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Phallic objects, monuments and remains;





PHALLIC OBJECTS,

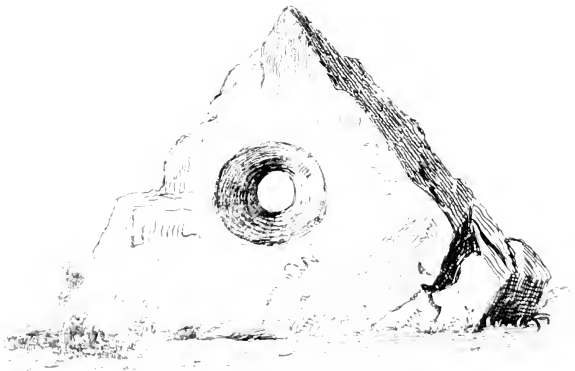
MONUMENTS AND REMAINS.







*Round Tower, Central America.*



*Stone of Countess, Andes.*



✓  
Phallic Objects,  
Monuments and Remains

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE

RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
PHALLIC IDEA

(SEX WORSHIP)

AND ITS EMBODIMENT IN WORKS OF  
NATURE AND ART.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

1889.



## P R E F A C E .

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*T*HE following volume, describing a number of the most celebrated monuments, consisting of towers, pillars and stones connected with Phallism, exhibits and illustrates many of the peculiar features of that singular worship, and the wide extent of territory over which it prevailed.

A large share of it has been devoted to a description of Phallic remains in the kingdom of Ireland, particularly of those mysterious towers, the solution of whose origin and uses has exercised the minds of the learned and ingenious for centuries. The same objects have been traced in various other parts of the world, and many of their kindred monuments in the shape of the holed stones and pillars have been shown to exist even in our own land.

The reader who has consulted our volumes, "Phallism" and "Ophiolatrea," will find in these pages an interesting companion to those treatises, and be enabled in his travels to identify certain singular objects which will from time to time present themselves to his notice, and whose meaning is supposed to have been lost in the oblivion of bygone days.



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# PHALLIC OBJECTS, MONUMENTS, AND REMAINS.

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## CHAPTER I.

*The Question raised—Numbers of Round Towers in Ireland—Tower of Devenish—Swords—Kildare—Monasterboice—Antrim—Clondalkin—Trummery—Ardmore—Clones—Exploration of the Tower at Clones—Clonmacnoise—Glendalough—The Rock of Cashel and its Tower—Torry—Kinneigh—Kilmacduagh—Saint Canicè—Timahoe—Roscrea—Armoj.*

IN the *Dublin Penny Journal* of July 7th, 1832, a contributor signing himself "Terence O'Toole," (said by O'Brien to be the Rev. Caesar Otway, a member of the council of the Royal Irish Academy) wrote respecting the woodcut at the head of the journal:—"The round tower to the right, is a prodigious puzzle to antiquarians. Quires of paper, as tall as a tower, have been covered with as much ink as might form a Liffey, in accounting for their origin and use. They have been assigned to the obscene rights of Paganism—to the mystic arcana of Druidism—said to be temples of the fire worshippers—standings of the pillar worshippers—Christian belfries—military towers of the Danish invaders—defensive retreats for the native clergy, from the sudden inroads of the ruthless Norman. . . . Sixty-five of these extraordinary constructions have been discovered and described in our island; of these the highest and most perfect are at Dronuskin, Fertagh, Kilmacduagh, Kildare, and Kells. There are generally the marks of five or six stories in each tower. The doors are from thirteen to twenty feet from the ground, and so low that none can enter without stooping. The one nearest to Dublin, is at Clondalkin, four miles from town, though formerly there was one in a court, off Ship street. The one most interesting, both to the antiquarian and the lover of mountain scenery, is the one at the seven churches of Glendalough, within a day's drive of Dublin."

With regard to the number of these towers in Ireland, which the above writer gives as sixty-five discovered, we may observe that others have informed us that lists, have been made to the number of one hundred and twenty, and that of these the remains of about sixty-six are traceable.

Keane, in his "Towers and Temples of Ancient Ireland," calls that of Devenish, the best specimen at present existent in Ireland, and he is cordially supported in this, by Mr. J. H. Parker, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for the year 1864, who says it is the most perfect in Ireland, though not one of the earliest.

The island of Devenish lies nearly two miles below Enniskillen, and contains nearly two hundred acres, of what was once the richest land in the country. Long ago, it was described as remarkable, for possessing one of the completest round towers of Ireland. "A tower built of black stone, cut into blocks, which seemed united independent of cement." This tower was built—no one knew when, except that it must have been in a time far remote. Said a writer, in the *Dublin Journal*, of 1833, "It is indeed, one of the most beautiful, perhaps the most beautiful, in Ireland. Its stonework is complete, even to the top-stone, and that, we may say, without any thanks to the proprietor. The stone is now, and has been for many years, toppling to its fall."

"Some seeds of the elder have been borne to the summit of the tower by the wind, there they took root and flourished. The effect on the stones has been, to displace them very much, and, if some steps be not taken to preserve this interesting structure, it will in a few years be added to the numerous ruins that in this country surround us, as memorials of our recklessness and insipidity."

"The outline of the tower is beautiful. The stones of which it is built, were accurately cut in the external and internal end to the curve, according to which the tower was constructed. The summit, or cap, is built of accurately cut stones, laid on in diminishing series, till it is crowned by a single stone fashioned to a cone. The stones of the structure are cemented with mortar, but the quantity of cement laid in it, is so small, that an accurate and close inspection is necessary to discern it. The stones are not black, as described by another writer, they are a light brown sandstone, found in the neighbourhood, and most excellently adapted for building, as it can be cut to any scantling, and it hardens with the weather.



“The cornice is divided into four parts, and the points of division marked by four carved heads, which look to the cardinal points.” These are clearly and beautifully delineated on page 305, of Kane’s “Towers of Ancient Ireland.” “Each division is neatly wrought with a carving peculiar to itself. There are several windows or openings in the tower, four close under the cornice, and their places marked by the carved heads, and others at different distances below them. Within, about seven feet from the ground, there is an opening, evidently intended for a doorway, it is about four feet high, and has on the inner jamb on the left-hand side, an iron hinge, strongly fastened to the stone. At a small distance above, there is a fractured spot, indicating the place where the corresponding hinge has been.”

The height of the tower is about ninety feet, the circumference at the base, forty-eight feet.

Mr. Parker, in the article already quoted, states, that an ash tree had sprung up and grown on the top of the tower, and was causing the mischief described. Anyhow, ash or elder, the damage was becoming so serious, that two years after the publication of the account in the *Dublin Journal*, viz., in 1835, the tower was repaired, the greatest care being taken to secure the proper readjustment of the stones, by marking each before its removal. When it is stated that the tower is cylindrical, with a conical summit, its form will readily present itself to the eye, even without the aid of a diagram.

Swords, is an ancient town, of the barony of Cavlock, about seven miles north of Dublin; it has long, however, been little more than an insignificant village, remarkable for its picturesque features, pleasant and romantic situation, and historical recollections. Like many other ancient Irish towns, it appears to be of ecclesiastical origin. A splendid monastery was founded there in the year 512, by the great St. Colomb, who appointed St. Finian Lobair, or the leper, as its abbot, and to whom he gave a missal or copy of the gospels, written by himself. St. Finian died before the close of the sixth century. In the course of time, this monastery became possessed of considerable wealth, and the town rose into much importance. It contained within its precincts, in addition to St. Colomb’s church, four other chapels, and nine exterior chapels subservient to the mother church. Hence on the institution of the collegiate church of St. Patrick, it ranked as the first of the thirteen

canonries attached to that cathedral by Archbishop Comin, and was subsequently known by the appellation of "the golden prebend."

Swords was burnt and plundered frequently, as well by the native princes as the Danes, who set the example. By the latter it was reduced to ashes, in the years 1012, and 1016, and by the former in the years 1035 and 1135. On this last occasion, the aggressor, Conor O'Melaglin, king of Meath, was slain by the men of Lusk. Its final calamity of this kind occurred in the year 1166.

Of the numerous ecclesiastical edifices for which Swords was anciently distinguished, the only remains now existing, are a fine and lofty round tower and the abbey belfry, a square building of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The tower is seventy-three feet high, fifty-two feet in circumference, and the walls four feet thick. It contained five stories, or floors. Its present entrance which is level with the ground, is of modern construction, as well as the roof and upper story: what appears to have been the original doorway is twenty feet from the ground, and but four feet high.

At Kildare, 30 miles W. by S. from Dublin, is one of the finest specimens of round towers extant. It seems to have been built of two kinds of stone: from the foundation to about twelve or thirteen feet, it is composed of a kind of white granite; the remainder is of a common kind of stone of a dark colour. The entrance or door, is placed about fourteen feet from the ground, and it is quite a hundred feet in height. The tower is highly ornamented and is in excellent preservation.

The ruins of the ancient abbey and round tower of Monasterboice situated between Drogheda and Dunleer, and about three miles and a half S. W. of the latter place, form altogether a singular and interesting group—the enclosure of a small churchyard, containing the shell of two chapels, two perfect stone crosses, and a broken one, by far the finest specimens of this kind to be met with, and a round tower of great height, in good preservation. Its height is indeed, a hundred and ten feet, and its circumference at the base fifty-one feet. The walls are three feet six inches thick, and the door is five feet six inches in height, twenty-two inches in width, and six feet from the level of the ground. The diameter of the tower, on the inside is nine feet, and above the door, it is divided into five stories by rings of stone, slightly projecting.

On a spacious plain, about half a mile from the town of Antrim, stands another of these round towers, ninety-five feet in height, and fifty-three feet in circumference a yard from the ground. It is divided into three stories, with holes in the walls for joists to support lofts, and loopholes for the admission of air and light. Those near the top correspond with the four cardinal points, and near them a beam of oak extends across the tower, as if for the purpose of supporting a bell. A little above these, the tower tapers in the form of a sugar-loaf, and was formerly surmounted by a conical covering of granite, resembling in shape a cap or bonnet. At the base are two rows of stones projecting about eight inches, and nine feet above these is the door, fronting the north; it is four feet three inches in height, by two feet wide; the wall at the sill is two feet nine inches in thickness. The outside lintel of the door consists of one large stone, as does that inside; and between those is a beam of oak across the door, which it is said must have been placed there at the erection of the tower, as it appears impossible to have been fixed there since.

Clondalkin, is an interesting and picturesque village, about four miles from Dublin, at the Naas road. It was originally a camp or settlement of the Danish invaders, who, we are informed, erected a palace in it, named Dun Awley, from the name of its founder, Awliffe. This place was burned by the Irish, about the year 832, when one hundred of the principal Danes were slain. In revenge, the Danish chief surprised by ambuscade a body of two thousand men, most of whom were either slain or taken prisoners. Here, in close proximity to an abbey, stood one of the towers we are describing. It was eighty-four feet high, and fifteen feet in diameter, the doorway being twelve feet from the ground.

At Trummery, county of Antrim, close to the church, stood a tower about sixty feet in height, a cylinder of most graceful proportions, tastefully crowned with a cupola, curiously raised on a frame of basket-work, the rim of which had fitted the circumference, the diameter being nearly five feet; over the frame was spread a deep covering of mortar, in which were closely laid thin flags of limestone, regularly decreasing in breadth from the wall up to the centre, forming a light and firm arch; over this was a covering of mortar, well paved with coarse limestone gravel; lastly, a coat of strong cement completed the crown. There were two great entrances into the tower—the first, a low,

narrow, strong archway of red freestone, opening on the south, through which you first enter the church; at the east gable a door led to a small apartment, and from thence into the tower. The second entrance or doorway was right over the archway, about five feet high by three wide, handsomely cased with yellow and red freestone, at the height of six feet from the floor. To the right of the arch, as you entered, several stones connected with the wall inside, led up to the door. A few feet from the ground were two loopholes, one due east, the other north-west, well cased with freestone, for the purpose of preventing the rain that fell on the crown trickling down and injuring the ends of an oak beam that crossed the tower. About the middle of the tower, inside, were some square holes, but from their scattered situations they could not have served the purpose of joists. The outer-work of the tower was of undressed but well-chosen land stones—"that rule by masons, called breaking the joint, quite neglected," says a writer in the *Dublin Journal*—yet the inside wrought with the strictest order, and a considerable quantity of freestone used; perhaps this has led some into an error, who have asserted the tower was composed of a double wall, but it was no more than the common thickness of such works, scarcely three feet.

This tower fell in the year 1828, in consequence it is supposed, of the ivy by which it was partially covered, having been cut away, and in 1842, its ruins were excavated and examined by a party of gentlemen, consisting of the Rev. Robert Kitt, minister of the parish; Mr. Goodwin, C.E.; Mr. Rogan, a contributor to the *Dublin Penny Journal*, and others.

Ardmore, interpreted by Keane "The high palace of the great God," on the south coast of the county of Waterford, possesses one of the most perfect and beautiful of the Irish towers, built of a hard sandstone brought from the mountains of Slievegrian, about four miles distant. The tower is described by Mr. Hayman as of about fifteen feet in diameter at the base, whence it gradually tapers to the apex, ninety-seven feet above the surface of the ground, and terminates in a conical roof now half thrown over by lightning. Four string courses divide the exterior into five stories. The entrance is in the east side at the distance of thirteen feet from the ground. It is circular headed and tapers from one foot eleven inches at springing of the arch to two feet seven inches at base. The full height of this fine doorway is five feet nine inches. Around the outer

edges is cut a bold Norman head; and inside are bar-holes, two at each side of the entrance, for securing the door. Access to the interior is now rendered easy by means of the ladders and floors provided by Mr. Odell, the lord of the soil. The lower stories are lighted by splaying spike-holes, some square, some with circular heads; and as the visitor ascends, he meets grotesque corbels at intervals, staring at him from the concave walls. The highest story has four tapered windows, facing the cardinal points. Each of these presents on the exterior a triangular arch, and on the interior a trefoil head. In height they are respectively three feet nine inches. The stone lintels remain over the opes, where the beam for the bell rested, which tradition says was of so deep and powerful a tone that it was heard at Glaun-mor, or the "Great Glen," eight miles distant.

Clones, county Monaghan, celebrated as the residence of St. Tighearnach, who here founded a monastery in the early part of the sixth century, has one of the oldest and most roughly constructed towers of the country. It is built of the hard mountain limestone, chiefly in natural boulders, but partly in hammer dressed stones, in irregular courses, "that is to say," remarks Mr. Parker, "not always level, but some sloping; the joints between the stones are very wide, being what is termed, 'spawled masonry.' It was built with mortar, but much of it has disappeared from the outside of the wall."

*The Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, says, "The tower, when perfect, must have been of considerable elevation, and an imposing example of this kind of architecture. As far as could be ascertained by several calculations, made from the shadow at different periods of the day, the remaining portion is about seventy-feet high above the foundation, or sixty-eight feet and a half above the level of the burying ground. At about five feet above the first offset, the circumference measures fifty-one feet, and the thickness of the wall is three feet six inches to three feet seven inches. The interior diameter is nine feet, which is considerably more than the average of other towers. The door, which is quadrangular-headed, stands due east, and is eight feet above the level of the first offset, or three feet above the present level of the surface on that side of the building.

This tower is considerably off the perpendicular, with a decided inclination towards the north, and has suffered a diminution in height by the falling of a portion of the upper part,

where several stones, particularly on the west side, overhang so much as to lead to the impression that unless some means are taken to secure them, another portion will before long be precipitated into the interior.

An interesting account is given of an examination of this tower by a number of antiquarians, assisted by some labourers employed upon the works of the Ulster canal:—

“The interior was filled up to within three feet of the sill of the door, that is, to the level of the burying-ground, or five feet above the first offset of the base, with remains of jackdaws’ nests, broken glass, human bones, probably thrown in from the graveyard, horns of oxen, hair, leather, fragments of coffins, and stones which had formed part of the roof and upper walls, when the tower was perfect; these were mixed throughout with a rich dark mould, formed from decomposed organic matter. Having cleared this away to the depth of three feet and a half, a well defined clay floor was uncovered, described by Mr. Casebourne, as formed with puddled clay. This was broken through in the centre, and the excavation continued to the depth of eighteen inches farther, with no other result than laying bare, a few inches beneath the clay floor, two thin irregular-shaped flags, with traces of fire on the surface, and near them some remains of charcoal, or perhaps burned bones. In the earth thrown out, a few fragments of thigh bones and other human remains, were also remarked. A second floor was now discovered, formed by a thin coat of lime: it extended across the tower, at the part where the first internal offset of the base occurred, on the same horizontal line as the first external one.

“The removal of this lime floor was an operation of considerable difficulty, and attended with some delay, in consequence of the tenacity of the upper stratum of clay, and of the desire to use as much care as possible. An opening was then made in its centre, and on excavating to a depth of fifteen or sixteen inches, the leg bones of an adult person were discovered. In the hope of finding the skull and trunk lying towards the west, a commencement of removing the clay in that direction was made; at the distance, however, of less than a foot from the first opening, in a rather south-westerly direction, a skull was unexpectedly discovered, but so cracked and broken that it could not be saved entire. The fragment preserved, was sufficient to show, that the skull must have been that of a

child not exceeding eight years of age, the permanent incisor teeth not having penetrated through the jaw.

“In consequence of the depth to which the operations extended, it was found necessary to erect a scaffold or stage across the eastern side ; and the western half was carefully examined from its southern to its northern boundary. Considerable human remains, in a state of very great decay, some of a child, some of adults, were thus exposed, especially at the northern extremity, where the bones of several lower limbs, a pelvis, feet, &c., were crowded together within the curve formed by the wall, and in close contact with the side, but without order or regularity. Having carefully examined one half to the depth of three feet without meeting anything further, the stage was removed and the material upon which it had rested cautiously thrown upon the part already explored. Upon the same level with the child’s skull and the other bones already detailed, and occupying as nearly as possible the north-eastern quarter of the floor, the remains of four skulls were reached, all greatly fractured, either by walking over them before the removal of the soil, or by the erection of the scaffold. They were so damaged that the exact position they lay in could not be correctly ascertained, although the relative position occupied by each was sufficiently perceptible ; these positions were such as to prove clearly that they were *bones* and not bodies, that had been thus deposited. To the south of the fourth skull, and in close contact with it, lay a fifth, also broken into fragments, but connected with a complete spinal column and ribs, extending in the direction of the adult lower extremities, found beside the child’s skull, this had every appearance of having been interred before the integuments had been removed from the bones by decomposition. No pelvis, however, was found, but the bones generally were in such a state of decay, that it is quite possible that it may have crumbled away during the search. If the body had been deposited in a perfect state as supposed, the position was very different from that usually adopted at the present day, having a direction nearly N. by E., with the feet directed towards the south-west. One of the skulls was overlaid by a projecting portion of the offset, the interval between it and the others being in part filled up with moderate sized stones, as if so placed before the laying on of the projecting offset during the progress of the building. Indeed, there was no doubt on the part of the intelligent

observers of the proceedings, some of them professional men, that the remains discovered must have been deposited in the position they occupied, before the building had been carried up higher than the first offset. Mr. Grattan, who gave great attention to the inquiry throughout, was strongly impressed with an opinion that the walls, having been carried up to the height of the last offset but one, the remains were then deposited, the place filled in with clay to that level, the last offset then set on, the surface levelled and coated with lime, and the remainder of the building then proceeded with.

“Along with the four skulls described, and under such circumstances as necessarily proved it to have been interred at the same time, a portion of a pig’s or boar’s jaw was discovered. It was in such a singular state of preservation that, when shown to Dr. Scouler by Mr. Grattan, he declared his opinion that it could not have remained long in the ground; a conjecture which is valuable as a proof of the difficulty of determining their age from the mere inspection of such remains. Reference has been already made to doubts expressed of the age of the skull found at Drumbo tower, from its high state of preservation. Now, indisputably, the pig’s jaw must have been as long here as the skull with which it was found deposited, and they manifest all the characters of extreme antiquity; consequently, the difference in their present condition must be the result of original difference of individual structure. It is clear, therefore, that the fresh and sound condition of the Drumbo skull by no means proves it to be recent; no part of the skeleton being subject to greater varieties in density, solidity, and texture, than the skull, not merely in different races, but also in different individuals of the same race. The greater part of the fragments of the different skulls found on the present occasion were preserved, though unfortunately not all of them; no idea being entertained at the time that they could have been so satisfactorily put together as was afterwards found practicable.”

Clonmacnoise, situate eight miles S. by W. from Athlone, has two very fine specimens of round towers, one of which is incorporated with the temple called St. Finian’s church. This tower is faced with ashlar masonry inside and outside, and with fine joints. “The chancel arch is of two orders, the outer one having only shallow rounds, and narrow angular mouldings between; but the inner arch has a rich, though shallow triple



zigzag both on the vertical face and on the soffit, the salient points of which meet on a large bowtel, which runs along the angle. Under this is a modern plain arch of black limestone. The abacus is square, and of the common Norman form. The capitals of the outer shafts are human heads with drapery passing under the chin, but much mutilated and decayed. Those of the inner one are an Irish variety of the usual scalloped form, which did not come into use until the twelfth century, with an extra moulding giving them a more finished appearance than usual. On the jambs are heads, three on each jamb, and a peculiar huckle-shaped ornament overlapping the shaft. One of the heads, the central one, a grotesque human head, is large and very remarkable."

"The material of this tower is the hard limestone of the country, very well cut and squared, but the beds are not quite level, although this is hardly perceived, and is much less marked than at Cashel; it is sufficient to show that the masons were accustomed to the use of rough stone, and not of ashlar."\*

The larger of the two towers at Clonmacnoise, is called by the natives, the tower of O'Rourk, and is so named in the Register. Long ago, it lost its roof, and the belfry storey has been re-built of rough stone, with eight openings in it, all square-headed with a single long stone forming the top; the other windows are of the same form. "The doorway is round-headed, with a regular arch of ashlar, and sloping sides formed of six stones on each side, part of the regular and nearly parallel courses of masonry which continue all round the tower, which is constructed in the oldest parts of ashlar masonry, and fine jointed. The material is the hard limestone, which is very difficult to cut, and requires excellent tools for the purpose. The character of the masonry and construction of this tower, is decidedly later than that of the domestic buildings attached to the cathedral, or than that of the castle built by the English in 1212, which adjoins the south-west corner of the burial ground. It is recorded in the *Chronicon Scotorum*, and in the "Annals of the Four Masters," that the great *Cloichteach* of Clonmacnoise was finished in the year 1124."†

Mr. Keane remarking on this, says:—"These remarks of Mr. Parker's are most correct, and evince his sound judgment on the subject of Norman Architecture. Yet we are asked to

\* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1864, p. 149.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1866.

believe that this tower, with its superior masonry and ashlar doorway, 'decidedly later in style than the castle built by the English in 1212,' was built by the Celts in 1124, because the annals inform us that it was *finished* in that year."

The explanation before offered is the only one capable of solving the difficulty, namely, that the tower was built by the early Cuthite inhabitants of Ireland; that having been partially broken down by time, the top was rebuilt for a belfry in 1124, with rough stone, and eight windows the better to emit sound, when it became recorded as *finished*, that eleven years after, viz., 1135, the roof was struck by lightning, since which time it has remained as it now is—a ruin.\*

We now turn to Glendalough, the most interesting spot in Ireland to the antiquary who desires to examine relics of ancient Irish architecture and sculpture.

This Glendalough is described in the "Acts of St. Kevin," compiled as early as the beginning of the twelfth century, thus:—

"A solitary place enclosed by lofty mountains and watered with fair streams, for there the waters of two lakes and of a beautiful river flowing down from the mountains unite, and in the upper part of the valley, where the mountains close in and terminate it, the lake stretches from the roots of one mountain to the foot of the other, and that valley was formerly called in Irish, Gleand De, but now Gleandloch, that is, the valley of the two lakes."

Glendalough is situate in the midst of the Wicklow mountains, nine miles from the Rathdrum Station, on the Wicklow and Wexford Railway. There we find one of the best specimens of the Irish round towers. It is ninety feet high, and is built principally of mica slate and blocks of granite. The slate, for the most part, is in blocks about three feet in length, and the whole of the stones are laid together as they come to hand, and simply hammer-dressed on the face to bring them into the circular form of the tower. "The dressings of the doorway are of granite, without moulding or ornament of any kind. The tower has lost its conical capping, but in other respects is almost perfect. Close to the top of the tower are four small quadrilateral windows which face the cardinal points, and there are three of similar form in the shaft, each lighting a story. All the openings in the tower have inclined jumbs, and, as usual with

\* *Towers of Ireland.*

the windows of other round towers, they are the same in width inside and outside."\*

In the southern part of Tipperary stands the celebrated Rock of Cashel, visible with its ruin-covered summit for many miles across the surrounding country. So immense and precipitous is the Rock, that it is inaccessible on all but one side, the south, and this is protected by a gateway. Says Mr. Parker, "the grey, hoary, solemn, and melancholy-looking ruins seem in their mute eloquence like spirits of the past standing in the present, silent, yet speaking. The ruined cathedral, the shattered castle, and the weather-beaten cross, all raise thoughts which it is not possible to express. And when all these are seen by the light of a setting sun, shining from behind clouds over the distant Galtees, the effect is beyond anything that can be conceived, and must be seen in order to be felt."

The ruins consist of a cathedral, an archiepiscopal palace, a round tower, and a Norman building known as Cormac's Chapel.

"The masonry of the tower," says Mr. Parker, "is different from that of Cormac's chapel, and earlier. It consists (beginning from the ground) of: 1, a projecting plinth of sandstone, cut into blocks of about eighteen inches to two feet long; the depth cannot be seen, as they are partly buried in the ground, but they probably rest on the solid rock for a foundation; 2, then five courses of sandstone and limestone intermixed, in pieces of irregular shape, not squared, and many of the vertical joints sloping; the courses vary in depth from eight inches to a foot, and the fifth course from the bottom is only six inches deep, the stones also vary very much in length, from six inches to two feet. The sixth course is only six inches wide, the seventh about nine inches; then come nine courses of limestone, in long narrow pieces, from four to eight inches thick; then a narrow course of sandstone, then another of limestone; and above that all the rest seems to be of sandstone, in about eighty more courses. The limestone is far more irregular than the sandstone, and hammer-dressed only, with the interstices filled up with the chippings, as usual in this sort of construction. The sandstone is much more regular than the limestone, but still not in regular square pieces like those of Cormac's chapel, and many of the vertical joints in the sandstone are sloping; the joints are not very wide, though not fine; there is no thickness of mortar, and

none of it projects, as at Cien." \* The door of the tower is twelve feet above the level of the base, and the summit is as usual, conical.

Tory, is an island, about nine miles from the coast of Donegal, and belongs to the parish of Tullaghobegly, barony of Kilmacrenan. It has two towns, (villages, the "Ulster Journal of Archaeology," calls them) East and West Town, in the latter of which are certain ecclesiastical remains, and a round tower. Mr. E. Getty describes West Town, as quite a quarry of remains of religious edifices, but says that with the exception of the round tower and eastern archway of the abbey enclosure, called Rath Finian, they are nothing more than ruins. The building of the tower, has been attributed by some to Saint Columba, that, however, is of course mere speculation.

It is much smaller than many others in the country, being only fifty-one feet high; its diameter is seventeen feet two inches, and its outer circumference, fifty-one feet six inches. The door is eight feet six inches from the first offset of the base outside; it is arched with narrow flat stones, the key-stone being wedge-shaped. The material of the tower is that common to the ecclesiastical ruins, viz., red granite; and the walls four feet three inches in thickness. The summit was dome-shaped instead of conical, as we usually find in these structures, and within the outer one was a second dome, very much lower down. Mr. Getty, says, "This, which may, perhaps be considered a stone floor, such as seen in some ancient buildings, separated an upper apartment of considerable height, which was, perhaps, intended for purposes of special security, or only to contain a bell. If the former was the object, it may have been thus planned with the intention that a person looking up from below, should suppose he saw to the top, when in reality his view only reached this lower dome. It is not possible to ascertain what means of access was provided, but it must have been by an aperture through the floor, or by a difficult ascent from one window to another. A man was induced by Mr. Getty to climb up and examine this upper chamber; he reached to about six feet above the tower arch, and stated he could see two offsets for floors upwards, and three downwards; five in all. According to this, the arch mentioned may be the only one remaining of six stone floors, but there were reasons for believing that any other floors had been of wood."

\* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1864.

Some of the inhabitants stated with great confidence, that within their memory there had been a bell in the tower, but that it fell down, and was then sold to a travelling tinker.

At Kinneigh, in the county of Cork, said in ancient times to have been a bishopric, about one hundred feet to the south-west of the present church, stands a tower of common brown stone, between seventy and eighty feet in height. The tower is, as usual, round, but at the basement for the space of fifteen feet, is hexagonal, a figure found nowhere else. Twelve feet from the ground is the door, an oblong opening five feet by three feet, level with it is a stone floor, with an opening in the centre just large enough to let a man down into a gloomy under-vault. Four circular nests occur in the upper part of the structure for floors, which have long disappeared, and these were lighted by as many small square loops. The inside diameter of this tower is nine feet two inches; it is situated in a deep valley, and does not command an extensive view on any side.\*

Kilmacduagh, Galway, has a tower 102 feet in height, and nineteen feet in diameter at the base. There was once a famous bishopric; but now little else is to be seen but miserable huts and ruins. St. Colman is said to have founded the see in the seventh century, and the abbey was rebuilt by Bishop Maurice in 1280, and appropriated for Canons Regular of the Augustine Order. Its style shows that it was again rebuilt in the sixteenth century. The tower is what is called a leaning one, and the most exaggerated stories have prevailed with regard to that fact, it having been reported that the deviation from the perpendicular was very much greater than that of the renowned tower of Pisa. Accurate measurement, however, with instruments has shown that the inclination is two and a half feet in the entire height.

Saint Canicè, in Kilkenny, so named from the saint of that name, who is said to have had a cell upon the spot where the cathedral was built, has a tower 108 feet in height and forty-seven feet in circumference, one of the largest of this class of structures. The doorway as usual, is considerably above the ground—eight feet, facing the south-west.

The tower at Timahoe, Queen's County, seven miles from Maryborough, is described by Keane, as in a very perfect state, and exhibiting the most beautiful specimen of round tower architecture to be found in Ireland. The abbey built by

\* *Newhaven's Picturesque Ireland.*

St. Mochoe, in 497, near the tower, was burned in 1142, but rebuilt again the same year. It is now a ruin, but the tower is still perfect, with the exception of the roof. The latter has some features about it altogether different to most other Irish towers. Its height is eighty-four feet, and its diameter eighteen feet, and it leans to the south-west five feet beyond the perpendicular line. It has a most beautiful doorway, at a height of seventeen feet, the workmanship of which is said to be most remarkable. Keane, calls it, "one of the richest specimens in Ireland." It is ornamented with chevrons, or zigzag mouldings beautifully carved in red sandstone. It appears to have been divided into six separate stories, by projecting stones, on which probably rested the beams that supported the stage or floors.

Several notices respecting the abbots of Timahoe, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, occur in the Annals; but the last record (by the Four Masters) mentions the burning of Tech-Mochua, in the year 1142, from which time it seems to have had no existence as a monastery. "When therefore" asks Keane, "could this beautiful doorway have been erected? The record of this burning, and the subsequent silence of the Annals on the subject of the monastery, are significant, and tend to disprove the notion that Timahoe and other buildings of the same class were erected at any time since the Christian era."

The tower is historically associated with a battle which was fought in its immediate vicinity, between General Monk and General Preston, in which the former with six hundred foot and two troops of horse, defeated the latter who had three thousand men.

Another thing may appropriately be mentioned here, as it has a connection with the question which must presently be faced, as to the origin and object of the peculiar structures. Sir William Betham says, "Some years since, Mr. Middleton, who lives in the neighbourhood of Timahoe, in the Queen's County, told me that a peasant having frequently dreamed that treasure was hid in the round tower of that place, induced two others to join him, and went at night, and having removed the earth came to a flagstone, which they raised, and discovered an urn with bones therein. Mr. Middleton assured me he had often conversed with those men, and had no doubt whatever of the truth and accuracy of the statement. I mentioned this fact to Mr. George Petrie, but he repudiated the idea as utterly unworthy of belief.

Some years afterwards I became acquainted with Mr. Moore, of Cremorgen, near Timahoe, and I requested him to inquire into the facts. Shortly afterwards I received from that gentleman, a letter, of which the following is a copy, fully bearing out Mr. Middleton's statement :—

“My dear sir—When I was last in town, you expressed a wish that I should make some inquiries respecting the round tower of Timahoe, in the Queen's County, I have accordingly done so, and find that about fifty years ago, some persons were tempted to dig within the tower in search of money, when, having gone as deep as three feet, they found a flag, and over it a very large rib, which they supposed to be that of a horse, on finding which, the search was discontinued till many years after, when some persons again commenced digging in the tower, when having gone down about three or four feet farther than the former persons, they found a flag (stone), and under it an earthen vessel filled with bones, having the appearance of being burned. This circumstance caused no surprise in the persons searching, as in almost every sand-hill in the neighbourhood (of which there are a great number) similar earthen vessels, filled with bones, have been found, at from four to eight feet down. I received this account from eye-witnesses on whom I could depend.

Believe me to be yours very truly,

PIERCE MOORE.”

This letter, in my mind demolishes the notion of these buildings being belfries, or even Christian buildings. Cremation, so far as history informs us, never obtained as a mode of sepulture among Christians, therefore, urns and burned bones being found buried within the tower of Timahoe, demonstrates an earlier period for the erection of the round towers.\*

Roscrea, is a town of some importance in the county of Tipperary, on the road from Limerick to Dublin, and at one time possessed ecclesiastical establishments of a somewhat prominent character. It has, close to the ruins of what was once the gateway of a church, a good specimen of the ordinary round towers.

Sir William Bethan, describes by the aid of several letters he received from his friends, Mr. Hackett and Mr. Wall, the discovery, in the tower, of various human remains. “All through,” says a letter of February 1862, “there were human

\* *Etruria Celtica.*

bones sparingly interspersed; I found three under jaw-bones of aged persons, but one had the teeth in good preservation, with several thigh-bones, and it is remarkable that they were all found close to the walls. I should infer that the bodies were not buried in the position we found them. Portions of skulls were also found, and the rib of a child." And a letter in April of that year says:—"We met many more bones than before in the same space, but much decayed from the damp. We also found a piece of oak about the size of a hand, about a quarter of an inch thick, which had the appearance of having been charred on one side; altogether, we penetrated fifteen feet from the doorway, and the human bones increased as we descended."

"Mr. Wall's description is very minute, and therefore, the more important and valuable. The irregularity of the interior of the wall downwards, while that upwards was so smooth and finished, clearly points out that the lower portion was intended for a sepulchral deposit. It was found full of human bones at the lowest portion, at fifteen feet from the doorway, and they gradually diminished in the upper portion of the mould and stones."

On the northern coast of Ireland, within about four miles of Ballycastle, and one of Kenbaan Head, stands what is left of the round tower of Armoy, viz., about forty-four feet.

Armoy, was once an important place in the ancient territory of Dalriada. It is mentioned in the "Annals of the Four Masters," as having been set on fire by Cumee O'Flynn, in 1177, during an expedition of John De Courcy. In 1247, it is again mentioned, in connection with a predatory excursion made by Eachmarcach O'Kane,, Lord of Kianaghta and Firnacreeva, into the territory of Manus O'Kane.

Near the church, stands what remains of the tower, of which a careful exploration was made, by a party of antiquaries, in the year 1843.

The walls are of mica slate, and during the excavation a part of the original roof was discovered, formed on the plan precisely as the stone preserved at Antrim. The door is semicircular-headed, the arch being cut out of one block, and ornamented by an architrave, also cut on the same lintel stone. It follows the curve of the arch, and it is probable, that originally the side of the doorway exhibited a continuation of the same projections. The wall of the building is three feet five inches thick. The interior diameter is eight feet two inches, and it does not seem to



vary in this dimension. At the door is a projection of the walls for the support of a floor, and another about ten feet higher up.

“In the course of the excavations, only loose debris, with small portions of wood and stone, and jaws of animals, were thrown out for several feet, but at length a skull and other human remains were found, packed up against the wall on the north side. These were evidently in the same position as at first placed. Portions of horn were also found, and remains of the fallen part of the tower. Anything observed hitherto was considered of little importance, as all to this depth may have been disturbed at some period posterior to the erection of the building. The skull, nevertheless, had an appearance of considerable antiquity. When the search was continued to a further depth of some feet, another skull was found, imbedded like a fossil, lying on the south-east side of the line of entrance, but without any other bones of the skeleton with it. This skull lay with the upper part towards the centre of the tower, and the lower jaw towards the wall. The material it was imbedded in was stiff clay, and there was this peculiarity attending it, that it was contained in a hollow space in the wall, which appeared to have been constructed to contain it, in the manner of a rude niche. Mr. Benn and Mr. Birnie, with the writer, examined it *in situ*, and were all equally struck by the fossil-like appearance it presented, an appearance previously described in similar instances. It is an interesting circumstance to notice, that the three upper cervical vertebræ were found in connection with this skull, or *in situ* as respects the cranium, and no other bones were found in the same place that seemed to be parts of the same body. The inference drawn by the parties present, was, that the head buried here had been, when in a recent state, severed from the trunk. The under jaw and vertebræ were nearly in the same horizontal line, in fact, just so much of the vertebral column remained as must have been severed with the head, if taken off while the muscles and integuments were recent.

This relic was obtained, fortunately in a nearly perfect state. In the place where it lay, a fire had been burned, and it had been deposited on a bed of peat ashes and charcoal, before being covered with the clay.

The discovery of a human head so distinctly interred separate from the body, gives more than usual interest to the skull exhumed from this tower. That such a practice was not without precedent with the ancient Irish is proved by several facts.\*

\* *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 4.

## CHAPTER II.

*Similarity of Round Towers—Large number of Towers in Ireland—Hellenic Towers in the Isles of Andros, Ceos, Cythnos, Seriphos, Siphnos, Naxos and Paros—Letter of Capt. Graves—Towers in Central America—Persian Towers—Indian Towers—Indian and Irish names—A Bulgarian Tower—Round Tower at Patna—The Round Towers of Switzerland—Mr Diron's description of Towers at Romont, Ber, Saint Saphorin, Lausanne, and Martigny—Internal structure of Round Towers—Scotch Towers.*

SO far as Ireland is concerned, we need attempt no further description of her towers; there is so much similarity between them that an account of one serves for five or six; variations of detail in certain specimens we have already mentioned. Many of them have conical roofs of stone, a few have low roofs as that of Kilkenny, and one, as that at Kilmallock, has a conical roof, which is concealed by a battlemented parapet. Their height varies from fifty or sixty feet as with the two at Clonmacnoise, to a hundred and eight feet as in the case of St. Canice; ninety feet may perhaps be taken as a fair average, and their general diameter as fifteen or sixteen feet at the base. Apart from the mystery surrounding their origin and purpose, the principal thing connected with them which strikes the observer, is the remarkable manner, in which, notwithstanding their great age, they have weathered the attacks of wind, sunshine, rain and tempest. Plain looking as they are too, they are not without a beauty of their own, the sides of the doors and windows have been sloped, to harmonise with the diminishing lines of the walls, and true artistic taste has thus been shown to have prevailed in the minds of the builders, even in the remotest ages.

It is difficult to say now how many of these towers once existed in Ireland alone, some say 120, others fix the number as much higher; the country seems in fact fairly to have bristled with them, and in addition to those we have just been describing, they are still to be found at Downpatrick, Ram's Island, Maghera, Nendrum, Drumbo, Donaghmore, Baal, Castledermotte,

Arranmore, Dysart, Drumcliff, Kells, Ballagh, Ferbane, Killcullen, Kilree, Lusk, Oughterhard, Rattoo, Scattery, West Carbury, and numerous other localities.

We must now call attention to the existence of the round towers in other parts of the world besides Ireland.

In the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature," for the year 1854, we find some very interesting allusions to certain towers in the islands of the Grecian Archipelago. Colonel Leake, in a letter to W. S. W. Vaugh, Esq., says: "Inclosed herewith I have the pleasure of transmitting to you, for the purpose of being submitted to the Royal Society of Literature, drawings of twelve ruined Hellenic round towers, existing in the islands of Andros, Ceos, Cythnos, Seriphos, Siphnos, Naxos, and Paros. In a letter addressed to me by Captain Graves, R. N., dated, Malta, February, 1853, he says, 'The twelve drawings of round towers, which I send you, are from sketches made at my request by the zealous officers, with whom I was so long associated in the survey of the archipelago, and who in Her Majesty's Ship, 'Spitfire' (Captain Spratt) are at present employed in bringing the survey to a conclusion. Capt. Graves notices the resemblance of these towers to the round towers of Ireland, &c. The Irish towers, he adds, when perfect, are generally from seventy to one hundred feet in height, and from fifty to sixty in circumference. The Pyrgi of the Greek islands, those of Andros and Naxos for example, are about sixty feet high, and generally exceed the Irish towers in circumference, by about forty feet.'"

The first tower mentioned, is that of Andros, situate about half-an-hour's journey from Port Gavrio. It is about sixty feet in height, that is, what remains of it, for it is in a state of ruin, and has been so for some years. The entrance in this case, unlike those of the Irish towers, is level with the ground, and leads into an apartment about twenty feet in diameter, and sixteen feet high; the wall of the tower is six feet thick, and the material, limestone from the adjacent rock, with the exception of the door-posts, the sills of the windows, and some projecting stones on the outside, which are of white marble.

Of the tower of Ceos, or Lia, a structure of great antiquity, and built of stones of immense size, very little remains; its diameter is twenty-seven feet.

Of Cythnos, only eleven feet of its height now remain; it was built of large blocks of slate, and was twenty-eight feet in diameter.

The tower of Seriphos is built of blocks of white marble ; its joints are so close and its exterior so smooth, that it appears to be but one block.

Of Siphnos, we learn from Herodotus, that it was an Ionian colony, noted for its great wealth, derived chiefly from its silver mines. These were in full work, and of considerable renown in the sixth century before the Christian era, when a treasury was erected by the inhabitants at Delphi, for the reception of a tithe of the mining produce, for the service of Apollo ; the rest they shared amongst themselves.

There is a small church on the summit of a mountain ridge, 2280 feet high, the church is dedicated to St. Elias, most of whose places of worship are in lofty altitudes ; there is also on the mountain, a monastery bearing the same name. Near it, 890 feet above the sea, is the village of Stavro, and about a mile from Stavro, is the monastery of Sti-Vrysi. Above the latter, and close to the village of Hexambelia, are the remains of the Hellenic tower, now used for threshing corn.

On the island of Naxos, is another tower, described in an old and scarce work, supposed to have been written by Pere Sanger, a Jesuit, and published at Paris, in 1698, entitled, "*Histoire nouvelle des anciens ducs et autres souverains de l'Archipel.*"

At Paros, are a few remaining courses of a tower, which must have been very similar to those found in other parts.

Passing now to Central America, we meet with other specimens of the round towers, somewhat similar in form to those we have already described, but differing considerably in height. Stevens, in vol. 1, of his "*Travels in Yucatan,*" says :—"The mounds were all of the same general character, and the buildings had entirely disappeared on all except one, but this was different from any we had at that time seen, though we afterwards found others like it. It stood on a ruined mound, about thirty feet high . . . the exterior is of plain stone, ten feet high to the top of the lower cornice, and fourteen more to that of the upper one. The door faces the west, and over it is a lintel of stone. The outer wall is five feet thick ; the door opens into a circular passage, three feet wide, and in the centre is a cylindrical solid mass of stone, without any doorway or opening of any kind. The whole diameter of the building is twenty-five feet, so that, deducting the double width of the wall and passage, this centre mass must be nine feet in thickness."

Turning to a second tower, he says, "It is circular in form, and is known by the name of the Caracol, or winding staircase, on account of its interior arrangements. It stands on the upper of two terraces . . . a grand staircase of forty-five feet wide, and containing twenty steps, rises to the platform of the terrace. On each side of the staircase, forming a sort of balustrade, were the entwined bodies of two gigantic serpents, three feet wide, portions of which are still in place; and among the ruins of the staircase, we saw a gigantic head, which had terminated at one side the foot of the steps . . . On the platform, fifteen feet from the last step, stands the building. It is twenty-two feet in diameter, and has four small doorways facing the cardinal points. A great portion of the upper part, and one of the sides have fallen. Above the cornice, the roof sloped so as almost to form an apex. The height, including the terraces, is little short of sixty feet, and when entire, even among the great buildings around, this structure must have presented a striking appearance. The doorways give entrance to a circular corridor, five feet wide. The inner wall has also four doorways, smaller than the others, and standing at intermediate points of the compass, facing north east, north-west, south-west, and south-east. These doors give entrance to a second circular corridor, four feet wide, and in the centre is a circular mass, apparently of solid stone, seven feet six inches in diameter; but in one place, at the height of eight feet from the ground, was a small square opening choked up with stones, which I endeavoured to clear out, but the stones falling into the narrow corridor made it dangerous to continue. The roof was so tottering, that I could not discover to what this opening led. It was about large enough to admit the figure of a man in a standing position, to look out from the top. The walls of both corridors were plastered and ornamented with paintings, and both were covered with the triangular arch—the plan of the building was new; but instead of unfolding secrets, it drew closer the curtain that already shrouded with almost impenetrable folds these mysterious structures."

Persia, likewise, has its round towers. Hanway, describes one found at the ruins of Jorjan, near Asterabad, which had a conical top, and was altogether remarkably like the tower we have described as at Antrim.

Turning to India, we also find similar structures, and Lord Valentine says, "It is singular that there is no tradition concerning them, nor are they held in any respect by the Hindoos of

this country." And Keane adds, "In this latter particular, as well as in their general form, and their having the doorway not on the ground level, they resemble our Irish round towers."

There is another at Coel, near Allyghur, described, says Becham in his "Etruria Celtica," by Captain Smith, late 44th Regiment. Mr. Keane says, he would ask the reader's attention to the name Coel, that of the place where this round tower is found, a name frequently occurring in association with Irish topography and legends. "The coincidence," he says, "is singular and worthy of attention."

Markham, in his "Travels in Peru," describes a tower found on the borders of the lake of Umayu, of just such a character as those found in different parts of Ireland, cylindrical, with a circular top. This is thirty-six feet high, and built of well cut masonry, with a cornice and vaulted roof.

In order to form a proper judgment respecting the origin and uses of these towers, it is important to notice their wonderful similarity in all parts of the world, where they happen to exist. Any one who has the opportunity of inspecting the plates in Keane's "Towers and Temples of Ancient Ireland," will at once be forcibly impressed with this, especially by the drawings delineated on page 317, representing towers at Antrim, in Persia, Peru, and the East Indies. Of the three latter, Mr. Keane remarks, "The intelligent observer will find no difficulty in perceiving certain features of peculiarity which identify them with Irish round towers. In one we have a succession of rings or offsets, such as appear on some of the Irish towers, Ardmore and Dysert for instance. In another we have the conical top exactly the same as that of all round towers throughout Ireland which remain perfect. And in the masonry of the Peruvian specimen we have several instances of what has been elsewhere noticed as jointing peculiar to Cuthite masonry. The names of these places are also worthy of note as bearing resemblance to, and connection with, Irish topography. Titi-caca, Aster-abad, and Coel have all their counterparts in Ireland; where *Caca* is only another reading for *Cocca*, the nurse of St. Kieran; *Asthore* (love, in Irish), becomes *Aster* for euphony when used as a compound; and *Coel* is literally represented, as before observed, in Coole Abbey, county Cork, and Kilmacoolle *alias* Kilmacduagh, county Galway, &c."

Sir William Betham says, "We find round towers in every

respect similar to our own, nay, some of them almost identical, *similar* is not a sufficiently strong term, scattered over the whole surface of the peninsulas of India." \*

In the "Histoire de decouvertes dans la Russie et la Perse," printed at Berlin in 1779, we find an account of a town of which mention does not appear elsewhere. "The village of Bulgari was the famous city of Brjæchinof, the ancient capital of Bulgaria; as no description had been given of this place, Messrs. Pallas and Lepuchin were induced to visit it."

The village of Bulgari is built on the ruins of the ancient city; it is situated on an eminence, bordering on a marshy ground overgrown with bushes and thickets. It is surprising that so considerable and well populated a city as this must once have been, should be constructed in a situation which could not be supplied with water; they are now obliged to sink wells or pits in the marsh, and this is their only resource.

The village contains about one hundred good houses; it was seized by the crown with other church-lands. On the south is a plain surrounded with resinous trees or evergreens, interspersed with birch. This plain, at present covered with fertile fields, was once the esplanade of the city; it is yet surrounded with a rampart and ditch, which once formed an irregular half oval, at least six versts in circumference.

Most of the vestiges of the ancient buildings are within the rampart; among others are the ruins of a convent with an inclosed area, which at present contains a handsome stone-built church and some wooden houses. The most remarkable of these ancient buildings is a tower, Misgir or Midsgir, constructed of stone, extremely well wrought; it is a little more than twelve toises high (about seventy-five feet). It is well preserved, and is ascended by a circular staircase of seventy-two steps, each measuring exactly twelve inches, French measure, in the rise; the staircase is in perfect repair, and the roof is covered with wood, withinside is an inscription in modern Arabic.

The tower stands in the north east angle of a wall of an irregular square form, which appears by its great thickness to have been part of a fortress, or probably of a grand mosque. On the west side of the tower is the ruin of a Tartarian oratory, which is entirely vaulted; it has been repaired, and is now a chapel dedicated to Saint Nicholas.

\* *Etruria Celtica*, vol. 2, p. 190.

From this description, and from the drawing, it is evident the oratory is in the foundation of the tower, and that the entrance to the upper part of the tower must be over the vault of the oratory, which makes the likeness to our towers much stronger; it is to be wished these curious travellers had copied the Arabic inscription.

It is to be observed, the name given to these towers is *misgir* or *midsgir*, a word I translate fire-circle or fire-tower, hence the Persian word *mudskir*, one who continually praises God; *muzki*, making the holy fire burn bright; in Arabic, *medkyn* is smoking incense, perfuming with burning odours; and *mudakis* is the dance of the Magi round the holy fire.

It may be added that in the drawing of this tower it presents a very similar appearance to the principal of those found in Ireland, being a gradually diminishing cylinder topped with a conical roof.

“On the Giriyeek hill, south of Patra, in Behar, is a round tower ascribed by the natives to Jarasandhu, a king who, they say, lived and reigned here five or six centuries before Buddha's time. He is a favourite popular hero, like the five Pandus, whose names are connected by the natives with most of their antiquities. There is no doubt it is a Buddhist monument. In the fort of Chittoor stand two Jain towers. One was built by Khumbo Rana to commemorate a victory gained over Mahmoud, of Malwa, in the year 1439. It consists of nine stories, and a stair in the centre communicates with each. It is one hundred and twenty feet high, the whole being covered with architectural ornaments and sculptures. The Chinese nine-storied pagodas are imitations of the Jaina or Buddhist nine-storied towers of India. There are two lats or pillars commemorative of a victory, or marking the burial place of a Buddhist relic among the topes of Cabul. They are erroneously ascribed by the natives to Alexander the Great. Their upper members are copied from the Persepolitan pillars. ‘They also,’ says Mr. Fergusson, ‘resemble the chapiters which form so important a part of the two pillars which Solomon set up before his temple at Jerusalem.’”

The names of towns and hills near the Irish round towers are Indian, and the towers themselves have been considered emblematic of the Phallus or Lingam, an opinion which is sustained by the fact that in the neighbourhood of Seenite pagodas, conical rocks, conspicuous for their height and symmetry, have some-



times been consecrated as Lingams. I was told that at Trichengore, in Barramahal, there is a conical rock dedicated to the Lingam, which it has been made more closely to resemble by artificial means, having at its summit a small temple of Seeva, reached by an ascent winding round the eminence externally.

“At Metapolliam, slabs of mica, slate, and gneiss protruding through the surface, nearly perpendicularly, to the height of eight or ten feet, form an enclosure which has been taken advantage of for the purpose of the Lingam worship. I found in it an old stone Lingam rising from a pedestal and covered with garlands of faded flowers, while the ground about it was strewn with votive earthenware lamps of various sizes and shapes.” \*

In the year 1866, an interesting communication was made to *Notes and Queries* respecting certain towers in Switzerland, a part of which we here transcribe as calling attention to a country we have not yet noticed. The writer, Mr. J. H. Dixon, says—“I have not met with any archaeological, or even topographical, work published in England or elsewhere that notices the round towers of Switzerland, otherwise than in a superficial and offhand manner. And yet several of these edifices exist in that country. The Swiss know nothing of their history, and dismiss them with all sorts of vague and absurd suppositions. Some tell us that the round towers were built by the Romans! others say they were erected by the old counts of Savoy, or by some of the Burgundian conquerors, and some (more sagely in my opinion) suppose that they may be older than the Christian era, and were probably constructed by Pagans when the cantons wherein they were found were under celtic domination, or subjected to the visits of some nomadic oriental tribes. In fact the Swiss towers, like those of Ireland and Persia, are a mystery. I am not aware, however, that any Swiss archaeologist has ever supposed that the towers of Helvetia were built by the Danes, or that they were constructed by the early Christian missionaries for belfries! Such sage ideas belong exclusively to certain Irish antiquaries, and much good may they do them.” The writer then proceeds to relate that while visiting some localities contiguous to the railway from Lausanne to Tribourg, his attention was arrested by a round tower at the little town of Romont. He inquired what it was, and was told it was part of the old fortifications. Not accepting this statement as conclusive, he

\* H. C. in *Notes and Queries*, April, 1866.

resolved upon an inspection. Arriving at the scene of his intended explorations he found two round towers, one in the town near the ancient parish church, the other completely detached and outside the walls of the town in the centre of a field. The latter he describes as a most beautiful and graceful edifice, in an excellent state of preservation. The entrances, two in number, are about halfway between the ground and the roof. The tower, he says, is built on an artificial mound about a yard in height, and is thirty feet in circumference. There is no entrance below, and the solid masonry shows that there never was one. He then says—"Having, along with my friend, Mr. Edwin Lees, of Worcester (F.L.S., and author of "The Geology of the Malvern Hills,") made a most careful examination of the towers, I can assert that they bear a remarkable resemblance to those of Ireland. They have evidently been built by a similar people, and for an identity of purpose. Romont is said to be of Roman origin, and to have been called 'Rotundus Mons.' Such name is found in several old MSS. But I am inclined to believe that Romont was inhabited long anterior to Roman domination. The original name was, probably, 'Round Tower Hill,' or 'The Towers on the Round Hill.' Indeed, in some MSS., the place is called 'Rotundo Monte,' which looks like part of a name, and might induce one to suppose the ablative adjective and noun lack the nominative tures. Romont is the very spot that the worshippers of fire would have selected for a 'high place.' The watch-tower theory is at fault here. What could be wanted with *two* towers at so short a distance? They stand on equal elevations, or nearly so—there may be a slight difference. One commands the same view as the other. The belfry theory may be equally dismissed."

This latter statement is supported by another writer (anonymous), who speaks of the smallness of the ancient bells preserved in museums, and challenges anyone to take them to the top of, say, Clondalkin tower, near Dublin, and hammer away as vigorously as possible and see if the clatter would be loud enough to summon a congregation within a hundred yards diameter.

Mr. Dixon proceeds to mention some other towers in the same country, and points out how very similar they are in various particulars to the round towers of other parts of the world. Near the village of Bex he found one whose entrance was probably about halfway between the foundation and the roof.

At the town of La Tour de Peilz, a suburb of Vevey, he found two. He says—"As the name of the town is derived from the towers, it may be presumed that there was a time when they stood in solitary grandeur. The opening to the cardinal points, the high doorways, &c., &c., still exist; in fact, there are all the features that mark the genuine and unmistakeable *round tower*."

At Saint Saphorin, a little hamlet in the same Canton de Vaud, he found another round tower, much dilapidated, but still possessing most of its original features.

At Lausanne was another, in which a door had been made to obtain access to the lower portion, which previously was closed to the upper. "The high original entrance," he says, "still remains, as do all the characteristic features of a genuine round tower."

In the canton of Vallais he found another of "these mysterious" towers—"at the romantic and picturesque town of Martigny, so well-known to all tourists who visit Mont Blanc." This tower is one hundred and eighteen feet high without the roof, and the entrance is exactly halfway between the foundation and the roof.

The writer then says—"It is not my intention to enter upon any discussion about the Swiss round towers or their peculiarity of form. But in concluding this notice, I will say that I am more inclined to the O'Brien than to the Petrie theory. One thing is certain, they are only found in Celtic Switzerland."

The following extract from *Notes and Queries* relating to the internal structure of the round towers, may prove of interest to our readers. Mr. W. Cassie says—"An answer to J. B. Waring's query, as to how communication was effected between the stories of the round towers of Ireland, would be, I am certain, more or less guess work. These towers stand from fifty to a hundred and fifty feet in height, with an average circumference of fifty feet at the base, and the distance of the doors from the ground-level varies from four to twenty-four feet. At present they are perfectly empty from the door upwards, but divided by projecting blocks of stone into stories ranging in number from three to eight. The main room was apparently at the top, where, with three exceptions, there were windows—generally four in number—though in four towers there are to be seen, five, six, seven, and eight windows respectively. These remarks introduce the subject.

Walter Harris says, "that the Irish towers were fitted with lofts and stages, by means of which and the help of short ladders

access might readily be had to the top. In an article in the *Edinburgh Magazine*, a circular tower in Scotland is described, 'Having stone shelves ranged all round the sides one above the other, and that there are also some remains of an awkward staircase.' O'Brien says this was built by an Irish colony, and that the Irish round towers have similar shelves or recesses in the wall, or in their place projecting stones."

"In Archer's 'Travels in Upper India,' he describes some conical pillars at Serrowee having tiles stuck in them resembling steps, and O'Brien says that these were for the purpose of ascending by the aid of a hoop; and that the projecting stones in the Irish towers, or the cavities that appear after their removal, are also thus accounted for. Dr. Milne conjectures that a ladder was used, and that it was afterwards drawn up in a certain manner. If so, one can easily see how one ladder would suffice in many instances to reach the whole of the stories.

"This is not quite satisfactory. O'Brien's idea that some of the round towers may have been entered by a hoop, or in other words, by the aid of a rope embracing both the climber and the tower in the same fashion as I have no doubt many besides myself have seen, the Arabs climb the palms to open its fruit to the sun is, I think, nearly out of the question; though the Devenish Tower, in Lough Erne, and some others have two doorways, one above the other—a fact which tends to upset the ladder theory.

"Petrie says that the floors were 'almost always of wood,' and here he gives us leave to imagine occasionally a stone floor. In which case, why not a stone stair? The whole question is beset with difficulties. I may say I have come to the conclusion, after inspecting several of them, that little or no wood was used in the construction of these towers, else in all likelihood would the roofs have been of wood; that the remains of charcoal found in excavating the base of the towers do not prove the existence of wooden steps, and that the majority will be found to evidence staircases of projecting stones outside to the doorways, and inside to the apex, these stones being purposely chosen of a material well-known to indurate by time."\*

We may add to this the fact that two of these towers, at least, have been discovered in Scotland, and they are thus

described by a traveller named Gordon—"I went directly to Abernethy, the ancient capital of the Pictish nation, about four miles from Perth, to see if I could find any remains of the Picts hereabout, but could discover nothing except a stately hollow pillar without a staircase, so that when I entered within and looked upward, I could scarce forbear imagining myself at the bottom of a deep draw-well. It has only one door or entrance, facing the north, somewhat above the basis, the height of which is eight feet and a half. Towards the top are four windows which have served for the admission of light; they are equi-distant, and five feet nine inches in height, and two feet two inches in breadth, and each is supported by two small pillars. At the bottom are two rows of stones projecting from beneath, which served for a basis or pedestal. The whole height of the pillar is seventy-five feet, and consists of sixty-four rows or regular courses of hewn stone. The external circumference at the base is forty-eight feet, but diminishes somewhat towards the top, and the thickness of the wall is three feet and a half. This is by the inhabitants called the round steeple of Abernethy, and is supposed to be the only remains of Pictish work in these parts."

Of another tower he thus speaks—"In my journey northward, I found a steeple at Brechin, differing little in shape from that at Abernethy, only it was larger and covered at the top; its height from the base to the cornice is eighty-five feet, and from thence to the vane fifteen, in all one hundred; it consists of sixty regular courses of stone; the external circumference thereof is forty-seven feet, and the thickness of the wall three feet eight inches. However, this has no pedestal like the other, but seems to shoot out of the ground like a tree; it has a door fronting the south, the height and breadth of which differ little from Abernethy.

"This steeple has a low spiral roof of stone, with three or four windows above the cornice, and at the top thereof is placed a vane. It has no staircase within any more than the other, but the inhabitants of both towns ascend to the top by ladders. The vulgar notion of these is that they are Pictish, and I should easily have rested in that opinion had I not been since that time assured that some of the like monuments are to be seen in Ireland, where the Picts never were settled."

### CHAPTER III.

*A Difficult Problem—Suggested Uses of the Round Towers—Prize Essays—Petrie's Theory—Petrie's Inaccuracies—Great Age of the Towers—Petrie's Theory Objected to—Belfries—Faber on Petrie's Fallacies of Reasoning—Extravagant Conclusions of Theorists—Materials used by the Ancient Irish in Building*

AN Irish writer, some twenty years ago, asked—"Is it not a shame and a wonder that the true idea of the origin and use of the round towers of Ireland should have been buried in the darkness of, perhaps, a thousand years? Yet it is so. These objects so striking and remarkable have been made the subject of many essays, and of almost innumerable discussions. Still no published theory respecting them has been accepted as true or as satisfactory by public opinion. The latest distinguished writer on Irish history says—'That probably the question of their origin and of their use will for ever remain in obscurity.' In the face of such discouragement and failure, it requires no slight energy to approach the subject now with any amount of success."\*

The question, "To what uses were these round towers applied?" has always been one which has much exercised the minds of Archaeologists, Theologians, and Thinkers in general, and some nine or ten solutions of the difficulty have been offered, which have afforded various degrees of satisfaction to different classes of enquirers. They read as follows:—

1. They were fire-temples.
2. They were used as places from which to proclaim the Druidical festivals.
3. They were astronomical observatories.
4. They were phallic emblems or Buddhist temples.
5. They were anchorite towers or stylic columns.
6. They were penitential prisons.
7. They were belfries.
8. They were keeps or monastic castles.
9. They were beacons and watch towers." †

\* "Smiddy, on the Druids, &c."

† "Petrie, *Eccl. Architect, Ireland*," 4.

Mr. O'Neill jokingly observes—"And, as if nine were not enough, some wag has had the cruelty to inflict a tenth theory, namely, that the towers were built by the ancients for the purpose of puzzling the moderns; and, alas! this has proved to be the truest theory of them all."

Various efforts were made years ago by the Royal Irish Academy to untie this troublesome knot, and at different times several handsome prizes were offered for the best essays upon the subject. Twice in these documents, viz., in 1827 and 1828, the theory that they were fire-temples, was maintained. In 1832 another prize was offered, and this was gained by Dr. Petrie, who asserted that they were of Christian origin, a theory which has been adopted by a good many subsequent writers.

From the delay in the publication of Dr. Petrie's essay, it would appear that either the author or the academy, or perhaps both, had some misgivings as to the soundness of the offered explanation; for, it is said, that as long a period as thirteen years passed before the essay made its appearance, by which time it had grown considerably in bulk, filling a closely-printed imperial octavo of nearly five hundred pages, whereas originally it consisted only of fifty.

If we turn to the essay itself, we find its author's views thus stated:—

1. That the towers are of Christian and ecclesiastical origin, and were erected at various periods between the fifth and thirteenth centuries.

2. That they were designed to answer at least a twofold use, namely, to serve as belfries, and as keeps, or places of strength in which the sacred utensils, books, relics and other valuables were deposited, and into which the ecclesiastics to whom they belonged could retire for security in case of sudden predatory attack.

3. That they were probably also used when occasion required, as beacons or watch-towers."

The proof of the above would appear to have been, in Dr. Petrie's judgment, a very much easier task than it has generally been regarded by other writers, for he actually says in his preface—"That I have been able to throw some considerable light on the hitherto neglected antiquities of my country, and to remove the *very thin veil which involved the origin of round towers in mystery*, will, I fondly hope, be the

opinion of the learned." Then he proceeds—"I have not, however, any very sanguine expectations that either the evidences or arguments which I have adduced, or those which I have still to submit to my readers, will have any very immediate effect on the great majority of the middle-classes of the Irish people (for the lower or agricultural classes have no ideas upon the subject but the true ones), in changing their opinions as to their indefinite antiquity and Pagan uses."

The exposure which has been made of Dr. Petrie's boasted accuracy—an accuracy to which he says he pledges himself—may be passed over as of little consequence in our present enquiry; what we have to do with chiefly is his theory of the exclusively Christian origin of these towers.

It is known that there was a great Art Era with the Irish Christians, in which the most wonderful and beautiful of works of all kinds were produced. During this era, Dr. Petrie says, the round towers were built, and for the purposes we have enumerated. There appears but little reason for such an assertion, for there is nothing about them which in any way links them with the beautiful works of that period. As to his statement that, "On several of them Christian emblems are observable;" that is absolutely without proof, and to this day has never been supported and verified.

Now there are two branches or schools amongst those who hold the theory that the towers belong to the Christian era of Ireland. One of these, of which Dr. Petrie was the head, insisted that these buildings were erected at various periods from the commencement of the fifth to the close of the twelfth century. The others say that the period of all these buildings is confined to the twelfth and following centuries, and they argue upon the well-established fact that the Celtic Irish had no buildings of stone and mortar before the twelfth century. "We have," says Mr. Keane, "the testimony of contemporary writers that then, for the first time, buildings in stone began to be erected; the previous structures built by the Irish, whether palaces, churches, or monasteries, being all of wood or earthwork. If, therefore, the beautifully-wrought specimens of architecture to be decided be assumed to belong to the Christian era, they cannot be assigned to a period earlier than the twelfth century, for then was introduced the Gothic or early English style, displaying in Ireland the same architectural character as



that of the more civilized country, though the buildings themselves were inferior in decorative skill and artistic completeness."

Smiddy says—"The age of the towers is truly great. In even the twelfth century, at the period of the English invasion, legend and story had gathered round them on account of their great antiquity. In recording the physical wonders of Ireland, an English priest, Giraldus Cambrensis, who had come with King John to this country, says that the fishermen of Lough Neagh at certain times saw the submerged round towers of past ages shining at the bottom of that lake, or as the poet Moore has rendered it:—

On Lough Neagh's bank as the fisherman strays,  
When the clear cold eve's declining,  
He sees the round towers of other days,  
In the wave beneath him shining."

Speaking of the various theories propounded respecting the origin and uses of the round towers, Smiddy, after mentioning several of them, says—"Lastly, Dr. Petrie, whose essay on the subject obtained a prize and gold medal from the Royal Irish Academy, maintained that they were intended to serve as belfries, and also as keeps or places of strength in which the sacred utensils, books, relics and other valuables of the adjoining church were preserved, and into which the ecclesiastics to whom they belonged, could retire for security in case of sudden predatory attacks."

"It would be an almost endless task to examine the grounds for these various theories with a view to their refutation. It is only the true theory that can accomplish the work, and if that can be discovered it will demolish all these at one stroke. But with respect to Dr. Petrie's theory, one would imagine that a slight and narrow tower, one hundred or one hundred and thirty feet high, would be a poor place to fly to with one's treasures, when a few stones taken out of the foundation with a crow-bar would soon bring the whole structure crashing to the ground. That elevation, too, would not be the best suited for the ringing of a bell, or the transmission of its sound, especially when we know how small were the bells of early times compared with those in use at present. Possibly to the circumstance of their never having possessed any treasure, is mainly due the preservation of so many of the round towers to this day.

“Perhaps according to our motto, *Antiquam exquirite matrem*—‘Search out the ancient mother’—the name of the round tower in the Irish language may throw some light on its use and origin. In the Irish Annals and old Chronicles we find the names *Cloictheach* and *Cloigtheach* applied to the round towers and to other structures. *Cloictheach* means ‘the house of stone,’ and *cloigtheach* ‘the house of the bell,’ or belfry. But the universal popular name of the round tower in Munster, Connaught, and other Irish speaking parts of Ireland is *cuilceach* or *cultheach*. This name is formed from *cuile* ‘a reed,’ and *theach* ‘a house,’ that is, the reed house, or reed-shaped structure. Thus the people have always said with constant unerring accuracy, when speaking of these structures, *cuilceach Colmain*, the round tower of Colman (the patron saint); *cuilceach Deaglain*, the round tower of Deaglan (of Ardmore), and so on. Some have said that *cuilceach* is a mere corruption of *claighteach* ‘the bell-house.’ It is no such thing. It is the real true name of the round tower in Irish, and is pronounced by the people with unmistakable accuracy. There is growing in the bogs and ruins of Ireland a large kind of *cuile* or reed, with a conical head, which in form and shape resembles the lines of the round tower, and which, I am sure, was originally taken as the model for it. Anyone looking at the perfect round tower of Rattoo, in Kerry, and at the reeds growing in the water near it, must be at once struck by the great resemblance in shape which they bear to one another.”\*

The Rev. G. S. Faber, in the *Dublin University Magazine* for 1850, vol. 35, p. 330, calls attention to the several weak points in Dr. Petrie’s theories, and says—“The fallacy of his reasoning may be compendiously expressed in the familiar logical dogma, *Dolus latet in generalibus*, that is to say, he puts more into his premises, and thence deduces *generals* from *particulars*.”

His line of argument, as I understand him, is the following:—

He assumes that the round towers were erected at various periods between the fifth and thirteenth centuries, so that the supposed earliest are allowed to be as old as the mission of Patrick.

\* “Druids, Round Towers, &c.,” p. 199.

Next he brings satisfactory testimony to show that between the tenth and thirteenth centuries many round towers were built by Christians, and attached to their churches for the ecclesiastical purpose of belfries.

Then he fairly acknowledges the general absence of distinct notices, and the extreme meagreness of the Irish annals anterior to the tenth century; in other words, he acknowledges that between the fifth and the tenth centuries we have no definite accounts either of the building of round towers or of the use to which they were put.

Now, in what manner does Dr. Petrie employ these materials?

From the evidentially ascertained building and ecclesiastical use of round towers between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, he draws the conclusion: that *all* round towers, the *more ancient* included as well as the *more modern*, must have been built by Christians for ecclesiastical purposes; in other words, he draws a *general* conclusion from only *particular* premises.

Such, if I mistake not, is the fallacy in Dr. Petrie's *reasoning*. His *opinion*, abstractedly, may be quite correct. But that is not precisely the point. We are concerned with the *proof*. And here we cannot help feeling that *Dolus latet in generalibus*.

Dr. Petrie, however, draws what I readily admit to be no improbable inference.

One of the principal duties of the *aistaire*, he tells us, was to ring the bell in the *cloictheach* or round tower. But the office of *astaire* can be shown to have existed in the Irish church under Patrick in the fifth century. Therefore, a not improbable inference may be drawn, that bell-towers were then in existence; as, otherwise, this duty could not have been performed.

I have not the slightest quarrel with the inference. On the contrary, it is the precise inference which, for the purpose of showing *the existence of round towers in the fifth century*, I myself should have drawn, and I feel scarcely a doubt of its correctness.

But what then? What is the result?

Truly I am at a loss to perceive how this perfectly legitimate inference can substantiate the opinion that the round towers were *universally built for ecclesiastical purposes*, and

that the *earliest* of them were constructed in the fifth century *by Patric and his Christian associates*. It may be so, but still the inference would only go to the *use* made of the round towers in the earliest Hiberno-Christian times; it would not go, yet additionally, to the *construction* of those towers by Christian hands for Christian purposes.

Purely hypothetically, let us say, that Patric did not build these very ancient round towers, but found them *ready built* to his hand; and let us mark the result of such a supposition.

We all know that in the early propagation of Christianity among the northern nations, it was a regularly established plan to appropriate pagan places of worship to Christian purposes, with such additions of churches and the like as might be found convenient or necessary. This, according to Bede, was the plan enjoined by Pope Gregory upon Augustine of Canterbury, in the sixth century, or the very century which succeeded the mission of Patric to the Irish. Now, there is nothing in Dr. Petrie's very just inference to forbid the belief that Patric *found* certain pagan round towers already in existence, and, naturally enough, applied them to the Christian *use* of belfries, while churches were built in immediate contiguity.

I do not positively assert that it *was* so, but most assuredly the inference will warrant only the *use*, not the *erection*, of the round towers, which Dr. Petrie assumes to have *existed* in the fifth century and in the time of Patric.

If, then, we consider the point of *probability*, the question will be: whether it be more likely that Patric *erected* such extraordinary edifices, or that he *found* them erected by pagan hands, and applied them to a very obvious Christian use in exact conformity with the plan, authoritatively as we know, in those days recommended.

It is, no doubt, a question of mere *probability*, and, as I understand Dr. Petrie, the question either way is incapable of being decided *essentially*. Let us, then, purely for the sake of discussion, take that side of the alternative which is rejected by Dr. Petrie, and we shall see that it will account for the existence and application of all the round towers confessedly built by Christians between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries.

Patric, we will say, *found* certain round towers which had

been *built* by pagan hands for pagan religious purposes. The missionary *applied* them to Christian uses. They were found very convenient for belfries; and henceforth, quite down to the thirteenth century, whenever a belfry was wanted to a *new* church, an imitative round tower was erected. Much the same progress may be observed in the well-known change of the Roman basilica into the Christian cathedral. The change was speedily followed by similar imitative Christian buildings; and the pagan basilica became the type of the larger Christian church.

Now, I do not assert, in opposition to Dr. Petrie, that such *was* the progress of the Irish round tower; I only say that, by his own shewing, such *might* have been the progress. Neither side of the alternative has ever been *proved*, and, for anything that *evidentially* appears to the contrary, the earliest round towers may just as well have been *built* by pagans as by Christians; yet it may not be useless to compare and weigh opposing probabilities.

On the supposition that round towers were *first* built in the fifth century by Christian hands and for Christian purposes, we are obviously led to ask how Patric came to adopt that very peculiar shape rather than any other more familiar one. Was he the architectural inventor of the round tower? Or did he bring the model of it from France or Italy? I am unable myself to answer these questions. I only know, that with the exception of (I believe) two in Celtic Scotland, round towers of the Irish type are usually deemed peculiar to Ireland. Something like parallel cases have, I believe, been brought from Hindostan or its vicinity; but these would afford no solution of the principle on which Patric might be thought to have permanently introduced them into the land of his mission.

On the contrary supposition, that the earliest round towers were built by pagan hands *prior* to the arrival of Patric, we shall not have very far to seek for at least a plausible explanation of their peculiar shape. When I wrote, between thirty and forty years ago, my "Origin of Pagan Idolatry," I knew so very little of the Irish round towers, that I did not care to commit or expose myself by introducing a subject which I had then never studied, and of which I was consciously ignorant. Otherwise, I might have well introduced them into my comparative view of pyramidal or conical

temples, if *temples* according to our common idea of a temple, they may be properly denominated. I considered all buildings of either pyramidal or the conical form, whatever might be their several proportions of height relatively to base, as designedly constructed with the same ideality; and since I met with such buildings in regions widely separated from each other, I concluded that they must all have sprung from one common centre; the region, to wit, where the whole postdiluvian race were once congregated, and whence they were subsequently scattered over the face of the whole earth . . . . Now with or without propriety, I might, at least, on the principle of analogy, have classed with other pyramidal or conical buildings the round towers of Ireland. The *analogy* is certain; whether it be the result of accident or design is another question. In point of *fact*, I should define an Irish round tower to be a conical pyramid, the proportions of which in height compared to base widely differed from those of either the Egyptian pyramid or the Indian pagoda, or the Buddhic cone, while they closely correspond with those of the lofty square Chinese pyramid.

I am by no means prepared to *affirm* that the most ancient of the round towers must have been erected anterior to the fifth century and the arrival of Patric, or the somewhat earlier arrival of Palladius, by pagan hands and for pagan purposes; for it may be doubted whether we have sufficient evidence to affirm anything positively. But I certainly think that for the pagan side of the alternative rejected by Dr. Petrie, as fair a case of probability may be made out as for the Christian side of the alternative espoused by him. At all events, he has given no legitimate proof that *his* opinion *must* be correct, for the evidentially-established circumstance that the *less* ancient round towers were erected by Christian hands for Christian purposes, between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries, is no valid proof, either that the *more* ancient ones of the fifth century were built by Patric and his Christian converts, or that no round towers were in existence *previous* to his arrival.

“The assertors of the pre-Christian and post-Christian date of the structures are both in extremes, the former in saying that they *all* belong to pagan, the latter to Christian times. It must be admitted that round towers have been erected subsequent to the fifth century, as belfries, or

ornaments of some kind; but to insist from this fact that none existed prior to that period is a fallacy very easy to illustrate. Throughout Europe there are to be seen Christian churches and other public edifices, built exactly like the pagan temples of Greece and Rome. These structures have been reared chiefly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and if one were to assert that no such edifices existed previous to these dates, he would commit the same fallacy that those fall into who would infer that round towers were unknown before the twelfth and thirteenth century, dates to which they are only able to assign the erection of one or two of them. The truth is that public buildings are *traditional*. The same kind of building is erected from age to age for different purposes. The temple of Jupiter, or Apollo, or Minerva, revives after nearly three thousand years, in the form of a School of Arts, as in Edinburgh; or of a Catholic Cathedral, as in Marlborough Street, Dublin; or of a Presbyterian or a Methodist Chapel, as may be seen in almost every town in the United Kingdom. Therefore, though we should be able to show that every round tower now standing in Ireland was of post-Christian date—and only one or two can be so shown—it would not follow that no such structures existed in Ireland previous to the era of St. Patrick. On the contrary, the probability would be that the Christian Irish got the models from their pagan ancestors.

“The round tower is an Asiatic building *par excellence*. There are round towers in Persia and in India, so old that their age and use are alike unknown. Syria, comprising the Canaan, and Phœnicia of antiquity is full of them; but they are modern and, no doubt, also they are *traditional*. In a letter published in the *Nation* newspaper, under the signature C., 12th July, 1851, I have shown that the ‘high places’ of the Canaanites so often mentioned in scripture as places of pagan worship, were *high towers*, and though I have not proved yet I have rendered it highly probable, that they were round towers.

“When we consider that Ireland is the only country in Europe in which these Asiatic structures are to be found, we are forcibly impelled to the conclusion that the idea of the round tower was imported into Ireland by an Asiatic people, and this inference is not in the smallest degree con-

tradicted by the fact that some few of them can be shown to be more than a thousand or eight hundred years old.”\*

Sir James Ware, writing in the year 1654, says—“Certain it is that the ancient Irish had no walled towns before the coming of the English, as Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, Wexford, and Cork, but they were built by the Easterlings. That which we treat of here is of the houses of the ancient Irish, which as they were neither marble nor brick, so neither were they (unless very seldom) subterraneous caves or dens, as were those of the ancient Germans described by Tacitus, but made of hurdles and covered with straw or rushes, few of them were of solid timber. These were either great or small according to the dignity of the inhabitants, and were usually built in woods and on the banks of rivers. Nor was it otherwise (it seems) among the ancient Britons. Of the castle of Pembroke, built of small rods and turf by Arnulphus de Mountgomery, under Henry I. (see Giraldus Cambrensis), and of the most ancient towns of the Britons. The Britons (says Caesar) call it a town when they have hedged in a wood with a bank and a ditch. From this poor sort of building among the ancient Irish, it comes to pass that we have so few signs remaining of any houses or castles built by the kings of Ireland before the coming of the English. Therefore, when Roderick O’Connor, king of Connaught, in the year 1161, built a stone castle at Tuam, it was so new and unusual in those times that the Irish called it the Wonderful Castle. But above all is Temoria (now called Teragh), in Meath, which though it was their principal palace, and the place where at certain times they held their royal assemblies; yet at this day there is not the least sign or remainder of an ancient building. The first of the Irish, or at least one of the first who began to build with stone and lime, was Malachias O’Morgair, Archbishop of Armagh. Of which St. Bernard, who lived at the same time, says thus in the life of Malachias, he was of opinion that he ought to build a stone oratory at Benchor, like those he had seen in other countries, and, having begun to lay the foundation, it was the wonder of the natives, the like buildings never before having been seen in that country. And a little after he introduces a

\* *Ulster Jour. Arch.*, vol. 1, p. 303.



certain malicious fellow exclaiming thus—‘O good man, what is your meaning to introduce such a novelty into our country? What levity is this? We are Scots, not Gauls! What need is there of so proud and so superfluous a work? How will you, poor man, bear the charge of it? or who will ever see it finished?’ In Bernard we likewise read that this Malachias built an oratory there some years before, well and firmly set together of planed timber, for a Scotch work, fair enough. Nor is it beside the purpose to remember here that Henry II., King of England, being in Dublin in 1171, caused to be built a royal palace of smooth rods, after a wonderful manner, near St. Andrew’s church, without the city, where he with the kings and princes of Ireland, celebrated the festival of the nativity of our Lord. So says Roger Hoveden.”\*

\* “Antiquities of Ireland.”

## CHAPTER IV.

*M. Violett le Duc on certain "Light Towers"—Suggestions respecting the Irish Towers—Early Architecture of Ireland—The Stone Age—Early Saints—Preservation of the Towers—The Cuthites—Sir John Davis on Irish Building Materials—Mr. Parker on Ancient Building Materials—Phallic Worship among the Cuthites—Wanderings and Wars of the Cuthites—Ireland and the Cuthites—Diffusion and Degeneration of Phallic Worship.*

“**I**N the admirable dictionary of M. Violett le Duc (vol. 6, p. 155), is a very curious account of certain towers which are found in cemeteries in the centre and west of France, and in which formerly lights were burned at night to indicate the proximity to the last resting-places of the dead. He states that they are also called *fanel*, *tournière*, and *phare*. The earliest notice he gives is from an old chronicle of the Crusades, which states—‘Then died Saladin (Salahedius), the greatest prince that there was in Pagan-dom, and was buried in the cemetery of St. Nicholas of Acre, near his mother, who was there very richly interred; and over them a beautiful and grand tower, where is night and day a lamp full of olive oil, and the hospital of St. John of Acre pays and causes it to be lighted, who hold great rents which Saladin and his mother left them.’”

“The author says, however, there is a tradition that they were ‘menhirs’ or erections of stone, consecrated to the Sun in Druidical times. He gives illustrations of three of these lanterns to the dead. They have all a small door, raised some distance above the ground, and an opening or window at the top, where the lighted lamp was exhibited. One is from Celfronin (Charente), and is like a pier surrounded by clustered columns about six feet in diameter, and including a sort of conical top or spire about forty feet high. The mouldings, &c., show it to be the work of the thirteenth century. The second exists at Ciron (Indre), has a similar door, and six lancet windows at the top, and is not more than twenty-five feet high. The third is at

Antigny (Vienne), and is square with small jamb-shafts at the angles, and is about thirty-five feet high, and seems also to be of the thirteenth century. They all stand on flights of steps.

“Is it possible that the round towers of Ireland were intended to serve as cemetery lights or lanterns of the dead? In France, these fanals seem to be confined to the Celtic districts, and it is not impossible that the Celtic races in Ireland may have seen and copied them. They have the same entrances a little above ordinary reach, the same window at top, and the same conical tops . . . . It is not impossible after all that they may be the means of dispelling the mystery which has hung so long over the far-famed towers of Ireland.”\*

“The round towers and other edifices of what may be termed the primitive architecture of Ireland, are commonly classed with the English-Norman from a similarity in outline; both having doorways and windows with semicircular heads, but so many difficulties and anomalies present themselves in following up the comparison, that several of the most learned and diligent enquirers have given up the subject as utterly inexplicable. It is manifestly absurd to affirm that a people, who had never previously to the twelfth century constructed buildings of stone, and openly expressed their contempt for such structures, should have produced *at their very first essay*, so many fine examples of skill in building and sculpture, attesting the early excellence of architectural art, even now in their condition of ruin, with the ecclesiastical structures of our advanced period.

“However, there is a large amount of evidence to prove that some of the finest examples of ancient Irish architecture existed long before the twelfth century—some as early as the fifth—which has induced Dr. Petrie and his school to question the authenticity of the evidence, attesting that the commencement of building in stone among the *Irish Celts* was not earlier than the twelfth century.”†

“While there is ample evidence to prove that the Irish Celts did not build in stone before the twelfth century, another equally important historical fact in support of my

\* *Notes and Queries*, 1864, p. 115.

† Keane, “*Antiquities of Ireland*,” xviii.

views is sustained by even more abundant evidence, viz.:— that antecedent to the Celtic invasion, which took place many centuries before our era, Ireland was inhabited by a highly-civilized race of building celebrity; and a careful investigation of the ancient classic and oriental histories and traditions will clearly prove the identity of this primitive race with the Cuthites of antiquity, the descendants of Ham.

“As a general rule, the sites at which the remains of ancient Irish architecture are found, have their foundation ascribed to Christian Saints reported to have lived in the fifth and sixth centuries. I endeavour to prove that these so-called Saints, with the exception of St. Patrick and a few others, were the divinities or hero-gods worshipped by the earliest apostates from the north, who, under the names of Cuthites, Scythians, and various other denominations, bore sway in the earth for a considerable period, commencing at the usurpation of Nimrod, the grandson of Ham; and that Cuthite superstitions traditionally preserved were the origin of Irish legendary hagiology.

“That so many of these structures should have survived the wasting effects of time and change, during an interval of three thousand years, is accounted for by several causes: First, the building stone of Ireland excels in enduring resistance to atmospheric influences the same material in other European countries. Secondly, Ireland never having been subjected to Roman dominion, the substantial edifices of the primitive colonists escaped demolition for the construction of an alien architecture. And, thirdly, the Celtic conquerors of these Cuthite colonists, though themselves despising the art of building in stone, suffered to remain uninjured those edifices to which they ascribe a supernatural origin.”\*

Mr. Keane further says that his conviction of the heathen origin of these ruins has been strengthened in proportion to the increased knowledge which he has acquired by examination of the ruins themselves, and by the study of works bearing upon the subject. He then proceeds to criticise Dr. Petrie's essay in somewhat similar terms to those in which it has been dealt with by O'Neill, G. S. Faber and others, and he remarks that Dr. Petrie undertakes to prove:— First, that the round towers of Ireland are coeval with the

\* Keane, “Anc. Arch., Ireland,” xix., xx.

ancient so-called "Norman" stone-roofed churches and crosses found so frequently in Ireland; and, secondly, that these stone-roofed churches and crosses, as well as the round towers, were erected after the introduction of Christianity. He, Mr. Keane, says—"I think he has failed in his second argument; and my effort shall be to show, that not only the round towers, but also the crosses, &c., are entirely of heathen origin, and are in fact, the work of the Tuath-de-Danaans and their Cuthite predecessors."

Now, a good deal in this discussion turns upon the character of material employed by the early Irish in the construction of their various buildings, ecclesiastical, domestic or otherwise, and the opinions of the learned in antiquarian matters must be duly consulted in order to arrive at a just and sensible conclusion. Ledwich says—"From every evidence supplied by antiquity, it is certain the Irish had neither domestic edifices or religious structures of lime or stone, antecedent to the great northern invasion in the ninth century. Some years before the birth of Christ, Drusus erected castles or forts along the Rhine, so that the calcination of stone and the preparation of mortar, could not be unknown to the natives, and yet a hundred years after, Tacitus assures us the Germans did not use cement or mortar. A century later, Herodian and Dion Cassius declare the same. Tacitus does not say the Germans were ignorant of mortar and its composition, that would have been impossible from their intercourse with the Romans, he only denies them the use of it; their riches, as this writer observes, were their flocks and herds, their life was pastoral, a state of society wherein no one expects to find durable structures. And yet they had skill enough to form subterranean granaries and antrile chambers to secure their corn and soften the winter's cold. Such was exactly the case with the Irish. Whatever change Christianity operated in the religious sentiments of the latter, it made no alteration in the political constitution of the country, of course things remained in their ancient state as to the arts of civil life. The force of this analogical reasoning cannot be resisted, it must satisfy every rational inquirer. If to this we superadd the positive proofs, before alleged, of our buildings being of wood, nothing more is wanting to make it complete demonstration."\*

\* "Antiquities of Ireland."

Let us hear Sir John Davis, a candid and intelligent observer—"Though the Irishry be a nation of great antiquity, and wanted neither wit nor valour; and though they have received the Christian faith above twelve hundred years since, and were lovers of poetry, musick, and all kinds of learning, and were possessed of a land in all things necessary for the civil life of man, yet, which is strange to be related, they did *never build any houses of brick or stone*, some few poor religious houses excepted, before the reign of King Henry II., though they were lords of the isle many hundred before and since the conquest attempted by the English. Albeit, when they saw us build castles upon their borders, they have only in imitation of us, erected a few piles for the captains of the country. Yet, I dare boldly say, that never any particular person, either before or since, did build any stone or brick house for his private habitation, but such as have lately obtained estates according to the course of the law of England. Neither did any of them in all this time plant any garden or orchard, settle villages or towns, or make any provision for posterity."\*

We quote also the statement of Mr. J. H. Parker; he says—"A careful examination of the principal buildings of modern Europe from which the general history of architecture has been drawn, has demonstrated that after the fall of the Roman Empire, the people who succeeded them were accustomed to build chiefly of wood, of which we have, of course, no remains; and occasionally of rough stone, such as they found ready to their hands on the surface of the ground, or split from the rocks or cliffs by means of wedges. The various tribes of the Northmen, whether called Saxons, or Danes, or Normans, or by other names in other countries, who over-ran Europe in all directions and destroyed the Roman civilization, were accustomed to build in this manner only, when they built at all. When these nations began to be civilized and became Christian, they became very zealous Christians, as it was their nature to be vigorous and zealous in everything that they undertook. Having become Christian they began to build churches everywhere with wonderful activity and zeal, but they did not possess much skill in building, they had everything to learn by copying the older buildings of the Romans, or such others

\* Ledwich, "Hist. Res."

as they could find to copy. The earlier churches were generally of wood, and the chronicles are full of accounts of the burning of churches; it was not until the eleventh century that churches were commonly built of stone, in order that they might not be burnt. The number of churches erected in the eleventh century was marvellous, but they were so badly built that comparatively few have come down to our time; we have, however, enough of them to see that they were at first entirely of rough stone, and that cut stone or ashlar was introduced very gradually and very sparingly at first, being confined to the corners and what are called the dressings—that is, the sides of the openings for door and windows—for a long period, down to near the end of the eleventh century. It is not until quite the end of that century that we can find anywhere buildings faced entirely with ashlar or cut stone, and at first the joints of mortar between these cut stones were extremely rude and clumsy. The walls of all early buildings are also very thick and massive, and as the workmen became more skilful by practice, they learned to be more careful of the material; they discovered that walls of half the thickness well-built were equally strong with those of double the mass badly put together. They learned by degrees to arrange these rough stones in regular courses, and to trim them with the hammer; eventually they learned the art of cutting stone into square blocks called ashlar, and to reduce the spaces between these blocks, until they arrived at walls built entirely of ashlar, with very fine joints and wonderfully thin for the height to which they were reared and the masses they had to carry. But it was not until the twelfth century that this perfection of masonry was anywhere attained; and it was not until the thirteenth that the marvellously thin walls, which shew such skill in construction, were erected, such as those of Notre Dame de Dijon, &c.

Many successive generations of workmen were necessary before such a degree of skill as this in the art of building was attained. To suppose that the native Irish possessed this degree of skill centuries before any other nation is the height of improbability.\*

The remarkable people called the Cuthites, and to whom the round towers are attributed as remains of monuments

*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 16, N.S.

connected with their worship of the Phallus, are an extremely ancient race now known as Samaritans, and said to be rapidly approaching extinction. It is said that they were an ingenious and powerful people, and ruled the world for many centuries after the Noachian Deluge. They are also said to have been established as a kingdom by the first king of Babylon, Nimrod, Belus, or Elorus. They were known as Scythians, and their dominion was antecedent to the Assyrian Empire.

Phallic worship was all-prevailing during the time of their prosperity and power, and from them found its way into India, "introduced," as history says, "from the banks of the Euphrates where the mighty Lord Belus was thus worshipped."

Here we are reminded of the origin of the title "Shepherd Kings," which arose from the fact of the king of Babylon assuming to himself the name of the Royal Shepherd, hence the Cuthite victors in Egypt were called Shepherds, or Shepherd Kings. Some other names by which the Cuthites were known were Ethiops, Phœnicæ, Scuthi, Hyperboreans, Cyclopeans, Centaurs, Titans, and Denions.

The progress of these Cuthites or Scythians gradually westward has been traced by several writers, notably by Bryant, who mentions two great wars, the first which, he says, was for dominion, which lasted ten years, and ended in the defeat of the Cuthites, who were expelled from Babylonia and driven to Tartarus, *i.e.*, to the west; others of them were at the same time made tributaries in the localities where they had founded settlements. "This," says Keane, "was the war referred to by the ancients as that between the Gods and the Giants—the Greeks and the Centaurs; and the war of the sexes as recorded by Wilford and Faber from Hindoo mythology."

The second war was one of extirpation. After the overthrow of the Cuthite dominion, the remains of that race in Italy, Sicily, and by the borders of the Euxine, became objects of intense dislike and hatred to their neighbours on account of their religious practices, which included human sacrifices.

This banishment to Tartarus is said to mean "to the west, to the abyss of the Atlantic Ocean and the unknown regions beyond." Keane is of opinion that this emigration was probably the first colonisation of America, and that



then also Ireland for the first time may have been peopled.

Keating describes the journeying of these Scythians as first from Scythia, the country about the river Tanais on the Euxine. "They travel backwards and forwards between Scythia, Crete, Egypt, Thrace, and Gothland, thence to Spain, and ultimately to Ireland." He derives his information, he says, from the "Book of Invasions," upon whose authority we may depend; for the whole account is faithfully collected and transcribed from the most valuable and authentic chronicles of the Irish affairs, particularly from that choice volume called "Leabhar Dhroma Sneachta; or, the White Book," that was written before St. Patrick first arrived in Ireland to propagate Christianity in the country. About a thousand years were occupied in these wanderings.

Keane, in his "Antiquities of Ireland," quotes a number of passages from Bryant's "Ancient Mythology" relating to the journeyings and vicissitudes of these Cuthites, and says—"Although Ireland seems never to have entered into Bryant's mind as connected with Cuthite history, every sentence in these quotations respecting the Hyperboreans—when taken in connection with Irish records—seems to point to Ireland as the home of that people, to whom ancient Greek authors refer as the Hyperboreans. I must, however, direct the reader to other notices respecting the *Insula Hyperborea* of the classic writers, about which Mr. O'Brien has written at some length in his 'Round Towers.' He quotes Mr. Booth's translation of the notice respecting it by Diodorus Siculus, as follows—'Amongst them that have written old stories much like fables, Hecataeus and some others say that there is an island in the ocean *over against Gaul as big as Sicily*, under the arctic pole, where the Hyperboreans inhabit, so called because they lie beyond the breezes of the north wind. That the soil here is very rich and fruitful, and the climate temperate, insomuch as they have two crops in the year. They say that Latona was born there, and, therefore, that they worship Apollo above all Gods; and because they are daily singing songs in praise of this god and ascribing to him the highest honours; they say that these inhabitants demean themselves as if they were Apollo's priests, who has here a stately grove and renowned *temple of round form*, beautiful with many rich gifts. That there is a city likewise consecrated to this god, whose citizens are most of them

*harpers*, who, playing on the harp, chant sacred hymns to Apollo in the temple setting forth his glorious acts. The Hyperboreans use their natural language, but, of long and ancient time have had a special kindness for the Grecians, and more especially the Athenians and them of Delos; and that some of the Grecians passed over to the Hyperboreans, and left them divers presents inscribed with Greek characters; and that Abaris formerly travelled thence into Greece and renewed the ancient league of friendship with the Delians.

“ . . . The sovereignty of this city and the care of the temple, they say, belong to the Boreades, the posterity of Boreas, who hold the principality by descent in the direct line from that ancestor.” (O'Brien, pp. 396, 397.)

Mr. Keane then proceeds to draw certain conclusions from this passage, and says that it presents many striking coincidences which go far towards identifying the Hyperborean island of antiquity with Ireland. These comprise 1, The situation, “over against Gaul.” 2, The size of the Hyperborean island, “as big as Sicily,” the actual size of Ireland. 3, The soil, “rich and fruitful,” the soil of Ireland. 4, The climate, “temperate,” the climate of Ireland. 5, They worshipped Apollo [the sun] above all gods, the Irish worshipped the sun under the name of Baal, &c. Then there were the round towers, and the songs, and the harps, &c., all of which Mr. Keane identifies with Ireland. And so we get in Ireland the Phallic worship of the Cuthites, and it is supposed the Round Towers as Phallic Objects and Monuments.

“The worship of the God of nature as the source of life and happiness under the emblem of the Lingam and the Yoni, seems to have pervaded the world during the period of the Cuthite dominion. The Arkite worship is generally regarded as a distinct idolatry, but a closer examination of the subject is sufficient to show that the ark was used only as an emblem in the deeper mysteries of the Lingajas and Yonijas. This Phallic worship was introduced into India from the banks of the Euphrates by Baleswana. Mr. Harcourt says—‘At Mohabalipoor, the city of the great Bali, *i.e.* Hercules Belus, the towers are pyramidal: one very old temple stands immediately on the brink of the sea, and midst the dash of the spray a tall pillar is conspicuous. It is indeed called by some a Linga, but then, in the

opinion of those who compiled the Puranas, this emblem was first publicly worshipped by the name of Baleswara-linga, on the banks of the Cumud-vati or Euphrates. Now Baleswara means the mighty Lord Belus, Bali, or Baal; for Iswara is lord, and it is a title of Mahedeva whose emblems are the crescent and all obelisks or pillars, whatever be their shape.' And again he says—'As the Phallic worship was attributed by the Hindoos to Baleswara, *i.e.* to Belus, so it was by the Greeks to Dionysius.' (Harcourt, pp. 283-4-5.)

"The origin of this idolatry in connection with the worship of Siva in India, is preserved in a legend translated from the Persic, and read before the Oriental Society in India. It may be found copied at length in O'Brien, p. 100. The introduction of this hateful idolatry into Egypt in connection with the worship of Osiris is mentioned by Plutarch, and copied by O'Brien. I mention these authorities to establish the fact of the very ancient and wide-spread influence of this idolatry—so much being necessary to the subject in hand.

"Colonel Franklin, writing on the Jeynes and Boodhists, says—'The Cuthites, or descendents of Chus, after having broken and dispersed from Shinar, the just punishment for their impious attempt to erect the Tower of Babel, wandered in detached masses to many different regions of the earth. . . .

"It will be seen hereafter that wherever they migrated, this singular race carried with them their arts and sciences; and they appear, according to the learned Bryant, in various parts of the globe, always great and always learned. . . . The great works of antiquity observable in various parts of Asia, but particularly in the widely extended peninsula of Hindoostan, are undoubtedly of Cuthic origin, *i.e.*, according to the learned Bryant, of Indo-Cuthites, who came to India at a very early period after quitting their native country of Ethiopia. The vicissitude which nature was constantly undergoing, according to the Hindoo mythology, made these obscene symbols (the Cuthite emblems of the god of nature) be regarded in a sublime and spiritual sense, which soon degenerated into Bachanalian revels when transplanted into other climes—gradually subverting all traces of the original doctrines of regeneration, until ending in the licentious feast of the Saturnalia, or the still more degrading mysteries of

Eleusis. Such scenes of moral debasement never polluted the caves of Salsette or Elephanta; and the offerings to the Lingam and Yoni, the types of creative power, are still made in these hallowed sanctuaries, freed from sensual ideas or impure emotions. The unadorned fabric of Boodhism combined with the worship of the solar orb, I believe to have been the first heresy, and the complicated worship of Siva, with all the monstrous attributes and meretricious ramifications which accompany it, are of recent introduction.'”\*

Very much in the same strain runs O'Brien's verdict respecting the round towers:—

“It is not difficult to understand why no information could be obtained from the present inhabitants as to the object of these edifices. Their remote antiquity is a sufficient reply. But I flatter myself that the reader who has accompanied me from the outset of this antiquarian voyage can now supply the defect, and explain that they were a series of round towers or phalli erected by the aboriginal Budhists, of whom the Jaina are only the wretched remains; and that those tiles which are stuck in them resembling steps, were for the purpose of ascending by the aid of a hoop, such as we have shewn at Hieropolis. The projecting stones in our Priaps, or the cavities that appear after their removal, are thus also accounted for.” †

\* Keane's "Ancient Ireland," 229.

† "Round Towers of Ireland," 176.

## CHAPTER V.

*Pillar Stones of Central America—Pillar Stones of Britain—Pillar Stones of India—Superstitious Uses connected with Pillar Stones—Phallic Associations—Stone Worship forbidden by various Councils—Sexual Distinctions indicated by Stones—Persian Customs—Extravagant Application of the Phallic Idea.*

ON a previous page we have quoted from "Stephens' Travels in Yucatan," an account of two ancient American towers, in the centre of one of which, he says, "There is a cylindrical solid mass of stone . . . this centre mass must be nine feet in thickness."

Mr. Keane expresses the opinion that this is "The same as the Mahody of Elephanta, the Muidhr of Ireland, and the Lingam of all the rock temples of Hindostan."

In the fourth volume of Vallancey's "Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis," page 211, we read as follows—"The Tuatha Dadann, though they could not effectually introduce image worship among the Scoti of the Britannic Isles, did however prevail on them to adopt the cave-worship of Muidhr or Grain, that is of the sun, an institution entirely of their invention.

"Several of these Antra Mithræ exist in Ireland and in Britain at this day. They are of a wonderful construction. Such is that at New Grange, described by Governor Pownall in the second volume of the *Archæologia*. Grange, I take to be a corruption of Grein-uagh, that is, the uagh, cave, or den of Grian, *i.e.* Mithras or the sun. Uagh, Coire, or Goire, signify a cave, hence that remarkable Antrum called Carrig-coire, or the cave of the rock, in the county of Waterford, near Tramore. This was a natural cave, that of New Grange is artificial. The most remarkable caves of this kind are in the island of Inis Muidr, now called Innis Murra, and the Holy Island or Island of Saints. It is about nine miles distant from Sligo. Here, not only the ruins of the caves are to be seen, but the Cloch Greine, Sun Stone, or Muidhr, from whence the island takes its name, is still remaining in its most perfect state, being a

conical pillar of stone placed on a pedestal, surrounded by a wall to preserve it from profanation. This is the Mudras of the Greeks, and the Mahody of the Gentoas.

“Captain Pike landed in the island of Elephanta, near Bombay. In the midst of a Gentoa temple, he found a low altar, on which was placed a large polished stone of a cylindrical form, standing on its base, but the top was rounded or convex. The Gentoas, says he, call this the stone of Mahody, a name they give to the original of all things. And this hieroglyphic of the Supreme Being is intended to shew that it is beyond the limited comprehension of man to form to himself any just idea of him that made the world, for, they say, no man can behold the Great God and live, which is the reason he cannot be represented in his proper shape. Upon the captain’s enquiring the reason of placing such a stone there, and in that awful and solemn manner, it was answered—That this sacred stone is dedicated to the honour of Mahody, who created the universe, and his name is placed under it, and therefore that stone which defends the name of the great and inconceivable God from all pollution, is itself a holy memorial, but is not itself a God, yet being thus placed, though a stone, no profane or polluted man ought to touch it.

“Linsater, in his voyage to India, tells us that the Brahmins report that their holy men in the rajah’s country, can give an account of these monuments, and that they are recorded in their Handscrit books. That no offerings were to be made at the altar of Mahody but by those of clean and unpolluted minds. He saw one erected in a tank of water to prevent any unclean thing coming near it. At the north and south of the island of Elephanta there are other pagodas full of imagery, except the interior of the Mahody temples, and each has a spring of water or a tank near it to purify all that entered.

This is certainly the stone Herodian saw at Emissa, in Phœnicia, where, says he, they worship Heliogabalus; but he saw no image fashioned by men’s hands, but only a great stone, round at bottom and diminishing towards the top in a conic form. Our Muidhr and the Mahody of the Gentoas are not conical, but only columns of circular bases rounded at the tops.

“Muidhr in Irish, in the ancient glosses, is written for

Midhr, which is explained by the ray of the sun, but the Mahody of Captain Pike is certainly corrupted from the Gentoo Maha-deu, *i.e.* Magnus Deus, in the Irish Mah or Maith-de bonus deus.

“Reverting again to ‘Stephens’ Travels in Yutacan,’ in vol. I. he describes another of these pillar stones. He says—‘Near the centre of the platform, at a distance of eighty feet from the foot of the steps, is a square enclosure, consisting of two layers of stones, in which stands in an oblique position as if falling, or, perhaps, as if an effort had been made to throw it down, a large round stone measuring eight feet above the ground, and five feet in diameter. This stone is striking for its uncouth and irregular proportions, and wants conformity with the regularity and symmetry of all around. From its conspicuous position it doubtless had some important use, and in connection with other monuments found in this place induces the belief that it was connected with the ceremonial rites of ancient worship known to have existed among all eastern nations.’

“These pillar stones are found, like the round towers, in various parts of the world. We have a picture of one on the Hill of Tara. Keane says it was found buried in the ground on a part of the hill called Bel-Pear, and was removed after the year 1798 to mark the grave in which a number of ‘Croppies’ were buried, who had been shot by the king’s troops. ‘The name of the place,’ he continues, (Bel-Pear) ‘from which the stone had been removed, is significant. I believe it to be identical with Baal-peor of the Scriptures; which, like the Priapus, Muidhr and Mahody, was the emblem of the sun as the source of generative life. Another pillar stone, square in form, stands on the Hill of Tara in the churchyard. On it is sculptured the well-known figure of the Irish Sheela-na-gig, from the original name of which I believe the Irish word CLUAIN—the Stone of Ana, was derived.’

“Mr. Keane’s remarks upon this are as follows—‘In the foregoing, the reader will observe that the stone of Bel-Pear at Tara is a conical pillar (the stone called Cloich Kieran at Cape Clear is precisely of the same form), and that Herodian describes the sun as worshipped in Phœnicia under the form of a conical stone. Diodorus Siculus identifies ‘Sol’ with ‘Priapus.’ At Inis-Muidhr, County Sligo, a

stone of a similar form is by the people called 'Cloich Greine,' literally 'the stone of the sun;' the 'Mudros' of the Phœnicians is also represented as a 'conical stone.' At the temple of Elephanta, the Divinity who created the universe is worshipped under the form of a similar stone, and under the name Mahody, answering to our St. Mochudee of Lismore. The name of the island near Sligo, at which the Cloich Greine, or the stone of the sun, is described to be, is Inis-Muidhr—Muidhr, in the ancient glosses, is written for Midhr, which is explained by the ray of the sun—the modern name of the island is Inis-Mura, the name of the celebrated but mythical Saint Mura. This Saint is thus far identified with the Mahody of Elephanta, and Saint Mochudee of Lismore, one of the names of the Cuthite divinity. The patron Saint of Inis-Mura or Inis-Muidhr, is Saint Molaise, another Cuthite derivation, which I have elsewhere shewn to be identical with Molaice, Molach in the genitive case.' \*"

That pillars and other stone ornaments were objects of veneration and worship, we have ample and conclusive evidence, "certainly in France, and by implication in England—down to the times of Charlemagne and Alfred at least," remarks Fergusson.

A decree of the Council of Nantes called upon bishops and their servants to dig up and remove, and hide in places where they cannot be found, those stones which in remote and woody places were still worshipped, and where vows were still made. This decree was probably dated 658, according to "Richard, 'Analyse des Conciles.'"

In 452 it had been decreed by the Council at Arles that if, in any diocese, any infidel either lighted torches or worshipped trees, fountains or stones, or neglected to destroy them, he should be found guilty of sacrilege. The Council at Tours in 567, called upon the clergy to excommunicate those who, at certain stones or trees or fountains, perpetrated things contrary to the ordinances of the Church.

The Council at Toledo, 681, also decreed against the practice, and declared that those who did such things, sacrificed to the devil, and rendered themselves liable to penalties. In 692, a Council at Rouen, condemned all who offered to trees or fountains or stones as they would at

\* "Towers, &c., of Ancient Ireland."



altars; and a decree of Charlemagne, 789, condemned before God, trees, stones and fountains, which foolish people worshipped.

A reviewer, quoted by Forlong, says—"Arnobius, a Christian convert of the fourth century, relates that in Africa where he resided, he never before his conversion saw a stone upon which oil had been poured without paying it homage." Why? Not surely if it did "not typify something beyond itself." Arnobius would have answered differently. This writer can only fancy that these stones were held to be aerolites, or at least to have come down from heaven in some mysterious manner, for in no other way can he account for the otherwise unaccountable fact, that "stones smeared with oil and called Betyls were amongst the earliest objects of devotion;" that Jacob made his pillar-stone into such a Betyl, and that even according to Acts xix., 35; "the world-famed temple of Diana at Ephesus commemorated one of these meteoric stones," and, he adds, "the black stone of Meka is such another. . . ."

"It is here, perhaps, necessary to inform my readers that all conical or erect stones, and all quaint or rude masses of rock usually denote the male sex, unless ovate or rounded, when they are feminine."\*

Mention has just been made of the stone set up by Jacob at Bethel, and this is declared by various writers to be of a phallic character and an object of worship. The record in Genesis says—"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it."

Upon this passage we have the following note in Kitto's Pictorial Bible. "Nothing can be more natural than this act of Jacob, for the purpose of marking the site and making a memorial of an occurrence of such great interest and importance to him. The true design of this humble monument seems to have been, however, to set this annointed pillar as an evidence of the solemn vow which he made on that occasion. Mr. Morier, in his 'Second Journey through Persia,' notices a custom which seems to illustrate this act of Jacob. In travelling through Persia he observed that the guide occasionally placed a stone on a conspicuous piece of rock, or two stones one upon another, at the same time

\* Forlong, "Riv. Life," vol 1.

uttering some words which were understood to be a prayer for the safe return of the party. This explained to Mr. Morier what he had frequently observed before in the east, and particularly on high roads leading to great towns at a point where the towns are first seen, and where the oriental traveller sets up his stone, accompanied by a devout exclamation in token of his safe arrival. Mr. Morier adds: Nothing is so natural in a journey over a dreary country, as for a solitary traveller to set himself down fatigued and to make the vow that Jacob did; or again, that on first seeing the place which he has so longed to reach, the traveller should sit down and make a thanksgiving, in both cases setting up a stone as a memorial. The writer of this note has himself often observed such stones without being aware of their object, until happening one day to overturn one that had been set upon another, a man hastened to replace it, at the same time informing him that to displace such stones was an act unfortunate for the person so displacing it, and unpleasant to others. The writer afterwards observed that the natives studiously avoided displacing any of these stones 'set up for pillars' by the way-side. The Jews believe that the stone which Jacob set up at Bethel was placed in the sanctuary of the second temple, and that the ark of the covenant rested upon it; and, they add, that after the destruction of that temple and the desolation of Judea, their fathers were accustomed to lament the calamities that had befallen them over the stone on which Jacob's head rested at Bethel," "which means," declares Forlong, "that they grieved, like good Sivaites, over the loss of the original Lingam of Yokob, for he was a female demi-god, as elsewhere shown. It is a mere fancy of the Jews that they ever recovered their ark-box, either for the second or Zerubbabel's temple of the fifth century B.C., or for the second Herod's, of 21 B.C. No doubt if they had it would have been the receptacle of the Lingam, or been placed over it like Soma, the moon, upon the upright Siva in Som-nat. As few eastern conquerors take away a mere tribal Lingam—national ones were constantly removed—we may believe that Yokob's Matsebah would remain and descend to the next conquerors of this unfortunate city, of which there were several before the Mahomedans. These are indeed said to be the culprits, for though Islamis, they had long

lost their own 'black stone,' and could only show fragments of another, for the adoration of the faithful; we find exactly such a stone as the Jewish one is described to be, viz.: 18 × 3 × 3 inches, actually built into the corner of the Al-Kaba, as is detailed in my chapter on Arabian Faiths.\*

This same writer asserts—"All pillars were sacred to the phallic Hercules, that is, they were Phalli. The 'Pillars of Hercules' were, says Strabo, at the noted passage of the Mediterranean; one in Iberia called Kalpe, now called Gibel-Tar or Gibraltar, and the other Abyla or Ab-El-Parens Sol. . . .

The rudest and most ungainly-looking rock or stump was sufficient to denote a Hercules or Pallas; and a lump, a Ceres or Juno."

\* "Rivers of Life."

## CHAPTER VI.

*Variation of Form in Objects of Stone Worship—Holed Stone at Aghade—Story of Eochiad—Holed Stone at Ballyveruish—Holed Stone at Kilquare—Holed Stones at Lackendarragh, Kilmalkedar and Castledermott—Large Holed Stone at Ballyferriter—Stones at Dingle, Killaloe and Moytura—Holed Stone in Circassia—Holed Stones in Cornwall—Ceremonies connected with Holed Stones—The Stone of Odin—Account of a Game Played as a Religious Ceremony with the Holed Stones—The Phallic Idea connected with Holed Stones.*

STONE Worship has not been confined to pillars or any other particular form; in every quarter of the globe, north, south, east and west, it has existed in connection with the cromlech, the pillar, the circle, the rocking-stone, and the holed stone. It is a singular thing that notwithstanding the ages that have passed since these things first came into existence, superstitious memories and practices still linger in connection with them. If we look across to Ireland we shall find a number of them, with most of which some remote and extraordinary tradition is associated.

Ryan, in his "History and Antiquities of the County of Carlow," describes one standing two miles south of Tullough, in the parish of Aghade, it is called *Cloch-a-Phoill*, i.e. in Irish, the "hole stone." He says—"It is about twelve feet in height, and four feet in breadth, having an aperture through near the top. There is a tradition that the son of an Irish king was chained to this stone, but that he contrived to break his chain and escape. The stone is now thrown from it perpendicular; and it was a practice with the peasantry to pass ill-thriven infants through the aperture in order to improve their constitutions. Great numbers formerly indulged in this superstitious folly, but for the last twenty years this practice has been discontinued. My informant on this occasion was a woman who had herself passed one of her infants through the aperture of this singular stone."

The story of the Irish king who was chained to the stone

is found in the Book of Ballymote, a vellum MS. of the fourteenth century, in the possession of the Royal Irish Academy. His name was Eochaid, the son of Enna Cinsealach, king of Leinster in the fifth century.

Translated by Dr. John O'Donovan, and printed in the Transactions of the Academy, the story is that Eochaid, having been for some time at Tara, as an hostage from his father to Niall of the Nine Hostages, monarch of all Erin, absconded and repaired to the south to his own country. He decided on visiting the house of Niall's poet laureate, Laidginn, the son of Barcead, to refresh himself, but on arriving there he was refused entertainment. He proceeded home then, but soon returned with some followers to the poet's home, burned it, and killed his only son. . . . In the meantime the poet so worked up the feelings of the monarch Niall, that he vowed to march with his army into Leinster and lay it waste unless the young prince Eochaid was delivered up to him again, to be dealt with as he should think fit, in expiation of the double insult and violation which had been offered to the sacred persons of himself and his poet. This vow he immediately carried into effect, and the king of Leinster being unable to offer any effectual resistance, was compelled to deliver up his son as he was commanded. The young prince was conveyed to Niall's camp at Ath Fadat, on the river Slaney, where he was left with an iron chain round his neck, and the end of the chain passed through a hole in a large upright stone and fastened on the other side. Shortly after there came to him nine champions of Niall's soldiers for the purpose of killing him. "This is bad, indeed," said he, at the same time giving a sudden jerk by which he broke the chain. He then took up the iron bar which passed through the chain at the other side of the stone, and faced the nine men, and so well did he ply the iron bar against them, that he killed them all. The Leinstermen, who were in large numbers in the neighbourhood, finding their prince at liberty by his own valour, rushed in, led by him, upon their enemies, and a great battle ensued, in which the monarch (Niall) was routed and forced to retreat to Tulla, and ultimately out of Leinster.

The *Dublin Penny Journal* for 1832, gives an account of one of these stones at Ballyveruish, about a mile from the

village of Doagh, in the parish of Kilbride and county of Antrim. It is a large slab of whinstone, according to the drawings extremely rough and unhewn, about five feet high, two feet six inches wide at the base, and about ten inches in thickness. The hole is three feet from the ground, and two and a half inches in diameter.

There is another in the churchyard of Kilquare, near Mallow, county of Cork, six feet high, two feet four inches wide, with a hole four inches in diameter, of dark red sandstone. It is called Cloch na-Pecaibh, or the Sinner's Stone, as is marked on the maps. It was the custom for the women to draw clothes through the hole, as children were drawn through holes of greater dimensions.

A smaller stone with a smaller hole also, stands not far off in the Townland of Lacken-darragh, parish of Kilcoleman. This is four feet five inches high, three feet three inches broad, and one foot thick; the hole is on one side, and is only an inch and a half in diameter.

Another, four feet six inches in height, eight inches broad, and eight inches thick, stands near the church of Kilmalkedar, county of Kerry; it has a fine Ogham inscription.

In the churchyard of Castledermott, county of Carlow, is another of granite, extremely rude and ill-shapen.

Not far from Ballyferriter, on the road to Dingle, is another, five feet high, with a hole two inches in diameter, which, as in the stone at Lacken-darragh, is close to the side. Attempts have been made to give to this stone and the one at Kilmalkedar a Christian appearance, by marking them with Greek crosses and other ornaments of a similar character.

A number of others with such small holes as the above are found scattered about in various parts of Ireland, in different states of preservation, some with the hole half broken away as in the case of one two and a half miles west of Dingle.

At Killaloe, where stands the famous round tower we have already mentioned, in its principal church, Teampuil Camin, used for some years for burials, is a small stone about three feet six inches high and fifteen inches wide, with a small hole. The stone is broken at the top, and a like attempt to some previous ones to Christianise it has been made by marking it with a cross.

In the county of Sligo, at Mogtura, are some stones much larger than any of those we have yet mentioned, in which the holes are five inches in diameter.

Bell, in his "Residence in Circassia," p. 154, describes a curious monument, one of whose stones was such as we have just been noticing. The tomb, for such it happens to be, is about five feet high, and is built of five great slabs of stone, four supporters and one covering stone, the latter nine feet long and six feet broad. In the front slab is a circular hole sufficiently large for the admission of a child's head. Mr. Bell says there are others of a like character in different parts of the country.

We now turn to Cornwall, a most remarkable country; the country "*par excellence*," says the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "of megalithic monuments."

Borlase, in his "Antiquities" says, after describing certain forms of rocks—"There is another kind of stone-deity which has never been taken notice of by any author that I have heard of. Its common name in Cornwall and Scilly is Tolmên; that is, the Hole of Stone. It consists of a large orbicular stone, supported by two stones, betwixt which there is a passage. There are two of these in the Scilly Islands, one on St. Mary's Island at the bottom of Salakee Downs; the top stone forty-five feet in girth horizontally measured; the other in the little island of Northwethel, thirty-three feet in girth horizontal, by twenty-four feet perpendicular measurement. They are both in the decline of hills beneath a large karn of rocks, standing on two natural supporters; the first has one exactly round basin on it; the second has none, neither are there any basins on the rocks below, or near it, but elsewhere on the island there are several. Both these are probably erected by art, and the top stones large as they are, brought from the karns above, and placed by human strength where we see them. But the most astonishing monument of this kind is in the Tene-ment of Mên, in the parish of Constantine, Cornwall. It is one vast oval pebble, placed on the points of two natural rocks, so that a man may creep under the great one and between its supporters, through a passage about three feet wide and as much high. The longest diameter of this stone is thirty-three feet, and the breadth in the middle eighteen feet six inches. I measured one half of the circumference

and found it, according to my computation, forty-eight feet and a half, so that this stone is ninety-seven feet in circumference, about sixty feet across the middle, and by the best information I can get, contains at least seven hundred and fifty tons of stone. Getting up by a ladder to view the top of it, we found the whole surface worked like an imperfect or mutilated honey-comb into basins; one, much larger than the rest, was at the south end, about seven feet long, another at the north about five, the rest smaller, seldom more than one foot, oftentimes not so much, the sides and shape irregular. Most of these basins discharge into the two principal ones (which lie in the middle of the surface), those only excepted which are near the brim of the stone, and they have little lips or channels which discharge the water they collect over the sides of the Tolmên, and the flat rocks which lie underneath receive the droppings into basins which they have cut into their surfaces. This stone is no less wonderful for its position than for its size; for although the underpart is nearly semicircular, yet it rests on the two large rocks; and so light and detached does it stand, that it touches the two under stones but as it were on their points."

"In the area below this stone there are many great rocks which have been divided and split, but whether thrown down from the sides of the Tolmên for the purposes above mentioned, I will not pretend to determine. One thing is remarkable, which is, that these Tolmêns rest on supporters and do not touch the earth, agreeably to an established principle of the Druids, who thought that everything that was sacred would be profaned by touching the ground, and therefore ordered it so as that these deities should rest upon the pure rock, and not be defiled by touching the common earth. Another thing is worthy of our notice in this kind of monument, which is that underneath these vast stones there is a hole or passage between the rocks. What use the ancients made of these passages we can only guess at; but we have reason to think that when stones were once ritually consecrated, they attributed great and miraculous virtues to every part of them, and imagined that whatever touched, lay down upon, was surrounded by, or passed through these stones, acquired thereby a kind of holiness, and became more acceptable to the gods. This passage



might be also a sanctuary for the offender to fly to, and shelter himself from the pursuer; but I imagine it chiefly to have been intended and used for introducing proselytes or novices, people under vows, or going to sacrifice, into their more sublime mysteries; and, for the same reason, I am apt to think that the vast architraves, or cross-stones resting upon the uprights at Stonehenge were erected, namely with an intent to consecrate and prepare the worshippers by passing through those holy rocks for the better entering upon the offices which were to be performed in their penetralia, the most sacred part of the temple. The Druid throne at Boscawen Rôs might also serve at particular times for the like preparatory rites, and might be thought to instil a greater degree of sanctity into the presiding judge, the seat being surrounded so on every side by rocks. For much the same reasons the ancient idolaters made their children pass through their consecrated fires, a lustration which ever afterwards made the Gentiles think that those who had gone through had acquired thereby a greater degree of purity than any others; and, as Maimonides informs us, the Canaanites believed that such children should not die before their time.

“The inhabitants of Shetland and the Isles used to pour libations of milk or beer through a holed stone in honour to the spiritual Brownie, which is therefore called Brownie’s Stone. Now whether the Cornish Druids applied this stone to the use of such offerings I cannot say, but the Cornish to this day invoke the spirit Brownie when their bees swarm, and think that their crying ‘Brownie, Brownie,’ will prevent their returning into their former hive, and make them pitch and form a new colony. It is not improbable but this holed stone (consecrated, as by its structure and present uses, it seems to have been) might have served several delusive purposes. I apprehend it served for libations, served to initiate and dedicate children to the offices of rock-worship by drawing them through this hole, and also to purify the victim before it was sacrificed; and considering the many lucrative juggles of the Druids (which are confirmed by their monuments) it is not wholly improbable that some miraculous restoration of health might be promised to the people for themselves and children upon proper pecuniary gratifications, provided that at a certain season of the moon

and whilst a priest officiated at one of the stones adjoining, with prayers adapted to the occasion, they would draw their infirm children through this hole. And, I must observe, that this passing through stones and holes in order to recover or secure health, is the more likely to be one of the Druid principles, because I find that they used to pass their cattle through a hollow tree, or through a hole made in the earth (for like superstitious reasons probably) which was therefore prohibited by law. It is not improbable but that this stone might be also of the oracular kind; all which may, in some measure, be confirmed by the present though very simple uses to which it is applied by the common people. When I was last at the monument, in the year 1749, a very intelligent farmer of the neighbourhood assured me that he had known many persons who had crept through this holed stone for pains in their back and limbs, and that fanciful parents at certain times of the year, do customarily draw their young children through in order to cure them of the rickets. He showed me also two pins carefully laid across each other on the top of this holed stone. This is the way of the over-curious, even at this time, and by recurring to these pins and observing their direction to be the same, or different from what they left them in, or by their being lost or gone, they are informed of and resolve upon some material incident of love or fortune, which they could not know soon enough in a natural way.

“Of the same kind, and appropriated to the same uses as that I have here explained, I look upon all thin stones which have a large hole in the middle; but before I close this chapter of the holed stones I must just mention some of another sort, many of which I have seen. About sixty-five paces exactly north of Rosmodreuy Circle, in Buryen, Cornwall, is a flat stone six inches thick at a medium, two feet six wide, and five feet high; fifteen inches below the top it has a hole six inches in diameter, quite through. In the adjoining hedge I perceived another, holed in the same manner; and in one wall of the village near by, a third of like make. By some large stones standing in these fields, I judge there have been several circles of stones erect, besides that which is now entire; and that these belonged to those circles and were detached stones to which the

ancients were wont to tie their victims whilst the priests were going through their preparatory ceremonies, and making supplications to the gods to accept the ensuing sacrifice."

A large triangular holed stone was described by Mr. J. T. Blight in a paper read before the Royal Institution of Cornwall in 1862. He called it the largest of its class, and was eight feet eleven inches wide at the base, eight feet six inches high to the apex, and about twelve inches average thickness. The hole was seventeen inches in diameter. His words were—"A few years ago, a person digging close to the Tolven discovered a pit in which were fragments of pottery arranged in a circular order, the whole being covered by a flat slab of stone. Imagining that he had disturbed some mysterious place, with commendable reverence he immediately filled up the pit again. Taking the proximity of burrow in connection with pit, it seems most probable that the Tolven is a sepulchral monument, stones of this kind being erected, perhaps, to a peculiar class of personages. It is well known that the circle is an ancient symbol of eternity, and it was sometimes adopted as typical of Deity itself. The triangular form of the stone may be accidental. The holed stones at Madron also form part of a triangular arrangement. Whether a significant connection was intended in this union of the circle and triangle is perhaps worthy of consideration."

The stone with the hole seventeen inches in diameter is at Tolven Cross, in the parish of Constantine.

Then, again, near St. Just's at the Land's End, at Carn Kenidjack are four holed stones, and at Boilleit two others.

There is a stone at Madron with a still larger hole than any yet mentioned; it is two feet two inches in diameter on one side, and one foot seven inches on the other. It stands between two other stones at the distance of seven feet ten inches from one, and seven feet eight inches from the other. It is called Mên-an-tol.

As might naturally be expected from the intimate historical connection in the past of Ireland and Scotland, the latter country has also its holed stones used for similar purposes as those of the former. There is the celebrated stone of Odin, at which contracts were entered into and agreements ratified.

Mr. Daniel Wilson, in his "Pre-historic Annals of Scotland,"

says—"The celebrated stone of Odin, near the Loch of Stennis, in Orkney, which has had a new interest added to it by being interwoven with the romantic incidents of the 'Pirate,' was one of the remarkable monolithic group called The Stones of Stennis. It formed no part, however, either of the Great Ring of Bragar, or the neighbouring circle of Stennis, but stood apart to the north-east of the latter group; though it can scarcely be doubted that it bore some important relation to these ancient and mysterious structures. The Stone of Odin is described as standing about eight feet high, and perforated with an oval hole large enough to admit a man's head. A curious though rudely executed bird's-eye view of the Stones of Stennis is given in the *Archæologia Scotica*, from a drawing executed by the Rev. Dr. Henry, about the year 1780, and there a man and woman are seen interchanging vows, plighted by the promise of Odin, which Sir Walter Scott refers to as 'the most sacred of northern rites yet practised among us' The vow was sworn while the engaging parties joined hands through the perforation in the stone; and though it is difficult to decide how much of the tradition may be ascribable to modern embellishment and the adaptation of a genuine heirloom of primitive superstition to the preconceived theories of local antiquaries, there cannot be a doubt of the popular sacredness attached to this sacramental stone in former times. An illustration of the practice from which this originated is supposed to be traceable in an ancient Norse custom, described in the *Eyrbiggia Saga*, by which, when an oath was imposed, he by whom it was pledged passed his hand, while pronouncing it, through a massive silver ring sacred to this ceremony."

"The solemnity attached to a vow ratified by so awful a pledge as this appeal to the Father of the Slain, the severe and terrible Odin, continued to maintain its influence on the mind till a comparatively recent date. Dr. Henry, writing in 1784, refers to the custom as having fallen into disuse within twenty or thirty years of the time he wrote, and adds, this ceremony was held so very sacred in those times, that the person who dared to break the engagement was counted infamous, and excluded all society."

Principal Gordon, of the Scots College, Paris, who visited Orkney in 1781, thus refers to a curious example, showing

probably the latest traces of this venerable traditional relic of Scandinavian superstition:—

“At some distance from the semi-circle stands a stone by itself, eight feet high, three broad, nine inches thick, with a round hole on the side next the lake. The original design of this hole was unknown, till about twenty years ago it was discovered in the following manner: A young man had seduced a girl under promise of marriage, and she growing with child, was deserted by him. The young man was called before the session; the elders were particularly severe. Being asked by the minister the cause of so much rigour, they answered: You do not know what a bad man this is, he has broken the promise of Odin. Being further asked what they meant by the promise of Odin, they put him in mind of the stone at Stenhouse with the round hole in it, and added that it was customary when promises were made, for the contracting parties to join hands through this hole, and promises so made were called the promises of Odin.”

“It is possible that the awe which the vow of Odin so recently inspired may have originated in the use of the stone for more dreadful purposes than the most solemn contract, sealed with imprecations derived from a barbarous pagan creed; though little value can be attached to another tradition, described by Dr. Henry as still existing in his time,—that human victims destined for sacrifice were bound to the perforated column, preparatory to their slaughter, as an acceptable offering to the terrible god. Another stone on the north side of the island of Shapinshay, bears the name of the Black Stone of Odin, but no definite associations are now attached to it, and its sole value is as the march stone between the grounds of two conterminous heritors. A more trustworthy tradition ascribed peculiar virtues to the Stennis Stone, manifestly corresponding with those referred to by Borlase in connection with one at Maddeon, and denounced in ancient Anglo-Saxon laws. According to this, a child passed through the hole would never shake with palsy in old age.

“A view of this remarkable memorial of ancient manners and superstitious rites, is given in Lady Stafford’s ‘Views in Orkney and on the North-eastern Coast of Scotland,’ drawn in 1805, and has been copied as one of the illustrations for the Abbotsford edition of ‘The Pirate.’ But

the stone itself no longer exists. After having survived the waste of centuries, until it had nearly outlived the last traditional remembrance of the strange rites with which it had once been associated, it was barbarously destroyed by a neighbouring farmer in the year 1814, along with two stones of the adjacent semi-circle. Had it not been for the interference of Mr. Malcolm Laing, the historian, the whole group of Stennis would have been broken down as building material for the ignorant Goth's cow-sheds. The act was less culpable, perhaps, as the perpetrator was a stranger who had only recently taken up his abode in Orkney. It affords proof, however, that the native reference for the venerable memorial had not entirely disappeared, that its unfortunate destroyer's life was rendered miserable by the petty persecutions with which the natives sought to revenge the destruction of their sacramental stone. So far, indeed, was the manifestation of popular indignation carried, that various conspiracies are said to have been formed to injure him, and two different attempts were made to set fire to his dwelling and property; a sufficiently manifest token that the old spirit of veneration for the stone of Odin was not unknown to the modern Arcadian."

The grafting of pagan ideas on to those of Christianity has an illustration in the holed stone cross of Eilean Rona, a small island on the western coast of Scotland. It is an upright cross, somewhat rude in shape, pierced by three holes in the form of a triangle. Evidently the holes by themselves are a pagan conception, while their number and form are Christian, that is, they represent the Holy Trinity.

Stones of a very similar character are found in various parts of India, especially in Southern Bengal; some of these are rude to a degree while others are refined and delicate, or as Dr. Wise says, of beautifully dressed stone, richly ornamented. "There is a stone circle of near one hundred and fifty feet in diameter, composed of beautiful monoliths, in each of which a niche is sunk, with a miniature altar and lingam. The stones are placed quite close together in the circle, and are covered with delicate symbolical carvings. The centre is occupied by an altar and lingam."

In some of the cromlechs the stones have holes running through them, like those in Ireland, Brittany and Circassia.

Stephens, in his "Yucatan," already quoted several times

in these pages, describes a peculiar game of the ancient Americans which was engaged in as a religious ceremony, there is frequent mention also of its having been common in Ireland as well. It was played with a spherical ball, emblematic of the sun, in an open area between two walls of great thickness. A stone with a hole in it was set in each wall, and the aim of the players was to send the ball completely through; whoever did this was declared winner of the game.

Stephens says—"In the centre of the great stone walls, exactly opposite each other, and at the height of twenty feet from the ground, are two massive stone rings, four feet in diameter and one foot one inch thick; the diameter of the hole is one foot seven inches. On the rim and border were two sculptured entwined serpents.

"These walls, at the first glance, we considered identical in their uses and purposes with the parallel structures supporting the rings at Uxmal, of which I have already expressed the opinion that they were intended for the celebration of some public games."

In the account of the diversions of Montezuma, given by Herrera, we have the following—"The place where they played was a ground room, long, narrow, and high, but wider above than below, and higher on the sides than at the ends, and they kept it very well plastered and smooth, both the walls and the floor. On the side walls they fixed certain stones, like those of a mill, with a hole right through the middle just as big as the ball, and he that could strike it through there won the game; and in token of its being an extraordinary success, which rarely happened, he had a right to the cloaks of all the lookers-on, by antient custom, and law amongst gamesters; and it was very pleasant to see, that as soon as ever the ball was in the hole, the standers-by took to their heels, running away with all their might to save their cloaks, laughing and rejoicing, others scouring after them to secure their cloaks for the winner, who was obliged to offer some sacrifice to the idol of the tennis court, and the stone through whose hole the ball had passed. Every tennis court was a temple, having two idols, the one of gaming and the other of the ball. On a lucky day, at midnight, they performed certain ceremonies and enchantments on the two lower walls and on

the midst of the floor, singing certain songs or ballads : after which a priest of the great temple went with some of their religious men to bless it ; he uttered some words, threw the ball about the tennis court four times, and then it was consecrated and might be played in, but not before. The owner of the tennis court, who was always a lord, never played without making some offering and performing certain ceremonies to the idol of gaming, which shews how superstitious they were, since they had such regard to their idols, even in their diversions."

"Captain Wilford, in the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, mentions the fact that perforated stones are not uncommon in India, and devout people pass through them when the opening will admit of it, in order to be regenerated. If the hole be too small, they put either the hand or foot through it, and with a sufficient degree of faith it answers nearly the same purpose."

We have indeed here the secret of the whole matter of these passages through fissures in rocks, holes in stones and clefts in trees, *viz.*, the idea of regeneration. A reference to our former volume\* will supply a full account of this custom, and the reader will find there some remarkable and interesting specimens of its existence and manifestation in both India and England. We may mention here the story there quoted from Wilford, of two Brahmins who came on a political expedition to England, and who in their return journey having crossed the Indus, contracted, according to the Hindoo faith, serious impurity, and in consequence lost caste. All efforts made in their behalf by the rajah, in whose service they had undertaken the journey, proved unavailing, and at an assembly of Brahmins it was decreed that :—

"In consequence of their universal good character, and of the motive of their travelling to distant countries, which was solely to promote the good of their country, they might be regenerated and have the sacerdotal ordination renewed. For the purpose of regeneration it is directed to make an image of pure gold of the female power of nature in the shape either of a woman or of a cow. In this statue the person to be regenerated is enclosed and dragged

\* "Phallism."



out through the usual channel. As a statue of pure gold and of proper dimensions would be too expensive, it is sufficient to make an image of the sacred Yoni, through which the person to be regenerated is to pass. Rayhu-Nath-Raya had one made of pure gold and of proper dimensions; his ambassadors were regenerated, and the usual ceremonies of ordination having been performed, and immense presents bestowed on the Brahmins, they were re-admitted into the communion of the faithful."

Mr. Richard Brash, writing in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1864, winds up an article on these stones as follows:—"I think a few inferences may be drawn from the facts already stated. First, that the superstition of the holed stone seems peculiar to the 'Goadhal' or Irish Celts, as the examples existing are almost exclusively found in Ireland, Scotland, and Cornwall, which two latter districts were largely colonised by the Goadhal. Secondly, that the virtues attributed to its use are found either traditionally or in actual existence in the countries whence I have drawn my examples, Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, India; and those are the binding nature of contracts made through them, but more particularly the regenerative power supposed to be communicated by passing through the orifice, whether it be a diseased limb, or the weakly and rickety infant, or the linen about to be used in childwork. In India it undoubtedly was a Phallic emblem with a twofold symbolism, representing in the one monument the reciprocal principles. I am equally certain, that among our Celtic progenitors it had a similar signification, of which the existing myths have a faint shadowing. In Ireland ample evidences are not wanting to show that Phallic dogmas and rites were very extensively known and practised in ancient times. It is patent in the existing folk-lore of the country, in some everyday customs of the peasantry, and in the remains of midnight plays and ceremonies, practised still in remote districts at wakes and such-like occasions. Thirdly, Mr. Blight has before alluded to the triangular arrangement of the stones at Madron, and to the triangular stone at Tolven Cross, Constantine, and hints that the coincidence is worthy of consideration. To these I would add the triangular arrangement of the aperture on the cross at Eilean Rona, and the thrice-repeated aperture on the supporting slab of the cromlech on Gafr-Inis, Brittany."

The object we set out with has now been achieved, and we have in the foregoing pages endeavoured as clearly as possible to describe three particular forms of "Objects, Monuments and Remains," *viz.*, the Round Towers, the Pillar Stones, and the Holed Stones. That the bulk of them were not of Christian origin, to whatever uses they may have been put in Christian times, has probably struck the reader as unquestionable. When their peculiar form is taken into consideration, their great antiquity and the very striking analogy between many of the circumstances connected with their history and those connected with the history of eastern nations, little difficulty will probably be felt in coming to the conclusion that the theory which regards them as emblems of the male and female organs of generation, and therefore as Phallic Remains, has the preponderance of argument in its favour.

THE END.

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