

Inishowen

Its History, traditions, & Antiquities

By

Maghtochair

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THE ancient territory of Inishowen is now a barony of the County of Donegal, and in it is Malin Head, the most northern point of Ireland. Inishowen lies between the parallels of 55° and $65^{\circ} 22' 10''$ north latitude, and between $6^{\circ} 48'$ and $7^{\circ} 31'$ west longitude. Its length is 26 miles, and greatest breadth about 25 miles. It comprises an area of 197,860 statute acres, or about 309 square miles. There are 246a. 3r. 27p. of the above under water, being the area of a few small lakes, and the tide-way of one or two rivers. Its population, according to the census of 1861, was 45,675.

On its northern shores is the Atlantic Ocean ; Lough Foyle forms its eastern boundary, and Lough Swilly its western. It is connected with the mainland on the south, and is, therefore, not an *inis*, or island, as its name implies, but a peninsula. Its southern limit, however, is not so well defined ; some say it was formed by a line drawn from Lough Swilly through the present town of Manorcunningham to Carrigans, on the river Foyle ; while others suppose it did not extend so far south.

Regarding its southern boundary we learn, by the Ordnance Survey that, “ about half the parish of Templemore, or what is generally called the northern liberties of Londonderry, was comprised in Inishowen, before the formation of the County of Londonderry, as is evident from an inquisition taken in Derry in the seventh year of the reign of James I, from which it appears that a jury composed of resident English and ancient Irish natives, of the principal septs of the district, ‘ did upon their oaths find and present that the auncient and known meares of the country of Inishowen, alias O’Dogherties countrey, (O’Dogherty was placed in the lordship of the peninsula at the commencement of the fifteenth century) to the south and south-east, are and have been, tyme out of mynde, as followeth, viz., from the part or branch of Lough Swilly, on the weste and south-west parte of Birt, thorough the midst of a bog which extendeth to Lough Lappan (O’Lappan’s Lake) from a well or spring upon Mullagh-knockemona, and from the topp of that mountayne the meare extended through a small bog, which runneth alonge the top of the hill of Ardenemahill, and soe to the top of the hill of Knockenagh, upon the easte part of which hill ariseth the streame of Altbally M’Rowertie, which runneth a meare betweene *Bally Mac Rowertie in Innishowen*, and parte of the landes of the Derry and Garrowgarle to the cawsy under Ellogh, and so down thorough the bog to Logh Swilly, and from the foresaid cawsy the meare of Inishowen aforesaid is thorough the midst of the Bog to Lough Foile.”

The principal headlands are Inishowen Head at the entrance to Lough Foyle ; Malin Head, Dunaff Head, at the entrance to Lough Swilly, and Neid’s Point on the Swilly. Along nearly the whole of the northern coast are picturesque precipices and rocky cliffs of a bold and romantic character.

Off the coast are the following islands :—Inistrahall, on which is a light-house, situated eight miles east of Malin Head ; the Garve Islands, still nearer to the shore ; Glasheady, off the Clonmany coast ; and the island of Inch in Lough Swilly.

The bays are—Moville Bay, a well sheltered and spacious sheet of water ; Culdaff Bay, adapted for the coasting trade, but little used ; Culoort Bay, in Malin ; Strabreagy Bay, rather of the nature of a gulf, the entrance to which is narrow, the tides rapid, and the coast on each side very rocky. Though well sheltered, and affording safe anchor-age, Strabreagy is, on account of its dangerous bar, unfit for vessels which draw much water. Mariners have often mistaken it for Lough Swilly, which has caused many shipwrecks. Westward on the Clonmany coast are Tullagh Bay, Rockstown Bay, and Leenan Bay, an inlet of the Swilly.

Mountains, Plains, and Valleys.

Leaving out the promontory of Malin Head, Inishowen has something of a triangular shape, with the base turned to the north. A ridge of mountains runs along each of the sides of this triangle, leaving a comparatively narrow margin on the east and west sloping down to the water. The western chain is the highest and most precipitous, and includes the Fahan, Desertegney, and Clonmany mountains, and terminates at Dunaff. On the east are the Iskaheen and Moville mountains, sloping off gently to Inishowen Head. The former are famous in the annals of the private distiller, as affording dews more potent than Cognac, and sweeter than mead. The north is enclosed by the Glengad and Malin ridge, running from east to west, and terminating at Pollin Strand. This chain is not quite continuous, a link having apparently been snapped by some violent convulsion of nature, separating the Isle of Doagh from Malin, with which there is sufficient reason to believe it was once connected, and permitting the waters of the Atlantic to enter in the breach, and to form the gulf or rather inland lake of Strabreagy. From the apex of the triangle above-named a central range runs north-ward, with spurs that shoot off east and west, towards Glenaganon on the one hand, and the high lands of Coolcross and the Clonmany mountains on the other. The culminating point of this range is Slieve Snaght, which overlooks all the others, as a lofty tower in the midst of a city smiles on the insignificance of the surrounding buildings. By the Ordnance Survey, the summit of Slieve Snaght is 2,019 feet above the level of the sea ; but on Bett's map of Ireland its elevation above sea level is given as 2,232 feet. Taking it at the latter, the circle bounding the observer's view from its summit would be traced by a radius of 57 miles, and would contain within its limits some 10,000 square miles of the earth's surface. Its east and west sides are steep and difficult of ascent, but it is more accessible on the north and south.

On the top is a level space of considerable extent ; here, too, is a cairn erected by the Surveyors of the Board of Ordnance ; and a little lower are the remains of the huts which afforded them shelter during their stay on the mountain. Not far from the cairn is a well of water. The views from this mountain, on a fine day, are very extensive and highly interesting. To the north and west is the blue Atlantic, with its ceaseless pulsations, rolling along in league-long billows. Turn around, and Antrim, Derry, Tyrone, and West Donegal unfold themselves to our wondering gaze ; the Giant's Causeway, Downhill, Magilligan, Beneveny, the heights around Londonderry, Horn Head, Dunfanaghy, the deep indentations of the ocean on that romantic coast, such as Sheep Haven and Mulroy water, Fannet, sacred to the memory of St. Columb, and Tory Island, his favorite retreat, are plainly perceptible. All around the spectator is Inishowen itself ; its hills, dales, valleys, lakes, and rivers spread out as in a map. Between the mountains, or embosomed among them, are glens, cloons (valleys), meens (narrow valleys), glacks (secluded nooks), and narrow passes, with lakes of limpid water teeming with eel and trout, formed to tempt as well as to reward the attentions of the angler.

The only plain of any considerable extent in Inishowen is Maghtogher, [1] or the plain of springs. Conceive a line drawn from the southern shoulder of Cruick-na-coille-dare (the hill of oak woods,) on which, by the way, is a considerable stripe of natural wood to remind one of the primitive forests with which the country was once clad ; conceive, I say, a line drawn from this point to the bridge of Gleneely (the lime vale), another from said bridge to the Croah (stack) of Glengad, another from Croah to Magherard, Isle of Doagh, and a fourth from Magherard to Cruick-na-coille-dare, aforesaid, and you have the boundary of the plain of Maghtogher, in shape a quad-rilateral, one of the diagonals of which is about eight miles, the other six. There is considerable indication of the ocean wave having at one time rolled across a portion of this plain from Culdaff to Binion Hill, isolating Malin, with which, as I have stated, Doagh Isle was most probably connected. On the Glengad coast an old beach may be traced at a considerable distance from the present sea line, and fully 50 feet elevation above its level, which goes evidently to show that the sea has retired. Again, along the course I have named, stand the “ Isles of Grellagh,” which reared their heads above the ancient deep ; but towards Tulnabrattly, on the leading road from Carndonagh to Clonmany, the evidence of the action of the waves on the rocks, and traces of the coast line are quite apparent. The rivers are generally short and rapid. There are two which empty themselves into the sea at Bunrana ; the Clonmany River, which rises in Meendoran Lough, and is joined by the Ballyhallon, near the town of Clonmany, and which empties itself into the sea at Binion ; the two which pass Carndonagh, on its eastern and western side, and empty themselves into the sea at Strabreagy ; the Culdaff River, flowing into Culdaff Bay ; and the Braddagh, at Merville, are the principal

The lakes are, Meentagh Lake, Meendoran Lough, Meedianmore Lake, in Malin ; Moneydarragh Lake, Loughcunn, Ballyarnet Lough, Lough Fad, and the Round Lough in Urris Mountains.

According to the Catholic divisions, there are the following parishes, viz. :— Upper Fahan, Burt, and Inch (united). Lower Fahan and Dysertegney (united), Clon-many, Donagh, Cloncha, Culdaff, Merville, and Iskaheen,

According to the Protestant divisions, there are twelve benefices. Eight of these, namely. Upper Fahan, Dysertegney, Clonmany, Donagh, Cloncha, Culdaff, Lower Merville, and Upper Merville, are Rectories ; and four, namely, Burt, Inch, Lower Fahan, and Muff, are perpetual Curacies.

II

First Colonists—Parthalon's Expedition—The Colony of Nemedius—The Firbolgs—The Tuatha de Danains—Ith—The Milesians—The Three Collas—Defeat of the Collas by the sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages—Ennis-Owen.

O'Flaherty, following the annals of Clonmacnoise, fixes the arrival of the first colonists in Ireland under Parthalon, in the year of the world 1969. Parthalon, says Walsh, having landed with his colony in Ireland, divided the Island between his four sons, Er, Orbha, Fearon, and Ferghna ; but, after three hundred years' residence in the country, his posterity perished by a plague, after which the country remained uninhabited for thirty years.

According to O'Flaherty, [2] Nemedius, great grand-nephew of Parthalon, having learned the tragic end of his relations in Ireland, embarked with thirty-four transports, carrying 1020 persons, besides his wife and four sons, and took possession of the island. After twelve years, his wife, Macha, died, and was buried at Ardmach ; from which circumstance Armagh takes

its name. The colony of Nemedius was overthrown by the Fomorians. Jobath, grandson of Nemedius, led a remnant of his people into north Germany, and from these, according to Keating, were descended the Tuatha de Danains.

In some time after, the Firbolgs or Belgians, another people of Britain, to the number of 5,000 men, commanded by five chiefs, either by defeat or desertion of the Fomorians, took possession of the island. [3] They divided it into five parts, which gave rise to the pentarchy. Their dominion lasted eighty years, under nine kings, the last of whom, Eogha, married Tailta, daughter of a Spanish prince, who gave name to the place of her burial, still called Tailton, in Meath. [4]

In the reign of Eogha, the last of the Firbolg kings, the Tuatha de Danains made a descent upon Ireland, gave battle to, and defeated the Firbolgs at Partry, in the County of Mayo. The Thuathe De Danians, noted magicians, arrived here from Cornwall, after having passed through Norway and Denmark, and brought with them that celebrated stone which they used at the coronation of their Kings, and which was afterwards borrowed by Fergus I., of Scotland. It was preserved in the Abbey of Scone, carried off by Edward I., of England, and placed in the coronation chair in Westminster—Lia-Fail, or stone of destiny. Inishowen, from its natural defences, formed a safe retreat for the De Danains ; here, accordingly, they built the stronghold of Elagh, where their King, Kearnada, died, and where his sons, Eathur, Teahur, and Keahur, reigned one year each alternately, on the arrival of the Milesians

According to the Psalter of Cashel, this colony held possession of the island for the space of one hundred and ninety-seven years, under seven of their kings, of whom the three sons of Kearnada, who represented their father, and who ruled one year alternately for a space of 30 years, were the last. Those three brothers, who were married to three sisters, took surnames from the different idols which they worshipped ; and Ireland, which previously was called Inisfail, changed its name with the reigning queen, and was called alternately Banba, Fodla, and Eire. Eathur, who espoused Banba, was surnamed Maccuill, from the hazel-tree which he adored. Teahur married Fodla, and worshipped the plough. He was called Mac-Keaght. Keahur, who married Eire, took the sun for his divinity, and was called Mac-Greine, which means the son of the sun.

One morning early in Autumn, about 1,000 years before the Christian era, a venerable man might be seen prostrate on the beach at the foot of that promontory known as Inishowen Head. He knelt there to worship the sea god—to pour forth the gratitude of his heart to Neptune for the happy termination of a long and perilous voyage. His ship rode at anchor before him. No cloud darkened the deep blue of the heavens, the air was calm, the sky lustrous, the sun had just risen, and burnished with dazzling brightness the gentle ripple which played on the surface of the waters. The stranger was Ith, uncle of Milesius, who had sailed from Braganza, in Spain, in quest of the most western isle of the world, which a soothsayer had declared should be the final resting-place of his nation.

Many were the mutations and migrations of this people. Niul, son of Fenius Farsa, King of Scythia, son of Baath, son of Magog, second son of Japhet, son of Noah, made a voyage into Egypt, where he married Scota, daughter of Pharaoh Cincria, and had issue a son, who was called Gaodal-Glas, or Gadelas, from whom was descended the Gadeliens. Having lived in Egypt for three generations, the Gadeliens greatly increased in numbers, and were obliged, from the jealous fear of the Egyptians, to depart, which they did, sailing to Crete, now Candia. From Crete they proceeded to Scythia, thence in the course of time to North Africa, where they remained for eight generations. From Africa they crossed to Spain, then inhabited by the descendants of Tubal, son of Japhet, Here, by right of conquest, they became masters

of the northern province, and built the town of Braganza, so called from their chief, Breogan, grand-father of Milesius. Milesius in turn became chief of the Gadelians, was twice married and the father of eight sons, Donn, Aireach, Heber-Fionn, Amhergin, Ir, Colpa, Aranann, and Heremon. He travelled much, did Milesius, and greatly distinguished himself as a general and warrior, particularly in the army of the King of Egypt, against the Ethiopians ; and, after many dangers, toils, and difficulties, returned to Spain, where he ended his days in peace. [5]

Soon after his demise a famine arose, which determined the Milesians to fit out an expedition to seek that fruitful Isle, that promised land, which the chief Druid pre-dicted should be theirs. Accordingly, a vessel was fitted out with 150 soldiers onboard, and to Ith, recommended by his wisdom and experience, was given the command. Having successfully overcome all the difficulties and anxieties attendant on navigation at this early period, Ith landed at the place above-mentioned, on that lovely morning. His devotions over, he ascended the cliff, and, with his footsteps brushing the dew off the verdant turf, proceeded to the summit of a gentle eminence, from which he beheld the first glimpse of Erin. The whole face of the country acknowledged the lavish kindness of Nature. Forests of stately trees, oaks, larches, elms, and beeches, ran along the hill sides, herds of lowing cattle fattened on the plains, and prosperity and quiet content reigned in the hamlets of the peasantry.

At this period the country was in the possession, as has been stated, of the Tuatha de Danains, and, in reply to Ith's inquiries, he was informed by the people that their ruling princes were then at Oileag-Nead [6] (Aileach). Escorted by one hundred of his soldiers, he proceeded to Aileach, where, on his arrival, he was honourably received by the princes above-named, who, perceiving he was a man of much wisdom, appointed him arbiter in a difference which existed between them as to the right of succession. Ith settled their differences to their own satisfaction, congratulated them on the fruitfulness of the soil and the healthiness of the climate, and took his leave. But his wisdom, or rather his exercise of it in this case, proved his ruin, for the De Danians, in dread that going to his own country he might speedily raise an army to subdue them, pursued and overtook him at Moy-Ith, [7] where an engagement took place, in which Ith was wounded. He died on his voyage homewards, and his son carried the body to Spain to inspire his people with revenge against the princes of the western isle. The Milesians immediately equipped a fleet of sixty sail, in which the whole colony embarked and sailed for Ireland. Arriving at the south coast they were overtaken by a fearful hurricane, which scattered their fleet, so that not two of them remained together. Donn perished with his entire crew, Arannan was driven to sea, Ir was drowned, and his body found near Dingle, in Kerry, Aicach and Colpa were wrecked in Drogheda Bay, Heremon landed at the mouth of the Boyne, and Heber, Amergin, and their attendants, landed in Kerry.

The dangers from wind and wave over, they next encountered the hostile De Danains, first at Slieve Mish, in Kerry, under the princess Eire, where they (the Milesians) obtained a victory ; next at Tailton, in Meath, where, after a hard-fought battle, the De Danains were completely defeated, and their three princes killed. Thus were the De Danains overthrown, after having governed Ireland for 197 years. On the division of the country by the Milesians, the north was given to Heber-Donn, the son of Ir, whose descendants were called Irians, and who resided in Elagh until the time of Kimbaath, who, at the desire of his queen, built the palace of Emhuan-Macha, near Armagh, and made it his abode. The first of the Irians who attained the dignity of monarch of Ireland was Rory, surnamed the Great, 87 years before the birth of Christ. They were so proud of this monarch's glory that they named the whole sept after him *Clanna Rory*—children of Rory. [8] The Clanna Rory reigned, almost uninterruptedly, in Ulster till the fourth century of the Christian era. In 323 the three Collas, sons of Eocha-Dubhlein, usurped the government of Ireland, having made war against the monarch, in which they were successful, and the oldest of the three was proclaimed in his

stead ; but, after a reign of four years, they were obliged to quit the country, and take shelter with the King of the Picts. Hearing afterwards that the King of Ireland became merciful to them, they returned and obtained his pardon. Having no possessions, the monarch advised them to establish themselves in some part of the kingdom, by right of conquest, and, as he had an old grudge against the people of Ulster, he directed them to enter that province, sword in hand, and reduce it, promising to assist them with troops. On their arrival they were joined by malcontents to the number of 7,000 ; with these and the monarch's troops they commenced action, and, after a seven days' fight, Fergus-Fodha, King of Ulster, was killed, his army cut to pieces, and the field remained in possession of the conquerors. Forthwith they ruined the palace of Eamhain, and formed the kingdom of Oriel, comprising the present counties of Louth, Armagh, Monaghan, and part of Down and Antrim, and drove the Clanna Rory into Derry, Tyrone and Donegal.

About the end of the fourth century the rule of the Collas [9] in Ulster was put an end to by the four sons of the monarch, Niall the Great, who entered the northern country in arms, and took possession of Tyrone and Donegal, with the neighbouring territories. To Carbre was allotted Tefnia, Enna received Kinnel-Enna, and Owen and Conal Gulban divided the County of Donegal between them. This peninsula was a portion of Eoghain's or Owen's territory ; hence its name, Ennis-Owen, or the island of Owen, though, strictly speaking, and, as before observed, it is not an island, for the Foyle and Swilly, which bound it on the east and west respectively, are separated by an isthmus nearly four miles wide. The rest of Owen's possessions was Kinel-Eoghain, a portion of Northern Hy-Niellia, comprising the County of Tyrone, after-wards the domain of the O'Neills, who were descended from him. The remainder of County Donegal fell to Conal Gulban, and was named Tirconnell. Prince Eoghain repaired the ancient castle of Elagh, in which he afterwards resided, and from which he governed the mixed races of Irians and Hy-Nialls with much happiness and tranquillity.

III.

Religion of the Ancient Irish—Cromleachs—Cromleach of Magheramore—Cromleachs of Culdaff—Cromleach of Drung—Of the " Scalp"—Druidical Temples and Circles—Temple of Larahirl—of Carrowmore, Glentogher—of Greinan—Caves associated with Druidical Remains—Pillar Stones or Dallans—Pillar Stones and Caves in Donagh—Pillar Stones and Caves in Culdaff—Mechanical Arts of the Ancient Irish—Cairns—Lisses.

The ancient Irish were Fire Worshippers ; and their superstitions consisted in believing the hills, rocks, and woods, peopled with hosts of fairies. They chose the summit of a hill or eminence for sacrificing upon, probably with the view of having the sacred fire visible at distant places, and here they erected the temple, cromleach, circle, or pillar stone. Cromleach meant stone or altar of their god ; it might also mean a slanting stone from *crom*, a downward slope, and *leach*, a flagstone. They were usually dedicated to the sun. They vary in size, but consist generally of an altar-stone, lying nearly horizontal, and supported by three upright ones, with an open passage underneath for cattle and children to pass under the sacred fire. 'Twas this sort of worship which prevailed among the Israelites when they were reproached for passing their sons and daughters under the fire to Moloch, one of the names given to the sun. At Magheramore, in the parish of Clonmany, is a very perfect specimen of the cromleach, consisting of a table stone of above 30 tons, supported by three upright pillars. It is here called Fionn M'Cool's finger-stone.

The following observations on the cromleach are taken from *Hall's Ireland* :—
 " The altar known to English antiquaries by the Greek name of Trilithon (three stones), received in Ireland the appropriate name of *Cromleac*, or stone of Crom, and a particular

class of the priesthood was named *Crumtheas*. It consisted of a great incumbent rock, or flag, in its rude state, untouched by chisel or hammer, and rested on a number of pillar stones ; sometimes we find the altar-stone resting at one end on the ground, whilst the other was lifted upon a single supporter ; and again, but rather rarely, the natural rock is adopted as the basis.”

But to return to the cromlech of Magheramore. In after times, when Christian sects hated each other for the love of God, and when the weak were obliged to fly from the oppression of the strong, this same stone often served as an altar for offering thereon the Catholic Mass. A garden convenient, yet known by the name of Garra-na-sogarth, was the priest’s hiding-place, and scouts were posted on the hills, to give notice of the approach of danger, while the people knelt at their devotions beneath the blue vault of heaven.

There is no locality in the north of Ireland, as I believe, richer in druidical remains than the parish of Culdaff. At a place named Doon-Owen, near Carthage, in this parish, there is a magnificent cromlech. It is situated on a cliff ; it faces the east, and overlooks the ocean. In this parish, too, is another cromlech, named Cara, or Cloughtogal. It consists of an altar stone, about two tons weight, supported by four upright ones, four feet high. The temple in connexion with this altar is in a good state of preservation, and consists of three separate apartments—that occupied by the altar, and two outer ones—and the whole was enclosed by a wall. At Drung, in the parish of Upper Merville, are the remains of a cromlech, and on the mountain named the Scalp, in the parish of Upper Fahan, there is one in excellent preservation.

On the left hand side of the road from Culdaff to Merville, and at the distance of a few hundred yards from Bocan Catholic Church, is a beautiful specimen of the *Druid-ical Temple*. It is situated on a rising ground, which commands a view of the sea and the adjoining country. It consists of a number of stones placed in a perpendicular and circular form. Druidical Temples were circular, for the principal deity of the Druids was the sun ; and, like the ancient Germans, they entertained such a sublime idea of the majesty of the deity that they did not confine him within the limits of space, hence their temples had no roof, and the stones which formed the circle, in almost all cases, stood at short intervals from each other. The circle was availed of for other purposes : thus it served as a court of justice and as an observatory, in which they marked the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies, the seasons of the year, and periods of the day and night. In the locality last named, in the Parish of Culdaff, there seems to have been an assemblage of Druidical temples, for at Larahirl are a number of stones, which stand at intervals from one another, and which form an oblong temple, 27 feet in length by 12 feet broad. This oblong is surrounded by a circle of 70 yards in circumference, the stones of which are similar to those in the internal figure, and placed at like intervals. This temple at Larahirl deserves special remark, on account of the combination of the oblong and circle which it exhibits. At Carrowmore, in Glen-togher, there is a small Druidical circle. The Temple of Greinan, near Burt, next claims our attention. It is situated on the summit of the hill of that name, and at an elevation of 802 feet above sea level.

From this mountain many splendid views may be obtained. The whole surface of the Foyle is distinctly visible, so likewise is that of the Swilly. Erragil and the Gap of Barnismore, M’Gilligan and Beneveney, Tyrone and central Inishowen, are equally within the reach of vision.

The talented Colonel Blacker, who was the first to discover this ancient remains of Greinan, considers it to have been a temple for the worship of the sun, and supports his theory by argument and proof. The following is the accomplished Colonel’s description of it :—

“ To the casual observer the first appearance of the edifice is that of a truncated cairn, of extraordinary dimensions ; but, on a closer inspection, particularly since the clearing away of fallen stones, &c, which took place under my direction, it will be found a building constructed with every attention to masonic regularity, both in design and workmanship. A circular wall, of considerable thickness, encloses an area of eighty-two feet in diameter. Judging from the number of stones which have fallen on every side, so as to form, in fact, a sloping glacis of ten or twelve feet broad all round it, this wall must have been of considerable height—probably from ten to twelve feet—but its thickness varies—that portion of it extending from north to south, and embracing the western half of the circle, being but ten or eleven feet ; whereas, in the corresponding or eastern half, the thickness increases to sixteen or seventeen, particularly at the entrance. To discover this entrance was one of the first objects of my attention, and having directed a clearance to be made as nearly due east as possible, a passage was found, in breadth about 4 feet, flagged at the bottom with flat stones, equal in width to the opening itself, and filled with great regularity. This passage was covered with flags, of very large dimensions, which, however, we found fallen in ; the main lintel on the inner side was formed of a single stone, six feet 3 inches in length, and averaging fourteen inches square in thickness. Within the wall, to the right and left of this entrance (though not communicating with it), are carried two curious passages, about 2 feet wide by 4 feet in height, neatly covered at top with flags, in the same manner as the entrance. These passages extend through half the circumference of the building, terminating at the northern and southern points ; that running southward was found to communicate with the area, or interior of the place, by an aperture extremely disproportioned to the passage itself, being merely wide enough to permit the entrance of a boy ; this aperture is due south, and the passage, as it approaches the eastern part of the building, becomes gradually narrow, being not more than six inches wide at its termination adjoining the entrance. The approach to that gallery or passage, wending northward, appears to have been from above, there being no signs of an aperture communicating with the area, as in the case of the other passage just mentioned ; whereas, on clearing away the fallen stones, to the north-ward of the main entrance within the building, we discovered a staircase, eighteen inches wide, leading from the level of the area to the top of the wall. This passage extends to the northern point, but, differing from the other, it carries its breadth the entire way. On either side of the entrance passage, a few feet within, appears a square niche, or what masons would call a double revel of four inches deep. At first sight it seemed as if they had been the entrances to the two passages already mentioned, and which had been for some cause built up, but on examination this was found not to be the case ; they were evidently formed at the original building of the wall, and I am inclined to think may have served for the purpose of enabling those within to close the passage from above by means of something in the nature of a portcullis. From a careful examination of the wall in different places throughout its circumference, it appears to have been parapeted, the space between the parapet and the interior of the circle being (as was usual in amphitheatres) allotted to spectators, and accessible by the staircase already noticed. *In the centre of the area are the remains of the altar, or place of sacrifice, approached from the entrance to the building by a flagged pathway, which was discovered by raising the turf by which it is overgrown ;* around these are the ruins of a square building, but of comparatively modern construction—in fact, the place was resorted to by the Roman Catholics in the vicinity, for the purposes of worship, until some forty years back, when a small chapel for their accommodation was erected at the foot of the mountain—a certain proof of the *traditionary sanctity of the spot.* The stones of which the building is formed are of the common grey schistus, but evidently selected with considerable attention as to size ; and, considering their exposure to the Atlantic storms for so many centuries, the decomposition is wonder-fully small. In those parts of the wall which have been protected by the accumulation of the *debris* from above, the chiselling is yet sharp and the squareness perfect The

circumstance of its being a stone building adds considerably to the antiquarian interest which Greenan is calculated to excite.”

We beg to notify that at the base of the hill are several caves, which, no doubt, were associated with the structure on the summit We find, too, caves of a similar description associated with Druidical remains, some of which we shall notice presently. The caves at the base of Greinan hill, now blocked up, were described to Mr. and Mrs. Hall by a gentleman who entered them in 1838, as follows :—

“ The chamber into which we first obtained entrance is somewhat dilapidated, and appears to consist of the original apartment of the building, and of a sloping passage leading to it. It is much encumbered with loose clay and stones, and declines a good deal towards the lower extremity, where we were able to stand perfectly upright, although we were at first obliged to creep in on our hands and knees. The form of this chamber is oblong, or rather oval.

“ On the arrival of lanterns, we proceeded into the second apartment. The passages between the first and second, as well as between the second and third apartments, resemble much the mouth of a large pipe, or the apertures (called in Ireland ‘ Kiln-logies’) by which the fire is introduced into lime-kilns. These entrances are compactly built, of large stones, and they both decline a little towards their lower extremity—a remark which is also applicable to all three apartments. The second chamber is nearly circular, but approaches in form to the oval. Here, as in the other apartments, the floor is of clay, and the walls are regularly built of large stones, without mortar or cement of any kind, and incline perceptibly inwards at the top and bottom. In all these apartments the ceilings are composed of immense flags resting on the walls on either side, and smaller stones are advanced to support them in one or two instances where the flags were too abort to cover the whole extent. The stones employed in the construction of the building are the common schist of the country, intermixed with whin stones and some quartz. The walls were found by measurement to average about three feet in thickness. The passage between the second and third chambers branches off to the east, and is situated on the right, immediately as you enter from the first apartment. In the corner of the second chamber, between the two passages, and nearly on a level with the ceiling, there is built a recess in the wall answering to the purposes of a cup-board, and similar to the ‘boles’ which are placed in the walls of Irish cabins. The architecture is the same as that of the rest of the building ; it extends to the north east ; the entrance is nearly square, but the interior is circular. The floor of the third apartment is one foot eight inches below the end of the entrance passage, of which fact the first of us who crawled in was informed to his cost, as may readily be imagined. The third chamber runs parallel to the second—viz., due north and south, and its form and architecture are similar, except that perhaps the second apartment is more circular.”

Having said so much regarding Greinan and its vicinity, we will now state some of the reasons on which we have founded our opinion that it was not the royal residence. Its lofty and exposed situation in such a climate would render Greinan unsuitable for a dwelling-place. Colonel Blacker supposed, which supposition was adopted by Petrie, that the height of the wall was but 13 feet. Considering its circumference, then, it would have been impossible at that height to have closed it in with one stone at the top, or to have given it the bee-hive shape which Aileach is said to have had, as described in the poem of the *Dinnseanchus*. That description, therefore, whatever it is worth (and which, on the whole, we are inclined to believe is very fabulous) is not applicable to Greinan. Moreover, if the height of the walls was 13 feet, as stated by Colonel Blacker, and not contradicted by Petrie, the structure was unroofed ; consequently it could not have been a royal residence. Gratianus Lucius says stones were not used at first by the Milesians in their buildings, nor was their use then known

to the Britons and Gauls. Singular it is that the De Danians should have used them if the Britons did not. Ware says the judges of the Milesians were called "Brehons," and that they distributed justice and decided lawsuits in the open air and on high mount-ains ; also, that they had no walled cities ; that their houses were built of wood, and covered with thatch or straw. And again, that they always fought in the open air, had no fortified cities, and would have considered it as cowardice to conceal themselves behind walls in order to defend themselves against the enemy.

The Tuatha de Danains could not have used stones in the erection of their dwell-ings, otherwise the Milesians, who subdued them, would have adopted the custom at once. The royal residence of Aileach existed at the time of Ith's arrival in the country. It was then called Oileag-Nead. According to the Annals of the Four Masters, [10] Lough Foyle (or Loch-Feabhail) did not exist until 81 years after their arrival, consequently the passage in the poem of the *Dinnseanchus*, which says that Aileach was named after a stone carried from Lough Foyle, is a poetical fiction or an utter absurdity ; otherwise the annalists are in error ; or, this stone, carried from Lough Foyle, would have given a name which existed 81 years at least before Nature's formation of the Lough !

But why ascribe the introduction of cyclopean architecture, or the erection of the Druidical Temples, circles, cromleachs, and pillar stones, whose remains are observable in every district of Ireland, to the Tuatha de Danains ? Did they, whose authority in Ireland lasted for 197 years only, do all ; and the Milesians, who came 1,000 years before the Christian era, and who professed Druidical doctrines for 1500 years at least, do nothing in that respect ? The idea is simply incredible. Nearly so is the supposition that Greinan was constructed by the De Danains ; but if erected by them at all, it must have been for a temple of religion, or of justice, or for both, as their habitations were not constructed of stone, nor were their houses of that material in Cornwall or Anglesea, even when the country was first visited by the Romans, though their temples were, as, for example, that of Abury, near Marlborough, in Wiltshire, which was, indeed, in many respects like Greinan.

And well adapted was this hill for a temple of the Druids. From its lofty summit the smoke of the sacred fire could have been visible to devout worshippers from a distance as they turned in prayer to this cynosure of their affections. The caves, too, around its base are similar to those which exist in the vicinity of Druidical temples.

There can be little doubt, however, that the palace of Aileach stood in the towland of that name, at a distance of three miles from Greinan, and at the place where O'Doherty erected a castle in the fifteenth century, a fragment of which remains. The locality is fairly adapted for the purpose, and bears the signs of occupancy and cultivation from the most remote period. Its elevation is somewhat greater than the hill of Tara, being 248 feet above the level of the sea. It commands a sufficiently extensive view of Tirconnell. Lough Swilly, Inch, and the adjacent country. It is sheltered from the northern storms by the high ridges of the Scalp and the mountains of Iskaheen, and if not the site of Aileach castle, the patrimony of the kings who sprung from the royal race of Eoghan, a more eligible one could nowhere be found within the district. As corroborative of this view we may mention that when Prince Eoghan, who resided in Aileach, died of grief for the loss of his brother, the lord of Tirconnell, his body was buried in Iskaheen, which adjoins the townland above-named, as related in the Annals of the Four Masters.

The standing stone or pillar-stone, sometimes called Dalian, which means a spike, is believed to have been set up for various purposes. They sometimes stand singly ; but often in conjunction with the Cromleach, or Druidical circle ; they are also found in groups, in

straight lines, or forming triangles. The pillar stone was sometimes used as an object of worship ; at others for marking the place where a battle was fought, or where a chieftain was interred ; chieftains and princes were also inaugurated upon them, and they were used for making certain boundaries. On some there are Ogham inscriptions, circles incised on others ; and the Christian has incised the figure of the cross on more. At Cashel, in Glentogher, there are two of these pillar stones ; there is one in Ballyloskey, near the Workhouse, on the western face of which the figure of the Cross has been inscribed.

Convenient to this pillar stone, and beneath a portion of the Workhouse site, are subterranean caves somewhat similar to those at Greinan. Beside the stone, surrounded by a low wall and a few stunted thorns, is a small burying ground, known as Kilhride. This spot, therefore, was evidently regarded as sacred ground both in Pagan and Christian times.

If we except the cromlech of Magheramore, (at an altitude of 400 feet) previously noticed, Clonmany is remarkably deficient in Druidical remains ; but, on the confines of Donagh, traces of them begin again to appear. Thus, near Magheralahin, at the base of Cruicknagacosh, there is a pillar stone or *dallan* in this parish. South-west of it, at Ballybeg, in the parish of Donagh, is another ; a third one stands near the house of a man named Campbell, at a short distance from Straths Bridge. These three mark the angles of what would, be, very nearly, an equilateral triangle. A fourth one stands on the farm of Mr. John O'Donnell, of Glenmakee ; another triangle would be traced by lines connecting this stone with that at Ballybeg and at Campbells, and then again with each other. Within the latter figure, in the lands of Ardbarrack, there is a remarkable group of large stones which, likely, marks the grave of some person of distinction in times long past. It consists of one stone, about four feet in height, and four and one-half feet in breadth, standing on its edge erect. Beside this is another in a recumbent position, which, no doubt, was once erect also. On the ground, with its upper surface on a level with the soil, and one end in contact with the standing stone, is a third ; it is 7 feet long, 3 feet 4 inches broad, and 5 or 6 inches thick. Also, within this triangle, immediately behind Glassalts National School, and at a short distance from the spot last described, there is a green knoll in which is a series of caves. Two of these have been opened. The opening of one revealed a circular shaft of three feet in diameter, and seven feet in depth, cut through the solid rock. From the bottom of this shaft three openings, one to the north, one to the west, and one to the south, lead into as many different chambers. The northern and western chambers are each about 12 feet long by 5 feet broad, but, from the quantity of loose stones and rubbish thrown into them since they were opened, I cannot say with any degree of accuracy to what depth they have been cut. By stooping a little, however, a person can yet easily move through them. The southern chamber is of similar design, but smaller than either of the others. The second cave was not sunk so deep beneath the surface of the earth, and it is now almost filled with the same sort of rubbish as was cast into the first.

We now return to the parish of Culdaff, where so much remains of the pride of other days. At Carrowmore, near the site of the old monastery, (to be noticed here-after) there is a pillar stone, on which is incised a circle, and through this circle has been cut a figure of the cross. In an adjoining field, some few years ago, a stone coffin was discovered in turning up the ground. It consisted of flags laid across and closely adjoining each other, forming the bottom. Similar ones, in connexion with each other, formed the sides and top, and the ends were composed of a single stone to each. The coffin was six feet two inches in length, and when discovered contained the bones of a full grown person.

At Baskill are two upright stones supporting a horizontal one laid across from one to the other. [11] The name of this place implies that it was used as a burying ground, and that a

chapel, in which was performed the burial service, stood here. About four years ago a very curious subterranean cave, or rather series of caves, was discovered here by men quarrying stones. The entrance to the first compartment was by a circular aperture, 3 feet in diameter, leading downwards from the surface. It was closed by a flag. Descending through this aperture the walls of the cavern are found to be irregular. Its dimensions about 10 feet long, 7 feet broad, and 5 feet high. From the first, a rude Gothic arch, of about 2 feet in height, and the same in breadth at the base, cut through solid quartz rock, leads to the second. Crawling through this arch, the second is found to be much larger, but also irregular. Its dimensions are 30 feet by 10 by 6. Another passage like the first leads to a third cave, and so on to a fourth. Several opinions have been advanced as to the use for which these chambers were excavated. One theory is that they belonged to the antechristian period, and were used as burying places. This is not likely, as no remains were found in them. Another theory, and the most probable one, is that they were used as places of concealment.

The leading feature of the Druidical remains which have been described is, that associated with them we invariably find places of interment, some of which continued to be used after the introduction of Christianity, and subterranean caves. The latter seem to have served for places of concealment, or as depositaries for such property or valuables as were meant to be kept extra secure.

We may remark that considerable proficiency in the mechanical arts was necessary to enable the builders of these temples, &c., to construct them. They must have been accustomed to the use of the wedge, in order to split such large masses of stone in the quarries ; with that of the lever to move them along to their destination ; and with the inclined plane for the purpose of raising them to the required elevation.

The cairns, of which there were two kinds—the burying and the simple cairn, were also erected on high places, and on the latter class the fires of Baal used to be lighted on festival days. The burying cairn was the last resting-place of some mighty chieftain, or other illustrious person. At Umgal, parish of Cloncah, is shown one of these, said to be the grave of Ossian ; and in the neighbourhood are places bearing names similar to those mentioned in his poems.

In those early times, too, were erected the Lisses. Lis signifies a fortified house ; it was an artificial mound or hill, almost circular, with a flat top and an earthen rampart all around the summit. Inside this was the dwelling, which was secondly defended by a strong wattle paling, as is at present the practice among the Circassians. Inishowen has had its Lisses.

[1] The *Annals of the Four Masters* specify that the plain of Magh-tochair was cleared (of wood) in the reign of Nemedius, whose colony arrived in Ireland in the year 1154 B.C. Dr. O'Donovan says—"Magh-tochair means the plain of the Causeway. This was the name of a plain at the foot of Sliabh-Sneacht, *anglicè* Slieve Snaght, in the barony of Inishowen, and county of Donegal, which was anciently a part of Tir-Eoghain or Tyrone. The church of Domhnachmor-Muighe-tochair, near the village of Carndonagh, is referred to in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick as in this plain."

[2] *Ogygia*, part 2, p. 65.

[3] Mac-Geoghegan.

[4] *Ogygia*, part 3, chap. 9.

[5] This account of the Milesians is founded on statements contained in *Leavar-drom-sneachta*, or the White Book, cited by Keating, and which was written in the time

of Paganism.

[6] Oileag-Nead means, literally, *The Swanks Nest*.

[7] This is MacGeoghegan's account of it.

Dr. O'Donovan says—"Maighe-Ithe was the name of a place near Lough Swilly, in the barony of Raphoe, and county of Donegal ; but it is now obsolete. Magh-Ithe is the name of a plain in the barony of Raphoe, along the River Finn." He likewise says "Inishowen was anciently a part of Tir-Eoghain or Tyrone." Tir-Eoghain, of course, means, literally, the country or territory of Eoghain, not simply the present county Tyrone. The situation of the plain where Ith was wounded has given rise to some controversy. Some say it was Magh-Ith, along the river Finn ; others that it was in the county of Tyrone. It is most likely the incident in question occurred near Lough Swilly, in the place more anciently known as Maighe-Ithe ; not on the plain of the Finn, which seems to have been named after it ; nor in what is now known as the county of Tyrone ; though, doubtless, when Inishowen was part of Tir-Eoghain, Maighe-Ithe was also a part of it.

[8] From the Clanna-Rorys are descended the MacGinnises, the MacCartans, the O'Mordhans (O'More), O'Connors-Kerry, O'Loughlins, O'Farrells, MacGranuills or MacRanells, Mac-an-Bhairds (Wards), O'Lawlors, Magilligans, Scanlans, Brosnaghans, O'Cathils, O'Conways, Casies, Tiernys, Nestors, O'MacCachains, O'Lyns, O'Hargans, O'Flahertys, Dorcys, O'Huallachains, MacSheanloichs, O'Morrains, O'Rodachains (Rody), O'Doains, O'Mainings, MacGilmers, O'Kennys, O'Kenellys, O'Keithernys, MacEochaidhs, O'Carrollans, the Mac-an-Gaivnions (Smith), and others.—*MacGeoghegan's Ireland*, chap, 7, p. 118.

[9] From the Three Collas are descended the MacDonnells of Ireland and Scotland, the MacMahons, Maguires, O'Hanluans, Magees, O'Floinns-Tuirtre, O'Ceallaigs (O'Kellys), O'Maddins, O'Niallains, MacEagains, Neachtains, Shiehys, McDowels, Kerrins and Nenys.—*Mac Geoghegan's Ireland*, chap, 7, p. 118.

[10] Dr. O'Donovan's edition, Vol. I, pp. 25 and 41.

[11] It is highly probable that other stones, placed similarly, and forming a temple, existed in connexion with these. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that such was the form of the Druidical Temple of Stonehenge.

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