

An Historical Review
Of The
State Of Ireland,
From The
Invasion Of That Country Under Henry II.
To Its
Union With Great Britain
On The First Of January 1801.
In Five Volumes.

By Francis Plowden, Esq,

Vol. I.

Pauci prudentiâ honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt : plures aliorum eventis docentur.

Tac. 4 *Ann.* 33.

Few are qualified by their own reflection to mark the boundaries between vice and virtue. To separate the useful from that which leads to destruction is not the talent of every man. The example of others is the school of wisdom. Murphy's *Trans.* Vol. i. p. 273.

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The Testimony of Strangers

IN order to prepare the mind for an impartial and satisfactory judgment upon the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, it will be proper to premise some general observations upon the nature and resources of Ireland, and the spirit and character of its native inhabitants, independently of any connection with Great Britain. We shall thereby be enabled to judge impartially of the relative effects of that connection, which, through a long and intricate maze of national vicissitudes, has ultimately led to an incorporate union of the two kingdoms. I affect not to write a regular history of Ireland [1], but shall endeavour to draw the attention of my reader to such prominent events, as have in their time, order, and proportion, remotely and proximately led to the incorporate union of Great Britain with Ireland, which is the primary object of this publication.

Although the nature of man be homogeneous, yet different portions of the human race differ from each other by properties, qualities, and habits, so strongly distinctive, as nearly to approximate to a difference of species. Many are the gradations and shades of these distinctions. True it is, that different political systems produce powerful effects upon mankind : they go great lengths, but not the whole way towards changing the innate genius, spirit, and character, of nations. To a close and impartial observer, the original national character will manifest itself, up to the remotest antiquity, under

the strongest influence of improvement or debasement. Without entering into a philosophical disquisition of the immediate causes of a variety in national characters, we may be allowed to attribute much to the air and soil of particular countries, although, at distant periods of time, many may be the instances of changes, suspensions, and apparent extinctions, of the most marked characters in the same nations. Faintly, if at all, can we trace a single line of the old Grecian, Punic, or Roman character, through modern Turkey on the coasts of Barbary, or in the territorial possessions of the Bishop of Rome. But who shall assert, that a melioration of the political systems of government in those countries, would not vivify the smothered embers, and rouse into a flame that very spirit, which once was the dread of the day, and has since been the astonishment of posterity? Yet Ireland undoubtedly stands prominently conspicuous amongst the nations of the universe a solitary instance, in which neither the destructive hand of time, nor the devastating arm of oppression, nor the widest variety of changes in the political system of government, could alter or subdue, much less wholly extinguish, the national genius, spirit, and character of its inhabitants.

It would be useless to attempt any thing like a geographical surveyor description of the island. Sir John Davies, who was attorney-general in Ireland, in the beginning of the reign of James the First, applied his observations in a particular manner to its local, as well as its then political situation. His report, from ocular testimony, compresses, in few words, the immense advantages and resources of this island in itself, and consequently its importance to the British empire at large. [2] “ During the time,” says he, “of my *service in Ireland* (which began in the first year of his Majesty’s raigne), I have visited all the provinces of that kingdome, in sundry journies and circuits. Wherein I have observed the good *temperature* of the *ayre* ; the *fruitfulnesse* of the *soyle* ; the pleasant and commodious *seats* for *habitation* ; the safe and large *ports* and *havens*, lying open for *trafficke* into all west parts of the world ; the long inlets of many navigable rivers ; and so many great lakes and fresh ponds within the lands, as the like are not to be scene in any part of Europe ; the rich *fishings* and wilde fowle of all kinds ; and, lastly, the bodies and minds of the people, endued with extraordinary abilities of nature. [3]”

Dr. Leland, whose History of Ireland claims classical preeminence amongst the modern productions upon this subject, has favoured us with the following characteristic of the people of Ireland [4] “ A robust frame of body, a vehemence of passion, an elevated imagination, were the characteristics of the people. Noble instances of valour, generous effusions of benevolence, ardent resentments, desperate and vindictive outrages, abound in their annals. To verse and music they are peculiarly addicted. They who are possessed of any superior degree of knowledge, they who operate on their fancies or passions by the liveliest strains of poetry, are held in extraordinary veneration. The ministers of their religion are accounted more than human. To all these they submit their contests ; they consult them as oracles of law and policy. But reflection, and the gradual progress of refinement, convince them of the neces-sity of settled laws. The principles of equity and independence implanted in the human breast, receive them with delight ; but the violence of passion still proves superior to their restraint. Private injuries are revenged by force ; and insolent ambitious chieftains still recur to arms.”

If this be a faithful portrait of the characteristic features of the Irish nation, and I admit the outline and colouring to be just, the references I shall make to the earlier parts of the Irish annals, will serve to trace and account for the origin, nature, and continuance of that national character, out of which arise some of the strongest reasons for uniting that kingdom with our own.

The pride of ancestry has a peculiar effect upon the Irish. No nation, in fact, now upon the face of the globe, can boast of such certain and remote antiquity ; none can trace instances of such early civilization ; none possesses such irrefragable proofs of their origin, lineage, and duration of government. It has been a pitiful prejudice in too many English writers, to endeavour to throw discredit upon the early part of the Irish history. That many fabulous accounts are to be found in the Irish annalists, is true ; but no less true is it, that the English historians superabound with gross and wilful misrepresent-ations of the Irish annals [5]. The possession of a vernacular language at this day, which was in general use above three thousand years ago, is a defiance to historical fiction and falsity, that Ireland alone, amidst all the nations of the universe, can proudly boast. The ancestors of the Irish were un-doubtedly Scythians [6], or, as they were afterwards called, Phœnicians. The general belief that the Greeks, the Romans, the Carthaginians, and even the Egyptians, received the use of letters from the Phœnicians, reconciles the mind to the very early civilization of this colony, which they

settled in the west. For it now seems no longer doubtful, that a Scythian or Phœnician colony settled in Ireland. [7].

All ancient historians agree, that hordes of Scythians emigrated to Egypt, and from thence to Spain : why then refuse credit to the Irish annalists, who are unanimous in asserting that a colony of these Scythians from Spain settled in Ireland? The Irish have always prided themselves upon having kept up a longer succession of monarchs, than any other kingdom of the world. This race of kings the Irish call *Milesian*, all of them having descended from *Heber*, *Eremon*, and *Ith*, the three sons of *Milesius*, who headed the expedition from Spain. In the year of our Lord 1170, one of the Princes of Ulster boasted to Pope Alexander III. of an uninterrupted succession of 197 Kings of Ireland, down to his time. [8] It appears, indeed, at all times to have been a national passion of the Irish, to boast of the monuments of their ancient glory.

The government introduced by the first settlers, was of a peculiar cast. They divided the country into four provinces, viz. *Ulster*, *Leinster*, *Minister*, and *Connaught*, each of which had its king ; and at the head of these four provincial kings was placed a supreme monarch. The whole formed a Pentarchy. To the supreme they all pay tribute, as a mark of subjection, though they were, in all other respects, absolute and independent within their respective provinces or provincial kingdoms. The monarch had always had some demesne lands annexed to his royalty ; but their great and favourite *Tuathal* separated the district of *Meath* from the other provinces, and appointed it for the appanage of the monarch. This formed one part of his revenue ; another part of it arose out of the provincial contributions of corn, hay, and cattle : and when any state emergency required more than the ordinary subsidies, the revenue was aided to the extent of the exigency by occasional taxes, which were voted and imposed, not by the monarch, but by the general assembly of the nation.

It has been frequently and justly remarked, that more family pride is retained by the Irish, even in extreme indigence, than by any other nation ; and it is generally attended with a conviction of some right to large possessions, and seldom exists without some hereditary tincture of contempt for those, whose lineage they think less ancient and noble than their own ; although, at the same time, no nation attach more consequence to property. This is a relict and natural consequence of the ancient constitutions, under which more dignity and consequence were annexed to particular families than in other nations, not as with us by primogeniture ; but the honours and dignities of the families were considered by the different septs, clans, or lineages, as disposable to the most worthy. This principle prevailed from the family of *Milesius* down to every other throughout the island. Not only the throne, but all the posts of honour and profit under the state were in fact elective ; not indeed out of the nation at large, but out of particular septs or families : consequently purity of blood became a national object, and carried with it more real consequence, than it did in any other nation of Europe. Thus although the monarchy were by the constitution elective, and in fact seldom went in an immediate lineal descent ; yet from the landing of the Phœnicians to the mission of St. Patrick, including the space of about 1500 years, and from that to the invasion of Ireland under Henry II. being about 640 years, no one filled the monarchy that was not a descendant of one of the three sons of Milesius. In the choice of their monarch seniority and proximity of blood had great weight, but not the preponderance. Military talents outweighed civil accomplishments ; the previous reception of the order of knighthood was an indispensable qualification to be elected; and any species of personal imperfection, or even casual deformity, created absolute ineligibility. [9]

In viewing the long duration of the infelicity of Ireland since it has been dependent upon or connected with this country, it is impossible not to lay the largest share of its calamity to the account of that monstrous anomaly in politics *imperium in imperio*. The only radical cure has now been applied. The restitution of Ireland to soundness and even vigour of constitution now rests with Great Britain, which, since the union, is compelled, from policy and interest, to ensure the most beneficial effects to this national incorporation. Discovery facilitates the removal or weakens the power of every retardment or difficulty in the attainment of the end of this great object. By concentrating the prospective views of the distinct parts of the British empire into one general focus, many particular and local pre-judices and prepossessions will vanish and die away, which have hitherto only existed by the circumstances of separation and independence. The numerous claims of royal lineage, which are seldom dis-annexed from wild convictions of rights to princely domain, and that especially in a sensitive and impoverished people, will ultimately vanish, when we look up to this change in the government of Ireland for the correction of the evil ; an evil which originated in the earliest constitutions of their government.

The grand Milesian Monarchy was a model of the four great provincial and numerous other smaller kingdoms into which the island was subdivided. Besides the universal monarch of the island and the four kings of the provinces, there were kings of Offaly, Limerick, Cork, &c. So that every provincial sovereign had under him as many kings as there were septs or families of distinction within the province : and although we can form no other idea at present of these numerous roitelets or petty sovereigns, than mere lords of manors or tenants in *Capite*, yet the effects of the national prejudices, [10] unfortunately transmitted down by tradition, are as operative as if every such ancestor had been as powerful as Charlemagne. Disorders in states have elsewhere been raised by the relatives of the deposed or deprived sovereigns : but whether the attempts succeeded or failed, the effect was partial, not national, and died away as the royal lineage decayed either in number or power. But as in Ireland every individual of a sept, who bore the name, assumed the blood, and partook in some degree of the consequence and dignity of their thier sovereign or king for the time being, the effect of debasement and deprivation embraced a wider range, and grew into a national evil of the greatest magnitude. The actual indigence of an individual that perhaps might have been greater under the ancient than the present order of things, [11] is contrasted against the ease and luxury of modern opulence ; and the influence of poverty and pride upon an irritable and bold race is but too obvious. Whatever national pre-dilections or prejudices can by any means be put down, when different nations become subject to a common sovereign, it is the undoubted policy of that sovereign to effect it without irritafting the sore-ness which such changes are likely to create [12]. If the genuine origin of these national prejudices be to be traced, to paganism, not to Christianity, we must resort.

The pretensions to the royal stock of sovereignty in Ireland were not the only grounds of this system of family pride and consequent presumption. Each king or sovereign had his order of chivalry, of which he was himself the chief: his high priest to superintend religion ; his brehon or chief justice to expound the laws ; his physicians, antiquarians, chief treasurer, marshal, standard-bearer, generals of horse and foot, &c. All these were hereditary honours in certain families, out of which the most dis-tinguished and best qualified were elected to the particular appointments.

We have seen that in the agitation of some of the great national questions in Ireland during these last twelve years, the public mind has been worked up more without grounds than without malice into a dread of the principle of resumption, should the civil liberties of British subjects be imparted in com-mon to the whole community of Ireland. True it is, that many of the illiterate Irish do entertain general confused convictions, that princely possessions should ever attend the royal blood that fills their veins. This general species of gregarian resumption, grafted upon the collective claims of septs or clans to certain districts, will upon close inspection and impartial investigation be found to refer only to the old tenures of *Tanistry and Gavelkind*, of which we shall speak hereafter, and by no means to the laws of England, which have for centuries regulated the descent of lands in Ireland : otherwise the resumption would be confined to the individuals, upon whom the law would in the supposed cases of resumption cast the inheritance, either by primogeniture or some other mode of descent. Now the only cry for resumption is ever supposed to arise from that cast of the natives, who have retained that national spirit with the delusive claims of royalty and domain, which could alone be realized by the redintegration of the old Brehon institutions. [13] It goes not to touch the titles of any landed property, that was at any time put under English tenures.

The Irish law of *Gavelkind* differed materially from the law, which we so denominate in Kent. When any one died, all the possessions, real and personal, of the whole family, were put together (or in hotch-pot), and divided anew amongst the survivors, by the head of the family, whom they termed the *Caunfinny* ; [15] bastard sons were admitted into this distribution, though all females, both wives and daughters, and of course more remote female relatives, were excluded from it ; the division extended to the whole sept or race, by which means, many vested freeholds came upon such new partitions to be divested during the lives of the tenants. This law or custom was productive of one of the most pernicious prejudices, that can pervade the useful part of a community ; it prevented whole septs or families, howsoever numerous and needy, from learning any trade, or turning mechanics, because they would be thus degraded, and the *Caunfinny* would in any future partition exclude such as had de-based themselves by such abdication of their family dignity. Union seems to afford the final correct-ive, if there still remain such senseless and pernicious prepossessions.

The national division into septs or tribes, though natural to infant communities, was attended in the progress of population v/ith the worst of consequences, and these were entailed upon the nation by

the laws of [16] *Tanistry and Gavelkind* : of the latter I have already spoken ; and by the former, successors were chosen during the lives of their ancestors, not only to their monarch and other kings, but also to their great state and other officers, which were elective within a given line of hereditary descent. There existed also a custom peculiar to Ireland, of giving out their children to be nursed by fosterers. [17] It extended for some years beyond the necessity of keeping the child at the breast, and it consequently tended to strengthen the ties of affection and attachment which united the members of the different tribes or septs. [18] It created an extraordinary fraternizing spirit amongst the Irish, unknown to other nations ; and hence, in a comparative view of the different dispositions of the English and Irish, it has been observed, that there is more warmth of affection in Ireland for a foster brother, than in England for a brother by consanguinity.

The grand epoch of political eminence in the early history of the Irish is the reign of their great and favourite monarch *Ollam-Fodlah*, who reigned, according to Keating, about 950 years before the Christian æra. Under him was instituted the great *Fes* at *Teamor* or *Tarah*, which was in fact a triennial convention of the states, or a parliament, the members of which consisted of the Druids and other learned men, who represented the people in that assembly. Thus the monarch and the provincial and other kings, who had the executive power in their hands on one side, and the philosophers and priests, together with the deputies of the people on the other, formed the whole of this ancient legislature. When this great council was convened, previous to their entering upon business, they sat down to sumptuous entertainments for six days successively. Very minute accounts are given by the Irish annalists of the magnificence and order of these entertainments ; from whence we may collect the earliest traces of heraldry that occur in history, and deduce that partiality for family distinctions, which to this day forms a striking part of the Irish national characteristic. In order to preserve order and regularity in the great number and variety of the members who met together on these occasions, when the banquet was ready to be served up, the shield-bearers of the princes and other members of the convention delivered in their shields and targets, which were readily distinguished by the coats of arms emblazoned upon them : these were arranged by the grand marshal and principal herald, and hung upon the walls on the right side of the tables, and upon entering the apartments each member took his seat under his respective shield or target without the slightest disturbance [19]. The first six days were not spent in disorderly revelling and excess, but particularly devoted to the examination and settlement of the historical antiquities and annals of the kingdom : they were publicly rehearsed and privately inspected by a select committee of the most learned members. When they had passed the approbation of the assembly, they were transcribed into the authentic chronicle of the nation, which was called the register or psalter of *Tarah*, This singular caution to prevent the introduction of any falsity or misrepresentation into their national history, would have furnished posterity with the most authentic and interesting relations of this ancient and extraordinary kingdom, had not the Danes in their frequent ravages and invasions of Ireland, during the 9th and 10th centuries, burnt all the books and monuments of antiquity that fell in their way. We have still more to lament the shameful and fatal policy of our ancestors, who, from the first invasion of Henry Plantagenet down to the reign of James the First took all possible means of art and force to destroy whatever writings had by chance or care been preserved from the destructive hands of the Danes. [20] They imagined, that the perusal of such works kept alive the spirit of the natives, and kindled them to rebellion by reminding them of the power, independency, and prowess of their ancestors. The public mind upon this subject has been long changed: two centuries have gone by, since Sir John Davies said, that “ had this people been granted the benefit of the English laws, it would go infinitely farther towards securing their obedience, than the destruction of all the books and laws ever published in this kingdom.”.... We have happily lived to see a legislative union of the two countries, which will, it is trusted, by the natural workings of the British Constitution, go further in three years towards the destruction of national prejudice and disaffection, than a mere communication of laws did in three centuries. [21]

Notwithstanding this legislative caution against historical prostitution, few histories are so charged with fable, as the *Annals of Ireland*. For besides such historiographers, as submitted their productions to the investigation of the *Fes* every family of consequence retained bards to celebrate and record their actions, who from the very nature of their dependant situation could not be expected to administer that historical justice, which the state historians were necessitated to do, as being pensioned by the public, and subjected to the authority of the triennial convocation. These private histories being written in verse, admitted of all the aids of poetical fire and fancy, to raise, flatter and provoke the passions. Large and ample revenues were assigned to the public heralds, physicians, harpers and bards : and although they were hereditary, yet, as before observed, the eldest son did not regularly

succeed to the employment and estate, unless he were the most accomplished of his race in his particular pro-fession.

To this day the native Irish have a peculiar taste for music and poetry : every excellence and extraordinary talent is with them still holden in the highest estimation ; as it formerly was rewarded with emolument and honour. Anciently the arts of poetry and music were cultivated by the Irish (or *Scots* as they were then called) to a degree of extravagance. The manners of the people were engrafted on this stock. The arts themselves were considered to be of divine original, and ignorance of them was judged a sufficient exception to a man's elevation to any important service or dignity in the state. The history of their nation, all the placits or acts of their legislators, and all their systems, philosophical, metaphysical and theological, were conveyed in the harmony of sound and verse. Such subjects formed the chief diversion of their festive hours. They were sung by their princes' bards and crotaries with vocal and instrumental accompaniments. [22] Besides the other duties of their profession the bards acted as heralds : clad in white flowing robes, and accompanied by musicians, they marched with the chiefs at the head of their armies, which they animated by martial strains, sung to harp accompaniments. They sung also the funeral panegyrics of such as fell honourably in battle. The excellence of the Irish in [23] athletic accomplishments has through all ages been proverbial. The variety of revolutions, convulsions, distresses and oppressions under which Ireland has at different times laboured, prevents us from tracing any uniform national taste or disposition for the cultivation or improvement of the soil. [24]

The obscurity of the first period of the History of Pagan Ireland was put an end to by letting in the light of the Gospel : for with the introduction of Christianity a new set of historians or annalists sprung up, new repositories of learning were established, foreign connections were much extended, and the learned languages were brought into use. It is to be lamented, that the Christian spirit of candor and truth has so little influenced most modern historians of Christian Ireland. Suffice it to state, what is indeed asserted by all ancient authors and admitted by the most respectable modern writers, that St. Patrick was sent [25] by Celestine Bishop of Rome to preach the Gospel to the Irish, together with twenty assistants eminent for their virtue and learning. [26] Under the blessing of God, St. Patrick and his coadjutors applied themselves with the utmost assiduity to the work of their mission; and their success exceeded all human expectations. In no land did the Gospel make such rapid progress ; in none was it so slightly opposed at it's first introduction. The people, says an historian, received the doctrines of Christianity with a spiritual sort of violence. Those, therefore, who discover the hereditary traces of a national spirit under the various modifications, which time produces, will not wonder, that what the nation so received, it should adhere to with a violent sort of tenacity : and it is certainly a political axiom, that tenderness and even reverence are to be paid to the conscientious convictions of a people, be they what they may.

Whether the facility, with which the first Christian missionaries propagated their divine doctrines, were in any manner owing to the superior state of letters and other civil cultivation in Ireland, is now difficult to determine. It has indeed been said, that Christianity ever met with the least opposition from the most learned and civilized nations. But how does this accord with the persecutions from heathen Rome ? Certain it is, that Christianity was introduced into Ireland with less change or violence to the civil institutions of the country, than in any instance recorded in history ; and it is truly singular, that within the short space of five years after St. Patrick had opened his mission, he was summoned to sit and assist in the convention or parliament of Tarah. He was appointed one of the famous Committee of Nine, to whom was intrusted the reform of the ancient Civil History of the Nation, so as to render it instructive to posterity. Literary establishments had subsisted in Ireland from the most remote antiquity: and it has been before remarked, that talent and science had ever been in the highest estimation with the Irish nation : it may not then be unfair to conclude, (barring any extra-ordinary interposition of the Deity) that had not these missionaries particularly exerted themselves in their attentions to erudition, their proselytes would have been less numerous, less tractable and docile than they were. Christian schools and seminaries were established in opposition to those of the Druids : and as Paganism declined, they multiplied and flourished; insomuch that from the 5th to the latter end of the 9th century the Irish nation was preeminently distinguished above all the nations of Europe, as the first seat of literature and science. When we consider, that since Ireland has become connected with, or rather subjected to England, it has ceased to perform the part of a nation on the political theatre of the universe, we bring our minds with difficulty to believe the accounts of her leading eminence on that very theatre before such connection or subjection took

place. However, natives, foreign-ers, friends and enemies, all in perfect unison, extol the præexcellence of that learning of the Irish clergy, which attracted the youth of the most respectable families of every nation in Europe, to their seminaries for education. Venerable Bede, not only confirms this as to his own countrymen, the Anglo-Saxons, but records an instance of national generosity and hospitality in the Irish, which stands single and unprecedented in the annals of mankind. Such of our ancestors, as went over to Ireland either for education, improvement or for an opportunity of living up to the strictest ascetic discipline, were maintained, taught, and furnished with books without fee or reward. [27] In Ireland did our great Alfred, receive his education. Bede informs us that the Anglo-Saxon King Oswald applied to Ireland for learned men to teach his people the principles of Christianity. And a foreign writer [28] under the French monarch Charles the Bald, says ; “ why should I mention Ireland? Almost the whole nation despising the dangers of the sea resort to our coasts with a numerous train of philosophers.” In the 7th century the Emperor Charlemagne paid a just tribute to the celebrity of the Irish monarchy, by honouring their sovereign with his alliance and friendship. [29] This state of preeminence which Ireland so long enjoyed [30] amidst all the nations of Europe, shews to what a degree of consequence she is capable of rising, when her native energies and powers are not crossed by internal divisions, or damped by foreign power, oppression, and intrigue. What but union with Great Britain could so effectually withdraw the checks and obstacles too long thrown in the way of Irish greatness, and effectually stimulate that people to emulate their pristine glory ?

Ere I conclude this chapter, historical justice demands the refutation of a charge generally preferred against the Irish, of lawless intractability. I wish the imputation originally lay as much in ignorance, as in malevolence. In no nation of the earth, but Ireland, have we witnessed that the arts and sciences have flourished amidst the horrors and devastations of war. This was owing to the reverence and esteem, in which the Irish ever held the professors of the polite arts and sciences, and the ministers of religion. In like manner did they revere and hold as sacred the administration of justice. Even a constant intestine war of 400 years, nourished and kept alive by different English deputies, could not erase those exalted principles. Finglass, chief baron of the exchequer in the reign of Henry VIII. says, “ that the English statutes passed in Ireland are not observed 8 days after passing them, whereas those laws and statutes made by the Irish on their hills, they keep firm and stable without breaking them for any favour or reward.” Sir John Davies, who had still better opportunity of knowing the Irish (as being the first English justice, that ventured on circuits out of the pale, assures us, “ that there is no nation under the sun, that love equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish ; or will rest better satisfied with the execution thereof, although it be against themselves.” This must be considered as the testimony of an enemy, written at the conclusion of a most bloody war for 15 years, and therefore more pointedly clears the Irish of this unfounded accusation. The additional testimony of Sir Edward Coke, whose candor did not on all occasions keep pace with his learning, shall close this chapter: [31] “ For I have been informed by many of them, that have had judicial places there, and partly of mine own knowledge, that there is no nation of the Christian world, that are greater lovers of justice than they are, which virtue must of necessity be accompanied by many others.”

[1] Whoever has given even a transient thought to the history of Ireland, must be sensible that the most striking features of it have been generally delineated in the strongest tints of party prejudice. This made Dr. Leland say : “ But the circumstances of Ireland were a still more dispiriting obstacle to the historian of this country. Prejudices and animosities could not end with its disorders. The relations of every transaction in times of contest and turbulence, were for many years dictated by pride, by resentment, by the virulence of faction, by the obliquity of particular interests and competitions. It was scarcely possible for a writer not to share in the passions and prejudices of those around him ; or, however candid, dispassionate, and accurate, still he must have done dangerous violence to their opinions and prepossessions.... Time and reflection, and an encreasing liberality of sentiment, may have sheathed the acrimony of contending parties ; and those at a distance may look on their contentions with indifference. Yet, even at this day, the historian of Irish affairs must be armed against censure, only by an integrity which confines him to truth, and a literary courage, which despises every charge but that of wilful or careless misrepresentation. In several instances, the author may have stated facts in a manner different from those writers usually accepted as authentic. Had he, in such cases, proceeded to a particular examination of the opinions and assertions of other men ; had he entered into a justification of his accounts, or specified the reasons

which determined him to reject, or admit, every particular authority, his work must have swelled to an enormous size. He was, therefore, obliged to content himself with a diligent and attentive inspection of different evidence, with a careful use of his private judgment ; with exhibiting the authorities he chose to follow, without generally engaging in critical or controversial discussions. They who are the best acquainted with the materials of which this history, and particularly the latter periods, have been formed, will possibly be the readiest to acknowledge the necessity of this method." To these sentiments I unequivocally subscribe.

[2] A Discoverie of the true Causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued, &c by Sir John Davies, Part 1.

[3] It is well known that Camden, though entitled generally to high historical credit, yet laboured under strong prejudices against the Irish : such, indeed, was the prevailing fashion or spirit of all the English writers of his days. His testimony, therefore, in favour of the Irish, is of double force. It was said of him, by an Irish author, not impertinently,

Perlustras Anglos oculis Cambdene duobus,
Uno oculo Scotos, ææcus Hybernigenas.

Thus then Camden speaks of the Irish (*Brit.* p. 680.) “ *Bellicosi sunt, ingenosi, corporum lineamentis conspicui, mirifica carnis mollitie, et propter musculorum teneritudinem agilitate incredibili.*” And (p. 789), “ *In universum gens hæc corpore valida et imprimis agilis, animo forti et elato, ingenio acri, bellicosa, vitæ prodiga, laboris frigoris et inediæ patiens, veneri indulgens, hospitibus perbenigna, amore constans, inimicitiis implacabilis, credulitate levis, gloriæ avida, contumeliæ et injuriæ impatiens, et ut inquit ille olim, in omnes actus vehementissima.*”

The singular phenomenon of reptiles, which are elsewhere venomous, being deprived of their poison and sting in Ireland, is too curious, and too generally spoken of as fabulous, not to be noticed. The native Irish have ever attributed this singularity to the prayers of St. Patrick, in whose days, they affirm, the island to have been over-run with these noxious creatures. The fact has been recognised by men of the highest authority. Venerable Bede, in the beginning of the eighth century, said, *Nullus ibi serpens vivere valeat.* Lib. i. c. 1. And Camden, in his *Brit.* 727, also says, *Nullus hic anguis, nec venenatum quicquam.*

[4] The attempt to write the history of the union of Great Britain and Ireland, in a manner unexceptionable to all parties, though perhaps unattainable in fact, is not of so desperate a nature as to be abandoned in the first instance. I readily admit, that whatever may be hazarded in this work as matter of opinion, is fully open to controversy ; and that general presumptions will reasonably bear hard against a person, who can prove but little by the testimony of his senses, either of the nature of the country, or the disposition of its inhabitants. Upon these two points, therefore, I have adopted the opinions of Sir John Davles and Dr. Leland as unexceptionable; inasmuch as they both lived many years in the country, and applied their minds to those objects with peculiar attention. I have, therefore, submitted my own opinions, whatever they might have been, in these two points to those of others, in every way more competent, from personal experience, to judge rightly of them than myself. But as to all public documents and proofs of historical facts, every man that undertakes the functions of an historian must be supposed competent to judge ; and by that competency will he form his judgment. *Et eum oportet esse gnaviter impudentem*, who, in defiance of such public documents, shall wilfully attempt to misrepresent the truth. I have, moreover, personal reasons for adopting the opinions of others, on these two points, in preference to my own. About ten years ago, before I had ever been in Ireland, I published a pamphlet, on the occasion of the passing of an act of parliament in Great Britain in favour of the English Catholics : it was also at the time when Mr. Paine, and his proselytes, were industriously propagating the doctrines on the abstract *Rights of Man*. In that work, I said : “ The lower class of the Irish, I understand, to be a race robust and hardy, and of a very irritable disposition and nature : they are now indolent in extreme poverty, from being debarred the common resources of industry ; and are averse from all laws, from having felt the constant pressure of such only as are galling and severe.” And I concluded, that the zealots for sedition and anarchy found them ready materials to work upon Sir Richard Musgrave, in the additional Appendix to his *Memoirs of the Rebellions in Ireland*, has chosen to construe these words into a strong incitement to disloyalty and insurrection ; and he adds, in a

note, that *if this gentleman had lived among the Irish, he would have known that they were active citizens, both by night and by day*. Since the publication of that pamphlet, I have thrice visited Ireland : the legislature, since that period, has thought proper to repeal most, if not all of those very laws, which I then termed *galling and severe*. The acts of the legislature have justified my application of those epithets to the laws, which they found necessary to repeal. The *civic activity, by night and day*, upon which the historical baronet has indulged his jocularly, is rather too awful a subject to reply to in the same strain. I scarcely know a more sure preventative against a relapse into this disorder of *activity*, than to encourage the sober industry of the active citizens. It long has been my cordial wish to promote the welfare of Ireland, which is, if I may be allowed the phrase, the right hand of the British empire: and it has ever pained me to observe its natural powers cramped, checked, and paralysed. In reprobating the spirit with which this work of Sir Richard Musgrave, and some other publications of a similar tendency, are written, it would be injustice to the public not to lay before them the sentiments which the Marquis Cornwallis expressed in an official letter to that Baronet, after the publication of his work, viz.

“ Sir,

Dublin Castle, March 24, 1801.

“ I am directed, by the Lord-Lieutenant, to express to you his concern, at its appearing that your late publication of the History of the late Rebellions in Ireland, has been dedicated to him by permission. Had his Excellency been apprized of the contents and nature of the work, he would never have lent the sanction of his name to a book, which tends so strongly to revive the dreadful animosities which have so long distracted this country, and which it is the duty of every good subject to endeavour to compose. His Excellency, therefore, desires me to request, that in any future edition of the book, the permission to dedicate it to him may be omitted.

“I have, &c.

“*Sir Richard Musgrave, Bart.*

“ E. B. Littlehales.”

[5] The ill-judged policy of misrepresenting the Irish history, for partial or corrupt purposes, began almost as early as our connections with that country ; and, it is to be lamented, that it has been kept up almost uniformly to the present day. Gerald Barry, commonly called Giraldus Cambrensis, was sent over by Henry II. for the avowed purpose of publishing whatever he could collect, that was disadvantageous to the Irish. Williamson, the bishop of Berry, says : “ Wonderful, indeed, are many of the tales which he picked up, of the natural, moral, and political state of this nation.” (Ir. Hist. lib. 2.) Sir James Ware, who published his antiquities of Ireland under Queen Ann, “ admires that some men of his age, otherwise grave and learned, should obtrude those fictions of Giraldus upon the world for truths.” The Bishop of Derry, who published his Irish historical Library in 1724, assures us, p. 3, that “ a very learned person, Mr. Josiah Lynch, titular Archbishop of Tuam, to whom Mr. Flaherty prefaces his *Ogygia*, wrote a particular detection of this man’s mistakes and slanders, which he called *Cambrensis Eversus*, and published under the name of *Gratianus Lucius*. This writer accuses Cambrensis of maliciously destroying a great many of the old Irish annals, where-of he had the perusal : and it is thence justly observed by *Bishop Stillingfleet*, that (If so) he had better advantages and more authorities than *Keating*” Candour however must admit, that if Cambrensis be fairly charged with wilful misrepresentation of facts, suppression of truth, and publication of falsehood, the motive for destroying those annals, which he had so perverted and abused, cannot be doubtful. No impartial writer has ever attempted to justify the groundless and incredible tales, of Cambrensis. Mr. Pinckerton, as lately as 1789, has remarked, that he *shews the greatest ignorance* in his account of Irish History. (Pinck. Scot. London, 1789.)

[6] Hence were they anciently called *Scoti*, by an easy transition from $\Sigma\upsilon\theta\omicron\iota$, Sythians : which appellation, in process of time, remained only appropriate to North Britain, which was inhabited by a colony from Ireland. Venerable Bede generally calls the Irish *Scots*. James I. upon his accession to the throne of England, boasted to the Parliament that he derived his pedigree from the Irish Dynasty,

[7] Besides the common use of the Phœnician language by the native Irish to this day, there are many proofs of their descent from the Scythians or Phœnicians, that put the question out of all doubt. That the Carthaginians were a Phœnician colony has never been questioned, and like other colonies they carried their language with them. Plautus, who wrote his plays in the second Punic war, introduces into his *Pœnulus* the character of *Hanno* a Carthaginian, into whose mouth he puts several Carthaginian (or Phœnician) sentences, which had ever before baffled the erudition of the learned to decypher ; until these speeches have been lately attentively considered, and became perfectly intelligible to the Irish scholar. The ingenious and learned Lieutenant Colonel Vallancey, whose un-exampled proficiency in the Irish language has rendered his researches into the antiquities of that country most useful to the public, has given an accurate collation of these Punic speeches with the Irish, as now spoken; and they. will be found to differ little more than the different provincial dialects of the French, and even of our own tongue ; and infinitely less after a lapse of 3000 years, than modern English differs from what was in use four centuries ago. *Vid. Collect, de Reb. Hib.* They are also to be found in Sir L. Parsons's Defence of the Ancient History of Ireland. It was to be expected that the ignorance of the editors and printers of Plautus,, should often misplace the syllables and run one word into another, in a language which was not understood. Colonel Vallancey has corrected this dislocation of the words and syllables, and thus rendered the whole legible to the Irish, without altering a letter. The curious reader may wish to see a specimen of this wonderful similarity, or rather identity of the Phœnician and Irish languages.

Carthaginian, as in Plautus.

Bythlym mothym noctothij nelechthanti diasmachon.

Proper intervals arranged by Colonel Vallancey.

Byth Lim ! mo thym nocto thii nel ech anti dias machon.

Irish.

Beith liom ! mo thyme noctaithe niel ach anti daise maccoinne.

Be with me ! my fears being disclosed, I have no other intention but recovering my daughter.

Carthaginian and Irish, without the change of a word or letter.

Handone silli hanum bene, silli in mustine.

Whenever she (Venus) grants a favour, she grants it linked with misfortunes.

Carthaginian.

Meipsi &. en este dum & a lam na cestin um.

Irish.

Meisi & an eiste dam & alaim na cestin um.

Hear me, and judge, and do not too hastily question me.

The warlike instruments which have been found in Ireland under the earth, exactly resemble the weapons discovered about Cannæ, some of which are in the British Museum: the brazen swords and spears are of the same form and substance, being a composition of brass and tin. I think it useless to adduce any proofs of the similarity of habits, customs or usages, between the colony and the mother country, from the historians of each. Surfice it to say, that to this day the Irish peasants are in the annual habit of lighting upon certain hills, on the eve of Midsummer, what they still call *Bal's fire*, though fully as ignorant, that *Bel* was the god of their Phœnician ancestors, as others are, that. Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus, were heathen deities, in whose honour the days of the week have received their appellation.

[8] The moderate allowance of 10 years to the reign of each of these kings, will fill the space of 1970 years, 200 years being a moderate allowance for those reigns which exceeded that duration. This nearly corresponds with the time (viz. about 1000 years before the birth of Christ), at which most of the Irish annalists date the arrival of the Phœnician colony from Spain under Milesius.

[9] The Irish annalists relate that Cormoc, in the third century, soliciting votes to be elected to the succession of Mac Con, Fergus king of Ulster, who wished to defeat his election, so contrived during the revelry, that Cormoc should set fire to his beard, by which he lost his election. It is to be noted, that in order to prevent the mischiefs of anarchy during elections, by the ancient constitution of Ireland, the successor was elected during the life of the reigning monarch.

[10] We can discover no period of the Irish history, at which the family pride of the Irish was not attended with mischievous effects. The very wide scope of the Irish annals throws almost an appearance of romance upon the bare references to dates. Until the reign of the great *Tuathal*, of the race of Heremon, (A. D. 125.) few or none of the posterity of the Milesians ever submitted to trade or any manual labour, lest they should degrade their original, or bring a stain upon their family. For this very purpose they kept in the country a number of the Belgians and Dannonians (the former of which passed under the name of *Fir-bolgs* in order to carry on these servile and mechanical occupations. But in the reign of Tuathal, tradesmen and mechanics, as well as artists of all professions, were put under the management of a committee, who had power to examine into their abilities, to reform all abuses, and to suspend such as by their unfairness or want of skill brought their occupations into discredit. So that, according to Dr. Warner (Hist. of Ireland, 225.) this pride has been so inherent from that time to this, that Bishop Berkeley has said, a kitchen wench in his family refused to carry out cinders, because she was descended from an old Irish stock. But in the reign of this monarch, when they saw the legislature take trade and manufactures under their protection, and that no person was allowed to exercise the arts without a licence from the committee empowered by the general assembly of the states, many of the Milesians condescended to follow some employment.

[11] Formerly the lower class of the people, being in a state of villeinage, had no property. They belonged to the soil, which they cultivated, and were transferred with it, at the pleasure of their masters. At present there is no state so abject throughout the nation.

[12] It is most unaccountable, that to the religion which the majority of the Irish nation now professes, the effects of these national prejudices or' prepossessions have been and still are attributed by English, and latterly even by some Irish writers. True it is, that the greatest part of the old Irish still profess the religion of their Christian ancestors ; and true also is it, that the Irish nation is peculiarly tenacious of its old and accustomed habits and modes of thinking. Dr. Leland has informed us, *that they account their ministers of religion as more than human*. By these they are told, and they believe, that the religion which they received from St. Patrick, is what had been regularly transmitted to him from the apostles of Christ. The mere circumstance of professing the Catholic religion is as extensive and foreign from this national family pride or regal enthusiasm, as it is from any other distinctive traits of national character, whether they depend on the endowments of the mind or body. Thus long ere our reformation of religion was thought of, one of the O'Neals being told that Barrett, of Castlemore, an Englishman, and equally a Catholic with himself, had been there 400 years, he replied, that he hated the clown as if he had but come thither yesterday.

[13] The Earl of Castlehaven, who resided in Ireland during the whole of the rebellion in 1641, and for many years after its reduction, wrote Memoirs concerning the wars in Ireland, in order to rectify many errors, and contradict the numerous falsehoods of Dr. Borlase's publications on that and other subjects relating to Ireland, whose History of the Rebellion in particular Dr. Nalson, (*Intr. to 2 vol. of Imp. Coll. p. viii.*) says, *is rather a paradox than a history* ; and that his distorted plagiarism of Lord Clarendon's manuscript " rendered him suspected not to be overstocked with honesty and justice, so necessary to the reputation of an unblemished historian. He wrote for the avowed purpose of defending the harsh government of his father. Sir John Borlase and Sir William Parsons : " and Nalson, as well as the Bishop of Derry, (*Ir. Hist. lib. 56.*) admits, that he continued Sir John Temple's partial and unfaithful memoirs, and wrote reflections upon Lord Castlehaven's Memoirs, as being openly and avowedly *a favourite of the faction and the men and actions of those times*. The Bishop of Derry quotes from Lord Castlehaven's publication, made in 1684, a private opinion of that nobleman upon the effect of these prepossessions, viz. that in his judgment, the only true and great motive to this rebellion (as well as to all others since the reign of Henry II.) was the old national feud, built upon an inflexible persuasion that the sovereignty and property of all the lands in the kingdom, by their unrepealed Brehon law, rested still in the surviving heirs of the *meer Irish* or *Milesian* stock. The noble memorialist was inattentive to the judgment of the King's Bench in the reign of James I. and did not seem aware that by strict law (though unobserved) the whole kingdom was then subjected to the common law of England.

- [14] Le Canfinny, ou chef de sept (que fuit communement le plus auncient de sept) fesoit tout les partitions per son dyscretion. Dav. Rep. 49.
- [15] Sir John Davis reports very fully the judgment of the court of King's Bench in Ireland, 5 Jac. (p. 28.) by which they declared the custom of holding by *Tanistry* to be void by reason of its uncertainty, and on other grounds there specified. This judgment was given upon a special verdict found in ejectment between *Murrough Mac Bryen, plaintiff, v. Cahir O'Callaghan*, defendant. The custom or tenure of *Tanistry* was, that the lands so holden descended, *seniori & dignissinio viro sanguinis & cognominis* of the person who last died seized. The same reporter gives us the resolutions of the judges touching the Irish custom of *Gavelkind*, by which it was resolved and declared, *per tous les justices*, that the said Irish custom of *Gavelkind* was void in law, not only from the inconvenience and unreasonableness of it, but because it was a mere personal custom, and could not alter the descent of an inheritance by the common law of England. It is there said that formerly in Ireland every lordship or chiefry, with the portion of land that passed with it, went without partition to the Tanist, who always came in either by election, or *manu forti*, and not by descent ; but all inferior tenancies were divisible among the males in *Gavelkind* (p. 49.)
- [17] By this custom, says Sir John Davis, (Hist. Ir. 180.) “ the potent and rich men selling, and the meaner sort buying the alterage of their children : and the reason was, because, in the opinion of this people, fostering hath always been a stronger alliance than blood ; and the foster children love and are beloved of their foster fathers and their sept more than of their own natural parents and their kindred.”
- [18] In order to prevent the natural effects of fostering children, and by the crooked policy of those days, in the 28th of Henry VIII. ch. 28. it was made treason for any of the king's subjects within the land to marry or foster themselves, their children, or king's folk, within the fourth degree, or any of them to or with any Irish person or persons of Irish blood, which be not the king's true subjects, nor use themselves accordingly, though any such person or persons be made denizens. What ideas of oppression and inconsistency does not this statute afford, viz. the possibility of a king's subject being denized, and a prohibition of the intercourse of nature between the king's subjects ?
- [19] Nothing can give us stronger ideas of the early civilization of Ireland than to reflect upon the period of time, at which this regular system of heraldry and other literary institutions were established in Ireland ; viz, 950 years before the æra alluded to by Cæsar of the rude barbarism of the Britons. In this triennial assembly King Ollam Fodlah (about 950 years before the coming of our Saviour) gave the royal assent to a great many good laws, and amongst the rest to one, whereby it was ordained, that every nobleman and great officer should by the learned heralds have a particular coat of arms assigned to him, according to his merit and his quality, whereby he should be distinguished from others of the same rank, and be known by an antiquary or person of learning, wherever he appeared, whether at sea or land, in the prince's court, at the place of his own residence, or in the field of battle. (The Bishop of Derry Ir. Hist. Lib. quotes Keating, p. 143.) The nature of this undertaking will not admit of minute critical disquisitions into the authenticity of several leading facts of the Irish history, which nothing but their extreme antiquity renders doubtful to the indolent, or fabulous to the unthinking. There is, however, a mass of evidence, which, when impartially weighed, baldly bids defiance to the fastidious and envious sceptic, and demonstrates the extreme antiquity of the Irish nation, and its colonization by the Phœnicians about 1000 years before the Christian æra. Without calling upon the submission of any one to a particular fact of the ancient history of Ireland, when we combine together the proofs of the Phœnician and Irish language being the same, the similarity of the old Irish and Carthaginian military weapons, the concordance of the Greek and the Irish accounts of the names and productions of the island, the coincidence of the bards and historians as to the number of their kings, the reference of their earliest bards to long pre-existing usages, which confirmed by names and terms which have survived those usages, prove their former existence, the very fabulous allusions of their bards or poets to the names of monarchs who find their regular places in the lists of the most accurate and attentive annalists, the accuracy of computation upon the lives and number of their monarchs to fill up the space of time attributed to the continuance of their royal lineage, the physical discoveries of their very ancient cultivation, the extreme probability of all the leading coincidences, the attempts of their conquerors to eradicate; all the vestiges of their antiquity and

splendour, the testimony of strangers as to the belief of the natives, and the very traditions of a people who have preserved their language for 3000 years, all tend to raise a monument of historical veracity, which ignorance, prejudice, malice, envy, or traduction, will never be able to overturn.

- [20] The like was done in Scotland under our first Edward.
- [21] In the middle of the last century Bishop Berkeley observed “ though it is the true interest of both nations to become one people, yet neither seem apprized of this truth.” Warn.Hist. p. 30.
- [22] A national style or character of music is the most incontestible proof of the nation’s disposition to harmony. Cambrensis, the determined enemy of the Irish nation, says notwithstanding, *of all the nations within our own Knowledge, this is beyond comparison the first in musical compositions.* Ann. 4. Mag. This was said some centuries back. *Geminiani*, that great master of harmony, has more recently affirmed, that he found no music on this side of the Alps so original and beautiful as the Irish airs. O’Con. D. p. 72.
- [23] All athletic accomplishments will be cultivated in proportion to the encouragement given to them by public institutions. Long before the Christian æra one month was dedicated to gymnastic exercises in every year, and that they might be the more generally frequented, the finest season of the year was chosen for this purpose, viz. from the middle of July to the middle of August, which in Ireland is as early as the harvest usually begins. They consisted of all sorts of military exercises, horse and foot races, wrestling, and other such contests of strength and art. They were holden at Tailton, in *Meath*, and were established by one of their favourite monarchs, *Lugha Lam Fada* : and the first of August is to this day called in Irish *La’h Lugh Nasa*, which means a *day* devoted to the memory of *Lugha*. See Keating Reign of *Lugha* and *Ogyg* 3 pt. c. lo.
- [24] Hence the old Irish saying, that *Ireland was thrice under the ploughshare, thrice it was wood, and thrice it was bare.* The historical relations of the former population, cultivation and natural opulence of this island, need no other proof than the various discoveries of their ancient relics, which stamp them with an authenticity, that baffles all scepticism, ignorance or malice. Many unsatisfactory conjectures have been made of the original causes and formation of bogs in Ireland ; every hypothesis which goes to account for them from the conflux of rain, river, and spring waters rotting and rendering the surface of the soil spongy, or from the neglect of cultivation, or any other gradual cause, seems untenable, if we credit the daily discoveries made under the boggy substance, of every species of trees, always lying in the same direction (from west to east) hazle trees in full bearing, the furrowed relicts of tillage, culinary utensils still filled with unctuous substance, all sorts both of military and civil implements useful and ornamental, of massy gold, silver, brass and composition, all of equal and great atiquity : all which circumstances bespeak some sudden convulsion of nature, and that in the summer season, which over-whelmed the country and at once encrusted the then cultivated surface, with all that was upon it, with this spongy substance, the careful removal of which at this day demonstrates a former state of cultivation and opulence. The silence of all historians upon such a sudden calamity or visitation of God upon the land, is certainly a strong presumption against this hypothesis. And that Ireland formerly superabounded (as it certainly still does, if properly explored and worked) with gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, coals and other minerals, is incontestable from the discoveries of half-worked mines, and the solidity of implements of gold and silver constantly discovered ; the laws for the annual or occasional payment of given quantities of gold and silver ; the concurrence of all ancient historians and constant recent appearances, insomuch that the parliament of Ireland in 1796, voted 1000*l.* to be applied towards making an experiment for working a gold mine in the mountains of Wicklow. 36 Geo. III. c. 1.s, xxxi : Many pounds of pure gold having been washed down from these mountains about that time.
- [25] Whether or no it pleased the Almighty to confirm the preaching of this apostle of the Irish by all or any of the signs and prodigies, which are recorded in the early history of his mission is irrelevant to the scope of this history to examine. But it is material to know, that the faith which was preached by St. Patrick to, and received by the Irish, was, that which is now denominated the *Roman Catholic Faith*. It could in fact have been no other. For St. Patrick received his Christian Education, as well as his *Surname Patricius* at Rome : nor is it to be presumed that Pope Celestine

sent St. Patrick to preach other doctrines, than what he himself maintained : and what these were may be easily collected, not only from the writings of St, Patrick and some of his co-apostles in that country, but from those of his cotemporaries, Sts. Hierome, Ambrose, Augustine, Sec. &c. After the introduction of Christianity and the establishment of a regular Hierarchy throughout the island, the communication of Ireland with Rome became, by the intervening distractions of the continent, less frequent than it had been. In about two centuries after the establishments made by St, Patrick, there broke out a sort of schism between the Church of Ireland and the Church of Rome, not indeed upon any dogmatical points of faith or religion, but upon the mere point of Ecclesiastical Discipline, as to the mode of computing the time for celebrating Easter. After some contention the Irish Church submitted to the Roman Ordinance. The native Irish boast that never since this difference has the Irish Hierarchy been interrupted.

[26] Dr. Warner admits that *he went to Rome to be consecrated for his mission*. Hist, 273, St. Patrick flourished in the 5th century, and was coteoporary with St, Augustine, St. Ambrose, &c.

[27] “ A most honourable testimony,” says Lord Littleton, “ not only to the learning, but also to the hospitality and bounty of that nation.” It would be unjust not to notice that innate spirit of hospitality, which distinguishes the Irish nation from all others. For even to this day amongst the poor natives, so universally does this system of hospitality prevail, that a traveller enters the cabin he arrives at, and sits dwm with as much ease and confidence as he would at home ; and is sure of a cordial welcome to a participation of whatever it affords. There was an old Brehon law against septs suddenly breaking up their establishments, and emigrating to other parts of the country, lest the stranger and traveller might be disappointed of that reception and entertainment, which the law presumed them entitled to by a claim of social nature. It is the custom to this day with the native Irish peasants, to unlatch and open the door of their cabins whenever they sit down to what they call a meal. This amiable and magnificent principle of hospitality is more discernible in the frank participation of the homely fare of the cabin, than in the ostentatious display of refined luxury, which, in the higher orders, has taken place of that genuine principle of benevolence. Leland observes, the Christian clergy were particularly careful to inculcate this value of hospitality. Prelim. Dis. xxx.

[28] Henrick of St. Germain.

[29] A monument of which was preserved in tapestry in the late palace of Versailles, in which the King of Ireland with his harp was in the row of princes in amity with that ehiperor.

[30] There happened about the year of our Lord 1418, a very notable transaction, which proved the high estimation in which the kingdom of Ireland then was, and ever had been, holden by the learned of Europe. At the council of Constance the ambassadors from England were refused the rank and precedency, which they claimed over some others ; they were not even allow^ed to rank or take anyplace as the ambassadors of a nation : the aplvocates for France insisted, that the English having been conquered by the Romans, and again subdued by the Saxons, who were tributaries to the German empire, and never governed by native sovereigns, they should take place as a branch only of the German empire, and not as a free nation; for added they, “ it is evident from Albertus Magnus, and Bartholomew Glanville, that the world is divided into the three parts, Europe, Asia, and Africa (America had not then been discovered): Europe was divided into four empires, the Roman, the “ Constantinopolitan, the Irish, and the Spanish.” The English advocates admitting the force of these allegations, claimed their precedency and rank fr. m Henry's being Monarch of Ireland only, and it was accordingly granted. O’Hal. 1. V. 68.

[31] 4 Inst. 34-9.

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