

# Ancient History of Ireland

HISTORY

OF THE

CIVIL WARS OF IRELAND.

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*Political Condition of the Country at the Time of the Anglo-Norman Invasion.*

The pretensions of the Irish to an antiquity more remote than that of other Europeans, and their claims of being descended from the most powerful and enlightened of the Eastern nations, have been attacked and defended with a zeal and vigour beyond the laws of literary controversy. In this contest, the cause of Irish history has suffered far more from the extravagant claims of its advocates, than from the fiercest assaults of its opponents. The suspicious particularity of the more remote incidents, and the still more suspicious coincidence of the epochs with the received system of chronology, are gravely quoted as proofs of genuine antiquity, while, in fact, they are decisive evidences of falsification. The materials from whence the historians have compiled their narratives, were the songs of the bards, the genealogies of the sennachies, and the popular legends current in their day ; and it is manifest that such records must have been replete with errors and defects, and, above all things, must have contained little or no reference to dates and eras. The monks of Ireland, in the middle ages, seem to have surpassed their brethren of Britain in the art of fabricating history. The latter went no higher than the days of Brute the Trojan ; but the former boldly ascended to the days of Adam, and brought his grand-daughter to Ireland with a numerous colony, before the primitive race had yet degenerated into crime. The intervention of the deluge might have been supposed to throw some difficulties in the way of this hopeful legend ; but for this a remedy was easily provided—one fortunate individual was saved in the western world, to relate the circumstances of that great event to the next band of colonists who arrived in the country. The new settlers could boast of an origin equally illustrious : they were Greeks, under the guidance of Partholanus, whose genealogy from Noah is traced with edifying accuracy. After this, several new tribes arrive from places equally illustrious ; but their fame is absorbed in the superior glory of the Milesian colony, whose arrival in Ireland is dated previous to the Argonautic expedition ; that is, before Greece had even a traditional history ! The history of the Milesians before their arrival in Ireland, is detailed at length in the Irish legends. They were, it appears, a Phœnician branch of the vast Scythic nation, to which the greatest revolutions in ancient and modern times have been generally ascribed. Phenius, the chief legislator of the tribe, having invented letters, and some important arts of civilized life, acquired great fame in the neighbouring nations, and the Egyptian king sent ambassadors to his court. Niul, the son of Phenius, progenitor of the O'Neill family, was sent with a numerous train to return the compliment, and so highly pleased Pharaoh, that he obtained his daughter in marriage, and a fertile tract on the banks of the Egyptian river as her dowry. From him the river Nile takes its name ; and from him Egypt derived all that knowledge which in subsequent ages entitled her to be named the parent of civilization. Shortly after this the Exodus occurred; and the Phœnicians treated the departing Israelites with so much generosity, that the silence of Moses on the subject is a matter perfectly unaccountable. The Egyptians who survived the calamity of the Red Sea, were indignant at the kindness shown to the Israelites. They expelled the Phœnicians from their territories; and, after a long course of wandering, in which they successively established themselves in Crete, in Africa, and in Spain, they at last landed in Erin, bringing to that favoured country the knowledge of letters, and the elements of civilization,

long before Greece had emerged from barbarism, or Italy received the arts of social life. When attempts are made to impose such a wild romance as this on the world for history, it is no wonder that the whole mass of the Irish annals should be rejected with disgust, and that the few important truths which are mixed up with a mass of similar fictions, should share in the merited condemnation such legends must inevitably meet.

There is really no authentic history of Ireland before the introduction of Christianity into the country ; but there are some genuine traditions which appear to be based in truth, because they accord with and explain the peculiar customs which were found to prevail in the island at the time of the English invasion. These traditions declare, that the original Celtic inhabitants were subdued by an Asiatic colony, or at least by the descendants of some Eastern people, at a very remote period : they aver, that the conquerors were as inferior to the original inhabitants in numbers, as they were superior in military discipline and the arts of social life : they describe the conquest as a work of time and trouble ; and assert, that, after its completion, a hereditary monarchy and a hereditary aristocracy were for the first time established in Ireland. It has been judiciously remarked by Faber, that, “ in the progress of the human mind, there is an invariable tendency not to introduce into an undisturbed community a palpable difference between lords and serfs, instead of a legal equality of rights ; but to abolish such difference by enfranchising the serfs. Hence, from the universal experience of history, we may be sure that, whenever this distinction is found to exist, the society must be composed of two races of men differing from each other in point of origin.” We shall soon show that such a distinction prevailed in Ireland ; and shall now only add, that the original difference between the successive settlers in the country is not even yet effaced. The blue eyes, flaxen hair, and fair complexion of the peasantry on the eastern coast and in the midland districts, shows that they are a different race from the dark-visaged, black-haired inhabitants of the south-western counties. Besides the uniform tradition, that the Milesian colonists were of Asiatic origin, there are many customs still preserved in Ireland, plainly derived from some Eastern source. The forms of salutation, the Beltane fires, manifestly derived from the former prevalence of solar worship, and the feastings and cries at funerals, so completely coincide with the descriptions of Asiatic manners given by all travellers ancient and modern, that it is difficult to refuse assent to the traditionary account of the Milesian origin. Those unaccountable edifices, the round towers of Ireland, are frequently quoted in proof of this theory ; and certainly the most plausible account given of them is, that they were erected for the purpose of fire-worship. But this is a subject involved in hopeless obscurity, and cannot consequently afford much additional strength to our previous arguments.

The state of society in Ireland, the form of government, and the tenure of land previous to the Anglo-Norman invasion, are subjects of much more importance than the origin of the nation ; for, without a previous investigation of these matters, much of the subsequent history of the country would be scarcely intelligible. The attachment of the Irish to their ancient usages, and the eager desire of the first invaders to adopt these institutions, was the primary source, of the greatest evils by which the country was afflicted ; and, notwithstanding the many changes of rule and chances of time which have occurred in Ireland, their pernicious consequences are felt at the present hour.

At some unknown period, Ireland was divided by the Milesian conquerors into five kingdoms, Ulster, Leinster, Connaught, Munster, and Meath ; the latter was at a subsequent, but equally uncertain age, considered as the peculiar property of the paramount sovereign. It is impossible to determine at what time the entire island was first united under a single monarch. Neither is the inquiry of any importance ; for the authority of the Lord Paramount was merely nominal, unless he had the good fortune to possess sufficient forces in his hereditary dominions to ensure obedience.

These kingdoms were again subdivided into several principalities, inhabited by distinct septs, each ruled by its own *carfinny* or chieftain. The obedience of these local rulers or top-

archs to the provincial sovereign, was regulated like his to the general monarch, by the powers that he possessed for enforcing his authority. Each petty lord presided over the administration of justice in his own dominion, and possessed, or at least exercised, the right of making war and peace with his neighbours at his pleasure.

The succession to every degree of sovereignty was regulated by the law of Tanistry, which limited hereditary right to the family, but not to the individual. The chiefs could only be selected from noble houses ; but there was not an individual of each royal or noble family that might not become a candidate for the office of tanist or chieftain-elect. The love of offspring might probably have induced the toparchs to limit the right of succession to their immediate descendants, had it not been the custom to elect the tanist immediately after the accession of the chief ; and the interest which procured his designation, would of course be sufficient to secure his right of inheritance. This pernicious custom was productive of unmixed misery. Every election of tanist was necessarily productive of party-feuds, which rarely terminated without bloodshed. The chiefs looked with jealous eyes on those who only waited for their deaths to attain the rank of princes ; and the tanists, conscious of these suspicions, frequently endeavoured to accelerate the moment of their elevation by open war or secret assassination. In the list of 178 monarchs of the Milesian line enumerated by the Irish historians, only 47 died natural deaths, 71 were slain in battle, and 60 murdered. It may indeed be said, and with some truth, that this list is a fabrication ; but it was probably composed by combining the genealogies of several provincial monarchs, whose pride was flattered by the notion that their ancestors ruled the entire island ; and at all events, it shows the proportion between violent changes and peaceful successions in the opinion of the native historians themselves.

Each district was deemed the common property of the entire sept ; but the distribution of the several shares was intrusted to the toparch. The cultivators had, consequently, no property in the soil, and were little interested in improving it by cultivation. The tanist alone was assigned an inalienable portion of mesnal land ; all the others were tenants at the will of the toparch, and removable without the formality of a notice. The accession of every chief, the death of a large proprietor, the reception of a new member into the sept, and the banishment of any who had displeased the chief, usually produced a new division of land, which kept property in a state of constant fluctuation ; and the custom of inheritance by gavelkind, extended and perpetuated the evil. The gavelkind of Ireland and Wales differed, in several important particulars, from that which still prevails in some parts of England. By the Irish custom, females were absolutely excluded from all right of inheritance ; and no distinction was made between legitimate and illegitimate children. The lower orders were divided into freemen and *betages* [1] or, as they were called by the Normans, *villains*. The former had the privilege of choosing their tribe ; the latter were bound to the soil, and transferred with it in any grant or deed of sale.

These institutions [2] are manifestly inconsistent with the high degree of civilization which the Irish historians describe in such glowing colours. Where the great majority of the people could not possess landed property, and where the circumstances of the country prevented the accumulation of commercial wealth, the elements of comfort and greatness were wanting. There could have been no money, no trade, no manufactures, and there could have been no towns whose municipal privileges might have restrained the despotic power of the toparchs. The cities of Dublin, Limerick and Waterford, found in the country by the Normans, at the time of the invasion, if not originally built by the Danes, at least owed all their greatness and celebrity to that maritime people.

But though this state of society appears to modern writers replete with so much evil, it had many attractions for a people such as the Irish were at that day, and such as they continue at present. With few and simple wants, reckless of danger, ardent speculators, full of buoyant spirits, eager for any new enterprise, however culpable or dangerous, their best and their worst qualities were equally gratified by a system, which flattered their vanity and supplied

objects for their ambition. Eligibility to the office of Tanist being common to every man of noble birth, it became the interest of the nobility to conciliate the affections of the people ; and this produced a connexion, not the less intimate because the hustings became frequently fields of battle. The law of gavelkind offered to every individual the hope of that great object of every Irishman's ambition, *a bit of land* ; and though the tenure was insecure and uncertain, Irishmen then, as now, literally fulfilled the precept, of “ taking no thought for the morrow.”

The customs of *fostering* and *gossipred* drew closer the links that bound the lords to their vassals. The sons of the nobility were invariably nursed by the wives of the tenantry, and the associations thus formed were esteemed ties fully as binding as those of nature. On the other hand, the nobles became name-fathers to the children of their favourites, and were thus supposed to establish a claim to filial, rather than feudal obedience. It is amusing to find, that these innocent and interesting customs were denounced as high treason, by the statute of Kilkenny, in the reign of Edward III., because they were deemed the greatest support of the overgrown power of the Irish aristocracy.

The administration of justice was regulated by the Brehon law, which is said to have been formed into a code at a very early period. Its most remarkable feature was the almost total absence of capital punishment ; for every offence, even for murder, a pecuniary mulct, called an *eric*, was provided ; but the friends of the deceased were rarely satisfied with such a compensation, and deadly feuds were consequently multiplied. [3] The office of Brehon, or judge, was hereditary in certain families ; and, by a custom which seems to have been derived immediately from the East, all honourable professions were similarly limited.

The first introduction of Christianity into Ireland is a subject involved in impenetrable obscurity. The tradition which ascribes the conversion of the island to Saint Patrick, though generally received, is not worthy of implicit credit ; and the romantic narratives of the Saint's adventures are a mere compilation of extravagant fictions. It would be, however, an excess of scepticism, to follow Dr Ledwich in denying the Saint's existence altogether ; but the precise period of his mission, and the extent of his success, must remain uncertain. There is, however, satisfactory evidence, that the form of Christianity established in Ireland, as well as in Britain, resembled that of the Eastern churches, rather than that which Rome had adopted. In such matters of discipline—as the form of clerical tonsure, the time of celebrating Easter, and the celibacy of the clergy—this difference between the Hibernian and Roman churches might seem of little importance ; but they were at issue on more important topics. The ecclesiastical constitution of Ireland was completely at variance with the model which the Roman See was anxious to establish ; and several doctrines, condemned in the Papal councils, were vigorously maintained by the Irish clergy.

The bishops, in the primitive church of Ireland, were as numerous as the parishes. They paid no canonical obedience to a foreign head ; they bequeathed frequently their pastoral charge to their children ; and generally held their Sees at the pleasure of their chieftain. They also possessed not any of the lordly privileges which the Continental prelates enjoyed. It was not until the eighth century, that they were exempted from military service ; and they always remained subject to taxation, and to the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals.

The Irish church also provoked the hostility of the pontiffs, by its adherence to the doctrines of Pelagius, and the share it took in the controversy of “ the three chapters.” Jerome, whose right to the title of Saint assuredly rests not on his moderation, assails the entire Irish nation for its supposed heresy, with a virulence surpassing the ordinary bounds of theological controversy. He even asserts, that the Irish were cannibals, and that he had himself seen a party of them eat a child in Gaul ; forgetting, as the Jesuit Slainhurst wisely remarks, to account for the permission they obtained to commit such a crime in the country, which was then the chief seat of orthodoxy. The controversy of “ the three chapters,” which once agitated the

entire of Christendom, is now consigned to oblivion. It seems, that the Council of Chalcedon had tacitly approved the writings of three Eastern prelates, which were supposed to favour the Nestorian heresy. The Roman synod took a different view of the matter, and condemned the chapters in no very measured terms. The Irish unanimously supported the authority of the Council ; and, as we are informed by Baronius, attributed the calamities, by which Italy happened to be afflicted, to the fatal heresy of the Papacy.

The Irish clergy, though deficient in orthodoxy, were honourably conspicuous for their learning, zeal, and piety. Their missionaries travelled into the neighbouring heathen countries, not like the papal legates, with all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of imperial ambassadors ; but like their predecessors the apostles, in the garb of unaffected poverty, with the words of persuasion on their lips, and the gospel of everlasting peace in their hands. The pious labours of Columbkille and Columbanus, if they were really different persons, are to this hour justly the boast of the Irish nation ; though, unfortunately, the ecclesiastical system which produced numbers of men animated with similar zeal has long since perished.

The invasions of the Franks, the Saxons, and other barbarians, seconded by the dark intrigues of the Romish See and its partisans among the clergy, destroyed the primitive churches which had been established in Gaul and Britain. The persecuted clergy and those of their flocks who were anxious to maintain the independence of their national churches, either fled, or were forced into a reluctant submission.

The Irish generously offered to the fugitives a safe asylum ; thither came all those whom barbarous violence and Roman ambition had driven from their homes. The unfortunate Britons, in particular, threatened with extirpation by the Saxons, fled to the sister-island, and spread such a horror of the violence they had suffered, that the Irish to this day call their invaders by the odious name of Saxons. During the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, Ireland was proverbially the chief seat of piety and learning. True, the learning of the period was confined to a very limited range of subjects, and, even such as it was, monopolized by the clergy : still, the respect shown to information, and the ardour exhibited for literary distinction, produced beneficial effects which extended far beyond the circle of those who enjoyed the immediate fruits.

The invasion of the Danes in the ninth century, reduced Ireland to the same miserable condition as those countries for whose calamities she had shown such generous sympathy. Though these piratic hordes were not numerous, they obtained extraordinary success in a country distracted by internal commotions, where each sept rejoiced in the depression of its rival, and where the feelings of nationality were lost in the virulence of party-spirit. As the Danes came into Ireland from the East, they called themselves Eastmen, or Ostmen, just as in France they took the name of Northmen, or Normans. They first confined themselves to mere predatory expeditions ; soon after they erected castles, or seized on towns near the shore, to shelter their booty ; until, at length, encouraged by their own success, and the dissensions of the natives, they resolved to attempt the conquest of the entire island. Early in the ninth century, this was effected by Turgesius, a monarch distinguished by great abilities, and greater depravity. After a brief reign of cruelty and lust, Turgesius was murdered by the contrivance of a petty prince whose daughter he designed to seduce ; and in the general revolt which ensued, the power of the Ostmen was completely overthrown. But the private feuds of the Irish princes rescued the Ostmen from total destruction ; and, retaining possession of the seaports, they soon became formidable, though they never regained their former supremacy of the country.

In the beginning of the eleventh century, a majority of the Irish determined to make a great national effort against the invaders : the nominal Lord Paramount of the island, Malachi King of Meath, was deposed, and the sovereignty transferred to the celebrated Brian Boiromhe, whose administration of his provincial kingdom had raised it to the highest rank among the

surrounding states. During a reign of ten years, Brian ruled the country in tranquillity ; the Danish settlers purchased safety by becoming tributary, and the feuds of the Irish princes were checked by the vigour and prudence of the monarch. But the spirit of faction, though quelled, was not extinguished ; the partisans of the deposed monarch secretly meditated a new revolution ; and their projects were favoured by many who viewed with jealousy the elevation of a rival tribe. A trivial circumstance kindled these materials of discord into a flame. Murchard, the eldest son of Brian, incautiously reproached Maolmordha, King of Leinster, for his former treacherous connection with the Danes, and so irritated the vindictive passions of the haughty prince, that he determined to purchase revenge, even at the price of his country's ruin. An alliance was soon formed between the King of Leinster, and the Danish colony of Dublin. Auxiliaries were summoned from Norway, and the northern islands ; emissaries were sent to stimulate the discontented princes into rebellion ; and Brian, now in the extremity of old age, found himself involved in a contest more fearful than any he had hitherto experienced. The monarch, however, proved himself equal to the emergency ; he summoned to his standard all the princes who owed him obedience, and collected together his hereditary forces, on whom alone he saw that implicit reliance could be placed. The battle, which for the time decided the fate of Ireland, was fought on the plains of Clontarf, now a pretty village near Dublin. The engagement commenced on the morning of Good Friday, A. D. 1014, a circumstance which added religious enthusiasm to the patriotic zeal of the Irish, for the Danes had not been as yet converted to Christianity. At the very moment that battle was joined, Malachi, King of Meath, withdrew his forces, leaving Brian with only his own provincial army to withstand the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. The soldiers of Munster were not, however, disconcerted ; they had with them in the field every member of the royal house, to which they were passionately attached ; for the King brought with him to the battle his five sons, his grandson, and his fifteen nephews. The conflict lasted the entire day ; but at length the valour of the Irish prevailed. The traitor Maolmordha, with his chief associates, were slain. His followers immediately broke their lines and fled ; and the Danes were driven, with dreadful slaughter, to their ships and the gates of Dublin. But this success was dearly purchased. Brian was slain, while praying in his tent, by a wandering party of the enemy ; his son Murchard, with the best and bravest of the Irish nobility, fell in the arms of victory ; and the gallant sept of the Dalgais, Brian's own tribe, was almost annihilated. With Brian perished the glory, the tranquillity, and the prosperity of his country. Ireland no longer existed as a nation, but was broken up into a number of independent sovereignties, animated by the most rancorous mutual hostility. " There was no longer a king in the land. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." From this period to the Anglo-Norman invasion, the annals of Ireland record little more than a series of intestine wars begun for some petty object, and concluded without any remarkable consequence. A new invasion of the Danes, under the guidance of Magnus, King of the Isle of Man, is indeed stated to have been repelled ; but how deplorable must the condition of the country have been, when the King of Man would venture to invade it with the hopes of conquest ! The evils produced by this long unvarying scene of civil discord, predisposed the Irish princes to submit to the power of the Norman prince. They felt the necessity of possessing a sovereign ruler ; and they knew, by bitter experience, that mutual jealousy and ancient rivalry would render the government of any native prince equally insecure and inefficient.

#### *The Causes and Occasion of the Anglo-Norman Invasion.*

The establishment of the Anglo-Norman dynasty in Ireland, was but a part of that great system by which the Papal supremacy was enabled to prevail over the national churches of Western Europe. Henry came to Ireland as the deputy of the Pope. To establish his spiritual authority was the avowed object of the expedition ; and on the Papal gift alone did the Norman monarch rest his claim to the sovereignty of the country. By a very rare coincidence, the zealous Protestant and Catholic writers of Irish history have agreed in suppressing this important fact. The former were unwilling to acknowledge that their ascendancy, which they justly identified with English connexion, was derived from the great object of their fear and

hatred ; the latter, equally attached to their country and their religion, were disinclined to confess that their spiritual head had destroyed their national church, and given the dominion over their native land to a stranger, in order to extend his own power. The contest between patriotic spirit, and habitual submission to the Roman pontiff, is evident in some of the writings of the earlier Irish historians : they zealously contend for the piety and purity of their national church ; but, when they labour to identify its doctrines with Romanism, they are sorely at a loss to account for the harsh epithets given to the Irish clerical establishment by the Popes and their authorized advocates.

The power of the Roman See had acquired additional strength by every revolution caused by the successive immigrations of the Northern barbarians. The pontiffs deemed the ignorant pagans more hopeful subjects for the bold experiment of establishing their supremacy than the Christians of Gaul, Britain and Erin, who were zealously attached to the independence of their national churches. They therefore uniformly supported the cause of the invaders, conciliated their leaders by giving them extravagant titles, and presenting them with rich dresses, whose unusual splendour attracted their admiration, and gratified their vanity. The Franks were encouraged in their warfare against the Gauls, the Goths, and the Burgundians ; because, after the conversion of Clovis, they readily adopted whatever creed his Holiness thought fit to dictate ; and the former possessors of the country were sentenced to utter ruin because they were heretics, or at least schismatics. The Goths were accused of Arianism ; the Britons were said to have adopted the errors of Pelagius ; and paganism itself was declared preferable to such abominable heresies. Many of the bishops in the devoted nations aided the machinations of the Roman pontiffs ; they were eager to become spiritual princes, and to share in those privileges and immunities which Rome claimed for the Episcopal character. Foreign violence was thus aided by domestic treason ; and the Papal authority was established in France and England by the sword of the Franks and the battle-axes of the Saxons. But no opportunity of reducing Ireland to obedience was afforded. The successors of Augustine in the see of Canterbury vainly sent embassies to the island ; their authority was spurned, their threats derided, and they were left to vent their indignation in slander and reproach. Bede has preserved a curious specimen of the remonstrances addressed to the schismatic Irish by the Papal legates ; it is full of pride and bitterness, as may be seen in the following extract : — “ We, deputies from the Apostolic See to the Western regions, once foolishly believed in your island’s reputation for sanctity ; but we now know, and can no longer doubt, that you are no better than the Britons. Of this the journey of Columbanus into Gaul, and that of one Dagammon into Britian, have fully convinced us ; for, amongst Other things, this Dagammon, passing through the places where we dwelt, has refused not only to come and eat at our tables, but even to take his meals in the same house with us.”

The crimes of Columbanus have been mentioned in the preceding chapter ; they were simply ardent zeal, sincere piety, and unpretending poverty. He founded no bishopricks, he courted no kings, he preached only to the poor and to the afflicted. Leaving courts and camps to the Papal legates, he spent his life in preaching the gospel to the wood-cutters and hunters in the mountains of the Vosges. The discourteous conduct of Dagammon was not wholly without excuse. The massacre of the British monks at Bangor by a body of pagan Saxons more than suspected of having been employed by the Italian Archbishop of Canterbury, and the bitter persecution of the native clergy of Wales, disgusted a man who believed in his simplicity that Christianity was, as it ought to be, a system of peace and love, and who was, besides, allied in faith to the sufferers.

The invasion of the Danes was fatal to the national church of Ireland. The seats of learning, which had been ever spared in the disastrous feuds between rival princes, were but the more tempting objects to these avaricious savages. The seminaries were destroyed, the students scattered, and the means of support taken away from those who laboured to instruct a new race of pastors. Hence innumerable abuses arose ; the toparchs appointed to the sees persons

wholly inadequate to perform the duties ; monasteries were seized by ambitious laymen ; and religious ordinances were either entirely neglected, or performed with a negligence which degraded them into an unmeaning ritual. The power possessed by the Anglo- Saxon clergy, contrasted with their own weakness, naturally excited the emulation of the Irish bishops. They began to wish for the lofty titles and the substantial privileges enjoyed by the prelates of the neighbouring island ; and as they clearly saw that this object could not be attained without the assistance of the Roman See, they determined to make the acknowledgment of the Papal authority the basis of their own aggrandizement. It may be, that some were actuated by better motives. There may have been a few who thought that external aid was necessary to reform the abuses which had been produced by centuries of commotion, and who looked to Rome, indisputably the head of the Western churches, as the only source from whence the means of an efficient reformation could be derived. The Holy See was not slow in availing itself of these favourable dispositions, especially as, by its aid, a new dynasty had been just established in England, more devotedly attached to the Papal cause than that of the Saxons, because the benefits received by the Normans were more important and more recent.

The conquest of England by the Duke of Normandy, was hailed by the descendants of the Danes in Ireland as a triumph that prognosticated the revival of their own power and eminence. They relinquished the name of Ostmen for the more important title of Normans, and sent ambassadors to congratulate William on his success. They also broke off their connection with the Irish Church, asserting, with truth, that they had been instructed in Christianity by the Saxons ; and they sent over their bishop-elect of Dublin to receive ordination from Lanfranc, the Norman Archbishop of Canterbury. This was the first step towards submission ; but it was not made without resistance ; for a letter is extant from the people of Dublin to Ralph, Archbishop of Canterbury, about the year 1121, in which they complain of the dislike shown to them by the Irish bishops, on account of their having submitted to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of a foreigner. The first Irishman who advocated the Papal supremacy was Gillebert, Bishop of Limerick, who accepted the office of apostolic legate. He wrote a curious tract, which is yet extant, recommending his countrymen to tender their spiritual allegiance to the common father of Christendom ; but he urges it as a novel proposal, which assuredly he would not have done, if, as some pretend the first preachers of the gospel in Ireland had made the authority of the Pope a part of their system. Gillebert was succeeded as legate by the celebrated Malachy, whose life has been written by St Bernard, the pious and learned abbot of Clareval. Malachy took the decided measure of going to Rome, to solicit palls, the Roman emblem of investiture, for the metropolitan see of Ardmagh and the new archbishopric of Cashel. He did not, however, complete the journey ; he died at Clareval in the arms of his friend and biographer. The court of Rome did not allow the favourable impressions produced by Gillebert and Malachy to remain unimproved. In the year 1152, a synod was convened at Kells, over which Cardinal Paparo, the apostolic legate, presided. There, for the first time, palls were distributed to the Irish prelates, and the Papal authority formally acknowledged. The other enactments, made at the same time, clearly show the motives by which the clergy were induced to resign their independence :—tithes never before collected in Ireland ; immunities hitherto withheld ; the freedom of their order from taxation and civil jurisdiction were granted at this synod ; and thus, the last of the Western national churches was united finally to the Roman See.

The new ecclesiastical establishment was not, however, received universally. Many of the inferior clergy, animated by different motives, vigorously contended for their ancient usages ; and the toparchs were opposed to a system, by which their power was limited and controlled. Complaints were made in Rome, that the Irish clergy still continued to marry ; that tithes were paid irregularly ; and that the native princes usurped the nomination to ecclesiastical dignities. The Pope saw that some ally was necessary to confirm the supremacy which he had already gained ; and the abilities and ambition of Henry II. pointed him out as the most eligible auxiliary. In the year 1155, the negotiations between Henry II. and Pope Adrian were concluded. The holy father entered into a compact with the enterprising young monarch, by

which it was stipulated, that the lordship of Ireland should be transferred to Henry, provided that he would maintain the Papal supremacy and the ecclesiastical constitutions, which had been established by the synod of Kells. This negotiation, which was the foundation of the connexion between England and Ireland, is a precious sample of the hypocrisy, the injustice, and the mutual treachery of both parties. Henry, by no means a devoted slave to ecclesiastical power, suddenly found his Christian feelings wounded, by the schismatic state of the Irish church ; he therefore proposes to invade the island with a missionary army, not to extend his own dominions, but to diffuse the blessings of pure religion in that benighted country. Adrian, on the other hand, without even affecting to consult the wishes of the inhabitants, transfers to the Norman prince the sovereignty of an independent country, with as little scruple as if it had been an estate, of which he held the title-deeds. The genuineness of Adrian's bull has indeed been sometimes disputed ; but this is a matter of little importance. The fact, that Ireland was literally *sold* to the Norman invaders by the Pope, is indisputable, and is proved by a host of documents, which never have been questioned. The bull of Pope Alexander, read at the council of Cashel, which, by the way, refers to Adrian's bull as an authentic document, is to the full as explicit a declaration of the terms of the bargain, as that whose credit has been impugned. The declaration of the Irish clergy in their synod at Cashel, that they recognised Henry's authority, because it was founded on the infallible decree of Christ's vicar, and the unanimous consent of all cotemporary historians, native, English, and Continental, that Henry undertook the conquest of Ireland, by command of the visible head of the church, in order to extirpate the religious abuses which prevailed in that country, are sufficient to prove the true cause and nature of the invasion, if Adrian's bull had never existed. During four centuries, the English monarchs and the parliament of the pale, unable to maintain their supremacy by the sword, constantly appealed to these Papal grants as the sacred source of their power ; and, during the same period, every effort to restore the independence of Ireland was placed under ban and excommunication, as being a rebellion against the deputy of the sacred successors to the patrimony of Saint Peter. After the Reformation, when the Catholics of Ireland divided into two parties, which may be called those of the Low and High church, the latter, so far from denying the fact, of Ireland having been ceded to England by Papal authority, laboured strenuously to maintain the right of the Pope to make such a grant, and to resume it when the conditions had been violated. The origin of the right of the Holy See to Ireland was variously stated by different writers. One found out that *all* islands were included in the magnificent donation bestowed on the successors of Saint Peter by the Emperor Constantine ; another discovered, in the prophecies of Isaiah, a divine right to islands ; a third asserted, that some of the Irish Kings, during a pilgrimage to Rome, had resigned the supremacy of their dominions to the Sovereign Pontiff ; while a whole host contended, that the Irish, in the time of Saint Patrick, had, in a sudden burst of national gratitude, placed themselves and their country at the disposal of their spiritual father. These idle legends are now only calculated to produce a smile ; but there was a time when they were potent causes of evil ; and many and bitter were the calamities which such wicked absurdities inflicted on the unfortunate island.

Continental wars, and the rebellion of his unnatural sons, long prevented Henry from availing himself of the Papal grant ; but, in the mean time, he entered into negotiations with some of the Irish prelates, who were anxious to purchase the pomp, power and privilege, possessed by the English and Continental bishops, even at the price of their country's independence. What might have been the result of unaided negotiations is mere matter of conjecture. An accidental circumstance hurried them to a rapid conclusion, and brought the Normans into Ireland, before Henry and his partisans could make any previous preparations for the unexpected event.

[1] In the grants of land made for the support of monasteries by the Irish monarchs, the *Betags* or *Betages* are expressly named, and the property in them transferred together with the land.

[2] The nature of the Irish tenure and law of Tanistry is very clearly laid down in an inquisition taken at Mallow, on the 25th October 1594, before Sir T. Norris, Vice-President of Munster, W. Saxey, Esq., and J. Gould, Esq., justices of said province, by virtue of a commission from the Lord Deputy and Council, dated the preceding 26th of June. It is found, among other things, “ That Conogher O’Callaghan, *alias* the O’Callaghan, was and is seized of several large territories in the inquisition recited in his demesne, as lord and chieftain of Poble Callaghan, by the Irish custom, time out of mind used ; that as O’Callaghan aforesaid is lord of the said country, so there is a tanist, by custom of said country, who is Teig O’Callaghan, and the said Teig is seized as tanist, by the said custom, of several plough-lands in the inquisition mentioned, which also finds that the custom is further, that every kinsman of the O’Callaghan had a parcel of land to live upon, and yet that no estate passed thereby ; but that the lord and the O’Callaghan for the time being, by custom time out of mind, may remove the said kinsmen to other lands ; and the inquisition further finds, that O’Callaghan MacDermod, Irrelagh O’Callaghan, Teig MacCahir O’Callaghan, Donogh Mac Thomas O’Callaghan, Conohor Genkagh O’Callaghan, Dermod Bane O’Callaghan, and Shane MacTeig O’Callaghan, were seized of several ploughlands, according to the said custom, subject, nevertheless, to certain seigniories and duties payable to the O’Callaghan, and that they were removable by him to other lands at his pleasure

[3] The following copy of a Breton’s decree will probably interest the reader : —

“ These be the allegations and challenges I have in the behalf of Donagh MacSeayn and Teig MacFynyne, against Cahall O’Connor and his people, viz. That Cahall O’Connor, together with his people, came forcibly to the land of the said Donagh, and seized upon a prey belonging to him, and have taken away with them [ ] coves of the said prey, and have also taken with them the said Donagh and Teig prisoners, and the rest of the prey being taken from the said Cahall against his will : but having beaten, bruised, and deadly wounded the said Donagh and Teig, therefore I say, that they came with intent to kill the said Donagh and Teig, and that they shall have remedy and release as if they had been killed, in regard the said Donagh and Teig never submitted themselves to the mercy of the said Cahall and his people, but scoope (escaped) by their own valour and assistance, as by the law in that behalf appeareth, which is in *hæc verba*.” ( The words of the law are not quoted. ) — *Hardman’s Irish Deeds*, p. 26.

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