

Colonies and Inhabitants

History of Ireland,

The Earliest Period to The Present Time ;

Derived

From Native Annals, and from The Researches of

Dr. O'Donovan, Professor Eugene Curry, The Rev. C. P. Meehan, Dr. R. R. Madden,

And Other Eminent Scholars ;

And from

All The Resources of Irish History now available.

Martin Haverty.

1871

IN presenting to his countrymen in America a new HISTORY OF IRELAND, the publisher desires to call attention to its marked and superior excellence as a history, and the number, beauty, and elegance of its illustrations, maps, etc. The author stands prominent among Irish scholars of the present day, and he has devoted to his work the labors of years in searching and examining into the archives of Irish history, in presenting a clear and reliable narrative of events, and in arousing and sustaining that patriotic love of their native land which characterizes Irishmen wherever they may dwell. Mr. Haverty is a ripe scholar ; he discusses the varied topics before him in a philosophical spirit. Out of the myths and romantic traditions of early days, he extracts the essential, important truth ; and availing himself of the valuable re-searches of living scholars and students of Irish history, he gives his readers a most interesting and attractive work in a style of eloquent and lofty-toned love for his native country and its good name in the world.

There needs no commendation for such a work as this, at this day. Irishmen are world-noted as patriots and lovers of the soil which gave them birth. Irishmen are always deeply interested in the story of the wrongs which their land has suffered from foreign oppression and outrage, as well as in the glorious record which Ireland's annals present of noble heroes, statesmen, poets, and philanthropists, for century upon century past.

The publisher, therefore, is certain that he has done a good work in presenting this History of Ireland to his countrymen in the attractive dress in which it now appears. He has spared no expense in this undertaking ; he appeals unhesitatingly to the volume itself in proof of his zeal and devotion in order to render it in every respect worthy of the subject of which it treats. And he confidently looks for the extensive support of all those who would keep alive the flame of patriotism in their children's hearts, and would furnish their homes and their firesides with the latest, best, and most complete *History of Ireland* which is to be found in the English language.

THOMAS KELLY.

New York, May 1871.

THE work here brought to a close was undertaken with a view to supply an impartial History of Ireland, according to the present advanced state of knowledge on the subject. The labors of such eminent Irish scholars as Dr. O'Donovan and Professor Curry have opened to us new sources of information, and the researches of these and other learned and indefatigable investigators have, of late years, shed a flood of light upon our history and antiquities ; but the knowledge thus developed was still unavailable for the general public ; and it remained to collect, in a popular form, materials scattered through the publications of learned societies, and the voluminous pages of our native annals ; buried in collections of state papers, and in the correspondence of statesmen ; or concealed from the world in the Government archives. We have been enabled to avail ourselves of a mass of important original documents derived from the last-mentioned source ; but with what success the task of converting all these copious materials to the object of producing a popular History of Ireland has been performed in the present volume, the reader must judge : we can only say that no pains have been spared to accomplish it conscientiously.

To identify the ancient topography of the country with the events of its history is important and interesting; and the invaluable information accumulated by Dr. O'Donovan in his annotations to the *Annals of the Four Masters*, and collected by him for the Ordnance Survey, has been freely employed for that purpose in these pages.

The narrative has been interrupted as little as possible with discussions of controverted points, and the space has not been unnecessarily encumbered with extraneous matter. The authorities relied on have been sufficiently indicated in the marginal references, but the Author here desires to express his deep obligations to Dr. O'Donovan, Professor Eugene Curry, the Rev. C. P. Meehan, Dr. Wilde, Dr. R. R. Madden, and J. T. Gilbert, Esq., for the invaluable information they have kindly afforded him. in addition to that which he derived from their published works.

MARTIN HAVERTY.

KILBEHA-MUIRRE, ASKEATON.

The First Inhabitants of Ireland.—The Colonies of Parthalon and Nemedius.—or Belgians.—The Tuatha do Dananns.—The Legend of Manar—The Fomorians.—The Firbolgs in Mac Lir, &c.

ACCORDING to the ancient chronicles of Ireland, the first inhabitants of this country was a colony who arrived here from Migdonia, supposed to be Macedonia, in Greece, under a leader whose name was Parthalon, about 300 years after the Deluge, or, according to the chronology adopted by the Four Masters, in the year of the world 2520. Some fables are related of persons having found their way to Ireland before the Flood, and also of a race of people, who lived by fishing and hunting, having been found here by Parthalon (or Parralaun, as the name is pronounced) ; but these are rejected by our ancient annalists as unworthy of credit, and merit no attention. It is said of Parthalon that he fled from his own country, where he had been guilty of parricide ; that he landed at Inver Scene, now the Kenmare river, [1] accompanied by his three sons, their wives, and a thousand followers ; that he was the first who cleared any part of Ireland of the primeval woods which covered it ; that certain lakes, namely, Lough Con and Lough Mask, in Mayo, Lough Gara, on the borders of Roscommon and Sligo, two others which cannot now be identified by their ancient names, and Lough Cuan, or Strangford Lough, in the county of Down, were first formed during the period of his colony ; that he died in the plain in which Dublin now stands, thirty years after his landing ; and that, in the same plain, in A.M. 2820, that is, 300 years after their arrival, his entire

colony, then numbering 9,000 persons, perished by a pestilence, in one week, leaving the county once more without inhabitants. [2]

It is said that Ireland remained waste for thirty years, until the next colony, which also came from the southeastern part of Europe, or the vicinity of the Euxine Sea, led by a chief called Nemedius, or Neimhidh (pronounced *Nevy*), arrived here, and occupied the country for about 200 years. The annals record the names of the raths or forts which were constructed, and of the plains which were cleared of wood during this period ; and they also mention the eruption, during the same time, of four lakes, namely. Lakes Derryvarragh and Ennell in Westmeath, and two others not identified. Nemedius, with 2,000 of his followers, were carried off by a pestilence in the island of Ard-Neimhidh, now the Great Island of Barrymore, near Cork ; and the remnant of his people, who appear to have been engaged in constant conflicts with a race of pirates called Fomorians, who infested the coast, were at length nearly annihilated in a great battle with these formidable enemies, A. M. 3066. They attacked and demolished the principal Fomorian stronghold, called Tor-Conainn, or Conang's Tower, in Tory island, on the north-west coast of Donegal ; but succor having arrived by sea to the pirates, the battle was renewed on the strand, and became so fierce that the combatants suffered themselves to be surrounded by the rising tide, so that most of those who did not fall in the mutual slaughter were ingulphed in the waves. [3] Three captains of the Nemedians, with a handful of their men, survived, and, in a few years after, made their escape from Ireland, with such of their countrymen as chose to follow their fortunes. One party, under Briotan Maol, a grandson of Nemedius, sought refuge in the neighboring island of Albion, in the northern part of which their posterity remained until the invasion of the Picts, many centuries after ; and that island, as some will have it, took the name of Britain from their leader, and not from the fabulous Brutus. Another portion of the refugees passed, after many wanderings, into the northern parts of Europe, where they became the Tuatha de Danann of a subsequent age ; and finally, the third party of the scattered Nemedians made their way, under their chief, Simon Breac, another grandson of Nemedius, to Greece, where they were kept in bondage, and compelled to carry burdens in leathern bags, whence they obtained the name of Firbolgs or Bagmen. [4]

For a long interval—200 years, say the bards—after the great battle of Tory island, we are told that Ireland remained almost a wilderness, the few Nemedians who were left behind having retired into the interior of the country, where they, nevertheless, were made to feel the galling yoke of the Fomorians, who were now the undisputed masters of the coast ; but at the end of the interval just mentioned, the island was restored to the former race, although under a different name. The Firbolgs having multiplied considerably in Greece, resolved to escape from the bondage under which they groaned, and for that purpose seized the ships of their masters, and proceeding to sea, succeeded in making their way to Ireland, where they landed without opposition (A. M. 3266), and divided the country between their five leaders, the five sons of Deala, each of whom ruled in turn over the entire island. The names of these brothers were, Slainghe, Rury, Gann, Geanann, and Seangann ; and from the first of them the river Slaney, in Wexford, is said to have derived its name. It would appear that there were several tribes engaged in this expedition, although all belonged to the same race. Thus, one section of them, called Fir-Domhnan, or Damnonians, landed on the coast of Erris, in Mayo, where they became very powerful, giving their name to the district, which has been called, in Irish, Iarras-Domhnan, that is, the western promontory or peninsula of the Damnonians ; while another tribe, distinguished by the name of Fir-Gaillian, or Spearmen, landed on the eastern coast, and from them some will have it that the province of Leinster has been so named. [5]

Such is the account of the origin of the Firbolgs and Damnonians, given by the bardic annalists ; and of this and similar relations, which we find in our primeval history, we may

remark in general that, however they may be enveloped in fable, we have sufficient reason for believing them to be founded in historic truth ; and that they are not lightly to be set aside, where nothing better than conjecture can be substituted. The favorite modern theory is, that the Firbolg colony came into this country from the neighboring coasts of Britain, and that they were identical in race with the people of Belgic Gaul, and with the Belgæ and Dumnonii of Southern Britain. Then arises the question, were these Belgæ Celts, or were they of Tuetic or Gothic origin ? To this we can only answer that the Irish authorities are explicit in stating that the Firbolgs were of the same race with subsequent colonies, who were confessedly Celtic, and this seems to be the generally received opinion. [6]

The Belgæ, or Firbolgs, had only enjoyed possession of the country for thirty-seven years, according to the chronology of the Four Masters, or for eighty years, according to that of O'Flaherty, when their dominion was disputed by a formidable enemy. The new invaders were the celebrated Tuatha de Dananns, a people of whom such strange things are recounted, that modern writers were long uncertain whether they should regard them as a purely mythical race, or concede to them a real existence, all Irish antiquaries, however, adopting at present the latter alternative. The arrival of the Tuatha de Dananns took place in the year of the world 3303, the tenth year of the reign of the ninth and last of the Firbolgic kings, Eochy, son of Erc. The leader of the invaders was Nuadhat-Airgetlamh, or Nuad of the Silver Hand, and their first proceeding on landing was to burn their own fleet, in order to render all retreat impossible. According to the superstitious ideas of the bards, these Tuatha de Dananns were profoundly skilled in magic, and rendered themselves invisible to the inhabitants until they had penetrated into the heart of the country. In other words, they landed under cover of a fog or mist ; and the Firbolgs, at first taken by surprise, made no regular stand, until the newcomers had marched almost across Ireland, when the two armies met face to face on the plain of Moyturey, near the shore of Lough Corrib, in part of the ancient territory of Partry. Here a battle was fought in which the Firbolgs were overthrown, with " the greatest slaughter," says an old writer, [7] " that was ever heard of in Ireland at one meeting." Eochy, the Firbolg king, fled, and was overtaken at a place in the present county of Sligo, where he was slain, and where his cairn, or the stone-heap raised over his grave, is still to be seen on the sea-shore ; while the scattered fragments of his army took refuge in the northern isle of Aran, Rathlin island, the Hebrides, the Isle of Man, and Britain. [8]

The victorious Nuadhat lost his hand in this battle, and a silver hand was made for him by Credne Cerd, the artificer, and fitted on him by the physician, Diencecht, whose son, Miach, improved the work, according to the legend, by infusing feeling and motion into every joint of the artificial hand as if it had been a natural one. Hence the surname which the king received. The story may be taken as an illustration of the surgical and mechanical skill which the Tuatha de Dananns were believed to possess : and we are further told, that for the seven years during which the operation was in progress, a temporary king was elected, Breas, whose father was a Fomorian, and whose mother was of the Tuatha de Dananns, having been chosen for the purpose. At the end of that period Nuadhat resumed the authority ; and in the twentieth year of his reign, counting from this resumption, he fell in a battle fought with the Fomorians, who took the field at the instigation of their countryman, the deposed king, Breas, and were aided also, we may suppose, by the Firbolg refugees. This battle was fought at a place called Northern Moyturey, or Moyturey of the Fomorians ; and its name is still preserved in that of a townland in the barony of Tirerrill, in the county of Sligo, where several sepulchral monuments still mark the site of the ancient battlefield. Nuadhat was killed in this conflict by Balor " of the mighty blows," the leader of the Fomorians, who is described in old traditions as a monster both in barbarity and strength, and as having but one eye. Balor himself was killed in the same battle by a stone cast from a sling by his daughter's son, Lugh Lamhfhada, or Lewy of the long hand, in revenge for some of his crimes.

We have here followed the generally received account of the fate of the Firbolgs in the Tuatha de Danaiin invasion ; but there is another version of it given in an ancient Irish manuscript [9] which is much more consistent with subsequent history. According to this latter account, the battle of Southern Moyturey resulted in a compromise, rather than in such a defeat as that mentioned above ; and although the Firbolg king was slain, another leader of the same people, named Srang, was still at the head of a considerable force ; and, after some negotiations, a partition of the country was agreed to, Srang and his people retaining Conn-aught, and the Tuatha de Dananns taking all the remained. MacFirbis, in his tract on the Firbolgs, seems to say that an account of the affair to some such effect existed ; and unless it be admitted, it is impossible to account for the firm footing which we find these people all along holding in Ireland, and for their position at the Milesian epoch, when they were at first received as allies by the invaders, and were afterwards, for centuries, able to resist them in war. Nor is this account inconsistent with the statement that many of the Firbolgs repaired, on the arrival of the Tuatha de Dananns, to the islands mentioned above.

Lugh Lamhfhada, the slayer of Balor, succeeded Nuadhat as king of Ireland ; and the fact that he was of Fomorian origin, on his mother's side, and a Tuatha de Danann on that of his father, as well as a like mingling of races in the person of Breas, the first king of the Tuatha de Dananns, led to the conclusion that an affinity existed between the two races, and afford an argument to O'Flaherty, who held that both races were Northmen, or Danes. [10] Lugh reigned forty years, and instituted the public games, or fair, of the hill of Tailltean, now Teltown, near the Blackwater, in Meath, in commemoration of his foster-mother, Tailte, the daughter of Maghmor, a Spanish, or Iberian king, and wife of Eochy, son of Erc, the last of the Firbolg kings, after whose death, in the battle of Southern Moyturey, she married a Tuatha de Danann chief, and undertook the fostering, or education, of the infant Lewy. This celebrated fair, at which various sports took place, continued to be held until the twelfth century, on the 1st of August, which day is still called, in Irish, Lugh-Nasadh, or Lugh's fair ; and vivid traditions are yet preserved of the pagan form of marriage. and ancient sports, of which the old rath of Teltown was the scene. [11]

Lewy, having been killed by MacCuill at Caendruim, now the hill of Uisneach, in Westmeath, was succeeded by Eochy Ollathair, who was surnamed the Dagda Mor (the Great-good-fire), the son of Ealathan. The Dagda reigned eighty years, and having died from the effects of a wound inflicted 120 years before at the battle of Northern Moyturey, with a poisoned javelin, by Kathlen, the wife of the Fomorian Balor, he was interred at the Brugh, on the Boyne, the great cemetery of the east of Ireland in the pagan times. His monument is mentioned in ancient Irish manuscripts as one of those vast sepulchral mounds which are at this day objects of wonder and interest on the banks of the Boyne, between Drogheda and Slane.

A. M. 3451.—Dealboeth, the son of Ogma, succeeded, and was followed by Fiacha ; after whom three brothers, named MacCuill, MacCeacht, and MacGreine, the last of the Tuatha de Danann kings, reigned conjointly for thirty years, each exercising sovereign authority in succession for the space of one year. The real names of the three brothers, according to an old poem quoted by Keating, were, Eathur, Teathur, and Geathur, and they were called, the first, MacCuill, because he worshipped the hazel-tree ; the second, MacCeacht, because he worshipped the plough, or rather, encouraged agriculture ; and the third, MacGreine, because he made the sun the object of his devotions. The old bardic annalists, who, with a gallantry peculiar to their country, derive most of the names of places from celebrated women, tell us that the wives of these three kings were Eire, Banba, and Fodhla, three sisters who have given their names to Ireland ; and they add that the country was called after each queen during the year of her husband's administration; and that if the name of Eire has been since more generally applied, it was because the husband of queen Eire was the reigning king when

the Milesians arrived and conquered the island. The names of Banba and Fodhla are frequently given to Ireland in all the ancient Irish writings.

Before we leave the Tuatha de Dananns, whose sway continued for 197 years—from A. M. 3303 to A. M. 3500—we may mention two or three remarkable circumstances connected with the accounts of that ancient people. By them the Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny, on which the Irish kings were crowned in subsequent ages, was brought into Ireland. This stone was said to emit mysterious sounds when touched by the rightful heir to the crown ; and when an Irish colony invaded North Britain, and founded the Scottish monarchy there in the sixth century, the Lia Fail was carried thither to give more solemnity to the coronation of the king, and more security to his dynasty. It was afterwards preserved for several ages in the monastery of Scone, but was carried into England by Edward I., in the year 1300, and deposited in Westminster Abbey, and is believed to be identical with the large block of stone now to be seen under the coronation chair. [12]

Ogma, one of the Tuatha de Danann princes, is said to have invented the Ogam Craove, or occult mode of writing by notches on the edges of sticks or stones ; and Orbsen, another of them, is celebrated as the mythical protector of commerce and navigation. He was commonly called *Mananan*, from the Isle of Man, of which he was king, and *Maclir*, son of the sea, from his knowledge of nautical affairs. He was killed in a battle in the west of Ireland by Ullin, grandson of King Nuad of the Silver Hand, and was buried in an island in the large lake, which from him was called Lough Orbsen, since corrupted into Lough Corrib, the place where the battle was fought being still called Moycullen, or the plain of Ullin. [13]

•

The Milesian Colony.

The Milesian Colony.—Wanderings of the Gadelians.—Voyage of Ith to Ireland.—Expedition of the Sons of Miledh, or Milesius.—Contests with the Tuatha de Dananns.—Division of Ireland by Heremon.—The Cruithnians, or Picts.

THE old annalists preface the account of the Milesian invasion of Ireland by a long story of the origin of that colony, and of its many wanderings, by land and sea, for several hundred years, until it arrived in Ireland from Spain. There is no part of our primitive history that has been so frequently questioned, or which modern writers so generally reject as fabulous, as these first accounts of the Milesian or Gadelian race ; yet they are so mixed up with our authentic history, and so frequently referred to, that they cannot be passed over in silence. We, therefore, give an outline of the narrative, chiefly as we find it related in the Duan Eireannach, or Poem of Ireland, Written by Maelmura of Othain, one of the most ancient of our authorities for the Milesian tradition. [14] We are told in this poem that Fenius Farsaidh came out of Scythia to Nembroth (Nimrod), and that, some time after “ the building of the tower (of Babel) by the men of the world,” Nel, or Niul, the son of Feuius, who possessed a knowledge of all the languages then spoken by mankind, left his father and travelled into Egypt, where the fame of his learning came to the ears of Forann (Pharaoh), who gave him his daughter Scota in marriage. Niul had a son named Gaedhuil Glas, or Green Gael ; and we are told that it is from him the Irish have been called Gaedhil (Gael), or Gadelians, while from his mother is derived the name of Scoti, or Scots, and from Fenius that of Feni, or Fenians. The poem goes on to say that after Forann, pursuing the people of God, was drowned in the sea Romhuir (Red sea) the people of Egypt were angry with the children of Niul for having declined to render any assistance in the pursuit ; and that the latter, through fear of being enslaved as the Israelites had been, seized the deserted ships of Pharaoh, and in the night-time passed over the Red sea, “ the way they knew,” by India and Asia, to Scythia,

their own country, over the surface of the Caspian sea, leaving Glas, dead, at Coronis (probably Cyrene, in the Lybian sea), where they halted for a period.

After some time, and with some variations in the different accounts, we find Sru, son of Esru, or Asruth, son of Gadheal Glas, [15] acting as leader of the descendants of Niul, and proceeding to the island of Taprabaiia (Ceylon) [16] and Slieve Riffi, [17] until he settled in “fiery Golgatha,” or Gaethligh, a place which is variously supposed to be Gothia, or Galatia, or Gethulia ; and again, in two hundred years after, that is, according to O’Flaherty, about the time of the destruction of Troy, Brath, the son of Deagath, or Deatha, and nineteenth in descent from Fenius, led a fresh expedition from this last-named place to “the north of the world, to the islands, ploughing the Tarrian sea (Mediterranean or Tyrrhenian) with his fleet.” He passed by Creid (Crete), Sicil (Sicily), and the columns of Hercules, to “Espain, the peninsular ;” and here he conquered a certain territory, his son, Breogan, or Bregond, succeeding him in the command. The city which our wanderers built in Spain was called Brigantia, believed to be Betanzos, in Galicia; and, from a lofty tower erected on the coast, by Breogan, it is said that his son, Ith, discovered Eri, or Ireland, “as far as the land of Luimnech (as the country at the mouth of the Shannon was called), on a winters evening.” [18] Ith appears to have been of an adventurous spirit, and no doubt discovered the coast of Ireland, not from the tower of Breogan, which was impossible, but after having sailed thither in search of the land, which, according to the traditions of his race, the children of Niul were destined to possess. He landed at a place since called Magh Ithe, or the Plain of Ith, near Laggan, in the county of Donegal ; and having been taken for a spy or pirate, by the Tuatha de Dananns, was attacked and mortally wounded, when he escaped to his ship and died at sea. [19]

The remains of Ith were carried to Spain by his crew, now commanded by his son Lugaid, who stimulated his kinsmen to avenge his death ; and such, according to the chroniclers, was the provocation for the expedition which followed. Accordingly, the sons of Gollam (who is more generally known by his surname of Miledh, or Milesius), the son of Bile, son of Breogan, and hence the nephew of Ith, manned thirty ships, and prepared to set out for Inis Ealga, as Ireland was at that time called. Milesius himself, who was king of Spain, or at least of the Gadelian province of it, and who in his earlier life had travelled into Scythia, and performed sundry exploits there, had died before the news of the death of Ith arrived ; and his wife Scota, the second of the name we have yet met in these annals, went with her six sons .at the head of the expedition. Some of the accounts mention eight sons of Milesius, but the names given in Maelmura’s poem are Donn, or Heber Donn, Colpa, Amergin, Ir, Heber (that is, Heber Finn, or the fair), and Heremon. Lugaid, the son of Ith, was also a leader of the expedition, and the names of several other chiefs are given ; and it is probable that the principal portion of the Gadelian colony in Spain sailed on the occasion.

A. M. 3500.—It was in the year of the world 3500, and 1700 years before Christ, according to the Four Masters, or A. M. 2934, and B. C. 1015, according to O’Flaherty’s chronology, that the Milesian colony arrived in Ireland. The bardic legends say the island was at first made invisible to them by the necromancy of the inhabitants ; and that when they at length effected a landing and marched into the country, the Tuatha de Dananns confessed that they were not prepared to resist them, having no standing army, but that if they again embarked, and could make good a landing according to the rules of war, the country should be theirs. Amergin, who was the ollav or learned man and judge of the expedition, having been appealed to, decided against his own people, and they accordingly re-embarked at the southern extremity of Ireland, and withdrew “the distance of nine waves” from the shore. No sooner had they done so than a terrific storm commenced, raised by the magic arts of the Tuatha de Dananns, and the Milesian fleet was completely scattered. Several of the ships, among them those of Donn and Ir, were lost off different parts of the coast. Heremon sailed

round by the northeast, and landed at the mouth of the Boyne (called Inver Colpa, from one of the brothers who was drowned there), and others landed at Inver Scene, so called from Scene Dubsaine, the wife of Amergin, who perished in that river. In the first battle fought with the Tuatha de Dananns, at Slieve Mish, near Tralee, the latter were defeated ; but among the killed were Scota, the wife of Milesius, who was buried in the place since called from her, Glen-Scoheen, and Fas, the wife of Un, another of the Milesians, from whom Glenofaush in the same neighborhood has its name. After this the sons of Milesius fought a battle at Tailtinn, or Teltown, in Meath, where the three kings of the Tuatha de Dananns were killed and their people completely routed. The three queens, Eire, Fodhla, and Banba, were also slain ; women having been accustomed during the pagan times in Ireland to take part personally in battles, and in many instances to lead the hostile armies to the fight. Among the Milesians killed in this battle, or rather in the pursuits of the Tuatha de Dananns, were Fuad (from whom Slieve Fuad in Armagh, a place much celebrated in Irish history, has derived its name), and Cuailgne, who was killed at Slieve Cuailgne, now the Cooley mountains, near Carlingford, in the county of Louth.

After the battle of Teltown the Milesians enjoyed the undisturbed possession of the country, and formed alliances with the Firbolgs, the Tuatha de Dananns, and other primitive races, but more especially with the first, who aided them willingly in the subjugation of their late masters, and were allowed to retain possession of certain territories, where some of their posterity still remain. Heremon and Heber Finn divided Ireland between them ; but a dispute arising, owing to the covetousness of the wife of Heber, who desired to have all the finest vales in Erin for herself, a battle was fought at Geashill, in the present Kings county, in which Heremon killed his brother Heber. In the division of Ireland which followed, Heremon, who retained the sovereignty himself, gave Ulster to Heber, the son of Ir ; Munster to the four sons of Heber Finn ; Connaught to Un and Eadan ; and Leinster to Crivann Sciavel, a Damnonian or Firbolg. The people of the south of Ireland in general are looked upon as the descendants of Heber ; while the families of Leinster, many of those of Connaught, the Hi Nialls of Ulster, etc, trace their pedigree to Heremon. Families sprung from the sons of Ir are to be found in different parts of Ireland ; but of Amergin, the poet and ollav, little is said in this distribution of the land. He is mentioned as having constructed the causeway or *tochar* of Inver Mor, or the mouth of the Ovoca in Wicklow.

The wife of Heremon was Tea, the daughter of Lugaid, the son of Ith, for whom he repudiated his former wife Ovey, who followed the expedition to Ireland, and died of grief on finding herself deserted ; and it was Tea who selected for the royal residence the hill of Druim Caen, called from her Teamur or Tara—that is, the mound of Tea. [20] In the second year of his reign Heremon slew his brother Amergin in battle, and in subsequent conflicts others of his kinsmen fell by his hands ; and having reigned fifteen years, he died at Rath-Beothaigh, now Rathveagh on the Nore, in Kilkenny.

About the period of the Milesian invasion the Cruithnigh, Cruithnians, or Picts, so called, according to the generally received opinion, from having their bodies tattooed, or painted, are said to have paid a visit to Ireland previous to their final settlement in Alba, or Scotland. Having no wives, they obtained Milesian women in marriage; that is, according to some accounts, they married the widows of those who had been drowned with Heber Donn in the expedition from Spain, making a solemn compact that, should they succeed in conquering the country they were about to invade, the sovereignty should descend in the female line. The Cruithnians were of a kindred race with the Scots or Irish, and for many centuries dwelt as a distinct people in the eastern part of Ulster, where some of their descendants were to be found at the time of the confiscations under James I. ; but the confused traditions about the visit of a Pictish colony at the same time with the children of Milesius are properly treated as apocryphal.

- [1] Or, as some think, the river Corrano, in Kerry,
- [2] The place in which this catastrophe happened was called *Sean-Mhagh-Ealta-Edair*, or “The Old Plain of the Flocks of Edair,” a name which it received in after-time from an Irish chieftain, from whom the Hill of Howth was called Ben-Edair : and it extended from that hill to the base of the Dublin mountains, and along the banks of the Liffey.
The memory of this event is preserved in the name of the village of Tallaght (*Tamleacht*), which signifies “the plague monument,” from *Tamh*, a plague, and *Leacht*, a monument ; and in Irish books this place is sometimes called *Tamleacht Muintir Parthaloin*, or “the plague monument of Partholon’s people,” to distinguish it from other plague monuments, also called *Tamleachts*, in other parts of Ireland. (See O’Donovan’s “Four Masters,” and Doctor Wilde’s “Report on Tables of Deaths,” in the Census of 1851.) The pestilence which swept away Partholon’s colony was the first that visited Ireland, and is said to have been caused by the corrupting bodies of the dead slain in a battle with the people called Fomorians.
- [3] Who these Fomorians were, who are so often mentioned in Irish history, is a matter of speculation. They are said by some of the old annalists to have been African pirates of the race of Ham ; but O’Flaherty thinks they were Northmen, or Scandinavians. Some modern writers will have it that they were Phœnicians ; but their name implies in Irish that they were sea-robbers, and it is remarkable that their memory is preserved in the Irish name of the Giant’s Causeway, which is *Cloghan-na-Fomharaigh*, or the causeway or stepping-stones of the Fomorians. (See O’Brien’s *Diet*.) The Fomorians are by some called the aborigines of Ireland.
- [4] From *Fir*, “men,” and *bolg*, which in Irish means a “leathern bag.”
- [5] The Irish name of Leinster was sometimes written *Coige Gaillian* ; *Coige* being the word for a fifth part, or one of the five provinces ; but it is more generally called *Laighin*, a word which signifies a spear or javelin.
- [6] In the Irish version of Nennius, published for the Irish Archæological Society, the *Firbolgs* are termed *Viri Bullorum*, which, as the learned editor, Dr. Todd, remarks, might afford a derivation for the name not previously noticed ; the word *Bullum*, in the Latinity of the middle ages, signifying, according to Du Cange, *Baculum pastoris*, a shepherd’s staff. In the additional notes to that publication, by the Hon. Algernon Herbert, many curious suggestions are made about these and the other ancient inhabitants of Ireland, all which speculations show how exceedingly vague and meagre is the information that can be gleaned about these primitive races, and how uncertain are the theories which have been formed about them. Of the *Firbolgs*, however, as we shall hereafter see, we find frequent mention in what all admit to be authentic periods of Irish history ; and their monuments, and even their race, still exist among us.
- [7] Connell Mageoghegan’s “Annals of Clonmacnoise.”
- [8] Book of Leacan, fol. 277 ; quoted in the *Ogygia*, Part iii., c. 9.
The site of this battle is sometimes called *Moyturey of Cong*, from its proximity to that town, and “it is still pointed out,” says Dr. O’Donovan (*Four Masters*, vol. i p. 16), “in the parish of Cong, barony of Kilmaine, and county of Mayo, to the right of the road as you go from Cong to the village of the Neal. From the monuments of this battle still remaining, it is quite evident that great numbers were slain.” The cairn of the *Firbolg* king, *Eochy*, is on the shore near *Ballysadare*, in the county of Sligo ; and, although not high above the strand, it is the popular belief that the tide can never cover it.
- [9] The author is indebted to Professor Eugene Curry for the purport of this tract, which appears to have escaped the attention of our other Irish scholars.
- [10] *Ogygia*, part i., p. 13.
- [11] See Wilde’s *Boyne and Blackwater*, p. 150. *Ogygia*, part iii., c. 13 and 56.
- [12] Dr. Petrie, in his *History and Antiquities of Tara Hill*, controverts this account of the *Lia Fail*, and employs some learned, though not conclusive, arguments to show that that celebrated relic of pagan antiquity is the present pillar-stone over the “*Croppies’ Grave*”

in one of the great raths of Tara. O'Flaherty (*Ogygia*, p. 45) thinks the Stone of Destiny was not carried to Scotland until A. D. 850, when it was sent by Hugh Finnliath, king of Ireland, to his father-in-law, Keneth MacAlpinc, who finally subjugated the Picts.

[13] Dr. O'Donovan, in a note on the Tuatha de Dananns (*Four Masters*, vol. i. p. 24), says:—

“ In Mageoghegan's translation of the Annals of Clonmacnoise it is stated that ‘ this people, Tuathy DeDanan, ruled Ireland for 197 years ; that they were most notable magicians, and would work wonderful things by magick and other diabolicale arts, wherein they were exceedingly well skilled, and in these days accompted the chiefest in the world in that profession.’ From the many monuments ascribed to this colony by tradition, and in ancient Irish historical tales, it is quite evident that they were a real people ; and from their having been considered gods and magicians by the Gaedhil, or Scoti, who subdued them, it maybe inferred that they were skilled in arts which the latter did not understand. Among them was Danann, the mother of the gods, from whom *Da chich Danainne*, a mountain in Kerry (the Pap Mountain), was called ; Buanann, the goddess that instructed the heroes in military exercises, the Minerva of the ancient Irish ; Badhbh, the Bellona of the ancient Irish ; Abhortach, god of music ; Ned, the god of war ; Nemon, his wife ; Manannan, the god of the sea ; Diancecht, the god of physic ; Brioghit, the goddess of poets and smiths, &c. It appears from a very curious and ancient Irish tract, written in the shape of a dialogue between St. Patrick and Caoilte MacRonain, that there were very many places in Ireland where the Tuatha de Dananns were then supposed to live as sprites or fairies, with corporeal and material forms, but endued with immortality. The inference naturally to be drawn from these stories is, that the Tuatha de Dananns lingered in the country for many centuries after their subjugation by the Gaedhil, and that they lived in retired situations, where they practised abstruse arts, which induced the others to regard them as magicians . . . It looks very strange that our genealogists trace the pedigree of no family living for the last thousand years to any of the kings or chieftains of the Tuatha de Dananns, while several families of Firbolgic descent are mentioned, as in Hy-Many, and other parts of Connaught. (See *Tribes and Customs of Hy-Many*, pp. 85-90 ; and O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, part iii., c. 11.)”

Manannan MacLir is described in Cormac's Glossary as “ a famous merchant of the Isle of Man, and the best navigator in the western world.” Dr. O'Donovan (*Four Masters*, vol. iii., p. 533, note) says : “ There exists a tradition in the county of Londonderry that the spirit of this celebrated navigator lives in an enchanted castle in the *tuns* or waves of Magilligan, opposite Inishowen, and that his magical ship is seen there once every seventh year.”

[14] Maelmura of Othain (now Fahan, in Donegal) died A. D. 884, and the historical poem referred to above was printed, for the first time, in the Irish version of Nennius, published in 1848 by the Irish Archæological Society, with copious notes by the Rev. Dr. Todd, S. P. T. C. D., and by the Hon. Algernon Herbert.

[15] This name is just before written Gaedhiul Glas ; and, in general, there appears to be no fixed orthography for those ancient Irish names.

[16] Sometimes written, in Irish MSS., Tipradfane, that is, the Well of Fenins.

[17] The Slieve Riffi, so often mentioned in Irish MSS., were the Riphean mountains, but it is by no means easy to determine what was the position of these. That they were situated in some part of the vast region anciently called Scythia is tolerably certain, and the probable opinion is that they were the Ural mountains in Russia ; but they are sometimes set down in old maps as occupying the place of the Carpathian mountains, and even of the Alps, and the vague accounts we have of them would answer for any range of mountains in northern Europe.

[18] The Hon. Algernon Herbert, in one of the additional notes to the Irish Nennius, shows how this legend of Ireland having been seen from the tower of Betanzos (the ancient Flavium Brigantium) may have arisen from passages of Orosius, the geographer, where mention is made of a lofty Pharos erected on the coast of Spain, “ *ad speculum*

Britannice,” “ for a watch-tower in the direction of Britain ;” and where again, describing the coasts of Ireland, the writer says “ *procul spectant Brigantiam, Gallicito civitatem,*” &c.—“ they lie at a distance opposite Brigantiam, a city of Qallicia,” &c ; the words “ *speculum*” and “ *spectant*” having apparently led to the absurd notion that the coast of Ireland was visible from the tower. See also Dr. Wilde’s communication to the Royal Irish Academy on the remains of the Pharos of Corunna, which he believes to have been the tower of Breogan.

[19] Whoever attempts to trace on the map of the world the route ascribed in the text to the ancestors of Milesius, will find himself seriously puzzled. In all the accounts of these peregrinations two distinct expeditions are alluded to, one by the east and north, and the other westerly, that is, through the Mediterranean sea and the Pillars of Hercules. The latter is intelligible enough, but the former would imply a passage by water, from south to north, through the central countries of Europe. The Nemedians and Tuatha de Dananns would also appear to have passed freely in their ships between Greece, or Sythia, and the northern seas, without going through the Straits of Gibraltar. Some get rid of this difficulty by treating the whole story as a fable founded on the Argonautic expedition and its river-ocean ; but even that famous legend of classic antiquity stands itself in need of explanation ; and with that view it has been suggested that the Baltic and Euxine seas were at some remote period connected, and that the vast, swampy plains of Poland were covered with water. A connected series of lakes may thus have extended across the continent of Europe from north to south ; and the lagunes along the present northern coast of the Black sea may indicate what their appearance had been. Traditions of many of the physical changes which have taken place from time to time in the surface of Ireland, since the universal Deluge, such as the eruption of rivers, and the formation of new lakes and inlets of the sea, are preserved in the Irish annals ; and it is probable that the Greek traditions of Deucalion’s Deluge, and the theories respecting the eruption of the Euxine into the Archipelago, and of a channel between the ocean and the Mediterranean through ancient Aquitaine, may refer to a period when the ship Argo, and the barques of the descendants of Niul, might have passed from the shores of Greece to the Hyperborean seas through the heart of Sarmatia, as indicated above. — (See “ A Vindication of the Bardic Accounts of the Early Invasions of Ireland, and a Verification of the River-ocean of the Greeks.” Dublin, 1852. Also the Dublin University Magazine for March, 1802.)

[20] The above etymology of Tara is evidently legendary ; and according to Cormac’s Glossary, quoted by O’Donovan (Four Masters, vol. i., p. 31), the name, which in Irish is Teamhair, merely signifies a hill commanding a pleasant prospect.

The history of Ireland : from the earliest period to the present time : derived from native annals, and from the researches of Dr. O’Donovan, Professor Eugene Curry, the Rev. C.P. Meehan, Dr. R.R. Madden, and other eminent scholars, and from all the resources of Irish history now available (1871)

Author : Haverty, Martin, 1809-1887

Subject : Ireland — History

Publisher : New York : T. Kelly

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : MSN

Book contributor : Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center

Collection : allen_county; americana

Source : Internet Archive

<http://www.archive.org/details/historyofireland00have>

Edited and uploaded to www.aughty.org

December 12 2011