

The Land of Ir

*The
History of Ireland,
From The First Colonization Of The Country, Down To the Period Of
The English Invasion, Comprehending The Topography Of The Scenes
Of Battles, And Memorable Events, As Well As A Review
Of The Rise And Progress Of Irish Literature
And The Fine Arts.
In One Volume.*

By George Pepper.

“ PRAETERITORUM, MEMORIA EVENTORUM.”

“ Whate’er may be our humble lot,
By foes denounc’d—by friends forgot—
Thine is our soul—our sigh, our smile—
GEM OF THE OCEAN ! LOVELY EMERALD ISLE !”
Phillips.

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1835.

To
Daniel O’Connell Esq. M.P.
The Virtuos, Eloquent, And Incorruptible
Patriot,
Whose Illustrious and Matchless Services, In The Cause Of
Ireland,
Have Immeasurably Surpassed The Greatest Efforts Of His
Predecessors, Or Contemporaries :
And Whose Sublime And Roman-Like Integrity And Devotion To
His Beloved Country, Spurned, Offered Honors And
Emoluments, This Volume Of
The History Of Ireland,
Is Respectfully Dedicated,
By His Grateful, And Admiring Countryman,

GEORGE PEPPER.
Boston, June 1, 1835.

Introduction.

It has often been asked by foreigners, why a country justly boasting of her poets and orators, has not produced an able historian, who can be classed with a Voltaire, a Gibbon, or a Robertson ; and why the learning of an Usher, or the genius of a Swift, has left no historical monument to perpetuate the ancient glories of a nation, that in remote ages was styled, “ *Isle of learning, and the school of the west ?*” We confess our inability to answer the question satisfactorily.

Perhaps the primary cause of the desideratum, in our ancient history, may be principally ascribed to the zeal of St. Patrick, who, to the eternal loss of Irish literature, caused more than 500 volumes of our records to be committed to the flames at Tara. McDermott, Lynch, and Flanagan, are of opinion that Ossian's autographs blazed in the conflagration kindled by the Christian Missionary. Another cause of the scantiness of historical materials, may be fairly traced to the vile assiduity of Danish and English invaders, to annihilate all memorials of our ancient greatness, power, and grandeur.

Still it must be confessed, that the ancient chronology of all countries, as well as that of Ireland, is extremely erroneous and uncertain. What is the boasted alleged origin of the Greeks from the gods, but the creation of poetical fancy, the chimerical mythology of Hesiod, Homer, and other Grecian fabulists ?

Even in holy writ, there are the most irreconcilable anachronisms. The Septuagint and many of the fathers of the church, fix the period intervening the creation, and the vocation of Abraham, at 3513 years, whilst the Hebrews and many Christian ecclesiastics compute it but 2023 ! Varro, the Roman historian, finding it impossible to grope his way through the dark mazes of chronology, declared that the dates and epochs of all the events, said to have occurred before the first Olympiad, (i.e. the year after the creation, 3232,) were but the imaginary computations of fiction. We find that the Greeks began to reckon their historical eras by the Olympiads, and the Romans distinguished theirs by the period that elapsed from the foundation of the " ETERNAL CITY." Hence we are not to wonder at the discrepancy in the chronological order of ancient Irish events, particularly those that took place before the coming of our Melesian ancestors. The authenticity of the events enumerated in our annals, is at least as well established as that of the history of England, and the united testimony of foreign and native writers has fortified our pretension to remote antiquity, with evidence and arguments that cannot be impeached or subverted. The historic pillars that support the proud edifice of our illustrious origin, like those of Hercules, cannot be destroyed ; they, (thanks to our ancient Monks,) escaped the rage of the Danes, the fury of the Henries, and the Richards ; the rapacity and perfidy of the myrmidons of the sanguinary Elizabeth, and the ruthless and diabolical fanaticism of Oliver Cromwell. Some English and Scottish writers, actuated by rancorous prejudice, regard the whole of our traditional, and even our written records of early times, with a fastidious degree of incredulity. This unwarrantable scepticism, with which these writers are so incurably infected, may be justly imputed to their ignorance of the Irish language, and the consequent derision with which they treat of our historical events and circumstances ; and the impotent attempt, which they make to give them a fabulous aspect. But some of their own historians have denominated Ireland, "*the venerable mother of Britain and Albany.*" These sceptical writers seem to have adopted the maxim of Voltaire, in their opinions of Irish history—" that incredulity is the source of wisdom." The philosophic Lord Bolingbroke has indeed asserted, that it is an egregious folly to endeavor to establish universal pyrrhonism, in matters of historical investigation, because there are no histories without a mixture of facts and fictions. We think, however, that there is more truth in the opinion of the splendid moralist, Dr. Johnson, who steadily maintained that all the coloring of history was imparted by the pencil of fancy. How, then, can it excite surprise, if there are defects in the chronological arrangements of Irish history, when even in the present age of literature and philosophic light, we cannot find any two accounts of the same event perfectly in accordance, in the detail of their minute circumstances and leading features ? There is an anecdote related in the life of Sir Walter Raleigh, which throws a blaze of illustration on the subject. One morning, after his confinement in the Tower of London, by the order of the fanatic pedant, James I. while deeply engaged in reconciling the jarring and contrary accounts of various historians, respecting some noted transactions that had occurred in the early ages of the world, he was annoyed and disturbed by a fray which happened in the court-yard exactly

under his window. He was not able to see the transactions with his own eyes, so that he was anxious to obtain a narrative of it, from the first person that came into his apartment, who gave a circumstantial account of it, which he asserted to be correct, as he had seen, he said, the entire affair. In a few minutes after he had given his detail of the occurrence, another friend, Paul Pry-like, *dropped in*, who gave a different version of the disturbance, and just as his relation was finished, a third person entered, who asserted he was an eye-witness of the fracas, and his recital of it was as opposite and as contradistinguished as light and darkness, from the narratives of the two preceding observers. Sir Walter, astonished at the amazing discrepancy in their stories, exclaimed,—“ Good God ! how is it possible I can pretend to arrive at certainty, respecting events which happened 3000 years ago, when I cannot obtain a correct account of what happened under my window, only three hours since.”—Every province in Ireland had its historian, who kept its records, and every chief had his laureate and antiquarian ; for so late as the usurpation of Cromwell, we find that the famous Poet, McDairy, was the Bard of the Earl of Thomond. In a country where there was much competition among poets and historians, we must be so candid as to admit, that it is probable that, in order to swell the panegyric of their chieftains and patrons, they often decked their fame and exploits in the tinsel drapery of poetic imagination. “ As a question becomes more complicated and involved,” says the discriminating Doctor Hawkesworth, “ and extends to a greater number of relations, disagreement of opinion will always be multiplied, not because we are irrational, but because we are finite beings, furnished with different kinds of knowledge, exerting different degrees of attention.” But though a portion of fable has been infused into our early history, yet the credit that attaches to the events connected with the landing of the Milesian colony in A. M. 2736, and the transactions and circumstances of the subsequent ages, which intervened from that epoch, until the invasion of Henry II. are authenticated by historical evidence which cannot be impeached. [1]

The first materials of history must have been collected from national traditions, public inscriptions, and other authorities of a similar complexion ; and though the accounts delivered through the medium of popular legends, should even escape the tinge and alloy of hyperbolical exaggeration, yet the person who first recorded them, flattered with the novelty of being the original historian of his country, is naturally induced to exalt their character by the embellishments of style, and the coloring of poetry, in order to cover the barren field of incident with the verdure of imagination, and people it with heroes and heroines that never had existence. Succeeding historians, finding it difficult to separate fiction from fact, or perhaps in some instances, rather obeying the impulse of their desires than the approbation of their judgment, recorded all the fabricated accounts which they received with historical fidelity.

Though the ancient annals of Rome are replete with fiction, the Roman historians have drawn no line of distinction between the true and the fabulous part. Livy, the ablest and most candid of their historical writers, has admitted that it would be a kind of heresy against the dignity of a nation, to question the authenticity of its original records : he, therefore, omitted no fact, which he found sanctioned by antiquity. He seemed to be aware that truth was so blended and interwoven with invention, that it would be an endless, perhaps an insuperable task, to separate them :—but let us give his opinion in his own words—“ *Quæ ante conditam condendamve urbem poeticis magis decora fabulis, quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur, ea nec affirmare nec refellere ; in animo est.*” [2] The Milesians commenced their own immediate history with Phaenius, their great progenitor, and continued it with wonderful accuracy and fidelity, through the ages that elapsed from his time, until his remote descendants, Heber and Heremon, after the expiration of twenty-three generations, invaded Ireland, A. M. 2736. But we are not, in this introduction, to elucidate the inaccuracies of our chronology, nor could we, if we were inclined, light a torch, like our great and gifted country-

woman, LADY MORGAN, to show the reader the remains of our ancient renown and glory, mouldering in the catacombs of the Irish annals. There is not now in existence, and we say it unhesitatingly, any person who could write a better history of that country, of which she is the pride and the ornament, than her Ladyship. The profundity of her research—the flowery luxuriance of her style—the fervour of her patriotism—the philosophy of her investigations—and, above all, the intimate acquaintance which she has with the language in which Ossian sung, and Brian Boroihme bade defiance to his foes, would enable her to reflect the concentrated rays of these brilliant combinations, on a HISTORY OF IRELAND, that would wither the laurel wreaths, with which the historic Muse entwined the brows of a Gibbon, a Hume, and a Henry.

It must surely have excited surprise in the minds of the inquisitive readers, that while we have numberless histories of England and Scotland, adapted to popular use, no successful attempt has been made, since the days of the Irish Livy, O'HALLORAN, to familiarize the reading world with the events of Irish history, by presenting its records in a commodious and economical form. Yet it will not be denied, that the occurrences which took place in Ireland, during the last two centuries, and especially since the accession of George III. to the present time, demand the attention of the philosopher and the historian—furnishing, as they do, moral lessons, from which not only they, but the statesmen of the world, might derive wisdom, experience, and instruction ; for to form a just and impartial estimate of her present character, they must know something of her past greatness, and present degradation ;—her wrongs, persecutions, and injuries, which may be pronounced as flagitious, as ever the most wicked and tyrannic oppressors inflicted on a nation, to depress her spirit, sap her moral energies, and deteriorate her inherent and indigenous virtues. The picture presented by such mercenary Irish apostates, as Dr. Thomas Leland, the Rev. Mr. Gordon, Sir Richard Musgrave, Barlow, Taylor, and the late renegade, Dr. O'Connor, [3] (the, degenerate grandson of the celebrated and patriotic author of the "*Dissertations on Irish History*,") who, like a parricide of his country's fame, sold all the manuscripts of his venerable grandfather, to the Duke of Buckingham, in whose sepulchral library, at Stowe, " they rot in state," is distorted in its outline by venality, and heightened in its coloring by exaggeration, so that it bears no resemblance to the original. While, however, we denounce these hired traducers of their native land, let us not withhold merited praise from the venerable Keating, the learned O'Halloran, the impartial Dr. Warner, (an Englishman) the acute O'Flaherty, the erudite Bishop Usher, the sympathetic and intelligent Curry, the eloquent Lawless, the zealous Taaffe, the accomplished McDermott, the classic Dalton, and " though last not least," the elegant and efficient vindicator of the aspersed Irish, Mr. Plowden, whose history of Ireland, in all the great historical essentials, is superior to any similar production extant. All these historians have contributed materially to illuminate the *antique* darkness of our annals ; but their works do not embrace those topics, which the ample materials in our hands will enable us to introduce in our History.

The American readers, who may honor this history with a perusal, will be astonished at the record of our discords and civil warfare in feudal times. But we must inform them that martial glory was the goal of the ancient Irish warrior's ambition :—for him the sweets of peace and domestic happiness, had no charms or allurements. The inspiring songs of the bards, and the siren voice of anticipated military fame, hurried him to the field of combat, where distinction and renown could only be obtained, and the laurels of celebrity gathered. The chieftain was sure of being branded with degradation, who would loiter in the soft lap of luxury and inglorious pleasure. To be generously brave, is surely no proof of savage barbarity : and that such was the chivalric bravery of the Milesian Irish, will appear evident, when history assures us, that none of our monarchs ever survived the misfortune of a defeat in battle, except Malachy II. who fled from the glorious conflict of Clontarfe. Let us peruse the

history of the Romans, and it will exhibit a scene of eternal warfare, in which dissension and civil broils are perpetually mingled with foreign conquests. The Grecian states carried the glory of arms to the highest pitch of ambition, at the same time that they termed all other nations barbarians. Athens and Sparta wasted their strength in destroying each other, and yet they were considered the most elegant and polished people in the Grecian Republics ; nor was the soul-moving Demosthenes deemed a barbarian, when he, by his animating harangues, excited his countrymen to arms, and with —

“————— Resistless eloquence,
Wielded, at will, the fierce democracy ;
Shook the arsenal, and fulminated over Greece—
To Macedon—and Artaxerxes’ throne !”

It is, therefore, evident, that wars and civil commotions are no proofs of a deficiency of refinement of manners, or enlightenment of civilization, and however derogatory they may be to the precepts of religion, and the injunctions of morality, they still exhibit a theatre where all the higher powers of the mind are called into action—where the victor is disarmed of his enmity, by the pleadings of compassion, and the fortunate conquerer laments over the fallen foe.

But perhaps we have already extended this introduction to prolixity ; but we must of necessity carry it a little farther in order to define our plan. We are aware of the important task we have assigned ourself, and of the difficulty that will attend the writing of a comprehensive HISTORY OF IRELAND. We have indeed an abundance of materials, which we hope by industry and assiduity, to arrange with historical skill, and to combine information and instruction in our work, which will furnish a succinct narrative of all the memorable events that occurred in Ireland from the arrival of Partholanus, down to the present year. Nothing shall be omitted that deserves to be remembered. In relating the merits and demerits of memorable actions, we shall endeavor to trace them to the motives from which they originated—to elevate such as were consecrated by laudable intention, to their just eminence of moral celebrity, and to stamp such as sprang from the source of turpitude, with the stigma of reprobation. We will bring the cotemporary authority of English and Scottish writers to our aid, in dissipating the mists of prejudice, in which some of their countrymen obscured our fair fame and character. We shall let Americans see what Erin *once was*, for what she is, alas ! is known to the world. She has been the victim of English calumny, and it is generally in that deceitful mirror of misrepresentation, that she is even now reflected in America. We shall do all we can to subvert the baseless system of English and Scottish defamation—and to defend the ancient historic structure of Ireland, which we contemplate with the inalienable sympathies of hereditary affection, from the assaults of prejudice and incredulity.

We will give a fair, and we hope, an impartial history of Ireland ; though candor obliges us to confess, that when we come to detail the wrongs and persecutions of our native land, we cannot help speaking with warmth ; for he that would merit the title of quite an impartial historian, should, like Imlac’s Poet, divest himself of all the passions, feelings, and prejudices of his age and country.

In our history we shall give a luminous review of the literature, manners, and customs of the Irish people, embracing an inquiry into the merits of their genius, eloquence, valor, and characteristics, as well as specimens of the forensic and senatorial displays of Grattan, Curran, Burke, Sheridan, Burgh, Flood, O’Connell, Plunket, Sheil and Phillips.

I.

An Inquiry into the causes from whence Ireland derived the various names by which she has been distinguished in ancient times ; the reason to which she owes the origin of her present appellation. The arrival of the first Colony in Ireland, under the command of PARTHOLANUS, of Migdonia, in Greece. The Rivers and Lakes found in the Island, by this Scythian Colony, with remarks on them.

Name. In proceedings to give a History of Ireland, we think that we cannot take a preliminary step in our arduous undertaking, more conducive to facilitate our progress, than to give a compendious relation of the various names by which Ireland was distinguished in our ancient annals, and in the writings of Grecian and Roman poets and historians.

The noblest purpose to which history can be applied, is to extend our acquaintance with the human character, and to give free exercise to our judgment on human affairs. In deducing the History of Ireland from its first colonization, and tracing the foundation of our nation back to its remote origin, it is necessary that we should adduce every historical evidence that can strengthen the basis on which the proud edifice of our high pretension to illustrious antiquity rears its elevated towers. There are few, in this age of light and literature, who will conform to David Hume's favorite doctrine, "that nations should not push their researches too far into the exploits and adventures of their ancestors," which he thinks, "should be suffered to remain in oblivion."

Convinced, as we are, that the early period of our history presents traits of character, examples of valor and virtue, and monuments of genius, which the annals of Greece or Rome, in the most refined and enlightened ages of their triumph, can scarcely parallel, we shall expatiate with unwearied pleasure on the glory and grandeur that distinguished Ireland under her illustrious Monarchs, during those centuries of her greatness and renown, that preceded the disastrous epoch, which stands accursed in Erin's calendar, THE INVASION of HENRY II., in 1172.

But let us proceed to enumerate the different names by which the land of Bards and Orators was known in the "olden time." The first name, according to Bishop Hutchinson and Raymond, bestowed upon Ireland, was "*Inis Ealga*," in honor of Ealga, the wife of Partholan, the great founder of our nation. This was the appellation of Ireland until the country was invaded by the *Tuatha de Dananns*, whose chief called it EIRE, after his lady ; hence ERIN. The descendants of this colony, in process of time, changed the name of the country to *Innisfail*, from an enchanted stone, said to be part of Jacob's pillar, which they brought to Ireland. This continued to be the name of the nation until the Milesians subverted the dominion of the Danans, and gave Ireland the nomenclature of the Queen of Milesius— "SCOTIA." A great discrepancy of opinion prevails amongst our most learned writers, on the etymology of HIBERNIA. Bishop Usher and Raymond agree in deriving this name from the river Iberius, in Spain, whence the Milesians came to Ireland ; while Ledwich and Harris contend that the term is borrowed from a Greek compound word, which signifies *a western country*. Doctor Keating seems inclined to impute the origin of the title *Hibernia*, to Heber, the son of Milesius, one of the first of our Milesian monarchs.

The learned Bochart's conjecture on this disputed question assumes a great air of probability : "*Hibernia*," says he, plainly seems Phœnician ; for this term, by some called Ierne, is no more than Ibernæ, or, the furthest habitation westward." Sir James Ware concurs in this hypothesis. Cæsar, Pliny, and Tacitus called Ireland by the name of Hibernia, "which

means," says Camden, "the most remote country of Europe, westward." Strabo talks of Hibernia, as a woody country in the Atlantic Ocean.

But let us inquire whence the derivative of the present name of our country—IRELAND. Camden cites Orpheus, the poet of Thrace, as an author who gives the most ancient and decisive testimony of the name of Ireland; he says, the son of Apollo calls it *Ierna*, and our learned countryman. Bishop Usher, exultingly observes, that, "the Roman people were not able to produce so ancient a witness of their name." We think, with Dr. Keating, that the etymological origin of the term *Ireland*, may be traced back to *Ir*, one of the sons of Milesius, who was buried at Colp, near Drogheda: the place of his sepulture was called the *land of Ir*, from which, in process of time, the whole Island received the general name of *Irlandia*, signifying, in the Irish language, the country of Ire's grave. Sir William Temple is of opinion, that the name *Ireland* is derived from the river *Ierne*. Plutarch calls Ireland *Ogygia*, which signifies "*the most ancient Isle*." Some of our ancient historians have marshalled a host of arguments, tending to prove that Ireland was the Isle of Calypso. Eminent Roman writers have called Ireland, *Juverna*. But it is time that we should conduct our readers out of the barren field of etymology and conjecture, into the spacious region of historical narrative.

ARRIVAL OF PARTHOLANUS. Although creditable annalists have asserted, that Ireland was first peopled by the nephews of Noah, immediately after the flood, our learned antiquarians discard the story as the fiction of the Bards. But all our historians have impressed the seal of authenticity on the following record of the first colonization of Ireland.

According to the concurrent testimony of the annals of Erin, Partholanus, the son of Seara, the son of Sru, the son of Easru, the son of Framant, the son of Fathocda, the son of Magog, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, was compelled to fly from his country, Migdonia, in Greece, to evade the punishment with which justice threatened to visit him, for the murder of his parents, and his attempt to assassinate his brother, in order that he might reach the goal of his ambition, the supreme command. In his flight to the coast, where ships were prepared by his adherents, to transport him from the scenes of his guilt, he was accompanied by his wife *Alga* or *Elga*, his three sons, Rughraidhe, Saigne, and Laughline, with their three wives, together with one thousand soldiers, who volunteered to share in his fortunes. Having been fortunate enough to surmount the perils of a long and tedious voyage, he at length readied the coasts of Ireland, wafted thither, more probably, by the caprice of winds, or the sport of tempests, than by any previous knowledge which he had of the geographical situation of the Island, or the skill of his mariners in navigation. Our annals tell us, that he effected a landing in Derry, which he and his followers then called *Inbher Sceine*. This memorable event, according to the "*Book of Invasions*" occurred in the year of the world 1956, three hundred years after the flood. Mr. O'Flaherty, in his *Ogygia*, fixes, on the authority of *Clitan Mac Noisk*, the date of the arrival of Partholanus, in 1969, a difference, however, of little consequence in matters of such remote antiquity. The most incredible story recorded by the Partholanians, is, that on their arrival there were but three lakes and nine rivers in Ireland; but that before the death of Partholanus, a period of thirty years after his arrival, seven more new lakes bursted forth, and three rivers gushed from the mountains of Ulster. Doctor O'Halloran conjectures that the lakes and rivers discovered by Partholanus, were those in that part of the country first occupied by the colony; but as the woods were cut down, and cultivation extended, the new lakes and rivers, which the people discovered in the forests, were recorded in the national annals at the precise time of their discovery. Be this as it may, the accuracy with which they are mentioned, sufficiently evinces the scrupulous regard that our early writers paid to those minute circumstances which composed the detail of their simple story. There is no history extant, should be less alloyed with the dross of fiction than that of Ireland; because it is a fact attested by writers of unquestionable veracity, that the *national*

annals were always preserved in the archives of the state. O'Flaherty, Lynch, and Colgan, agree in stating that the government employed the chief Bards of the nation, to correct the national records before the assembled states, at TARA, so that the stream of genuine history might run down pure and pellucid to posterity. "The productions of the annalists," says the acute and erudite WARNER, "were to undergo the solemn test and sanction of the great council of the nation, in a triennial parliament or convention, where such accounts only as were deemed worthy of credit, were approved, and a memorial of them entered into the register of that high court. If any authors were found perverting the truth or imprudently prostituting it, in order to serve the purposes of a party ; misrepresenting unfortunate or defeated virtue, contracting or concealing undoubted facts, with the same perverse intention of prejudicing fallen patriots, who had no other than historical evidence for their vindication, in such cases the authors were degraded, and made liable to the penalties inflicted by a law against occasional and incendiary historians. Surely this ordinance of the ancient Irish legislatures, gives a great idea of the wisdom of this people, and an authenticity to their history, which is to be given, I believe, to no other nation under the sun." That all the volumes of our ancient history, which ST. PATRICK, in the enthusiasm of his zeal for Christianity, committed to the flames at Tara, A. D. 440, were the pure and unmixed essence of TRUTH, there can be no question.

But it is time to return from this digression, to the Lakes of the Parthoianians. Doctor Hutchinson, late Bishop of Down and Connor, in his defence of Irish historians, has taken much pains to defend this part of our history, and maintains with a strong bulwark of argument and ingenious reasoning, the probable truth of the accounts transmitted to us of these lakes and rivers, "which are," he says, "so far from discrediting the authenticity of our annals, that they not only afford strong proofs of the reality of the facts, but that those who recorded them were wise men, who wrote them for the instruction of posterity, that they might know which way nature moved. The most eminent Geographers tell us of more and greater new lakes than these, which have covered the low lands in many other countries." The Doctor confirms this observation by many instances ; and indeed it does not seem difficult to conceive that if even in our own times, the harmony of nature is often disturbed, and her laws interrupted, and this harmony must have been much more liable to tumultuary emotions, at so early a period after the flood, when the earth was convulsed to its very centre, and the equi-poise of the Globe consequently vacillating.

Partholanus, we are told, suspected the fidelity of his wife, who is represented, by some writers, to have been a woman of extreme beauty, which led him to confine her supposed gallant, (one of his officers,) in a cave. The reign of Partholanus is not represented to us marked by any memorable events. This is what might naturally be expected from the settlement of a few adventurers ; and if our annals have thrown a shade of importance over it, they would have been more liable to suspicion. Indeed we find an account, not at all authenticated, in M'Dermott's history of Ireland, which states that, "An African Colony resided in the Island, previous to the arrival of Partholanus, who lived by fishing and hunting. They were under the command of Ciocal, the son of Nin, the son of Garbh, the son of Nadhmoiar. A desperate and decisive engagement is stated to have taken place between them and Partholanus, soon after his arrival, at a place called *Muigh Jotha*, where Ciocal, the son of Nin, and the greater part of his followers were destroyed. Doctor Warner and O'Halloran regard the story of the African Colony as the dream of poetic fiction. The Partholanians cut down all the woods, and extended tillage and pasturage over the whole Island.

Partholanus reigned thirty years, and at his death left his kingdom to four sons, who were born in Ireland, Er or *Ire*, Orba, Fearn, and Fergna ; the three sons whom he brought from Greece having died since his arrival. Slainge died in the thirteenth year of his reign, and was

interred in the side of a mountain, in the county of Down, from him denominated Sliabh Slainge, or the mountain of Slainge. Two years after, Laughline died, and from the circumstance of his being buried in the vicinity of a Lake in West Meath it received the name of Loch-Laughline. In the 25th year of his reign, Rughruidhe was drowned in a lake, in the County of Sligo. The scrupulous attention which our annals have paid to the names of places, is a strong and conclusive testimony of their truth.

The simplicity of such statements can never be reconciled to the spirit of romance and fiction. To describe so many men, observes Warner, “to point out their manners, to paint their persons, to relate their adventures, and make a circumstantial recital of their families, seems beyond the power of fiction.” In the hyperbolic narrative of the imagination, nothing but the marvellous can please : nothing but great and perilous disasters, the revolutions of power, the ruin of empires ; the rapid strides of conquest ; the feats of chivalry, and the brilliant execution of the steel clad warrior ; in a word, nothing but what is glorious in its design, and grand in its progress, like the splendid career of a Napoleon, can be admitted into the fanciful creation of the legendary romancer. In all the statements respecting the colony of Partholanus we perceive nothing but what is suited to real life, and to the origin of an infant Colony, totally unacquainted with civil and political transactions. There are no reports whatever, in these early records, that are belied by the circumstances of time and place. Human nature appears in her native dress, or more properly without any dress, such as she appears in countries secluded from the polish and adventitious modification of artificial society ; and yet an *Innis*, a *Hume*, a *Mac Pherson*, and our own apostate *Ledwich*, have had the unblushing effrontery to assert, that the accounts of Partholanus have been invented by our Bards and Monks, to gratify the “*pride of ancestry and national honor*.” Our history furnishes a “plain unvarnished tale,” unadorned by that affectation of “*national vanity and high born ancestry*,” to which *Innis*, in his “*critical essay, on the ancient Inhabitants of North Britain*,” ascribes our high pretensions to “illustrious antiquity.” But when we carry this history to the age of *Ossian*, we will endeavor to answer the objections of cavilling critics. The Monks, who are supposed to have fabricated our annals, would have found it extremely easy to exalt the character of Partholanus, the Romulus of Ireland, by uniting in his person all those conspicuous and ennobling qualities that emanate from heroism—from bravery, magnanimity, and God-like virtue ; all the varied excellencies of the son of Venus and Anchises might have been easily conferred upon him, and the national pride thus flattered by the high endowments of an imaginary hero. But instead of this we find him described as an infamous parricide, a wretch, who not content with spilling the blood of his parents, attempted to deepen the enormity of his remorseless turpitude, by sacrificing his brother’s life on the diabolical altar of Fratricide. Surely if the Monks coined this story, in the mint of invention, we are sorry, for the honor of our early ancestors, that it has obtained such historical currency.

The sovereignty, as we have already observed, was transmitted, at the death of Partholanus, to his four sons—Ire ruled over the north east part of the kingdom ; his southern limits extended to Dublin. Orba’s dominion comprehended the country from Dublin to the Isle of Barrymore in Munster ; Fearn had sway from Barrymore to Galway ; and Feergus’ possessions included the range of territory that lies from thence to the northern extremity of Ulster. Partholanus had, also, ten legitimate daughters, to whom, on their marriage with distinguished chiefs, lands were appropriated. We had almost omitted to mention, that when Partholanus landed in Ireland, he had, in his retinue, four learned men, one Poet Laureate, two Druids, and a sculptor. The Partholanians governed Ireland for three hundred years, at the end of which period a dreadful plague broke out which proved fatal to almost the entire of the colony. The Psalter of Cashel says that the contagion was peculiarly destructive at Ben-heder, (now Howth,) near Dublin, so much so that Howth was the burial place of some thousands of the Partholanians, who perished by the sweeping mortality, from which circumstance, says

the book of conquests, it was ever after called *Taimhleacht Muinter Phartholan*, or the cemetery of the race of Partholan. In the sixth century, St. Fenton erected a church in Howth, dedicated to St. Mary, which was in good preservation until the reign of Elizabeth, when it was plundered and destroyed, by her sacrilegious and sanguinary myrmidons. Howth, though now stripped of trees, was, we are informed by history, formerly covered with venerable oaks, which shaded a Druidical temple, as the remains of such an edifice are still to be seen in one of its sequestered valleys.

Before closing this chapter we should, perhaps observe, that some antiquarians have gravely asserted, that the Partholans were not the first who discovered Ireland. This honor they gave to Adhna, the son of Beatha, a messenger sent by Nion the son of Pelus, to ascertain the quality of the Irish soil. On reaching the Island, he found it clothed with the most luxuriant verdure, and brought back to his master a bunch of the rank grass, which he had plucked, as a proof of its fertility.

II.

The arrival of a second colony from Greece, under the command of NEMEDIUS, in Ireland.

The Africans and, infant Colony contend in several battles, for the dominion of the country ; the Nemedians are finally defeated, and compelled to retire to Greece.

A. M. 2286. KEATING and O'FLAHERTY concur in relating that all the Partholans were annihilated by the destructive plague which we mentioned in the last chapter, and that in consequence, the country lay waste and desolate for thirty years, until it was visited by a horde of African pirates, who took up their residence in it, and erected fortifications along the coast to protect them from the descent of other predatory rovers.

Nemedius, who, we are told, was descended from *Adhla*, an infant son, whom Partholanus left after him in Greece, prepared in the Euxine sea, a fleet with which he determined to follow the fortunes of his ancestors in Ireland. The motive that induced him to quit his native land, and fit out this expedition, is not recorded in our annals. This armament was very formidable; it consisted of thirty-four ships, each of which was manned by thirty marines. He landed on the coast of Ulster, (but where, we are not informed,) without opposition from the Africans. Besides his wife Macha, he brought to Ireland his four sons, Starn, Iarbanel, the prophet Feargus, and Ainnin.

Having established himself in the country without molestation from his African rivals, he selected a beautiful valley, where the city of Armagh now stands, in which he prepared to build two palaces [4] for himself and his retinue. Four African architects, who it seems had made a greater progress in the arts than his Grecian followers, were employed in the erection of these palaces, which they finished with such exquisite skill and elegance as excited the admiration of Nemedius ; but whether from ignoble feelings of envy, caused by those artists having surpassed the Grecians, in genius and execution, or from the apprehension that these accomplished architects might raise other edifices, exceeding his in magnificence and style, he had the baseness to order them to be assassinated.

Soon after the Court of Nemedius was removed to the new palaces, MACHA, the wife of this Chief, died, and from the mound of earth that was raised, as a monument over her grave, Armagh derives its name ; *Ardmacha*, signifying in Irish, *Macha's eminence*. Nemedius, while at peace with the Africans, made great improvements in Ireland ; several wilds were cultivated, and twelve forests were cut down. At this juncture, if we can credit Keating, four large lakes sprung up suddenly, and overflowed a great extent of the country. The Africans

looked with a jealous eye on the progress of the Nemedians, in their rapid acquisition of territory. A pretext for coming to an open rupture was soon seized upon by both parties. Hostilities were quickly commenced between them, and they engaged fiercely in three successive battles, in which the Africans were vanquished, and three of their principal leaders slain. The Nemedians, flushed with victory, resolved to drive the whole African race out of the Island. The Africans, aware of the resolution of their enemies, bravely determined to contend for the game of empire with desperate valour. Intrenching themselves in an advantageous position, they waited the attack of the Nemedians, to which they opposed a gallant resistance, that dismayed and deterred their assailants. Nemedius, exasperated at this formidable front, put himself at the head of his best troops, made an impetuous assault on the enemy's centre, but without effect ; the Africans now rushed forward on their foes, who began to give ground, and the conflict became general ; the engagement lasted many hours, both parties fighting with desperation, but at length fortune favored the Africans. Nemedius was totally defeated, and his army almost annihilated. Two of his sons, Starn and Ainnin, fell in the sanguinary battle. The fatal result of this conflict broke the spirit and blasted the hopes of Nemedius, nor did he long survive the disaster, for exhausted with grief and disappointment, he died at *Arda Neimhid*, now the Isle of Barrymore, in the county of Cork.

The Africans determined to avenge the different losses which they had sustained, on the shattered remains of the Nemedians, imposed a heavy tax on them, which was to be paid on the first of November, at a place called *Mag Gceidne* or the plain of violence. But the chief of the Nemedians rendered indignant by the enormity of this exaction, conspired with others, to shake off the odious yoke of despotism, and make one bold and vigorous effort to regain liberty and independence.

The Chieftains of the Nemedians at this time, were Fathach, the son of Nemedius, his brother Feargus, and Beothach, their nephew, noble spirits, of daring, fortitude, and chivalric bravery. They soon marshalled a force, with which they attacked their oppressors, and the success that crowned their arms was such as might be expected from the union of resolution and courage, animating men that fought for victory or death. In this irresistible assault, Conning, the African General, two of his sons, and the greater part of his army fell by the edge of the sword, and many of his fortified garrisons surrendered to the conquerors. But scarcely had the Nemedians enjoyed a momentary triumph under the laurels of victory, ere new dangers darkened the transient brightness of their exultation. More, the son of Dal, a powerful naval commander, who was abroad on an expedition for some time, returned with his fleet, at the moment his countrymen were preparing to evacuate Ireland.

When the Africans perceived the approach of the fleet, hope banished despair, while the Nemedians hastened to the shore of Tor Inis, to oppose the landing of More and his forces, conscious that if they failed in obstructing the landing of this chief and his hosts, their dominion in Ireland was lost. More's ships not being able to come near enough to the shore of Donegal, he caused his soldiers to descend into the waves in order to encounter the Nemedians, who boldly advanced through the water to attack their foes. The engagement was so fierce and obstinate, so prolonged and terrible, that both armies were unconscious of the swelling tide, that raised its waves to their middle, till they were borne away by the current, so that those who escaped the sword were drowned.

In this conflict the entire army of the Nemedians, except thirty officers and three commanders, perished. The African chief, with a few soldiers regained his shipping, and then with the wreck of his forces, took possession of the country.

The forlorn remains of the Nemedians were now reduced to the necessity of submitting to whatever terms their African masters thought proper to dictate, or to seek their fortune in other climes ; to the latter alternative they almost unanimously inclined. They prepared a fleet as soon as possible, and under the command of Simon Breac, the grand son of Nemedius, set sail for Greece, the country of their fathers, where, on their arrival, they met but a cold and unkind reception from their relatives, who, instead of alleviating their misfortunes, spurned them with contempt and scorn. Another grandson of Nemedius', Briotan Maol, with his followers, landed in the north of Scotland, and there settled, and his posterity, for many ages, were possessors of the country, as well as England, as far as Bristol. The Psalter of Cashel confers upon this Nemedian chief, the honor of giving name to Britain, which before was called the " Great Island."

This etymology is sanctioned by a great number of our antiquarians, and is certainly entitled to more credit than the fable of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who wished to derive the term Britain from Brutus, the Trojan, a claim so unfounded as to be rejected even by his own countrymen.

The few Nemedians who remained in Ireland, were subjected to every hardship and privation, by their cruel task masters, the Africans, until the Firbolgs invaded the Island. The period of time that elapsed, according to Keating and Lynch, from the colonization of Nemedius to the landing of the Belgae, was 217 years, though O'Flaherty, through mistake, assigns a rule of 216 years to the Nemedians, in Ireland. Dr. O'Halloran, with his usual penetration, satisfactorily proves the anachronism of the author of Ogygia.

[1] Vide Bede, Warner, Whitaker, Laing, Lloyde, Smith, Camden, Vallancy, &c.

[2] It is not my intention to maintain, nor yet to deny those accounts that have been transmitted to us. prior to the foundation and building of the city, as they may probably be vested in the drapery of poetic invention, rather than founded by truth on the basis of uncorrupted history, or arrayed in the modest garb of fact.

[3] See Plowden's historical letter to Columbanus, and McDermott of Coolovin's statement in relation to these manuscripts.

[4] These Palaces were, General Valiancy supposes, the first structures of stone erected in Ireland. The Palace of Tara was built by Heremon, the first of our Milesian Kings, in A. M. 2737. Its order of architecture was Ionic, and the marble of its colonnade was brought from Italy. The Palace of Emania, in the county of Armagh, the hereditary seat of the illustrious O'Neils, was the next structure in magnificence and beauty, to Tara. It was erected by Crombkaoth O'Neil, monarch of Ireland, A. M. 3539.

The history of Ireland, from the first colonization of the country, down to the period of the English invasion, comprehending the topography of the scenes of battles, and memorable events, as well as a review of the rise and progress of Irish literature and the fine arts .. (1835)

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