquered people, and extended some degree of protection and assistance to them. This conquest was of short duration. A few years later the Goths in turn invaded Spain and established a Gothic kingdom over it. These events belong to a period for which Ireland has no contemporary documents of history, but for which, as it borders on the more strictly historical period, Irish traditions have their highest validity in evidence. The testimony of native tradition, as we might expect, is in accord with that of external history.

The third and fourth centuries of the Christian era were a time in which nearly all the peoples of Europe outside of the Roman Empire were, so to speak, on the march with arms in their hands. At the beginning of the Christian era and before it, we have seen that this state of unrest already pervaded the Celts and Germans of Mid-Europe. A few centuries earlier still, the Celts almost alone are found in this condition of warlike mobility ; for the radiation of the Celtic migratory movements in every direction—southward into Italy, westward into Gaul, Spain, Britain, and Ireland, northward into the Baltic basin, and eastward along the Danube valley and into Asia Minor—is evidence that, unlike the movements which led to the break-up of the Western Empire, the earlier Celtic migrations were not accompanied by pressure from other moving populations on their borders.

I have ascribed the early expansion of the Celts to iron. The possession of iron had a two-fold effect. The natural condition of the greater part of Europe is forest. If man were absent or idle-handed, nearly all Europe in a few generations would revert to the forest state. To clear the land of woods, or even to prevent the fresh growth of woods after clearance, the implements of the Stone Age, Early and Late, cannot have been effective. Even let us suppose that large clearances could have been made by burning, at once the thickets would again spring up, and under their protection the forest trees. Nor can the possession of bronze have sufficed to subdue the natural tendency towards forest. Bronze, in the Bronze Age, was not the industrial material of the many ; it belonged to the privileged few who were not hewers of wood. Iron, when it came, introduced an industrial revolution relatively greater than that which has been introduced in modern times by the steam-engine. Once people knew how to work it, iron was abundant enough to be in the hands of every worker. Iron became and has ever since remained the sole master of growing wood. With the conquest of the forests came a great extension of tillage. Iron not only cleared fertile tracts but tilled them more rapidly and deeply than was possible with the wooden spade which, as the old Irish copper-mines have taught us, was the digging implement of the Bronze Age. Thus food became abundant, and with it a

density of population which, before iron, was possible only in fertile and forest-less regions like the flood areas of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Road-making, too, progressed, and the use of vehicles. As iron furnished the many with better implements of work, it furnished them also with better implements of war. An overflowing population and war-like arms for all—here we have the conditions for migratory conquest. On these conditions the Celtic migrations were based. The spread of these conditions to the Germans led to the later Germanic expansion, and their further spread brought about the Slavonic and Turanian migrations which drove the Germans down upon the subject peoples of Rome, peoples whose power of resistance and will to defend themselves had been already broken by that Roman policy so frankly described by Tacitus.

Just as the universal subjection of science and invention to the purposes of warfare has reduced Europe to its present condition, so the universal possession of iron made Europe in the third and fourth centuries a scene of universal war. Though Ireland was fortunately untouched by the great migratory movements of the Continent in that age, these movements reacted on Ireland by weakening the neighbouring provinces of the Empire.

The raids on Britain and Gaul for booty and captives—raids from which, as I have argued, the Irish got their new name of Scots—were followed by Irish settlements on various points of the British coast. The conquest of eastern Meath or Bregia by the kings of Connacht and Uisneach forced a part of the population to migrate, and one body of the migrants settled in Demetia, in the south of Wales. We can safely place the conquest of Bregia in the second half of the third century, but it does not follow that the settlement in Wales was made at the same time, for the story of the Déisi migration makes it appear that the expelled population remained for many years in Leinster before the settlement in Munster. There may have been a similar delay before their kindred crossed over to Wales.

In south-western Britain, there was also an Irish colony, apparently from Munster and headed by princes of the Eoghanacht dynasty which displaced the earlier line of the Iverni. Cormac's Glossary mentions in the Cornish region a stronghold named Dinn Map Lethan. This name, a mixture of Cymric and Gaelic, means the fortress of the Sons of Lethan. The Ui Liathain, or descendants of Liathan, were one of the principal septs of the Eoghanachta, and their territory adjoined the Munster coast in the district immediately to the west of the Déisi.

The most noted and most permanent of the Irish settlements in Britain was that of Argyleshire and the adjoining islands. The kings of Dal Riada, according to the Annals of Tigernach, did not take up their abode in that region until far on in the fifth century, A.D. 470. This, however, does not imply that the Irish migration to Scotland began at that time. It rather means that the Irish colonies of Argyleshire and the islands became subject at that time to the kings of the nearest territory in Ireland. There is no record known to me of the Irish migration to Galloway, the south-western angle of the Scottish mainland, a region formerly occupied by the Picts. Though the Norsemen settled in Galloway in a later age, a glance at the map will show that the place-names of Galloway are almost as purely Gaelic as those of any part of Ireland. Gaelic was the prevalent language of Galloway in the sixteenth century and continued to be spoken there in the eighteenth century.

These Gaelic settlements on the western seaboard of Britain appeared to Sir John Rhys to be the remnants of a Gaelic population which, he thought, preceded the British or Brythonic conquest.

There are stories of the Fiana and even of the heroes of the earlier Ulster cycle that reflect in tradition those raids on Britain which are recorded in Latin writings. As we approach the borderland of documentary history, the evidences are still more definite. The death of Niall of the Nine Hostages, king of Ireland, is assigned to the year 404. At the time of his death, he

was at the head of an expedition in the English Channel, and he was slain on board ship by a Leinster prince. He was succeeded by his brother's son Nath-'I, commonly called Dathi in later writings. Nath-'I in turn met his death at the head of an oversea expedition in the year 429. He is said to have been killed by lightning in the Alps. At this time, the Roman Empire was making its final struggle in Gaul under Aetius "the last of the Romans," against the Visigoths who held all the southern parts from Italy to the Bay of Biscay, and the Franks and Burgundians who had occupied the parts along the Rhine. It does not seem likely that an Irish raid, in these circumstances, could reach the Alps, nor can we well imagine what it could expect to gain by such an inroad. The Alps are probably a circumstantial ornament to the story, and we may content ourselves with the main point that this Irish king, three years before St. Patrick's mission began, led a raiding expedition to Gaul and met his death there. The story contains an additional proof that the kings of Ireland, who reigned in Tara in those days, represented the ancient dynasty of Connacht. The remains of Nath-'I were brought back to Ireland and laid to rest in the ancient pagan cemetery of Cruachain, beside the royal burg of the Connacht kings. It was the old line of the kings of Cruachain that had now become kings of Ireland seated in Tara. There is another interesting piece of evidence on this point which did not escape the notice of the late Father Hogan. Loeguire, son of Niall, succeeded his cousin Nath-'I as king of Ireland, and was reigning at Tara when St. Patrick began his missionary work. But it was at Cruachain and not at Tara that St. Patrick met and baptised the daughters of Loeguire. Tara, in fact, was the official seat of the monarchy, but Cruachain in Connacht was still the real home of the kings of Tara.

In St. Patrick's time, the headship of Tara was not yet firmly fixed in the national tradition. He founded various churches in the neighbourhood of Tara. Tirechan names eight of them. To none of these he attached the primacy, but to the church he founded close by the ancient capital of Ulster. The story of this foundation illustrates another trait of Patrick's character besides his wonderful charity. The nobleman, Daire, from whom he asked the land for his church, refused the site that Patrick wished and gave another instead. He afterwards presented Patrick with a fine vessel of bronze. Patrick said simply "Gratias agimus." This curtness displeased the magnate, so that he sent again and took away the gift. Patrick again said, "Gratias agimus." Hearing this, Daire came in person and restored the vessel to Patrick and said: "Thou must have thy vessel of bronze, for thou art a steadfast and unchangeable man. And moreover that piece of land for which thou once didst ask me, I give to thee with all my rights in it, and dwell thou in it." And that, says the ancient life, is the city which now is named Armagh.

[1] The Irish term for this class of poetry is "Fianaidheacht," and is of great antiquity.

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