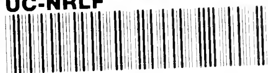
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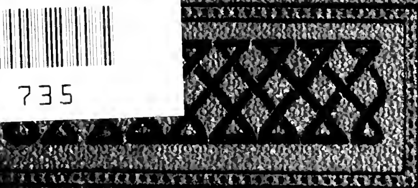

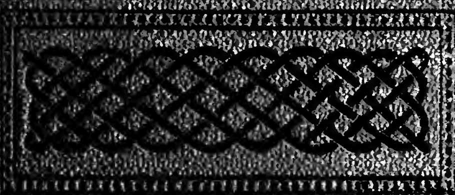

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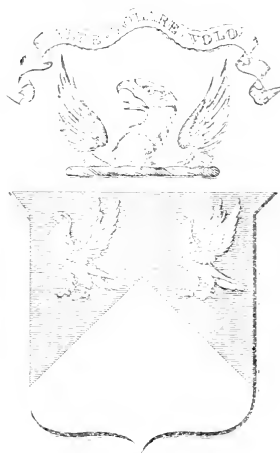

H. Morse Stephens.

University of California

A SHORT

HISTORY OF IRELAND

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO 1608

BY

P. W. JOYCE, LL.D., T.C.D., M.R.I.A.

ONE OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE ANCIENT LAWS OF IRELAND; AUTHOR OF 'IRISH NAMES OF PLACES' 'OLD CELTIC ROMANCES' AND OTHER WORKS RELATING TO IRELAND

WITH A MAP

LONDON

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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

PREFACE

In a short Preface I wish to draw attention to some special features of this book.

Most readers will perceive that the mode of treating the subject is somewhat new. The chapters forming Part I., on the literature, art, and institutions of ancient Ireland, will, I hope, prove useful; and perhaps they may be found interesting. They do not pretend to be deep or exhaustive; but, while setting them forth in language as simple, clear, and readable as I could command, I have tried to make them comprehensive so far as the limits allowed, and thoroughly accurate.

In five short chapters is given a popular exposition of a subject not easy to deal with—the Brehon Laws. The interpretation of these laws is often so difficult, and leaves so much room for differences of opinion, that I have been at unusual pains to give references. The vexed question of land tenure has lately aroused very lively interest, and perhaps the public may be pleased to have an explanation of the main features of the ancient Irish land laws.

I have generally followed the plan of weaving the history round important events and leading personages. This method, while sometimes necessitating a slight

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departure from the strict order of time, has enabled me to divide the whole book into short chapters, each forming a distinct narrative more or less complete in itself; and it has aided me in my endeavours to infuse some life and human interest into the story.

Original documents have been, all through, consulted; nothing has been accepted on second-hand evidence; and great care has been taken to give references or quotations for all statements that might give rise to doubt or question.

I have, I hope, written soberly and moderately, avoiding exaggeration and bitterness, and showing fair play all round. A writer may accomplish all this while sympathising heartily, as I do, with Ireland and her people.

In the beginning of the reign of James I. the Brehon Law and the Irish land customs were abolished, and Ireland ceased to be governed by native institutions. This, therefore, seems a convenient and proper place to make a pause. The first part of my task ends here: in another volume, which will appear, I hope, in the near future, the narrative will be brought down to the present day.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. Marlow Woollett for reading the proof-sheets, and for giving me, all along, the benefit of his great information and sound judgment. I have to thank Messrs. George Philip & Son for the use of the map, and Messrs. Alex. Thom & Co. for permission to use the Celtic design on the cover.

P. W. J.

LYRE-NA-GRENA, LEINSTER ROAD,
RATHMINES, DUBLIN:
July 1893.

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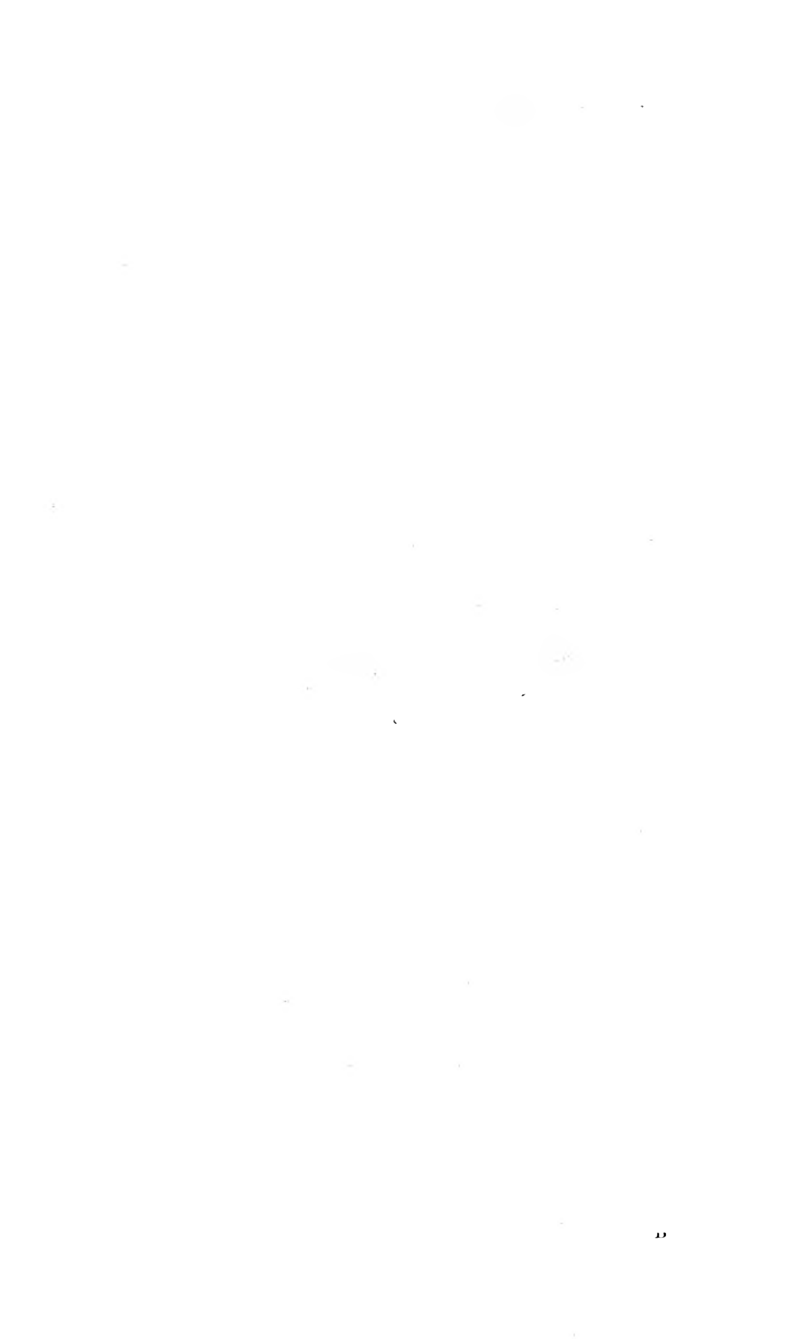
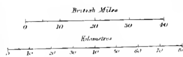


IRELAND.



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CHAPTER I

THE IRISH LANGUAGE

[Chief Authorities:—Zeuss's Gramm. Celt., Preface; O'Donovan's Article on Zeuss in Ulst. Journ. of Archæol. ii. 11; O'Donovan's Irish Gram.; O'Curry's Lect. on MS. Mat. of Irish Hist.; Stokes's Cormac's Glossary and Three Irish Glosses; Atkinson's Lect. on Irish Metric; Ferguson's Ogham Inscr. in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland; Most Rev. Dr. Graves's Papers on Ogham in Hermathena; Brash's Ogham Inscribed Monuments.]

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Each of these has branched into three dialects. Those of Gaelic are:—The Irish proper; the Gaelic of Scotland, differing only slightly from Irish; and the Manx. The dialects of British are:—Welsh; Cornish; and Breton or Armoric. The dialects of British differ more than those of Goidelic. Of the whole six dialects, five are still spoken; the Cornish became extinct in the last century; and Manx is nearly extinct. Four have an ancient written literature:—**Irish, Welsh, Cornish,** and **Armoric.** The Gaelic of Scotland has no ancient literature distinct from that of Ireland; but it has a modern literature.

Glosses. We shall see in another place that in the early ages of Christianity teachers and professors from Ireland were found in most of the universities and schools of the Continent. Among the learners that gathered round them were many young men who followed them from Ireland, and were instructed by them in the classical languages as well as in other branches of learning. When transcribing or using the classics or the Latin version of the Scriptures, these teachers, in order to aid the Irish learners, or for their own convenience, often wrote, between the lines or in the margin, literal Irish translations of the most difficult words of the text, or general renderings of the sense into Gaelic phrases. These are what are called Glosses. Numbers of those interesting manuscripts, their pages all crowded with glosses, are preserved to this day in many continental libraries; and in them are found older forms of Irish than any we have in Ireland. Many have been recently published, with the Latin passages and the corresponding Gaelic. Similar glosses in Welsh, Breton, and Cornish, are also found; but I am concerned here with Irish only. It is chiefly by means of these glosses that the ancient grammatical forms of the language have been recovered, and the meanings of innumerable Irish words, long obsolete, have been ascertained from their Latin equivalents.

Zeuss: The 'Grammatica Celtica.' The first to make extensive use of the glosses for these purposes was Johann Kaspar Zeuss, a Bavarian; born 1806; died 1856. He

had a great talent for languages, and began the study of the Celtic dialects about 1840. Thenceforward he laboured incessantly, visiting the libraries of Saint Gall, Wurzburg, Milan, Carlsruhe, Cambrai, and several other cities, in all of which there are manuscript books with glosses in the Celtic dialects; and he copied everything that suited his purpose. He found the Irish glosses by far the most ancient, extensive, and important of all. Most of them belonged to the eighth century; some few to the beginning of the ninth. At the end of thirteen years he produced the great work of his life, 'Grammatica Celtica,' a complete grammar of the four ancient Celtic dialects: published 1853. It is a closely printed book of over 1000 pages, and it is all written in Latin, except of course the Celtic examples and quotations. Each of the four dialects is treated of separately. In this work he proves that the Celtic people of the British Islands are the same with the Celtæ of the Continent; and that Celtic is one of the branches of the Aryan or Indo-European languages, abreast with Latin, Greek, the Teutonic languages, Sanscrit, &c.

Zeuss was the founder of Celtic philology. The 'Grammatica Celtica' was a revelation to scholars wholly unexpected, and it gave an impetus to the study, which has been rather increasing than diminishing since his time. He made it plain that a knowledge of the Celtic languages is necessary in order to unravel the early history of the peoples of Western Europe. It is now quite a common thing to find scholars from continental countries visiting and residing for a time in Ireland to learn the Irish language. Since the time of Zeuss many scholarly works have been written on Celtic philology: but the 'Grammatica Celtica' still stands at the head of all.

Three Divisions of Irish. It is usual to divide Irish, as we find it written, into three stages. I. **Old Irish,** from the eighth to the twelfth century. This is the language of the glosses, of the Irish found in the Book of Armagh, and of some few passages in the Book of the Dun Cow; but we have very little old Irish preserved in Ireland. The

classical age of the Irish language was from the eighth to the beginning of the twelfth century. After the Anglo-Norman invasion, the native language, like the native arts, degenerated; and it gradually lost its pure grammatical forms and its classical precision and simplicity. II. **Middle Irish,** from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, marked by many departures from the pure Old Irish forms. This is the language of most of our important manuscripts—described in next chapter—such as the Book of the Dun Cow, the Book of Leinster, the Lebar Brecc, and the Book of Ballymote. III. **Modern Irish,** from the fifteenth century to the present day. This is the language of most of the Ossianic tales. The purest specimens are the writings of Keating, mentioned in Chapters III. and IV. There is a vast amount of manuscript literature in Modern Irish.

In the long lapse of 1100 years—from the eighth to the nineteenth century—the Irish, like all other languages, has undergone great changes. Between the written Irish of the present day and the Middle Irish of the Book of Leinster there is at least as much difference as between Modern English and the language of Chaucer; and Old Irish is much farther removed. To a person who knows Modern Irish only it is quite as difficult to master Middle and Old Irish as to master a new language.

Ancient Glossaries and Grammars. In consequence of the gradual change of the Irish language—old words dropping out, new ones coming in, and many changing their forms—it became customary for scholars of past times, skilled in the ancient language, to write glossaries of obsolete words to aid students in reading very ancient manuscripts. Many of these are preserved in the old books. The most noted is 'Cormac's Glossary,' ascribed to Archbishop Cormac Mac Cullenan, king of Cashel, who died A.D. 908. It was translated and annotated by John O'Donovan; and this translation and the Irish text, with valuable additional notes, have been published by Dr. Whitley Stokes. Michael O'Clery, the chief of the Four Masters, printed and published at Louvain, in 1643, a Glossary of ancient and difficult Irish words. Duald

Mac Firbis and his master O'Davoren compiled Glossaries of the Brehon laws, which are still extant; and there are in Trinity College copies made by Mac Firbis of several other glossaries.

There is a very ancient treatise on Irish Grammar, divided into four books, ascribed severally to four learned Irishmen. Of these the latest was Kennfaela the Learned, who lived in the seventh century, and who is set down as the author of the fourth book. Copies of this tract are found in the Books of Ballymote and Lecan; but it has never been translated.

Irish Poetry and Prosody. In very early times not only poetry proper, but histories, stories, laws, genealogies, and such like, were very often written in verse as an aid to the memory. Among all peoples there were—as there are still—certain laws or rules, commonly known as prosody, which poets had to observe in the construction of their verse. The classification and the laws of Irish versification were probably the most complicated that were ever invented. The following statement will give the reader an idea of this. There are in Irish three principal kinds of verse. Of the first kind, which is called 'direct metre,' there are five species, all equally complicated. The first of these required the observance of the following rules: (1) Each stanza to consist of four lines making complete sense; (2) In each line seven syllables; (3) Alliteration in at least two principal words of each line; (4) The lines to rhyme, but the rhymes were generally assonances or vowel rhymes; (5) The last word of the second line to have one syllable more than the last word of the first line; a like relation between the last words of the fourth and third lines. Behind these were several minor observances that made the matter still more puzzling. O'Molloy, the earliest of modern writers on Irish grammar, pronounces direct metre 'the most difficult kind of verse under the sun.' It was something like writing double acrostics in English.[1]

[1] See the Irish treatise on Irish Metre from the Book of Ballymote, translated and annotated by the Rev. B. McCarthy, D.D., in the Todd Lecture Series, vol. iii. pp. 98–141.

That the old writers of verse were able to comply with all these rules we have positive proof in our manuscripts: and the result is marvellous. Atkinson in his lecture on Irish metric (p. 4) says:—'I believe Irish verse to have been about the most perfectly harmonious combination of sounds that the world has ever known. I know of nothing in the world's literature like it.' So much the worse, for everything had to be sacrificed to sound. Dr. Stokes[1] declares:—'In almost all the [ancient] Celtic poetry that I have read, substance is ruthlessly sacrificed to form, and the observance of the rigorous rules of metre seems regarded as an end in itself.' Even O'Curry obviously viewed the Irish metric system with disfavour, for we find him using the expression, 'the very artificial system of the Gaelic prosody.'[2] Such perplexing restrictions were quite enough to kill true poetry; all the energies of the poet were concentrated on the mechanical difficulties; and his praise was measured by his success in overcoming them, rather than by any true interpretation of nature.

In modern Irish poetry the old prosodial rules are almost wholly disregarded. The rhymes are assonantal; but in other respects Irish verse now follows the metrical construction of English verse.

If the Irish did not distinguish themselves in poetry as eminently as in music and art, I attribute it to their cumbrous and complicated rules of prosody. Yet not unfrequently we find the strength of individual genius breaking through all vexatious restrictions; and among the ancient bardic remains—odes, ballads, elegies, songs, &c.—are many pieces of great beauty, the products of true poetical inspiration. It may be remarked that the old Irish poets had a keen appreciation of the beauty of external nature. Spenser, though a prejudiced witness as regarded most things Irish, has I think, with his usual clear poetical insight, pronounced a fair criticism of the poetry of the Irish bards:—'Yea, truly I have caused divers of them to be translated unto me, that I might

[1] *Calendar of Aengus*, p. 17.
[2] *Lect. on Manners and Customs*, i. 167.

understand them, and surely they savoured of sweet wit and good invention, but skilled not of the goodly ornaments of poetry [i.e. they wanted the qualities that constitute great poetry]; yet were they sprinkled with some pretty flowers of their naturall device, which gave good grace and comelinesse unto them.'[1]

Of the Irish texts published, the following as well as several minor pieces (all described in the following chapters) are in verse:—The *Feilire* of Aengus; the Book of Rights; a portion of the Tribes and Customs of Hy Fiachrach; and the topographical poems of O'Dugan and O'Heeren. This last is an enumeration of the principal tribes of Ireland at the time of the English invasion, with the districts they occupied and the chiefs who ruled over them. The part relating to Leth Conn (North of Ireland) was written by John O'Dugan, who died in 1372; and that relating to Leth Mow (South) by Gilla-na-neeve O'Heeren who died in 1420. The whole poem has been translated and annotated by O'Donovan, and published by the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society. In such compositions as these we could hardly expect to find true poetry, for they are little more than mere catalogues in verse.

Ogham was a species of writing in use in early ages, the letters of which were formed by combinations of short lines and points, on and at both sides of a middle or stem line called a *flesc*. Scraps of Ogham are sometimes found in manuscripts; but it was almost always used for stone inscriptions, the groups of lines and points generally running along two adjacent sides of the stone with the angle for a *flesc*. The Ogham alphabet is called the **Beth-luis-nion**: the letters are nearly all named from trees.

According to the Brehon law books, *dallans* or pillar stones with Ogham inscriptions were sometimes set up to mark the boundaries between two adjacent properties; and these were often covered up with mounds of earth. But nearly all the Oghams hitherto found are sepulchral

[1] *View of the State of Ireland*, ed. 1809, p. 124.

inscriptions, which contain little more than the names of the persons interred and of their fathers. In the ancient tales, when the death and burial of a person are recorded, it is usually stated that a stone was placed over the grave, on which his name was inscribed in Ogham. In no instance has there been found any lengthened passage—whether written or inscribed—in Ogham.

Upwards of 200 Ogham monuments have been found in various parts of the four provinces of Ireland; but they are far more numerous in the south and south-west than elsewhere. Most of these stand in their original situations; but many have been brought to Dublin, where they may be seen in the National Museum; and a few have been sent to the British Museum. Between thirty and forty have been found in Wales and Scotland, and three or four in England and the Isle of Man—all probably inscribed by—or under the influence of—Irishmen.

In the Book of Ballymote is an ancient treatise on Ogham, which there is reason to believe was originally written in the beginning of the ninth century, and copied into this book from some older volume. There is a second and less important treatise in another Irish manuscript. These tracts give a key to the reading of Ogham. Independently of these, the key has been got from bilingual stone inscriptions—one at least in Ireland and several in Wales—in which the same words and names are given in both Ogham and Latin letters—like the Rosetta stone. The key thus found corresponds with that given in the manuscripts. Where inscriptions have not been injured or defaced they can in general be deciphered, so that many have been made out beyond all question. But as the greatest number of Ogham stones are more or less worn or chipped or broken, there is in the interpretation of the majority of the inscriptions some conjecture and uncertainty.

The Most Rev. Dr. Graves, in his paper in 'Hermathena,' vi. 241, has identified several of the individuals named in Ogham inscriptions as persons well known in history, which determines the dates of these individual inscriptions.

Of his identifications I will give one which I think the most ingenious and interesting of all. In the old churchyard of Aghabulloge, near Macroom, in Cork, stands a pillar stone about eight feet high, well known as St. Olan's stone or Olan's tomb, and much revered by the peasantry—not without good reason. It is drawn and described in the 'Dublin Penny Journal,' iii. 384, but the writer had no idea of its true history. The popular name preserves the name of the saint it commemorates—*Eolang*, though the people now know nothing about him. St. Finnbar of Cork, who lived early in the seventh century, was, as we learn from his Life, taught by *Eolang*, who —the old narrative says—*was otherwise called Mac Corb.* In the Martyrology of Donegal is commemorated a St. *Eolang* of the church of Aghaboe in the present Queen's County, who is set down as of the race of Conary II., king of Ireland; while in both the Book of Leinster and in the *Lebar Brecc* this St. Eolang of the race of Conary is given as of *Athbi-bolg*, i.e. of the present Aghabulloge; which satisfactorily identifies Eolang of Aghabulloge with Eolang of Aghaboe.

Now to come to the inscription: the part that concerns us reads, in Ogham, *Anm Corrpmac Suidd*: i.e. '[a prayer for] the soul of Corb-Mac the Sage.' Corb-Mac is the same as Mac Corb, with the syllables reversed according to a common Oghamic custom. We know that Mac Corb was another name for Finnbar's teacher *Eolang*; and here we have, in the very church named in the Book of Leinster as *Eolang's* church, a monument inscribed with his second name Corb-Mac or Mac Corb, and still well known as St. Olan's tomb. No one will hesitate to believe that Eolang or Mac Corb, St. Finnbar's preceptor, lies buried under this pillar stone. Thus the date of the inscription is fixed at about the year 600.

Ogham was cryptic writing, that is to say, intended to be read only by the initiated. That this was so is proved by many passages in our old writings—Brehon laws, histories, tales, and so forth. It was one of the accomplishments of a champion and of all professional men of

learning to be able to read it. In pursuance of the cryptic idea, the names of the persons commemorated, as well as other words of the inscription, are often intentionally disguised under strange forms, sometimes by the insertion of letters not belonging to the words, and sometimes by reversing the syllables of a name: and this greatly adds to the difficulty of deciphering inscriptions.

As to the antiquity of Ogham writing. Some contend that all Oghams are purely pagan, dating from a time before the introduction of Christianity; and they will not admit the correctness of any reading that brings an inscription within Christian times. But there is no evidence to support this contention, and there is plenty of evidence to disprove it. Others again, while admitting the use of Ogham in Christian times, will have it that this writing is a survival from the far distant ages of paganism, and that it was developed before Christianity was heard of. Dr. Graves, who has investigated the whole subject in a thoroughly scientific manner, maintains that Ogham was founded on the Roman alphabet, and that consequently no Ogham is older than the period of the earliest introduction of Christianity into Ireland.

CHAPTER II

IRISH LITERATURE

[Chief authorities for Chapters II., III., IV., V.:—Petrie's Tara; The Most Rev. Dr. Healy's Ireland's Anc. Schools and Scholars; O'Donovan's Gram. Introd.; Joyce's Old Celtic Romances; Miss Stokes's Early Christian Art in Ireland; and Early Christian Archit. in Ireland; Reeves on Book of Armagh in Proc. R. I. Academy, 1891; Documenta de S. Patricio, by the Rev. Edm. Hogan, S.J.; Petrie on Domnach Airgid, in Trans. R.I. Academy; O'Reilly's Irish Writers; Harris's Ware; O'Curry's Lect. on the MS. Materials of Irish History.]

WHETHER the pagan Irish were acquainted with the art of writing is a question that is now difficult or impossible to determine. Our most ancient traditions, indeed, assert the existence of written literature in pagan times. In the

account given in our old books of the revision of the law in the time of St. Patrick we are told that the pagan code had been previously written in books, which were brought together and submitted to the revising council; and in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick it is stated that the druids at the court of King Laeghaire [Leary] had books. However this may be, we know that long before St. Patrick's arrival there were Christians in Ireland (Part II. ch. iii.), who must have been acquainted with writing. The well-known Irishman Celestius, a disciple of the great heresiarch Pelagius, while still a youth, and before he had imbibed the Pelagian doctrines, wrote, in the year 369, from his monastery on the Continent to his parents, three letters, in the form of three little books, on the 'Love of God.' He would not have done this, of course, if he did not know that his parents could read them.[1] It is not necessary for us to follow this argument further; but it may be considered as pretty certain that the art of writing was known to the Irish as early as the middle of the fourth century; and it is highly probable that some few at least had the use of letters in the time of Cormac Mac Art, a little more than a century earlier.[2] But all the evidence bearing on this points to Christianity as the source of knowledge.

Several circumstances indicate a state of literary activity at the time of the arrival of St. Patrick. Both the native bardic literature and the ancient lives of Patrick himself and of his contemporary saints concur in stating that he found in the country literary and professional men—druids, poets, and antiquarians. And it is certain that immediately after the general establishment of Christianity, in the fifth century, the Irish committed to writing in their native language 'not only the laws, bardic historical

[1] See *Four Masters*, i., Introd. li. It is, however, asserted by Dr. Healy that the words 'Scotticae gentis'—of the Scotic or Irish nation—do not refer to Celestius at all, but to Pelagius himself. If this be so, the above argument falls to the ground. (*Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 39.)

[2] See Petrie's *Tara*, p. 47.

poems, &c., of their own time, but those which had been preserved from times preceding, whether traditionally or otherwise.'[1] It is hard to conceive how the use of writing could have come into general use so suddenly without a pretty wide-spread previous knowledge of letters. It is at the same time true that, though our old records testify to the existence of a succession of poets and historians from the earliest times, no books or writings of any kind, either pagan or Christian, of the time before St. Patrick remain—with the possible exception of some Ogham inscriptions. But this proves nothing; for a like state of things exists in Britain, where, notwithstanding that writing was generally known and practised from the Roman occupation down, no manuscript has been preserved of an earlier date than the eighth century.

After the time of St. Patrick, as everything seems to have been written down that was considered worth preserving, manuscripts accumulated in the course of time, which were kept either in monasteries or in the houses of hereditary professors of learning. As there were no printed books, readers had to depend for a supply entirely on manuscript copies. To copy a book was justly considered a very meritorious work, and in the highest degree so if it were a part of the Holy Scriptures, or of any other book on sacred or devotional subjects. Scribes or copyists were therefore much honoured; and the annalists, after mentioning a man otherwise learned and eminent—whether bishop, priest, or professor—considered it an enhancement to his dignity if they were able to add that he was a scribe. One of the merits of St. Columkille was his diligence in writing: it is recorded of him that he wrote with his own hand three hundred copies of the New Testament, which he presented to the churches he founded. The Four Masters mention sixty-one eminent scribes before the year 900, forty of whom lived between the years 700 and 800.

'In the dark time of the Danish ravages, and during the troubled centuries that followed the Anglo-Norman

[1] Petrie's *Tara*, 38.

invasion, the manuscript collections were gradually dispersed, and a large proportion lost or destroyed. In our very oldest books there are references to and quotations from manuscripts now no longer in existence; and many which existed even so late as 200 years ago are now lost. Yet we have remaining—rescued by good fortune from the general wreck—a great body of manuscript literature. The two most important collections are those in Trinity College and in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, where there are manuscripts of various ages, from the fifth down to the present century.'[1] In the Franciscan monastery of Adam and Eve in Dublin are a number of valuable manuscripts which were sent from the Franciscan monastery of St. Isidore's in Rome a few years ago—a portion of the great collection made by the Franciscans at Louvain in the seventeenth century. There are also many important manuscripts in the British Museum in London, and in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Before the invention of printing it was customary in Ireland for individuals, or families, or religious communities, to keep large manuscript books of miscellaneous literature. In these were written such literary pieces as were considered worthy of being preserved in writing—tales, poems, biographies, genealogies, histories, annals, and so forth—all mixed up in one volume, with scarcely any attempt at orderly arrangement, and almost always copied from older books. This practice of copying miscellaneous pieces into one great volume was very common. Some of these books were large and important literary monuments, which were kept with affectionate care by their owners, and were celebrated among scholars as great depositories of Celtic learning, and commonly known by special names, such as the *Cuilmen*, the *Saltair of Cashel*, the *Book of Cuana*. No one was permitted to make entries in such precious books except practised and scholarly scribes; and the value set on them may be estimated from the fact that one of them was sometimes given as ransom for a captive chief. I will here notice briefly a few of the most

[1] Joyce, *Old Celtic Romances*, Preface.

important of those we possess—all vellum; but there are also many important paper manuscripts.

The oldest of all these books of miscellaneous literature is the **Lebar-na-Heera**, or the **Book of the Dun Cow**, now in the Royal Irish Academy. It was written by Mailmurri Mac Kelleher, a learned scribe who died in Clonmacnoise in the year 1106. An entry in his own handwriting at page 37 shows how this book and others like it were compiled: 'Pray for Mailmurri Mac Kelleher who wrote and collected this book from various books.' About the year 1340 it was given by the O'Donnells of Tirconnell to O'Conor of Connaught as a ransom for their *ollave* of history who had been taken captive by the O'Conors some time before; but in 1470 the O'Donnells recovered it by force and brought it back to Tirconnell.

As it now stands it consists of only 134 folio pages—a mere fragment of the original work. It contains sixty-five pieces of various kinds, several of which are imperfect on account of missing leaves. There are a number of romantic tales in prose; a copy of the celebrated *Amra* or elegy on St. Columkille,[1] composed by Dallan Forgaill about the year 592, which no one can yet wholly understand, the language is so ancient and difficult; an imperfect copy of the Voyage of Maildun; and an imperfect copy of the *Tain-bo-Quelna*, with several of the minor tales connected with it. Among the historical and romantic tales are the Courtship of Emer, the Feast of Bricriu, the Abduction of Prince Connla the Comely by the *shee* or fairies, the Destruction of the palace of Da Derga and the Death of Conary king of Ireland. The language of this book is nearer to the pure language of the Zeussian glosses than that of any other old book of general literature we possess.

The **Book of Leinster**, the next in order of age, now in Trinity College, Dublin, was written in 1160 and in the years before and after. There is good reason to believe that it was compiled wholly, or partly, by Finn Mac Gorman,

[1] The pieces mentioned through this chapter will be described in detail in the next three chapters.

who was bishop of Kildare from 1148 to 1160, and by Hugh Mac Criffan, tutor of Dermot Mac Murrogh king of Leinster, and that it belonged to this king or to some person of rank among his followers. The part of the original book remaining—for it is only a part—consists of 410 folio pages, and contains nearly 1000 pieces of various kinds, prose and poetry—historical sketches, romantic tales, topographical tracts, genealogies, &c.—a vast collection of ancient Irish lore. The following entry occurs at the foot of page 313:—'Aed (or Hugh) Mac Mic Criffan wrote this book and collected it from many books.' Among its contents are a very fine perfect copy of the Tain-bo-Quelna, a History of the origin of the Boru Tribute, a description of Tara, a full copy of the Dinnsenchus or description of the celebrated places of Erin. The Book of Leinster is an immense volume, containing about as much matter as six of Scott's prose novels.

The **Lebar Brecc**, or **Speckled Book** of Mac Egan, also called the **Great Book of Duniry**, is in the Royal Irish Academy. It is a large folio volume, now consisting of 280 pages, but originally containing many more, written in a small, uniform, beautiful hand. The text contains 226 pieces, with numbers of marginal and interlined entries, generally explanatory or illustrative of the text. The book was copied from various older books, most of them now lost. All, both text and notes, with a few exceptions, are on religious subjects: there is a good deal of Latin mixed with the Irish. Among the pieces are the *Feilire* of Aengus the Culdee, Lives of SS. Patrick, Brigit, and Columkille, and a Life of Alexander the Great. From the traditional titles of the book it is probable that it was written towards the end of the fourteenth century by one or more of the Mac Egans, a literary family who for many generations kept schools of law, poetry, and literature at Duniry in the county Galway, near Portumna, and also at Ballymacegan in the north of Tipperary.

The **Book of Ballymote**, in the Royal Irish Academy, is a large folio volume of 501 pages. It was written by several scribes about the year 1391, at Ballymote in Sligo, from

older books, and contains a great number of pieces in prose and verse. Among them is a copy of the ancient Book of Invasions, i.e. a history of the Conquests of Ireland by the several ancient colonists—not the Book of Invasions noticed in Chapter IV., which was compiled at a later period by Michael O'Clery. There are genealogies of almost all the principal Irish families; several historical and romantic tales of the early Irish kings; a history of the most remarkable women of Ireland down to the English invasion; an Irish translation of Nennius's History of the Britons; a copy of the Dinnsenchus; a translation of the Argonautic Expedition and of the War of Troy. The version of Nennius has been translated and edited with valuable notes by Dr. James Henthorn Todd and the Hon. Algernon Herbert, forming one of the volumes published by the Irish Archæological Society.

The **Yellow Book of Lecan** [Leckan] in Trinity College is a large quarto volume of about 500 pages. It was written at Lecan in the county Sligo in and about the year 1390 by two of the scholarly family of Mac Firbis—Donogh and Gilla Isa. It contains a great number of pieces in prose and verse, historical, biographical, topographical, &c.; among them the Battle of Moyrath, the Destruction of Brudin Da Derga, an imperfect copy of the Tain-bo-Quelna, and the Voyage of Maildun.

The five books above described have been published in facsimile without translations by the Royal Irish Academy, page for page, line for line, letter for letter, so that scholars in all parts of the world can now study them without coming to Dublin. The Book of the Dun Cow was edited by John T. Gilbert, LL.D., F.S.A., the others by Dr. Robert Atkinson; and all five have valuable Introductions and full descriptions of contents.

The **Book of Lecan** in the Royal Irish Academy, about 600 vellum pages, was written in 1416, chiefly by Gilla Isa More Mac Firbis. The contents resemble in a general way those of the Book of Ballymote.

There are many other books of miscellaneous Gaelic literature in the Royal Irish Academy and in Trinity Col-

lege, such as the Book of Lismore, the Book of Fermoy, the Book of Hy Many; besides numerous volumes without special names.

Ancient Irish literature, so far as it has been preserved, may be classed as follows:—

I. Ecclesiastical and Religious writings.
II. Annals, History, and Genealogy.
III. Tales—historical and romantic.
IV. Law, Medicine, and Science.

I do not make a separate class of translations from other languages—Latin, Greek, French, &c.—of which there are many in our old books.

I will dismiss the subject of medical manuscripts in a few words here; but much might be written about them. The medical profession, like others in Ireland, was generally hereditary. Several families were for generations celebrated as leeches, such as the O'Hickeys, the O'Lees, the O'Shiels, and the O'Cassidys. Each family kept one or more manuscript medical books, mainly in the Irish language, containing all that was then known of medicine, in which the physicians of each generation wrote down from time to time their accumulated experience. Many of these medical manuscripts are preserved in Trinity College and in the Royal Irish Academy, as well as in the British Museum and elsewhere. Like the law books, they are highly technical and hard to read: none have been translated.

I will now proceed to make some remarks on each of the above classes separately.

CHAPTER III

ECCLESIASTICAL AND RELIGIOUS WRITINGS

COPIES of the Gospels or of other portions of Scripture, that were either written or owned by eminent saints of the early Irish Church, were treasured with great veneration by succeeding generations; and it became a common practice to enclose them, for better preservation, in ornamental boxes or shrines. Many shrines with their precious contents are still preserved: they are generally of exquisite workmanship in gold, silver, or other metals, precious stones, and enamel. Books of this kind are the oldest we possess.

The **Domnach Airgid**, or Silver Shrine, which is in the National Museum, Dublin, is a box containing a Latin copy of the Gospels written on vellum. 'This box,' says Dr. Petrie, 'is composed of three distinct covers, of which the first or inner one is of wood—apparently yew; the second or middle one of copper plated with silver; and the third or outer one of silver plated with gold. In the comparative ages of these several covers there is obviously a great difference. The first may probably be coeval with the manuscript which it was intended to preserve; the second, in the style of its scroll or interlaced ornament, indicates a period between the sixth and the twelfth centuries; while the figures in relief, the ornaments, and the letters in the third leave no doubt of its being the work of the fourteenth century.'[1] This, which until lately was preserved near Clones in Monaghan, is perhaps the most venerable Irish reliquary we possess. There is good evidence to show that the enclosed book is the identical copy of the Gospels presented by St. Patrick himself to his disciple St. Mac Carthenn, the founder of the see of Clogher.

The **Book of Kells** is the most remarkable book of this

[1] *Trans. R. I. Acad.* 1838.

class, though not the oldest. It is a Latin copy, in vellum, of the Four Gospels, now in Trinity College, Dublin, and received its name from having been kept for many centuries at Kells in Meath. The first notice of it occurs in the Annals, at 1006, where it is recorded that 'the great Gospel of Columkille'—'the principal relic of the western world, on account of its unequalled cover,' was stolen out of the sacristy at Kells. It was recovered soon after, but the gold cover had been taken. Its exact age is unknown; but judging from the style of the penmanship and from other internal evidence, we may conclude that it was probably written in the seventh century. At the present day this is the best known of all the old Irish books, on account of its elaborate and beautiful ornamentation, of which a description will be found farther on, in the chapter on Irish Art.

The **Cathach** [Caha] or **Battle-Book** of the O'Donnells. The following is the legend of the origin of this book. On one occasion St. Columkille was on a visit with St. Finnen of Movilla at a place called Drumfinn in Ulster, and while there borrowed from him a copy of the Psalms. Wishing to have a copy of his own, and fearing refusal if he asked permission to make one, he secretly transcribed the book day by day in the church. St. Finnen found out what he was at, but took no notice of the matter till the copy was finished, when he sent to Columkille for it, claiming that it belonged to him as it was made from his book without permission. St. Columba refused to give it up, but offered to refer the dispute to the king of Ireland, Dermot the son of Fergus Kervall; to which Finnen agreed. They both proceeded to Tara, obtained an audience, and laid the case before the king, who pronounced a judgment that long continued to be remembered as a proverb in Ireland:—'To every cow belongeth her little offspring-cow: so to every book belongeth its little offspring-book: the book thou hast copied without permission, O Columba, I award to Finnen.' 'That is an unjust decision, O king,' said Columkille, 'and I will avenge it on thee.'

At this same time it happened that the son of the king of Connaught, who was a hostage at Tara, killed in a dispute at hurling the son of King Dermot's chief steward during the celebration of the triennial *Fes*, thereby violating the sanctuary of the Tara meeting (Chap. X.); and, being aware of the consequences, he ran to St. Columkille for protection. But he was torn from the saint's arms by the king's orders, brought outside the palace, and instantly put to death. Knowing well that this would inflame the saint's anger still more, the king gave orders that he should not be permitted to leave Tara till his resentment had time to cool down. But Columkille evaded the guards and made his way alone northwards over the hills to his native Tirconnell.

The princes of the northern Hy Neill, both those of Tirconnell and Tyrone, to whom he was nearly related, took up his quarrel, and the very next year marched southwards to Drumcliff, where they were joined by the enraged king of Connaught. The monarch marched north to suppress the insurrection, and a pitched battle was fought—A.D. 561—at Cuil-Dremne, situated between Drumcliff and Sligo town, where the king's army was utterly routed. From this the book became known as the *Caha* or Battle-Book. It was afterwards given up to St. Columkille; and it has remained ever since, a precious heirloom, in possession of his kindred the O'Donnells. They always brought it with them to battle; and it was their custom to have it carried three times sunwise—left to right—round their army before fighting, in the firm belief that this would ensure victory: it was so employed at the end of the fifteenth century. This venerable relic, covered with a beautifully wrought case of gilt silver and precious stones, may be seen in the National Museum, Dublin, where it has been deposited by the head of the O'Donnell family. Only fifty-eight of the vellum leaves of the original book remain; and the writing is a small uniform hand.

In Trinity College, Dublin, are two beautiful shrines enclosing two illuminated Gospel manuscripts, the **Book of**

Dimma and the **Book of St. Moling**, both written in the seventh century.

The **Book of Armagh,** now in Trinity College, for beauty of execution stands only second to the Book of Kells, and occasionally exceeds it in fineness and richness of ornamentation. The learned and accomplished scribe was *Ferdomnach* of Armagh, who finished the book in 807, and died in 845. In four different places—at the end of certain portions—he wrote in Latin: 'Pray for Ferdomnach'; and two of these entries are still perfectly legible. He no doubt wrote many other books, for writing was the business of his life, but they are all lost.

The book originally consisted of 442 pages, of which ten are lost: with this exception it is as perfect as when it was written. It is chiefly in Latin, with a good deal of old Irish interspersed. It opens with a Life of St. Patrick. Following this are a number of notes of the life and acts of the saint, compiled by Bishop Tirechan, who himself received them from his master Bishop Ultan, of the seventh century. Those notes are not in the form of a connected narrative. The book contains a complete copy of the New Testament, and a Life of St. Martin of Tours. Perhaps the most interesting part of the whole manuscript is what is now commonly known as St. Patrick's Confession (printed by Dr. Whitley Stokes in his Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, p. 357), in which the saint gives a brief account, in simple unaffected Latin, of his captivity, his escape from slavery, his return to Ireland, the hardships and dangers he encountered, and the final success of his mission. At the end of the Confession Ferdomnach writes this colophon in Latin:—'Thus far the volume which Patrick wrote with his own hand. The seventeenth day of March Patrick was translated to heaven.' This entry was written about 300 years after the death of St. Patrick: and it appears from it that Ferdomnach had before him a book in the very handwriting of the great apostle from which he copied the Confession.

In 1004 an entry was made in this book which almost transcends in interest the entries of Ferdomnach himself.

In that year the great king Brian Boru made a triumphal circuit round Ireland, and arriving at Armagh, he made an offering of twenty ounces of gold on the altar of St. Patrick. He confirmed the ancient ecclesiastical supremacy of Armagh, and caused his confessor and secretary *Mailsuthain* to enter the decree in the Book of Armagh. The entry, which is as plain now as the day it was written, is in Latin, and stands in English:—'St. Patrick, when going to heaven, decreed that the entire fruit of his labour, as well of baptism and causes as of alms, should be rendered to the apostolic city, which in the Scotic tongue is called Arddmacha. Thus I found it in the records of the Scots (i.e. the Irish). This I have written, namely Mailsuthain, in the presence of Brian, supreme ruler ot the Scots, and what I have written he decreed for all the kings of Cashel.'

Of all the old books of Ireland this was for many ages the most celebrated and the most deeply venerated. The popular belief was that it was written by St. Patrick himself, from which it got the name of *Canoin Patrick*, Patrick's Testament. It was entrusted to the safe keeping of the members of a particular family, the Mac Moyres, who for generations enjoyed a liberal land endowment in consideration of the importance of their trust. From this circumstance they got the name of Mac Moyre—i.e. the descendants of the *maer* or keeper.

This venerable book was about being published; and the task of editing it was entrusted to the man who knew most about it, the Most Rev. Dr. William Reeves, late bishop of Down and Connor: but death intervened before he had time to finish the crowning literary work of his life. The book is ready, however, and it will be published. Meantime the Irish part—every expression in the Irish language that occurs in the book—has been edited and published, with great learning and skill, by the Rev. Edmund Hogan, S.J.

We have a vast body of original ecclesiastical and religious writings. Among them are the lives of a great many of the most distinguished Irish saints, mostly in

Irish, some few in Latin, some on vellum, some on paper, of various ages, from the eighth century, the period of the Book of Armagh, down to the last century. Of these manuscripts the great majority are in Dublin; but there are many also in the British Museum, as well as in Brussels and elsewhere on the Continent. The Lives of the three patrons of Ireland—Patrick, Brigit, and Columkille—are, as might be expected, more numerous than those of the others. Of these the best known is the 'Tripartite Life of St. Patrick,' so called because it is divided into three parts. There is a manuscript copy of this in the British Museum, and another in the library of the University of Oxford. It is in Irish, mixed here and there with words and sentences in Latin. Colgan and others after him have given their opinion that it was originally written in the sixth century by St. Evin of Monasterevin; but, according to Dr. Whitley Stokes, there are sufficient internal evidences to show that it cannot be older than the middle of the tenth century. This has been lately printed in two volumes, with translations and elaborate introduction and notes by Dr. Stokes.

Besides the Irish lives of St. Columkille, there is one in Latin, written by Adamnan, who died in the year 703. He was a native of Donegal, and ninth abbot of Iona, the first being the founder St. Columkille; and his memoir is one of the most graceful pieces of Latin composition of the Middle Ages. It has been published for the Archæological and Celtic Society by the Rev. Dr. William Reeves, who in his introduction and notes supplies historical, local, and biographical information drawn from every conceivable source.

In the year 1645 the Rev. John Colgan, a Franciscan friar, a native of Donegal, published at Louvain, where he then resided in the Irish monastery of that city, a large volume entitled 'Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ,' the Lives of the Saints of Ireland, all in Latin, translated by himself from ancient Irish manuscripts. They are arranged according to the festival days of the saints, and the volume contains the lives of those whose days fall in the three

first months of the year. His intention was no doubt to finish the work to the 31st December, but he stopped at the 31st March, and never published any more of the work. In 1647 he published another volume, also in Latin, which he calls 'Acta Triadis Thaumaturgæ,' the Lives of the Wonder-working Triad. It is devoted to Saints Patrick, Brigit, and Columkille, and consists almost entirely of translations of all the old Lives of these three saints that he could find: there are seven Lives of St. Patrick, including the Tripartite life. Both volumes are elaborately annotated by the learned editor, and text and notes—all in Latin—contain a vast amount of biographical, historical, topographical, and legendary information.

Another class of Irish ecclesiastical writings are the Calendars, or **Martyrologies**, or **Festilogies**—Irish, **Féilire** [fail'ira], a festival list. The *Feilire* is a catalogue of saints, arranged according to their festival days, with usually a few facts about each, briefly stated, but with no detailed memoirs. There are several of these Martyrologies. I mention one in the next chapter, the Calendar of Michael O'Clery; and the only other one I will notice is the **Feilire of Aengus the Culdee**, which is in verse. The circumstance that gave rise to this poetical catalogue is related in an ancient legend. One time while Aengus was at the church of Coolbanagher, in the present Queen's County, he saw a host of angels alighting one after another on a grave and immediately reascending. He asked the priest of the church who it was that was buried there, and what he had done to merit such honour. The priest replied that it was a poor old man who had lived in the place, and the only good he ever knew him to do was to invoke a number of the saints of the world—as many as he could remember—going to bed at night and getting up in the morning. 'Ah, my God!' exclaimed Aengus, 'when this poor old man is so honoured for what he did, how great should be the reward of him who should make a poetical composition in praise of all the saints of the year. Whereupon he began his poem on the spot. He continued to work at it during his subsequent residence at

Clonenagh, and finished it while living in lowly disguise at Tallaght.

The body of the poem consists of 365 quatrain stanzas, one for each day in the year, each stanza commemorating one or more saints—chiefly but not exclusively Irish—whose festivals occur on the particular day. But there are also poetical prologues and epilogues and prose prefaces. besides a great collection of glosses and explanatory commentaries, all in Irish, interspersed with the text; and all written by various persons who lived after the time of Aengus. There are several manuscript copies, one being in the *Lebar Brecc.* The whole *Feilire,* with Prefaces, Glosses, and Commentaries, has been translated and edited by Dr. Whitley Stokes for the Royal Irish Academy.

To Aengus is also commonly attributed—but it seems erroneously—**Saltair na Rann**, i.e. the Psalter of the Quatrains, of which the only complete copy lies in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It consists of 162 short Irish poems on sacred subjects. The whole collection has been published by Dr. Whitley Stokes, with glossary of words, but without translation. How ancient and difficult is the language of these pieces may be judged from the fact that Dr. Stokes was obliged to leave a large number of words in the glossary unexplained.

There is a class of ecclesiastical writings devoted exclusively to the pedigrees or genealogies of the Irish saints, all of which, besides the direct knowledge they convey, contain a large amount of topographical information on the antiquities of Ireland. Of these there are several, the oldest being that ascribed to Aengus the Culdee. Copies of this tract are found in the Books of Leinster and Ballymote, and in Mac Firbis's Book of Genealogies. Not one of these genealogies has been published.

The **Book of Hymns** is one of the manuscripts of Trinity College, Dublin, copied at some time not later than the ninth or tenth century. It consists of a number of hymns—some in Latin, some in Irish—composed by the primitive saints of Ireland—St. Sechnall, St. Ultan,

St. Cummin Fada, St. Columba, and others—with Prefaces, Glosses, and Commentaries, mostly in Irish, by ancient copyists and editors. It has been published by the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society, edited, with annotations and with translations of the Irish hymns and Irish Commentaries, by the Rev. Dr. James Henthorn Todd.

There are manuscripts on various other ecclesiastical subjects scattered through our libraries—canons and rules of monastic life, prayers and litanies, hymns, sermons, explanations of the Christian mysteries, commentaries, on the Scriptures, &c.—many very ancient. Of the numerous modern writings of this class, I will specify only two, written in classical modern Irish about the year 1630 by the Rev. Geoffrey Keating: the 'Key-shield of the Mass,' and the 'Three Shafts of Death.' This last has been published for the Royal Irish Academy without translation, but with a very useful glossary, by Dr. Robert Atkinson.

CHAPTER IV

ANNALS, HISTORIES, GENEALOGIES

Annals. The Irish chroniclers were very careful to record in writing remarkable occurrences of their own time, or past events as handed down to them by former chroniclers. This they did in the form of annals. The annals are among the most important of all the ancient manuscript writings for the study of Irish history.

The faithfulness and general accuracy of the Irish annals are strikingly exemplified in the fact that all their entries of natural phenomena are found to be correct. In the Annals of Ulster there are more than twenty records of eclipses and comets, from A.D. 496 to 1066, the year, day, and hour of which agree exactly with the calculations of modern astronomers. The solar eclipse of 664 may be cited as one example. Bede, writing many years after this eclipse, recorded it, but calculating backwards by the

erroneous method then in use, he fixed the date as the 3rd of May, two days wrong. The Annals of Ulster give the correct date—the 1st of May—and even the very hour, a striking proof that the event had been recorded by some Irish chronicler who actually saw it, from whose record the writer of the Annals of Ulster copied it. And the other phenomena were no doubt recorded in like manner by eye-witnesses. In the few cases also where early foreign or English writers notice Irish affairs, they are always in agreement with the Irish annals. A remarkable instance is Eginhard's record of the defeat of the Danes in 812. Testimonies of this kind might be almost indefinitely multiplied. The names of fifteen abbots of Bangor who died before 691 are given in the Irish Annals at the respective years of their death. In the ancient Service Book known as the Antiphonary of Bangor, which is still preserved on the Continent, there is a hymn in which 'these fifteen abbots are recited in the same order as in the Annals; and this undesigned coincidence is the more interesting because the testimonies are perfectly independent, the one being afforded by Irish records which never left the kingdom, and the other by a Latin composition, which has been a thousand years absent from the country where it was written.' [1]

The natural inference from all this is that, for events falling within historic times, though we have no books of annals earlier than the eleventh century, yet those we have were copied from earlier books, now lost, and the originals of all or most of the entries in our present annals were records of events that passed before the eyes of the writers. That the Annals of Ulster were copied from older sources O'Donovan shows in his Introduction to the Four Masters, xlvi.; and no doubt all the other annals were similarly copied.

The following are the principal books of Irish Annals remaining. The **Synchronisms of Flann.** This Flann was a layman, *Ferleginn* or chief professor of the school of Monasterboice: died in 1056. He compares the chronology

[1] Reeves, *Eccl. Antiqq.* 153.

of Ireland with that of other countries, and gives the names of the monarchs that reigned in Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, from the most remote period, together with most careful lists of the Irish kings who reigned contemporaneously with them. Copies of this tract, but imperfect, are preserved in the Books of Lecan and Ballymote.

The **Annals of Tighernach** [Teerna]. Tighernach O'Breen, the compiler of these annals, one of the greatest scholars of his time, was abbot of the two monasteries of Clonmacnoise and Roscommon. He was acquainted with the chief historical writers of the world known in his day, and it is clear that he had the use of a good library at Clonmacnoise. He quotes Bede, Josephus, St. Jerome, and many others; and with great judgment compares and balances their authorities one against another. He made use of Flann's Synchronisms, and of most other ancient Irish historical writings of importance. His work is written in Irish, mixed a good deal with Latin. In the beginning he treats of the general history of the world, with some brief notices of Ireland—the usual practice of Irish annalists; but the history of Ireland is the chief subject of the body of the work. One most important pronouncement he makes, which has been the subject of much discussion, that all the Irish accounts before the time of *Cimbaeth* [Kimbay], B.C. 305, are uncertain. Tighernach died in 1088. Several copies of his Annals are in existence in London, Oxford, and Dublin, but all imperfect.

The **Annals of Innisfallen** were compiled by some scholars of the monastery of Innisfallen, the ruins of which still stand on the well-known island of that name in the Lower Lake of Killarney. They are written in Irish mixed with Latin. In the beginning they give a short history of the world to the time of St. Patrick, after which they treat chiefly of Ireland. Their composition is generally ascribed to the year 1215; but there is good reason to believe that they were commenced two centuries earlier. They were subsequently continued to 1318.

The **Annals of Ulster**, also called the **Annals of Senait**

Mac Manus, were written in the little island of Senait Mac Manus, now called Belle Isle, in Upper Lough Erne. They treat almost exclusively of Ireland from A.D. 444. The original compiler was Cathal [Cahal] Maguire, an eminent divine, philosopher, and historian, who died of small-pox in 1498; and they were continued to the year 1541 by Rory O'Cassidy, and by a nameless third writer to 1604. There are several copies of these annals, one in a beautiful hand in a vellum manuscript of Trinity College, Dublin. One volume has been issued, translated and annotated by the late William M. Hennessy; the rest is in process of translation by the Rev. B. McCarthy, D.D.

The **Annals of Loch Ce** [Key] were copied in 1588 for Brian Mac Dermot, who had his residence in an island in Lough Key, near Boyle in Roscommon. They are in the Irish language, and treat chiefly of Ireland from 1014 to 1636, but have many entries of English, Scottish, and continental events. The only copy of these annals known to exist is a small-sized vellum manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin. They have been translated and edited in two volumes by William M. Hennessy.

The **Annals of Connaught** from 1224 to 1562. There is a copy in Trinity College, Dublin, and another in the Royal Irish Academy.

The **Chronicon Scotorum** (Chronicle of the Scots or Irish), down to A.D. 1135. This was compiled about 1650 by the great Irish antiquary Duald Mac Firbis. His autograph copy is in Trinity College, and two other copies are in the Royal Irish Academy. These annals have been printed, edited with translation and notes by William M. Hennessy.

The **Annals of Boyle**, from the earliest time to 1253, are contained in a vellum manuscript in the library of the British Museum. They are written in Irish mixed with Latin; and the entries throughout are very meagre.

The **Annals of Clonmacnoise**, from the earliest period to 1408. The original Irish of these is lost; but we have an excellent English translation by Connell MacGeoghegan of Lismoyny in Westmeath, which he completed in 1627.

Of this translation several copies are preserved, of which one is in Trinity College and another in the British Museum. O'Donovan printed many extracts from this compilation in his Notes to the Annals of the Four Masters.

The **Annals of the Four Masters**, also called the **Annals of Donegal**, are the most important of all. They were compiled in the Franciscan monastery of Donegal, by three of the O'Clerys, Michael, Conary, and Cucogry, and by Ferfesa O'Mulconry; who are now commonly known as the Four Masters. The O'Clerys were for many generations hereditary *ollaves* or professors of history to the O'Donnells, princes of Tirconnell, and held free lands and lived in the castle of Kilbarron on the sea-coast north-west of Ballyshannon. Here Michael O'Clery, who had the chief hand in compiling the Annals, was born in 1575. He was a lay brother of the order of St. Francis, and devoted himself during his whole life to the history of Ireland. Besides his share in the Annals of the Four Masters, he wrote a book containing (1) a Catalogue of the kings of Ireland; (2) the Genealogies of the Irish saints; and (3) an Account of the saints of Ireland, with their festival days, now known as the Martyrology of Donegal. This last has been printed by the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society, with translation by John O'Donovan, edited by the Rev. James Henthorn Todd, D.D., and by the Rev. William Reeves, D.D. Brother Michael also wrote the Book of Invasions, of which there is a beautiful copy in the Royal Irish Academy. It is a sort of chronological history, giving an account of the conquests of Ireland by the several colonists, down to the English Invasion, with many valuable quotations from ancient Irish poems.

Conary O'Clery, a layman, acted as scribe and general assistant to his brother Michael. His descendants were for long afterwards scholars and historians, and preserved his manuscripts. Cucogry or Peregrine O'Clery was a cousin of the two former, and was chief of the Tirconnell sept of the O'Clerys. He was a layman, and devoted

himself to history and literature. He wrote in Irish a Life of Red Hugh O'Donnell, of which his autograph copy is in the Royal Irish Academy. This has been translated, annotated, and published—text and translation—by the Rev. Denis Murphy, S.J. The fourth Master, Ferfesa O'Mulconry, was a historian from Kilronan in Roscommon.

The materials for this great work were collected after many years' labour by Brother Michael O'Clery, who brought every important historical Irish manuscript he could find in Ireland to the monastery of Donegal; for he expressed his fears that if the work were not then done the materials might never be brought together again. His fears seemed prophetic; for the great rebellion of 1641 soon followed; all the manuscripts he had used were scattered, and only one or two of them now survive. Even the Four Masters' great compilation was lost for many generations, and was recovered in a manner almost miraculous, and placed in the Royal Irish Academy by Dr. George Petrie. The work was undertaken under the encouragement and patronage of Fergall O'Gara, prince of Coolavin, who paid all the necessary expenses; and the community of Donegal supplied the historians with food and lodging. They began their labours in 1632, and completed the work in 1636.[1] The Annals of the Four Masters was translated with most elaborate and learned annotations by Dr. John O'Donovan; and it was published—Irish text, translation, and notes—in seven large volumes, by Hodges and Smith of Dublin,—the greatest and most important work on Ireland ever issued by any Irish publisher.

A book of annals called the **Psalter of Cashel** was compiled by Cormac Mac Cullenan (see Part II. ch. vii.), but this has been lost. Besides annals in the Irish language, there are also Annals of Ireland in Latin, such as those of Clyn, Dowling, Pembridge, of Multifarnham, &c., most of which have been published by the Archæological and Celtic Society.

[1] See Petrie's account of all this in O'Donovan's Introd. to the *Four Masters*, vol. i.

Histories. None of the writers of old times conceived the plan of writing a general history of Ireland: it was only in the seventeenth century that anything like this was attempted. But the old Irish writers left many very good histories of particular transactions, districts, or periods, all in the form of Historic Tales (next chapter) and mixed up with fabulous relations. Of these the following may be mentioned as examples—others will be noticed in next chapter. The **History of the Wars of the Gaels with the Galls** or Danes; the **History of the Borumean Tribute** (Part II. chap. ii.); the **Wars of Thomond,** written in 1459 by Rory McGrath, a historian of Thomond or Clare. Of these the first has been published, with translation, introduction, and annotations by Dr. James Henthorn Todd: the other two still remain in manuscript.

The first history of the whole country was the **Forus Feasa ar Erinn,** or History of Ireland—from the most ancient times to the Anglo-Norman invasion, written by Dr. Geoffrey Keating, a learned Roman Catholic priest of Tubrid in Tipperary, who died in 1644. Keating was deeply versed in the ancient language and literature of Ireland; and his history, though uncritical and containing much that is fabulous and legendary, is very interesting and valuable for its quaint descriptions of ancient Irish life and manners, and because it contains many quotations and condensations from authorities now lost. The work was translated in 1726 by Dermod O'Connor; but he wilfully departed from his text, and his translation is utterly wrong and misleading: 'Keating's History is a work which has been greatly underrated in consequence of the very ignorant and absurd translation by Mr. Dermot O'Connor.'[1] A complete and faithful translation by John O'Mahony was published, without the Irish text, in New York in 1866.

Genealogies. The genealogies of the principal families were most faithfully preserved in ancient Ireland. Each king and chief had in his household a *Shanachy* or historian, an officer held in high esteem, whose duty it was to

[1] Todd, *St. Patrick Apostle of Ireland*, p. 133 note.

keep a written record of all the ancestors and of the several branches of the family. Sometimes in writing down these genealogies the direction was downward from some distinguished progenitor, of whom all the most important descendants are given, with intermarriages and other incidents of the family. Sometimes again the pedigree is given upwards, the person's father, grandfather, &c., being named, till the chief from whom the family derived their surname is arrived at, or some ancestor whose position in the genealogical tree is well known, when it becomes unnecessary to proceed farther. All persons of position were careful to have their pedigrees preserved, partly from the natural pride of descent from noble ancestors, and partly because in cases of dispute about property, election to chiefships, &c., the written records certified by a properly qualified historian were accepted as evidence in the Brehon law courts. In the time of the Plantations and during the operation of the penal laws, the vast majority of the Irish chiefs and of the higher classes in general were driven from their lands and homes; and they and their descendants falling into poverty, lost their pedigrees, so that now only very few families in Ireland are able to trace their descent.

Many of the ancient genealogies are preserved in the Books of Leinster, Lecan, Ballymote, &c. But the most important collection of all is the great **Book of Genealogies** compiled in the years 1650 to 1666 in the College of St Nicholas in Galway, by Duald Mac Firbis, the last and most accomplished native master of the history, laws, and language of Ireland.

The confidence of the learned public in the ancient Irish genealogies is somewhat weakened by the fact that they profess to trace the descent of the several noble families from Adam—joining the Irish pedigrees on to the Scriptural genealogy of Magog the son of Japhet, from whom Irish historians claim that all the ancient colonists of Ireland were descended. But passing this by and coming down to historic times, the several genealogies, as well as those scattered portions of them found inci-

dentally in various authors, exhibit marvellous consistency and have all the marks of truthfulness. Moreover they receive striking confirmation from incidental references in English writers—as for instance Venerable Bede. Whenever Bede mentions a Scot or Irishman and says he was the son of so-and-so, it is invariably found that he agrees with the Irish genealogies if they mention the man's name at all.

The following three tracts from the manuscript genealogical books have been printed, with translations and most copious and valuable notes and illustrations by Dr. John O'Donovan, for the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society. An account of '**The Tribes and Customs of Hy Fiachrach**' in Connaught from Duald Mac Firbis's Book of Genealogies; a similar account of '**The Tribes and Customs of Hy Maine**' [Mainy] from the Book of Lecan; and from the same book the **Genealogy of** a Munster tribe named **Corcalee.** And the genealogies of numerous Irish and Scottish families have been printed in various Irish publications, all from the Irish manuscript books. A large number of them will be found in the Rev. John Shearman's 'Loca Patriciana.'

In this place may be mentioned the *Dinnsenchus*, a topographical tract giving the legendary history and the etymology of the names of remarkable hills, mounds, caves, cairns, cromlechs, raths, duns, and so forth. Copies of this tract are found in several of the old Irish books of miscellaneous literature, as already mentioned in Chapter II.; and some portions have been translated in Petrie's Tara, in the Kilkenny Archæological Journal, and elsewhere.

CHAPTER V

HISTORICAL AND ROMANTIC TALES

OF all our manuscript remains, romantic literature is the most abundant. Ingenious 'men of learning,' taking historical events and legends as groundwork, composed stories from time to time, of which those that struck the

popular fancy were caught up and remembered, and committed to writing. In course of time a great body of such literature accumulated, consisting chiefly of prose tales. In the Book of Leinster there is a very interesting list of ancient historical tales, to the number of 187, which has been printed by O'Curry in his Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Irish History, page 584. In this list the tales are classified into Battles, Voyages, Tragedies, Military expeditions, Cattle raids, Courtships, Elopements, Pursuits, Adventures, Caves (i.e. adventures in caves), Visions, Destructions, Sieges, Feasts, Slaughters, Exiles, Progresses, and Lake eruptions. We have in our old books stories belonging to every one of these classes.

'Some of the tales are historical, i.e. founded on historical events—history embellished with some fiction; while others are altogether fictitious—pure creations of the imagination. But it is to be observed that even in the fictitious tales, the main characters are nearly always historical, or such as were considered so. The old Shanachies wove their fictions round Conor Mac Nessa and his Red Branch Knights, or Finn and his Fena, or Luga of the long arms and his Dedannans, or Conn the Hundred fighter, or Cormac Mac Art; like the Welsh legends of Arthur and his Round table, or the Arabian romances of Haroun al Raschid. The greater number of the tales are in prose, but some are in verse, and in many of the prose tales the leading characters are often made to express themselves in verse, or some striking incident of the story is related in a poetical form. These verse fragments are mostly quotations from an older poetical version of the same tale, and are generally more archaic and difficult to understand than the prose.'[1] Most of the tales have fallen under Christian influences, and contain allusions to Christian doctrines and practices; but some are thoroughly pagan in character, without the least trace of Christianity.

Story-telling was a favourite recreation among the ancient Irish. There were professional Shanachies or story-tellers, whose duty it was to have a number of the

[1] Joyce, *Old Celtic Romances*, Preface.

standard tales by heart, to recite them at festive gatherings for the entertainment of the chief and his guests. These men were always well received at the houses of princes and chiefs, and treated with much consideration; and on occasions when they acquitted themselves well, so as to draw down the applause of the company, they were often rewarded with costly presents.

A large proportion of the tales fall under two main cycles of ancient Irish history, which in all the Irish poetical and romantic literature were kept perfectly distinct:—the cycle of Conor Mac Nessa and his **Red Branch Knights**, and the cycle of Finn the son of Cumal and his **Fianna** [Feena]. Conor Mac Nessa was king of Ulster in the first century of the Christian era, and lived in the palace of *Emain* or Emania, whose ruins—now called the Navan Fort—are still to be seen two miles west from the city of Armagh. Under him flourished the Red Branch Knights, a sort of militia for the defence of the throne. Their commander was Cuchullain, the mightiest of the heroes of Irish romance. He had his residence at *Dun-Dalgan*, now called Castletown moat, a majestic fort two miles west of Dundalk. The chief Red Branch heroes under him were Conall Kernach; Keltar of the Battles, who lived at Rath Keltar, the great fort beside Downpatrick; Fergus Mac Roig; the poet Bricriu of the Venom tongue, who lived at Loughbrickland, where his fort still remains near the little lake; and the three sons of Usna—Naisi, Ainnle, and Ardan. Contemporary with the Red Branch Knights were the **Degads** of Munster, whose great chief Curoi Mac Dara resided in his stone fort palace on the side of Caherconree mountain; and the **Gamanradii** of Connaught, commanded by Keth Mac Magach and by the renowned hero Ferdiad. The stories of this period, in which figure the knights named above, and many others, form by far the finest part of our ancient romantic literature.

The most celebrated of all the tales is the **Tain-bo-Cuailnge** [Quelnè] the epic of Ireland. *Medb* [Maive] queen of Connaught, who resided in her palace of Croghan

—still remaining near the village of Rathcroghan in the north of Roscommon—having some cause of quarrel with an Ulster chief, set out with her army for Ulster on a plundering expedition, attended by all the great heroes of Connaught. The invading army entered that part of Ulster called *Cuailnge* or Quelnè, the principality of the hero Cuchullain, the north part of the present county Louth. At this time the Ulstermen were under a spell of feebleness, all but Cuchullain, who had to defend single-handed the several fords and passes, in a series of single combats against Maive's best champions, in all of which he was victorious. At length the Ulstermen, having been freed from the spell, attacked and routed the Connaught army. The battles, single combats, and other incidents of this war, which lasted for several years, form the subject of the *Tain*, which consists of one main epic story with about thirty minor tales grouped round it.

There are many copies of this old epic which are mentioned in Chapter II. A few of the minor tales have been translated and published; but the main epic still lies locked up in manuscript awaiting the loving scholarship of some one of the rising generation of Irishmen.

A German scholar, Ernest Windisch, has recently published a book called *Irische Texte* (Irish Texts) containing the original Irish of several of these ancient tales, without translation, but with an elaborate glossary of Irish words explained in German; and a French scholar, H. D'Arbois de Jubainville, has published his 'Littérature Épique de l'Irlande' (the Epic Literature of Ireland), a most useful catalogue of ancient Irish romantic tales, with the several libraries and manuscripts in which they are to be found. These two books deserve mention if for no other reason than to show the interest taken by foreigners in Irish literature.

Of the cycle of Finn and the Fena of Erin we have a vast collection of tales. Finn the son of Cumal lived in the third century, and had his chief residence on the Hill of Allen in Kildare. He was killed on the Boyne when an old man, A.D. 283; and of all the heroes of

ancient Ireland he is most vividly remembered in popular tradition. He was son-in-law of Cormac Mac Art, king of Ireland, and under that monarch he commanded a militia or standing army called the **Fianna of Erin** [Feena]. The chief heroes under him, who figure in the tales, were:—Oisin or Ossian, his son, the renowned hero poet to whom the bards attribute—but we know erroneously—many poems still extant; Oscar the brave and gentle, the son of Oisin; Dermot O'Dyna, unconquerably brave, of untarnished honour, generous and self-denying, the finest character in all Irish literature, perhaps the finest in any literature; Gaul Mac Morna, the mighty leader of the Connaught Fena; Kylta Mac Ronan the swift-footed; Conan Mail or Conan the bald, large bodied, foul tongued, boastful, cowardly, and gluttonous.

The tales of the Fena, which began to be composed about the end of the twelfth century, and continued to be produced till the end of the last century, are neither so ancient nor so fine as those of the Red Branch Knights: the greater number are contained in manuscripts not more than 100 or 150 years old. Six volumes of tales, chiefly of the cycle of Finn, have been published with translations by the Ossianic Society. The best of them is 'The Pursuit of Dermot and Grania,' which has been literally translated by Standish Hayes O'Grady; and I have given a free English translation of it in my 'Old Celtic Romances.' There is one Fenian tract much older than the majority of the tales, the 'Dialogue of the Ancient Men,' which is found in the Book of Lismore, a volume copied about the year 1400, and in several other manuscripts. It is an account, supposed to have been given to St. Patrick by Oisin and Kylta Mac Ronan in their extreme old age, of the historical mountains, rocks, rivers, caves, wells, and burial mounds all over Ireland. It is a highly interesting document, and well deserves to be translated and annotated.

The battle of Moylena and the battle of Moyrath are the subjects of two historic tales, both of which have been published, the former edited by O'Curry and the latter by O'Donovan, both with valuable notes. What are called

the 'Three Tragic Stories of Erin,' viz., the Fate of the Children of Lir, the Fate of the Sons of Usna, and the Fate of the Sons of Turenn, have been published in the Atlantis, translated and edited by O'Curry; who also translated the Sick-bed of Cuchullain in the same periodical. Some few others have been published with translations in the 'Kilkenny Archæological Journal,' in the 'Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,' and in the 'Revue Celtique.' Four English poetical epics have been published founded on four of these old tales:—'Congal,' on the Battle of Moyrath, by Sir Samuel Ferguson; 'The Foray of Queen Meave,' on the Tain-bo-Quelnè, by Mr. Aubrey de Vere; and 'Deirdre,' on the Fate of the Sons of Usna, and 'Blanid,' on the Death of Curoi Mac Dara, both by Dr. Robert Dwyer Joyce. I have myself published in my 'Old Celtic Romances' free translations—without texts—of eleven ancient tales. The great majority of those old tales still remain unpublished and untranslated.

CHAPTER VI

THE BREHON LAW

[Chief authorities for Chapters VI., VII., VIII., IX., X.:—The four published volumes of the Brehon Law, and Introductions; O'Curry's Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish, with Sullivan's Introduction; Petrie's Essay on Tara; Spenser's View of the State of Ireland; Maine's History of Ancient Institutions; O'Mahony's Keating.]

THE Irish legal system, as described in this and the following four chapters, existed in its fulness before the ninth century. It was disturbed by the Danish and Anglo-Norman invasions, and still more by the English settlement; but it continued in use till finally abolished in the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In Ireland judges were called **Brehons**, and the law they administered—i.e. the *Fenechas*, or ancient law of Ireland—is now commonly known as the **Brehon law.** To become a brehon a person had to go through a regular,

well-defined course of study and training. It would appear that the same course qualified for any branch of the legal profession, and that once a man had mastered the course, he might set up as a brehon, a consulting lawyer, an advocate, or a law-agent. In very early times the position of brehon or lawyer was open to anyone who spent the proper time and completed the studies; but in later ages the legal profession tended to become hereditary in certain families, some of whom were attached to kings or chiefs, though all had to comply with the conditions as to time and study:—'No person is qualified to plead a cause at the high court unless he is skilled in every department of legal science.'[1] The brehons were a very influential class of men, and those attached to chiefs had free lands for their maintenance, which, like the profession itself, remained in the family for generations. Those not so attached lived simply on the fees of their profession, and many eminent brehons became wealthy. It generally required great technical skill to decide cases, the legal rules, as set forth in the law-books, were so complicated, and so many circumstances had to be taken into account. The brehon, moreover, had to be very careful, for he was himself liable to damages if he delivered a false or an unjust judgment.[2] There is no record how the brehons acquired the exclusive right to interpret the laws and to arbitrate between litigants; it came down as a custom from times beyond the reach of history.

In pagan times the brehons were both priests and judges. The brehon was then regarded as a mysterious, half-inspired person, and a divine power kept watch over his pronouncements to punish him for unjust judgments:—'When the brehons deviated from the truth of nature, there appeared blotches upon their cheeks.'[3] The great brehon, Moran, son of Carbery Kinncat, king of Ireland in the first century, wore a collar round his neck, which tightened when he delivered a false judgment and expanded again when he delivered a true one; and similar legends are related of other ancient brehons.

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 89. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 305. [3] *Ibid.* i. 25.

The brehons had collections of laws in volumes or tracts—all in the Irish language—by which they regulated their judgments, and which those of them who kept law-schools expounded to their scholars; each tract treating of one subject or one group of subjects. Many of these have been preserved, and of late years some of the most important have been published, with translations, forming four printed volumes. Of the tracts contained in these volumes, the two largest and most important are the **Senchus Mor** [More] and the **Book of Acaill** [Ack'ill]. In a popular sense, it may be said that the Senchus Mor is chiefly concerned with the Irish civil law, and the Book of Acaill with the criminal law and the law relating to personal injuries.

In the ancient introduction to the Senchus Mor[1] the following account is given of its original compilation. In the year 438 A.D. a collection of the pagan law-books was made at the request of St. Patrick, and the whole *Fenechas* code was expounded to him by Duftach, the king's chief poet, a zealous Christian convert. *Laeghaire* [Leary] king of Ireland appointed a committee of nine persons to revise them, viz. three kings—Laeghaire himself, Corc king of Munster, and Daire [Dara] king of Ulster; three ecclesiastics—Patrick, Benen, and Cairnech; and three poets and antiquarians—Rossa, Duftach, and Fergus. These nine having expunged everything that clashed with the Christian faith, produced at the end of three years a revised code, which was called Senchus Mor—also called Cain Patrick or Patrick's Law. Though there are historical difficulties in these statements, there seems no good reason to doubt that there was some such revision.

The code produced by the committee contained no new laws: it was merely a digest of those already in use, with the addition of the Canon and Scriptural laws. The statement in the old Introduction is, that before St. Patrick's time the law of nature prevailed, i.e. the ancient pagan law as expounded by Duftach to Patrick: after his

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 3 *et seq.*

time the law of nature and the law of the letter, i.e. the Gospel rule.[1]

The very book left by St. Patrick and the others, or the original manuscript book, at whatever time written, has been long lost. Successive copies were made from time to time, with commentaries and explanations appended, till the manuscripts we now possess were produced. The manuscript copies of the Senchus Mor consist of:—1. The original text, written in a large hand with wide spaces between the lines: 2. Commentaries on the text, in a smaller hand: 3. Glosses or explanations on words and phrases of the text, in a hand still smaller; commentaries and glosses commonly written in the spaces between the lines of the text: 4. An Introduction to the text.

Of these the text, as might be expected, is the most ancient. The language is extremely archaic, indicating a very remote antiquity, though probably not the very language of the text left by the revising committee, but a modified version of a later time. The Introduction comes next in point of antiquity; and the Commentaries and Glosses are the least ancient of all. Introduction, Commentaries, and Glosses were written or copied by different learned lawyers at various times from the beginning of the fourteenth down to the sixteenth century: the language, as I have said, being often much older than the writing. The manuscript copies of the Book of Acaill and of some other law tracts resemble those of the Senchus Mor, the original texts being accompanied by Introduction, Commentaries, and Glosses. In the printed volumes all these are translated, and the different sizes of the writing are marked by different sizes of type, both in the Irish and in the translation.

It is probable that in very ancient times all laws were in verse.[2] This was evidently the case with the original Senchus Mor, for we are told that at the compilation 'Duftach put a thread of poetry round it for Patrick.'[3] The old form has to some extent survived in the law

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i, 17; iii. 29.
[2] Maine, *Hist. of Anc. Inst.* 14.
[3] *Brehon Laws*, i. 23, 25.

tracts, for certain portions of the existing version of the Senchus Mor, and the whole of another law tract—the Book of Rights—are in verse.

The **Book of Rights** 'gives an account of the rights of the monarchs of all Ireland, and the revenues payable to them by the principal kings of the several provinces, and of the stipends paid by the monarchs to the inferior kings for their services. It also treats of the rights of each of the provincial kings, and the revenues payable to them from the inferior kings of the districts or tribes subsidiary to them, and of the stipends paid by the superior to the inferior provincial kings for their services. These accounts are authoritatively delivered in verse, each poem being introduced by a prose statement.'[1]

According to the old authorities, St. Benen or Benignus was the author of the original Book of Rights. The present transcripts of it, which were we know copied from more ancient versions, are not older than the end of the fourteenth century. This however refers to the mere penmanship: the language is much older; and it is O'Donovan's opinion that the prose Introductions, which are much less ancient than the text, were written in their present form at a time not far removed from the period of Brian Boru.[2] The Book of Rights has been published, with translation and most valuable Introduction and Notes by John O'Donovan, LL.D.

The language of all these old law-books is very difficult, partly on account of the peculiar style, which is very elliptical and abrupt—often incomplete sentences, or mere catch-words of rules not written down in full, but held in memory by the experts of the time, and partly from the number of technical terms, many of which are to this day obscure. The two great Irish scholars—O'Donovan and O'Curry—who translated them, were able to do so only after long study; and in numerous instances were, to the last, not quite sure of the meaning. As they had to retain the legal terms and the elliptical style, even the translation is hard enough to understand, and is often unintelligible.

[1] *Book of Rights*, Introd. vi. [2] *Ibid.* xxv.

The Brehon code forms a great body of civil, military, and criminal law. It regulates the various ranks of society, from the king down to the slave, and enumerates their several rights and privileges. There are minute rules for the management of property, for the several industries—building, brewing, mills, water-courses, fishing weirs, bees and honey—for distress or seizure of goods, for tithes, trespass, and evidence. The relations of landlord and tenant, the fees of professional men—doctors, judges, teachers, builders, artificers—the mutual duties of father and son, of foster-parents and foster-children, of master and servant, are all carefully regulated. Contracts are regarded as peculiarly sacred, and are treated in great detail. 'There are three periods of evil for the world'—says the Senchus Mor—'the period of a plague, of a general war, and of the dissolution of verbal contracts'; and again: 'The world would be evilly situated if express contracts were not binding.'[1] In criminal law, the various offences are minutely distinguished:—Murder, manslaughter, wounding, thefts, and all sorts of wilful damage; and accidental injuries from flails, sledge-hammers, and weapons of all kinds.

It does not appear that laws were enacted in Ireland by legislative bodies convened for the purpose, with state authority to have the laws obeyed, like our present parliament: in other words, no distinct legislative authority existed. The central government was never strong enough to have much influence either in the making of laws or in causing the existing laws to be carried out. It has been asserted indeed that the *Fes* of Tara was convened to enact laws; but for this assertion there is no ancient authority. We have very full descriptions of this *Fes*, and also of the proceedings at some of the *Aenachs* or Fair-meetings held elsewhere (Chap. X.). But though we find it stated over and over again that at these assemblies the laws were publicly 'proclaimed,' or 'promulgated,' or 'rehearsed'—to make the people familiar with them—that they were 'revised,' or 're-arranged,' or 're-affirmed'—these several functions

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 51: iii. 3.

being always performed by properly qualified lawyers—there is nowhere any open or plain statement that laws were *made* or *enacted* and sent forth with authority either at the Fes or at any of the Aenachs. The idea of a public assembly to frame laws was indeed not unfamiliar: and we find a few such meetings recorded—none of them however being the Fes of Tara. Among them may be mentioned the synod convened at Tara in 697, where, under the influence of St. Adamnan, the law exempting women from taking part in war was agreed on and promulgated; and also the meeting held at Slieve Fuait to settle precincts.[1] But such meetings can hardly be classed as legislative assemblies—at best they bore only a faint resemblance to them; for there existed no authoritative machinery to have the laws carried out, and anyone who chose might refuse to obey them. Moreover the special laws stated to have been framed in this way are in themselves of minor importance, and form only a very insignificant part of the body of the Brehon laws. The Brehon laws then 'are not a legislative structure, but the creation of a class of professional lawyers or brehons.'[2] It is to be observed that in later times Christianity exerted an ever-increasing influence in law as in other institutions; and it is evident from the law-books that, while custom was the main guide of the Brehon lawyers, moral right and wrong obtained more and more consideration in the settlement of cases as time went on.

The Brehon law then was derived partly from immemorial custom, like the common law of England, and partly from the decisions of eminent jurists—customs and decisions being carefully written, with commentaries, by successive generations of lawyers, into their books. Those portions of the Brehon code derived from old custom—which the Senchus Mor calls the law of nature—are no doubt the remains of the primitive legal rules of the Aryan people, which were better preserved in Ireland than elsewhere on account of its exemption from foreign influences.

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iv. 227; for Adamnan's Law see Part II. chap. iv.
[2] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 24.

The decisions of jurists were sometimes on actual cases, delivered as occasion required; and sometimes on hypothetical cases, which were, however, usually such as were likely to occur in real life. How large a portion of the Brehon code is derived from these judicial decisions will be understood from the fact that the whole of the Book of Acaill—233 pages of printed matter—is composed of the decisions and opinions of two eminent jurists—Cormac Mac Art, king of Ireland, and Kennfaela the Learned, a jurist who flourished in the seventh century.

The Irish being in a great measure shut out from the rest of the world, had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the laws of other nations. Chiefly for this reason the Brehon laws are deficient in general principles. The lawyers' minds tended too much to fine-drawn distinctions and over-refinement. An attempt is made to meet all possible varieties of cases by laying down a mass of minute rules, leaving no discretion in the hands of the brehon; where at the present day magistrates or juries or judges have considerable discretionary power to fix the amount of damages, or otherwise settle matters, by viewing all the facts of the case. Yet as time went on wider principles were grasped: 'The brehons were gradually approaching the idea of general legal propositions by an induction from numerous and distinct cases which had been decided in accordance with pre-existing custom.' [1]

The Brehon law was vehemently condemned by English writers; and in several acts of parliament it was made treason for the English settlers to use it. But these testimonies are to be received with much reserve as coming from prejudiced and interested parties. The laws laid down in the Brehon code were not in fact peculiarly Irish. They were precisely similar to the ancient laws of all other Aryan tribes, a survival—modified by time and circumstance—of what was once universal.[2] We have good reason to believe that the Brehon law was very well suited to the society in which, and from which, it grew up. This view

[1] Richey, *Brehon Laws*, iv Introd. vii.
[2] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 19.

is confirmed by the well-known fact that when the English settlers living outside the Pale adopted the Irish manners and customs, they all—both high and low—adopted also the Brehon law, and became quite as much attached to it as the Irish themselves. The Anglo-Irish lords of those times often kept brehons in their service like the Irish chiefs.

I will now proceed to sketch, in the four following chapters, some of the leading features of the Brehon law.

CHAPTER VII

THE LAWS OF COMPENSATION AND DISTRESS

IN modern codes—as for instance in British law—a distinction is made between an offence against the state—which is technically called a 'crime'—and an offence against an individual—called a 'tort.' In the former case the state prosecutes and enforces the penalty: in the latter the person injured prosecutes in the courts provided by the state, and if necessary the state forces a trial at the instance of the person injured, and enables him to exact the penalty. In the Brehon law there is no such distinction as between crimes and torts. The constant warfare in Ireland and the absence of a strong central government prevented the idea of the state from taking root, and the people could not look to it for supreme authority or for protection—much the same as matters stood in England in the time of the Heptarchy. A central state authority would no doubt have been ultimately developed in Ireland if the development had not been at first retarded by civil strife, and finally arrested by the Danish wars and by the Anglo-Norman invasion.

The Brehon law accordingly knew nothing of an offence against the state, and of course the state never prosecuted. Every offence was against the individual—a tort: and on the injured party or his friends devolved the duty of seeking redress. If a man is assaulted or murdered

nowadays, it is the duty of the magistrates and police—whether friends intervene or not—to bring the offender to justice. But in Ireland in those times there were no police, and a man might waylay or kill another, or set fire to a house, or steal a horse, and still go scot free, unless the injured person or his friends took the matter in hand. A similar state of things existed among the Anglo-Saxons,[1] as well as among all early Aryan communities.

In very early times, beyond the reach of history, the **law of retaliation** prevailed—'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'—in other words, every man or every family that was injured might take direct revenge on the offender. But this being found inconsistent with the peace and well-being of the community—especially in cases of homicide, which were frequent enough in those days—gradually gave place to the **law of compensation**, which applied to every form of injury from homicide down.

That this general system of compensation for wrongful acts was at least reasonably effectual is evident from the fact that it was the custom among all the early Aryan tribes.[2] 'In most early codes with which we are acquainted the idea of compensation predominates over that of the duty of revenge.'[3] In Ireland the process was this:—The injured party, having no civil authority to appeal to, might at once, if he chose, take the law into his own hands. But though this was sometimes done, public opinion was decidedly against it, and the long-established custom was to refer all such matters to the arbitration of a brehon. Accordingly, the person injured sued the offender in proper form, and if the latter responded, the case was referred to the local brehon, who decided according to law. The penalty always took the form of a fine to be paid by the offender to the person or family injured, and the brehon's fee was usually paid out of this fine.

If the offender refused to submit the case to the usual tribunal, or if he withheld payment after the case had been decided against him, or if a man refused to pay a just debt

[1] *Student's History of England*, by S. R. Gardiner, ed. 1892, p. 32.
[2] *Brehon Laws*, iii., Richey in Introd. cxxi. [3] *Ibid.* iii. Introd. lxxxii.

of any kind—in any one of these cases the plaintiff or the creditor proceeded by **Distress**; that is to say he **distrained** or seized the cattle or other effects of the defendant. Due notice had to be given, but no other legal preliminary—no permission from, or reference to, any court or other higher authority—was necessary: the plaintiff resorted to distress on his own responsibility. We will suppose the effects to be cattle. There was generally an **anad** or stay of one or more days on the distress; that is, the plaintiff went through the form of seizing the cattle, but did not remove them.[1] The defendant had however to give a pledge—sometimes his son or other family member—to the plaintiff, who retained it till the end of the stay, when he returned it on formally getting back the distress. If the defendant refused to give a pledge, then there was no stay, and it was an **immediate distress.** If at the end of the stay the defendant did not give up the distress, the plaintiff kept the pledge, which he then might dispose of as he would the distress.[2] During the stay the cattle remained in the possession of the defendant or debtor—no doubt to give him time to make up his mind, or to have the case tried before the brehon—but the plaintiff had all the time a claim on them.

If the debt was not paid at the end of the lawful stay, the plaintiff, in the presence of certain witnesses, removed the cattle and put them in a pound.[3] The following 'three things are to be announced at the residence of the defendant, i.e. the debt for which it [the distress] was taken, the pound in which it was put, the law agent by whom it was taken.'[4] They remained in the pound for a period called a **dithim**, during which the expense of feeding and tending was paid out of the value of the cattle.[5] At the end of the *dithim* they began to be forfeited to the plaintiff at a certain rate per day, till such a number became forfeited as paid both the debt and the expenses.[6] The animals were not to be mixed: each species should have a separate

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 327.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 209, 211.
[3] *Ibid.* i. 289, 291.
[4] *Ibid.* i. 269.
[5] *Ibid.* i. 211; iii. 327.
[6] *Ibid.* i. 103; iii. 327.

pound; and diseased animals were to be separated from those that were sound. The length of the anad and of the dithim was regulated by law according to circumstances. There was no stay—i.e. the distress was immediate—when it was taken by a chief from one of a lower grade, and also in certain other obvious cases; in some cases, also, notice was not necessary. In immediate distress the cattle were removed at once to the pound. If after the plaintiff had given due notice the defendant absconded, his *fine* [finna] or kindred were liable.[1]

The defendant or debtor might prevent the removal of the cattle at the beginning, or might get them back up to the end of the dithim, by either paying the debt or giving a pledge that he would submit the case for trial, if it had not been tried already.[2] Goods of any kind might be taken in distress, or a man himself, if there were no goods;[3] but the distress was most generally in cattle.

Much formality was observed in all these proceedings; and the distrainer had to be accompanied by his law-agent and witnesses, who should be able to testify that there was a distress and that it was carried out in exact accordance with legal rules.[4] In the case of some distresses with stay there were curious fictitious observances. Thus when barren cattle were distrained, a stone was thrown over them thrice before witnesses; if hens, a little bit of withe was tied on their feet, and their wings were clipped; if a dog, a stick was placed across his trough to prohibit feeding; if an anvil, a little withe was tied on it to prohibit its use; if carpenters' or shield-makers' tools, a little withe-tie was put on them; if distress was on religious orders, a withe-tie was put on their bell-house or at the foot of the altar, a sign that they were not to be used, and so forth.[5] After these formalities it was understood that though the defendant was allowed to keep the things, he was not to make use of them meantime.

The object of a distress was either to recover a debt or to force a reference to a brehon: it appears to have been

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 265, 287. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 327.
[3] *Ibid* i. 105, 107 ii. 41. [4] *Ibid.* i. 85. [5] *Ibid.* ii. 119 121.

the almost universal way of bringing about the redress of wrong.[1] Heavy penalties were incurred by those who distrained unjustly or contrary to law.[2] Distress should be taken 'between sunrise and sunset'; except in cases of urgent necessity it should not be taken at night.[3] It will occur to anyone to ask why should not the defendant resist the removal of his goods. The reply to this is that custom, backed by public opinion, was so overwhelmingly strong that resistance was hardly ever resorted to. The Irish proceedings by distress were almost identical with the corresponding provisions of the ancient Roman law, as well as of those of all the early Aryan nations.[4] The law of distress is given in great detail in, and occupies a large part—186 pages of print—of the Senchus Mor.

In some cases before distress was resorted to a curious custom came into play:—the plaintiff '**fasted** on' the defendant; and this process was always necessary before distress when the defendant was of chieftain grade and the plaintiff of an inferior grade.[5] It was done in this way. The plaintiff, having served due notice, went to the house of the defendant, and, sitting before the door, remained there without food. The length of the fast was regulated by law, according to the circumstances of each case. It may be inferred that the debtor generally yielded before it was ended, i.e. either paid the debt or gave a pledge that he would settle the case. If the creditor continued to fast after an offer of payment, he forfeited all the debt due to him.[6] Fasting as a mode of enforcing a right is mentioned in the 'Tripartite' and other Lives of St. Patrick; and from some passages it would appear that the debtor was bound to remain fasting as long as the creditor or complainant fasted,[7] though this is nowhere mentioned in the Brehon laws. This fasting process was regarded with a sort of superstitious awe; and it was considered

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 257. [2] *Ibid.* ii. 71; iii. 147. [3] *Ibid.* i. 105.
[4] *Ibid.* iii., Richey in Introd. cxxxvi.-vii.; Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 282.
[5] *Brehon Laws*, i. 113. [6] *Ibid.* i. 119; ii. 65.
[7] Stokes's *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, clxxvii., clxxviii. 557 and 560 note.

outrageously disgraceful for a defendant not to submit to it:—'He that does not give a pledge to fasting is an evader of all: he who disregards all things shall not be paid by God or man.'[1] Moreover, he had to pay double the original claim.

This institution of fasting on a debtor is still widely diffused in the East, and is called by the Hindoos 'sitting dharna.' They believe that if the plaintiff die of starvation, the defendant is sure to be visited by fearful supernatural penalties. Our books do not give us much information about the Irish institution: but it is evidently identical with the eastern custom, and no doubt it was believed in pagan times to be attended by similar supernatural effects.[2]

Suppose now the defendant defied all the proceedings of the plaintiff to the last: here appears the striking difference between the Brehon and modern law. British law has the state at its back, but anyone who chose might disobey the Brehon law, for it was not so much a law as a custom. There really was no authority to compel any man either to submit to the arbitration of a brehon or to abide by his decision, except public opinion. But public opinion, founded as it was on immemorial custom, was very strong. Even in our own day certain customs have become so universally sanctioned by public opinion as to have all the force of law, so that no man dares to violate them: and public opinion then as now was generally though not always sufficient. There might be persistent refusal, and in this case the injured person or family might fall back on the old rule of direct retaliation.[3]

Homicide, whether by intent or by misadventure, was atoned for like other injuries, by a money fine. That men who killed others were themselves often killed in revenge by the friends of the victim—as in all other countries—we know from our annals; but this always outraged public opinion. The idea of awarding death as a judicial punishment for homicide, even when it amounted to murder, does not seem to have ever taken hold of the public mind in

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 113. [2] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 40, 297. [3] *Ibid.* 171

Ireland. Capital punishment was not unknown, however; kings claimed the right to put persons to death for certain crimes. Thus we are told, in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick,[1] that neither gold nor silver would be accepted from him who lighted a fire before the lighting of the festival fire of Tara, but he should be put to death. It would seem, both from the ancient Introduction to the Senchus Mor and from the Lives of St. Patrick, that the early Christian missionaries attempted without success to introduce capital punishment for murder.

The fine for homicide, or for bodily injury of any kind, was called **eric** [errick]: the amount was adjudged by a brehon. Many modifying circumstances had to be taken into account—the actual injury, the rank of the parties, the intention of the wrong-doer, the provocation, the amount of set-off claims, &c.—so that the settlement demanded great skill and tact on the part of the brehon. The principles on which these awards should be made are laid down in great detail in the Book of Acaill. The eric for murder was double that for simple manslaughter (or homicide without intent), 'for fines are doubled by malice aforethought.'[2] The man who killed a native freeman paid the amount of his own honour-price, and seven cumals (p. 71) for the homicide itself (or double if of malice). This will give some idea of the standard adopted, it being understood that the total fine was higher or lower according to the rank of the parties.

In case of homicide the family of the victim were entitled to the eric. If the culprit did not pay, or absconded, leaving no property, his *fine* or family were liable, the guiding principle here, as in other parts of the Brehon law, being that those who would be entitled to inherit the property of the offender should, next after himself—in their several proportions—be liable for the fine for homicide incurred by him.[3] If they wished to avoid this they were required to give up the offender to the family of the victim,[4] who might then, if they pleased,

[1] Stokes's *Tripartite Life*, 43.
[2] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 99.
[3] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 69; iv. 245.
[4] *Ibid.* iii. 69.

kill him: or failing this his family had to expel him, and to lodge a sum to free themselves from the consequences of his subsequent misconduct.[1] The expelled person had to leave the tribe; he then became a sort of outlaw, and would likely become a *daer-fudir* (p. 80) in some other tribe. If neither the slayer nor his friends paid the murder-eric, then he might be lawfully killed by the friends of the victim.

In the Book of Acaill there is a minute enumeration of bodily injuries, whether by design or accident, with the compensation for each, taking into account the position of the parties and the other numerous circumstances that modified the amount. Half the eric for homicide was due for the loss of a leg, a hand, an eye, or an ear; but in no case was the collective eric for such injuries to exceed the body fine, i.e., the eric for homicide;[2] Dr. Richey has shown that this part of the Brehon code is essentially the same as the corresponding laws of all the Aryan communities, including those of the early English people.[3]

For homicide, and for most injuries to person, property, or dignity, the fine consisted of two parts—first the payment for the mere injury, which was determined by the severity of the injury and by other circumstances; second, a sum called **Log-enech**, or Honour-price, which varied according to the rank of the parties: the higher the rank the greater the honour-price. The consideration of honour-price entered into a great number of the provisions of the Brehon law. This principle also existed in the early Teutonic codes.

To make due allowance for all modifying circumstances in cases of trial called for much legal knowledge and technical skill on the part of the brehon—quite as much as we expect in a lawyer of the present day.

Spenser, Davies, and other early English writers bitterly denounce the law of eric-fine for homicide, as 'contrary to God's law and man's.' It was indeed a rude and inadequate sort of justice, and favoured the rich, as they could afford to pay fines better than the poor. But it was

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 382 note, 383. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 349.
[3] *Ibid.* iii., Richey in Introd. cxi.

no doubt very useful in its day, and was a great advance on the barbarous law of retaliation, which was nothing more than private vengeance.[1] The principle of compensation for murder was moreover not peculiar to Ireland. It existed among the Anglo-Saxons, as well as among the ancient Greeks, Franks, and Germans—as a German institution it is mentioned with approval by Tacitus; and traces of it remained in English law till the early part of this century.[2]

CHAPTER VIII

GRADES AND GROUPS OF SOCIETY

THE people were divided into classes, from the king down to the slave, and the Brehon law took cognizance of all—setting forth their rights, duties, and privileges. These classes were not *castes;* for under certain conditions persons could pass from one to the next above. The social subdivision of the people as given in some of the law tracts is very minute and artificial: we may adopt here Dr. Richey's broad arrangement,[3] namely into five main classes:—(1) Kings of various grades, from the king of the *tuath* or cantred up to the king of Ireland; (2) Nobles; (3) Freemen with property; (4) Freemen without property (or with very little); (5) The non-free classes. The first three were the privileged classes: a person belonging to these was an **aire** [arra] or chief. The nobles were those who had land as their own property, for which they did not pay rent; they were the owners of the soil—the aristocracy.

Part of this land they held in their own hands and tilled by the labour of the non-free classes: part they let to tenants. An aire of this class was called a **flaith** [flah], i.e. a noble, a chief, a prince. There were several

[1] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 23 [2] *Brehon Laws*, i. Introd. xlix., l.

[3] *Brehon Laws*, iv. Introd. cxcix. The description of the whole social arrangement on which the following account is chiefly based is in the law tract called *Crith Gabhlach*: *Brehon Laws*, iv. 297.

ranks of *flaiths*, the rank depending chiefly on the amount of landed property. The lowest was the **Aire-desa**, so-called from the *des* or fee-simple land for which he received rent. Certain houses, horses, and equipments were prescribed for him as necessary for his rank, and he should have at least five *saer*-tenants and five *daer* or *giallna* tenants (see next chapter).

Among the nobles there was one called the **Aire-echtai**, holding a singular official position. He was the king's champion, and his duty was to avenge all insults offered to the king or to the tribe, particularly murder. In any expected danger from without, he had to keep a watch at the most dangerous ford or pass on that part of the border where invasion was expected, and prevent the entrance of any enemy. He had a number of attendants—all brave fighting men—and he enjoyed several valuable privileges.

The highest rank of flaith, next to the Tanist of the king (p. 61), was the **Aire-forgaill**: he should have at least twenty *saer*-tenants and twenty *daer*-tenants; and he had to answer to the king for the character of the flaiths under him. The Aire-forgaill seems to have been an official one of whose functions was to determine the status and privileges of the several nobles and functionaries about the court. The flaiths did not pay rent: they were sharply distinguished from the classes that follow, all of whom were rent-payers.

A person belonging to the second class of aire—a non-noble rent-paying freeman with property—had no land of his own, his property consisting of cattle and other movable goods; hence he was called a **bo-aire**, i.e. a *cow-aire*. There were several ranks of bo-aires, according to the amount of property, the lowest being the **og-aire**, i.e. junior-aire, 'from the youngness of his aireship.'[1] A bo-aire having no land of his own, rented land from a flaith, thus taking rank as a *saer-céile* or free tenant (see next chapter); and he grazed his cattle partly on this and partly on the 'commons' grazing land. He

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iv. 305.

might sublet his rented land to under-tenants. The bo-aires had certain allowances and privileges according to rank. Among their allowances were a share in the mill and in the kiln of the district, and fees for witnessing contracts and for other legal functions.

The **Brugh-fer** or **Brugaid** [broo-fer: broo-ey] was an interesting official of the bo-aire class. He was a public hospitaller, bound to keep an open house for the reception of strangers,[1] and of certain functionaries—king, bishop, poet, judge, &c.—who were privileged to claim for themselves and their attendants free entertainment when on their circuits. For this purpose he was bound to keep always ready a sufficient supply of provisions; and his house should be supplied with all necessary furniture and appliances—for he was not allowed to borrow. There should be a number of open roads leading to it, so that it might be readily accessible; and he had to keep a light burning in the *faithche* [faha] or lawn at night to guide travellers. He was a sort of magistrate, and was empowered to deliver judgment on certain cases that were brought before him to his house: 'He is a *bo-aire* for giving judgment.' He had large allowances too for the support of the expenses of his house, and he was much honoured. As visitors and their followers were constantly coming and going, his house, furniture, and other property were jealously protected by law from wanton or malicious damage, the various possible injuries being set forth in great detail, with the compensation for them. The *brugh-fers* must have been pretty numerous: probably there was one in every *tuath*.[2]

The **Fer-fothla** was the highest of the bo-aires. He was a rich man, who having more stock than he was able to graze, hired them out as *taurcrec* to others (*daer-céiles*: see next chapter), who thus became his dependents. Belonging to this class was an official—the **Aire-Coisring**—who was the representative of all the bo-aires of his

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 47, 61.

[2] For full account of the Brugaid or Brugh-fer, see *Brehon Laws*, iv. 311, 313, 315.

district, and was expected to be able to give an account to the king of their conduct and obedience to the laws. If a Fer-fothla could prove that he had twice as much property as was required for the lowest rank of flaith (the Aire-desa), and complied with certain other conditions and formalities, and also provided his father and grandfather had been aires, he was himself entitled to take rank as a flaith.

The next class—the fourth—the freemen without property, were *céiles* or free tenants; they differed from the bo-aires only in not possessing property in herds—for the bo-aires were themselves *céiles* or rent-payers; and accordingly, a man of the fourth class became a bo-aire if he accumulated property enough. The freemen without property and the non-free classes will be treated of in connection with land in next chapter.

The people were formed into groups of various sizes from the family upwards. The **Family** was the group consisting of the living parents and all their descendants : but strangers were sometimes adopted, for which however the consent of the tribe was necessary.[1] The **Sept** was a larger group, descended from common parents long since dead. All the members of a sept were nearly related, and in later times bore the same surname. The **Clan** or **house** was still larger. *Clann* means children, and the word therefore implied descent from one ancestor. The **Tribe** was made up of several septs, clans, or houses, and usually claimed, like the subordinate groups, to be descended from a common ancestor. But inasmuch as strangers were often adopted into all the groups—the tribe sometimes absorbing not only individuals but smaller tribes—there was much admixture; and the theory of common descent became a fiction, except for a few of the leading families, who preserved their descent pure and kept a careful record of their genealogy. Thus the tribe became a mere local association of people, occupying a definite district, and bound together by common customs, by common interests, by living under one ruler, and in some degree by the

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iv. 61, 289.

fiction of descent from one common ancestor. Each member had to bear his part of the obligations and liabilities of the tribe:[1] for instance he had to contribute to the support of old people who had no children; and the whole sept or tribe were liable for the fines or debts of any individuals who absconded or were unable to pay. No individual was free to enter into any contracts affecting the tribe; for example he was restricted by certain conditions when he wished to sell his land.

The word **fine** [finna] is loosely applied to almost any subdivision of society, from the tribe in its largest sense down to a small group consisting of members of the same family.

The social system was aristocratic: in no case have we any evidence that there was a community governed by an assembly of representatives without a permanent head.[2] Each group, whether sept, clan, or tribe, was governed by a flaith or chief, who was always a member of the ruling family. Under the flaith who governed the whole tribe were a number of minor flaiths of the several ranks, the heads of the smaller associations composing the tribe. When the tribal community comprised a large population occupying an extensive district, it often got the designation **Cinel** [Kinel], still implying—like *clan*—descent from a common ancestor. Thus the Kinel-Owen, who possessed the principality of Tir-Owen, and were supposed to be descended from Owen, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, were ruled by one of the O'Neills, and included the septs of O'Cahan, Mac Quillan, O'Flynn, and many others, each governed by a flaith who was tributary to O'Neill. The tribe organisation was not peculiar to Ireland; it existed among all the Aryan nations in their early stages.

If the territory occupied by the tribe was sufficiently extensive, the flaith was a **Ri** [ree] or king; the **tuath** or cantred was the smallest territory whose ruler was called a *Ri*. There were 184 tuaths in all Ireland, but probably all had not kings. Many of these small sub-kingdoms

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 283; iii. 55. [2] *Ibid.* ii. 279, 281.

are now represented—more or less nearly—by the modern baronies, most of which still retain the old names. Sometimes there was a group of four or more tuaths under one king: this was called a **mor-tuath** [more], or great tuath.

There was a regular gradation of sub-kingdoms from the tuath upwards. Some were very large, such as Tyrone, Tirconnell, Thomond, Desmond, Ossory, &c., each of which comprised several tribes. A minor king under a king of one of these large territories was often called an **Ur-ri** [Oor-ree], or under-king—called an *Urriagh* by English writers.

Each of the five provinces—Ulster, Leinster, Munster, Connaught, Meath—had a king; this is commonly known as the Pentarchy. These five provincial kings had sovereignty over the sub-kings of their several provinces, all of whom owed them tribute and war service. The king of a tuath was bound to send 700 men to the field; and the kings of larger territories in proportion.

Lastly there was the **Ard-ri,** or supreme monarch of all Ireland. He had sovereignty over the provincial kings, who were bound to pay him tribute and attend him in war.

The following are the main features of the ancient territorial divisions of the country. It was parcelled out into five provinces from the earliest times of which we have any record—Leinster, Ulster, Connaught, and the two Munsters; this partition was made, according to the legend, by the five Firbolg brothers, the sons of Dela.[1] *Laighin* [Layen] or Leinster extended from the Suir to *Inver Colpa* (the mouth of the Boyne); *Ulaid* [Ulla] or Ulster from the Boyne round northwards to the little river Drowes between Donegal and Leitrim; *Olnegmacht* or Connaught from the Drowes to Limerick and the Shannon; *Da Mumain* or the two Munsters, viz., the province of Curoi Mac Dara from Limerick to Cork and westward to the coasts of Cork and Kerry, and the province of Achy Avraroe from Cork to the mouth of the Suir. It is stated that these provinces met at the hill of Ushnagh in West

[1] See Part II., chap. ii. of this book.

Meath—the two Munsters being, in this statement, taken as one province.

This division became modified in course of time. A new province—that of *Mide* or Meath—was created in the second century by Tuathal the Legitimate, king of Ireland, who formed it by cutting off a portion of each of the other provinces round the hill of Ushnagh (Part II. chapter ii.). *Murthemne*, now the county Louth, was transferred from Ulster to Leinster; the present county Cavan, which originally belonged to Connaught, was given to Ulster; and the territory now known as the county Clare was wrested from Connaught and annexed to Munster. The two Munsters ceased to be distinguished, and the whole province was known by the name of *Muman* or Munster. A better known subdivision of Munster was into Thomond or North Munster, which broadly speaking included Tipperary, Clare, and Limerick; and Desmond or South Munster, comprising Kerry, Cork, and Waterford. In recent times Meath has disappeared as a province; and the original provinces remain — Leinster, Ulster, Connaught, and Munster.[1]

With the object of avoiding the evils of a disputed succession, the person to succeed a king or chief was often elected by the tribe during the lifetime of the king or chief himself; when elected he was called the **Tanist**, a word meaning *second*, i.e. second in authority. The person who was generally looked upon as the king's successor, whether actually elected tanist or not—the heir apparent—was commonly called the **Roydamna**. Proper provision was made for the support of the tanist by a separate allowance of mensal land: 'The tanist hath also a share of the country alotted unto him, and certain cuttings and spendings upon all the inhabitants under the lord.'[2]

The king or chief was always elected from members of one family, bearing the same surname; but the succession was not hereditary in our sense of the word: it was

[1] Philips' *Atlas and Geog. of Irel.* by P. W. Joyce, LL.D., 8.
[2] Spenser, *View*, 12.

elective, with the above limitation of being confined to one family. Any freeborn member of the family was eligible: the tanist might be brother, son, nephew, cousin, &c., of the chief. That member was chosen who was considered best able to lead in war and govern in peace; and of course he should be of full age.[1] Every freeman of the rank of *Aire* had a vote. The person elected, whether king, chief, or tanist, should be free from all personal deformities or blemishes likely to impair his efficiency as a leader or to lessen the respect of the people for him.

The inauguration or *making* of a king was a very impressive ceremony. Of the mode of inaugurating the pagan kings we have hardly any information, further than this, that the kings of Ireland had to stand on a coronation stone at Tara called *Lia Fail*, which *uttered a roar*, as was believed, when a king of the old Milesian race stood on it.

But we possess full information of the ceremonies used in Christian times. The mode of inaugurating was much the same in its general features all over the country; and was strongly marked by a religious character. But there were differences in detail; for some tribes had traditional customs not practised by others. Each tribe had a special place of inauguration, which was held in much respect—invested indeed with a half-sacred character. It was on the top of a hill, or on an ancestral cairn, or on a large *lis* or fort, and sometimes under a venerable tree, called in Irish a *bile* [billa]. Each tribe used a coronation stone—a custom common also among the Celts of Scotland. Some of the coronation stones had the impression of two feet, popularly believed to be the exact size of the feet of the first chief of the tribe who took possession of the territory. On the day of the inauguration the sub-chiefs of the territory were present and also the bishops, abbots, and other leading ecclesiastics.

The hereditary historian of the tribe read for the elected chief the laws that were to regulate his conduct; after which the chief swore to observe them, to maintain the ancient customs of the tribe, and to rule his people

[1] Spenser, *View*, ed. 1809, p. 10; *Brehon Laws*, ii. 279.

with strict justice. Then, while he stood on the stone, an officer—whose special duty it was—handed him a straight white wand, a symbol of authority, and also an emblem of what his conduct and judicial decisions should be—straight and without stain. Having put aside his sword and other weapons, and holding the rod in his hand, he turned thrice round from left to right, and thrice from right to left, in honour of the Holy Trinity, and to view his territory in every direction. In some cases one of the sub-chiefs put on his sandal or shoe, in token of submission, or threw a slipper over his head for good luck and prosperity. Then one of the sub-chiefs appointed for this purpose pronounced in a loud voice his surname—the surname only, without the Christian name—which was afterwards pronounced aloud by each of the clergy, one after another, according to dignity, and then by the sub-chiefs. He was then the lawful chief: and ever after, when spoken to, he was addressed 'O'Neill'—'McCarthy More'—'O'Conor,' &c. In most cases, the main parts of the inauguration ceremony were performed by one or more sub-chiefs: this office was highly honourable, and was hereditary. The O'Neills were inaugurated at Tullahogue by O'Hagan and O'Cahan.

Giraldus Cambrensis has an account of a disgusting ceremony which he says was observed by the Kinel-Connell at the inauguration of their chiefs, and which need not be detailed here. But it is obviously one of the many silly stories which we find in Giraldus—like those of the sorcerers who used to turn stones into red pigs at fairs, of a lion that fell in love with a young woman, and many others of a like kind. It is so absurd indeed that many believe it was told to him in a joke by some person who was aware of his unlimited credulity. Irish writers have left us detailed descriptions of the installation ceremonies, in none of which do we find anything like what Giraldus mentions, and some have directly refuted him; and their accounts have been corroborated in all leading particulars by a writer whom many will consider the best authority of all—Edmund Spenser. Spenser

knew what he was writing about, and his description, though brief, is very correct and agrees with the Irish accounts. 'They use to place him, that shal be their Captain, upon a stone alwayes reserved for that purpose, and placed commonly upon a hill: In some of which I have seen formed and ingraven a foot, which they say was the measure of their first Captain's foot, whereon hee standing, receives an oath to preserve all the ancient former customes of the countrey inviolable, and to deliver up the succession peaceably to his Tanist, and then hath a wand delivered unto him by some whose proper office that is: after which, descending from the stone, he turneth himself round, thrice forward, and thrice backward.'[1]

Kings maintained their authority over their sub-kings and chiefs mainly by a system of hostageship. A king had always hostages residing in his palace, who appear to have been generally treated with consideration, and admitted to the court society, so long as they conducted themselves with propriety. 'He is not a king,' says the Brehon law, 'who has not hostages in fetters.'[2]

A king was not to go about unattended: he was always to have his retinue, of which the minimum number for each grade of king was fixed by law. He was not to do any servile work, on penalty of being ranked as a plebeian. The king, of whatever grade, was not despotic: he was in every sense a limited monarch, and his duties, restrictions, and privileges were all strictly laid down in the Brehon law.

It was the belief of the ancient Irish that when a good and just king ruled, the whole country was prosperous—the seasons were mild, crops were plentiful, cattle were fruitful, the waters abounded with fish, and the fruit trees had to be propped owing to the weight of their produce. Under bad kings it was all the reverse. In the reign of the plebeian king, Carbery Kinncat, 'evil was the state of Ireland; fruitless her corn, for there used to be

[1] Spenser, *View*, p. 11. For an exhaustive account by O'Donovan of the inauguration of Irish kings, see his *Hy Fiachrach*, pp. 425 to 432.

[2] *Brehon Laws*, iv. 51.

only one grain on the stalk; fruitless her rivers; milkless her cattle; plentiless her fruit, for there used to be but one acorn on the stalk.'[1] 'There are seven proofs which attest the falsehood of every king [i.e. seven proofs of the king's badness]:—to turn a church synod out of their *lis*: to be without truth, without law: defeat in battle: dearth in his reign: dryness of cows: blight of fruit: scarcity of corn.'[2]

While the inferior, of whatever position, paid homage and tribute to his superior, the latter, by a curious custom, was bound to give his dependent a subsidy of some kind—called a *taurcrec*: it might be a present or a yearly stipend, or stock, or the use of land—much smaller however than what he received. The acceptance of this gift or stipend was an acknowledgment of vassalage. When Malachi came to Brian Boru's tent with a retinue of twelve score men, to offer him submission, Brian gave to him, as a vassal, twelve score steeds; but the retinue to a man refused to take charge of them, so Malachi presented them in token of friendship to Brian's son Murrogh.[3] Sometimes—in case of the lower order of dependents—this subsidy was called *raith* or wages. The tributes and stipends for the various ranks are set forth in detail in the Book of Rights.

It will be seen that there was a regular gradation of authority. The tenant owed allegiance to the *flaith*: the minor *flaith* to the king of the *tuath*: the king of the *tuath* to the king of the *more-tuath*: the king of the *more-tuath* to the provincial king: the provincial king to the *ard-ri* of all Ireland. But this was merely the theoretical arrangement: in the higher grades it was very imperfectly carried out. The authority of the supreme monarch over the provincial kings was in most cases only nominal, like that of the early Bretwaldas over the minor kings of the Heptarchy. He was seldom able to enforce obedience, so that they were often almost or altogether independent of him. There never was a king of Ireland who really ruled

[1] *Four Masters*, A.D. 14. [2] *Brehon Laws*, iv. 53.
[3] *Wars of the Gaels with the Galls*, 133.

the whole country: the king that came nearest to it was Brian Boru. In like manner the *urrees* often defied the authority of their superiors. If the country had been left to work out its own destinies, this state of things would in the end have developed into one strong central monarchy, as in England and France. As matters stood it was the weak point in the government. It left the country a prey to internal strife, which the *ard-ri* was not strong enough to quell; and the absence of union rendered it impossible to meet foreign invasion by effectual resistance.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAWS RELATING TO LAND

THE following account of the ancient land laws of Ireland is corroborated in some of its main features by those early English writers who described the native Irish customs from personal observation. It throws much light on the Irish land question of modern times.

In theory the land belonged not to individuals, but to the tribe. The king or chief had a portion assigned to him as mensal land. The rest was occupied by the tribesmen in the several ways mentioned below. The chief, though exercising a sort of supervision over the whole of the territory, had no right of ownership except over his own property, if he had any, and for the time being over his mensal land. It would appear that originally—in prehistoric times—the land was all common property, and chief and people were liable to be called on to give up their portions for a new distribution. But as time went on this custom was gradually broken in upon; and the lands held by some, being never resumed, came to be looked upon as private property. As far back as our records go there was some private ownership in land, and it is plainly recognised all through the Brehon laws.[1]

[1] *Brehon Laws,* iii. 53; iv. 69 to 159: these references given as specimens; many other passages might be referred to.

'All the Brehon writers seem to have a bias towards private, as distinguished from collective, property.'[1] Yet the original idea of collective ownership was never quite lost: for although men owned land, the ownership was not so absolute as at present. A man, for instance, could not alienate his land outside the tribe; and he had to comply with certain other tribal obligations in the management and disposal of it,[2] all which restrictions were vestiges of the old tribe ownership. But within these limits, which were not very stringent, a man might dispose of his land just as he pleased.

Within historic times the following were the rules of land tenure, as set forth chiefly in the Brehon laws, and also in some important points by early English writers.

The tribe was divided into smaller groups or septs, each of which, being governed by a sub-chief under the chief of the tribe, was a sort of miniature of the whole tribe; and each was permanently settled down on a separate portion of the land, which was considered as their separate property, and which was not interfered with by any other septs of the tribe. The land was held by individuals in five different ways.

FIRST: The chief, whether of the tribe or of the sept, had a portion as mensal land, for life or for as long as he remained chief.

SECOND: Another portion was held as private property by persons who had come to own the land in various ways. Most of these were *flaiths*, or nobles, of the several ranks; and some were professional men, such as physicians, judges, poets, historians, artificers, &c., who had got their lands as stipends for their professional services to the chief, and in whose families it often remained for generations. Under this second heading may be included the plot on which stood the homestead of every free member of the tribe, with the homestead itself.

THIRD: Persons held as tenants portions of the lands belonging to those who owned it as private property, or portions of the mensal land of the chief—much like

[1] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 105. [2] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 283; iii. 53, 55.

tenants of the present day: these paid what was equivalent to rent—always in kind. The term was commonly seven years, and they might sublet to under-tenants.

FOURTH: The rest of the arable land, which was called the **Tribe land**, forming by far the largest part of the territory, belonged to the people in general—the several subdivisions to the several septs—no part being private property.[1] This was occupied by the free members of the sept, who were owners for the time being, each of his own farm. Every free man had a right to his share, a right never questioned. Those who occupied the tribe land did not hold for any fixed term, for the land of the sept was liable to gavelkind (p. 84 below) or redistribution from time to time—once every two or three years.[2] Yet they were not tenants at will, for they could not be disturbed till the time of gavelling; even then each man kept his crops and got compensation for unexhausted improvements; and though he gave up one farm he always got another. This common occupation of land is alluded to in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick.[3]

FIFTH: The non-arable or waste land—mountain, forest, bog, &c.—was **Commons land**. This was not appropriated by individuals; but every free man had a right to use it for grazing, for procuring fuel, or for the chase. There was no need of subdividing the commons by fences, for the cattle of all grazed over it without distinction. The portion of territory occupied by each sept commonly included land held in all the five ways here described.

The common was generally mountain land, usually at some distance from the lowland homesteads. After the farm crops had been put down in the spring, it was a usual custom for the whole family to migrate to the hills with their cattle. Several families commonly joined, and they built a group of huts on some convenient spot, where they lived, attending to their flocks, herding during

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 53.
[2] Davies, *Discoverie*: Letter to Lord Salisbury, 279, ed. 1787.
[3] Stokes, *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, 337, and Introd. clxxv.

the day and milking morning and evening, changing their abode to fresh pastures if necessary during the summer.[1] A temporary settlement of this kind was called in Irish a *buaile* [pron. booley], and the custom was known to English writers as **Booleying**. At the approach of autumn the people returned home with their cattle for the winter in time to gather in the crops. English writers denounce this booleying as they did every custom differing from their own. But it seems to have very well suited the circumstances of the people at the time; and that they did not neglect the cultivation of their crops appears from many authorities—for example, Moryson's description of the prosperous state of things he witnessed in Leix in 1600.[2] In many parts of Ireland there are to this day 'commons'—generally mountain land—attached to village communities, on which several families have a right to graze their cattle according to certain well-defined regulations; and there are bogs where they have a right to cut peat or turf—a right of turbary, as they call it; and if an individual sells his land, these rights go with it. All this is a remnant of the old custom.

Between common sept ownership on the one hand and private ownership by individuals on the other, there was an intermediate link; for in some cases land was owned by a family, though not by any individual member, and remained in the same family for generations. This was often the case with land granted for professional services. A very remarkable and peculiar development of family ownership was what was known as the **Gelfine** [gel'finna: *g* hard as in *get*] system. It is now difficult and perhaps impossible to understand this system fully, for the same reason that many other parts of the Brehon laws are obscure or unintelligible—namely, that no description of it is given in the laws, inasmuch as it was then universally familiar and well understood. But certain features are clear enough from the context.

A *Gelfine* organisation when complete consisted of

[1] Spenser, *View*, ed. 1809, p. 82.
[2] Moryson, *Hist. of Irel.* i. 178. See Part IV. chap. xiii.

seventeen men all related to each other, divided into four groups:—the *gelfine* group—which gives name to the whole organisation—consisting of five; the *derfine*, the *iarfine* [eer], and the *innfine*, of four each. Each of the four groups occupied in common a distinct portion of land: the four portions were presumably conterminous, so as to form one continuous tract. Probably in each sept there was only one gelfine organisation, the members of which were the family and relatives of the chief of the sept. The gelfine group was the most junior of all; and it was the most privileged, no doubt as being the immediate family of the chief, or most nearly related to him; and, generally speaking, the others were more and more senior and less and less nearly related to the gelfine group, in the order derfine, iarfine, innfine. The farther removed from the gelfine the less privileged. The five members of the gelfine group were often a father and four sons.

If any one of the groups fell short of its full number, through death or otherwise, those of the group that remained had still the whole of the property of that group. If any property was left to the organisation, it went to the gelfine solely. If any group became extinct, its property was divided among the other groups according to rules very distinctly laid down in the law. Thus if the gelfine became extinct, $\frac{12}{16}$ of its property went to their nearest relatives the derfine, $\frac{3}{16}$ to the iarfine, and $\frac{1}{16}$ to the innfine: if the derfine became extinct, $\frac{12}{16}$ to the gelfine, $\frac{3}{16}$ to the iarfine, and $\frac{1}{16}$ to the innfine: and there are similar rules to meet the extinction of each of the other groups.

The several groups might contain less, but could not contain more, than the numbers given above. Suppose, then, that all the groups were full, and that a new member was born into the gelfine. In this case the oldest of the gelfine passed into the derfine; the oldest of the derfine into the iarfine; the oldest of the iarfine into the innfine; and the oldest of the innfine passed out of the organisation altogether, and became an ordinary unattached member of the tribe.[1]

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 331; iv. 283; and Richey in iv. Introd. xlix.

It should be observed that the individuals and families who owned land as private property were comparatively few, and their possessions were not extensive: the great bulk of both people and land fell under the conditions of tenure described under the fourth and fifth headings.

The chief of a tribe was the military leader in war, the governor in peace; and he and his people lived in mutual dependence. He was bound to protect the tribesmen from violence and wrong, and they maintained him in due dignity.[1] It was both a danger and a disgrace not to have a chief to look up to: hence the popular saying, 'Spend me and defend me.' His revenue was derived from **three** main sources:—First his mensal land, some of which he cultivated by his own labourers, some he let to tenants: Second, subsidies of various kinds from the tribesmen: Third, payment for stock as described farther on. But in addition to this he might have land as his own personal property.

Every tribesman had to pay to his chief a certain subsidy according to his means. The usual subsidy for commons pasturage was in the proportion of one animal yearly for every seven,[2] which was considerably less than a reasonable rent of the present day. Probably the subsidy for tillage land was in much the same proportion. Every person who held land shared the liabilities of the tribe; for instance, he was liable to military service,[3] and he was bound to contribute to the support of old people who had no children.[4]

This is a proper place to remark that the payments were always in kind—live animals or provisions; or in case of artificers, the articles they made—furniture, metal work, vessels, and so forth. Horned cattle formed the general standard of value, as in all societies in an early stage of advancement; and they were valued not merely for their use, but also as a medium of exchange—as money. As an article of payment a cow or heifer was called a **séd** [shade]. A **cumal** was originally a bondmaid: afterwards

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 345.
[2] *Ibid.* iii. 129; iv. 305.
[3] *Ibid.* iv. 19, 41.
[4] *Ibid.* ii. 283.

the word came to denote merely the value of a bondmaid, estimated at three séds. Rents, fines, dues, payments of all kinds, were estimated in séds and cumals. But the word *séd* is used very loosely, and seems to have varied in value according to locality; and there were séds of smaller animals, which of course were of minor value. The cumal also varied in value. For general convenience it was laid down that where the payment was half a cumal or less, it might be legally made in one kind of goods—cows, or horses, or silver: from half a cumal to a cumal, in two kinds: above a cumal, in three. Whenever horned cattle were given in payment, one-third of them should be oxen; when horses, one-third should be mares; and silver payment should include one-third of manufactured articles. But under mutual agreement payments might be made in any way.[1]

The tribesman who placed himself under the protection of a chief, and who held land, whether it was the private property of the lessor or a part of the general tribe-land, was a **Céile** [cail'eh] or tenant; also called an *Aithech*, i.e. a plebeian, farmer, or rent-payer. These free rent-payers were also called *Féine* or *Feni*, which has much the same signification as *aithech*. But a man who takes land must have stock—cows and sheep for the pasture-land, horses or oxen to carry on the work of tillage. A small proportion of the céiles had stock of their own, but the great majority had not. Where the tenant needed stock it was the custom for the chief to give him as much as he wanted at certain rates of payment. A man might hire stock from the king or a chief, or from a *flaith*, or from some rich *bo-aire*. This custom of giving and taking stock on hire was universal in Ireland; and it gave rise to a peculiar set of social relations which were regulated in great detail by the Brehon law. Stock given in this manner was a *taurcrec* (page 65), consequently the giving of stock was an assertion of superiority: the taking was an acknowledgment of vassalage.[2] It often happened

[1] See for all these arrangements, *Brehon Laws*, iii. 151, 153.
[2] *Ibid.* iv. 315.

that an intermediate chief who gave stock to tenants took stock himself from the king of the territory.

The tenants were of two kinds, according to the manner of taking stock:—**Saer-céiles**, or free tenants, and **Daer-céiles**, or bond tenants—the latter also called **giallna** [geelna: *g* hard] tenants. A *saer* [sare] tenant was one who took stock without giving security—nothing but a mere acknowledgment.[1] Stock given in this manner was **saer stock**, and the tenant held by **saer tenure**. A *daer* tenant was one who gave security for his stock: his stock was **daer stock**; and he held by **daer tenure.**

A king had the right to make any tenant under his rule take *saer* stock from him, whether needing them or not,[2] but in all other cases the transaction was voluntary. The saer-tenants were comparatively independent, and many of them were rich, as for instance the *bo-aires*, who were all saer-tenants to kings, chiefs, or flaiths. The payments saer-tenants had to make were reasonable. Not so the daer-tenants: they had to pay heavily, and were generally in a state of dependence. Their position was much the same as that of needy persons of our own day, who are forced to borrow at usurious interest. More stock was given to a man in daer tenancy than in saer tenancy. It was of more advantage to the chief to give daer stock than saer stock.[3] A man might change from saer to daer, or the reverse, by complying with certain conditions. If a saer tenant found he had not sufficient stock he might change to daer tenancy, and then he got more stock.[4] If a chief wished to take back his saer stock, the tenant might demand to be made a daer tenant; and then the chief, instead of getting back his stock, had to give him more.[5] If he had no more to give, and still insisted on getting back his saer stock, he got only two-thirds: the remaining third was forfeited to the tenant for disturbance.[6] A man might take saer but not daer stock from

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 195.
[2] *Ibid.* ii. 223, 225.
[3] *Ibid.* ii. 211, 213.
[4] *Ibid.* ii. 207–9–11.
[5] *Ibid.* ii. 213.
[6] *Ibid.* ii. 207.

an external king.[1] This might be unavoidable if his own chief had not stock enough to hire out.

When a man took daer stock he had to do so openly, without any concealment; and his *Fine* [finna], i.e. his family, including all his sept or kindred within certain degrees of relationship, might if they pleased veto the whole transaction.[2] From this it would appear that daer tenancy was viewed with disfavour by the community, for the reason, no doubt, that it tended to lower the status of the tribe.[3] There was a sharp distinction between the two orders of tenants, the daer tenants being very much the lower in public estimation. When the chief gave evidence in a court of law against his tenants, the saer tenants were privileged to give evidence in reply, but the daer tenants were not.[4]

A daer or bond tenant was so called, not that he was a slave or an unfree person, but because by taking daer-stock he forfeited some of his rights as a freeman, and his heavy payments always kept him down. In theory the taking of daer-stock was voluntary;[5] for although a man who had no stock was forced of necessity to take it on hire, yet he was free to take it from any one he pleased. Accordingly the law treats the transaction as a free contract, and regards the giver and taker as voluntary parties.

The ordinary subsidy owed by a saer-tenant to his chief was called **Bes-tigi** [bess-tee] or house tribute, varying in amount according to his means or the extent of his land: it consisted of cows, pigs, bacon, malt, corn, &c. He was also bound to give the chief either a certain number of days' work, or service in war.[6] For whatever saer stock he took he had to pay one-third of its value yearly for seven years, at the end of which time the stock became his own property without further payment.[7] This was equivalent to thirty-three per cent. per annum for

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 225.
[2] *Ibid.* ii. 217.
[3] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 163.
[4] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 345.
[5] *Ibid.* ii. 223.
[6] *Ibid.* ii. 195; iii. 495.
[7] *Ibid.* ii. 195, 197, 199, 203.

seven years to repay a loan with its interest—a sufficiently exorbitant charge. He also had to send a man at stated times to pay full homage to the chief. The labour and the homage are designated in the laws as the worst or most irksome of the saer tenant's obligations.[1]

A daer tenant had to give war-service and work. His chief payment, however, was a food-supply called **Biatad** [bee'ha] or food-rent—cows, pigs, corn, bacon, butter, honey, &c.—paid twice a year. The amount depended chiefly on the amount of daer stock he took,[2] and probably varied according to local custom. At the end of his term he had, under ordinary circumstances, to return all the stock or its equivalent.[3] But if the chief died at the end of seven years, the tenant, provided he had paid his food rent regularly, kept the stock.[4] The daer tenants were the principal purveyors of the chief, who could be sure of a supply of provisions all the year round for his household and numerous followers, by properly regulating the periods of payment of his several tenants. This custom is described by several English writers as existing in their own time, so late as the time of Elizabeth.

The daer tenants were bound to give **coinmed** [coiney] or refection on visitation—that is to say, the chief was entitled to go with a company to the daer tenant's house, and remain there for a time varying from one day to a month, the tenant supplying food, drink, and sanctuary or protection from danger.[5] The number of followers and the time, with the quantity and quality of food and the extent of protection, were regulated by law according to the tenant's amount of daer stock,[6] and also according to the rank of the guest: the higher the rank the longer the time.[7] The protection might be relinquished either wholly or partly for an increase of food and drink or *vice versâ*.[8] Sometimes soldiers, in lieu of regular pay, were sent among the tenants, from whom they were entitled to receive **buannacht** or bonaght, i.e. money, food, and enter-

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 195. [2] *Ibid.* ii. 229. [3] *Ibid.* ii. 223.
[4] *Ibid.* ii. 269. [5] *Ibid.* ii. 20, note 2, 233; iii. 19.
[6] *Ibid.* iii. 21. [7] *Ibid.* ii. 20, note 2. [8] *Ibid.* ii. 21.

tainment: an eminently evil custom. The refection and bonaght, which were by far the most oppressive of the daer tenant's liabilities, seem to have been imposts peculiar to Ireland. The daer tenants were subject to several other duties, which came at irregular intervals; and in time of war the chief usually imposed much heavier tributes than at other times upon all the tenants.

If either the chief or the tenant fell into poverty, provision was made that he should not suffer by unjust pressure from the other party: 'No one,' says the law-book, 'should be oppressed in his difficulty.' [1]

Kings, bishops, and certain classes of chiefs and professional men were also entitled to free entertainment when passing through territories, with the proper number of attendants.[2] And it appears that when certain officials met to transact public business, the tenants, both saer and daer, had to lodge and feed them.[3]

The daer tenants were by far the most numerous; and accordingly this system of the chief stocking the farms was very general. It has often been compared to the *métayer* system, still found in some parts of France and Italy, according to which the landlord supplies the stock and utensils and receives half the produce.

The text of the laws gives no information regarding the circumstances that led some to become saer tenants and others daer tenants; and the whole subject is involved in considerable obscurity. But a careful study of the text will enable one to gather that this is probably how matters stood. All who took land had to pay the chief certain subsidies—as we have said—independently of what they had to pay for stock. Those who chose to become saer tenants did so because they had stock of their own, either quite or nearly sufficient, and they took stock in small quantity, either to make up the amount they needed, or whether needing it or not to comply with the universal custom of *taurcrec.* The daer tenants on the other hand were poor men who had to take all their stock—or nearly

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 339. [2] *Ibid.* iv. 347, 349, 351.
[3] *Ibid.* iii. 21.

all—on hire; and they had to give security because they were poor, and because they took such a large quantity. In their case the subsidies for land and the payments for stock are in the laws commonly mixed up so as to be undistinguishable.

The power and influence of a chief depended very much on the amount of stock he possessed for lending out: for besides enriching him, it gave him all the great advantage over his tenants which the lender has everywhere over the borrower. This practice was so liable to abuse that the compilers of the Brehon code attempted to protect borrowing tenants by a multitude of precise detailed rules. Sir Henry Maine considers that the payments made by the Irish tenants for stock developed in time into a rent payment in respect of land.

Seven different modes are enumerated in the Senchus Mor in which the parties might legally separate or dissolve their agreement.[1] The regulations regarding these include very careful provisions—penalties in the shape of heavy compensation payments—to prevent either the chief or the tenant—whether in saer or daer tenancy—from terminating the agreement in an arbitrary fashion, as well as to protect each against any neglect or misconduct on the part of the other.[2] The tenure of all was therefore secure, in whatever way they held their lands.

The law throughout shows plainly a desire to be just to all. 'In the selection of their rules [regarding land] they have exhibited an honest and equitable spirit.'[3] There is an evident endeavour to protect tenants from oppression by the higher classes. This is explained by the fact that it was drawn up not by chiefs or landlords, but by classes of persons—professional judges and lawyers—who had no reason to be biassed towards one side or the other, but whose sympathies would naturally be with those liable to be oppressed. They did not indeed frame the laws, they merely put the old customs into shape; but they took care to include all provisions tending to preserve the tenants' rights—as well indeed as those of the chiefs.

[1] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 313. [2] *Ibid.* ii. 313 *et seq.*
[3] *Brehon Laws*, iv., Richey in Introd. cxl.

Though the custom of visiting tenants' houses for coiney or refection was carefully safeguarded in the Brehon law, it was obviously liable to great abuse. In imitation of the Irish, the Anglo-Irish lords adopted the custom of Coyne and Livery,[1] which in several forms was known by various other names—*coshering*, *cuddying*, *cutting*, *spending*, &c. The first of them to practise it was Maurice Fitzgerald the first earl of Desmond, in 1330; and his example was followed by the earl of Ormond, the earl of Kildare, and others, as well as by the Irish chiefs.[2] It was such a crying evil that several acts of parliament were passed, making it high treason; but they were seldom carried into effect. Whenever a military leader could get no money to pay his soldiers after an expedition, he adopted the simple plan of sending them with arms in their hands among the people—most commonly the settlers—to extract payment for themselves in food and money. This was coyne and livery: and the evil custom was continued with little intermission for many generations.

But the Anglo-Irish coyne and livery was very different from the Irish *coinmed*. For the Irish chiefs—though apt enough to abuse their privileges—were more or less restrained by old customs and by the letter of the law; they could not claim refection from any but those who legally owed it, and the amount, however heavy, was strictly defined.[3] Even a king could not exceed his proper allowance.[4] For excesses of any kind the law prescribed penalties. But the Anglo-Irish lords made no distinctions, and were restrained by neither old customs nor legal rules. They cared nothing for the Brehon law. They simply turned their followers loose over the whole country to do as they pleased, and the Irish chiefs, breaking through their own customs, only too often followed their example. It is from English writers we get the most vehement denunciations of the custom. Davies says that when the English had learned

[1] Coyne and livery—food for man and horse. *Coyne* is the Irish *coinmed* or *coiney*; *livery* is French—food for a horse.

[2] Davies, *Discoverie*, 195, ed. 1747. [3] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 233, 257, 259.

[4] *Brehon Laws*, iv. 337, and Richey in Introd. cciv.

coyne and livery, 'they used it with more insolency and made it more intollerable;'[1] and that the soldiers, while they were quartered on the people, committed murders, robberies, and many other crimes.[2] Several times he states that it almost destroyed the English settlements; for the settlers, ruined by constant exactions, fled the country in great numbers, while those that remained joined the Irish.[3] In one passage, seeming at a loss for words strong enough, he says—quoting from an ancient writer—that it would ruin hell itself if introduced there.[4]

The tenants hitherto spoken of—the saer and daer tenants—were all free men. Each had a house of his own, the right to a share of the tribe land and to the use of the commons. They had also some political rights; yet the daer tenants lay under some degree of serfdom. We now come to treat of the non-free classes. The term 'non-free' does not necessarily mean servile. The non-free people were those who had scarcely any rights—some none at all. They had no claim to any part of the tribe land or to the use of the commons; and except under very restricted conditions they could not enter into contracts. Yet some justice was done to them: for if a freeman made a forbidden contract with a non-free person, the former was punished, while the non-free man had to be compensated for any loss he incurred by the transaction.[5] Their standing varied, some being absolute slaves, some little removed from slavery, and others far above it. That slavery pure and simple existed in Ireland in early times we know from the law-books as well as from history; and that it continued to a comparatively late period is proved by the testimony of Giraldus Cambrensis, who relates that it was a common custom among the English to sell their children and other relatives to the Irish for slaves—Bristol being the great mart for the trade. Slaves in those days formed a recognised item of traffic in Ireland. They must have been very numerous in the twelfth century; for at the synod held in Armagh in 1171, the clergy came to the

[1] Davies, *Discoverie*, p. 175, ed. 1747. [2] *Ibid.* 190.
[3] *Ibid.* 153, 189. [4] *Ibid.* 33. [5] *Brehon Laws*, ii. 289.

conclusion that the Norman invasion was a curse from heaven as a punishment for the inhuman traffic in slaves; and they anathematised the whole system and decreed that all English slaves were free to return to their own country. How far this decree took effect we are not told.[1]

The non-free people were of three classes, who are distinguished in the law and called by different names:—the **Bothach**, the **Sencleithe**, and the **Fudir**. The persons belonging to the first two were herdsmen, labourers, squatters on waste lands, horse-boys, hangers-on and jobbers of various kinds—all poor and dependent. But they enjoyed one great advantage: they were part of the tribe, and had consequently the right to live within the territory and to support themselves by their labour.

The third class—the *Fudirs*—were the lowest of the three. Though permitted by the chief to live within the territory, they had no right of residence, for they were not members of the tribe. A fudir was commonly a stranger, a fugitive from some other territory, who had by some misdeed, or for any other reason, broken with his tribe and fled from his own chief to another who permitted him to settle on a portion of the unappropriated commons land. But men became fudirs in other ways, as we shall see. Like the céiles, the fudirs were distinguished into *saer* and *daer*.[2] The saer fudirs were those who were free from crime, and who, coming voluntarily, were able to get moderately favourable terms from the chief. They were permitted to take land from year to year, and they could not be disturbed till the end of their term. Allowance had to be made to them for unexhausted improvements, such as manure. As they were permitted a settlement by the grace of the chief, they were reckoned a part of the chief's *fine* or family.[3] Outside these small privileges, however, they were tenants at will. It would seem indeed that the chief might demand almost anything he pleased from a fudir tenant, and if refused might turn him off.[4] Any

[1] *Hib. Expugn.* lib. i. cap. xviii.; see also Harris's *Ware*, ii. chap. xx.
[2] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 10, 11. [3] *Ibid.* iv. 283. [4] *Ibid.* iii. 131.

freeman might give evidence against a fudir: but the fudir could not give evidence in reply.[1]

Some of the fudir tenants however who accumulated wealth were much better circumstanced. If there were five of them under one chief, each possessing at least 100 head of cattle, they might enter into partnership so as to answer for each other's liability. In this case they enjoyed privileges that put them almost on a level with the céiles or tenants. They had a share in the tribe land and in the commons: they took stock from the chief, and paid *biatad* or food rent. They paid their part of any fines that fell on the sept from the crimes of individuals: and they took their share of any property left to the finè or sept like the ordinary tenants.[2] But these must have been the rare exceptions.

The daer fudirs were escaped criminals, captives from other districts or other countries, convicts respited from death, persons sentenced to fine and unable to pay, purchased slaves, &c. If a daer fudir took land it did not belong to him during occupation;[3] he was merely permitted to till it: he was a tenant at will, having no right whatever in his holding. He was completely at the mercy of the chief, who generally rackrented him so as to leave barely enough for subsistence. Some daer fudirs were mere slaves: and those who were not were little better: St. Patrick while in captivity at Slemish was a daer fudir. The daer fudirs belonged to the land on which they were settled, and could not leave it. The land kept by a flaith or noble in his own hands was commonly worked by daer fudirs: and none but a flaith could keep them on his estate. Yet their lot was not hopeless: the law favoured their emancipation: a daer fudir could become a saer fudir in course of time under certain conditions.

The settlement of fudirs was disliked by the community and discouraged by the Brehon law:[4] for it curtailed the commons land; and while it tended to lower the status of the tribe, it raised the power of the chief, who in cases of dispute could bring all his fudirs into the

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 131.
[2] *Ibid.* iv. 39, 43.
[3] *Ibid.* iii. 131.
[4] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 175.

field. Any social disturbance, such as rebellion, invasion, civil war, &c., in which many were driven from their homes and beggared, tended to increase the number of the fudirs. Spenser, Davies, and other early English writers speak of the Irish tenants as in a condition worse than that of bondslaves, and as taking land only from year to year. No doubt the tenants they had in view were the fudirs, who must have been particularly numerous during the Irish wars of Elizabeth. It is evident from the Brehon law that the fudirs were a most important class on account of their numbers; for as they tended to increase in the disturbed state of the country from the ninth century down, they must ultimately have formed a very large proportion of the population.

As the number of persons who held land as private property, as well as the total extent of land so held, increased in course of time, we find that the letting and hiring by ordinary contract, without reference to saer or daer tenure, became more prevalent. The later law tracts show that the old tenures and these newer contracts existed side by side, till the whole Irish land system was swept away in the reign of James I.

The tenants of all kinds were protected—more or less—by old customs and by the Brehon law, which also safeguarded the rights of the landlord as well as those of the tenant. The law expressly provided that the chief should not exact excessive rent or subsidy from the tenants. Nevertheless the state of things described in the last few pages obviously tended to increase the power of the chiefs and to throw the land more and more into their hands; and the movement in this direction was accelerated by the English settlement. For when the English lords and undertakers settled down on their Irish estates, they found it more convenient to adopt the native customs of receiving rent, as squaring in with the habits of the people and consequently giving less trouble. But while they carefully preserved the landlord rights, and went even further by imposing various tributes unknown to the ancient Irish,[1]

[1] O'Donovan in *Book of Rights*, Introd. xvii. to xxii.

they disregarded the rights of the tenants as laid down in the Brehon law: and the neighbouring Irish chiefs readily followed their example.

The ancient rights of the tenants, i.e. of the céiles or freemen, as may be gathered from the preceding part of this chapter, were chiefly three:—A right to some portion of the arable or tribe land, and to the use of the commons: a right to pay no more than a fair rent, which in the absence of express agreement was adjusted by law:[1] a right to own a house and homestead, and with certain equitable exceptions, all unexhausted improvements.[2] Unless under special contract in individual cases the fudirs had no claim to these—with this exception however, that the saer fudirs had a right to their unexhausted improvements. Among those who held the tribe land there was no such thing as eviction from house or land, so that all had what was equivalent to fixity of tenure. If a man failed to pay the subsidy to his chief, or the rent of land held in any way, or even the debt due for stock, it was recovered like any other debt, by distress, never by process of eviction.[3]

When the authority of the Brehon law became weakened—chiefly through the influence exerted by the English settlement—the tenants lost their best support, and all their rights were gradually swept away, till land, houses, and improvements of every kind came—in the absence of express contract—to be considered as the exclusive property of the landlords; and the tenants were nearly all driven into the position of the fudirs of old. The fudirs in fact never died out, but rather increased and multiplied under the combined influences of perpetual social disturbance and force from above. The tenants at will, who were so numerous within our own memory, were fudirs under another name, with no rights worth mentioning. They were indeed altered in many ways by the modern conditions of society, but not altered at all in their helplessness and misery.

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 159; ii. 317; iii. 127; iv. 97.
[2] *Ibid.* iv. 133, 135, 137.
[3] *Ibid.* i. 123, 157, 159, 169, 187, 215, 219, 231, 233; iv. 133, 135, 137.

But customs that have grown up slowly among a people during more than a thousand years take long to eradicate. They subsist as living forces for generations after their formal abolition; and notwithstanding the lapse of three centuries, there has remained all along, and remains to this day—lurking deep down in the minds of the people—a sort of unconscious memory of the old right to subsistence from the soil, and a disbelief in the landlord's absolute ownership of the land. The people never in fact quite forgot or quite relinquished their old Brehon law claims; and the cruel land war went on and became more bitter with lapse of time—the tenants ever getting the worst—till recent legislation restored to them a portion of their lost rights and privileges.

In Ireland the land descended in three different ways. FIRST: as **private property**. When a man had land understood to be his own, it would naturally pass to his heirs [1]—i.e. his heirs in the sense then understood, not necessarily in our sense of the word; or he might if he wished divide it among them during his life, a thing that was sometimes done. In the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick we find cases of the sons inheriting the land of their father.[2] There appears in the Brehon law a tendency to favour descent of land by private ownership: 'The Brehon law writers seem to me distinctly biassed in favour of the descent of property in individual families.'[3] It should be remarked that those who inherited the property, inherited also the liabilities.[4]

SECOND: The land held by the chief as mensal estate, descended, not to his heir, but to the person who succeeded him in the chiefship. This is what is known as descent by **Tanistry**.

THIRD: By **Gavelkind**. When a tenant who held a part of the Tribe Land died, his farm did not go to his children: but the whole of the land belonging to the finè

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 399; iv. 45, 69.
[2] Stokes's *Tripartite Life*, 109, 111. [3] Maine, *Anc. Inst.* 193.
[4] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 399 to 405; iv. 45.

or sept was redivided or *gavelled* among all the male adult members of the sept—including the dead man's adult sons —those members of the sept who were illegitimate getting their share like the rest.[1] The domain of the chief and all land that was private property were exempt. The redistribution by gavelkind on each occasion extended to the sept—not beyond. Davies (*Letter to Lord Salisbury*, ed. 1787, p. 280) complains with justice that this custom prevented the tenants from making permanent improvements.

Davies asserts that land went by only two modes—Tanistry and Gavelkind: but both the laws and the annals show that descent by private ownership was well recognised.

The two customs of Tanistry and Gavelkind formerly prevailed all over Europe, and continued in Russia till a very recent period; and Gavelkind, in a modified form, still exists in Kent. They were abolished and made illegal in Ireland in the reign of James I.; after which land descended to the next heir according to English law.

CHAPTER X

FOSTERAGE: PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES: SANCTUARIES

Fosterage. One of the leading features of Irish social life was fosterage, which prevailed from the remotest period. It was practised by persons of all classes, but more especially by those in the higher ranks. A man sent his child to be reared and educated in the home and with the family of another member of the tribe, who then became foster father, and his children the foster brothers and foster sisters of the child.

Fosterage was subject to stringent regulations, which were carefully set forth in the law. A special portion of

[1] Davies, *Discoverie*, ed. 1747, p. 169; *Brehon Laws*, iv. 7, 9.

the Senchus Mor—occupying twenty-four pages of the second volume—is devoted to it; in which the rights, duties, and obligations of the parties are detailed with minute particularity: and it is referred to in other parts of the law. I give here the most important of these regulations.

A child might be sent to fosterage at one year of age. Boys might be kept till seventeen and girls till fourteen, which were considered the marriageable ages: then they returned to their parents' house. There were **two** kinds of fosterage—**for affection** and **for payment**. In the first there was no fee: in the second the fee varied according to rank. For the son of an *og-aire* or lowest order of chief, it was three cows; and from that upwards to the son of a king, for which the fee was eighteen cows. For girls, as giving more trouble, requiring more care, and as being less able to help the foster parents in after life, it was something higher. The child, during fosterage, was treated in all respects like the children of the house: he worked at some appropriate employment or discharged some suitable function for the benefit of the foster father.

The foster child was to be educated by the foster parents. The education prescribed was very sensible, aiming much more directly at preparing for the future life of the child than do some of our modern educational systems. The following was the technical or non-literary part of their education. The sons of the humbler ranks were to be taught how to herd kids, calves, lambs, and young pigs; how to kiln-dry corn, to prepare malt, to comb wool, and to cut and split wood: the girls how to use the needle according to their station in life, to grind corn with a quern, to knead dough, and to use a sieve. The sons of chiefs were to be instructed in horsemanship, archery, swimming, and chess-playing, and in the use of the sword and spear; and the daughters in sewing, cutting out, and embroidery. For the neglect of any of these there was a fine of two-thirds of the fosterage fee. There were minute regulations regarding clothes, food, and means of amusement, all of which varied according to rank. How

far the foster father was liable for injuries suffered by the foster child at the hands of others, or for his misdeeds, is set forth with great care.

Precautions were taken—in the shape of penalties—to prevent the fosterage being terminated before the time by either party without cause. At the termination of the period of fosterage the foster father gave the foster son a parting gift, the amount of which was regulated according to rank and other circumstances. If in after life the foster father fell into poverty, and had no children of his own to support him, he had a claim on his foster son for maintenance, provided he had duly discharged all the duties of fosterage, including that of the parting gift. The foster mother had a similar claim. It was usual for a chief to send his child to be fostered to one of his own sub-chiefs: but the parents often chose a chief of their own rank. Sometimes a chief had a large number of children at fosterage: in the Book of the Dun Cow we are told that at one time Achy Beg, king of Cliach, the district round Knockainy in Limerick, had forty boys in his charge, sons of the nobles of Munster.[1] In cases where children were left without parents or guardians, and required protection, the law required that they should be placed in fosterage under suitable persons.[2]

Fosterage was the closest of all ties between families. The relationship was regarded as something sacred. The foster children were often more attached to the foster parents and foster brothers than to the members of their own family: and cases have occurred where a man has voluntarily laid down his life to save the life of his foster father or foster brother. The custom of fosterage existed in Ireland—though in a modified form—even so late as the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

There was also a **literary fosterage**, when a boy was sent to be reared up by a professor and instructed for a degree. The foster father was 'to instruct him without reserve, to prepare him for his degree, to chastise him

[1] O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, i. 357.
[2] *Brehon Laws*, ii. Introd. lvii.

without severity, and to feed and clothe him while learning his legitimate profession.' The amount of fee was regulated by law. All gains earned by the pupil while learning were to be paid to the tutor, and also the first fee he earned after leaving him. If the teacher fell into poverty in after life his foster pupil was bound to support him. The relationship of literary fosterage was regarded as still more close and sacred than that of ordinary fosterage.[1]

Gossipred. When a man stood sponsor for a child at baptism, he became the child's godfather, and gossip to the parents. Gossipred was regarded as a sort of religious relationship between families, and created mutual obligations of regard and friendship.

Fosterage and gossipred were fiercely denounced by early English writers. But gossipred in a modified form exists to this day all over the empire; and the custom of fostering was formerly common among the Welsh, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Scandinavians. After the Invasion the colonists readily fell in with fosterage and gossipred; and it was quite usual for the Anglo-Irish nobles to give their children to be fostered by the Irish chiefs. The government always looked on this practice with disfavour, for their aim was to keep the races asunder; and several times laws were enacted making fosterage with the Irish high treason; but these laws were generally disregarded.

Public assemblies. In early times when means of intercommunication were very limited, it was important that the people should hold meetings to discuss divers affairs affecting the public weal, and for other business of importance. In Ireland popular assemblies and meetings of representatives were very common, and were called by various names—*Fes*, *Dal*, *Mordal*, *Aenach*, &c. They were continued to a late period. Spenser in the following accurate description notices them as frequent in his time:—'There is a great use amongst the Irish, to make great assemblies together upon a rath or built house to parlie (as they say) about

[1] For Fosterage, see *Brehon Laws*, ii. 147, 349; and Harris's *Ware*, i. ch. xi.

matters and wrongs between township and township, or one private person and another.'[1]

The **Aenach** or Fair was an assembly of the people of every class belonging to a district or province. Some fairs were annual; some triennial. According to the most ancient traditions, many of these *aenachs*—perhaps all—had their origin in funeral games; and we know as a fact that the most important of them were held at ancient cemeteries, where kings, or renowned heroes, or other noted personages—of history or legend—were buried. One was held at the great cemetery of Croghan in Connaught round the grave and monumental pillar-stone of King Dathi. A triennial fair was held at Carman or Wexford, which lasted for a week—the first week in August. At Tlachtga, now known as the Hill of Ward near Athboy in Meath, there was a yearly fire-festival beginning on the eve of *Samin* (1st November). In the fire kindled here the druids burned their sacrifices; and while it lasted all other fires in Ireland were to be extinguished or covered. A fair-meeting was held in the month of May every year on the Hill of Ushnagh in Westmeath; and during this time it was the custom all through Ireland to light fires through which cattle were driven as a preservative for the coming year against disease. This old pagan custom of driving cattle through fire on May day, subsisted in some parts of the country within my own memory. The most remarkable of all those fairs was held yearly on the 1st August and the following days at Tailltenn, now Teltown on the Blackwater, midway between Navan and Kells. This was originally instituted—according to the old legend—by the Dedannan king Lugad of the Long Hand, in commemoration of his foster mother *Tailltiu* from whom the place took its name. At all these places there are ancient cemeteries: at the three last named—Tlachtga, Ushnagh, and Tailltenn—Tuathal the Legitimate, king of Ireland in the second century, built three royal forts, selecting these sites no doubt on account of their celebrity from immemorial ages. Fairs of less importance were held in

[1] *View of the State of Ireland*, ed. 1809, p. 126.

innumerable other places all over the country; and constant references are made to them in the old literature.

Important affairs of various kinds, national or local, were transacted at these meetings. The laws were publicly promulgated or rehearsed to make the people familiar with them. There were councils or courts to consider divers local matters—questions affecting the rights, privileges, and customary usages of the people of the district or province—acts of tyranny or infringement of rights by powerful persons on their weaker neighbours—disputes about property—the levying of fines—the imposition of taxes for the construction or repair of roads—the means of defence to meet a threatened invasion, and so forth. All these functions were discharged by persons specially qualified.

Then there were sports and pastimes, to suit high and low:—music and dancing, jugglery and masked plays by *druith* or buffoons, horse-racing and all sorts of athletic sports, and the recitation of poetry, genealogy, history, and historic tales. For excellence in the various performances, the king or chief, or some other important person, distributed prizes. Many of those sports and pastimes were also carried on at feasts and banquets, where the recitation of tales was an amusement rarely omitted. Marriages formed a special feature of the fair of Tailltenn. From all the surrounding districts the young people came with their parents, bachelors and maidens being kept apart in separate places, while the fathers and mothers made matches, arranged the details, and settled the contracts. After this the couples were married, the ceremonies being always performed at a particular spot. All this is vividly remembered in tradition to the present day; and the people of the place still point out what they call the 'Marriage Hollow.' Meetings continued to be held annually in Teltown on the first of August till the beginning of the present century; greatly changed from what they were in the olden time, but to the last athletic sports a main feature.

In pagan times there were various druidic rites at all the *aenachs*: but these were superseded by Christianity;

and after the time of St. Patrick Masses, singing of hymns, and other religious observances, constituted part of the proceedings.

The fair meeting was also a market for the sale and purchase of all kinds of commodities :—Food and clothes, live stock, gold and silver articles—the traffic in these last, as we are told, attracting numbers of foreigners, who came over sea to sell their tempting wares to the natives. These markets were a great convenience in those days when there were few centres of population, and hardly any such places as shops, where people could buy what they wanted. The fairs of the present day are remnants of the *aenachs*; but almost the only one of the old functions retained is that of buying and selling, with a faint imitation of the sports.[1]

It is probable that the Danish raids caused the discontinuance of many of the *aenachs*, though some were afterwards revived. The last fair of Carman was held in 1033 by Donogh Mac Gilla Patrick, king of Leinster; and the last—i.e. the last formal celebration—at Tailltenn was held by King Roderick O'Connor in 1168.

The most celebrated of all the ancient meetings was the **Fes** or Convention of Tara. This, like the other great meetings, was originally connected with funeral games; for there was here a cemetery in which many illustrious persons were interred. The old tradition states that it was instituted by *Ollamh Fodla* [Ollav Fola]. It was originally held, or intended to be held, every third year; but within the period covered by our authentic records—since the fourth or fifth century—it was generally convened only once by each king, namely at the beginning of his reign—or if oftener it was on some special emergency.

This Fes was a convention of the leading people, not an *aenach* for the masses: and it represented all Ireland. The provincial kings, the minor kings and chiefs, and the most distinguished representatives of the learned profes-

[1] For an ancient Irish poetical description of the proceedings at aenachs or fairs, see the 'Fair of Carman': O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, ii. 523.

sions—the *ollaves* of history, law, poetry, &c.—attended. It lasted for seven days, from the third day before *Samin* (1st November) to the third day after it: the formal meetings for the consideration of important matters were held in the great Banqueting Hall. The king of Ireland feasted the company every day: there was a separate compartment for the representatives of each province with their numerous attendants; and each guest had his special place assigned according to rank. We have very detailed descriptions of all these arrangements in our ancient literature: all of any value have been published with translations by Dr. Petrie in his essay on Tara. The last convention was held here by King Dermot the son of Fergus, A.D. 560.

At the Fes of Tara—as well indeed as at all other important meetings—elaborate precautions were taken to prevent quarrels or unpleasantness of any kind. Anyone who struck or wounded another, used insulting words, or stole anything, was punished with death: and all persons who attended were free for the time from prosecution and from legal proceedings of every kind.

Maigens or Sanctuaries. The plot of land around the house of a person of rank was a sort of asylum. This was called a **Maigen** or precinct: and within it no man should break the peace without the consent of the owner. The higher the rank the larger the maigen. The maigen of a *bo-aire*, the lowest rank entitled to the privilege, was the smallest: it extended the cast of a spear all round his house. That of an *aire-desa* extended two casts. The extent doubled for each rank upwards to the king of the *tuath*, whose maigen extended sixty-four casts round his residence. The maigen of a provincial king or of the king of Ireland included the whole plain on which the palace stood. There was also a maigen—varying according to rank—round the dwelling of an ecclesiastic, and also round a church: the sanctuary of a church was often called **Termon** land. The archbishop of Armagh had the same extent of maigen as the king of Ireland.

The right accorded to the maigen was for the protec-

tion of the owner, not in the interest of the person protected. No act of violence was to be committed within it by an outsider. A fugitive, no matter what his crime—if he entered a maigen with the consent of the owner—was safe for the time being. But as the right of asylum belonged to the owner only, if he waived his claim the fugitive might be arrested. This formality also was necessary:—the owner should guarantee that no loss should accrue to the pursuer or aggrieved party by the temporary shelter afforded to the fugitive—that the original claim should hold good—that the fugitive should not be enabled to finally escape from justice. If this guarantee was not given the pursuer was not bound to respect the sanctuary. The fugitive was in fact simply protected against immediate vengeance and secured a fair trial. A person who committed any act of violence within a maigen—provided he knew it was one, and that the necessary formalities were observed—had to pay damages to the owner, the amount depending on honour-price, on the extent of the violence, and on other circumstances.

This law of sanctuary in and around a house existed also in early times in England, and in a form almost identical with that laid down in the Brehon law.[1]

CHAPTER XI

MUSIC

[Chief authorities:—O'Curry, Manners and Customs, with Sullivan's Introd.; Lynch, Cambrensis Eversus, chap. iv.; Bunting, Anc. Mus. of Ireland; Petrie, Anc. Mus. of Ireland; Joyce, Anc. Irish Music; G. F. Graham's Introd. to Francis Robinson's Melodies of Ireland.]

FROM very early times the Irish were celebrated for their skill in music. Our native literature abounds in references to music and to skilful musicians, who are always spoken of in terms of the utmost respect.

[1] *Brehon Laws*, iii. Introd. ciii. For the whole law of Precincts see *Brehon Laws*, iv. 227.

In the early ages of the church many of the Irish ecclesiastics took great delight in playing on the harp; and in order to indulge this innocent and refining taste, they were wont to bring with them in their missionary wanderings a small portable harp. This fact is mentioned not only in the Lives of some of the Irish saints, but also by Giraldus Cambrensis.[1] Figures of persons playing on harps are common on Irish stone crosses, and also on the shrines of ancient reliquaries. It appears from several authorities that the practice of playing on the harp as an accompaniment to the voice was common in Ireland as early as the fifth century.

During the long period when learning flourished in Ireland, Irish professors and teachers of music would seem to have been almost as much in request in foreign countries as those of literature and philosophy. In the middle of the seventh century, Gertrude, daughter of Pepin, mayor of the palace, abbess of Nivelle in France, engaged SS. Foillan and Ultan, brothers of the Irish saint Fursa of Peronne, to instruct her nuns in psalmody.[2] In the latter half of the ninth century the cloister schools of St. Gall were conducted by an Irishman, Maengal or Marcellus, a man deeply versed in sacred and human literature, including music. Under his teaching the music school there attained its highest fame; and among his disciples was Notker Balbulus, one of the most celebrated musicians of the middle ages.[3]

That the cultivation of music was not materially interrupted by the Danish troubles appears from several authorities. Warton, in his 'History of English Poetry,'[4] says:—'There is sufficient evidence to prove that the Welsh bards were early connected with the Irish. Even so late as the eleventh century the practice continued among the Welsh bards of receiving instruction in the bardic profession [of poetry and music] from Ireland.' The Welsh records relate that Gryffith ap Conan, king of

[1] *Top. Hib.* iii. 12. [2] Bolland. *Acta SS.*, 17 Mar. p. 595.
[3] Schubiger, *Die Sängerschule St. Gallens*, p. 33. [4] Vol. i. Diss. i.

Wales, whose mother was an Irishwoman, and who was himself born in Ireland, brought over to Wales—about the year 1078—a number of skilled Irish musicians, who in conference with the native bards reformed the instrumental music of the Welsh.[1]

But the strongest evidence of all—evidence quite conclusive as regards the particular period—is that of Giraldus Cambrensis, who seldom had a good word for anything Irish. He heard the Irish harpers in 1185, and gives his experience as follows:—'They are incomparably more skilful than any other nation I have ever seen. For their manner of playing on these instruments, unlike that of the Britons (or Welsh) to which I am accustomed, is not slow and harsh, but lively and rapid, while the melody is both sweet and sprightly. It is astonishing that in so complex and rapid a movement of the fingers the musical proportions [as to time] can be preserved; and that throughout the difficult modulations on their various instruments, the harmony is completed with such a sweet rapidity. They enter into a movement and conclude it in so delicate a manner, and tinkle the little strings so sportively under the deeper tones of the base strings—they delight so delicately and soothe with such gentleness, that the perfection of their art appears in the concealment of art.'[2]

For centuries after the time of Giraldus music continued to be cultivated uninterruptedly, and there must have been an unbroken succession of great professional harpers. That they maintained their ancient pre-eminence down to the seventeenth century there is abundant evidence, both native and foreign, to prove. Among those who were massacred with Sir John Birmingham, in 1328, was the blind harper Mulrony Mac Carroll, 'chief minstrel of Ireland and Scotland,' 'of whom it's reported that no man in any age ever heard, or shall hereafter hear, a better timpanist (harper).'[3]

The Scotch writer John Major, early in the sixteenth

[1] Harris's *Ware*, ii. 184. [2] *Top. Hib.* iii. 11.
[3] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1328, note w.

century, speaks of the Irish as most eminent in the musical art. Richard Stanihurst (1584) mentions in terms of rapturous praise an Irish harper of his day named Cruise; and Drayton (1613) has the following stanza in his 'Polyolbion':—

> 'The Irish I admire
> And still cleave to that lyre,
> As our Muse's mother;
> And think till I expire,
> Apollo's such another.'

The great harpers of those times are, however, mostly lost to history. It is only when we arrive at the seventeenth century that we begin to be able to identify certain composers as the authors of existing airs. The oldest harper of great eminence coming within this description is Rory Dall (blind) O'Cahan, who, although a musician from taste and choice, was really one of the chiefs of the Antrim family of O'Cahan. He was the composer of many fine airs, some of which we still possess. He visited Scotland with a retinue of gentlemen about the year 1600, where he died after a short residence.

Thomas O'Connallon was born in the county Sligo early in the seventeenth century. He seems to have been incomparably the greatest harper of his day, and composed many exquisite airs. We have still extant a short and very beautiful Irish ode in praise of his musical performances written by some unknown contemporary bard, which has been several times translated. After his death, which happened in or about 1700, his brother Laurence travelled into Scotland, where he introduced several of the great harper's compositions.

A much better known personage was Turlogh O'Carolan or Carolan: born in Nobber, county Meath, about 1670: died in 1738. He became blind in his youth from an attack of smallpox, after which he began to learn the harp; and ultimately he became the greatest Irish musical composer of modern times. Like the bards of old he was a poet as well as a musician. Many of his Irish songs are published in 'Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy' and elsewhere. A large part of his musical compositions are preserved,

and may be found in various published collections of Irish airs. Carolan belonged to a respectable family, and like Rory Dall, became a professional musician from taste rather than from necessity. He always travelled about with a pair of horses, one for himself and the other for his servant who carried his harp; and he was received and welcomed everywhere by the gentry, Protestant as well as Catholic.

The harp is the earliest musical instrument mentioned in Irish literature. It was called **Crot** or **Cruit**, and was of various sizes, from the small portable hand harp to the great bardic instrument six feet high. It was commonly furnished with thirty strings, but sometimes had many more; and it was always played with the fingers or finger nails. Several harps of the old pattern are still preserved in museums in Dublin and elsewhere, the most interesting of which is the one now popularly known as Brian Boru's harp in Trinity College, Dublin. This is the oldest harp in Ireland—probably the oldest in existence. Yet it did not belong to Brian Boru; for Dr. Petrie[1] has shown that it could not have been made before the end of the fourteenth century. It is small, being only thirty-two inches high; it had thirty strings; and the ornamentation and general workmanship are exquisitely beautiful.

The Irish had a small stringed instrument called a **Timpan**, which had only a few strings—from three to eight. It was played with a bow or plectrum, and the strings were probably stopped with the fingers of the left hand like those of a violin. The **bagpipe** was known in Ireland from very early times: the form used was that now commonly known as the Highland pipes—slung from the shoulder, the bag inflated by the mouth. The other form—resting on the lap, the bag inflated by a bellows—which is much the finer instrument, is of modern invention. The bagpipe was in very general use, but it was only the lower classes that played on it: the harp was the instrument of the higher classes, among whom harp-playing was a very usual accomplishment. Crofton Croker tells

[1] In his memoir of this harp: Bunting, *Anc. Mus. of Irel.* 1840, p. 42.

us that in the last century almost everyone [of the better classes] played on the Irish harp. The harp, the timpan, and the bagpipe were the principal musical instruments of the ancient Irish; but several others, such as the war trumpet, bells, &c., are mentioned in our old records. Many specimens of ancient war trumpets and bells are preserved in the National Museum, Dublin.

The early history of music in Ireland is very obscure; and what makes it all the more so is the fact that music and poetry are often confounded, so that one sometimes finds it impossible to determine to which of the two the passages under notice refer. The confusion no doubt arose from the circumstance that the same man was formerly often both poet and musician. Music is indeed often specially mentioned, but always very vaguely; and the airs that tradition has handed down to us are almost the only means we have of forming an opinion of the state of musical education in those old times.

There was not in Ireland, any more than elsewhere, anything like the modern developments of music. If there was harmony—and that there was seems plainly proved by the passage in Giraldus—it was of the very simplest kind, and not brought into much prominence. There were no such sustained and elaborate compositions as operas, oratorios, or sonatas. The music of ancient Ireland consisted wholly of short airs, each with two strains or parts—seldom more. But these, though simple in comparison with modern music, were constructed with such exquisite art that of a large proportion of them it may be truly said no modern composer can produce airs of a similar kind to equal them.

The Irish musicians had three styles, the effects of which the old Irish romance writers describe with much exaggeration, as the Greeks describe the effects produced by the harp of Orpheus. Of all three we have well-marked examples descending to the present day. The **Gann-tree**, which incited to merriment and laughter, is represented by the lively dance tunes and other such spirited pieces. The **Goll-tree** expressed sorrow: repre-

sented by the *keens* or death tunes, many of which are still preserved. The **Suan-tree** produced sleep. This style is seen in our lullabies or nurse tunes, of which we have many beautiful specimens.

The Irish had also what may be called **occupation tunes**. The young girls accompanied their spinning with songs—both air and words made to suit the occupation. The ploughmen encouraged and soothed their horses with the peculiarly wild and plaintive plough-whistles: and while the milking girls chanted the sweet melancholy milking songs, the cows submitted all the more gently in the milking bawns. We have still a smith's song which imitates the sound of the hammers on the anvil, like Handel's 'Harmonious Blacksmith.' Like the kindred Scotch, each tribe had a war march which inspirited them when advancing to battle. Specimens of all these may be found in the collections of Bunting, Petrie, Joyce, and others.

The music of Ireland, like our ballad poetry, has a considerable tendency to sadness. The greater number of the *keens*, lullabies, and plough-whistles, and many of our ordinary tunes, are in the minor mode, which is essentially plaintive; and the same plaintive character is impressed on many of the major airs by a minor seventh note. This tendency to sadness was the natural outcome of the miseries endured by the people during long centuries of disastrous wars and unrelenting penal laws. But it is a mistake to suppose that the prevailing character of Irish music is sad: by far the largest proportion of the airs are either light-hearted dance tunes or song airs full of energy and spirit without a trace of sadness.

In early times they had no means of writing down music; and musical compositions were preserved in the memory and handed down by tradition from generation to generation; but in the absence of written record many were lost. While we have in our old books the Irish words of numerous early odes and lyrics, we know nothing of the music to which they were sung. It was only in the last century that people began to collect Irish airs from singers and players, and to write them down. Some few

faint attempts were made early in the century: but later on more effectual measures were taken. Several meetings of harpers—the first in 1781—were held at Granard in the county Longford, under the patronage and at the expense of James Dungan, a native of Granard, then living at Copenhagen. Each meeting was terminated by a ball, at which prizes were distributed to those who had been adjudged the best performers. Dungan himself was present at the last ball, when upwards of 1,000 guests, as we are told, assembled.

A few years later, a meeting to encourage the harp was organised in Belfast by a society of gentlemen under the leadership of Dr. James Mac Donnell. This meeting, which was held in Belfast in 1792, and which was attended by almost all the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood, was followed by more practical results than those held at Granard. The harpers of the whole country had been invited to attend. But the confiscations, the penal laws, and the social disturbances of the preceding century and a half had done their work. The native gentry who loved music and patronised the harpers were scattered and ruined, and the race of harpers had almost died out. Only ten responded to the call, many of them very old and most of them blind, the decayed representatives of the great harpers of old. Edward Bunting, a local musician, was appointed to meet them, and after they had all exhibited their skill in public, and prizes had been awarded to the most distinguished, he took down the best of the airs they played.

This was the origin of Bunting's well known collection of Irish music. He published three volumes, the first in 1796, the second in 1809, and the third in 1840. Another collection, edited by George Petrie, was published by Holden of Dublin about the year 1840. A volume of Carolan's airs was published by his son in 1747 and republished by John Lee of Dublin in 1780; but many of Carolan's best airs are omitted from this collection. A great number of Irish airs were printed in four volumes of a Dublin periodical called 'The Citizen' in 1840 and

1841; and these were followed up by a special volume of airs by the editor. In 1844 was published 'The Music of Ireland,' by Frederick W. Horncastle, of the Chapel Royal, Dublin, a number of airs with accompaniments and English words; most of these airs had been already published, but some were then printed for the first time. About the same time a collection of airs by John P. Lynch was published by S. J. Pigott, Dublin. In 1855 a large volume of Irish music hitherto unpublished was edited, under the auspices of 'The Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland,' by Dr. George Petrie. A volume of airs never before published was edited by me in 1873, collected by myself from singers and players in the course of many years. A second instalment of the Petrie collection was printed in 1877, edited by F. Hoffman. These are the principal original collections of Irish music extant; other collections are mostly copied from them. About 1870 Bussell of Dublin issued a large collection of Irish airs, edited by Dr. Francis Robinson, with a good Introduction on Irish Music by George Farquhar Graham: all the airs in this had been published before. Later on two volumes of the Dance Music of Ireland was edited by Mr. R. M. Levey of Dublin; some of which then appeared for the first time.

The man who did most in modern times to draw attention to Irish music was Thomas Moore. He composed his exquisite songs to old Irish airs; and songs and airs were published in successive numbers or volumes, beginning in 1807. They at once became popular, not only in the British Islands, but on the Continent and in America, and Irish music was thenceforward studied and admired where it would have never been heard of but for Moore. The whole collection of songs and airs—well known as 'Moore's Melodies'—is now published in one small cheap volume. In the first half of the present century a great number of original songs were written by Samuel Lover, nearly all to old Irish airs. The 'Spirit of the Nation' contains a good many old Irish airs with words from the 'Nation' newspaper, Dublin. A volume of most characteristic Irish

popular songs composed by Alfred Perceval Graves was published in 1882 to Irish airs already elsewhere published, the music arranged by C. Villiers Stanford.

We know the authors of many of the airs composed within the last 200 years: but these form the smallest portion of the whole body of Irish music. All the rest have come down from old times, scattered fragments of exquisite beauty, that remind us of the refined musical culture of our forefathers. To this last class belong such well known airs as Savourneen Dheelish, Shule Aroon, Molly Asthore, The Boyne Water, Garryowen, Patrick's Day, Eileen Aroon, Langolee (Dear Harp of my Country), The Groves of Blarney (The Last Rose of Summer), &c., &c. To illustrate what is here said, I may mention that of about 120 Irish airs in all 'Moore's Melodies,' we know the authors of less than a dozen: as to the rest, nothing is known either of the persons who composed them or of the times of their composition.

As the Scotch of the western coasts and islands of Scotland were the descendants of Irish colonists, preserving the same language and the same traditions, and as the people of the two countries kept up intimate intercourse with each other for many centuries, the national music of Scotland is, as might be expected, of much the same general character as that of Ireland. The relationship of Irish and Scotch music may be stated as follows. There is in Scotland a large body of national melodies, composed by native musicians, airs that are Scotch in every sense, and not found in Irish collections. In Ireland there is a much larger body of airs, acknowledged on all hands to be purely Irish, and not found in Scotch collections. But outside of these are great numbers of airs common to the two countries, and included in both Scotch and Irish collections. In regard to a considerable proportion of them, it is now impossible to determine whether they are originally Irish or Scotch. A few are claimed in Ireland that are certainly Scotch; but a very large number claimed by Scotland are really Irish, of which the well known air 'Eileen Aroon' or 'Robin Adair' is an example.

From the earliest times it was a common practice among the Irish harpers to travel through Scotland. How close was the musical connection between the two countries is hinted at by the Four Masters, when in recording the death of Mulrony Mac Carroll they call him the 'chief minstrel of Ireland and Scotland': and there is abundant evidence to show that this connection was kept up till towards the end of the last century. Ireland was long the school for Scottish harpers, as it was for those of Wales: 'Till within the memory of persons still living, the school for Highland poetry and music was Ireland; and thither professional men were sent to be accomplished in these arts.'[1] Such facts as these sufficiently explain why so many Irish airs have become naturalised in Scotland.

It is not correct to separate and contrast the music of Ireland and that of Scotland as if they belonged to two different races. They are in reality an emanation direct from the heart of one Celtic people; and they form a body of national melody superior to that of any other nation in the world.

CHAPTER XII

ART

[Chief authorities: Early Christian Art in Ireland; and Early Christian Archit. in Ireland, both by Miss Margaret Stokes; J. O. Westwood on the Book of Kells; Petrie's Round Towers of Ireland.]

Penwork. In Ireland art was practised in four different branches:—Ornamentation and illumination of manuscript books; metal work; sculpture; and building. Art of every kind reached its highest perfection in the period between the end of the ninth and the beginning of the twelfth century.

The special style of pen ornamentation was quite peculiar to the Celtic people of Ireland; and it was developed in the course of centuries by successive generations of artists who brought it to marvellous perfection. It was

[1] Jameson's ed. of *Letters from the North of Scotland* (1818), vol. ii. p. 65 note.

mainly, though not exclusively, the work of ecclesiastics, and it was executed for the most part in the monasteries. Its most marked characteristic is interlaced work formed by bands, ribbons, and cords, which are curved and twisted and interwoven in the most intricate way, something like basketwork infinitely varied in pattern. These are intermingled and alternated with zigzags, waves, spirals, and lozenges; while here and there among the curves are seen the faces or forms of dragons, serpents, or other strange-looking animals, their tails or ears or tongues elongated and woven till they become merged and lost in the general design. Nothing is done at random: the designs are all symmetrical. This ornamentation was chiefly used in the capital letters, which are generally very large: one capital of the Book of Kells covers a whole page. The pattern is often so minute and complicated as to require the aid of a magnifying glass to examine it. The penwork is throughout illuminated in brilliant colours, which in several of the old books are even now very little faded after the lapse of so many centuries.

The Book of Kells, a vellum manuscript of the Four Gospels, probably written in the seventh century, is the most beautifully written Irish book in existence. Each verse begins with an ornamental capital; and upon these capitals, which are nearly all differently designed, the artist put forth his utmost efforts. Miss Stokes, who has examined the Book of Kells with great care, thus speaks of it:—'No effort hitherto made to transcribe any one page of this book has the perfection of execution and rich harmony of colour which belongs to this wonderful book. It is no exaggeration to say that, as with the microscopic works of nature, the stronger the magnifying power brought to bear upon it, the more is this perfection seen. No single false interlacement or uneven curve in the spirals, no faint trace of a trembling hand or wandering thought can be detected. This is the very passion of labour and devotion, and thus did the Irish scribe work to glorify his book.'[1]

[1] *Early Christian Architecture in Ireland*, p. 127. See p. 18 *supra*.

Professor J. O. Westwood of Oxford, who has examined the best specimens of ancient penwork all over Europe, speaks even more strongly. In his little work on the Book of Kells he writes:—'It is the most astonishing book of the Four Gospels which exists in the world' (p. 5): 'How men could have had eyes and tools to work them [the designs] out, I am sure I, with all the skill and knowledge in such kind of work which I have been exercising for the last fifty years, cannot conceive (p. 10). I know pretty well all the libraries in Europe where such books as this occur, but there is no such book in any of them . . . there is nothing like it in all the books which were written for Charlemagne and his immediate successors' (p. 11).

Speaking of the minute intricacy and faultless execution of another Irish book, Mr. Westwood says:—'I have counted [with a magnifying glass] in a small space scarcely three quarters of an inch in length by less than half an inch in width, in the Book of Armagh, no less than 158 interlacements of a slender ribbon pattern formed of white lines edged with black ones.' The Book of Durrow and the Book of Armagh, both in Trinity College, are splendidly ornamented and illuminated; and of the latter, some portions of the penwork surpass even the finest parts of the Book of Kells.[1]

Giraldus Cambrensis, when in Ireland in 1185, saw a copy of the Four Gospels in St. Brigit's nunnery in Kildare which so astonished him that he has recorded—in a separate chapter of his book—a legend that it was written under the direction of an angel. His description would exactly apply now to the Book of Kells. 'Almost every page is illustrated by drawings illuminated with a variety of brilliant colours. In one page you see the countenance of the Divine Majesty supernaturally pictured; in another the mystic forms of the evangelists: here is depicted the

[1] Many of the most beautiful pages and letters of the *Book of Kells*, as well as of numerous other ancient Irish manuscripts, have been reproduced by Dr. John T. Gibbert in the *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Ireland*, a most valuable work in 5 vols. which may be seen in all the public libraries.

eagle, there the calf: here the face of a man, there of a lion; with other figures in almost endless variety. . . . You will find them [the pictures] so delicate and exquisite, so finely drawn, and the work of interlacing so elaborate, while the colours with which they are illuminated are so blended, that you will be ready to assert that all this is the work of angelic and not of human skill.'[1]

The early Irish missionaries brought their arts of writing and illuminating wherever they went, and taught them to others; and to this day numerous exquisite specimens of their skill and taste are preserved in the libraries of England, France, Germany, and Italy.

Metal work. The pagan Irish, like the ancient Britons, practised from time immemorial—long before the introduction of Christianity—the art of working in bronze, silver, gold, and enamel. Some of the antique Irish articles of metal, believed to have been made in pagan times, show great mastery over metals, and exquisite skill in design and execution. This primitive art was continued into Christian times, and being improved and enlarged by the knowledge imported from Gaul by St. Patrick's companion missionaries, was brought to its highest perfection in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It continued long after, but gradually declined owing to the general disorganisation of society in Ireland.

The ornamental designs of metal work were generally similar to those used in manuscripts, and the execution was distinguished by the same exquisite skill and masterly precision. The principal articles made by the artists—who were chiefly but not exclusively ecclesiastics—were crosses; croziers; chalices; bells; brooches; shrines or boxes to hold books or bells or relics; and book satchels, in which the two materials, metal and leather, were used. Specimens of all these—many of them of the most remote antiquity—may be seen in the National Museum in Dublin. The three most remarkable, as well as the most beautiful and most elaborately ornamented objects in this museum are the **Cross of Cong**, the **Ardagh chalice**, and the **Tara brooch.**

[1] *Top. Hib.* ii. xxxviii. Bohn's translation.

The chalice, which is 7 inches high and 9½ inches in diameter, was found a few years ago buried in the ground under a stone in old *lis* at Ardagh, in the county Limerick. Beyond this nothing is known of its history. It is elaborately ornamented with designs in metal and enamel; and, judging from its shape and from its admirable workmanship, it was probably made some short time before the tenth century.

The Tara brooch was found in 1850 by a child on the strand near Drogheda. It is ornamented all over with amber, glass, and enamel, and with the characteristic Irish filigree or interlaced work in metal. From its style of workmanship it seems obviously contemporaneous with the Ardagh chalice. In the old Irish romances we constantly read that the mantle of both men and women was fastened at the throat by a large ornamental brooch. Many of these old brooches are preserved, but the one now under notice is by far the most perfect and beautiful of all.

The cross of Cong, which is 2 feet 6 inches high, was a processional cross, made to enshrine a piece of the true cross. It is all covered over with elaborate ornamentation of pure Celtic design, and a series of inscriptions in the Irish language along the sides give its full history. It was made by order of Turlogh O'Conor king of Connaught, for the church of Tuam, then governed by Archbishop Muredach O'Duffy. The artist, who finished his work in 1123, and who deserves to be remembered to all time, was Mailisa Mac Braddan O'Hechan.

A great variety of gold ornaments may be seen in the National Museum, many of beautiful workmanship. There are several torques, all pure gold, one of which—found at Tara—is 5 feet 7 inches in length and weighs 27½ oz. There are curious crescent-shaped ornaments of thin gold, hollow globes, and numerous specimens of 'ring money,' as they are called for want of a better name. The torques were worn round the neck, but of most of the other articles the uses are unknown.

Sculpture. Artistic sculpture is chiefly exhibited in the great stone crosses, of which about forty-five still

remain in various parts of Ireland. One peculiarity of the Celtic cross is a circular ring round the intersection, binding the arms together, and supposed to symbolise eternity. Thirty-two of the forty-five existing crosses are richly ornamented, and eight have inscriptions with names of persons who have been identified as living at various times from A.D. 904 to 1150. Miss Stokes gives the dates of the stone crosses as extending over a period from the tenth to the thirteenth century inclusive. Besides the ornamentation, most of the high crosses contain groups of figures representing various subjects of sacred history, such as the Crucifixion, the fall of man, Noah in the ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, the fight of David and Goliath, &c. The ornamentation is still of the same general Celtic character that we find in metal work and in illuminated manuscripts, and it exhibits the same masterly skill and ease both in design and execution.

CHAPTER XIII

DWELLINGS, FORTRESSES, ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS

[Chief authorities:—Miss Stokes's Early Christian Architecture in Ireland; Petrie, Round Towers; O'Curry, Mann. and Cust. with Sullivan's Introduction; Keating's History of Ireland.]

Dwellings and fortresses. Before the introduction of Christianity buildings of every kind in Ireland were almost universally round. The quadrangular shape, which was first used in the churches in the time of St. Patrick, came very slowly into use; and round-shaped structures finally disappeared only in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The dwelling-houses were almost always of wood. The wall was formed of strong posts, with the intervening spaces filled with wickerwork, plastered, and often whitened or variously coloured: the roofs of the circular houses were conical, supported by a central pillar, and thatched. Sometimes the walls were made of hewn planks instead of wickerwork. Occasionally these timber houses

were oblong: in this case the roof was supported by one or two rows of pillars.

Like the houses of the Anglo-Saxons, the Germans, and the Scandinavians of the same period, the Irish dwelling-house had only one large room—at least for the men—which was used for living, eating, and sleeping in. Round the walls inside were sleeping-couches, separated by boarded partitions; and seats for ordinary use. The seats for the people of the several ranks, from the chief down, were specified with much particularity; and a person of one rank dared not occupy the seat for one of another rank. The fire was placed somewhere near the middle of the floor. There were windows protected by shutters with bars. In the houses of the better classes the doorposts and other special parts of the dwelling and furniture were often made of yew, carved and ornamented with gold, silver, bronze, and gems. We know this from the old records; and still more convincing evidence is afforded by the Brehon law, which prescribes fines for scratching or otherwise disfiguring the posts or lintels of doors, the heads or posts of beds, or the ornamental parts of other furniture.

The homestead of an *aire* or chief consisted of a group of houses, each under a separate roof, the principal one for the dwelling, the rest outhouses for servants, cows, horses, pigs, &c. The women had often separate apartments or a separate house in the sunniest and pleasantest part of the homestead: this was called the *Grianan* [greenan], i.e. sunny house.

The homesteads had to be fenced in to protect them from robbers and wild animals. This was done by digging a deep circular trench, the clay from which was thrown up on the inside. Thus was formed all round, a high mound or dyke with a trench outside: one opening was left for a door or gate. Whenever water was at hand the trench was flooded as an additional security. The ancient houses of the Gauls were fenced round in a similar manner. Houses built and fortified in the manner here described continued in use till the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

These old circular forts are found in every part of Ireland, but more in the south and west than elsewhere, many of them still very perfect—but of course the timber houses are all gone. Almost all are believed in popular superstition to be the haunts of fairies. They are known by various names, *Lis*, *Rath*, *Brugh* [broo], *Dun*, *Cashel*, and *Caher*—the cashels and cahers being usually built of stone. These are the very names found in the oldest manuscripts. Some forts are very large—300 feet or more across—so as to give ample room for the group of timber houses, or for the cattle at night. The smaller forts were the residences of the farmers. Very often the flat middle space is raised to a higher level than the surrounding land, and sometimes there is a great mound in the centre, with a flat top, on which no doubt the strong house of the chief stood. In the very large forts there are often three or more great circumvallations. A *Dun* was the residence of a *Ri* [ree] or king: according to law it should have at least two surrounding walls with water between. Round the great forts of kings or chiefs were grouped the timber dwellings of the *fudirs* and other dependents who were not of the immediate household, forming a sort of village.

In most of the forts, both large and small, whether with flat areas or with raised mounds, there are underground chambers, commonly beehive shaped, which were probably used as storehouses, and in case of sudden attack as places of refuge for women and children. The Irish did not then know the use of mortar or how to build an arch any more than the ancient Greeks; and these underground chambers are of dry stone work, built with much rude skill, the dome being formed by the projection of one stone beyond another, till the top was closed in by a single flag.

Where stone was abundant the surrounding rampart was often built of dry masonry, the stones being fitted with great exactness. In some of these structures the stones are very large, and then the style of building is termed cyclopean. Many great stone fortresses still re-

main near the coasts of Sligo, Galway, Clare, and Kerry, and a few in Antrim and Donegal: two characterstic examples are Greenan-Ely, the ancient palace of the kings of the northern Hy Neills, five miles north-west from Londonderry; and Staigue Fort near Sneem in Kerry. The most magnificent fortress of this kind in all Ireland is Dun Aengus on a perpendicular cliff right over the Atlantic Ocean on the south coast of Great Aran Island.

Beside the *dun* or *lis* there was a level space, fenced in, called a *faithche* [faha] or lawn for athletic exercises and games of various kinds, into which also the cattle might be driven at night. Every chief above a certain rank was bound by the Brehon law to keep a candle and a fire always burning at night so as to be ready for the reception of visitors. He was also bound to keep a signal fire blazing on the *faha* on dark nights for the guidance of travellers to his house; and to have a signal of some kind—generally a blaze—beside a river as a guide to a ford, if he lived near one.

For greater security dwellings were often constructed on artificial islands made with stakes, trees, and bushes, in shallow lakes: these are called *crannoges*. Communication with the shore was carried on by means of a rude boat kept on the island. Crannoge dwellings were in very general use in the time of Elizabeth; and the remains of many of them are still to be seen in our lakes.

The Irish had no walled or fortified towns. There were some considerable centres of population—towns or cities they might be called—which grew up chiefly round monasteries; but they were quite open and unprotected. The Irish learned the art of fortifying towns from the Danes and English. There was not much tendency to concentrate populations: Sir John Davies states that in 1607 there was not one fixed village in all the county Fermanagh.[1]

Churches. From the time of St. Patrick downwards, churches were built, the greater number of wood, but many of stone. The early churches built on the model of those intro-

[1] *Letter to Lord Salisbury*, ed. 1787, p. 261.

duced by St. Patrick, were small and plain, seldom more than sixty feet long, sometimes not more than fifteen, always a simple oblong in shape, never cruciform. Some of the very small ones were oratories for private or family devotions. The primitive stone churches, erected in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, are simple oblongs, small and rude. As Christianity spread, the churches became gradually larger and more ornamental, and a chancel was often added at the east end, which was another oblong, merely a continuation of the larger building. The jambs of both doors and windows inclined so that the bottom of the opening was wider than the top: this shape of door or window is a sure mark of antiquity. The doorways were commonly constructed of very large stones, with almost always a horizontal lintel: the windows were often semicircularly arched at top, but sometimes triangular headed. The remains of little stone churches of this antique pattern, of ages from the fifth century to the tenth or eleventh, are still to be found all over Ireland.

In the beginning of the eleventh century what is called the Romanesque style of architecture, distinguished by a profusion of decoration—a style that had previously been spreading over Europe—was introduced into Ireland. Then the churches, though still small and simple in plan, began to be richly decorated. We have remaining numerous churches in this style: a beautiful example is Cormac's chapel on the Rock of Cashel, erected in 1134 by Cormac Mac Carthy king of Munster. In early ages churches were often in groups of seven, a custom still commemorated in popular phraseology, as in 'The Seven Churches of Glendalough.'

Round towers. In connection with many of the ancient churches there were round towers of stone from 60 to 150 feet high, and from 13 to 20 feet in external diameter at the base: the top was conical. The interior was divided into six or seven stories reached by ladders from one to another, and each story was lighted by one window: the top story had usually four windows. The door was placed 10 or more feet from the ground outside,

and was reached by a ladder: both doors and windows had sloping jambs like those of the churches. About 80 round towers still remain, of which about 20 are perfect: the rest are more or less imperfect.

Formerly there was much speculation as to the uses of these round towers; but Dr. George Petrie, after examining the towers themselves, and—with the help of O'Donovan and O'Curry—searching through all the Irish literature within his reach for allusions to them, set the question at rest in his Essay on 'The Origin and Uses of the Round Towers.' It is now known that they are of Christian origin, and that they were always built in connection with ecclesiastical establishments. They were erected at various times from about the ninth to the thirteenth century. They had at least a twofold use: as belfries, and as keeps to which the inmates of the monastery retired with their valuables—such as books, shrines, croziers, relics, and vestments—in case of sudden attack. They were probably used also—when occasion required—as beacons and watch-towers. These are Dr. Petrie's conclusions, except only that he fixed the date of some few in the fifth century, which recent investigations have shown to be too early. It would appear that it was the frequency of the Danish incursions that gave rise to the erection of the round towers, which began to be built in the ninth century simultaneously all over the country. They were admirably suited to the purpose of affording refuge from the sudden murderous raids of the Norsemen: for the inmates could retire with their valuables on a few minutes' warning, with a good supply of large stones to drop on the robbers from the windows; and once they had drawn up the outside ladder and barred the door, the tower was, for a short attack, practically impregnable. Round towers are not quite peculiar to Ireland: about 22 are found elsewhere—in Bavaria, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Scotland, and other countries.

Later Churches. Until about the period of the Anglo-Norman invasion all the churches were small because the congregations were small, and this again chiefly resulted

from the tribal organisation which had a tendency to split up all society, whether lay or ecclesiastical, into small sections. But the territorial system of church organisation, which tended to large congregations, was introduced about the time of the Invasion. The Anglo-Normans were as we know great builders, and about the middle of the twelfth century the simple old Irish style of church architecture began, through their influence, to be abandoned. Towards the close of the century, when many of the great English lords had settled in Ireland, they began to indulge their taste for architectural magnificence, and the native Irish chiefs imitated and emulated them; large cruciform churches in the pointed style began to prevail; and all over the country splendid buildings of every kind sprang up. Then were erected—some by the English, some by the Irish—those stately abbeys and churches of which the ruins are still to be seen, such as those of Kilmallock and Mannisteranenagh in Limerick; Jerpoint in Kilkenny; Grey Abbey in Down; Bective and Newtown in Meath; Sligo; Quin and Corcomroe in Clare; Ballintober in Mayo; Knockmoy in Galway; Dunbrody in Wexford; Buttevant; Cashel; and many others.

CHAPTER XIV

VARIOUS CUSTOMS

[Chief authorities: Girald. Cambr. Top. Hib.; Lynch's Cambrensis Eversus; Harris's Ware; Spenser's View of the State of Irel. ed. 1809; Book of Rights, Introd.; Joyce's Irish Names of Places; Petrie's Tara; O'Curry's Lect. on MS. Mat. and on Mann. and Cust.]

Arms and armour. The Irish employed two kinds of foot-soldiers: *Gallaglachs* or Galloglasses and Kern. The galloglasses were heavy-armed infantry; the mode of equipping them appears to have been imitated from the English. They wore a coat of mail and an iron helmet: a long sword hung by the side, and in the hand was carried a broad heavy keen-edged axe. They are usually described as large-limbed, tall, and fierce-looking. The corselet was known in very early times, but seldom used.

The use of armour was imitated in a measure from the Danes, but chiefly from the English; at the time of the Invasion the Irish wore no armour. They never took to it very generally, but preferred to fight in saffron linen tunics: 'They go to battle without armour, considering it a burden, and deeming it brave and honourable to fight without it,'[1] which lost them many a battle. The kern were light-armed foot soldiers: they wore headpieces, and fought with a *skean*, i.e. a dagger or short sword, and with a javelin attached to a thong.[2]

'It is curious that bows and arrows are very seldom mentioned in our old writings: and the passages that are supposed to refer to them are so indistinct, that if we had no other evidence it might be difficult to prove that the use of the bow was known at all to the ancient Irish. However the matter is placed beyond dispute by the fact that flint arrow-heads are found in the ground in various parts of the country.'[3] They retained the use of bows and arrows to a late period. Spenser mentions 'their short bowes and little quivers, with bearded arrowes. And the same sort both of bowes, quivers, and arrowes are at this day to be seen among the Northerne Irish-Scots.'[4]

They used two kinds of shields. One made of wicker-work, often large enough to cover the whole body, convex outwards, and covered, like the old Greek shields, with layers of hardened hide. Spenser mentions 'their long broad shields, made but with wicker roddes.'[5] The other was a small circular shield generally made of yew wood, sometimes of bronze. Shields of both kinds were often elaborately ornamented. Specimens of the small round shield may be seen in the National Museum in Dublin.

The Irish were very dexterous in the use of the battle-axe. Giraldus Cambrensis says:—'They make use of but one hand to the axe when they strike, and extend the thumb along the handle to guide the blow: from which

[1] Girald. *Top. Hib.* iii. x. [2] Harris's *Ware*, ii. 161.
[3] See my *Irish Names of Places*, vol. ii. chap. xi.
[4] *View of the State of Ireland*, p. 95. [5] *Ibid.* 96.

neither the crested helmet can defend the head, nor the iron folds of the armour the rest of the body. From whence it has happened, even in our times, that the whole thigh of a soldier, though cased in well-tempered armour, hath been lopped off by a single blow of the axe, the whole limb falling on one side of the horse, and the expiring body on the other.'[1]

Ancient weapons of three different materials are found in every part of Ireland:—of stone, of bronze, and of iron and steel. In the National Museum in Dublin there is a large collection of all three kinds. The stone implements are hammers and axes, and flint arrow-heads, spear-heads, and knives. Those of bronze are chiefly axes, spear-heads, and swords, all beautifully formed. The weapons of stone are in general much older than those of bronze, and belong to a period beyond the reach of history: the bronze weapons come within the domain of our ancient literature. Those of iron and steel, which are chiefly swords, daggers, and spears, belong to a comparatively late period: the axes spoken of by Giraldus were steel.

Spenser praises the Irish soldiers: 'They are very valiaunt, and hardie, for the most part great indurers of colde, labour, hunger, and all hardnesse, very active and strong of hand, very swift of foot, very vigilant and circumspect in their enterprises, very present in perils, very great scorners of death.' 'I have heard some great warriours say, that in all the services which they had seen abroad in forraigne countreyes they never saw a more comely man than the Irishman nor that commeth in more bravely to his charge.'[2] Froissart's testimony is perhaps stronger: 'No man at arms, be he ever so well mounted, can overtake them, they are so light of foot. Sometimes they leap from the ground behind a horseman and embrace the rider so tightly that he can no way get rid of them.'[3] The French gentleman Castide who gave the account of the Irish to Froissart, was himself taken prisoner in this way by the Irish chief whose daughter he afterwards married.

[1] *Top. Hib.*, Dist. iii., chap. x. Bohn's Translation.

[2] Spenser, *View*, 116, 119.

[3] Johnes's *Froissart*, ii. 578.

Cavalry were not much used in ancient Ireland: for example we do not find them mentioned in the battle of Clontarf. But from the earliest times individual chiefs and other distinguished persons were in the habit of riding on horseback, and they were very particular in the choice of their horses. They rode without saddle, stirrup, or spur. After the Invasion cavalry came into general use. Each horseman had at least one footman to attend him—called a *gilla* or *dalteen*—armed only with a dart or javelin having a long thong attached. Sometimes a horse soldier had two or three dalteens.

Chariots. Our literature affords unquestionable evidence that chariots were used in Ireland from the most remote ages. In the ancient historical tales, the chiefs are constantly described as going to battle in war-chariots, each driven by an *ara* or charioteer: and we know from the Lives of the early saints that Patrick, Bridget, Columkille, Declan, and other Irish saints, travelled in two-horse chariots in their missionary journeys through the country. The war-chariots are sometimes described as furnished with sharp spikes and scythe-blades like those of the old Britons: while in times of peace, kings, queens, and chiefs of high rank rode in chariots luxuriously fitted up and ornamented with gold, silver, and feathers.[1]

Roads. That the country was well provided with roads we know, partly from our ancient literature, and partly from the general use of chariots. There were five main roads leading from Tara through the country in different directions; and numerous minor roads—all with distinct names—are mentioned in the annals. There must have been roads everywhere in the inhabited districts: for we know that provision was made in the Brehon law for repairing them. And it was enjoined that a *brugaid* or public victualler should have roads leading from different directions to his house.

Boats. The ancient Irish used three kinds of boats:—small sailing vessels; canoes hollowed out from the trunks of trees; and currachs. The currach was made of

[1] See *Cambr. Evers.* chap. xii.

wickerwork covered with hides: some currachs had a double hide-covering, some a triple. These boats are constantly mentioned in lay as well as in ecclesiastical literature; and they are used still round the coasts, but tarred canvas is employed instead of skins.

Dress. In ordinary life the men wore a large frieze mantle or overall which covered them down to the ankles: among the rich it was usually of fine cloth, often variegated with scarlet and other colours. Their trousers were very tight fitting: the *barread* or hat was cone-shaped and without a leaf. The women wore saffron-coloured tunics, with many folds and much material—sometimes more than a dozen yards. The married women wore a kerchief on the head: the unmarried girls went bareheaded.

Mills. Water mills were known from very remote ages, and were more common in ancient than in modern times. We know from the Lives of the Irish saints that several of them erected mills where they settled, shortly after the introduction of Christianity. Water mills are mentioned in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, showing that they were in use before his time: and it appears certain that they were introduced as early as the time of Cormac Mac Art in the third century.[1] A small mill was a usual appendage to a *ballybetagh* or ancient townland; it was not owned by an individual, but was held in common by a number of persons of the richer classes. Mills are often mentioned in grants and charters of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and laws relating to them are laid down in detail in the Brehon code. In most houses there was a quern or handmill, and the use of it was part of the education of every woman of the working class. The quern continued in use until very recently both in Ireland and Scotland.

Surnames. Hereditary family names became general in Ireland about the time of Brian Boru, viz. in the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century: and some authorities assert that they were adopted in obedience to an ordinance of that monarch. The manner of

[1] Petrie's *Tara*, 164.

forming the names was very simple. Each person had one proper name of his own. In addition to this all the members of a family took as a common surname the name of their father, with *Mac* (son) prefixed, or of their grandfather or some more remote ancestor, with *ua* or *o* (grandson or descendant) prefixed. Thus the O'Neills are so called from their ancestor *Niall* Glunduff king of Ireland (A.D. 916), and 'John O'Neill' means John the descendant of *Niall*: the Mac Carthys of Desmond have their surname from a chief named *Carrthach*, who lived about the year 1043. The same custom was adopted in Scotland: but while in Ireland *O* was much more general than *Mac*, in Scotland the *O* was very rarely chosen, and nearly all the Scotch Gaelic family names begin with *Mac*.

Burial. Three modes of disposing of the dead were practised in ancient Ireland. First mode: the body was buried as at present. Second: sometimes the body of a king or warrior was placed standing up in the grave, fully accoutred and armed: King Laeghaire was buried in this manner in the rampart of his rath at Tara, with his face turned towards his foes the Leinstermen. Third: the body was burned and the ashes were deposited in the grave in an ornamented urn of baked clay. Of the first two kinds we have historical record: of the third we have none; but we know that it was in very general use in prehistoric times, for urns containing ashes and burnt bones are found in graves in every part of Ireland.

The body or urn was very often enclosed in a sort of rude stone coffin formed of flags, called a kist or kistvaen, placed underground near the surface: the bodies of those that fell in battle were often disposed of in this manner, so that kistvaens are now found in great numbers on ancient battlefields. Often that sort of stone monument now known as a *cromlech* was constructed, formed of one great flat stone lying on the tops of several large standing stones, thus enclosing a rude chamber in which one or more bodies or urns were placed. These cromlechs—which are sometimes wrongly called *druids' altars*—remain in every part of Ireland; and skeletons, and urns contain-

ing burnt bones have been found under many of them. Sepulchral monuments of the same class are found all over Europe, and even in India.

Over the grave of any distinguished person it was usual to heap up a great mound of clay or stones containing, in or near its centre, a beehive-shaped chamber of dry masonry communicating with the exterior by a long narrow passage. The body or urn was placed in the chamber; in some chambers, rude shallow stone coffins have been found. The largest sepulchral mounds in the whole country are those of Newgrange, Knowth, and Dowth, all on the Boyne, five miles above Drogheda.

A mound of stones raised over a grave is called a *cairn*. In old times people had a fancy to bury on the tops of hills; and the summits of very many hills in Ireland are crowned with cairns, under every one of which—in a stone coffin—reposes some chief renowned in the olden time.

At the burial of every distinguished person there were funeral games as among the ancient Greeks: cattle were sometimes slain as part of the ceremonial. Debased traces of the old funeral rites have come down to our own day in the customs at wakes and funerals.

Bards. In early ages a man who had mastered the seventh year's course of study (p. 156) and devoted himself specially to poetical composition was a bard. The words *bard* and *filè* [filla] are often understood in the same sense. In later times the word had commonly a narrower and lower signification—merely a verse-maker or rhymer.

All the Celtic nations both of the Continent and of the British Isles had their bards, whom they held in great estimation. In Ireland the bards were both esteemed and dreaded; their praise was eagerly sought after and liberally rewarded. The poet Erard Mac Cosse relates that on one occasion he visited Mailroney king of Connaught (died A.D. 954), who greatly honoured him, and at parting presented him with a chessboard, a sword, fifty cows, and thirty steeds.[1] But they were a very irritable race, and could compose an *aer* or satire which was believed to

[1] O'Curry, *Mann. and Cust.* i. 129.

have some preternatural influence for mischief, so as to inflict bodily or mental injury, such as raising blotches on the face, &c.

From the earliest times the bards were very numerous; and they were so exacting in their claims that they became an intolerable burden on the people. On three several occasions it was determined to abolish the order altogether, but each time they were saved by the intervention of the king and people of Ulster. The last crisis, which came in the reign of Hugh Mac Ainmire, was the most dangerous of all; when King Hugh, provoked by their insolence, proposed, at the Convention of Drumketta in 574, that the order should be suppressed and the bards banished; but at the intercession of St. Columba a middle course was adopted. Their number was greatly reduced, and strict rules were laid down for the regulation of their conduct in the future. The ollaves, under the direction of their chief, Dallan Forgaill, were required to open schools, as described in Part II. page 155. Lands were assigned for their maintenance, and the ollaves who possessed these lands were to support the inferior bards as teachers, so as to relieve the people from their exactions. It was on that occasion that Dallan Forgaill, in gratitude, composed the Amra on St. Columkille, spoken of at page 14. By this wise measure the bards seemed to have regained the confidence of the people.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion the bards were found by the invaders a great obstacle to the conquest of the country, as they stirred up the people to resistance by their spirited lays. Many determined attempts were made to exterminate them by stringent and cruel enactments, which it would seem had not much effect; for we have still extant many of their poetical effusions, written during the periods of fiercest persecution.

Chess. I have already mentioned several of the games of the ancient Irish: I will here mention one more—chess. Chess-playing was one of the favourite amusements of the Irish kings and chiefs, who had always their own chess-boards and men. In the Will of Cahirmore, king of Ireland in the second century, we are told that he bequeathed

his chessboard and chessmen to his son Olioll Kedach;[1] and the game is constantly mentioned in the very oldest Irish tales, as for instance in the *Tain-bo-Quelnè*. In the ancient tale called 'The Courtship of Etain' in the Book of the Dun Cow, Midir the fairy king of Bri-leith comes on a visit to King Achy. 'What brought thee hither?' said Achy. 'To play chess with thee,' answered Midir. 'Art thou good at chess?' said Achy. 'Let us prove it,' said Midir. 'The queen is asleep,' said Achy, 'and the house in which are the chessboard and men belongs to her.' 'Here I have as good a set of chess,' said Midir. That was true indeed; for it was a board of silver and pure gold; and every angle was illuminated with precious stones; and the man-bag was of woven brass wire.

One specimen of a chessman—an ivory king—may be seen in the National Museum, Dublin.

For further information the reader may consult O'Donovan's Introduction to the Book of Rights.

[1] *Book of Rights*, p. 201.

PART II

IRELAND UNDER NATIVE RULERS

(FROM THE MOST ANCIENT TIMES TO 1172)

In the beginning of this Second Part the narrative is legendary, like the early accounts of all other nations. Inasmuch as the legends of early Irish history, apart from the germ of truth they contain, are interwoven with much of the romantic and poetical literature of the country, they ought to be given, more or less briefly, in every history of Ireland.

This period includes the Danish invasions, which never broke the continuity of the monarchy in Ireland as they did in England. It ended about 1172; for after that time there was no longer a supreme native king over Ireland.

CHAPTER I

THE LEGENDS OF THE EARLY COLONIES[1]

[Chief authorities for Chaps. I., II., and IV.: Annals of Four Mast. and other Irish Annals; Keating's Hist. of Ireland; O'Curry's Lect. on MS. Mat. and on Mann. and Cust.; Irish Nennius; O'Flaherty's Ogygia; Lynch's Cambrensis Eversus; Petrie's Tara.]

The Parthalonians: the first colony, A.M. 2520. The first man that led a colony to Ireland after the flood was a chief named Parthalon, who came hither from Greece, with

[1] The whole of this chapter, as the title indicates, is legendary; as much so as the stories of the Siege of Troy, or of the Seven Kings of

his wife, his three sons, and 1,000 followers. He was forced to fly from Greece because he had murdered his father and mother; and he took up his abode on the little island of Inish-Samer in the river Erne, just below the waterfall of Assaroe at Ballyshannon. Afterwards he and his followers settled on Moy-Elta, the level district between Dublin and Ben-Edar or Howth.

But the curse of the parricide pursued the race; for at the end of 300 years they were destroyed by a plague, which carried off 9,000 of them in one week on Moy-Elta. The legend relates that they were buried at Tallaght near Dublin; and we know that this name Tallaght—or as it is written in Irish, *Tam-lacht*—signifies 'plague-grave.'

The Nemedians: the second colony, A.M. 2850. After the destruction of the Parthalonians, Ireland remained a solitude for 30 years. Then came Nemed from Scythia, with a fleet of 34 ships. These Nemedians were harassed by the Fomorian pirates, but Nemed defeated them in several battles. After some years he and 3,000 of his followers died of the plague in Oilen-Arda-Nemed (the island of Nemed's hill), now the Great Island in Cork Harbour.

The Fomorians were a race of sea-robbers, who, according to some, came originally from Africa. Their two chiefs, Morc and Conang, lived in a wonderful fortress-tower called Tor-Conang, on Tory Island off the coast of Donegal; and after the death of Nemed they tyrannised over his people and made them pay an intolerable yearly tribute of corn, butter, cattle, and *children*. So the Nemedians, unable to

Rome. The legends related here, and in the beginning of next chapter, receive some corroboration from external sources: for example, most of the sites are known to this day by their old names, and contain remains that exactly correspond with the legends. There is accordingly some reason to believe that these stories are shadowy memories of real events. But the dates—which are those given by the *Four Masters*—are all fanciful:—no reliance can be placed on them, except that they probably indicate the proper order of the events. O'Flaherty, in his *Ogygia*, has very much reduced the antiquity of these pre-Christian Irish dates. It should be observed that the *Four Masters*, partly following the Septuagint, count 5199 years from the Creation to the Birth of Christ, instead of 4004, the reckoning now generally accepted.

bear their miserable state any longer, rose up in a fury (A.M. 3066), destroyed Tor-Conang, and slew Conang himself and all his family. But Morc attacked them soon after; and a dreadful battle was fought on the sea beach, in which nearly all the combatants fell. And those who were not killed in battle were drowned; for the combatants fought so furiously that they gave no heed to the advancing tide-wave which rose and overwhelmed them. Of the Nemedians only the crew of one bark escaped; and Morc and his Fomorians remained masters of Tory.

Seven years after the battle a part of the Nemedians fled from Ireland under three chiefs, Simon-Brec, Ibath, and Britan-Mail. Simon-Brec and his people went to the north of Greece; and from them were descended the Firbolgs. Ibath and his followers, who were the ancestors of the Dedannans, made their way to that part of Greece in which the city of Athens is situated. And those who went with Britan-Mail settled in the north of Alban or Scotland. The few Nemedians that remained behind dwelt in Ireland for more than 200 years under the bitter tyranny of the Fomorians.

The Firbolgs: the third colony, A.M. 3266. The people of Simon-Brec increased and multiplied in Greece. But they fared no better there than at home; for the Greeks kept them in hard bondage, and forced them to bring soil on their backs from the rich lowlands to fertilise the rocky and barren hill-sides. And from the leathern wallets in which they brought the clay they were called Firbolgs or bagmen. At length they fled from Greece under the leadership of the five sons of Dela, who led them to Ireland. These brothers partitioned the country into five provinces, Ulster, Leinster, Connaught, and the two Munsters. This ancient division into provinces has survived, with some alteration, to the present day (see page 60). The Firbolgs held sway for only 36 years when they were conquered by the next colony.

The Dedannans: the fourth colony, A.M. 3303. Ibath and his people having settled in the district round Athens,

learned magic from the Greeks till they became more skilled than their masters. While they dwelt here it came to pass that the Syrians invaded Greece; and every day a battle was fought between the Greeks and the invaders. Now the Greeks prevailed in these battles through the necromancy of the Dedannans, who restored to life, each evening, those Greeks who had been slain during the day. But the Syrians, having consulted their druid, found means to defeat the Dedannan spells, and falling on the Greeks, slaughtered them without mercy.

The Dedannans now dreading the vengeance of the Syrians, secretly fled from the country, and journeyed northwards to *Lochlann* or Scandinavia, where they settled down for a time. They lived in four cities, and taught the people of Lochlann arts and sciences. From this they migrated, under the command of their great chief, Nuada of the Silver Hand, to the north of Scotland; where having sojourned for seven years they crossed over to Ireland (A.M. 3303). They brought with them from Lochlann 'four precious jewels,' one of which was the wonderful Coronation Stone called the Lia Fail, which they set up at Tara, and which remained there ever after.

As soon as they had landed they burned their ships; and shrouding themselves in a magic mist, so that the Firbolgs could not see them, they marched unperceived to Slieve-an-Ierin Mountain in the present county Leitrim. And they sent without delay one of their champions to the Firbolgs with a demand either to yield possession of the country or fight for it. The Firbolgs chose battle; and the two armies fought for four successive days on the plain of South Moytura near Cong. The Firbolgs were defeated, their king was slain, and the Dedannans remained masters of the island.

The Fomorians still continued to plague the country; and twenty-seven years after the battle of South Moytura, a battle was fought between them and the Dedannans at North Moytura near Sligo, where the Fomorians were defeated and all their chief men slain. The two plains of Moytura are well known, and both are covered all over

with mounds, cromlechs, and other sepulchral monuments—the relics of two great battles.

The Milesians: the fifth colony, A.M. 3500. The legends dwell with fond minuteness on the origin, the wanderings, and the adventures of this last and greatest of the Irish colonies. From Scythia their original home they began their long pilgrimage. Their first migration was to Egypt, where they were sojourning at the time that Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea. Driven from Egypt because they had taken part with Moses, they went to Crete, where they lived for a time; thence back again to Scythia; and after wandering through Europe for many generations they arrived in Spain. Here they abode for a long time; and at last they came to Ireland with a fleet of thirty ships under the command of the eight sons of the hero Milèd or Milesius, and anchored at the mouth of the river Slaney (A.M. 3500).

At this time the country was governed by three Dedannan kings, the sons of Kermad of the Honey-mouth, namely Mac Coill, Mac Kecht, and Mac Grena, whose three queens, Eirè, Fodla [Fo'la], and Banba, gave their three names to Ireland. Having been driven out to sea by the spells of the Dedannans, the Milesians landed a second time at Inver-Skena or Kenmare Bay. Marching north to Tara, they met there the three kings and demanded from them the surrender of the country or battle. The cunning Dedannans pretended that they had been taken by surprise and treated unfairly; and the dispute was referred to Amergin the chief druid or *brehon* of the Milesians. Now this druid delivered a just judgment even against his own people. He decided that the Milesians should re-embark at Inver-Skena and retire nine waves from the shore; and if after this they could make good their landing, the country should be given up to them. And to this both parties agreed.

But no sooner had the Milesians got nine waves from shore than the Dedannans, by their magical incantations, raised a furious tempest which scattered and wrecked the fleet along the rocky coasts. Five of the eight brothers

perished, and the remaining three, Eremon, Eber-Finn, and Amergin, landed with the remnant of their people. Soon afterwards two battles were fought, one at Slieve Mish near Tralee, and the other at *Tailltenn*, now Teltown on the Blackwater in Meath, in which the Dedannans were defeated; and the Milesians took possession of the country.

The two brothers Eber-Finn and Eremon now (A.M. 3501) divided Ireland, Eber-Finn taking the two Munsters and Eremon Leinster and Connaught. And they gave Ulster to their nephew Eber, son of their brother Ir who had perished in the magic storm. As for Amergin, he, being a seer, got no land for himself; but he was made chief brehon and poet of the kingdom. From that time forward Ireland was ruled by a succession of Milesian monarchs till the reign of Roderick O'Conor who was the last native over-king.

CHAPTER II

THE KINGS OF PAGAN IRELAND [1]

THE brothers Eber-Finn and Eremon had no sooner settled down in their new kingdoms than they quarrelled and fought a battle (A.M. 3501) near Geashill, in the present King's County, in which Eber was defeated and slain, and Eremon became sole king. By far the greater number of the Irish pagan kings after Eremon fell in battle or by assassination: a few only of the most distinguished need be noticed here.

Tighernmas [Teernmas], who began his reign A.M. 3581, was the first of the Irish kings to work gold in a regular way: it was mined and smelted in a woody district on the Wicklow side of the river Liffey. He distinguished the various classes of his people by the numbers of colours in their garments: a slave had one colour;

[1] In the early part of this chapter the matters related are legendary, and the dates, which are taken from the *Four Masters*, are quite untrustworthy. As we approach the reign of Laeghaire [Leary] there is a constantly increasing proportion of ascertained fact in the records, and the chronology is at least approximately correct.

a peasant had two; a soldier three; a *brugaid*, or public hospitaller, four; a chieftain five; a king or a queen, and also an *ollave* or doctor, six. Tighernmas, we are told, was miraculously destroyed, with a multitude of his people, while they were worshipping the great national idol Crom Cruach on the plain of Moy Slecht in Brefney, on the eve of the pagan festival of *Samin* (p. 89).

The mighty king Ollamh Fódla [Ollav Fōla]—A.M. 3922—established the *Fes* or meeting of Tara, where the nobles and learned men of the kingdom met every third year for some days before and after *Samin* or the first of November, to revise the laws and examine the historical records; and their proceedings were entered in the national record called the Psalter of Tara. 'It was he also that appointed a chief over every *tuath* or cantred and a *brugaid* over every townland, who were all to serve the king of Ireland.' (Four Masters, A.M. 3922.)

About 300 years before the Christian era,[1] Macha of the Golden Hair, the queen of Cimbaeth [Kimbay] king of Ulster, built the palace of Emania, which for more than 600 years continued to be the residence of the Ulster kings. Here, in after ages, the Red Branch Knights were trained in military accomplishments and deeds of arms. The foundation of this palace is taken as the starting-point of authentic Irish history by the annalist Tighernach, who states that all preceding accounts are uncertain (see p. 28).

Hugony the Great, king of Ireland soon after the foundation of Emania, divided Ireland into twenty-five parts among his twenty-five children; and this subdivision continued in force for many ages after.

Achy Feidlech [Fealagh], who ascended the throne a little before the Christian era, abolished Hugony's sub-division and restored the ancient division into five provinces, over each of which he placed a tributary king. This monarch built the palace of Croghan for his daughter, the celebrated *Medb* [Maive] queen of Connaught, where the kings of that province afterwards resided.

[1] The exact time, as determined by Tighernach, is 305 B.C. See *Four Masters*, i. Introd. xlvi.

According to the most trustworthy accounts the king who reigned at the time of the Incarnation was Conary I., or Conary the Great. In his time occurred the seven years' war between Maive queen of Connaught and Conor Mac Nessa king of Ulster, described at page 37. Conary was killed by a band of pirates in the palace of Brudin Daderga on the river Dodder near Dublin.

Some time in the first century of the Christian era the Attacottic or plebeian races, i.e. the Firbolgs, Dedannans, and Fomorians, whom the Milesians had enslaved, rose up in rebellion, wrested the sovereignty from their masters, and almost exterminated the Milesian princes and nobles: after which they chose Carbery Kinncat for their king. But the Milesian monarchy was after some time restored in the person of Tuathal [Toohal] the Legitimate, who, returning from exile, ascended the throne towards the end of the first century.

This king Tuathal took measures to consolidate the monarchy. Before his time the over-kings had for their personal estate only a small tract round Tara. But he cut off a portion from each of the provinces and formed therewith the province of Meath, to be the special demesne or estate of the supreme kings of Ireland. This new province included the present counties of Meath, Westmeath, and Longford, with portions of the neighbouring counties—Monaghan, Cavan, King's County, Kildare, &c. In three ancient assembly places belonging to three of the old provinces he built palace-forts which remain to this day:—Tlachtga in Munster, Ushnagh in Connaught, and Tailltenn in Ulster—all thenceforward belonging to the new province (see p. 89). And gathering together the chief men of the country, he made them swear the solemn old pagan oath—by the sun and wind and all the elements—that they would give the sovereignty of Ireland to his descendants for ever. He celebrated the *Fes* of Tara with great state; and he re-established the three great fairs of Tlachtga, Ushnagh, and Tailltenn, which he celebrated with much formality.

At this time Leinster was ruled by a king named Achy

Ainkenn, who obtained one of king Tuathal's daughters in marriage. But after some time getting tired of her, he pretended that she was dead and induced the king to give him his second daughter. Each sister was ignorant of what had befallen the other; but soon after the second marriage the two met by accident in the palace, and they were so overwhelmed with astonishment, grief, and shame, that they both died immediately. To avenge this great crime Tuathal marched an army into Leinster, and imposed an intolerable tribute on the province, to be paid by the Leinstermen every second year to the kings of Ireland.

Whatever amount of truth may be in this story, one thing is certain, that the kings of Ireland from very early times claimed from the Leinstermen an enormous tribute which was known as the Boruma or Boru. It was never paid without resistance more or less, and for many centuries it was the cause of constant bloodshed. It produced most disastrous consequences not only on Leinster but on Ireland at large; for the Leinster kings were at perpetual enmity with the kings of Ireland; and we find them taking part with the enemies of their country at the most critical periods of her history.

The renowned Conn *Ced-Cathach* [Ked-Caha], or Conn the Hundred-fighter, became king early in the second century (A.D. 123). His most formidable antagonist was the great Munster hero Eoghan-Mór [Owen-More], otherwise called Mogh-Nuadhat [Mow-Nooat] king of Munster, who having defeated him in ten battles, forced him at last to divide Ireland between them. For a line of demarcation they fixed on a natural ridge of sandhills called Esker-Riada, which can still be traced running across Ireland with little interruption from Dublin to Galway. This division is perpetually referred to in Irish literature: the northern half, which belonged to Conn was called *Leth-Chuinn* [Leh-Conn] or Conn's half; and the southern *Leth-Mogha* [Leh-Mow], that is Mogh's half. Owen however renewed the quarrel, and was slain in a decisive battle fought at Moylena in the present King's County; after which Conn became the undisputed monarch. Conn ended

his life by assassination, and was succeeded by his son-in-law Conary II. (A.D. 157).

From the earliest ages the Irish of Ulster were in the habit of crossing the narrow sea to Alban or Scotland, where colonies were settled from time to time; and constant intercourse was kept up between the two countries. The first regular colony of which we have any reliable account was conducted by Carbery Riada, the son of king Conary. The Irish accounts of this migration, which are very detailed and circumstantial, are corroborated by the Venerable Bede, who has also preserved the name of the leader:—'In course of time, Britain, besides the Britons and Picts, received a third nation, the Scoti, who issuing from Hibernia under the leadership of Reuda, secured for themselves, either by friendship or by the sword, settlements among the Picts which they still possess. From the name of their commander they are to this day called Dalreudini; for in their language *Dal* signifies a part.'[1] The settlers took possession of the western coasts and islands, in spite of the opposition of the kindred Picts who had occupied the country before them. From this Riada two territories, one in Ireland and the other in Scotland—both well known in Irish and Scottish history—were called Dalriada, Riada's *dal* or portion.

Cormac Mac Art, or Cormac Ulfada (A.D. 254), the grandson of Conn the Hundred-fighter, was the most illustrious of all the pagan kings of Ireland. He was a great warrior and gained many battles during his reign of forty-two years. He is however more celebrated as an encourager of learning than as a military leader. He is said to have founded three colleges at Tara, one for the study of military science, one for history and literature, and one for law. It is said of him also that he caused the chroniclers of Ireland to write into the Psalter of Tara the history of the kings of Ireland, with an account of the subdivisions of the country and of the stipends due to the several kings from their sub-kings. But the Psalter of Tara has been long lost.

[1] Bede, *Eccl. Hist.* Book I. chap. i.

After a prosperous reign, Cormac abdicated on account of the accidental loss of an eye; for no king with a personal blemish was allowed to reign at Tara (see p. 62). He retired to his kingly cottage, called Cletta, on the shore of the river Boyne; and here he composed the book called Tegasg Righ [Ree] or Instructions for a King, and other law tracts, of which we have copies in our old manuscript volumes. Cormac died at Cletta in the year 277, and it is stated that his death was brought about by the druids. For the legend says that he became a Christian; and that the druids practised their incantations against him and caused him to be choked by the bone of a salmon.

In the time of Cormac flourished the Fianna [Feena] of Erin, a sort of militia, like the Red Branch Knights (p. 38), in the service of the monarch. They were commanded by Cormac's son-in-law, the renowned Finn Mac Cumhail [Cool], who is remembered in tradition all over Ireland to this day.

Cormac was succeeded (A.D. 266) by his son Carbery of the Liffey. In his reign the Fena of Erin were suppressed. For they had grown turbulent and rebellious, so that at last king Carbery was forced to march against them; and the two armies fought a terrible battle at Gabhra [Gavra] near the Hill of Skreen in Meath. Carbery slew Oscar (p. 38) in single combat, but was himself slain immediately after by a treacherous kinsman as he was retiring faint and wounded after his fight with Oscar. In this celebrated battle the two armies almost annihilated each other; and the Fena were dispersed for evermore.

During the reign of Muredach (A.D. 327) his three cousins, Colla Huas, Colla Menn, and Colla Da-Crich [Cree]—commonly called the Three Collas—invaded and conquered Ulster, destroyed the palace of Emania, drove the Ulster people eastwards across Glenree or the Newry river, and took possession of that part of the province lying west of the same river.

Niall of the Nine Hostages, son of Achy Moyvane (king of Ireland A.D. 358) and uncle to king Dathi, was one of the greatest, most warlike, and most famous of all the

ancient Irish kings. Four of his sons settled in Meath, and four others conquered for themselves a territory in Ulster where they settled. The posterity of Niall are called Hy Neill; the southern Hy Neill being descended from those that settled in Meath, the northern Hy Neill from those that went to Ulster. By far the greatest number of the Irish kings from this period till the Anglo-Norman invasion were descended from Niall through one or the other of these two branches. Generally, though not always, the kings of Ireland were elected from the northern and southern Hy Neill alternately.

All who have read the histories of England and Rome know how prominently the 'Picts and Scots' figure during the first four centuries of our era, and how much trouble they gave to both Romans and Britons. The Picts were the people of Scotland—a branch of the Goidels or Gaels: the Scots were the Irish Gaels:—'The Scots, who afterwards settled in what is now known as Scotland, at that time dwelt in Ireland.'[1] In those times the Scots often went from Ireland on plundering excursions to the coasts of Britain and Gaul, and seem to have been almost as much dreaded then as the Danes were in later ages. At some early age—before the time of Suetonius in the first century—they conquered the Isle of Man and a large part of Wales, where many traces of their occupation remain to this day. Our oldest traditions teem with references to, and stories of, these conquests. During the whole time of the Roman occupation of Britain we constantly hear—both from native and Roman sources—of the excursions of the Scots; and when the Roman power began to wane, they became still more frequent. 'It was only however in the fourth century, when the warlike energies of the Roman empire had become relaxed, and vigorous life was fast fading at its extremities, that the Hibernian Scots became the implacable and perpetual foes of the empire.'[2]

[1] Gardiner's *Student's History of England*, 1892, pp. 23, 24.

[2] *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, by Prof. G. T. Stokes, D.D., p. 17. For more information on the invasions of Britain by the Scots, see pp. 16 to 20 of the same book.

'An invasion of Britain, on a far more extensive and formidable scale than had yet been attempted from Ireland, took place towards the close of the fourth century under Niall of the Nine Hostages, one of the most gallant of all the princes of the Milesian race.'[1] Observing that the Romans had retired to the eastern shore of Britain, Niall collected a great fleet and landing in Wales carried off immense plunder. He was forced to retreat by the valiant Roman general Stilicho, but 'left marks of depredation and ruin wherever he passed.' On this occasion the poet Claudian when praising Stilicho says of him—speaking in the person of Britannia:—'By him was I protected when the Scot [i.e. Niall] moved all Ireland against me and the ocean foamed with their hostile oars.' The ancient Irish accounts of these expeditions are on the whole corroborated by Roman historians. In one of Niall's excursions St. Patrick was brought captive to Ireland, as related in next chapter.

It was in one of his expeditions to the coast of Gaul—according to the ancient Irish tradition—that Niall, while marching at the head of his army, was assassinated (A.D. 405) on the shore of the river Loire by the king of Leinster, who shot him with an arrow across the river.

Dathi [Dauhy], Niall's successor (A.D. 405), was the last king of pagan Ireland. He too made inroads into foreign lands; and he was killed by a flash of lightning at the foot of the Alps, after he had plundered the sanctuary of a Christian hermit named Parmenius. His soldiers brought his body home and buried it at Croghan under a red pillar-stone which remains in the old pagan cemetery to this day.

Laeghaire [Leary] the son of Niall succeeded in 428. In the fifth year of his reign St. Patrick came to Ireland on his great mission. This king, like many of his predecessors, waged war against the Leinstermen to exact the Boru tribute; but they defeated him and took him prisoner. Then they made him swear by the sun and wind and all the elements that he would never again demand the

[1] Moore, *Hist. of Irel.* i. 150.

tribute; and when he had sworn they set him free. But the very next year (463) he invaded Leinster again; whereupon—so says the legend—he was killed while on his march by the sun and wind for having broken his oath.

The history of pagan Ireland ends here, and for so far we have drawn almost exclusively on native sources of information. These are commonly regarded as legendary, and at least in the earlier part as unworthy of credit. Yet the few notices of Ireland left us by early foreign writers would seem to justify to some extent the native claim to civilisation and regular government in times before the Christian era. The island was known to the Phœnicians, who probably visited it; and Greek writers mention it under the names Iernis and Ierne, and as the Sacred Island thickly inhabited by the Hiberni. Ptolemy, writing in the second century, who is known to have derived his information from Phœnician authorities, has given a description of Ireland much more accurate than that he has left us of Great Britain.[1] And that the people of Ireland carried on considerable trade with foreign countries in those early ages we know from the statement of Tacitus, that in his time—the end of the first century—the harbours of Ireland were better known to commercial nations than those of Britain. Commerce and barbarism do not coexist; and the natural inference from those scattered but pregnant notices is that the country had settled institutions and a certain degree of civilisation as early at least as the beginning of the Christian era.

We shall here interrupt the regular course of the narrative to sketch the mission of St. Patrick: the secular history will be resumed in Chapter IV. page 150.

[1] Moore, *Hist. of Irel.* vol. i. chap. i.

CHAPTER III

SAINT PATRICK

[Chief authorities:—Trip. Life of St. Pk. by Stokes; Most Rev. Dr. Healy's Ireland's Anc. Schools and Scholars; Lanigan's Eccl. Hist.; Todd's St. Pk. Apostle of Irel.; Four Mast.; Rev. J. Shearman's Loca Patriciana; O'Curry, Mann. and Cust.; Relig. Beliefs of Pagan Irish, by Crowe—Kilk. Arch. Jour. 1868–9, p. 307.]

It is commonly supposed that the religion of pagan Ireland was druidism. But when we come to inquire particularly into the nature of this Irish druidism—what were its doctrines and ceremonials—we find ourselves very much in the dark; for the native information that has come down to us is scattered, vague, and unsatisfactory, and there is none from outside. The druidic systems of Gaul, Britain, and Ireland were originally no doubt one and the same, as being derived from some common eastern source; but judging from our ancient literature, druidism became greatly modified in Ireland; and the descriptions of the Gaulish druids left us by Cæsar and others give us no information regarding the druids of Ireland. The following short account is derived from purely native sources, beyond which we cannot go.

In the oldest Irish traditions the druids figure conspicuously. All the early colonists had their druids, who are mentioned as holding high rank among kings and chiefs. They are often called Men of Science to denote their superior knowledge; for they were the exclusive possessors of all the knowledge and learning of the time. Many worshipped idols of some kind. Some worshipped water; and we read of one, of the time of St. Patrick, who considered water as a god of goodness, and fire an evil genius, so that he got himself buried deep under his favourite well called *Slan* (p. 40) to keep his bones cool from the fire that he dreaded.[1] *Slan* means *healing*; and

[1] *Tripartite Life*, by Stokes, 123.

we are told that the people offered gifts to this well as to a god.

They were skilled in magic—indeed they figure more conspicuously as magicians than in any other capacity—and were believed to be possessed of tremendous preternatural powers. They wore a white magic tunic, and when working their spells they chanted an incantation.[1] In some of the old historical romances we find the issues of battles sometimes determined not so much by the valour of the combatants as by the magical powers of the druids attached to the armies. They could—as the legends tell—raise druidical clouds and mists and bring down showers of fire and blood; they could drive a man insane or into idiocy by flinging a magic wisp of straw in his face; and many other instances of this necromantic power could be cited. In the hymn that St. Patrick chanted on his way to Tara on Easter Sunday morning, he asks God to protect him against the spells of women, of smiths, and of druids. They were skilful in divination, and foretold future events from dreams and visions, from sneezing and casting lots, from the croaking of ravens and the chirping of wrens. King Dathi's druids forecasted the issue of his military expeditions by observations of some kind from the summit of a hill.[2] In their divination they used a rod of yew with Ogham words cut on it. In prehistoric times it is pretty certain that druids, poets, and brehons were identical; and in the ancient literature it is often hard to distinguish them: but in after ages they became distinct.

The druids instructed the sons of kings and chiefs in poetry, divination, and military accomplishments. They bitterly opposed Christianity, as we know from the Lives of St. Patrick. We learn also from the Lives of other saints, that there were druids in the country long after St. Patrick's time, and that they continued to exercise powerful influence. The whole life of St. Berach, who flourished in the sixth century, seems to have been one continual struggle against the druids.

[1] *Tripartite Life*, by Stokes, pp. 55, 57, 325, 326.
[2] *Tribes and Customs of Hy Fiachrach*, 99.

In our ancient literature there are numerous notices of pagan religious beliefs and observances; but whether all these were connected with druidism is a matter of uncertainty. In the old historical romances several pagan deities are mentioned. There were war goddesses called severally *Badb* or Bava, *Morrigan*, *Macha*, and *Nemain*, who hovered shrieking over the heads of heroes in battle, and inspired them with preternatural fury. Bava and Nemain were the wives of *Neit*, who was the god of war.[1] *Ana* or *Danann*, a Dedannan goddess, is called in Cormac's Glossary the Mother of the Gods; and it is stated that the Paps Mountains in Kerry—anciently the 'Two Paps of Danann'—took their name from her. Mannanan Mac Lir, of the Dedannans, was god of the sea, who gave name to the Isle of Man. His son was the powerful god Dagda, whose son again was Aengus Mac-in-Og. Aengus dwelt in the palace of Bruga of the Boyne within the great mound of Newgrange: and Brigit, the goddess of wisdom, was his daughter. Diancecht was the god of healing.

Our most ancient secular and ecclesiastical literature attests the universal belief in the *Side* [Shee] or fairies, who, as we are told in Fiach's Hymn and in the Tripartite Life, were worshipped by the Irish.[2] These were local deities who were supposed to live in the interior of pleasant green hills or under great rocks or sepulchral cairns, where they had splendid palaces. These fairy hills and rocks are also called *side*; numbers of them, each with its own tutelary deity, are scattered over the country; and many are still known and held in much superstitious awe by the people. Hence the fairies are often called *deena-shee*, people of the fairy hills; and a female fairy is still called a *banshee*, from *bean* [ban], a woman. Finnvarra, the fairy of Knockma near Tuam in Galway, is still vividly remembered; so is Aed-Roe who lives in his palace under the green hill of Mullinashee beside Ballyshannon; and Donn of Knockfierna near Croom in Limerick rules all the Limerick plain.

[1] W. M. Hennessy on 'The Ancient Irish Goddess of War' in *Revue Celtique*.

[2] *Tripartite Life*, by Stokes, pp. 100, 315, 409.

Cleena the potent banshee of South Munster has her palace in the heart of a pile of rocks—Carrig-Cleena—near Mallow, and gave name to Tonn-Cleena (Cleena's Wave), the sea off Glandore in Cork; and the guardian spirit of the Dalcassians of North Munster was the beautiful Eevin of Craglea, a great grey rock rising over Lough Derg near Killaloe. All these, and many others, are well known to this day by the people of the several places.

The fairies were also believed to inhabit the old raths and lisses, so numerous all over the country, a superstition that still lingers everywhere among the peasantry. In the Book of Armagh we read that when the two daughters of King Laeghaire met St. Patrick and his companions in the early morning in their strange white robes with books in their hands, they supposed them to be deena-shee (p. 148, farther on). In our oldest literature the deena-shee are identified with the Dedannans. This mysterious people, after their conquest by the Milesians, retired to remote places, and in process of time became deified.[1]

There was a dim vague belief in a land of everlasting youth and peace, called by various names—*Tir-nam-beo*, the land of the ever-living, *Tirnanoge*, the land of perpetual youth, *Moy-Mell*, &c. As to where it was situated the accounts are shadowy and variable. Sometimes it was represented as deep in the earth in a great sparry cave all in a blaze of light; sometimes it was O'Brazil, far out in the Atlantic Ocean; sometimes it was Tir-fa-tonn, 'the country beneath the waves.'

Though we have no positive evidence that the Irish generally worshipped the elements, yet our ancient literature affords glimpses that would seem to point to the prevalence of elemental worship in pre-historic times. The most solemn and binding pagan oath was by the sun and moon, water and air, day and night, sea and land; and the legend relates that king Laeghaire, for violating this oath, 'was killed by the sun and wind and by the other guarantees; for no one dared to dishonour them at

[1] See the chapter on 'Fairies, Demons, Goblins, and Ghosts' in my *Irish Names of Places*, where this subject is more fully discussed.

the time.'[1] St. Patrick himself in his Confession seems to imply the existence of sun worship where he says that all who adore the sun shall perish eternally. We know from the Lives of St. Patrick and from other authorities that in some places certain wells were worshipped (see p. 137 above). There were primitive customs connected with fire, some of which are noticed at pages 89 and 146; the relics of which have descended to our own time in the fire superstitions of Beltane or May-day, and in the custom of lighting fires in the open air on the eve of the 24th of June. This is the most we can say in favour of the prevalence of elemental worship. Recent detailed descriptions of the sun worship and fire worship of pagan Ireland, and the speculations about 'bovine cultus,' 'porcine cultus,' 'Crom the god of fire,' and such like, are all dreams of persons who never took the trouble to investigate the ancient authentic literature of the country.

In some places idols were worshipped. There was a great idol, called *Crom Cruach*, covered all over with gold, on *Moy-Slecht* (the plain of adoration) in the present county of Cavan, surrounded by twelve lesser idols, all of which were destroyed by St. Patrick.[2] Both the secular and ecclesiastical authorities concur in the main facts regarding this idol, and we are told in the legend that king Tighernmas and crowds of his people were destroyed as they were engaged worshipping it. Crom Cruach was the chief idol of Ireland and the special god of some kings.[3] In the Book of Leinster[4] it is stated that the Irish used to sacrifice their children to this idol; but I receive this comparatively late statement with doubt: it is not corroborated by the older and better authorities, the Lives of St. Patrick; and I do not believe the ancient Irish practised human sacrifice. In the west of Connaught the people worshipped another noted idol called *Crom-duff*. But though idols are often mentioned in the Lives of the

[1] *Book of the Dun Cow*, p. 118, col. 2, line 30.
[2] *Tripartite Life*, by Stokes, 91, 369.
[3] *Ibid.* 219.
[4] Page 213, 2nd column, line 18 from bottom.

saints and in the native secular literature, it does not appear that idol worship was very general.

These references and many others in our old literature are too vague and disconnected to enable us to say that the pagan Irish had any very generally diffused uniform system of religion or religious worship. Their religious beliefs may be best described as a collection of superstitions, which never attained such consistency and dignity and never exercised such an influence on the inner life of the people as to deserve the name of a religion.

We know that there were Christians in Ireland long before the time of St. Patrick, but we have no evidence to show how Christianity was introduced in those early ages. St. Prosper of Aquitaine, a contemporary authority, tells us that in the year 431, Pope Celestine sent Palladius 'to the Scots believing in Christ to be their first bishop;' and Bede repeats the same statement. There must have been Christians in considerable numbers when the Pope thought this measure necessary; and such numbers could not have grown up in a short time. We have evidence that as early as the middle of the fourth century there were Christian Irishmen of eminence on the Continent; and though we are not able to say that they brought their faith from Ireland, yet the fact lends strength to other evidence that Christianity had found its way into the country at that early date.

Palladius landed in the present county of Wicklow; but his mission was not successful; for after a short sojourn, during which he founded three little churches, he was expelled by Nathi, chief of the district; and soon after he died in Scotland.

The next mission had very different results. 'Although Christianity was not propagated in Ireland by the blood of martyrs, there is no instance of any other nation that universally received it in as short a space of time as the Irish did;'[1] and in the whole history of Christianity we do not find a missionary more successful than St.

[1] Lanigan, *Eccl. Hist.* iv. 287.

Patrick.[1] He tells us in his Confession and in his Letter to Coroticus, that his father Calpurnius was a deacon, son of Potitus a priest, and that he was also a *decurion* or magistrate of a Roman colony. It is pretty certain that Patrick was born either in Scotland or in Armoric Gaul: the weight of authority tends to the neighbourhood of Dumbarton in Scotland. When he was a boy of sixteen—as he states in the Confession—he was taken captive with many others and brought to Ireland. This was about the year 403; and it occurred probably in one of those predatory excursions already spoken of (p. 135), led by Niall of the Nine Hostages. He was sold as a slave, and spent six years of his life herding sheep on the bleak slopes of Slemish Mountain in Antrim. Here in his solitude his mind was turned to God, and while carefully doing the work of his hard master Milcho, he employed his leisure hours in devotions. We know this from his own words in the Confession:—'I was daily tending the flocks and praying frequently every day that the love of God might be more enkindled in my heart; so much so that in one day I poured out my prayers a hundred times, and as often in the night: nay, even in woods and mountains I remained and rose before the light to my prayer, in frost and snow and rain, and suffered no inconvenience, nor yielded to any slothfulness such as I now experience, for the Spirit of the Lord was fervent within me.'

At the end of six years he escaped and made his way through many hardships and dangers to his native country. During his residence in Ireland he had learned the language of the people; and brooding continually on the state of pagan darkness in which they lived, he formed the resolution to devote his life to their conversion. He set about his preparation very deliberately. He first studied under St. Martin in his monastic school at Tours, and

[1] It is now known that there were at least two early saints named Patrick connected with Ireland, whose lives and acts have been sometimes mixed up. The incidents given in this short sketch are ascribed by the best authorities to the great St. Patrick.

spent some time subsequently with St. Germain of Auxerre. During all this time he applied himself with great fervour to works of piety; and he had visions and dreams in which he heard the Irish people calling to him to return to Ireland and walk among them with the light of faith. At length the time came to begin his labours; and he repaired to Rome with a letter from St. Germain recommending him to Pope Celestine as a suitable person to attempt the conversion of the Irish nation.[1]

Having received authority and benediction from the Pope he set out for Ireland. On his way through Gaul news came of the death of Palladius, and as this left Ireland without a bishop, Patrick was consecrated bishop by a certain holy prelate named Amator. Embarking for Ireland he landed, in the year 432, on the coast of Wicklow, at the mouth of the Vartry river, the spot where the town of Wicklow now stands. He was then in the full vigour of manhood--about forty-five years of age. The good Pope Celestine did not live to see the glorious result of the mission: he was dead before the arrival of his missionary in Ireland. Soon after landing, Patrick, like his

[1] The subject of Patrick's mission has given rise to much controversy. Many deny that he was sent by the Pope, their main argument being that no mention of the papal mission is found in the Confession or in the memoir of the saint in the beginning of the Book of Armagh. But Bishop Tirechan in his Notes, farther on in the same Book of Armagh (see p. 21 above), makes this positive assertion:—'In the thirteenth year of the emperor Theodosius the Bishop Patrick was sent by Celestine Bishop and Pope of Rome to instruct the Scots (Irish) . . . Through him all Ireland believed, and he baptised nearly the whole nation' (*Documenta de S. Patricio ex Libro Ardmachano*, by the Rev. Edmund Hogan, S.J., pp. 57, 89). Prefixed to Tirechan's notes is the following entry by Ferdomnach, who copied them before the year 807 into the Book of Armagh:—'Tirechan the bishop wrote these [Notes] from the mouth, or from the book of Bishop Ultan whose pupil or disciple he was.' St. Ultan, bishop of Ardbraccan in Meath, from whom Tirechan got his information, died in 656, which brings him within a century and a half of St. Patrick. Perhaps too much importance has been attached to this question, inasmuch as all agree that Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine. Moreover we know that St. Patrick always looked with great reverence and affection to Rome: and in one of his decrees he directs that when any difficult question arose in Ireland it should be referred to the chair of St. Peter. (*Tripartite Life*, by Stokes, pp. 356, 506.)

predecessor, was expelled from Wicklow, probably by the same chief Nathi; and coasting northward, and resting for a little time at the little island of Holmpatrick on the Dublin coast near Skerries, he finally landed at Lecale in Down. A herdsman who happened to see the party, thinking they were pirates, ran and told his master Dicho, the chief of the district, who instantly sallied forth with his people to drive them back; but when he caught sight of them he was so struck by their calm and dignified demeanour that he saluted them respectfully and invited them to his house. Here the saint announced his mission and explained his doctrine; and Dicho and his whole family became Christians and were baptized—the first of the Irish converted by St. Patrick. He celebrated Mass in a *Sabhall* [saval] or barn presented to him by the chief, on the site of which a monastery was subsequently erected, which for many ages was held in great veneration. And the memory of the auspicious event was preserved in the name by which the place was subsequently known, Sabhall-Patrick or Patrick's Barn, now shortened to Saul.

He next set out to visit the district where he had spent so many solitary years of his youth, for he was anxious to convert his old master Milcho; but that chief refused to see him, and died as he had lived, a pagan. Patrick then returned to Saul, where he remained some time, preaching still and converting the people.

During the whole of St. Patrick's mission his invariable plan was to address himself in the first instance to the kings and chiefs. He understood the habits of the Irish people; and he well knew that if the chief became a Christian, the people, with their devotion for their hereditary rulers, would soon follow. He now resolved to go straightway to Tara, where king Laeghaire and his nobles happened at this time to be celebrating a festival of some kind. Bidding farewell to his friend Dicho, he sailed southwards to the mouth of the Boyne, where leaving his boat, he set out on foot with his companions

across the country for Tara, and arrived at Slane on Saturday, Easter eve, A.D. 433. Here he prepared to celebrate the Easter festival, and towards nightfall—as was then the custom—lighted the Paschal fire on the hill of Slane.

At this very time it happened that the king's people were about to light the festival fire at Tara, which was a part of their ceremonial; and there was a law that while this fire was burning no other should be kindled in the country all round, on pain of death. The king and his courtiers were much astonished when they saw the fire ablaze upon the hill of Slane, nine miles off; and when the monarch inquired about it, his druids said:—'If that fire which we see be not extinguished to-night it will never be extinguished, but will overtop all our fires: and he that has kindled it will overturn thy kingdom.' Whereupon the king, in great wrath, instantly set out in his chariot with a small retinue; and having arrived near Slane he summoned the strangers to his presence. He had commanded that none should rise up to show them respect; but when they presented themselves one of the courtiers, Erc the son of Dego, struck with the saint's commanding appearance, rose from his seat and saluted him. This Erc was converted and became afterwards bishop of Slane; and to this day he is commemorated in the name of a little chapel beside the Boyne at Slane, called St. Erc's hermitage. The result of this interview was what St. Patrick most earnestly desired; he was commanded to appear next day at Tara and give an account of his proceedings before the assembled court.

The next day was Easter Sunday. Patrick and his companions set out for the palace, and on their way they chanted a hymn in the native tongue—an invocation for protection against the dangers and treachery by which they were beset; for they had heard that persons were lying in wait to slay them. This hymn, which is called *Faed Fiada*, or the Deer's cry, from the legend that Patrick and his companions appeared in the shape of deer to the intended assassins, was long held in great veneration by the

people of this country, and we still possess copies of it in a very old dialect of the Irish language.[1]

In the history of the spread of Christianity it would be perhaps difficult to find a more singular and impressive scene than was presented at the court of king Laeghaire on that memorable Easter morning. The saint was robed in white, as were also his companions; he wore his mitre, and carried his crozier—the *Bachall Isa* or staff of Jesus—in his hand; and when he presented himself before the assembly, Dubhthach [Duffa] the chief poet rose to welcome him, contrary to the express commands of the king. In presence of the monarch and his nobles, the saint explained the leading points of the Christian doctrine, and silenced the king's druids in argument.

The proceedings of this auspicious day were a type of St. Patrick's future career. Dubhthach became a convert, and thenceforward devoted his poetical talents to the service of God; and Laeghaire gave permission to the strange missionaries to preach their doctrines throughout his dominions. The king himself was almost moved to become a Christian, but there is good reason to believe that he died an obstinate pagan. Patrick next proceeded to Tailltenn (pp. 89, 90), where during the celebration of the national games he preached for a week to the assembled multitudes, making many converts, among whom was Conall Gulban, brother to king Laeghaire.

We find him soon after, with that intrepidity and decision of character for which he was so remarkably distinguished, making straight for Moy Slecht, where stood the great national idol Crom Cruach, surrounded by twelve lesser idols (page 141). These he destroyed, and thus terminated for ever the abominations enacted for so many ages at that ancient haunt of gloomy superstition.

In his journey through Connaught he met the two daughters of king Laeghaire — Ethnea the fair and Fedelma the ruddy—near the royal palace of Croghan; where they had been placed some time before by their

[1] It is printed with translation (by John O'Donovan) in Petrie's *Tara*; and also in Stokes's *Tripartite Life of St. Patrick.*

father, under the care of two magi or druids. Patrick and his attendants had assembled one morning at sunrise near a well called Clebach, in the vicinity of the palace, and chanted a hymn; and when the virgins had come at this same hour, 'to wash after the manner of women,' they were astonished to find so strange an assembly before them. 'And they knew not whence they were, or in what form, or from what people, or from what country; but they supposed them to be deena shee (p. 139), or gods of the earth, or a phantasm.'

The virgins then inquired whence they came, and Patrick answered them, 'It were better for you to confess to our true God than to inquire concerning our race.' They eagerly asked about God, his attributes, his dwelling place—whether in the sea, in rivers, in mountainous places, or in valleys—how a knowledge of him was to be obtained, how he was to be found, seen, and loved, with other inquiries of a like nature. The saint answered their questions, and explained the leading points of the faith; and the virgins were immediately baptized, and consecrated to the service of religion.

On the approach of Lent he retired to the mountain which has since borne his name—Croagh Patrick or Patrick's Hill—where he spent some time in fasting and prayer. This mountain has been ever since revered, and continues to this day a noted place of pilgrimage. At this time, A.D. 449, the seven sons of Amalgaidh [Awley] king of Connaught had convened a great assembly at a place called Forrach mac-nAwley or the meeting place of Awley's sons. Patrick repaired to the meeting and expounded his doctrines to the wondering assembly; and the seven princes with twelve thousand persons were baptized.

After spending seven years in Connaught, he visited successively Ulster, Leinster, and Munster. Soon after entering Leinster, he converted at Naas—then the residence of the Leinster kings—the two princes Ilann and Olioll, sons of Dunlang king of Leinster, who both afterwards succeeded to the throne of their father. And at Cashel, the seat of the kings of Munster, he was met by the

king, Aengus the son of Natfree, who conducted him into the palace with the highest reverence and honour, and was at once baptized.

Wherever he went he founded churches, and left them in charge of his disciples. In his various journeys he encountered many dangers, and met with numerous repulses; but his failures were few and unimportant, and success attended his efforts in every part of his wonderful career. He founded the see of Armagh about the year 455, and constituted it the metropolitan see of all Ireland. The greater part of the country was now filled with Christians and with churches; and the labours of the venerable apostle were drawing to a close. He was seized with his last illness in Saul, his favourite retreat, the scene of his first spiritual triumph; and he breathed his last on the 17th of March, in or about the year 465, in the 78th year of his age.[1]

The news of his death was the signal for universal mourning. From the remotest districts of the island, the clergy turned their steps towards the little village of Saul—bishops, priests, abbots, and monks—all came to pay the last tribute of love and respect to their great master. They celebrated the obsequies for twelve days and nights without interruption, joining in the solemnities as they arrived in succession; and in the language of one of his biographers, the blaze of myriads of torches made the whole time appear like one continuous day.

A contention arose between the chiefs of Oriel, the district in which Armagh was situated, and those of Ulidia, or the eastern part of Ulster, concerning the place where he should be interred; but it happily terminated without bloodshed. He was buried with great solemnity at *Dun-da-leth-glas*, the old residence of the princes of Ulidia; and the name, in the altered form of Downpatrick, commemorates to all time the saint's place of interment.

[1] There is much uncertainty both as to St. Patrick's age and as to the year of his death. I have given the age and year that seem to me most probable.

It must not be supposed that Ireland was completely Christianised by St. Patrick. There still remained large districts never visited by him or his companions: and in many others the Christianity of the people was merely on the surface. Much pagan superstition remained, even among the professing Christians, and the druids still and for long after retained great influence; so that there was ample room for the missionary labours of St. Patrick's successors.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY CHRISTIAN IRELAND

Lewy the son of Laeghaire was too young at the time of his father's death (p. 136) to claim the throne, which was seized by Olioll Molt king of Connaught, son of Dathi, A.D. 457. But Lewy when he came of age raised a great army and defeated and slew king Olioll in the terrible battle of Ocha in Meath, and took possession of the throne. This battle, which was fought in 483, forms one of the epochs of early Irish history, many subsequent events being dated from it; and it caused a revolution in the succession. Olioll Molt did not belong to the Hy Neill; Lewy was of the southern Hy Neill; and for 500 years after this—to the time of Malachi II.—the throne of Ireland was held by members of the Hy Neill race without a break.

The colony led by Carbery Riada to Scotland has already been mentioned (p. 132). These primitive settlers and their descendants, supported from time to time by other emigrants, held their ground against the Picts; but the settlement was weak and struggling, and did not deserve the name of a kingdom till it was reinforced by the next and greatest colony of all. This was led in 503 —during the reign of Lewy—by three chiefs of the Irish Dalriada, Fergus, Angus, and Lorne, the sons of a chief named Erc, a descendant of Carbery Riada. These colonists, as well as their leaders, it should be observed, were Christians. Fergus, who was also called Fergus

More (the Great) and Fergus Mac Erc, became king of the Scottish Gaelic colony, which before long mastered the whole country and ultimately gave it the name of Scotland.[1] He was the ancestor of the subsequent kings of Scotland; and from him through the Stewarts descend our present royal family.

Dermot the son of Fergus Kervall became king of Ireland in 544. In his reign the terrible pestilence called the *Crom-Connell* or yellow plague, which then prevailed over Europe, desolated Ireland for eight or ten years. The last *Fes* of Tara was held by Dermot in 560: after his time the old capital was abandoned as a royal residence. The worst of the misfortunes that befell this king arose from his quarrels with some of the leading ecclesiastics. I have already related (p. 20) how the outrage he committed on St. Columkille brought on the battle of Culdremne, where he was defeated by the men of Ulster and Connaught (in 561). The desertion of Tara came about by another quarrel of a similar kind. A criminal fleeing from the wrath of king Dermot took refuge in the church of St. Rodan at Lorrha in Tipperary: but the king, disregarding the sanctuary, had the fugitive brought forth and carried off prisoner. Whereupon the saint was so incensed that he proceeded north and very deliberately pronounced a solemn curse on Tara. From that time forth the kings of Ireland lived elsewhere—each in his own province: and the place gradually fell into decay. Its abandonment was no doubt an evil, as it tended to break up the unity of the monarchy.

Aed or Hugh the son of Ainmirè reigned from 572 to 598. By him was summoned, in 574, the celebrated convention of *Druim-cete* [Drum-Ketta], now called the Mullagh or Daisy Hill, on the river Roe, one mile above Limavady. It was the first national assembly held since

[1] The name Scotia originally belonged to Ireland: Scotland, which was anciently called Alba, got the name Scotia Minor from the *Scotic* or Irish colony. About the 11th century Scotland took the name Scotia permanently, and the parent country dropped it. See my *Irish Names of Places*, i. 88.

the abandonment of Tara, and it was attended by the chief men of Ireland both lay and clerical. St. Columba also and a number of his clergy came from Iona to take part in the proceedings, as well as the king and chiefs of the Scottish Dalriada. This meeting was convened to consider two main questions, besides many minor ones. The first was the regulation of the bards, which was settled at the intercession of St. Columba in the manner already related (p. 121). The second question had reference to the Dalriadic colony in Scotland. Three-quarters of a century had elapsed since its establishment, and the colonial kings had ever since continued subject to the kings of Ireland, and contributed men to their armies. Now king Aed demanded, in addition to this, a direct yearly tribute. But the colony had grown strong, and Aedan the Dalriadic king, who was brother of Branduff king of Leinster, made a demand for complete independence, which was resisted by the Irish king. In this important matter also St. Columba, who was nearly related to both the Irish and the Scottish kings, exerted his great influence; and the king of Ireland wisely yielding to him, consented to forego all claim to authority over the Scottish king. From that time forth the Dalriadic kingdom of Scotland remained independent.

King Aed perished, A.D. 598, in an attempt to exact the hated Borumean tribute from the Leinstermen. Branduff (Black Raven) the powerful king of Leinster resisted the claim; whereupon Aed invaded Leinster with a great army. Branduff met him at Dunbolg, now Dunboyke near Hollywood in Wicklow. His army was very much the smaller, but by a skilfully devised stratagem, he took his adversaries in a night surprise. The battle that followed is recorded in all the annals and is celebrated in an ancient Irish historical romance. The royal forces were defeated and slaughtered, and king Aed himself, retreating with his guards, was overtaken and beheaded by one of the Leinster chiefs.

After a number of short unimportant reigns, Donall the son of king Aed Mac Ainmire ascended the throne A.D. 627. His predecessor (Sweeny Menn) had been killed by

a powerful Ulster prince named Congal Claen: and Donall immediately on his accession marched into Ulster, defeated Congal in Derry, and forced him to fly from the country. Congal took refuge in Britain, where he had many relatives through intermarriages; and after an exile of nine years he landed on the coast of Down with a great army of auxiliaries—Britons, Saxons, Alban Scots, and Picts—and was immediately joined by his Ulster partisans.

Donall had been fully aware of Congal's projected invasion, and had made very deliberate preparations to meet it. He marched northwards at the head of his army, and confronted the enemies of his country at Moyrath, now Moira in the county of Down. Here was fought, in 637, one of the most sanguinary battles recorded in Irish history. It lasted for six successive days and terminated in the total defeat of the invaders. Congal fell fiercely fighting at the head of his forces; and his army was almost annihilated. An ancient Irish historical romance on this great battle has been translated and edited by John O'Donovan.

Again in 664 the terrible yellow plague swept over Ireland, after having desolated England from south to north. For three years it raged. Among its victims were the two joint kings of Ireland—Dermot and Blathmac—the king of Munster, and a vast number of ecclesiastics; and when it ceased, the annalists say that only a third of the people remained alive (see p. 151).

The Irish kings had continued to exact the Boru tribute from the Leinstermen, who struggled manfully against it to the last, sometimes with signal success, and sometimes suffering disastrous defeats. On the accession of Finaghta the Festive, in 674, he likewise claimed the tribute; and when they resisted, he defeated them in battle at Logore in Meath. But the iniquity of the tax, and the evils resulting from it, seem at last to have revolted the public mind; for soon after, at the earnest solicitation of St. Moling, the monarch solemnly renounced the Boru for himself and his successors. At the close of this century (697), the *Mordal* or great convention of the

chief men of Ireland both lay and clerical was held in Tara at the instance of St. Adamnan, who persuaded them to pass the very necessary law by which women were prohibited from taking part in wars (p. 45).

The generous action of Finaghta did not end the Boru tribute. After the lapse of two reigns, the monarch Fergal, in spite of his predecessor's solemn decision, demanded the tribute ; and on refusal he raised an army of 21,000 men among the Hy Neill to enforce his demand. The Leinster king, who had only 9,000 men, appears to have out-generalled the monarch. Anyhow in the battle that followed—which was fought in 722 at the historic hill of Allen in Kildare—the royal forces were utterly defeated, and king Fergal himself and 7,000 of his men were slain.

But not long afterwards the Leinstermen paid dearly for this victory. When Aed (or Hugh) Allen, the son of Fergall, became king, he lost no time in raising an army to avenge the defeat and death of his father. He engaged the Leinster army at *Ath-Seanaigh* [Ath-Shanny], now Ballyshannon in Kildare, and nearly exterminated them : A.D. 738. Nine thousand of their men fell : and Aed Mac Colgan, one of the princes who had led the Leinstermen at Allen sixteen years before, was slain in single combat by king Hugh.

In the next two chapters will be sketched the state of religion and learning during the early ages of the Irish Church : the Secular History will be resumed in Chapter VII.

CHAPTER V

EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

[Chief authorities for Chaps. V. and VI.:—Lanigan's Eccl. Hist.; Most Rev. Dr. Healy's Ireland's Anc. Schools and Scholars; Todd's St. Patk.; Miss Stokes's Six Months in the Apennines; Reeves's Adamnan, and Eccl. Antiq. of Down, Connor, and Dromore; Trip. Life of St. Patk. by Stokes; Martyrol. of Donegal; Cambrens. Eversus; Four Mast.; O'Curry's MS. Mat. and Mann. and Cust.; Professor Stokes's Ireland and the Celtic Church; Card. Moran's Papers in 1st vol. of Trans. Ossory Arch. Soc.; Shearman's Loc. Patriciana; Very Rev. Canon O'Hanlon's Lives of the Irish Saints; Keating's Hist. of Irel.; Brehon Laws.]

IN ancient Ireland education and religion went hand in hand, so that in tracing their history it is impossible to separate them. There were indeed some purely lay schools, but they were nearly all professional. By far the greatest part of the education of the country was carried on by, or under the direction of, priests and monks of the various orders, who combined religious with secular teaching. Before I proceed to give a particular account of the rise and progress of the Irish schools, it may be better to sketch the leading features of the ancient Irish educational systems so far as they are known to us.

The schools of Ireland were mainly of three classes:—those carried on at the public expense; those in connection with monasteries; and schools kept by private individuals or families, which were mostly professional. At the convention of Drumketta, A.D. 574, an attempt was made to reorganise the system of public education. The scheme, which is described in detail by Keating,[1] was devised by the *ard-ollave* or chief poet of all Ireland, Dallan Forgaill, the author of the *Amra* on St. Columkille. There was to be a chief school or college for each of the five provinces; and under these a number of minor colleges, one in each *tuath* or cantred. They were all endowed with lands, and all persons who needed it should get free education in them. These schools were for general education: and it

[1] Reign of Hugh Mac Ainmire: O'Mahony's *Keating*, p. 455.

is probable that the heads of most of them were laymen. How far this special scheme was carried out and succeeded we are not told.

Of the monastic schools we have full information. These were seminaries founded by saints of the early Irish church, nearly all of whom were subsequently celebrated in the ecclesiastical history of the country. But though the teaching was mainly ecclesiastical, it was by no means exclusively so: for besides divinity, the study of the Scriptures, and classics, for those intended for the church, the students were instructed in Gaelic grammar and literature, history, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music. Accordingly these schools were attended not only by ecclesiastical students, but also by numbers of young men not intended for the church, who came to get a good general education.[1] Sometimes, indeed, we find an eminent layman at the head of the professional staff of a college under ecclesiastical management: for example, Flann the annalist (p. 27)—who died in 1056—was *fer-leginn* or chief professor of the great school of Monasterboice; from which he is known to this day as Flann of the Monastery; and the poet Mac Cosse held a similar position a century earlier in the school of Ross Ailithir. And the minor positions were often held by lay teachers.

In the Book of Ballymote there is an interesting tract called the 'Book of the Ollaves,' which gives an account of the working of the schools.[2] According to this the whole course taught, including all the various branches—history, law, medicine, music, poetry, &c.—was called *Filidecht* or philosophy. It was divided into twelve stages, each stage for one year: thus the full course, of which the final stage was that for *ollave* or doctor in *Filidecht*, occupied twelve years. Before obtaining this the candidate had to gain several subordinate degrees one after another, like the successive degrees of a modern university. If a course of twelve years seems long, we must bear in mind, first that young persons did not begin

[1] O'Curry, *Mann. and Cust.* i. 83, 170.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 171, where the subjects for the several years are given.

their schooling till they were grown boys, so that the twelve years included the time for mere elementary education: and secondly, it was only those who advanced to the degree of ollave that remained the full time.

The ollave of Filidecht should be master of history, genealogy, and synchronisms: he should know the seven different species of poetry and the seven kinds of verse construction: and he should be able to improvise, i.e. to compose verses extempore on any subject proposed. He was to know by heart seven times fifty historical tales, so as to be able at a moment's notice to recite any that happened to be called for, for the entertainment of chiefs and people at feasts and assemblies.[1] Certain smaller numbers of tales—from twenty upwards—were prescribed for the several subordinate degrees. A professor of one or more branches of Filidecht was a *file* [filla]: but the word *file* was more commonly used to designate simply a poet. A *Seanchaidhe* [shanachy] or historian was a person specially learned in history, genealogy, and antiquities, and also skilled in reciting stories.

'Ollave' was the title of the highest degree in any art or profession: thus we read of an ollave builder, an ollave goldsmith, an ollave physician, an ollave lawyer, and so forth, just as we have in modern times doctors of music, of philosophy, of medicine, &c. It would appear that in order to attain a special degree of this kind, a candidate had to exhibit his work to one or more eminent ollaves, and if the judgment were favourable, the king formally conferred the degree. A king kept at his court an ollave of each profession, whose stipends are laid down in the Brehon law. The law also set forth the exact remuneration for each particular work of an ollave. The special duty of the king's shanachy was to keep a faithful record of the genealogy of the royal family and all its branches.

The head of a college, who had himself passed through and was supposed to know the whole course, was the *Fer-leginn* or *Drum-cli* or chief professor. Under him were special professors—of history, of poetry, of grammar, of

[1] *Brehon Laws*, i. 45.

divinity, &c.—whose teaching and whose functions were more restricted. They were of various degrees of scholarship, according to the rank they had attained in the twelve-stage curriculum. Most of the learned men commemorated in our annals were teachers—either for life or for some time—in the schools.

Besides the two classes of schools already mentioned, there were, under laymen, many private secular schools—no doubt the representatives of the public schools of the time of Dallan Forgaill. Most of these were professional—for law, for medicine, for history and antiquities, &c.—subjects which were commonly taught by members of the same family for generations. In later times—towards the sixteenth century—many such schools flourished under the families of O'Mulconry, O'Coffey, Mac Egan, O'Clery, and others. Some were self-supporting; some were aided with grants of land by the chiefs of the districts. It would appear that a lay college generally comprised three distinct schools, held in three different houses near each other. The three schools traditionally said to have been founded by Cormac Mac Art are mentioned in Chap. II. page 132. St. Bricin's College at Tomregan near Ballyconnell in Cavan, founded in the seventh century, comprised a school for law, one for classics, and one for poetry and general Gaelic learning—each school under a distinct *fer-leginn* or head professor. And coming down to a much later period, we know that in the fifteenth century the O'Clerys of Donegal kept three schools—namely, for literature, for history, and for poetry.

Besides schools for general education there were technical or professional schools taught by laymen. Campion, in 1571, notices those for law and medicine:—'They speake Latine like a vulgar tongue, learned in their common schools of leach-craft and law, whereat they begin [as] children, and hold on sixteene or twenty yeares, conning by roate the Aphorismes of *Hypocrates* and the Civill Institutions, and a few other parings of these two faculties.'[1]

Many interesting particulars of the schools and of the

[1] Campion, *Historie of Ireland*, ed. 1809, p. 25.

manner of life of the scholars have reached us. Some students lived in the houses of the people of the neighbourhood. A few resided in the college itself—those for instance who were literary foster children of the masters. When the scholars were very numerous they often lived in little houses built mostly by themselves around and near the school. The huts of the scholars of St. Movi of Glasnevin near Dublin extended along the banks of the river Tolka near the present bridge. The poorer scholars sometimes lived in the same houses with the rich ones, whom they waited on and served—often not so much through necessity as for an exercise of discipline—receiving in return food, clothing, and other necessaries. As illustrating this phase of school life an interesting story is told in the Life of King Finaghta the Festive. A little before his accession, he was riding one day towards Clonard with his retinue, when they overtook a boy with a jar of milk on his back. The youth attempting to get out of the way, stumbled and fell, and the jar was broken and the milk spilled. The cavalcade passed on without noticing him; but he ran after them in great affliction with a piece of the jar on his back, till at last he attracted the notice of the prince, who halted and questioned him in a good-humoured way. The boy not knowing whom he was addressing, told his story with amusing plainness:—'Indeed, good man, I have much cause to be troubled. There are living in one house near the college three noble students, and three others that wait on them, of whom I am one; and we three attendants have to collect provisions in the neighbourhood in turn for the whole six. It was my turn to-day; and lo, what I have obtained has been lost; and this vessel which I borrowed has been broken, and I have not the means to pay for it.'

The prince soothed him, told him his loss should be made good, and promised to look after him in the future. This boy was Adamnan, subsequently a most distinguished man, ninth abbot of Iona, and the writer of the Life of St. Columba. The prince kept his word: and after he became king invited Adamnan to his court, where the

rising young ecclesiastic became his trusted friend and spiritual adviser.[1]

There were no spacious lecture halls such as we have: the masters taught and lectured, and the scholars studied, very much in the open air, when the weather permitted. There were no prizes and no cramming for competitive examinations, for learning was pursued for its own sake. In every college there was a steward to manage food, fees, and other such matters. In all the schools, whether public or private, a large proportion of the students got both books and education free; but those who could afford it paid for everything.

It was the practice of many eminent teachers to compose educational poems embodying the leading facts of history or of other branches of instruction. These poems having been committed to memory by the scholars, were commented on and explained by their authors. Flann of Monasterboice followed this plan, and we have still a copy of one of his educational poems preserved in the Book of Lecan. He also used his synchronisms for the same purpose. In the Book of Leinster there is a curious geographical poem forming a sort of class-book of general geography, which was used in the great school of Ross Ailithir in Cork, written in the tenth century by Mac Cosse the ferleginn.[2] The reader need scarcely be reminded that teachers of the present day sometimes adopt the same plan, especially in teaching history. In all the schools the native Irish and Latin were carefully studied; and much of the historical literature that remains to us is a mixture of Latin and Gaelic, both languages being used with equal facility. Greek we know was also studied with success from a very early date.[3]

The sons of kings commonly attended the public colleges. But in case of kings of high rank, the young

[1] O'Curry, *Mann. and Cust.* i. 79; Reeves, *Adamnan*, xlii.

[2] Published with transl. by the Rev. Thomas Olden, in *Proc. R. I. Acad.* for 1879-1888, p. 219.

[3] See the paper on 'The Knowledge of Greek in Ireland between A.D. 500 and 900,' by the Rev. G. T. Stokes, D.D., in *Proc. R. I. Acad.* 1892, p. 187.

princes were generally educated at home: the teacher then resided at court and always took rank with the highest. Some of these tutors, when their pupils subsequently came to the throne, were advanced to high rank in the state. For example, when Hugh Ordnidhe [Ordnee] became king of Ireland, A.D. 797, he made his tutor—Fothad of the Canon (p. 190)—his chief poet and counsellor.

The Brehon law took cognisance of the schools in several important particulars. It prescribed the studies for the several degrees. It laid down what seems a very necessary provision for the protection of the masters, that they should not be answerable for the misdeeds of their scholars except in one case only, namely, when the scholar was a foreigner and paid for his food and education. The masters had a claim on their literary foster children for support in old age, if poverty rendered it necessary; and in accordance with this provision, we find it recorded that St. Mailruan of Tallaght was tenderly nursed in his old age by his pupil Aengus the Culdee.

Men of learning were held in high estimation, and an ollave in Filidecht had several valuable privileges. He sat at table next to the king or next to the highest chief present. He had a standing income of 'twenty-one cows and their grass' in the territory of the chief of the district where he lived, besides many valuable special allowances. On his journeys he was attended by subordinate tutors, advanced pupils, and servants, for all of whom—to the number of twenty-four—he was allowed food and lodging; and he was not permitted to lodge in the house of anyone below the rank of *flaith* or noble.[1] A fugitive who fled to his presence was free from injury or arrest for the time, once the ollave's wand of office was carried round and over him. Those of minor degrees had similar proportionate privileges which were strictly defined by law.

[1] O'Curry, *MS. Mat.* 3.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION AND LEARNING

During the lifetime of St. Patrick there was extraordinary religious fervour in Ireland which lasted for several centuries, such as, probably, has never been witnessed in any other country. There gathered round the great apostle a crowd of holy and earnest men, who, when they passed away, were succeeded by others as holy and as earnest: and the long succession continued unbroken for centuries. To enter the ecclesiastical state and take an active part in the great religious movement was the ambition of the best intellects of the country. We have the lives of those men pictured in minute detail in our old writings: and it is impossible to look on them without feelings of wonder and admiration. They were wholly indifferent to bodily comfort or to advancement in worldly prosperity. They traversed the country on foot and endured without flinching privations and dangers of every kind for the one object of their lives—to spread religion and civilisation among their rude countrymen. They carried, in a little sack strapped on the back, the few simple necessaries for their journey, or the books and other requisites for religious ministration; and when at home in their monasteries, many lived and slept in poor comfortless little houses, the remains of which may be seen to this day—places we should now hesitate to house our animals in. The lot of the poorest and hardest-worked labouring man of our time is luxury itself compared with the life of many of those noble old missionaries. But even these were left in the shade by those resolute Irishmen who went in crowds, in the seventh and eighth centuries, to preach the gospel to the half-savage, ferocious, and vicious people who then inhabited Gaul, North Italy, and Germany.

The spread of the faith suffered no check by the death of St. Patrick. Churches, monasteries, and convents continued to be founded all over the country, many under the patronage and at the expense of kings and chiefs. The founders of monasteries in Ireland may be said to have been of two classes. Those of the one class settled in the inhabited districts, and took on themselves and their monks the functions of education and religious ministration to the people of the neighbourhood and to those who came from a distance. Those of the other class gave themselves up to a life of prayer and contemplation; and these took up their abode in remote, lonely, uninhabited islands or mountain valleys, places generally hard to reach and often almost inaccessible. Here they lived with their little communities in cells, one for each individual, poor little places, mostly built by themselves, barely large enough to sit, stand, and sleep in. They supported themselves by their labour, lived on hard fare, slept on the bare floor, and occupied their spare time in devotions. There was a very pronounced tendency in Ireland to this solitary monastic life in the early Christian ages; and the custom, which came originally from the East, extended to England and Scotland. On almost all the islands round the coast, as well as on those in the lakes and rivers—many of them mere bare rocks—the remains of churches and of primitive eremitical establishments are found to this day.

But many who began life in this way had, as it were perforce, to turn to the active work of teaching. For the fame of their holiness and eminence spread abroad whether they would or no: and disciples crowded round them, till schools, and perhaps towns, arose in the lonely islands or desert valleys. This was the origin of the great monastic and scholastic establishments of Glendalough, Cork, Scattery, and Aran, as well as of those of several other places.

From the middle of the sixth century schools rapidly arose all over the country, most of them in connection with monasteries. The most celebrated were those of Clonard, Armagh, Bangor, Cashel, Downpatrick, Ross Ailithir now Rosscarbery, Lismore, Glendalough, Clonmacnoise, Monas-

terboice, Clonfert, Glasnevin, and Begerin: these and others will be mentioned at the end of this chapter. But almost all the monasteries—and convents as well—carried on the function of teaching. Some had very large numbers of students: for instance, we are told that at one time there were 3,000 under St. Finnen at Clonard; and some other schools had as many. In those great seminaries every branch of knowledge then known was taught: they were in fact the prototypes of our modern universities. 'We must neither overestimate nor depreciate these establishments. They undoubtedly were in advance of any schools existing on the Continent; and the list of books possessed by some of the teachers prove that their institutions embraced a considerable course of classical learning.'[1]

In all the more important schools there were students from foreign lands, attracted by the eminence of the masters or by the facilities for quiet uninterrupted study. The greatest number came from Great Britain—they came in *fleet-loads* as Aldhelm bishop of Sherborne (A.D. 705 to 709) expresses it in his letter to his friend Eadfrid bishop of Lindisfarne, who had himself been educated in Ireland.[2] Many also were from the Continent. Among the foreign visitors were many princes: Aldfrid king of Northumbria and Dagobert II. king of France were both, when in exile in the seventh century, educated in Ireland.[3] It appears that Aldfrid while in Ireland was called Flann Finna; and there is still extant a very ancient Irish poem in praise of Ireland, said to have been composed by him: it has been translated by O'Donovan in the 'Dublin Penny Journal,' vol. i. p. 94, and metrically by J. Clarence Mangan. We get some idea of the numbers of foreigners from the ancient Litany of Aengus the Culdee, in which we find invoked many Romans, Gauls, Germans, Britons, and even Egyptians, all of whom died in Ireland. It is known that in times of persecution Egyptian monks fled

[1] Richey's *Short Hist. of the Irish People*, 1887, p. 83.

[2] Most Rev. Dr. Graves, in *Trans. R. I. Acad.* vol. xxx. p. 100, quoting Ussher (Elrington's ed.), iv. 448–451.

[3] Lanigan *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 90, 100.

to Ireland; and they have left in the country many traces of their influence. In the same Litany of Aengus mention is made of seven Egyptian monks buried in one place.[1] And in the Life of St. Senan we are told that at one time fifty Roman monks settled in Ireland in order to lead a quiet life of study and strict discipline. There is a passage in Venerable Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History' which corroborates the native records. Describing the ravages of the yellow plague in 664 he says:—'This pestilence did no less harm in the island of Ireland. Many of the nobility and of the lower ranks of the English nation were there at that time who in the days of Bishops Finan and Colman [abbots of Lindisfarne, p. 166] forsaking their native island, retired thither, either for the sake of divine studies or of a more continent life: and some of them presently devoted themselves to a monastic life: others chose rather to apply themselves to study, going about from one master's cell to another. The Scots willingly received them all, and took care to supply them with food, as also to furnish them with books to read, and their teaching, all gratis.'[2] We know that one of the three divisions of the city of Armagh was called *Trian-Saxon*, the Saxon's third, from the great number of Saxon students inhabiting it; and we learn incidentally also that in the eighth century seven streets of a town called Kilbally near Rahan in King's County were wholly occupied by *Galls* or foreigners.[3]

How much respected were the Irish scholars of this period is exemplified in a correspondence of the end of the eighth century between the illustrious scholar Alcuin and Colcu the *Fer-leginn* or chief professor of Clonmacnoise, commonly known as Colcu the Wise. He was regarded as the most learned man of his time in Ireland, and we have extant a beautiful Irish prayer composed by him.[4] Alcuin in his letters expresses extraordinary respect for him, styles him 'Most holy father,' calls himself his son, and

[1] Dr. Graves, in *Proc. R. I. Acad.* 1884, p. 280. Observe the *Litany* of Aengus is to be distinguished from his *Féilirè*.

[2] *Eccl. Hist.* iii. chap. xxvii. Bohn's Translation.

[3] Petrie, *Round Towers*, 355.

[4] O'Curry, *MS. Mat.* 379.

sends him presents for charitable purposes, some from himself and some from his great master Charlemagne.[1] In the course of three or four centuries from the time of St. Patrick Ireland became the most learned country in Europe: and it came to be known by the name now so familiar to us—*Insula sanctorum et doctorum*, the Island of saints and scholars.

Great numbers of Irishmen went to teach and to preach the gospel in Great Britain, Wales, and Scotland. St. Aidan, an Irish monk from Iona, went to Northumbria on the invitation of king Oswald—who had himself lived for some time as an exile in Ireland—and founded the monastery of Lindisfarne, which became so illustrious in after ages. For thirty years—634 to 664—this monastery was governed by him and by two other Irish bishops, Finan and Colman, in succession. Bede has an interesting passage in which he tells us that as Aidan on his arrival in Northumbria was only imperfectly acquainted with the language, king Oswald, who had learned the Irish while in Ireland, often acted as his interpreter to the people.[2] There is good reason to believe that Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, one of the most illustrious of the saints of Britain, was a native of Ireland.

On every side we meet with evidences of the activity of the Irish in Great Britain. Scotland was evangelised by St. Columba and his monks from Iona, and the whole western coasts of England and Wales abound in memorials of Irish missionaries. Numbers of the most illustrious of the Irish saints studied and taught in the monastery of St. David in Wales; and it was under the tuition of the Irish monks of Glastonbury that the genius of St. Dunstan was developed and his learning perfected.[3] 'Many of the Scots came daily into Britain, and with great devotion preached the word to those provinces of the English over which king Oswald reigned.'[4] We may conclude the

[1] Lanigan, iii. 229. [2] *Eccl. Hist.* iii. chaps. iii. and xxv.

[3] See the series of Papers on 'Early Irish Missionaries in Britain,' by the Most Rev. Dr. Moran, in vol. i. of *Trans. of Ossory Arch. Soc.*

[4] Bede, iii. chap. vii.

remarks on this head with the words of Mr. Lecky:—'England owed a great part of her Christianity to Irish monks who laboured among her people before the arrival of St. Augustine.'[1]

Whole crowds of ardent and learned Irishmen travelled to the Continent, spreading Christianity and secular knowledge among people ten times more rude and dangerous in those ages than the inhabitants of these islands. 'What,' says Eric of Auxerre (ninth century), 'what shall I say of Ireland, who despising the dangers of the deep, is migrating with almost her whole train of philosophers to our coasts?'[2] Irish professors and teachers were in those times held in such estimation that they were employed in most of the schools and colleges of Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. The revival of learning on the Continent was indeed due in no small degree to those Irish missionaries; and the investigations of scholars among the continental libraries are every year bringing to light new proofs of their industry and zeal for the advancement of religion and learning. To this day, in many towns of France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, Irishmen are venerated as patron saints. Nay, they found their way even to Iceland; for we have the best authority for the statement that when the Norwegians first arrived at that island, they found there Irish books, bells, croziers, and other traces of Irish missionaries, whom the Norwegians called *Papas*.[3]

The organisation of the Irish church was modelled on that of society in general: it was tribal. Bishops and priests did not receive authority over districts as now; they were attached to tribes, clans, churches, and monasteries. 'In Patrick's Testament [it is decreed] that there be a chief bishop for every chief tribe in Ireland, to ordain ecclesiastics, to consecrate churches, and for the

[1] *Hist. of Irel. in 18th Cent.* i. 2. See also the three instructive chapters xvi. xvii. and xviii. of Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus*.

[2] Moore, *Hist. of Irel.* i. 299.

[3] Moore *Hist. of Irel.* ii. 3, 4. For a full and very interesting account of the vestiges of Irish saints in North Italy, see the recent work, *Six Months in the Apennines*, by Miss Margaret Stokes.

spiritual direction of princes, superiors, and ordained persons.'[1] The territorial jurisdiction of the clergy over dioceses and parishes, such as we have now, did not exist in the ancient Irish church: this was introduced early in the twelfth century. As the episcopate was not limited, bishops were much more numerous in those early times than subsequently.

The reciprocal obligations of clergy and laity as we find it laid down in the Brehon law resemble those of chief and people. The law says:—The right of a church from the people is: 1. Tithes; 2. First fruits, i.e. the first of the gathering of every new produce, and every first calf and every first lamb that is brought forth in the year; 3. Firstlings, i.e. the first son born after marriage (who was to enter religion) and the first-born male of all milk-giving animals. On the other hand the rights of the people from the clergy were 'baptism, and Communion, and requiem of soul:' that is to say, spiritual ministration in general.[2]

The head of a monastery was both abbot and chief over the community. For spiritual direction and for the higher spiritual functions, a bishop was attached to every large monastery and nunnery. The abbot, in his capacity of chief, had jurisdiction over the bishop; but in the spiritual capacity he was under the bishop's jurisdiction. But the abbot himself might be a bishop; in which case no other bishop was necessary.

The mode of electing a successor to an abbot strongly resembled that for the election of chief. He should be chosen from the *finè* or family of the patron saint; if for any reason this was impossible, then from the tribe in general; and if none were found fit in these two, one of the monks was to be elected.[3] One consequence of the tribal organisation was a tendency to hereditary succession in ecclesiastical or semi-ecclesiastical offices, as in the professions. The office of erenach for instance was hereditary; and in times of confusion—during the Danish

[1] *Tripartite Life*, by Stokes, clxxxii.
[2] *Brehon Laws*, iii. 33, 39. [3] *Ibid.* iii. 73, 75.

disturbances—the offices of bishop and abbot were kept in the same family for generations. Nay even laymen often succeeded to both; but this was in the capacity of chief; and they sometimes had the tonsure of the minor orders, so that they got the name of clerics. But such men had properly ordained persons to discharge the spiritual functions.

The Irish word *comorba*, commonly Englished *coarb*, means an heir or successor: but it was usually applied to the inheritor of a bishopric, abbacy, or other ecclesiastical dignity. Thus the archbishop of Armagh is the coarb of St. Patrick; the archbishop of Dublin the coarb of St. Laurence O'Toole; the bishop of Ardagh is the coarb of St. Mel; the abbot of Glendalough was the coarb of St. Kevin; and the pope is often called the coarb of St. Peter. The coarbs were sometimes laymen, as already mentioned.

The lands belonging to a church or monastery were usually managed by an officer called an erenach or herenach, who, after deducting his own stipend, gave up the residue for the purposes intended—the support of the church or the relief of the poor. It was generally understood to be the duty of the erenach to keep the church clean and in proper repair, and the grounds in order. There were erenachs in connection with nearly all the monasteries and churches; mostly laymen.

The term *culdee*, which literally means *servant of God*, was often applied in Ireland to monks to indicate a very rigid observance of monastic rule; but it was not used to designate any particular order of monks.

From very early times there was a difference between the East and the West as to the mode of calculating the time for Easter, so that it often happened that it was celebrated at different times at Rome and at Alexandria. The Roman method of computation, which was afterwards found to be incorrect, was brought to Ireland by St. Patrick in 432; and was carried to Britain and Scotland by the Irish missionaries. Many years after St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland, Pope Hilary caused a more correct method to be adopted at Rome, which it was intended

should be followed by all other Christian countries. But from the difficulty of communicating with Rome in those disturbed times, the Christians of Great Britain and Ireland knew nothing of this reformation, and continued to follow their own old custom: and when St. Augustine and his companions came to England about the year 600, they were much surprised and disturbed to find the people celebrating Easter at a wrong time.

The correct rule then as now was this. The day for the Easter festival is regulated by the 14th day of the moon, viz. that particular 14th day that comes first after the vernal equinox (21st March): the first Sunday after that day is Easter Sunday. The Irish custom as brought by St. Patrick was incorrect in two ways. First, by the mode of calculating the moon's age, the day of new moon, and by consequence the 14th day, were often placed wrong: secondly, if the 14th day that comes next after the vernal equinox happened to fall on a Sunday, they made that Sunday Easter day, though it should be the Sunday following. This was the custom as handed down to them from the great and venerated apostles St. Patrick and St. Columba, which they steadfastly refused to change notwithstanding the exhortations of St. Augustine.

At this time St. Columbanus was in France, where he and his monks celebrated Easter in accordance with his native custom. This brought on him the censures of the Gallican bishops, whereupon he wrote two letters in succession—in 601 and 603—one to the pope and the other to the bishops, defending the Irish practice with great learning and spirit: and having received no directions on the point, he continued his own custom to the last.

In 609 Laurence archbishop of Canterbury, St. Augustine's successor, wrote to the Irish bishops and abbots, exhorting them to change, but without effect. At last the attention of the pope, Honorius I., was called to the matter; and in 630 he wrote an admonitory letter to 'the nation of the Scots,' calling on them to adopt the Roman method. On the receipt of this letter a synod was held at Moylena in 630, where Cummian, an Irish monk

from Iona, pleaded so powerfully for the correct Roman method that they were on the point of adopting it, when some mischievous person rose up and roused the Irish prejudices of the assembly, and the proceedings were adjourned. Soon after, another synod was held at a place called Campus Albus near Carlow, where the matter was still left undecided. But now it was determined—in accordance with the rule of St. Patrick (p. 144, note)—to send a deputation of wise and learned persons to Rome, 'as children to their mother.' Meantime Cummian brought on himself the censures of the abbot and monks of the monastery of Iona, for the part he had taken; and he wrote a letter to the abbot, defending himself and arguing in favour of the Roman method. This letter is still preserved and exhibits great learning and eloquence.

At the end of three years, in 633, the messengers returned and declared that the custom of Rome was the custom of the world; for they had there seen Christians of all nations celebrating Easter on the same day, which, in that particular year, differed from that of the Irish by an entire month. The result of this was that the people of Leth Mow—the southern half of Ireland—immediately adopted the Roman method. But Iona and Leth Conn had too much reverence for Columba to make a change, and they still clung tenaciously to their old custom. It was also retained at Lindisfarne through the influence of the Irish bishops of the place. Still the controversy was kept up; and when the celebrated conference held at Whitby in 664 decided in favour of the Roman method, Colman bishop of Lindisfarne, who was present, resigned the government of the monastery rather than abandon the Irish custom, and returned to Ireland with all the Irish monks of the establishment and about thirty of the English. At the close of the century Adamnan the ninth abbot of Iona attempted to bring his fraternity to the Roman method, but without success. He was successful however in the north of Ireland: and now Iona alone stood out. At length they yielded even here, about the year 716, and thus terminated an observance that had lasted for a century

and a half, and which, though the question was comparatively unimportant, had given rise to more earnest controversy than any other during the early ages of the church in these countries.

For three or four hundred years after the time of St. Patrick the monasteries—protected and fostered by kings and chiefs—were unmolested; and as we have seen, learning was cultivated within their walls. In the ninth and tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, science and art, the Gaelic language, and learning of every kind, were brought to their highest state of perfection. But after this came a change for the worse. The Danish inroads broke up most of the schools and disorganised all society. Then the monasteries were no longer the quiet and safe asylums they had been—they became indeed rather more dangerous than other places; learning and art gradually declined; and Ireland ultimately lost her intellectual supremacy.

Here follows a short account of some of the most eminent early Irish saints and of the establishments they founded. Only a few of those who distinguished themselves in foreign countries are noticed: it would take a volume to treat of them all.

St. Benen or Benignus of Kilbennan, the special patron saint of Connaught, was born in Bregia about the year 426. When a mere boy he became a pupil and disciple of St. Patrick; who sent him, when qualified, to preach and baptise in those districts which he himself was not able to visit.

Having governed the monastery of Drumlease in Leitrim for twenty years, he erected his principal church at Kilbennan (Benen's church), which became the nucleus of a monastery that flourished for many centuries. Its ruins, including a round tower, are still to be seen two miles from Galway. Benen succeeded St. Patrick as archbishop of Armagh in 465, and died in 468. He was one of the committee of nine who drew up the Senchus Mor (p. 41); and he was the original compiler of the Psalter of Cashel and of the Book of Rights. He also wrote a book on the life and miracles of St. Patrick.

St. Fiacc of Sleaty was the son of Erc, of a distinguished family of Leinster. When young he became a disciple of

Duftach the arch-poet, converted by St. Patrick at Tara. When St. Patrick visited Leinster, Fiacc was introduced to him by Duftach, and was directed by the saint how to carry on his studies. He afterwards became chief bishop of Leinster, and fixed his see at Sleaty, where he presided over a monastery and a school. He was held in high estimation and had many disciples. There is a well-known very ancient Gaelic hymn in praise of St. Patrick, which some think was composed by him. Sleaty now contains the ruins of a church and some ancient crosses.

St. Mel of Ardagh, was born in Britain early in the fifth century. By some he is represented as the son of St. Patrick's sister Darerca: at any rate he became a disciple of the great apostle, and aided him in his Irish mission. He was appointed by St. Patrick to Ardagh, where he built a monastery and became its first bishop and abbot. Died in 488. Ardagh, which lies six miles from Longford, now contains the ruins of a very ancient church.

St. Cianan, Keenan, or Kienan, of Duleek, was born of a distinguished family, probably in Meath. He was consecrated bishop by St. Patrick, who also gave him a copy of the Gospels. He was the founder of Duleek in Meath, five miles south-west from Drogheda, and died in 490. The name Duleek signifies stone church: and it is stated that this was the first stone church ever erected in Ireland.

St. Ibar of Begerin was born in Ulster of the Dalaradian race. Having followed St. Patrick as disciple for a long time, and travelled through parts of Munster and Leinster, and having been for some time in charge of St. Brigit's community at Kildare, he finally settled on the little island of Begerin (i.e. Little Ireland) near the north shore of Wexford Harbour, two miles from Wexford town. Here he established a seminary to which the youth of Leinster flocked for instruction. He died in 500; and the monastery he founded flourished for many centuries afterwards. Begerin, which is now surrounded by reclaimed land, contains the ruins of a church and some ancient crosses.

St. Ailbe of Emly, a native of Munster, became a priest at a very early age, and travelled through Ireland, making many converts. While St. Patrick was at Cashel with king Aengus Mac Natfree he ordained Ailbe a bishop—the first bishop of Emly—and made him the ecclesiastical head of all Munster. Ailbe however being very gentle and humble, greatly disliked

his increasing reputation, and resolved to retire to a monastery. But king Aengus refused to let him go, whereupon he settled down at Emly, where he founded a monastery and established a school, and spent the rest of his life labouring incessantly for the good of religion and learning.

Ailbe was looked upon as the most illustrious saint of Munster, so that he was often styled a second Patrick ; and to this day the people of that province regard him with extraordinary respect and affection. In after ages the students of the school became very numerous, and Emly grew to be a city; but it is now only a little hamlet.

St. Declan of Ardmore, a contemporary of St. Ailbe, was the son of Erc prince of the Decies. While yet a young man he obtained such reputation for learning that several disciples placed themselves under his instruction, some of whom themselves afterwards became famous. He was consecrated a bishop, and ultimately settled at Ardmore. He is the patron of the people of Decies, who hold him to this day in great veneration. Ardmore, where the establishment founded by the saint flourished for ages, is a small village on the sea coast five miles from Youghal. It contains the remains of a very old church, and near it a well-preserved round tower: also Declan's oratory or dormitory, one of the smallest ecclesiastical buildings in Ireland.

St. Mochta or Mocteus of Louth, a native of Britain, was a disciple of St. Patrick. He founded a church and monastery and carried on a school at Louth in the county Louth, and while governing here was consecrated bishop. He was probably the last survivor of St. Patrick's disciples : died in 534.

St. Brigit of Kildare was born about the year 455 at Faughart near Dundalk, where her father, who was chief of the district, lived. She became a nun when very young : and soon the fame of her sanctity spread through the whole country. Having founded convents in various parts of Ireland, she finally settled—about the year 480—at a place in Leinster then called Drumcree. Here she built her first cell under the shade of a great oak-tree, whence it got the name of Kill-dara the church of the oak, now Kildare. This became the greatest and most famous nunnery ever established in Ireland. She died on the 1st of February 523 ; and the oak-tree, which she loved, was preserved there affectionately for several hundred years after. St. Brigit is venerated in Ireland beyond all other Irishwomen ; and there are places

all through the country still called Kilbride and Kilbreedy (Brigit's church), which received their names from churches founded by or in honour of her.

St. Enda or Endeus of Aran was the son of Conall, prince of Oriell in Ulster, where he was born about the middle of the fifth century. He was at first a soldier, and being distinguished for courage, was chosen tanist to succeed his father; but he gave up his worldly prospects for the sake of religion. He studied for some time in Britain; and having, after his return to Ireland, founded some churches near Drogheda, he finally settled on the great island of Aran in Galway Bay, where he erected a number of churches all over the island. Died about 542. So great was the number of learned and holy men who lived then and after on this island that it came to be called Ara-na-naemh [naive], Aran of the saints; and the ruins of many churches and other ecclesiastical buildings are still to be seen scattered over the island.

St. Ciaran or Kieran of Ossory was born on the island of Cape Clear, but his father belonged to Ossory. Having spent some time under the instruction of St. Finnen of Clonard, he founded a monastery in a solitary spot near Birr which still bears his name—Seirkieran. Here he became a bishop and founded the see of Ossory, of which he is the patron saint. Several other churches owe their origin to him, and he is much venerated in Ossory as well as in Cape Clear Island. On the sea shore of this island stands the ruin of a little church, and near it a rude stone cross said to have been made by the saint's own hands. The exact times of his birth and death are unknown; but he was contemporary with St. Finnen of Clonard, and his death probably occurred soon after 550.

It was formerly believed that the four saints Ibar, Ailbe, Declan, and Kieran (of Ossory) preceded St. Patrick in Ireland; but this opinion is now known to be erroneous.

St. Finnen of Clonard was born in Leinster towards the close of the fifth century, and like several other Irish saints, he spent some time in early life in Britain, teaching and preaching the gospel. After his return he founded churches in several parts of Leinster; and at last settled at Clonard, a lovely quiet spot on the Boyne. Here he founded his chief monastery and kept a school, and here he became bishop and abbot. He was a great and learned man—the first of that long line of great scholars who made Ireland famous in those ages—and crowds of students flocked to him, so that at one

time he had 3,000 scholars, and Clonard became the most celebrated of the ancient schools of Ireland. Many of the most illustrious fathers of the Irish church were educated by him, among them being the 'Twelve Apostles of Erin.' He is called in O'Clery's Calendar 'a doctor of wisdom and the tutor of the saints of Ireland in his time.' He died of the yellow plague in 549. The spot where St. Finnen's great establishment stood is a beautiful green meadow beside the Boyne; and of all the buildings erected there in old times, not the slightest vestige now remains.

N.B. The 'Twelve Apostles of Erin' were:—Kieran of Saigher or Seir Kieran; Kieran of Clonmacnoise; Columkille of Iona; Brendan of Clonfert; Brendan of Birr; Columba of Terryglass in Tipperary; Molaisse or Laserian of Devenish; Canice of Aghaboe; Rodan of Lorrha; Movi of Glasnevin; Sinnell of Cleenish in Lough Erne, near Enniskillen; and St. Nenni of Inishmacsaint in Lough Erne.

St. Ciaran or Kieran of Clonmacnoise, commonly known as Kieran the son of the carpenter, was born in Meath in or about the year 515. He lived with and studied under several saints —among them SS. Finnen of Clonard, Enda of Aran, and Senan of Scattery. After this he proceeded to Inis-Angin, now called Hare Island, in the south of Lough Ree, where he founded a monastery. In 548 he received a grant of a piece of land in a wild and lonely spot on the eastern bank of the Shannon, from Dermot the son of Fergus (p. 151), king of Ireland, where with his own hand he laid the foundation stone of his principal monastery. The following year (549) he died in the prime of manhood. Though dying so young, and though he had not attained the rank of bishop, Ciaran was one of the most illustrious of the early Irish saints; and he is greatly venerated not only in Ireland but in Scotland.

Clonmacnoise increased and flourished for many centuries after the founder's death; and it became a great school for both clerical and lay pupils. The ruins, which include many churches and two round towers, stand on a height over the Shannon; and like several other collections of ecclesiastical ruins in Ireland, they are popularly called The Seven Churches.

St. Ita, or Ida, or Mida, of Killeedy was born about 480, of the tribe of the Decies. She was remarkable from childhood for her gentleness and piety; and when she came of age she obtained her parents' consent to adopt a religious life. After

having received the veil she proceeded to the territory of Hy Conaill in Limerick, and fixed her residence at a spot called *Cloon-Credhuil* [Crail]. Here a large number of pious maidens placed themselves under her direction. In this manner sprang up her nunnery, which was the first in that part of the country, and which attained to great celebrity : and the name of the place was changed to Killeedy (St. Ida's church). Under her other name of Mida she is commemorated in those churches and places now called Kilmeedy in Cork, Limerick, and Waterford. She died in 569. St. Ita was one of the most illustrious saints of an age abounding in illustrious men and women ; so that she was often designated the Brigit of Munster.

Killeedy lies near Newcastle in the west of the co. Limerick, and at the present day contains St. Ita's Well, and the ruin of a very ancient and exquisitely beautiful little church.

St. Brendan of Clonfert, commonly called Brendan the Navigator, to distinguish him from another Brendan, was the son of Finloga, and was born in Kerry in 484. In very early life he was educated by St. Ita and afterwards by Bishop Erc. Having heard from many persons that there was an island far out in the western sea, he sailed from near Brandon Mountain in Kerry (which is named from him), on his celebrated voyage of seven years in the Atlantic, in which it is related that he saw many wonderful things.

On his return he founded the monastery of Clonfert in Galway in 558, where a large community of monks gathered round him. He also founded a church in Ardfert in Kerry, and several other religious houses : at one time he presided over 3,000 monks, who supported themselves by their labour in their several monasteries. He died in 577 in his sister's nunnery at Annadown in Galway, which had been founded by him. Immediately after Brendan's death Clonfert became a bishopric, and was for many centuries one of Ireland's great ecclesiastical centres.

St. Senan or Senanus of Scattery, the patron saint of Clare, was born in that district in or about 488. Having studied under St. Natalis of Kilmanagh (in Kilkenny), he established his first monastery at Inniscarra on the Lee above Cork, where he lived with his monks for some time. He settled finally—about 540—in *Inis-Cathaigh* [Cahy], now Scattery Island in the Shannon near Kilrush

Here gathered round him a community which was distinguished for its strict discipline. One of the rules was that no female should land on the island; and it is related in his Life that when St. Cannera, a virgin saint nearly related to him, came to Scattery to receive the viaticum from him, he at first refused to let her land; and only yielded when he was informed that she was at the point of death.

St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise visited him here, and remained some time under his instructions. At his death, which occurred probably about 560, the clergy of all the neighbouring districts gathered to Scattery to honour his memory, and his obsequies were celebrated for an entire week. Scattery Island contains one of the most interesting groups of ecclesiastical ruins in Ireland, consisting of six or seven churches and a perfect round tower.

St. Brendan of Birr belonged to a distinguished family of Munster. In his youth he was educated at St. Finnen's school of Clonard, where he formed friendship with St. Columkille, the two Kierans, and Brendan of Clonfert. About the middle of the sixth century he founded a monastery at Birr, which he governed till his death in 573.

St. Iarlath of Tuam was the son of Loga, of the Connaught family of Conmacne, and was born about the beginning of the sixth century. He first established a monastery at a place called *Cloon-fois* near Tuam; but by the advice of St. Brendan of Clonfert he removed to Tuam, of which he was the first bishop. Tuam subsequently became an archiepiscopal see, which it has remained to this day.

St. Finnen or Finnbarr of Movilla was born of Christian parents, of the royal family of Ulster, about the beginning of the sixth century. He first studied under Irish teachers of eminence, after which he went to St. Nennio's school in Britain. He next went to Rome, where he remained for seven years; and returning to Ireland he founded his establishment at Movilla. Here he governed and taught with great success; and among his pupils was the youthful Columkille. He became a bishop, and has always been regarded as the patron saint of Ulidia: died in the year 579. Movilla lies near Newtownards, and there are still some remains of the old abbey.

St. Molaissi [Molasha] or Laserian of Devenish, son of Natfree, was a native of Connaught, and was one of the most distinguished pupils of St. Finnen of Clonard. After leaving

Clonard he founded a monastery on Devenish Island in Lower Lough Erne, which became very famous. He died in 574 at the early age of thirty. The little island of Devenish lies two miles below Enniskillen. It contains a beautiful and perfect round tower and the ruins of several churches.

St. Fachtna of Rosscarbery, designated *Sapiens* or the Wise, was born in the early half of the sixth century. He was abbot of Molana or Darinis on the Blackwater near Lismore, after which he founded a monastery at Ross, now Rosscarbery, in Cork, where he became a bishop, probably before 570. Ross became a place of great ecclesiastical and educational eminence; and it was so famous for the crowds of students and monks flocking to it, that it was distinguished by the name of *Ros-ailithir*, the wood of the pilgrims.

St. Molaissi [Molasha] or Laserian of Inishmurray, the son of Deglan, was a contemporary of St. Columba and somewhat his senior, and we are told that it was he who enjoined on him to undertake the conversion of the Picts. In the early part of the sixth century he founded a monastery on the island of Inishmurray in Sligo Bay. He is to this day held in intense veneration by the people of the island; and the remains of his primitive monastery still survive in a most interesting state of preservation.[1]

St. Columba or Columkille of Iona was born in the year 521 at Gartan in Donegal. He belonged to the northern Hy Neill (p. 134), his father being grandson of Conall Gulban, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages; but he gave up all the worldly advantages of his high birth, and from an early age determined to devote himself to religion. He studied first under St. Finnen of Movilla, next under St. Finnen of Clonard, by whom he was ordained; and lastly under St. Mobhi [Movi] of Glasnevin. In the year 546 he built the monastery of Derry; after which, during the next fifteen years, he founded a great number of churches and monasteries all over the country, among others those of Kells, Swords, Tory Island, Lambay near Dublin, and Durrow in Queen's County, the last of which was his chief establishment in Ireland.

In the year 563 he went with twelve companions to the little island of Iona on the west coast of Scotland, which had been granted to him by his relative the king of that part of

[1] A full description of this interesting island and its ruins, by W. F. Wakeman, will be found in the *Kilkenny Arch. Journ.* for 1885–6, p. 175.

Scotland. Here he settled and founded the monastery which afterwards became so illustrious. He converted the Picts, who then inhabited that part of Scotland lying beyond the Grampian Hills; and he traversed the Hebrides, preaching to the people and founding churches wherever he went. After a life of unceasing labour in the service of religion, he died kneeling before the altar of his own church of Iona, in the year 597, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and was buried within the monastery (see pp. 19, 20, 121, 152).

St. Fintan or Munna of Clonenagh was born in Leinster in the early part of the sixth century. While still a young man he founded his monastery at Clonenagh in a fertile spot surrounded by bog and marsh—about the year 548. Here he gathered round him a community of monks, who lived under very severe discipline, and supported themselves by labour. St. Fintan was held in great esteem by St. Columkille; and several distinguished Irish saints were for a time under his instruction at Clonenagh. He died some time near the end of the sixth century. Clonenagh lies between Maryborough and Mountrath, two miles from the latter: it now contains a single, not very ancient, church ruin; but the place is known as the Seven Churches of Clonenagh. St. Fintan is still profoundly reverenced round all that neighbourhood.

St. Cainnech, Kenny, or Canice, of Aghaboe was a contemporary and friend of St. Columba, and was born in Keenaght in Derry in 517. In his youth he spent some years studying in Scotland, where several churches are still named from him: he also studied under St. Finnen at Clonard and under St. Movi at Glasnevin. He founded many churches in Ireland, the principal one being Aghaboe in Queen's County: in the monastery here he spent the latter part of his life, and died in 600. The original church of Kilkenny was dedicated to and named from him (Canice's Church). In course of time the bishops of Ossory took up their residence at Aghaboe, though in later times they have resided at Kilkenny. Aghaboe lies five miles east of Borris-in-Ossory, and still contains extensive and interesting abbey and church ruins.

St. Comgall of Bangor was born in Dalaradia in 517, of a distinguished family. When he had determined to embrace a religious life, he left his home and entered the monastery of St. Fintan at Clonenagh, where he studied for several years. Returning to Ulster, he founded his monastery at Bangor in 558. Bangor soon became a great school like Clonard; its

fame spread through all Europe; and Comgall had 3,000 monks and students under his instruction and obeying his rule. Among his pupils was the great St. Columbanus. After the foundation of Bangor, Comgall visited Scotland, where he founded a church and did some good missionary service; and before his return he spent some time with St. Columkille in Iona. He died in Bangor in 602.

After the suppression of the monasteries the ecclesiastical buildings of Bangor were destroyed; and scarcely anything now remains to remind the visitor of this once celebrated seat of learning. The Antiphonary or Latin Hymn Book used in the early ages of Bangor is still preserved in the monastery of Bobbio; it was printed in the last century by Muratori.

St. Kevin of Glendalough belonged to one of the leading families of Leinster, where he was born early in the sixth century. He was carefully educated by his parents, who were Christians, and having been ordained priest, he retired to the lonely valley of Glendalough, where he founded his chief establishment some time in the first half of the century. He governed here as abbot till his death, which took place A.D. 618. After the death of the founder many churches were built in the valley; and a city arose there which became a bishop's see and remained so till A.D. 1214, when it was annexed to the see of Dublin. The place now contains a most interesting group of ecclesiastical ruins, scattered over the lower part of the valley, including several churches, two round towers, and some crosses; the whole group is commonly called the Seven Churches of Glendalough.

St. Colman of Cloyne, the son of Lenin, was descended from the kings of Munster, and was born early in the sixth century. In his youth he was a poet attached to the court of the king of Cashel: but having resolved to devote his life to religion he went to the school of St. Iarlath at Tuam; and after some time he founded Cloyne, of which he became the first bishop: died in 604. Cloyne is still a bishop's see, and contains some interesting ruins, among them a fine round tower.

St. Mobhi [Movie] or Movi of Glasnevin, also called Berchan, and often Mobhi Clarinech (flat-face), was a contemporary of St. Columba and studied with him under St. Finnen of Clonard. He founded a monastery and kept a school at Glasnevin near Dublin. Here he was visited by St. Columba, who found 50 students in the school, among them St. Canice, St. Comgall, and St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise. The establish-

ment, which consisted of a little church with a number of huts or cells for residences, was situated on both banks of the river Tolka near the present bridge at Glasnevin : but every vestige has long since disappeared. St. Mobhi died in 545 of the terrible yellow plague (p. 151). The monastery flourished for more than 300 years afterwards, for the annalists record the death of an abbot of Glasnevin in 882.

St. Columbanus of Bobbio, one of the most illustrious men of the age in which he lived, was born in Leinster about the year 543, and while still a mere boy gave promise of great abilities. In early life he embraced the monastic state, and placed himself under the instruction of St. Comgall of Bangor, with whom he remained many years. He had a great ambition to carry a knowledge of the gospel to foreign countries : and accordingly he went to Burgundy about the year 590, with twelve companions, and journeying through France, preached the gospel with great success to the Gauls, then sunk in barbarism and vice. Sojourning for some time at Luxeuil, at the foot of the Vosges Mountains in France, his eloquence and holiness of life attracted round him many disciples—the greater number of them young noblemen—for whom he founded the two monasteries of Luxeuil and Fontaines. I have already spoken of his controversy with the continental ecclesiastics about the time of celebrating Easter (p. 170). He got into much more serious trouble by boldly rebuking Theodoric the king of Burgundy for his vices ; for which he was persecuted and ultimately expelled (in 610), chiefly through the influence of Theodoric's wicked old grandmother Brunehild, who had encouraged the prince in his vices. After many wanderings, during which he preached the gospel with undaunted courage, and wrote learned letters on various religious questions, he settled finally—in 613—at Bobbio in Italy, among the Apennines, on a site granted to him by Agilulf king of the Lombards, by whom he was held in great honour. He died at Bobbio in 615, where he was buried. We have still extant a number of his writings—letters, sermons, poems, &c.—which show him to have been a good and holy man, full of genius and deeply versed in many branches of learning. As he was near fifty years of age when he went to the Continent, and as he had neither time nor opportunity to study during his active and stormy life there, he must have brought his great learning from the old monastery of Bangor.

St. Gall or Gallus of St. Gall in Switzerland, was one of the

twelve companions who went with St. Columbanus to the Continent. At a place called Breganz in Switzerland, where they rested for a year in their wanderings, Gallus at the request of his master broke a number of idols, and understanding the language of the people he preached and converted many ; after which a monastery was erected there. Gallus was ill when Columbanus left in 612 for Bobbio, so that he was left behind. Shortly afterwards he built a cell for himself in a solitary spot, where he died about 645. He was so revered for his holiness that a church and a monastery were afterwards erected on the spot, round which grew up a town which still retains the name of the founder, St. Gall. He is the patron of the place, and his memory is greatly venerated to this day.

St. Finnbarr or Barra of Cork was a native of Connaught. Like many other early Irish saints, he visited Scotland, where he left his name on the island of Barra, of which, as well as of Dornoch, he is the patron. In Ireland he founded his first establishment in the wild solitude of Gougane Barra at the source of the Lee in Cork ; where notwithstanding the remoteness of the spot many disciples gathered round him. On a little island in the lake the remains of the humble cells in which he and his monks and disciples lived are still to be seen. After some time he removed to the mouth of the Lee and founded a monastery on the edge of a marsh near the river, to which young men flocked in great numbers for instruction. Around this monastery the city of Cork gradually grew up in after ages. He died early in the seventh century, and his name is preserved in that of the cathedral and parish of St. Finnbar's in the city of Cork.

St. Aidan or Maidoc of Ferns was born about the year 555 in the present co. Cavan. While still a mere youth he went to Wales to St. David, under whom he studied for a long time. Returning to his native country with a number of Irish students, he landed in Wexford and founded several churches in the present counties of Wexford and Waterford. Branduff the powerful king of Leinster had an extraordinary regard for him, and bestowed on him a tract of land called *Ferna* or Alder-land, now Ferns, where Aidan founded his principal church. At a synod of the chief clerics and laymen of Leinster, convened by Branduff, it was ordained that Ferns should be the chief ecclesiastical seat of Leinster : and Maidoc was made its first *Ard-espog* or chief bishop. This became one of the greatest ecclesiastical centres in Ireland, and a city

rose gradually round it. After a life of active benevolence in the cause of religion, Aidan died about the year 625. The Leinster people call him Mogue, which is the Irish pronunciation of Maidoc.

St. Carthach or Mochuda of Lismore, one of the most illustrious of the Irish saints, was born in Kerry about the middle of the sixth century. He was educated and ordained by an elder St. Carthach, a bishop: after which he went to Bangor, where he spent some time under St. Comgall. Returning to his native county, and soon afterwards proceeding to Leinster, he founded a monastery at Rahan, in the present King's County. Here he remained for forty years, becoming a bishop meantime; and scholars and disciples flocked to him from all parts to the number of eight or nine hundred, all of whom as usual supported themselves by their own labour.

Through some local jealousies he and his monks were expelled from Rahan in 632 by Blathmac, afterwards king of Ireland. In his subsequent wanderings he was received everywhere with great respect; and at last he settled down at Lismore. This at once became a bishop's see, and as a school it soon attained extraordinary celebrity. It was indeed a university, and was crowded with students not only from Ireland, but from Britain and the Continent. Carthach died in 637 and was buried at Lismore.

St. Molaissi [Molash'a] or Laserian of Leighlin was born in Ulster in the latter part of the sixth century; his father was a nobleman named Cairell, and his mother Gemma was the daughter of Aidan, one of the Dalriadic kings of Scotland. It is stated that he lived in Rome for fourteen years, and that he was ordained by Pope Gregory the Great. After his return to Ireland he settled in Leighlin in a monastery that had been founded some time before. Here he attained to great eminence, so that he had 1,500 monks under his charge. Having returned from a second visit to Rome, he attended the meetings held to determine the time for Easter, and strongly advocated the Roman method of computation, but was opposed by St. Fintan of Taghmon. This distinguished man died in 639, and was buried in his own church at Leighlin. This place, now Oldleighlin, is in co. Carlow.

St. Fursa of Peronne and his brothers **Foillan** and **Ultan**. These three saints, who are remembered in England and France as well as in Ireland, were sons of Fintan who was son of Finloga prince of South Munster. Fursa, the eldest, was

born some time before 577. Having received a careful religious education, he established a monastery for himself near Lough Corrib in Galway; after which he preached with great success in different parts of the country. He next repaired to England—about 637—accompanied by his two brothers Foillan and Ultan: he was received with great honour by Sigebert king of East Anglia, and converted great numbers by his preaching. Here he founded a monastery, which he left in charge of his brother Foillan: after which he spent a year with Ultan, who was then living as a hermit not far from the monastery. He next passed over to France, where he was kindly received by king Clovis II., and by the mayor of the palace. The mayor gave him a piece of land at Lagny near Paris, on which he erected a monastery. He now set out to visit his brothers in England, but on his way he was taken ill, and died about the year 650. He was buried with great solemnity at Peronne, where he is venerated to this day. Soon after Fursa's death, his brothers went to France; and we have already seen (p. 94) how they were engaged by Gertrude, daughter of Pepin, to instruct the nuns of Nivelle in psalmody. Foillan was murdered by some robbers, and his remains were buried at Fosse: and Ultan, having governed the monastery at Peronne, died about 670. These two brothers are still venerated at their several places of sepulture.

St. Camin of Iniscaltra was born a little after the middle of the sixth century, and was half-brother of Guary the Hospitable, king of Connaught. He founded a church on Iniscaltra in Lough Derg on the Shannon, where a number of disciples gathered round him, attracted by the fame of his learning and piety. He died in the year 653. Iniscaltra or Holy Island—as it is now more commonly called—lies in the southern extremity of Lough Derg in a beautiful situation near the Galway shore. It contains an interesting group of ruins, including a round tower almost perfect, and several small churches and oratories.

St. Dympna or Domnat of Gheel in Belgium and of Tedavnet in Monaghan, daughter of an Irish pagan king, was born most probably in or near Clogher in Tyrone. When little more than a child she secretly became a Christian. When she came of age her father made an unnatural proposal to marry her, whereupon she fled in horror from her home to the Continent with the venerable priest who baptised her and with a married couple as servants, and took up her residence with

her companions at Gheel in Belgium. Her father followed her, and after a long search discovered her retreat. The old priest (Gerebern) was instantly put to death : and the raging king having in vain sought to bring her to his purpose, ordered his attendants to behead her ; but as they one and all refused, he became outrageous and beheaded her himself. It is believed that the holy virgin suffered martyrdom some time in the seventh century. In course of time Dympna came to be regarded as the tutelar saint of those afflicted with insanity ; and innumerable cases are recorded of insane persons obtaining relief by visiting her shrine. For more than a thousand years Gheel has been a sanatorium for persons subject to nervous and mental disorders, where they are treated with great success. In certain parts of Ulster this virgin is still held in veneration : and one parish in Monaghan has taken its name from her—Tedavnet.

St. Moling of St. Mullins and of **Ferns** was a native of Hy Kinsellagh in Leinster. Having entered on a monastic life, he founded a monastery about the middle of the seventh century at a place near the Barrow, which is now called St. Mullins. He also erected a church in Kildare which still retains the name Timolin (Moling's house). He ultimately became bishop of Ferns, and induced the monarch Finaghta to remit the Boru tribute (p. 153). Died in 697.

Adamnan, the biographer of St. Columkille, was born about 624 in the south of Donegal, and came of a princely family, being eighth in descent from king Niall of the Nine Hostages. In 679, when he was about 55 years of age, he was elected abbot of Iona—the eighth after the founder Columkille. His Life of St. Columkille has been most learnedly edited by the Most Rev. Dr. William Reeves. In 697 was held the meeting of clergy and laymen at Tara, where at the instance of Adamnan a law was adopted forbidding women to take part in war : this was known as *Cain Adamnain* or Adamnan's Law. Adamnan is spoken of with great respect by his contemporaries. He is the patron of Raphoe in Donegal : and many churches both in Ireland and Scotland are dedicated to him : died in 703. He is popularly known in Ireland by the name Eunan, which is the Gaelic pronunciation of 'Adamnan.'

St. Buite, or Boetius, or Boece, of Monasterboice, the son of Bronach, was born in Keenaght, in the present co. of Louth. To perfect himself in religious knowledge he went to Italy,

where he lived for several years in a monastery : and on his way home he landed in Scotland, and stayed there for some time preaching with great success. On returning to Ireland he founded the establishment which was named from him *Monaster-Buite* or Monasterboice. Boetius was a bishop as well as abbot of his monastery. The ruins of Monasterboice, situated five miles from Drogheda, attest the former importance of the place. They consist of two churches, a round tower, and three stately, elaborately sculptured stone crosses, forming one of the most impressive groups of ecclesiastical ruins in Ireland.

Virgil or Virgilius, bishop of Salzburg. Of the early life of this distinguished man we know nothing further than this : that he was abbot of Aghaboe and that he went to France about the year 745. After his arrival, Pepin, mayor of the palace—afterwards king of France—became greatly attached to him and kept him in his palace for two years. Virgilius from this went to Bavaria, where he had some disputes on theological questions with the great English missionary St. Boniface ; but the matter was decided in his favour by Pope Zachary. In 756 he was appointed bishop of Salzburg.

Virgilius was one of the most advanced scholars of his day : he taught publicly—and was probably the first to teach—that the earth was round, and that people lived at the opposite side —at the antipodes. A perverted report of his opinions was sent to the pope, representing that he held the existence of another world below the earth : but nothing ever came of it ; so that we must suppose he defended himself successfully. His Irish name is *Fergil* ; and he is commonly known as Fergil the geometer. Died at Salzburg in 785.

St. Mailruan of Tallaght founded the monastery of Tallaght near Dublin in 769, which he governed as bishop and abbot till his death in 792. Among his monks was Aengus the Culdee, the saint next noticed. Tallaght flourished as a great religious centre for many ages afterwards ; and its ecclesiastical eminence has not yet wholly departed. The Dominicans have an establishment there ; and a beautiful little church has lately been erected on one of the old sites to the memory of the great Dominican preacher, Father Thomas Burke.

Aengus the Culdee was born about the middle of the eighth century. While yet a student at the monastery of Clonenagh in Queen's County, he had great reputation for sanctity ; and

wishing to avoid publicity he went in disguise to the monastery of Tallaght near Dublin, then governed by St. Mailruan. He was employed to attend the mill and kiln of the monastery, and in this humble condition he remained unknown for seven years, till his identity was discovered by accident.

Here he wrote his Feilire or Festilogium, already described (p. 24). Towards the end of his life he returned to Clonenagh, where he died about the year 820.

Among the vast number of Irishmen who became distinguished on the Continent, the following may be mentioned in addition to those already noticed. St. Fiacre of Breuil in France, died about 670, who gave name to a kind of vehicle called in French a *fiacre*, from the custom, in after ages, of using it in pilgrimages to his tomb. St. Fridolin 'the Traveller' explored the Rhine and founded a nunnery on the island of Seckingen: died probably in the beginning of the sixth century. Argobast and Florentius were successively bishops of Strasburg towards the end of the seventh century. St. Kilian the great apostle of Franconia converted Gozbert duke of Wurzburg, but suffered martyrdom in 689 through the revenge of Geilana the duke's divorced wife. St. Cataldus of Tarentum, of the latter half of the seventh century, educated in the school of Lismore, where he was a professor of great repute before leaving Ireland, went to the Continent and became bishop of Tarentum, where he is still held in extraordinary veneration. The two scholars Clement and Albinus, on landing with some merchants in France, attracted attention in an extraordinary way. They went through the market place where people were exposing their goods for sale, and cried out repeatedly to the crowd:—'Who want wisdom (i.e. learning), let them come to us, for we have it to sell!' The great Charlemagne hearing of them ordered them to his presence, and finding them men of learning, placed them at the head of two great seminaries. Dungal attracted the patronage of Charlemagne by addressing a letter to him on solar eclipses. Sedulius and Donatus, who flourished in Italy early in the ninth century, were writers of repute in theological subjects. But the most

remarkable Irishman of those times—in many respects the most distinguished scholar of his day in Europe—was John Scotus Erigena, celebrated for his knowledge of Greek, and for his theological speculations: he taught philosophy in Paris, and died about the year 870.

It is to be observed that very few of the natives of Ireland who distinguished themselves on the Continent are noticed in Irish records; the reason of which is, that the Irish chroniclers took nothing on hearsay, which was the only kind of evidence that could reach them from the Continent.

CHAPTER VII

THE DANISH WARS

[Chief authorities for Chaps. VII., VIII., and IX.: Wars of the Gaels with the Galls (i.e. of the Irish with the Danes); Annals of the Four Masters and the other Irish annals; Keating's History of Ireland; Haliday's Scand. Kingd. of Dublin; The Saga or Story of Burnt Nial, translated by Sir George Webbe Dasent].

TOWARDS the close of the eighth century the Danes began to make their descents on the coasts of Europe. They came from Norway, Sweden, Jutland, and in general from the islands and coasts of the Baltic. They deemed piracy the noblest career that a chief could engage in; and they sent forth swarms of daring and desperate marauders, who for two centuries kept the whole of Western Europe in a state of continual terror.

Our records make mention of two distinct races of Galls or Northmen: the *Lochlanns*, i.e. Norwegians and Swedes, who, as they were fair-haired, were called Finn-Galls or White strangers; and the *Danars* or Danes of Denmark, who were called Duv-Galls, Black strangers, because they were dark-haired and swarthy. In modern Irish histories the term 'Danes' is applied to both indifferently.

The Finn-Galls or Norwegians were the first to arrive. They appeared on the Irish coast for the first time in 795, during the reign of the Irish king Donogh, when they

plundered Lambay Island—or *Rechru* as it was then called —near Dublin. St. Columba had long before founded a church on this island, which no doubt had now wealth enough to tempt the rapacity of the pirates.

After this period their attacks became frequent. At first they came in small detached parties, and their raids were chiefly confined to the islands, a great many of which were then inhabited by colonies of monks (p. 163). But soon, emboldened by success, they fitted out fresh expeditions on a large scale, and often penetrated far inland, burning, plundering, and slaying wherever they came. The first series of invasions terminated in a defeat of the barbarians in 812 by the prince of *Owenaght* or the district round the Lakes of Killarney. This defeat seems to have been a very decisive one, for it is recorded in the Annals of Eginhard, Charlemagne's tutor, A.D. 812:—'The fleet of the Northmen having arrived at Hibernia, the island of the Scots, after a battle had been fought with the Scots, and after no small number of the Norsemen had been slain, they basely took to flight and returned home.'[1]

Among all this havoc and turmoil we find a few domestic matters of interest to chronicle. King Aed Ordnidhe [Ordnee], who reigned from 797 to 819, on one occasion, in 803, made a hostile incursion to Leinster, and forced Conmach, the primate of Armagh, and all his clergy to attend him. Having, on the march, arrived at a place called *Dun-Cuar*, now Rathcore in Meath, the archbishop expostulated with him on the impropriety of bringing the clergy on such expeditions. The king referred the matter to his tutor and chief adviser Fothad (p. 161), who, after due deliberation, pronounced judgment exempting the clergy for ever from attending armies in war. He delivered his decision in the form of a short *Canon* of three verses, which is still extant, whence he has ever since been known as Fothad of the Canon.[2]

The disaster at Killarney seems to have deterred the Danes for a while, and there was an interval of quiet of

[1] Quoted in Miss Stokes's *Early Christian Archit. in Ireland*, p. 149.
[2] O'Curry, *MS. Mat.* 363.

ten or eleven years. Soon after the accession of Concovar or Conor, who became king in 819, they began another series of inroads, A.D. 823, in which they plundered Cork, Cloyne, and Begerin. They destroyed the great monastery of Bangor in Down, broke the shrine of the patron St. Comgall, and massacred the bishop and clergy: and in the same year they ruined and plundered the monastery of Movilla in the same county. During the next ten years—from 823 to 832—we have an almost unbroken tale of murder and destruction, with an occasional record of spirited and successful resistance. A great number of important churches and monasteries of both north and south were plundered, among them being Taghmon in Wexford, St. Mullin's in Carlow, Inistioge in Kilkenny, Killevy near Newry, Swords, Glendalough, Dunleer, Slane, Duleek, Lismore, and Cloyne and Innishannon in Cork.

At first the Norsemen had come as mere robbers. They now began to make permanent settlements on several points of the coast, from which they penetrated inland in all directions: and wherever there was a religious establishment likely to afford plunder, there they were sure to appear. They took possession of Limerick and the lower Shannon, from which they plundered the neighbouring districts all round, till at last, in 834, Donogh chief of Hy Conaill Gavra, intercepted and routed them at Shanid, 'and it is not known how many of them were slain.' About the middle of the century they established themselves permanently in Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford, where they built fortresses.

Hitherto there was little combination among the Norsemen; but now appeared the most renowned of all their leaders—Turgesius or Thorgils—who united the whole of their scattered forces. There is some reason to believe that this Turgesius was identical with the celebrated chief Ragnar Lodbrog. He came with a fleet to the north of Ireland in 832—the last year but one of the reign of king Conor—and was immediately acknowledged king of all the foreigners. Soon afterwards three other fleets arrived, one of which, sailing up the Lower Bann, took possession

of Lough Neagh, another anchored in Dundalk Bay, while the third occupied Lough Ree on the Shannon.

Tergesius established himself for a time in Armagh, which he sacked three times in one month; and with much skill he posted parties at important points on the coast, such as Dublin, Limerick, Dundalk and Carlingford. He usurped the see of Armagh and expelled the bishop Forannan, who escaped with St. Patrick's shrine to Munster, where he remained four years. After committing great ravages in the north, he placed himself at the head of the fleet in Lough Ree; and from this central station he commanded a large part of Leinster and Connaught, and plundered those of the ecclesiastical establishments that lay within reach—Clonmacnoise, Lorrha and Terryglass in Tipperary, and the churches of Iniscaltra in Lough Derg. At Clonmacnoise his queen Ota desecrated St. Kieran's venerated church by seating herself daily on the high altar, in derision of the sacred place, and there performing some of her pagan rites and giving audience to her visitors.

The Irish princes might indeed have expelled the invaders without much difficulty if they had combined: but that they hardly ever did: on the contrary they fought as bitterly against each other as against the common foe. During the reigns of Hugh Ordnidhe [Ordnee]—797 to 819—and of Conor—819 to 833—we do not find it recorded that either took any steps to oppose the Danes, though both were engaged in several hostile expeditions against the provincial kings. The most culpable disturber of domestic peace at this time was Felim Mac Criffan king of Munster, of the race of the Owenaghts (p. 203), a very warlike and able, but a very unscrupulous man. He laid claim to the throne of Ireland, and made several incursions northwards to enforce his demands, plundering and burning churches and devastating the country almost as ruthlessly as the Danes themselves. But he never once turned his arms against Turgesius, who was at this very time in the full swing of his terrible career. It is asserted by some, on insufficient authority, that this Felim was arch-

bishop of Cashel as well as king of Munster. Some, with better reason, reckon him among the kings of Ireland. Towards the end of his life he retired to a hermitage, where he died in penitence in 847.[1]

After the arrival of the Danes the national character seems to have deteriorated. Chiefs and people, forced continually to fight and kill for their very existence, came to love war for its own sake—to regard it as the chief business of life. Much of the native gentleness and of the respect for peaceful avocations disappeared; and as the people retaliated cruelty for cruelty on their savage invaders, they learned at last to be cruel and relentless to each other. They lost in a great measure the old veneration for schools and monasteries: and now for the first time we are presented with the humiliating spectacle—frequent enough after this—of churches and monasteries burned and ravaged by native chiefs.

Although the Irish made no combined effort, yet the local chiefs often successfully intercepted the robbers in their murderous raids and slaughtered them mercilessly. In 838 the Kinel Connell defeated them at Assaroe; in the same year they were routed by the Dalcassians in Clare on the shore of Lough Derg; and in Meath the southern Hy Neill, under their chief O'Colgan, defeated them and slew their leader Earl Saxulph. At this period a great fair was held every year at Roscrea, which was attended by traders from all parts of Ireland. While this fair was going on in the year 845, a great body of the Norsemen, having quietly made their preparations beforehand, marched suddenly on the town, expecting little resistance and plenty of booty. But the people, having some little notice of their approach, made a hasty preparation, and meeting them as they entered, killed their leader with a great number of the rank and file, and put the whole body to the rout. But these and other victories bore no proportion to the devastation of the Norsemen, and had little effect in restraining them. The whole sea continued

[1] See Most Rev. Dr. Healy's *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*, p. 275.

—as the Irish record expresses it—to vomit floods of foreigners into Erin; they still held their grip on the main strongholds of the coast, from which they swept like a whirlwind through the country; and wherever they went the track they left after them was a belt of desert.

Meantime the tyrant Turgesius continued to tighten his hold on the country. As well as we can judge of his proceedings, it would seem that he hoped to make himself king of Ireland, and that he contemplated the extirpation of Christianity and the establishment of paganism in its place. He ruled for thirteen years as undisputed king of the Danes in Ireland. But so far from building up a kingdom, the only use he made of his power was to ravage and destroy: he never seriously attempted to subjugate the native princes in a body: and his career was at last suddenly cut short by the valour of one of the provincial kings. He was taken prisoner in 845 by Malachi king of Meath, who caused him to be drowned in Lough Owel in Westmeath.

This brave prince succeeded to the throne of Ireland in 846—as Malachi I.—one year after the death of Turgesius. He followed up his success with great vigour, and the Danes now suffered many disastrous defeats, not only by this king, but by several of the provincial rulers. The news of the tyrant's death seems to have been the signal for a general uprising. In 848 Malachi defeated them at Fore in Westmeath, and slew 700 of them: and in the same year they were routed at Skee-Nechtain, now Carbury Hill, at the source of the Boyne, by Olcovar king of Munster and Lorcan king of Leinster, who slew 1,200 of their chief men, including Tomrar or Tomar the heir to the throne of Norway. They were driven from many of their strongholds, and great numbers were forced to betake themselves to their ships.

Malachi's successes were so decisive that he sent ambassadors to Charles the Bald king of France, to acquaint him of his victories over the barbarians. This embassy is recorded by a French chronicler:—'The Scots breaking in upon the Northmen, by God's help victorious, drive them

forth from their borders. Whereupon the king of the Scots sends, for the sake of peace and friendship, legates to Charles with gifts, asking for permission to pass [through France] to Rome.[1]

The foreigners hitherto spoken of were Finn-Galls; who were by this time in possession of the most important seaports and had made Dublin their commercial capital. But now there arrived—in 852—a great swarm of Danars or Black-Galls at Dublin, and they forthwith attacked the Finn-Galls, defeated them with great slaughter, and plundered their fortress. Soon afterwards these two northern nations, collecting their forces for a determined struggle, encountered each other at Carlingford, where after a sanguinary fight of three days the Finn-Galls were defeated, and, abandoning their ships, fled inland. After this the two nations were sometimes united under one leader, and sometimes quarrelled and fought against each other: but whether united or divided, they never lost an opportunity of ravaging the country. (See note, page 241.)

Aed or Hugh Finnliath, who succeeded Malachi in 863, routed the Danes in several battles, after one of which—on the shore of Lough Foyle (in 866)—twelve score of their heads were piled in a heap before the king. A little later—in 869—he defeated them in a battle at Killineer, two miles north-west from Drogheda; where great numbers of them fell, among whom was Carlus son of Amlaff I. king of Dublin. In this battle the Danes were traitorously aided by Hugh's nephew Flann, king of the Keenaght of Meath, who was killed in the rout after the fight.

Hugh Finnliath was succeeded in 879 by Malachi's son Flann Sinna, who married Hugh's widow Mailmara, the daughter of Kenneth Mac Alpine king of Scotland. For 40 years—from 875 to 915—a period nearly coincident with Flann's reign, the Danes sent no new swarms to Ireland, and the country was comparatively free from their ravages; though those already in the country held their

[1] *Hist. Franc. Script.* t. ii. p. 524. Quoted by Miss Stokes, *Early Christian Archit. in Irel.* pp. 149, 150; and by Moore, in *History of Ireland*, ii. 34.

ground in their fortresses along the coast, such as Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, and Lough Foyle. But during this time there were serious wars among the Irish themselves.

In the time of Flann Sinna flourished archbishop Cormac Mac Cullenan king of Munster. Very soon after he was crowned king, Munster was invaded and plundered from Gowran to Limerick—in 906—by the monarch Flann and the king of Leinster. Whereupon Cormac, attended by his chief adviser, Flahertagh, the warlike abbot of Scattery, followed the invaders northward and defeated the monarch on the old battle ground of Moylena; and soon afterwards he routed another army of Flann's kindred, the Hy Neill, in Roscommon (907).

In the next year (908) Flann in conjunction with the kings of Leinster and Connaught collected a great army to oppose Cormac, who now, instigated by Flahertagh, demanded tribute from Leinster on the ground that he was by right king of Ireland. This Flahertagh was an obstinate and quarrelsome man, and thwarted the efforts for peace made by friends on both sides. The good king Cormac was unwilling to fight: but he allowed himself to be led by his turbulent counsellor. He had a presentiment that he would be killed; and he made his will, distributing his wealth among various abbeys and churches. The two armies met and fought a terrible battle at Ballaghmoon, two miles north of Carlow, where the Munstermen were defeated with a loss of 6,000. Towards the end of the battle Cormac was accidentally killed by the fall of his horse: and some common soldiers cut off his head and brought it to Flann. But king Flann received it with tender respect, and had the body buried with great honour at Castledermot. Cormac was of a gentle disposition and loved study and retirement. He was the most learned Irishman of his time, and was deeply versed in the history, literature, and antiquities of his country. The works written by him have already been mentioned (pp. 4, 31).

About the time (916) of the accession of Niall Glunduff (i.e. Niall Black-Knee) son of Hugh Finnliath and suc-

cessor of Flann, Ireland again began to suffer from the Danish irruptions. The Irish now—probably under the influence of this brave and spirited king Niall--showed a disposition to combine against them. The king, in the year of his accession, marched south at the head of a detachment of the Hy Neill to aid the Munstermen; and the combined army fought a battle against the Norsemen in the south of Tipperary—near Slievenamon—in which after great loss on both sides, the Danes were routed. But in this same year they defeated the king of Leinster at a place called Kenn-Fuat near the coast of Leinster, where fifty Irish chiefs fell, with 600 of their men.

In the third year of Niall's reign a new fleet arrived in Dublin Bay; and the Danish army formed an encampment at Kilmashoge near Rathfarnham. Here they were attacked by the heroic king Niall, and an obstinate and bloody battle was fought (in 919) in which the Irish suffered a disastrous defeat; the king was slain, and with him fell twelve princes and a great part of the nobles of the north of Ireland. Donogh the son of Flann Sinna succeeded Niall, and in the second year of his reign—in 920—he avenged the battle of Kilmashoge by defeating and slaughtering the Danes on the plain of Bregia north of Dublin.

During the reign of this king flourished Murkertagh of the Leather Cloaks, son of Niall Glunduff. He was one of the most valiant princes commemorated in Irish history, and waged incessant war against the foreigners. His first recorded exploit was to intercept them on their return from a plundering raid through Ulster in 921, when he cut them all off except a few who escaped in the darkness of the night Five years later—in 926—he again routed them and slew 800: and they suffered many other defeats at his hands.

He belonged to the northern Hy Neill, and in accordance with the rule of alternate succession (p. 134) he would naturally be the next king, as Donogh was of the southern branch. But in order to silence all opposition to his accession he made a circuit of Ireland in 941 with a

thousand picked men in the depth of winter, when he knew that his opponents were unprepared to resist. For the purpose of protecting his men from the wintry weather he adopted a plan never thought of before: each man was furnished with a large loose mantle of leather; and hence this prince has ever since been known by the name of Murkertagh of the Leather Cloaks. In this expedition he met with no resistance, and was entirely successful. He brought away the provincial kings or their sons to his palace at Ailech, where he kept them captive for five months, after which he sent them to king Donogh as a testimony of loyalty and to show that he had no wish to claim the throne during the life of the reigning monarch. This expedition was celebrated in a poem by Cormacan Eges chief poet of Ulster, who accompanied the little army. His poem is still extant, and has been translated and edited by John O'Donovan. Among the captives was Callaghan king of Cashel, a great warrior, celebrated in the romantic literature of that period. But he had none of the noble spirit of the northern chief, for he fought sometimes against the Danes and sometimes in alliance with them, according as he found it answered his own interest.

But Murkertagh was not destined to be king of Ireland. He was killed in 943 in an obscure skirmish at Ardee by Blacar the Dane, dying as he had lived, in conflict with the enemies of his country.

King Congalach who succeeded Donogh in 944 defeated the Norsemen twice at Dublin: on the first occasion—in 943, the year before his accession—he reduced the city to ruin, and carried the Danish inhabitants into bondage, except a few who fled in their ships to the island of Dalkey; and on the second (948), he slew 1,600 of them together with their leader Blacar, the very chief who had killed Murkertagh five years before. Yet the Irish, though often capturing Dublin, never attempted to keep it permanently; and the Danes always regained or were left in possession of it. Eight years later (956) he invaded Leinster—why we are not told. The Leinstermen, when they found themselves unable to expel him, sent word to Amlaff the

Danish king of Dublin, by whom he was caught in an ambuscade and slain.

During the reign of Donall O'Neill son of Murkertagh of the Leather Cloaks (956–980), the country continued to suffer as much as ever from the Danes, and there was incessant warfare both with them and among the native kings. And in many of these wars the chiefs were in alliance with the barbarians, fighting against their own countrymen.

Donall was succeeded in 980 by Malachi II., or Malachi the Great as he is often called, the most distinguished king who had reigned for many generations, second only to his great contemporary Brian Boru. The year before his accession he defeated the Danes in a great battle at Tara, where vast numbers of them were slain, including Ranall son of Amlaff Cuaran the Danish king of Dublin. Following up his success he marched straight on Dublin, which he captured after a siege of three days, took immense booty, and liberated 2,000 captives, among whom was Donall Claen king of Leinster. And Malachi now issued his famous proclamation : 'Everyone of the Gael who is in the territory of the foreigners in service and bondage, let him go to his own territory in peace and happiness.' The Four Masters who record this proclamation, add :— 'This captivity was the Babylonian captivity of Ireland : it was next to the captivity of hell.' The great Danish king of Dublin, Amlaff Cuaran, was so heartbroken by this disaster that he left his kingdom to his son Sitric of the Silken Beard and went on a pilgrimage to Iona, where he died.

We shall now interrupt the regular course of our narrative in order to trace the career of the man who was destined to crush the power of the Danes for ever.

CHAPTER VIII

BRIAN BORU

BRIAN BORU the son of Kennedy of the Dalgas race (p. 203), was born in Kincora in 941. In 964—while he was still a very young man—his brother Mahon became king of all Munster. At this time the Danes held the chief fortresses of the province, including Limerick, Cork, and Waterford, from which their marauding parties swept continually over the country, murdering and ravaging wherever they came. King Mahon and his brother Brian, finding that they were not strong enough to withstand them openly, and unwilling any longer to endure their tyranny, crossed the Shannon with those of their people who abode on the open plains, and took refuge among the forests and mountain solitudes of Clare. From these retreats they carried on a relentless desultory warfare with the foreigners, during which no quarter was given on either side.

After a time both parties grew tired of these destructive conflicts, and a truce was agreed on between Mahon and the Danish leaders. But this was done against the advice of young Brian, who would have no truce; 'for however small the injury he might be able to do the foreigners, he preferred it to peace.'[1] Accordingly with a small band of followers, he betook him again to the hills: and they lived as best they could in huts and caves, enduring great hardships, watching the Danes day and night, and falling on them at every opportunity. But the Danes, collecting an army in South Clare, sent out harassing parties against them day by day. And although Brian succeeded from time to time in slaying great numbers of them, yet his own little band gradually dwindled—either killed in fight or scattered—till at last he was left with only fifteen companions.

[1] The passages marked as quotations, without references, in this chapter and the next, are taken from *The Wars of the Gaels with the Galls* (of the Irish with the Danes).

And now the king, Mahon, hearing how matters stood, and fearing for his brother's safety, visited him in his wild retreat, and tried to persuade him to abandon further resistance as hopeless. But all in vain: the young chief was not to be moved from his purpose. He reproached his brother for making peace with the Danes, and said that neither his father Kennedy nor his grandfather Lorcan would have done so as long as those cruel foreigners held possession of the inheritance of the Dalcassians.

Mahon replied that though that was true, it was now impossible to meet the Danes, so numerous were they, and so fierce and brave in battle, armed with weapons of great excellence, and protected by impenetrable coats of mail. Then why should he lead forth his Dalcassians, as Brian himself had done, only to leave them dead on the battlefield.

Brian answered that it was natural for them all to die, and that death on the battlefield was better than living in slavery. But one thing there was which was neither natural nor hereditary to the Dalcassians, namely, to submit to outrage or insult; and he went on to say that it was a shameful thing that the lands which had been bravely defended from age to age by their forefathers, should now be abandoned to those grim and rude barbarians. Moreover it was not true, he said, that the Danes were invincible in the field: for he had himself often routed them in open fight; and once he had cleared the whole country side of them, from Lough Derg to the Fergus. But his brave followers were too few, so that the foreigners had at last prevailed against them; while Mahon and his people stood idly by and never stretched forth a hand to help them.

This and much more was said; and Mahon was in the end quite won over. Then summoning a general meeting of the Dalcassians,—in the year 968—he laid the whole case before them, and asked them was it to be peace or war. And to a man they answered war, and demanded to be led once more against the pirates. Mahon approved of the decision; and he and Brian, collecting all their

forces, formed an encampment at Cashel, from which they sent expeditions to ravage the Danish settlements all round.

Now when Ivar of Limerick, king of the Munster Danes, heard of this uprising, he was infuriated to madness; for he thought that the province had been thoroughly subdued, and he had never expected further resistance. And he made a mighty gathering of all the Danes of Munster and of the Irish who were in alliance with him, determined to march into Thomond and exterminate the whole Dalcassian race, root and branch. And he remorselessly put to death some of the allied Irish chiefs—allied to him more by force than through friendship—who expressed disapproval of this enterprise. But Molloy king of Desmond and Donovan king of Hy Carbery basely joined and encouraged him, not so much for love of the Danes as through jealousy and hatred of the Dalcassians. And Ivar, bent on vengeance, set out from Limerick with his whole army for the encampment at Cashel.

Meantime all those Dalcassians who were scattered here and there through Ireland at the time, had been flocking towards Cashel at Mahon's urgent summons, even those serving under O'Neill in Ulster and under king Malachi in Meath. And almost at the last moment they were rejoiced to see a small detachment fully armed marching towards the camp, led by Cahal king of Delvin More, who had come unsolicited to help them against the hated Norsemen.

When news of the advance of the Danish army reached the Dalcassian chiefs, they instantly broke up camp and marched west, determined to meet the enemy half-way; whom they found encamped amid the woods of Sulcoit—now called Sollohod—a level district near the present Limerick junction, twenty miles from Limerick city. We have few details of the battle of Sulcoit. It began at sunrise on a summer morning of the year 968, and lasted till midday, when the foreigners gave way and fled—'fled to the hedges and to the valleys and to the solitudes of the great flower-covered plain.'

And now the long pent-up fury of those they had

outraged and oppressed burst on them, and they were pursued in all directions and ruthlessly killed. The main body fled towards Limerick, and the rout and pursuit continued through the whole evening and night all the way into the city: till at morning dawn both the fugitives and the victors, mixed up in dire confusion, rushed in through the gates. Nor did this end the slaughter; for the Danes were cut down in the streets and houses; and finally the Irish plundered and burned the city. Their turn had now come, and vengeance was dealt out unsparingly. All the captives were brought to Singland—outside the walls—'and every one of them that was fit for war was killed, and every one that was fit for a slave was enslaved.'

After this the Danes of those parts took refuge in Scattery Island, which they made their head-quarters instead of Limerick; and they placed their women and children in the other islands of the Shannon. Mahon followed up this decisive victory by a series of successful hostilities. He reduced Donovan and Molloy and forced them to give him hostages for their future good behaviour: he defeated the Danes in seven battles, and banished Ivar beyond the sea to Wales; and having crushed all opposition, he ruled for several years, the undisputed sovereign of Munster.

But his uninterrupted success excited the envy and deepened the hatred of Donovan and Molloy; and in conjunction with Ivar the Dane (who had meantime returned from Wales) they laid a base plot for his destruction. Molloy had a motive for the course he took beyond mere personal hatred. There were two great ruling families in Munster, the *Owenaghts* or Eugenians, descended from Owen More (p. 131), and the *Dalgas* or Dalcassians from Cormac Cas, both sons of Olioll Olum king of Munster in the second century. The Eugenians, now represented by Molloy but in subsequent times by the Mac Carthys, ruled over Desmond or South Munster, while Thomond or North Munster was ruled by the Dalcassians, represented by Mahon and his family, whose descendants after the time of Brian Boru took the family name of O'Brien. It had been

for many centuries the custom that the kings of the Eugenian and Dalcassian families should be, alternately, kings of all Munster. The Dalcassian Mahon king of Thomond, was now king of Munster, and once he was out of the way, Molloy's turn would come next. Accordingly, in 976, Mahon was invited to a friendly conference to Bruree, the residence of Donovan, who on his arrival seized him and sent him to be delivered up to Molloy and his Danish associates. Before proceeding to Bruree, Mahon, as if fearing treachery, had obtained a guarantee of safety from the bishop and clergy of Cork; and now as an additional safeguard, he wore on his breast a well-known venerated reliquary, the Gospel of St. Finnbarr. The guarantee was violated by Donovan when he seized the king; and a worse violation was to follow.

Molloy, having been apprised of the arrest of Mahon, sent forward an escort to meet him in the pass of Barnaderg,[1] with secret instructions to kill him; and in order to lull suspicion, he sent some clergy along with them, who of course knew nothing of the intended murder. Molloy himself remained behind, within view of the pass, but a good way off. When the assassin raised the sword to strike, Mahon, perceiving his intention, flung the Gospel from him lest it might be stained with his blood: so that it lighted on the breast of one of the clergy. And when Molloy saw in the distance the flash of the naked sword, he knew the deed was done; and calling for his horse was about to mount. 'What wilt thou have me do now?' asked the priest who was with him, not knowing what had taken place. 'Cure yonder man if he should come to thee,' answered Molloy, mocking; and mounting his horse he fled from the place.

The priests who had witnessed the deed fled horror-stricken and told their tale to the bishop; and the news of the murder soon spread abroad. Brian was overwhelmed

[1] Barnaderg, now called Redchair, a narrow pass near Ballyorgan on the borders of the counties of Limerick and Cork. There is a doubt about the scene of the murder; three places are named in the old accounts: but I think Barnaderg is the most likely.

with grief; and he gave expression to his sorrow in an elegy, in which he praised the valiant king and denounced vengeance against his murderers.

> The death of Mahon is grievous to me—
> The majestic king of Cashel the renowned;
> Alas, alas, that he fell not in battle,
> Under cover of his broad shield;
> Alas that in friendship he trusted
> To the treacherous word of Donovan.
> It was an evil deed for Molloy
> To murder the great and majestic king;
> And if my hand retains its power,
> He shall not escape my vengeance.
> Either I shall fall—fall without dread, without regret—
> Or he will meet a sudden death by my hand:
> I feel that my heart will burst
> If I avenge not our noble king.

But this villainous deed only raised up a still more formidable antagonist, and swift retribution followed. Brian now became king of Thomond: and his first care was to avenge his brother's murder. He began with Ivar. Surrounding Scattery with a fleet of boats, he forced a landing and slew Ivar and his Danes, after which he ravaged all the islands where the rest of the foreigners had taken refuge after the battle of Sulcoit.

Donovan now becoming alarmed, made alliance with Harold the son of Ivar, and invited him and his Danes to Bruree. But, in 977, Brian made a sudden and rapid inroad into Hy Carbery, Donovan's territory, captured his fortress at Bruree, and slew Donovan himself, with Harold and a vast number of their followers, both Danes and Irish. It was now Molloy's turn. Brian sent him a formal challenge to battle, and commanded the envoy to add that no peace would be accepted and no eric for the murdered king—nothing but battle or the surrender of Molloy himself to atone for his crime. Then waiting for a fortnight and having received no reply, he marched south (in 978), and encountered Molloy's army—composed of Danes and Irish—in a place called *Belach-Lechta* in Barnaderg, the

very spot where the great crime had been committed two years before. Molloy was defeated with a loss of 1,200 men; and immediately after the battle he himself was found hiding in a hut, from which he was brought forth and killed without mercy by Murrogh the young son of Brian. Thus were the three murderers dealt with. After this last battle Brian was acknowledged king of all Munster.

But now his influence began to be felt beyond his own province, and other and more powerful antagonists arose against him. While he was in the midst of his victorious career in the south, Melaghlin or Malachi II. ascended the throne of Ireland, in 980, as already stated (p. 199); who viewed with jealousy the growing power of the southern king. To assert his own supremacy as Ard-ri, and to humble Brian, he made an inroad into Thomond in 982, and uprooted and destroyed the venerable tree of *Magh-Adhair* [Moy-Ire] under which the Dalcassian kings had for ages been inaugurated. This was one of the deadliest insults that could be offered to a tribe: and it led to a war of skirmishes and plundering expeditions, which continued with varying fortunes for several years.

During this period, Malachi, while maintaining the struggle against his great opponent, and gaining many victories over other native chiefs, never lost an opportunity of attacking the Danes. In 996 he swooped down on Dublin —then and for long after a Danish city—and plundered it. Among the trophies that he brought away were two heirlooms greatly prized by the Norsemen, the ring or collar of the Norwegian prince Tomar—he who had been killed at Skee-Nechtain 148 years before (p. 194)—and the sword of Carlus, who fell in the battle of Killineer in 869 (p. 195). This is the incident referred to by Moore in the words:— 'When Malachi wore the collar of gold which he won from her proud invader.' On the other hand, through all this clash of arms, Brian, though sometimes sustaining defeats, steadily advanced in power. At last the two opponents, having crushed all other competitors, found themselves so evenly matched, that they thought it better to come to an

understanding. In 998 they met amicably at a place on the shore of Lough Ree, and agreed to divide Ireland between them, Malachi to be king of Leth Conn and Brian of Leth Mow.

After this they seem to have united cordially against the common enemy: for we find it stated that in the very year of the treaty, they forced the Danes to give them hostages. The Annals add that the Irish were overjoyed at this—a record with a touch of sadness; for it proves, if indeed proof were needed, how little they were accustomed to see union among their princes.

Mailmora king of Leinster was not pleased with the terms of this peace, which placed him permanently under the jurisdiction of Brian. In the very next year (999) he and the Danes of Dublin revolted: whereupon Brian marched north over the Wicklow highlands intending to blockade Dublin; and on his way he encamped in the valley of Glenmama near Dunlavin, where he was joined by Malachi. The Danes of Dublin, hearing of the advance of the Irish army, determined to intercept them half-way: and marching from the city with Mailmora, came unexpectedly on the camp at Glenmama. Brian and Malachi were well prepared for an attack; and in the terrible battle that ensued the Danes and Leinstermen were totally defeated, and 4,000 of them were slain, including Harold son of Amlaff or Olaf Cuaran, the heir of the Danish sovereignty in Ireland. After the battle Mailmora was found hiding in a yew-tree and was taken prisoner by young Murrogh. Great numbers of the fugitives were killed or drowned in attempting to recross a ford on the Liffey now spanned by the ruined bridge of Horsepass; and in every other direction where they fled they were pursued and cut down.[1] The victorious army marched straight on Dublin and took possession of the Danish fortress. Here they found treasures of immense value; and Brian remained in the city upwards of a month, till

[1] For a description of this battlefield see the Rev. John Shearman's note in the *Wars of the Gaels with the Galls*, Introd. p. cxliv.; and *Ireland's Battles and Battlefields*, by W. St. J. Joyce. p 5.

he had reduced the greater part of Leinster to subjection. Then he returned home to Kincora, having enriched his followers with the spoils. He did not leave a garrison in Dublin, which in the following year was again taken possession of by the Danes.

It seems obvious that Brian began about this time to entertain designs on the monarchy; and this is the part of his career that least bears examination. In order to accomplish his purpose—to enable him to depose Malachi—he made alliance with those who had lately been the bitter enemies both of himself and of his country. He married Gormlaith mother of the king of the Dublin Danes (Sitric of the Silken Beard: p. 199) and sister of Mailmora king of Leinster; he gave his own daughter in marriage to Sitric; and he took Mailmora into favour and friendship. And for some time after this he had Danes in his army in all his military expeditions.

Having strengthened himself by these alliances, his next proceeding was to invade Meath, in 1002—Malachi's special territory—with all the forces of Leth Mow, in violation of the treaty made four years before; and having marched as far as Tara he sent messengers to Malachi to demand submission or battle. This is designated by Tighernach, 'the first treacherous turning of Brian against Malachi.' Malachi having asked and obtained from him a month to consider, went north and endeavoured to induce his relatives the northern Hy Neill to join him in resisting the demand. But they, fearing Brian's great strength, refused: whereupon he left them indignantly, and riding into the encampment at Tara with merely a small guard of honour, without any guarantee or protection, and telling Brian plainly he would fight if he had been strong enough, he made his submission. He yielded to the inevitable with calmness and dignity, and he was treated by Brian with great respect and consideration. This transaction was considered as an abdication; and Brian was now acknowledged king of Ireland. And from that time (1002) forth Malachi, as king of Meath alone, continued, except on one memorable occasion, his faithful

adherent, nobly suppressing all feeling of personal injury for the sake of his country.

From Ulster, however, the new king never received more than a forced and unwilling submission. Several times he marched northwards, but with no decisive results. It was in one of these expeditions—in 1004—that he confirmed the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Armagh, laid an offering of twenty ounces of gold on the great altar, and caused the entry, already noticed (p. 22) to be made in the Book of Armagh. He now prepared to make a still more formidable demonstration, a circuit through those parts of Ireland whose allegiance he had not yet secured, probably in imitation of the circuit of Murkertagh of the Leather Cloaks (p. 198). With a great army composed of the men of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, and the Danes of Dublin, he marched, in 1005, over the plains of Roscommon, crossed the Curlieu Hills into Sligo, then onwards between Binbulbin and the sea, and passing over the old ford of Ballyshannon beside the classic fall of Assaroe, he traversed the great mountain pass of Barnesmore into Tyrone; next into Eastern Ulster, where he dismissed the main body of his troops. Here he rested for some time with his own Dalcassian followers, and the Ulstermen supplied him with provisions, for which he paid in royal style, in gold, silver, horses, and clothing; after which he returned leisurely south to his home in Kincora.

And now after forty years of incessant warfare, finding himself firmly seated on the throne, he devoted his mind to works of peace. He rebuilt the churches and monasteries that had been destroyed by the Danes, and erected bridges, causeways, and fortresses, all over the country. He founded and restored schools and colleges, and took measures for the repression of crime. The bright picture handed down to us by the annalists, of the peaceful and prosperous state of Ireland during the twelve years that elapsed from Brian's accession to the battle of Clontarf, is illustrated by the well-known legend that a beautiful young lady, richly dressed, and bearing a ring of priceless value on her wand, traversed the country alone from Tory in the north to the

Wave of Cleena in the south (p. 140), without being molested—a fiction which Moore has embalmed in the beautiful song 'Rich and rare were the gems she wore.'

This account was written by a partisan, an open and devoted admirer of the great and powerful king. But though some allowance must be made for natural and excusable exaggeration, we have good reason to believe that the country enjoyed unusual prosperity under Brian's firm and vigorous administration.

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF

[This account of the battle of Clontarf is in strict accordance with my chief authorities:—The Wars of the Gaels with the Galls: the Irish Annals: and the story of Burnt Nial, in which there is an independent account of 'Brian's battle' as it is called. The Irish and Norse accounts agree in the main issue, though differing in details.]

Since the battle of Glenmama the Danes had kept quiet, partly because the king's strong hand held them down, and partly because he adopted a policy of conciliation and remained in friendly alliance with them. But it was a forced submission; and they only waited for a favourable opportunity to attempt the overthrow of king Brian and the restoration of their former freedom of action. The confederacy that led to the battle of Clontarf was originated however, not by the Danes, but by Mailmora king of Leinster. This great battle, like many another important event, took its immediate rise from a trifling circumstance.

It will be remembered that Brian had admitted Mailmora to friendship, and had married his sister Gormlaith, mother of Sitric the king of the Dublin Danes. This woman had been first married to Amlaff Cuaran king of Dublin (p. 199), by whom she had Sitric: then to Malachi II. king of Ireland, who after some time repudiated her; and lastly to Brian, by whom she became the mother of Donogh. She is called Kormlada in the Norse

records. The Saga says of her that she was 'the fairest of all women, and best gifted in everything that was not in her own power, but it was the talk of men that she did all things ill over which she had any power.'[1] The Irish annals give no better account of her.

On one occasion Mailmora set out on a visit to Kincora, bringing as a present for the king, from the forest of Figili near Monasterevin, three tall pine trees for masts. They were borne on men's shoulders, and at a narrow pass through a bog, a dispute arose as to which should take the lead; when Mailmora, in order to settle the matter, put his shoulder under one of the masts, which gave precedence to those that carried it. It happened that he wore a gold-bordered silken tunic which had been given him by Brian, and which he had accepted as a tributary prince (p. 65); and in the exertion one of the silver buttons was torn off. On his arrival at Kincora he went to his sister queen Gormlaith and asked her to replace the button. But she, snatching the tunic from his hand, threw it into the fire before his face, and bitterly reproached him for yielding service to Brian, a thing she said that neither his father nor his grandfather would have done.

Soon after, while still smarting under his sister's stinging rebuke, he happened to be present looking on at a game of chess between Murrogh, Brian's eldest son, and another chief; and he suggested a move by which Murrogh lost the game. Irritated at this, Murrogh said to him:—'You also gave the Danes an advice at the battle of Glenmama by which they lost the battle.' This kindled Mailmora's anger, and he replied:—'I will give them advice next time and they will not be defeated;' to which Murrogh bitterly retorted:—'Then you had better have a yew-tree ready to receive you'—alluding to the circumstance that Mailmora was found hiding in a yew-tree after the battle of Glenmama (p. 207). Mailmora, highly incensed, retired to his bedchamber, and next morning left the palace, without permission, and without taking leave of the king. When this was told to king Brian, he at

[1] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 323.

once despatched a messenger after him with a request to return: but the angry prince struck the messenger with the yew horse-rod which he held in his hand, 'and broke the bones of his head;' so that the man had to be carried back to the palace from the bridge of Killaloe, where this happened. Some of the household now proposed to pursue Mailmora and bring him back by force: but the king would not consent to this, as it would be a breach of hospitality; and he said he would demand satisfaction at the threshold of Mailmora's own house.

Mailmora, bent on vengeance, made his way eastwards to his own kingdom; and he immediately summoned his nobles: 'and he told them that he had received dishonour, and that reproachful words were applied to himself and to all the province.' Hearing this, the chiefs decided to revolt against Brian; and they sent messengers to O'Neill king of Ulster, to O'Ruarc prince of Brefney, and to the chief of Carbury in Kildare, all of whom promised their aid.

And now the threatened war-cloud broke over the country. The confederates began by attacking Malachi's kingdom of Meath, as he was now one of Brian's adherents. He defended himself successfully for some time: but he was at last defeated at Drinan near Swords by Mailmora and Sitric, with the united armies of Danes and Leinstermen, leaving 200 of his men, including his own son Flann, dead on the field. Mailmora and Sitric followed up this victory by an expedition into the very heart of Meath, which they plundered as far as the monastery of St. Fechin at Fore; and they returned with 'captives and cattle innumerable,' some taken in violation of sanctuary from the very termon of the saint. Malachi, finding himself unable to defend his kingdom against so many enemies, sent messengers to Brian to demand the protection to which, as a tributary king, he was entitled—'to complain that his territory was plundered and his sons killed, and praying him not to permit the Danes, and the Leinstermen, and the men of Brefney, and those of Carbury, and the Kinel-Owen, to come all together against him.'

Brain had hitherto remained inactive; but moved by

the representations of the king of Meath, and alarmed at the menacing movements of the Danes and Leinstermen, he now entered into the war. Two distinct expeditions were organised. The king himself, with one, ravaged Ossory, while his son Murrogh, at the head of the other, taking the Leinstermen in the rear, traversed Leinster, devastating and plundering the whole country as far as the monastery of Glendalough; and then marching northwards laden with spoil, he encamped at Kilmainham near Dublin. Here he was joined by his father in the beginning of September (1013), and the combined forces blockaded Dublin. But the attempt to reduce the city was unsuccessful, for the Danish garrison kept within walls and the Irish army ran short of provisions: so that the king was forced to raise the siege at Christmas, and return home to Kincora.

Mailmora and the Danish leaders began actively at the work of mustering forces for the final struggle. 'They sent ambassadors everywhere around them to gather troops and armies unto them to meet Brian in battle.' Gormlaith, who was now among her own people—having been discarded by Brian—was no less active than her relatives: for 'so grim was she against king Brian after their parting that she would gladly have him dead.'[1] She employed her son, king Sitric,[2] to collect forces. He went first according to her directions to Sigurd earl of the Orkneys, who consented to join the confederacy on two conditions:—that in case of success he was to be king of Ireland and have Gormlaith for his queen. Sitric agreed to both without hesitation; and when he returned to Dublin his mother approved of what he had done.[3]

She next directed him to go to the Isle of Man, where there was a fleet of thirty ships under the command of two Vikings, brothers, named Ospak and Broder; and she said to him:—'Spare nothing to get them into thy quarrel,

[1] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 323.

[2] Sitric of the Silken Beard reigned in Dublin from 989 to 1029, when he died on a pilgrimage to Rome. Many of his coins are preserved (Gilbert, *Viceroys of Ireland*, p. 7).

[3] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 327.

whatever price they ask.'[1] Broder refused to take any part in the war except on the very conditions already promised to Sigurd, namely, Ireland for his kingdom and Gormlaith for his queen; to which Sitric agreed without the least scruple, stipulating however that the covenant should be kept secret, especially from Sigurd. So Broder promised to be in Dublin on Palm Sunday—the Sunday before Easter—the day fixed on for the meeting of all the confederates. The Saga adds that this 'Broder had been a Christian man and a mass-deacon by consecration, but he had thrown off his faith and become God's dastard, and now worshipped heathen fiends:' and that he had a coat of mail on which no steel would bite. He was both tall and strong, and his black locks were so long that he tucked them under his belt. But his brother Ospak refused to fight against 'the good king Brian.' He made his escape with ten ships, leaving Broder twenty; and arriving at Kincora, he 'told Brian all that he had learnt, and took baptism, and gave himself over into the king's hand.' And Broder sailed for Dublin.[2] This account of the proceedings of Sitric and his mother is wholly taken from the Saga.

The Danish chiefs had strong inducements to take part in this expedition. They had before their eyes the successes of Swein and Canute, who at this very time had

[1] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 328.

[2] According to the Saga legend, Broder and his men had gloomy forebodings; and as the awful day approached they were disheartened by weird signs and portents. One night they were awakened by a horrible din; and when they sprang from their berths, a shower of boiling blood fell on them so that they had to shelter themselves under their shields; but many were injured, and one man died out of every ship. They slept all that day. Next night again a frightful noise made them all spring to their feet; and they saw swords leap from the scabbards, and spears and axes, wielded by invisible hands, flew around their heads and aimed at their breasts, so that they had much ado to defend themselves: and now also many were injured and one man died out of every ship. They slept that day. The third night they were awakened by a din worse than before; and now flocks of ravens with iron claws and beaks flew at them and attacked them, so that they had to defend themselves with swords and shields. But many were injured and one died out of every ship (*Burnt Nial*, ii. 330). So to put the matter beyond portent or warning, Broder unmoored his ships and set sail for Ireland.

made themselves masters of a great part of England; and Sigurd and Broder hoped to establish a similar kingdom for themselves in Ireland.

Returning to the Irish chronicle: there came, among others, the two earls of all the north of Saxon-land (England), namely Broder (the same man as the Broder of the Saga) and Amlaff the son of the king of Lochlann, bringing 2,000 'Danmarkians.' These two are described in the old Irish record as 'the chiefs of ships and outlaws and Danars of all the west of Europe, having no reverence for God or for man, for church or for sanctuary.' There came also 1,000 men covered with coats of mail from head to foot: a very formidable phalanx, seeing that the Irish fought as usual in tunics. Envoys were despatched in other directions also: and Norse auxiliaries sailed towards Dublin from Scotland, from the Isles of Shetland, from the Hebrides, from France and Germany, and from the shores of Scandinavia.

While Sitric and the other envoys were thus successfully prosecuting their mission abroad, Mailmora was equally active at home; and by the time all the foreign auxiliaries had joined muster, and Dublin Bay from Edar to the Liffey was crowded with their black ships, he had collected the forces of Leinster and arranged them in three great battalions within and around the walls of Dublin. The Irish monarch had now no time to lose. He collected his forces about the 17th of March, and set out towards Dublin, 'with all that obeyed him of the men of Ireland'—ravaging on his way the territories of the Danes and Leinstermen. Having encamped at Kilmainham, he set fire to the Danish districts near Dublin, so that the fierce Norsemen within the city could see Fingall the whole way from Dublin to Howth smoking and blazing. And brooding vengeance, they raised their standards and sallied forth to prepare for battle.

The aged king had resolved to stake all on the coming battle; and with the exception of his son Donogh, every living man of his family stood there to fight by his side—all his sons and nephews, and his grandson Turlogh, a

youth of fifteen, the son of Murrogh. A few days before, he had sent Donogh with a large body of Dalcassians to devastate Leinster, intending that he should be back in time for battle.

On the evening of Thursday the 22nd of April, 1014, the king got word that the Danes were making preparations to fight next day—Good Friday. They had been made aware of the absence of Donogh. Besides we are told in the Saga that Broder had consulted a pagan oracle, but found little comfort in the answer:—that if the battle were fought before Good Friday the heathen host would be utterly routed and all its chiefs slain; but if on Good Friday, then King Brian would fall, but would win the day. Friday, then, Broder determined was to be the day of battle. The good king Brian was very unwilling to fight on that solemn day; but he was not able to avoid it.

On the morning of Friday the 23rd of April, the Irish army began their march from Kilmainham at dawn of day, in three divisions:—the van consisted of the Dalcassians commanded by Murrogh: next to these came the men of the rest of Munster under Mothla O'Faelan prince of the Decies: and the forces of Connaught formed the third division, under the command of O'Hyne and O'Kelly. There were two companies brought by the Great Stewards of Mar and Lennox in Scotland, who were related to the southern Irish, and now came to aid them in their hour of need. The men of Meath—the southern Hy Neill (p. 134)—were there also, under Malachi: the northern Hy Neill took no part in the battle.

The Danish and Leinster forces also formed three divisions. In the van were the foreign Danes under the command of Broder and Sigurd; behind these were the Danes of Dublin, commanded by a chief named Duvgall; and the Leinstermen, led by Mailmora, formed the third division. Sitric the king of Dublin was not in the battle: he remained behind to guard the city. We are not told the numbers engaged: but there were probably about 20,000 men each side.

At that time Dublin city, which was held by the Danes,

lay altogether south of the Liffey, the narrow streets crowding round the Danish fortress which crowned the hill where now stands Dublin Castle. The only way to reach the city from the north side was by Duvgall's bridge —now the bridge at the foot of Church Street, beside the Four Courts. Northwards the sea flowed in considerably farther than Amiens Street and Abbey Street. Portion of the plain north of Dublin—Drumcondra and its neighbourhood, and on by Phibsborough towards the Liffey—was covered by a piece of natural forest called Tomar's Wood.

The battle ground extended from about the present Upper Sackville Street to the Tolka and beyond—along the shore towards Clontarf. The Danes stood with their backs to the sea; the Irish on the land side facing them. Malachi and his Meathmen stood at the Irish extreme right, on the high ground probably somewhere about Blessington Street. The hardest fighting appears to have taken place round the fishing-weir on the Tolka, at, or perhaps a little above, the present Ballybough Bridge; and indeed the battle is called in some old Irish authorities, 'the Battle of the Weir of Clontarf.'

In the march from Kilmainham the venerable monarch rode at the head of the army; but his sons and friends prevailed on him, on account of his age—he was now seventy-three—to leave the chief command to his son Murrogh. When they had come near the place of conflict, the army halted; and the king, holding aloft a crucifix in sight of all, rode from rank to rank and addressed them in a few spirited words. He reminded them that on that day their good Lord had died for them; and he exhorted them to fight bravely for their religion and their country. Then giving the signal for battle he withdrew to his tent in the rear.

Little or no tactics appear to have been employed, except the formation of each army into three divisions. It was simply a fight of man against man, like most battles of those days—a series of hand-to-hand encounters; and the commanders fought side by side with their men. No cavalry were employed.

On the evening before, a Dane named Platt, one of the 1,000 in armour, 'the bravest knight of the foreigners, son of the king of Lochlann,' had challenged any man of the Irish army to single combat; and he was taken up by Donall the Great Steward of Mar. Now stepped forth Platt on the middle space and called out three times, 'Where is Donall?' 'Here I am, villain!' answered Donall. And they fought in sight of the two armies till both fell, with the sword of each through the heart of the other.

The first divisions to meet were the Dalcassians and the foreign Danes; then the men of Connaught and the Danes of Dublin fell on one another; and the battle soon became general. From early morning till sunset they fought without the least intermission. The thousand Danes in coats of mail were marked out for special attack; and they were all cut to pieces; for their armour was no protection against the terrible battle-axes of the Dalcassians.

The Danish fortress of Dublin, perched on its hill summit, overlooked the field; and Sitric and those with him in the city crowded the parapets, straining their eyes to unravel the details of the terrible conflict. They compared the battle to a party of reapers cutting down corn; and once when Sitric thought he observed the Danes prevailing, he said triumphantly to his wife—king Brian's daughter (p. 208)—'Well do the foreigners reap the field: see how they fling the sheaves to the ground!' 'The result will be seen at the close of the day,' answered she quietly; for her heart was with her kindred.

The old chronicle describes Murrogh as dealing fearful havoc. Three several times he rushed with his household troops through the thick press of the furious foreigners, mowing down men to the right and left; for he wielded a heavy sword in each hand, and needed no second blow. At last he came on earl Sigurd whom he found slaughtering the Dalcassians: and here we have an interesting legendary episode from the Saga. Sigurd had a banner which was made by his mother with all her dark art of

heathen witchcraft. It was in raven's shape, and whenever the wind blew, then it was as though the raven flapped his wings. It always brought victory to Sigurd, but whoever bore it was doomed to death: now in presence of the Christian host it lost the gift of victory but retained its death-doom for the bearer. And when Murrogh—or Kerthialfad as the Saga calls him [1]—approached, he broke through the ranks of the Norsemen and slew the standard-bearer: and he and Sigurd fought a hard fight. Another man took up the banner, but he was instantly slain by Murrogh, and again there was a hard fight between the two. Sigurd now calls to Thorstein to take the banner, to whom his comrade Asmund said:—'Don't bear the banner, for all who bear it shall get their death.' Sigurd next calls out to Hrafn the Red:—'Bear thou the banner!' 'Bear thy own devil thyself!' replied Hrafn. Then the earl himself took the banner and put it under his cloak,[2] and again turned on Murrogh. But Murrogh struck off his helmet with a blow of the right hand sword, bursting straps and buckles; and with the other felled him to the earth—dead.[3]

[1] Kerthialfad is evidently intended for *Terdelbhach* or Turlogh, the name of Murrogh's son, given in the Saga by mistake to the father.

[2] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 336.

[3] How Sigurd met his death is told in the Irish Chronicle: the Saga merely says he was pierced through with a spear.

The Irish had their legends of the battle as well as the Norsemen. The young Dalcassian hero Dunlang O'Hartigan was Murrogh's dearest comrade, and fought by his side in every field. And the guardian fairy Eevin of Craglea (p. 140) loved Dunlang, and on the evening before the battle she came to him and tried to persuade him to stay away. For she said if he fought next day he was doomed to death: and she offered to bring him away to fairyland—the land of peace and pleasure. But he told her he was resolved to go to battle, even to certain death, rather than abandon Murrogh at the hour of danger. When she found she could not prevail, she gave him a magic cloak, and told him that so long as he wore it, it would make him invisible and keep him from danger, but that if he threw it off he would certainly be killed. Next day, when the battle was raging all round, Murrogh heard the voice of Dunlang over all the din, but could not see him; and he heard tremendous blows, and saw the Danes falling fast just beside him. At last taking breath for a moment he cried out, 'That voice is the voice, and these are surely the blows, of Dunlang O'Hartigan!' Whereupon Dunlang, thinking it a disgrace to hide himself from his

Towards evening the Irish made a general and determined attack; and the main body of the Danes at last gave way. 'Then flight broke out throughout all the host.' [1] Crowds fled along the level shore between Tomar's Wood and the sea, vainly hoping to reach either the ships or Duvgall's Bridge. But Malachi, who had stood by till this moment, rushed down with his Meathmen and cut off their retreat. When the battle commenced in the morning there was high tide; and now after the long day the tide was again at flood, so that the ships lay beyond reach far out from shore.[2] The flying multitude were caught between the Meathmen on the one side and the sea on the other, with the vengeful pursuers close behind; and most of those who escaped the sword were driven into the sea and drowned. The greatest slaughter of the Danes took place during this rout, on the level space now covered with streets from Ballybough Bridge to the Four Courts. This fearful onslaught of Malachi utterly crushed the Danes, and few escaped across Duvgall's Bridge.[3]

friends in battle, threw off the cloak; and presently he fell slain at the feet of Murrogh (*Wars of the Gaels with the Galls*, p. 173: and *Feis Tighe Chonáin*, Ossianic Society, p. 98).

[1] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 336.

[2] In the historical tale *The Wars of the Gaels with the Galls*, from which our account is mainly derived, it is stated that on the day of the battle, the 23rd of April 1014, the tide was at its height at sunrise:—'They continued fighting from sunrise till evening. For it was at the full tide the foreigners came out to fight the battle in the morning, and the tide had come to the same place again at the close of the day when the foreigners were defeated' (*Wars of the Gaels with the Galls*, p. 191). When Dr. Todd, who was preparing to edit the work, observed this statement in the old manuscript, he resolved to test its truth; and without stating his object, he put this question to the Rev. Professor Haughton of Trinity College:—'What was the time of high water in Dublin Bay on the 23rd of April, 1014?' Professor Haughton after a laborious calculation, found the time of morning high tide to be half-past 5 o'clock, and of evening tide 55 minutes past 5. Thus the old account was fully corroborated, showing that it must have been originally written by, or taken down from, an eye-witness of the battle. The reader will observe the striking similarity of this incident to that of the solar eclipse of 664 (p. 26). Dr. Haughton's calculation will be found in Dr. Todd's Introduction, p. xxvi.

[3] Keating, as well as the author of the *Wars of the Gaels with the Galls*, and other Munster writers, say that Malachi, though marching

The rout was plainly seen by those on the parapets of the fortress; and Sitric's wife, whose turn of triumph had now come, said to her husband with bitter mockery:—'It seems to me that the foreigners are making fast for their natural inheritance—the sea: they look like a herd of cows galloping over the plain on a sultry summer day, driven mad by heat and gadflies: but indeed they do not look like cows that wait to be milked!' Sitric's brutal answer was a blow on the mouth which broke one of her teeth.

to Clontarf with Brian, stood by with his Meathmen and took no part in the battle. But the Four Masters contradict this. They open their short account of the battle by telling us that Brian and Malachi marched to Dublin, and that the foreigners of the west of Europe assembled against them. Then having partly described the battle and the death of Brian, Murrogh, and many other Irish chiefs, they bring in Malachi for the first time:—'The [Danish] forces were *afterwards* routed . . . by Malachi from the Tolka to Dublin'—and then they go on to name the Danish and Leinster chiefs who were slain.

I had always looked on Malachi—and I do so still—as a magnanimous prince who sacrificed his personal feelings for love of country; and I disbelieved the assertions of the Munster writers as calumnies invented to raise the character of their own great hero. This was also the view of Moore, O'Donovan, and Todd. But O'Curry (*Man. and Cust.* i. 124) has called attention to a poem written immediately after the battle by Mac Liag, Brian's chief poet, contained in a portion of the Book of Hy Many, now in the British Museum, which, to say the least, throws a grave doubt on the conduct of Malachi, immediately before and at the battle. The poet is lamenting the death of Brian and of O'Kelly chief of Hy Many, Malachi's nephew, who fell in the battle. He expresses his sorrow that O'Kelly, whom he greatly loved, did not accept the proposal of Malachi before the battle, who offered him riches in abundance to withdraw from Brian:—'Malachi of the spears offered to the noble son of his sister as much as he had got from the princely Brian, to refrain from battle, from valour, and the jewels of Erin from wave to wave, with the command of his hosts.' But O'Kelly replied that the Dalcassians were dearer to him than all others of the Gael, and that he would never betray Brian and Murrogh. The poet mentions nothing of Malachi's conduct at the battle: it would have been quite out of place to do so, as he was merely bemoaning the fate of his friend O'Kelly; and this omission strengthens the belief in his truthfulness.

Though the Munster writers strive to blacken Malachi's character beyond his deserts, and tell us distinctly that he took no part at all in the battle, I fear we cannot altogether set aside their testimony. Carefully weighing all the evidence, the conclusion I come to—very reluctantly—is this: that Malachi came to Clontarf, as the Munster

We have related so far the disasters of the Danes. But the Irish had their disasters also; and dearly did they pay for their great victory.

After the rout of the Danish main body, and when the fortune of the day was decided, scattered parties of Danes, scorning or unable to fly, continued to fight for life with despairing fury at various points over the plain. On one of those groups came Murrogh, still fighting, but so fatigued that he could scarce lift his hands. Anrad the leader of the band, 'the head of valour and bravery of Lochlann,' dashed at him furiously. But Murrogh, who had dropped his sword, closing on him, grasped him in his arms, and by main strength pulled his armour over his head: then getting him under, he seized the Norseman's sword and thrust it three times through his body to the very ground. Anrad, writhing in the death agony, plunged his dagger into the prince's side, inflicting a mortal wound. But the Irish hero had still strength enough left to behead the Dane: and he lived till next morning, when he received the solemn rites of the church.

The heroic boy Turlogh fought valiantly during the day in his father's division, side by side with his elder relatives. After the battle—late in the evening—he was found drowned at the fishing weir of the Tolka, with his hands entangled in the long hair of a Dane, whom he had pursued into the tide at the time of the great flight.

But the crowning tragedy of the bloody day of Clontarf was yet to come. The aged king remained in his tent

writers say, intending not to fight: that he stood by all day; but that when towards evening he saw the Danes flying in confusion towards Dublin, his better nature and his old hatred of the Danes overcame the memory of his deposition, and he fell on them and slaughtered them. This is quite consistent with the Four Masters' narrative, especially in view of the word 'afterwards.' Brian himself, as we have seen, was not free from stain; and if Malachi on this single occasion weakly yielded for a time to his sense of wrong, we must not let this outweigh the heroic deeds of a long life; and we must remember it was his final onslaught that rendered the issue of the day final and decisive.

Though no one would think of doubting O'Curry, yet I never felt quite satisfied about this poem till I had gone to the British Museum and copied it with my own hand: and the above account is translated from it direct, not taken secondhand from O'Curry.

engaged in earnest prayer, while he listened to the din of battle. He had a single attendant, Laiten, who stood at the door to view the field; and close round the tent stood a guard. Once the king asked how the battle fared. 'The battalions,' replied Laiten, 'are mixed together in deadly struggle; and I hear their blows as if a vast multitude were hewing down Tomar's Wood with heavy axes. I see Murrogh's banner standing aloft, with the banners of the Dalgas around it.'

Then the king's cushion was adjusted and he clasped his hands in prayer.

Again, after a time, he made anxious inquiry. 'They are now mingled so that no living man could distinguish them; and they are all covered with blood and dust, so that a father could scarce know his own son. Many have fallen, but Murrogh's banner still stands, moving through the battalions.'

'That is well,' replied the king: 'as long as the men of Erin see that standard they will fight with courage and valour.'

The same question a third time towards evening. 'It is now as if Tomar's Wood were on fire, and the flames burning and the multitudes hewing down the underwood, leaving the tall trees standing. For the ranks are thinned, and only a few great heroes are left to maintain the fight. The foreigners are now defeated; but the standard of Murrogh has fallen.'

'Evil are those tidings,' said the old warrior-king, losing heart at last: 'if Murrogh lies fallen the valour of the men of Erin is fled, and they shall never again look on a champion like him.' And again he knelt and prayed.

And now came the great rout; and the guards, thinking all danger past, eagerly joined in the pursuit, so that the king and his attendant were left alone. Then Laiten becoming alarmed, said:—'Many flying parties of foreigners are around us; let us hasten to the camp where we shall be in safety.'

But the king replied:—'Retreat becomes us not; and I know that I shall not leave this place alive; for Eevin

of Craglea, the guardian spirit of my race (p. 140), came to me last night and told me I should be slain this day. And what avails me—now in my old age—to survive Murrogh and the other champions of the Dalgas?'

He then spoke his last will to the attendant, giving his property to various religious establishments, and directing as a farewell mark of devotion to the church, that his body should be buried at Armagh: and after this he resumed his prayers.

It happened that Broder, who had fled from the battle-field on finding that his coat of mail had lost its virtue, came with some followers at this very time towards the tent. 'I see some people approaching,' said Laiten. 'What manner of people are they?' asked the king. 'Blue and naked people,' replied the attendant. 'They are Danes in armour!' exclaimed the king, and instantly rising from his cushion he drew his sword. Broder at that instant rushed on him with a double-edged battle-axe, but was met by a blow of the heavy sword that cut off both legs, one from the knee and the other from the ankle. But the furious Viking, even while falling, cleft the king's head with the axe.[1]

After a little time the guards, as if struck by a sudden sense of danger, returned in haste: but too late. They found the king dead, and his slayer stretched by his side dying.

The battle of Clontarf was celebrated all over Europe, and exaggerated accounts of its horrors reached some of the continental chroniclers. Ademarl, the contemporary French annalist of Angoulême, records that it lasted for three days, that all the Norsemen were killed, and that their women threw themselves in crowds into the sea; but there is no foundation for this. The Nial Saga relates the whole story of the battle as a great defeat, and tells of visions and portents seen by the Scandinavian people in their homes in the north, on that fatal Good Friday. In Caithness one of the Norse settlers saw twelve maidens

[1] The Saga's account of the manner of Brian's death is somewhat different.

riding into a bower; and when he looked in through a chink he saw them weaving in a loom: 'Men's heads were the weights, men's entrails the warp and weft, a sword was the shuttle, and the reels were arrows;' and while they wove they sang a dreadful song. Then they arose and tore the web asunder, each keeping her own part, and galloped, six north and six south. These were Odin's Valkyrias or 'corse-choosers' who marked out those who were to fall on the battle-field.[1] In Iceland blood burst from a priest's vestments while he was celebrating Mass. A Norse earl in one of the Isles dreamed that a man who had come from Ireland sang to him:—

> 'I can tell of all their struggle,
> Sigurd fell in flight of spears,
> Brian fell but kept his kingdom,
> Ere he lost one drop of blood.'[2]

The Irish too had their prodigies: the old poet Mac Cosse tells us that at the hour of Brian's death a well of blood sprang from the earth beside the penitential bed of St. Fechin at Cong, far away on the western border of Erin.[3]

A week after the battle, Hrafn the Red, who had escaped, brought tidings to the North; and earl Flosi asks him:—'What hast thou to tell me of my men?' 'They all fell there,' replied Hrafn.[4]

As to the numbers slain, the records differ greatly. According to the annals of Ulster 7,000 fell on the Danish side and 4,000 on the Irish, which is probably near the truth. Almost all the leaders on both sides were slain, and among them Mailmora, the direct inciter of the battle.

To this day the whole neighbourhood of Clontarf teems with living memorials of the battle. You will see 'Danesfield,' 'Conquer Hill,' 'Brian Boru's Lodge,' and

[1] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 336. Dasent has given a translation of the song; and Gray has paraphrased it as an English ode—'The Fatal Sisters'—as weird and gloomy as the original.

[2] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 342.

[3] O'Curry, *Mann. and Cust.* i. 119.

[4] *Burnt Nial*, ii. 343.

many other such names. A fine spring well has been known from time immemorial as Brian Boru's Well; but it is now turned into a modern drinking fountain, still known however by the old name. According to some accounts the Dalcassian heroes retired to this well when thirsty and weary at intervals during the day to drink: but this is all modern: there is nothing of it in the old accounts. There are still many mounds where the dead were buried; and one very large one is called 'Brian Boru's Mound.'

The battle of Clontarf was the last great struggle between Christianity and heathenism.

The body of king Brian and that of his son Murrogh were conveyed with great solemnity to Armagh, where they were interred in the cathedral, the archbishop and clergy celebrating the obsequies for twelve days.

After the battle the Irish collected their broken battalions and encamped at Kilmainham. On Easter Sunday Donogh entered the camp to find that all was over. He took command, but did not attempt to capture Dublin from Sitric: what his father, four months before, had failed in, he could hardly hope to do in the weakened state of his army. After waiting a few days to rest and bury their dead, he and his Dalcassian clans set out on their homeward march, bringing the wounded on litters. Arriving at Athy they halted; and the men both whole and wounded refreshed themselves in the cool waters of the Barrow.

Here occurred a humiliating incident. Mac Gilla Patrick, prince of Ossory, an old enemy of the Dalcassians, basely taking advantage of their enfeebled state, came forth with his army to attack them. Donogh, making hasty preparations to meet him, gave orders that the wounded and sick men should be placed in the rear with one third of the army for a guard. But those brave men, emaciated and feeble as they were, insisted on taking part in the fight. 'Let stakes from the neighbouring wood,' said they, 'be fixed in the ground, and let us be tied to them for support, with our swords in our hands, having

our wounds bound up with moss, and let two unwounded men stand by each of us, on the right and on the left. Thus will we fight; and our companions will fight the better for seeing us.' It was done so. And when the Ossorians saw the Dalcassians marshalled in this manner to receive them, they were seized with fear and pity, and refused to attack such resolute and desperate men; so the Dalcassians were at last permitted to depart without fighting. Nevertheless on their southward march Mac Gilla Patrick hung on their rear and killed great numbers of them.

After the battle of Clontarf and the death of Brian, Malachi, by general consent and without any formality, took possession of the throne. He reigned for eight years after and gave evidence of his old vigour by crushing some risings of the Danes—feeble expiring imitations of their ancient ferocious raids—and by gaining several victories over the Leinstermen. Feeling his end approaching, he retired to Cro-Insha, a small island in Lough Ennel, to devote his last days to penitence and prayer. Here in presence of the archbishop of Armagh and other eminent ecclesiastics, he died a most edifying death (1022), in the seventy-third year of his age, leaving behind him a noble record of self-denial, public spirit, and kingly dignity.

The character and career of Brian Boru have been very differently estimated by different writers. His deposition of Malachi is called a rebellion, no doubt with justice, by the great annalist Tighernach, who flourished within half a century of his time. His accession was certainly a revolution. During the preceding 500 years, from Lewy (p. 150) to Malachi, there had been forty reigns, including five by two kings conjointly; forty-five kings altogether; and all without exception belonged to the princely Hy Neill family. Now for the first time the old succession was broken. To this interruption some modern writers have attributed, but on insufficient grounds, most of the subsequent disasters of the country; and they represent Brian as usurping the throne in pursuance of mere personal ambition. On the other hand the southern chroniclers

have unduly exalted the character of their hero, and to this end they have done their best to blacken the fame of Malachi. No doubt the truth lies between. We must remember that Brian probably saved Ireland from complete subjugation by the Danes, and that he succeeded—or almost succeeded—in combining the whole country in one solid monarchy, what no king before him was able to do. His magnificent conception was to establish a dynasty which should rule Ireland for evermore as one strong undivided kingdom; and he failed because no representative member of his family as able and as stronghanded as himself survived Clontarf. If he gained power by means not always above reproach, he employed it to crush the enemies of his country, and to advance the interests of religion, learning, and good government.

CHAPTER X

PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE INVADER

[Chief authorities: The Irish Annals; Keating's Hist. of Irel.; Cambrensis Eversus; O'Curry's MS. Mat., and Mann. and Cust.]

During the century and a half from the death of Malachi II. to the Anglo-Norman invasion, Ireland had no universally acknowledged over-king. To every one there was opposition from some influential quarter or another; which the annalists indicate by the epithet *Ri co fressabra*, 'king with opposition,' commonly applied to the kings who during this time aspired to the sovereignty. During the whole of this period Ireland was in a state of great confusion. The rival claimants waged incessant war with one another; and the annals present a pitiful picture of strife and bloodshed all over the country. What the Saxon Heptarchy was before the time of Egbert, such was Ireland during this dark and troubled interval; and as a natural consequence, it became an easy prey to the invaders when they came.

The annalists tell us that for some years after the death of Malachi (died 1022) there was an interregnum; and

that the affairs of the kingdom were administered by two learned men, Cuan O'Lochan, a great antiquary and poet, and 'Corcran the cleric,' a very holy ecclesiastic who lived chiefly in Lismore. What the functions of these two men were it is not easy to understand. Probably they were in some respects like the presidents of a republic; for we read in the annals of Clonmacnoise that 'the land was governed like a free state and not like a monarchy by them.'

Not long after the death of Malachi, Donogh king of Munster, son of Brian Boru, finding himself secure on the provincial throne, took steps to claim the sovereignty in succession to his father. He forced Ossory, Leinster, and Meath to give him hostages in token of submission; and later on he obtained the adhesion of Connaught. By some he is ranked among the kings of Ireland; but he never made any attempt on Ulster. Donogh had an elder brother Teige, who in 1023—the year after the death of Malachi—was treacherously killed by the people of Ely; and some say that Donogh himself instigated the deed in order to secure the crown of Munster; but of this there is no certainty. This Teige left a son, Turlogh O'Brien, who was fostered by Dermot Mac Mailnamo king of Leinster; and these two—foster father and foster son—always lived on terms of friendship and affection.

When Turlogh grew up he claimed the throne of Munster as his right; and he and his foster father waged incessant war on Donogh, believing that the murder of Turlogh's father was due to him. Donogh, though a powerful prince, was not able to stand against this combination, and gradually lost ground. They defeated him in several battles, and finally succeeded in deposing him; on which Turlogh became king of Munster; and Donogh, now in his old age, took a pilgrim's staff and fared to Rome, where he died penitently in 1064.

At the time of Donogh's deposition Dermot of Leinster was the most powerful of the provincial kings, so that he also is reckoned among the kings of Ireland. The most persistent opponent of his claims to the monarchy was

Conor O'Melaghlin prince of Meath, the son of Malachi. In the long contention between these two Dermot generally had the upper hand; but he was at last defeated and slain by Conor in a battle fought in 1072 at Ova or Navan in Meath.

Turlogh O'Brien was now free; for during his foster father's lifetime he had abstained from making any claim outside Munster. Without delay he marched north from Kincora and forced the kings and chiefs of all the other provinces and minor states, except Ulster, to acknowledge his authority. But when he attempted to reduce the Ulstermen they defeated him, in 1075, almost on the threshold of their province—near Ardee—so that he had to make a hasty retreat south.

But Turlogh had in him some of the spirit of his grandfather, and was not easily turned aside from his purpose. He now made deliberate preparations for the complete subjugation of the other provinces, hoping to reduce Ulster in due course. First marching into Connaught, in 1079 he expelled Rory O'Conor. Next year he proceeded to Leinster and forced Meath and Dublin to submit; and having banished the Danish king Godfred, he made his own son Murkertagh or Murtogh king of Dublin. And some say that he ultimately forced Ulster to submit and pay him tribute.

Turlogh is on all hands acknowledged to have been king of Ireland *with opposition*. What his contemporaries outside of Ireland thought of him may be gathered from a letter written to him by Lanfranc archbishop of Canterbury, in which he is styled 'Tirdelvac magnificent king of Hibernia,' and the archbishop says, the Almighty showed great mercy towards the Irish people 'when he gave your excellency supreme power over that land.' In 1086 this king died peacefully in Kincora after a reign of twenty-three years over Munster, and in the fourteenth year of his reign as king of Ireland.

Turlogh's son Murkertagh O'Brien succeeded as king of Munster. In the assertion of his claim to the throne of Ireland he invaded Leinster, in the year after his acces-

sion, and defeated the Leinstermen in battle under Donall the son of Mac Mailnamo. But he had a formidable competitor for the sovereignty—Donall O'Loghlan (or Mac Loughlin) king of Ailech (i.e. king of Ulster), who belonged to the northern Hy Neill and who now revived the claims of that princely family. These two men were distinguished for their abilities; and for more than a quarter of a century they contended with varying fortunes for the throne of Ireland.

Donall began the struggle in 1088 by marching southwards; and having forced O'Conor king of Connaught to submit and join him, they both plundered the great Munster plain extending through Tipperary and Limerick, burned Limerick city, and demolished the royal residence of Kincora. Donall then returned in triumph to Ulster, bringing captive many of the Munster chiefs, who were subsequently ransomed by Murkertagh.

In the very next year Murkertagh retaliated in an expedition up the Shannon, plundering remorselessly everything on his route, both church and homestead. But his boats were blocked in the river and his army was repulsed by O'Melaghlin king of Meath, so that he had to abandon his fleet and return to Munster.

The war went on, on all sides, till at length a meeting was held in 1090 on the shore of Lough Neagh by the two principal belligerents—O'Brien and O'Loughlin—with the kings of Meath and Connaught. Here O'Loughlin was acknowledged supreme monarch of the other three kings, and received hostages from them; after which they parted in peace. But the peace was of no long duration; for Murkertagh was determined to be king of all Ireland: and even during the short interval, the fierce broils of the other rulers continued to rage without the least intermission.

Murkertagh made two attempts in the year 1100 to reduce the Ulstermen, one by land and the other by sea with a Danish fleet; but on both occasions he was defeated and driven back by Donall. The next year (1101) he was more successful. With an overwhelming army drawn from the four provinces—Munster, Leinster, Meath, and Con-

naught—he marched through Connaught, crossed the ford of Assaroe, and traversing Innishowen, he destroyed Ailech or Greenan-Elly, the royal palace of the northern Hy Neill—Donall's residence—in revenge for the destruction of Kincora thirteen years before. And to make the demolition more complete and humiliating, he ordered his soldiers to bring away the very stones of the building, a stone in every provision sack, all the way back to Kincora. Leaving Innishowen he proceeded to Ulidia, where they gave him hostages. He made the whole circuit of Ireland in six weeks without meeting any opposition, and brought hostages from every territory to his home in Kincora.

Some time after this he again marched into Ulster and encamped in Moy-Cova in the west of the present county of Down; but while he himself was temporarily absent, his main army was attacked (1103) by Donall O'Loughlin and routed with prodigious slaughter. In addition to the expeditions related above, Murkertagh marched on several other occasions into the heart of Ulster; and five different times—from 1097 to 1113—when the hostile armies had confronted each other and were about to engage, the archbishop of Armagh interposed and persuaded the kings to make a truce and separate without bloodshed.

But some other matters besides war worthy of record occurred during this reign. Murkertagh found time to attend to the civil and religious affairs of the country; and he was a munificent patron of the church. Immediately before setting out on his triumphant circuit in 1101, he granted to the church the city of Cashel, one of the old seats of his kingly family, and changed his own chief residence to Limerick, which after that time continued to be the seat of the kings of Thomond. Hanmer relates that in the year 1098 Murkertagh gave William Rufus a number of great oak-trees from the wood of Ostmanstown or Oxmanstown on the north side of Dublin, wherewith was constructed the roof of Westminster Hall.[1]

Murkertagh, like his father, was thought highly of

[1] Hanmer's *Chronicle*, ed. 1809, p. 194.

abroad. He was on terms of friendship with Henry I. of England; one of his daughters was married to Sigurd son of Magnus, as related below, and another to Arnulf de Montgomery, brother of the earl of Shrewsbury. Anselm archbishop of Canterbury wrote him a letter about certain abuses in the Irish church in which he is styled the 'glorious king of Ireland.'

Though the Danes in Ireland were now quiet enough, yet the proceedings of Magnus the powerful king of Norway show that the foreign Danes had not quite relinquished the idea of conquering Ireland. In the year 1102 he made a hostile descent on Dublin, but was confronted by Murkertagh with a large army. Deterred by this reception, he did not fight; a peace of one year was made; and Murkertagh gave his daughter in marriage to Magnus's son Sigurd, the newly appointed king of the Hebrides. At the end of the year Magnus renewed his attempt however, by landing on the coast of Ulster; but he was caught in an ambuscade, and he and his whole party were slain; whereupon those that remained on board sailed away home with the fleet. The body of the Danish king was treated with great respect by the Irish, and was buried in the cathedral of Downpatrick.[1] A circumstance that, on the other hand, indicates the increasing goodwill between the Irish and Danes was the application of the Danes of Man and the Hebrides to Murkertagh (or more probably to his father Turlogh) for a member of his family to be king over them during the minority of their own king. He sent them his nephew Donall O'Brien, who however turned out an intolerable tyrant, and was expelled by his subjects at the end of three years. Another Donall O'Brien, his cousin, ruled the Danes of Dublin about the same time.

The long contest between these two powerful rivals—O'Brien and O'Loughlin—remained undecided to the last, for neither succeeded in completely and finally crushing the other; and they are both spoken of as kings of Ireland, reigning with equal authority, though O'Brien was certainly the more distinguished king. Both ended their days in

[1] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1102 and 1103; *Cambr. Evers.* ii. 49, 51.

retirement and penitence. Murkertagh struck down with a wasting sickness retired to the monastery of Lismore in 1114, where having entered the ecclesiastical state, he died in 1119. With him passed away for ever the predominance of the O'Brien family. Donall retired to the monastery of Derry, where he died in 1121.

After the death of Donall there was an interregnum of about fifteen years with no over-king. For the past century the struggle for supremacy had been chiefly between the O'Briens of Munster and the O'Loghlins or Mac Loghlins of Ulster—a branch of the Hy Neill. For the next half-century it was between the O'Neills and the O'Conors of Connaught, ending in the triumph of the O'Conors, till the native monarchy was overthrown for ever by the Anglo-Normans.

For some time past the kings of Connaught had been gradually gaining power and influence. Turlogh O'Conor, who at this time ruled over the province—the king who caused the Cross of Cong to be made in 1123 (p. 107)—believing himself strong enough to win the crown of Ireland, determined to reduce the other provinces. He began with Munster, which he considered the most powerful. Since the time of Brian Boru the alternate arrangement described at p. 204 had been set aside, and all the kings were of that great monarch's family. O'Conor, now that the formidable old king Murkertagh O'Brien was off the stage, marching to Glanmire near Cork in 1118, enforced a new arrangement, making Mac Carthy king of Desmond and one of the O'Briens king of Thomond—thus, so far as lay in his power, dividing and weakening the province.

He followed up this exploit by marching in the same year to Dublin, from which he carried off captive the Dublin king, son of O'Melaghlin prince of Meath. The palace of Kincora had been rebuilt by Murkertagh O'Brien in 1096, a few years after its destruction by Donall O'Loughlin (p. 231). O'Conor now turning south and west, again tore it down and hurled all, both wood and stone, into the Shannon.

Notwithstanding the subdivision of Munster, the

O'Briens proved formidable adversaries, and still retained at least nominal sway over the whole province. One of them—Conor of the Fortress—whom the Four Masters style 'supreme king of the two provinces of Munster,' not only disputed O'Conor's supremacy, but led several successful expeditions into the heart of Connaught. And thus the wretched country continued to be torn by feuds and broils: so that, as the Four Masters express it, Ireland was 'a trembling sod.' The good and saintly Celsus, archbishop of Armagh, undertook several journeys through the country endeavouring to make peace, and on one occasion—in 1126—he remained absent from his see for thirteen months. During the last of these journeys of mercy he died in 1129 at the monastery of Ardpatrick in Limerick, and was buried with great honour and solemnity at Lismore.

Through all this turmoil, Turlogh O'Conor steadily advanced in power, though the O'Briens still valiantly maintained the struggle against him. Turlogh O'Brien who succeeded Conor of the Fortress in 1142 had an army of 9,000 trained men with which he overawed all Munster, made several incursions into Connaught and Leinster, and held his Connaught adversary well in check. At length O'Conor, determined on a final effort to crush him, marched south with an army of the men of Connaught, Meath, and Leinster, these last under their king Dermot Mac Murrogh, of whom more will be heard in next chapter.

The Dalcassian king had meantime been much weakened by the defection of one of his own kinsmen who had joined O'Conor against him; he was indeed driven for a short time from his throne. Returning now from a predatory incursion into Desmond, he was caught at a disadvantage by unexpectedly meeting O'Conor's great army at a place called Moanmore, which has not been identified, but which is in either Limerick or Tipperary. Here a terrible battle was fought in 1151, in which the southern army was almost annihilated: 7,000 of their men were left dead on the field, with a number of the leading Munster chiefs: the greatest slaughter witnessed in Ireland since

the day of Clontarf. And thus all Munster was brought under the sway of the Connaught king. From this downfall Turlogh O'Brien never recovered.

Murkertagh O'Loghlin or Mac Loghlin, prince of Ailech, was now O'Conor's only opponent, and a very formidable foe he proved. In the same year of the battle of Moanmore—1151—he marched an army south to the Curlieu Hills, threatening an invasion of Connaught, so that O'Conor—now weakened after Moanmore—was forced to send him hostages in token of submission. For the purpose of weakening his adversary O'Loghlin espoused the cause of O'Brien who had been banished to Ulster by O'Conor; and having defeated O'Conor's forces in course of a successful raid, near Rahan in King's County (1153), he restored O'Brien to his kingdom of Thomond.

Next year (1154) Turlogh, collecting a great fleet filled with an army of skilled mariners from the sea margin and islands of Connaught, under the command of O'Dowda, sailed northwards and plundered the coasts of Tirconnell and Innishowen. To meet this invasion O'Loghlin hired a Scoto-Danish fleet from the western seaboards of Scotland, and from the Isle of Man; and a fierce naval battle was fought lasting from morning till night, in which the Danish fleet was defeated and captured; but the Irish commander was killed.

King Turlogh O'Conor never relinquished the struggle for supremacy till the day of his death, which occurred in 1156: he is reckoned among the kings of Ireland. He was a man of great ability, and he did not confine his energies wholly to warfare. We have some indication of the bent of his mind as a governor in the record that he built, early in his reign, three great bridges; a work of much merit and utility in those days:—two over the Shannon at Athlone and Shannon Harbour, and one over the Suck at Ballinasloe. Besides these he had several wicker bridges constructed. He also caused to be celebrated the ancient fair of Taillteann (p. 89), which had probably fallen into disuse on account of the disturbed state of the country.

Turlogh was succeeded in 1156 as king of Connaught by his son Rory, or as he is more commonly called, Roderick O'Conor. Not long after his election, this new king marched towards Ulster to assert his claim to be king of Ireland against O'Loghlin; who however met him on the old battle-ground at Ardee and inflicted on him a severe defeat (1159). After this O'Conor acknowledged O'Loghlin's supremacy and sent him hostages.

And now O'Loghlin was the unquestioned king of Ireland, and might have reigned long had he not committed an act of gross and wanton treachery. In violation of a solemn oath-bound treaty made in presence of the archbishop of Armagh and several of the Ulster princes a year before, he suddenly, without any provocation, seized Mac Dunlevy prince of Dalaradia, with some other chiefs, blinded Mac Dunlevy, and killed the others. This so enraged O'Carroll of Oriell, who had been one of the guarantees in the treaty, that he raised an army against the monarch, and in a battle fought at a place called Letterluin in Armagh in 1166, defeated and slew him.

Roderick O'Conor had now no rival of any consequence; and receiving tokens of submission from many quarters, he was formally and solemnly inaugurated king of Ireland. Two years after (in 1168) he caused the fair of Tailltenn to be celebrated by the people of Leth Conn with all its ancient splendour; and the Four Masters tell us that their horses and cavalry extended all the way from Mullach Aiti, or the Hill of Lloyd, to Tailltenn or Teltown, a distance of seven miles. During his reign occurred the most important events in the history of the country, which will be related in the following chapters.

Though most of the great educational establishments were broken up during the Danish ravages, many rose from their ruins or held their ground, notwithstanding that they were often ravaged both by Danes and natives. Even to the beginning of the twelfth century Ireland still retained some portion of her ancient fame for learning, and we find the schools of Armagh, Lismore, Clonmacnoise,

Monasterboice, and others still attracting great numbers of students, many of them foreigners.[1] At this time flourished the two great scholars and annalists, Flann of Monasterboice and Tighernach of Clonmacnoise. Many Irishmen also continued to distinguish themselves and to found monasteries on the Continent. Marianus Scotus or Mailbride went from his native Ulster to Germany about 1067, where he became the head of a community of monks at Ratisbon, and had the reputation of being the most learned man of his age.

Many grave abuses had crept into the church during the Danish troubles—nearly all caused by the encroachments of the lay chiefs: but they were all disciplinal irregularities. One grave abuse we find frequently mentioned—the usurpation of bishoprics and abbacies by laymen, who of course did not attempt to discharge any spiritual functions. Before the time of St. Celsus, St. Malachi's predecessor, eight married laymen had usurped the see of Armagh.[2] We find no indication of any defection in doctrine—of any taint of heresy or schism. The ecclesiatical authorities exerted themselves to correct these abuses; and their solicitude and activity are shown by a number of synods occurring about this time: in the one half-century from 1111 to 1169, eleven synods were held at various centres through the country. St. Malachi O'Morgair archbishop of Armagh, one of the greatest men of the Irish church (died 1148), was especially successful in his endeavours to remove abuses and restore proper discipline.

That religion never lost its hold on the Irish kings and chiefs, even during the time of their bitterest internecine struggles, is shown by the successful interference for peace on several occasions of the archbishop of Armagh, as already mentioned (p. 232).

In 1101 Murkertagh O'Brien, who was then looked upon as king of Ireland, having convened a meeting of the clergy and laity of Leth Mow at the royal seat of Cashel, solemnly dedicated that old city to God and St. Patrick, and gave it to the church, as stated, p. 232, 'a grant such as

[1] Lanigan, iii. 490. [2] *Cambrensis Eversus* ed. 1850, ii. 635.

no king ever made before.' Ten years later (in 1111) the same Murkertagh caused an important synod, or rather a great national convention, to be held at a place called *Fid-mic-Aengusa* near Ushnagh in Westmeath, 'to prescribe rules and good morals for all, both laity and clergy.'[1] It was attended by the archbishops of Cashel and Armagh, and by 50 bishops, 300 priests, and 3,000 clergy of inferior orders, as well as by king Murkertagh himself and the chiefs of Leth Mow. Another synod was held about the same time at a place called Rathbrassil, which has not been identified. At this synod the several dioceses all over Ireland were clearly defined; and it was ordained that the lands and revenues allotted to the bishops for their support should be exempted from public tax or tribute. The subdivision into parishes gradually followed. We have seen (p. 167) that in old times a chief bishop was appointed to every chief tribe. When the dioceses were marked out therefore they coincided with the districts then occupied by the several chief tribes; and to this day a great many of the old tribal territories are pretty accurately defined by the dioceses—more so than by the counties or baronies. Some believe that the synod of Rathbrassil was the same as that of Fid-mic-Aengusa: this is Dr. Lynch's opinion,[2] and he is probably right.

The most memorable synod of this period was that held at Kells in 1152, presided over by cardinal Paparo the pope's legate, which was attended by twenty-one bishops besides many abbots and priors and a great number of the inferior clergy. The cardinal had brought the palliums, which the great and good St. Malachi O'Morgair archbishop of Armagh had solicited from the pope some years before. Until this time there had been only two archbishops in Ireland, those of Armagh and Cashel; but at this council Dublin and Tuam were constituted archiepiscopal sees; and the cardinal conferred the four palliums on the four archbishops, declaring that the archbishop of Armagh was primate over the others. The several sees to be under each archbishop were also

[1] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1111. [2] *Cambrensis Eversus*, ii. 53.

enumerated. There were decrees against simony and usury, both then prevalent all over the Christian world, as well as against other vices and irregularities. It was ordained that tithes should be paid; but this regulation was not fully enforced till after the Anglo-Norman invasion. All the decrees related to discipline and morality: there was no reference—and no need of reference—to points of faith or doctrine.

LIST OF KINGS OF IRELAND

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA TO 1172, WITH THE DATES OF THEIR ACCESSION.

In compiling this List I have chiefly followed O'Flaherty's 'Ogygia' down to King Laeghaire (A.D. 428). In this early part there is some uncertainty as to the exact dates: but after the time of Colla Huas the dates may be taken as generally correct.

	A.D.
Conari I. (the Great) began to reign about the first year of the Christian Era.	
Lugaid Riab Derg (Lewy of the Red Circles)	65
Concobar Abrat Ruad (Conor of the Red Brows)	73
Crimthann (or Criffan) Nia Nair	74
Carbery Cinncat (Cat-head)	90
Feradach Finn Fachtnach	95
Fiatach Finn	117
Fiacha Finnola	119
Elim Mac Connra	126
Tuathal the Legitimate	130
Mal Mac Rochride	160
Fedlimid Rechtmar (Felim the Lawgiver) son of Tuathal the Legitimate	164
Cathir Mor [Cahirmore]	174
Conn Cedcathach (the Hundred-fighter)	177
Conari Moglama (Conari II.)	212
Art Aenfer (the Solitary) son of Conn Cedcathach	220
Lugaid (or Lewy) Mac Con	250
Fergus Dubhdedach (of the Black Teeth)	253
Cormac Mac Art or Cormac Ulfada (son of Art the Solitary)	254
Eochaid (or Achy) Gunnat	277
Carbery Liffechair (of the Liffey)	279
Fiacha Sraibtine	297
Colla Huas	327
Muredach Tirech	331
Caelbad	357
Eochaid Muigmedon (Achy Moyvane)	358
Crimthan Mor (Criffan More)	366
Niall of the Nine Hostages	379
Dathi [Dauhi]	405
Laeghaire [Leary]	428
Olioll Molt, son of Dathi	463
S.[1] Lugaid (or Lewy) son of Laeghaire	483
N.[1] Murkertach Mac Erca	512
N. Tuathal Mailgarb	533

[1] S. means Southern Hy Neill: N. Northern Hy Neill (see p. 134).

	A.D.
S. Diarmaid or Dermot, son of Fergus Kervall	544
N. Domnall, N. Fergus — joint kings, sons of Murkertach	565
N. Baitan, N. Eochaid — joint kings	566
N. Ainmire [An'mira]	568
N. Baitan	571
N. Aed Mac Ainmire, or Hugh son of Ainmire	572
S. Aed Slaine, N. Colman Rimid — joint kings	598
N. Aed (or Hugh) Uaridnach	603
N. Mailcoba	611
N. Suibne [Sweeny] Menn	614
N. Domnall or Donall, son of Aed Mac Ainmire	627
N. Cellach or Kellach, N. Conall Cail — joint kings	641
S. Blathmac, S. Diarmaid — joint kings: sons of Aed Slaine	656
S. Sechnasach, son of Blathmac	664
S. Cennfaelad [Kenfaila], son of Blathmac	671
S. Finachta Fledach (the Festive)	674
N. Longsech	694
N. Congal	704
N. Fergal	711
S. Fogartach Mac Neill	722
S. Cioneth (or Kenneth) the son of Irgalach	724
N. Flathbertach or Flahertagh	727
N. Aed (or Hugh) Allan, son of King Fergal	734
S. Domnall or Donall, son of Murcad	743
N. Niall Frassach (i.e. of the Showers)	763
S. Donncad or Donogh	770
N. Aed (or Hugh) Ordnee, son of Niall Frassach	797
S. Concobhar or Conor	819
N. Niall Caillne	833
S. Mailsechlann or Malachi I.	846
N. Aed (or Hugh) Finnliath	863
S. Flann Sinna (of the Shannon)	879
N. Niall Glunduff	916
S. Donncad or Donogh	919
S. Congalach	944
N. Domnall O'Neill, son of Murkertagh of the Leather Cloaks	956
S. Mailsechlann or Malachi II.	980
Brian Borama, or Boruma, or Boru	1002
S. Mailsechlann or Malachi II. (resumes)	1014

KINGS 'WITH OPPOSITION.'

	A.D.
Donncad or Donogh, son of Brian Boru	1027
Diarmaid Mac Mail-nam-bo (Dermot Mac Mailnamo) of the race of Cahirmore	1064
Turlogh O'Brien of the Dalgas	1072
Murkertach or Murtogh O'Brien	1086
N. Donall O'Loghlann	1086
(Both reckoned as kings of Ireland.)	
Turloch O'Conor	1136
N. Murkertagh O'Loghlann	1151
Rory or Roderick O'Conor	1166

NOTE ON THE DANISH RAVAGES.

The following short statement will give some idea of the wholesale destruction wrought by the Danes among the seats of learning and piety in Ireland, during the two centuries comprised in Chapters VII. and VIII.

Armagh: sacked and pillaged three times in one month by Turgesius, in or about 832: ravaged and plundered in 839, 850, 873, 876, 890 (when the Danes carried off 719 persons into captivity), 893, 895, 898, 914, 919, 926, 931, 943, 995, 1012, and 1021 (when the whole city was burned, with churches and books).

Glendalough: plundered and devastated in 830, 833, 886, 977, 982, 984, 985, 1016.

Clonard: plundered and devastated in 838, 887, 888, 996, 1012, 1016, 1020.

Clonmacnoise: plundered in 838 (with the whole line of religious houses along the Shannon): again four times in nine years ending 845; and at frequent intervals afterwards.

Besides the above and those already named in Chapter VII., the ecclesiastical establishments at the following places were ravaged, nearly all of them frequently; and it will be seen that neither distance nor seclusion was any protection:—Iona; Inishmurray in Sligo; Clonenagh; Killeigh; Ardbraccan; Birr; Seirkieran; Derry; Donaghpatrick; Downpatrick; Clones; Darinis; Skellig Rock off Kerry; Timolin; Scattery Island; Dunderrow; Kilmolash; Slane; Mungret; Louth; the two Clonferts; Movilla; Killeedy; Devenish; Ferns; Freshford; Aghaboe; Durrow; Rosscarbery; Kenmare; Finglas; Emly; Kells; Clondalkin; and many others too numerous to be mentioned here. In the Annals and in the 'Wars of the Gaels with the Galls,' in addition to these details, we find numerous records such as these:—'[On one occasion] they plundered the greater part of the churches of Erin': 'Magh Bregh was plundered by them, both country and churches': 'They destroyed all the churches of Hy Conaill,' &c. On all these occasions numbers of people were killed or carried off into slavery; every valuable thing was plundered; and all books within reach were destroyed, by being either burned or 'drowned'—i.e. thrown into water.

The wonder is that any trace of learning or civilisation was left in the country.

NOTE ON IRISH LITERATURE.

After Part I. of this book had been printed, a work was published to which the reader's attention must be directed:—'Silva Gadelica,' 2 vols. by Standish Hayes O'Grady. The first volume contains Irish text of 31 pieces, viz. 4 Lives of Saints and 27 Tales, including many of those I have mentioned in Part I. chaps. ii. and v. Second volume, translations—accurate and in pure English—of the pieces in the first volume, with notes. This is the most scholarly and valuable work illustrative of the ancient romantic literature of Ireland that has yet appeared.

PART III

THE PERIOD OF THE INVASION

1172–1547

IN this Third Part is told the story of the Anglo-Norman Invasion, beginning with the expedition of Fitzstephen and Prendergast, and ending with the reign of Henry VIII., the first English monarch who assumed the title of king of Ireland.

The conquest of Ireland, whose history we are now about to enter upon, might have been accomplished in a few years, if only proper measures had been adopted. Why it took so long was pointed out nearly three hundred years ago by Sir John Davies in his little work entitled 'A discoverie of the true causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued till the beginning of the reign of James I.' [1]

The force employed, in the first instance, was wholly insufficient for conquest. The king did not reside in Dublin; and there was no adequate representative of royalty with state and power to overawe the whole people, both native and colonial. There was always indeed a governor, but never with sufficient force and influence to rule either the natives or the colonists; while at the same

[1] Sir John Davies was an Englishman, James I.'s Irish attorney-general, and was employed in 1603 by that king to carry out the act extending English law to all Ireland. He was a sensible, just-minded, and very able man; and his *Discoverie* is one of the most solid and valuable documents ever written about the invasion and conquest of Ireland.

time his presence rendered a native government impossible. The great Anglo-Norman lords had too much power in their hands, and for their own selfish ends kept the country in a state of perpetual warfare. Great tracts of land belonged to absentees living in England, who merely drew their rents and did nothing for the country.

But the most fatal and disastrous mistake of all was this. The native Irish, sick of anarchy, would have welcomed any strong government able and willing to maintain peace and protect them from violence. But the English government, instead of treating them as subjects to be cared for, and placing them under the law that ruled the colonists—as the Romans did to the Britons, William the Conqueror to the Anglo-Saxons, and Edward I. to the Welsh—treated them and designated them from first to last as 'Irish enemies,' and refused them the protection of English law.

All these and much more Sir John Davies points out very clearly in his valuable essay; and they will be set forth in detail in the succeeding chapters of this book.

Henry II. did not conquer Ireland: it would have been better for both nations if he had. It took more than four centuries to do that—probably the longest conquest-agony recorded in history; which 'cost both nations unbounded treasures and outpourings of blood, and brought upon Ireland the contemptuous pity, and upon England the moral reprobation of all Europe.'[1]

[1] *A Short History of the Irish People*: by A. G. Richey, Q.C., LL.D.: edited by Robert Romney Kane, LL.D.

CHAPTER I

DERMOT MAC MURROGH

[Chief authorities: The Irish Annals: Giraldus Cambrensis: Morice Regan.]

The reader will remember that in the battle of Moanmore, the men of Leinster, fighting on the side of Turlogh O'Conor, were led by their king Dermot Mac Murrogh (p. 235). This Dermot, who was in after times often called Dermot-na-Gall (of the English), was a man of great size and strength, stern in manner, brave and fierce in war; and his voice was loud and hoarse from constant shouting in battle. He was cruel, tyrannical, and treacherous, and was hated in his own day as much as his memory has been hated ever since. His whole life was a record of violence and villainy. In 1135 he took the abbess of Kildare from her convent and forced her to marry one of his followers; and when the townspeople attempted to prevent the sacrilege, he killed 170 of them, including some of the nuns. The only good features of his character known to us were that he made himself in a degree popular with the lower classes, and that he was very liberal in founding and endowing churches and monasteries in his own province of Leinster.

In 1152, a few months after the battle of Moanmore, he carried off Dervorgilla the wife of Ternan O'Ruarc prince of Brefney, while O'Ruarc himself was absent from home. This was done with the consent, not only of the lady herself, but of her brother O'Melaghlin prince of Meath; and she took away with her all the cattle, furniture, and jewels she had brought to her husband as dowry. O'Ruarc appealed for redress to Turlogh O'Conor king of Ireland—the victor of Moanmore—who, although he and Mac Murrogh had hitherto been on good terms, marched with an army into Leinster (in 1153) and forced him to restore Dervorgilla and all her rich dowry. This

transaction earned for O'Conor, and for his son and successor Roderick, the undying hate of Dermot, who ever after, so long as any power remained in his hands, took part with the Ulster king O'Loghlin in the struggles of Ulster and Connaught for supremacy. Dervorgilla retired after a little time to the abbey of Mellifont, where she spent the rest of her days doing works of penitence and charity, and where she died in 1193 at the age of 85.

So long as king Murkertagh O'Loghlin lived he befriended Dermot and secured him in possession of Leinster. But when that king was slain—in 1166—and Roderick O'Conor the son of Turlogh became king of Ireland, then Dermot was left at the mercy of his numerous enemies. In this very year (1166) Ternan O'Ruarc led an army against him, composed of the men of Brefney and Meath, joined by the Dano-Irish of Dublin under their king Hasculf Mac Turkill, and by the incensed people of Leinster. Seeing that resistance was hopeless, Dermot, breathing vengeance against his revolted subjects, fled across the sea, resolved to seek the aid of the great king Henry II. of England. Then a solemn sentence of banishment was pronounced against him; and the princes and leaders of the invading army, having appointed a new king of Leinster, returned to their homes, fondly imagining that they had heard the last of the turbulent and hateful Dermot-na-Gall.

Many years before this time king Henry had resolved to attempt the conquest of Ireland at the first favourable opportunity. In the very year that he became king (1154) Nicholas Breakspear, an Englishman, had been elected Pope, with the title of Adrian IV.; and Henry sent an embassy to him to congratulate him on his election. In the following year he sent John of Salisbury to Rome with a cunning and designing message. This envoy represented to the Pope that Ireland was in a most deplorable condition, that religion had almost disappeared, and that the people were sunk in ignorance and vice. He said moreover that his master was very much concerned at the condition of the country; and he asked the Pope's

permission for king Henry to take possession of it in order to bring back the people to a state of order and religion.

Though there were still many grave religious abuses—the natural result of nearly three centuries of war and turmoil—yet the country was, as we have seen (pp. 238, 239), steadily recovering, and there is no doubt that this account of its spiritual condition was grossly exaggerated. We know that there had been a continued succession of great and good bishops in the country down to the time of the invasion, including St. Celsus, St. Malachi O'Morgair, and St. Laurence O'Toole, who seem to have been very well able, without help from outside, to grapple with such religious disorders as they encountered. St. Malachi, who knew the country well, visited Pope Innocent II. in 1139, and we find nothing in the communications that passed between them pointing to such a state of spiritual degradation in Ireland as is pictured by John of Salisbury. A similar observation applies to the synod of Kells in 1152, presided over by Cardinal Paparo (p. 239); and the general proceedings at this synod indicate great spiritual activity on the part of the Irish clergy. But the most signal proof of the falsehood of John of Salisbury's report is to be found in the decrees of the synod of Cashel, which was held by direction of Henry II. when he was in Ireland in 1172: a synod which was to cure the tremendous spiritual evils complained of in the report. These decrees, which are fully given by Giraldus Cambrensis,[1] all deal with matters of discipline, none with doctrine, and do not indicate any very serious spiritual degeneration in the Irish church. Moreover it is certain that what Henry had at heart was not the interests of religion as he pretended—for personally he had little or no sense of religion—but to conquer and annex Ireland.

The Pope, yielding to Henry's solicitations, issued a bull or letter making over to him the kingdom of Ireland, enjoining him to preserve inviolate the rights of the church, and stipulating that a penny should be paid annually to the chair of St. Peter from every house in Ireland. Some

[1] *Conquest of Ireland*, Book I. chap. xxxiv.

writers, and among them scholars of eminence, have questioned the issue of this bull. But the evidence is overwhelming on the other side; and there is no sufficient reason to doubt that the Pope, deceived by misrepresentation, did really issue the bull, with the firm conviction that it would be for the advancement of religion and for the good of Ireland. Perhaps too much has been made of this bull in connection with the annexation of Ireland. It did not originate the invasion, which would have taken place if it had never existed. King Henry made little or no use of it: it was only in 1175, at a synod in Waterford, that he had it made public, having indeed no need of it, except as a justification; and he did not trouble himself much about that. If he had regarded the bull as of great importance he would have exhibited it to the Irish bishops and princes when he visited Ireland in 1171.

Let us now return to Dermot. He presented himself before the king at Aquitaine, in 1168, and prayed him for help against his enemies, offering to hold his kingdom of Leinster under him, and to acknowledge him as lord and master. The king eagerly accepted the offer: but being then too busy with the affairs of his own kingdom to go himself, he gave Dermot letters, permitting any of his British or French subjects that pleased, to join the expedition.

Dermot returned to England in high spirits, and going to Bristol, he met there a man of a stamp such as exactly suited his purpose; Richard de Clare, earl of Pembroke, better known by the name of Strongbow. This nobleman, now between fifty and sixty years of age, belonged to an illustrious family; but from various causes he was at this time in a state of poverty. Seeing in the enterprise proposed by the Irish king some hope of retrieving his fortune, he eagerly entered into the design, on condition that he should get Dermot's daughter Eva in marriage, and should succeed him as king of Leinster. An Irish king was elected and maintained in his position by his people; and Dermot had no more right to give away the kingdom of Leinster than a lord lieutenant of our own day has to give away Ireland. He knew this perfectly well,

but cared nothing for it; all he wanted was to induce Strongbow to help him. Strongbow was, most likely, ignorant of the Irish law: and if he had known it he would no doubt have had as little respect for it as Dermot himself.

Dermot next proceeded to St. David's in Wales, which was then the chief residence of the Geraldine family. These Geraldines, who were of ancient and noble descent, were Normans in the male line and Welsh in the female, so that they should be called Cambro-Normans rather than Anglo-Normans. But bearing this in mind, the term Anglo-Normans, as a convenient designation, will henceforward be applied indiscriminately to all the invaders of this period. Dermot engaged a number of these; amongst others, Maurice Fitzgerald and Robert Fitzstephen, half-brothers. They were to get for their share from Dermot the town of Wexford and the adjoining district, which Dermot well knew belonged to the Danes, and had belonged to them for two centuries. And there were others who will be named as our narrative proceeds. The chief Geraldine leaders, who were nearly related to each other, and also to Giraldus Cambrensis the historian, were all needy and daring adventurers, ready to enter on any enterprise however dangerous that promised plenty of plunder. Such were the men the vindictive old king engaged to work out his traitorous designs against his country.

It was now the end of the year (1188), and Dermot, leaving his new allies to complete their arrangements, returned by secret ways to Ferns in Wexford, his capital, just two years after his expulsion. Here he remained concealed during the winter in the Augustinian monastery he himself had founded.

The Anglo-Normans, who are henceforward to play a chief part in our history, came originally from Scandinavia. About the beginning of the tenth century a great expedition led by Rollo, conquered and settled in that part of France still called from them, Normandy. In course of time they became Christians and adopted the French language, dress and customs. After a residence in France of

about a century and a half, they conquered England; and having ruled there for another century, they established colonies in Ireland, where in course of time their sway, as in England, extended over the whole country.

In many respects the Anglo-Normans resembled the Romans of old. They were a great race, brilliant, warlike, and energetic, but cruel and relentless to those who resisted them. They were great builders, and filled England and Ireland with castles, monasteries, and cathedrals, many of which still remain to bear testimony to the magnificent architectural conceptions of the founders. They were mighty warriors. Besides being personally brave and daring, they were supremely skilful in all those arts of war suitable to the times. They wore coats of mail, were celebrated then as after for expertness in the use of the long-bow; and, above all, they were under thorough discipline on the field of battle.

The Irish mode of going to battle was totally different. They were, as we have seen (p. 116), individually brave, and expert in the use of their weapons; but they lacked the scientific skill of their opponents, their discipline was loose, and they fought rather in crowds than in regularly arranged ranks. They had no walled cities. Their best defence was the nature of the country, abounding in impassable bogs and forests; and their most effective strategy was to hang on the flanks and rear of an invading army, and harass and slay as opportunity offered. So long as they kept to this, they could hold their own even against superior numbers. But in open fighting their tunic-clad tumultuous crowds were, number for number, no match for the steel-cased disciplined Anglo-Norman battalions. Yet they were quick to learn; and as time went on, the invaders began to find their own military skill often successfully turned to account against themselves.

After the battle of Clontarf no attempt was made to expel the Danes; they remained in the country; but they made no great figure, and from that time forth gave little trouble. Long before the period we are now entering on,

they had embraced Christianity, had settled down as ordinary citizens, and devoted themselves to industry and commerce. At the time of the invasion they formed a large proportion of the inhabitants of the maritime towns—Dublin, Carlingford, Larne, Wexford, Waterford, Limerick, Cork, &c., many of which were governed by Danish chiefs, in a great measure or altogether independent of the Irish princes. They had walled and fortified their towns, while the native centres of population continued, after the Irish custom, open and unprotected. Though forming distinct communities, they intermarried a good deal with the natives, stood on the whole on good terms with them, and at first, as we shall see, generally took sides with them against the new invaders.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST ANGLO-NORMAN ADVENTURERS

[The chief authorities for the events of the early part of the Invasion are Giraldus Cambrensis and Morice Regan, two contemporary writers. Giraldus visited Ireland with Prince John in 1185. Regan was Dermot Mac Murrogh's secretary. He gave his account of the invasion to a Frenchman who turned it into French verse. It is translated (imperfectly) in Harris's 'Hibernica'; and it has lately (1892) been published—French text and translation complete, with notes—by Mr. Goddard Henry Orpen, with the title 'The Song of Dermot and the Earl.' This is the edition I use: Regan's original is lost. Giraldus's account ends with the visit of Prince John in 1185 (Chap. VII.): Regan ends with the taking of Limerick by Raymond in 1175 (Chap. V.). In the main they agree, but often differ in details. In the Irish Annals there is little detailed information about the proceedings of the Anglo-Normans for some time after their arrival; but the few notices they have are very important.]

In fulfilment of the promises made to Dermot Mac Murrogh, a force of 100 knights and men-at-arms in coats of mail and about 600 archers, under Robert Fitzstephen and Maurice Prendergast, landed in the month of May, 1169, at the harbour of Bannow in Wexford. The total force was probably not less than 2,000 (see note, p. 255). With them 'also came over a man of fallen fortunes, Hervey Mountmaurice, who, having neither armour nor money,

was a spy rather than a soldier, and, as such, acting for Earl Richard (Strongbow), whose uncle he was.' [1] They were joined by Dermot and his son, Donall Kavanagh, with 500 horsemen; and as there was no army to oppose them, they advanced on the town of Wexford.

The townsmen—Danes and Irish—went forth to oppose them; but scared by the disciplined array of the strangers, and by their cavalry with bright armour, helmets, and shields, they retired behind their fortifications, burning the suburbs to deprive the invaders of shelter. Fitzstephen straightway led his troops to scale the wall; but here the townsmen resisted so valiantly, hurling down great stones and beams of timber on the assailants, that he was forced to withdraw, leaving eighteen of his men dead beneath the walls; and going to the strand he caused his men to set fire to all the ships they found lying there.

Next morning, when he was about to renew the assault, the townspeople, urged on by the clergy, who wished to prevent further bloodshed, came to terms. Wexford was surrendered; and the people unwillingly returned to their old king's allegiance, and gave him hostages. Then Dermot carried out his promise by going through the form of granting Wexford and the adjoining district to Robert Fitzstephen and Maurice Fitzgerald—the latter of whom had not yet arrived. He granted also to Mountmaurice the district lying between the towns of Wexford and Waterford. And he conducted the strangers to his own city of Ferns, where he feasted them for three weeks.

And now he made up his mind to settle scores with an old enemy, Mac Gilla Patrick, prince of the neighbouring sub-kingdom of Ossory: for shortly before, that chief, in a sudden fit of jealousy, had seized upon Dermot's son Enna and put out his eyes. With an army of 3,000, besides the band of Anglo-Normans having Fitzstephen, Prendergast, Mountmaurice, Robert de Barri, and Meyler FitzHenry at their head, he marched into the district. The Ossorians, under Mac Gilla Patrick, took up a strong position protected by woods and bogs, and made a brave

[1] Giraldus, II. chap. iii.

and obstinate resistance. But tempted by a feigned retreat to issue forth in pursuit of the enemy on the open plain, where the Norman cavalry could attack without obstruction, they were ultimately defeated. Giraldus tells a horrible story of Dermot's conduct on this occasion. After the battle, 200 heads of the Ossorians were ranged out as a trophy before him. He took them up one by one, and gazed at them, till at last recognising the head of a personal enemy, he held it up by the ears and hair and tore the face with his teeth. After this his army ravaged Ossory with fire and sword, till Mac Gilla Patrick was forced to sue for peace and submit to Dermot.

So far King Roderick had taken no steps to stay the progress of the invaders. But now at last he became alarmed; and summoning the Irish princes with their followers, he marched with a large army towards Ferns, where he found the king of Leinster and his foreign auxiliaries strongly entrenched. Dermot's army had now however become greatly reduced by the desertion of the natives, who were seized with a panic of fear when they heard of the approach of the king of Ireland. But the feeble-minded monarch, instead of promptly attacking the rebel king and his few foreign auxiliaries, sent persuasive messages to win Dermot and Fitzstephen to submission; and Dermot, seeing he was too weak to resist, agreed to a peace merely to gain time. He was restored to his kingdom on condition—which was kept secret from his new friends—that he should send home the foreigners and bring hither no more of them; and he gave his favourite son Conor and two other relatives as hostages for the faithful fulfilment of his part of the treaty. Then king Roderick returned to his own province, satisfied that he had fully performed his duty, and quite unsuspicious of the wiles of Dermot.

No sooner had the king of Leinster succeeded in averting present danger than he broke his oathbound promises, and returned to his old work. Hearing that Maurice Fitzgerald had landed at Wexford, he hastened to meet him, and with the united forces he marched on Dublin, then

governed by the Dano-Irish king Hasculf Mac Turkill; while Fitzstephen remained in Wexford and busied himself in building his castle at Carrick on the Slaney, two miles above Wexford. And they wasted the district round the city with fire and sword till the citizens were forced to submit.

At this critical time, while the Ard-ri was feebly struggling against foreign invaders and domestic enemies, Donall O'Brien prince of Thomond threw off his allegiance to him; and when Roderick marched south to reduce him to submission, he was repulsed by the united forces of O'Brien and Fitzstephen, and returned to Connaught defeated and humiliated. O'Brien was Dermot's son-in-law, which to some extent palliates his conduct; but in justice to him it must be observed that—as the reader will find—his eyes were soon opened to the real state of things, and that he subsequently became a most valiant and obstinate defender of his country.

At last Dermot, elated with success, became more ambitious, and resolved to make himself king of Ireland. But feeling that he was not strong enough to enforce this claim, he sent a pressing message across the sea to Strongbow urging him to fulfil his promise. Accordingly, on the 1st of May, 1170, Strongbow despatched a small force of knights and archers,[1] under Raymond Fitzgerald, commonly called Raymond le Gros, intending himself to follow soon after. They landed on a rocky point called Dundonnell on the coast of Wexford, a few miles south of Waterford city, where they threw up a temporary fort, and laid in provisions by plundering the neighbouring district, hoping to be able to hold out till the arrival of Strongbow.

Scarcely had they completed the fort when a great multitude of Danes and Irish, with contingents from Decies under O'Faelan, and from Idrone under O'Ryan, about 3,000 in all, came marching from Waterford to attack

[1] Giraldus says ten knights and seventy archers. But the total numbers were ten times larger, for Regan (p. 119: ed. 1892) states that Raymond, when he joined Strongbow and Dermot in the march to Dublin, three months later, had 800 companions; none having joined him meantime. (See note, next page.)

them. Raymond instantly made his dispositions with great skill. Within the fort was a herd of cows, which at the moment of the attack were driven out through the gate: at the same time the soldiers scared them by shouting and clashing their arms, so that the animals, affrighted with the din on every side, rushed madly among the Irish and caused horrible confusion. Just then Raymond, watching his opportunity, sallied out with his band and fell on the disordered multitude, who, after much furious fighting, turned and fled, leaving 500 dead around the fort. And besides those that fell fighting, many perished by being driven over the cliffs into the sea.

The brilliancy of this gallant defence was stained by an act of barbarous cruelty. By the advice of Mountmaurice, and against the will of Raymond—according to Giraldus—seventy of the principal citizens, who had been taken prisoners, were sentenced to be executed. Their limbs were first broken; and then the wretched captives, still living, were hurled over the sharp rocks into the sea. After this Raymond remained unmolested in his fort for three months, awaiting the arrival of his chief.

CHAPTER III

STRONGBOW

WHILE these things were taking place in Ireland, Strongbow was diligently making preparations for his expedition. Embarking at Milford, he landed near Waterford on the 23rd August, 1170, with an army of 3,000 men.[1] He was immediately joined by Raymond le Gros with 800 men, by Miles de Cogan with 700, and by Dermot with 1,000: making in all about 5,500 men; and the very next morning they marched straight on the city of Water-

[1] This is the number given by Regan (p. 119: ed. 1892), who is no doubt right. Giraldus makes the number only 1,000; but he probably counts knights and archers only. But knights and archers had attendants; so that here there may be no real discrepancy between Regan and Giraldus. It is not so easy to reconcile the great disagreement in note, last page.

ford, then governed by two Danish chiefs, Smorth and Reginald. The inhabitants made a brave defence, and twice repulsed the assailants; but at length Raymond, at the head of a small party, made a breach in the wall by pulling down a wooden house; and through this they rushed in. Then there was little more resistance; and the people, young and old, were slaughtered in vast numbers as they fled panic-stricken through the streets. At this juncture Dermot Mac Murrogh, whom the earl had sent for, arrived on the scene with Fitzstephen and Fitzgerald, and saved the lives of the Danish chief Reginald and of O'Faelan prince of the Decies, who had been taken prisoners; and Strongbow took possession of the town. Then Dermot carried out his promise; and the marriage of Strongbow and Eva was solemnised while the streets ran red with the blood of the citizens.

Scarcely had the ceremony ended when tidings came that Hasculf of Dublin had revolted against Dermot. It should be remarked that Dermot had an old grudge against the people of Dublin; for, some years before this, they had killed his father and buried his body with a dog; and now came the opportunity for vengeance. Leaving a sufficient garrison in Waterford, Dermot and Strongbow marched direct to Dublin with an army of about 4,000 English and 1,000 Irish; and they made their way over the mountains by Glendalough; for Dermot's scouts had reported to him that the roads and passes of the plains were beset by king Roderick all the way to Clondalkin. When the citizens beheld this formidable army pouring down the hill-slopes towards the city, and gathering before the walls, they were so terrified that they sent their illustrious and saintly archbishop Laurence O'Toole with conditions of surrender. Through his mediation a truce was agreed on till terms of peace should be settled. But even while the negotiations were going on, and after the conclusion of the truce, Raymond le Gros and Miles de Cogan, with a band of followers, forced their way into the city, and falling on the unresisting citizens butchered them without mercy. Hasculf and a large number of his people made their

escape on board ship and sailed for the Scottish isles; all negotiations came to an end; and Dermot and Strongbow remained in possession of the city (1170).

Dermot in his hour of triumph did not forget his old foe O'Ruarc, who at this time ruled over East Meath. Leaving Dublin in charge of Miles de Cogan, he and his allies entered Meath, which they desolated with horrible barbarity, burning and plundering the villages, homesteads, and churches, and killing the people wherever they met them. King Roderick, instead of taking decisive measures, now sent a feeble message to Dermot complaining of his breach of faith, and threatening to put the hostages to death. But Dermot sent a defiant reply; whereupon the king caused the three hostages—Dermot's son and grandson and another—to be executed.

The progress of the invaders began now to excite general alarm, and 'a synod of all the clergy of Ireland was convoked at Armagh, in which the arrival of the foreigners in the island was the subject of long debates and much deliberation. At length it was unanimously resolved, that it appeared to the synod the divine vengeance had brought upon them this severe judgment for the sins of the people, and especially for this, that they had long been wont to purchase natives of England as well from traders as from robbers and pirates, and reduce them to slavery; and that now they also, by reciprocal justice, were reduced to servitude by that very nation. For it was the common practice of the Anglo-Saxon people to sell their children, and they used to send their own sons and kinsmen for sale in Ireland, at a time when they were not suffering from poverty or famine. It was therefore decreed by the synod and proclaimed publicly by universal accord, that all Englishmen throughout the island who were in a state of bondage should be restored to freedom.'[1] Giraldus does not inform us how far this proclamation was obeyed.

In the spring of next year, 1171, the main cause of all these calamities, the arch-traitor Dermot, while busy

[1] Girald. Cambr. *Conquest of Irel.* I. xviii.: Bohn's transl.

preparing further outrages, died at Ferns. The Annals of the Four Masters and of Clonmacnoise state that he died of an unknown loathsome disease and impenitent to the last. But a contemporary writer in the Book of Leinster, who should know better, says he died a natural death, and very penitently:—'He died at Ferns after the victory of unction and penance, in the 61st year of his age': which is no doubt the truth.[1] Immediately after his death Earl Richard had himself proclaimed king of Leinster.

The fame of the great conquests made by Strongbow got noised abroad, so that it came to the ears of King Henry. He had at first looked on the whole expedition with indifference and contempt: now that it was attended with success it excited his jealousy: and he dreaded with good cause that Strongbow might found a powerful independent kingdom in his immediate neighbourhood. He at once issued an edict forbidding further intercourse with Ireland, and commanding all his subjects who were there with Strongbow to return home forthwith, under penalty of treason. At the same time he began to lay plans for his own expedition. And now Strongbow found himself reduced to dire distress. He was in want of provisions, and all reinforcements were stopped, so that he was barely able to maintain himself. The little band of Anglo-Normans in the midst of these great difficulties, were soon assailed from every side and were preserved from utter destruction only by their own indomitable bravery.

Hasculf Mac Turkill since his flight from Dublin had not been idle. He collected an army and now (1171) sailed up the Liffey with sixty ships full of Norwegians and men of the Isles of Scotland, and assaulted the east gate of the city near the present Cork Hill. They were under the command of a terrible Dane from the Orkneys named John the Mad, and all were armed with mail, breastplate, and shield—iron-hearted as well as iron-armed men. Miles de Cogan the governor of the city, in no way scared, made a sally from the gate, but was driven back by superior numbers. Meantime his brother Richard de

[1] *Book of Leinster*, p. 39, col. 4, line 22.

Cogan, passing out silently with a small party at the western gate, came round and attacked the Danes in the rear: and when those in the city heard the shouts, Miles again rushing out, fell on them. The Danes, taken front and rear, fell into confusion and fled: John the Mad, fighting desperately, just as he had lopped off the mailed thigh of a knight, was himself killed by the hand of Miles de Cogan. A vast number were slain, and Hasculf was captured just as he was entering his ship on the strand. The captive leader was brought before Miles de Cogan, and with imprudent boldness said to him: 'This is only the beginning: if I am alive we shall come down on this city with a much more numerous band!' Whereupon de Cogan ordered his head to be struck off on the spot.

But no sooner was this danger averted than there arose another one much more formidable. The patriotic archbishop Laurence O'Toole seeing the straits of the invaders, and thinking this a good opportunity for a combined effort to expel them, went through the country from province to province, and persuaded the kings and chiefs to join in an attempt to crush the enemy at one blow. And numerous contingents began to march from every side towards Dublin; so that a great army was soon encamped round about the city, all under the nominal command of king Roderick. And they were joined by a Danish contingent from the Isle of Man and elsewhere, who entered the Liffey with thirty ships, and cut off communication by sea.

For two whole months (of 1171) the king let his army lie inactive in their tents; but though they never attempted an assault, they reduced the garrison to great straits by stopping all supplies. To add to the distress of the beleaguered adventurers, Donall Kavanagh, arriving from Wexford, made his way with a small party into the city with news that Fitzstephen was surrounded by the Irish in his castle of Carrick (p. 254).

Then Strongbow, with the consent of his companion chiefs, sent the archbishop to King Roderick, offering to submit, and to hold his kingdom of Leinster in fealty to him. But Roderick sent back word that he would give

Dublin, Wexford, and Waterford to the earl, but not an acre of Leinster outside the walls of those three cities: and that if these terms were not accepted, Dublin would be attacked next day. Driven to desperation by this answer, they came to the resolution to attempt to cut their way in a body through the enemy; and they selected for the attack that part of the besieging army which was under Roderick's immediate command between Castleknock and Finglas. During all this time the king, confident in his numbers, had grown quite careless, adopting none of the precautions usual in such cases, and had allowed his army to become a mere confused mass without discipline or order, something like the crowds in a fair.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the desperate little band—600 Anglo-Normans—cavalry and footmen all well armed—with some Irish under Donall Kavanagh, suddenly sallied out and, marching towards Finglas in three divisions, took the Irish completely by surprise: so that at the first alarm they fled, making scarce any resistance. The king himself, who happened to be in his bath at this very time, escaped with much difficulty half-naked from the field. The panic spread rapidly through the whole army; and the various contingents, having no bond of unity, broke up and fled. And the garrison returned triumphant to the city, laden with booty, and with provisions enough for a whole year.[1]

Leaving Miles de Cogan once more in charge of the city, Strongbow set out for Wexford to relieve his friend Fitzstephen. He had to fight his way through some places: but he arrived at last only to find that he was too late. Fitzstephen had surrendered and was now a prisoner in the town of Wexford (which must have been recovered meantime by the Irish). Strongbow advanced on the town; but the inhabitants, first setting it on fire, retired with their prisoner to the island of Begerin. And they sent word to the earl that if he attempted to molest them, they would certainly cut off the heads of all the prisoners. So he was

[1] Cambrensis and the Four Masters place the siege by Roderick after that by Mac Turkill: Regan reverses them—wrongly as I believe.

forced to return; and with a heavy heart he marched towards Waterford.

Here he was met by Mountmaurice with a message from King Henry, summoning him to his presence. So Strongbow, hastily crossing the sea, presented himself before the monarch, whom he found with a large army preparing to invade Ireland. And after much difficulty and delay he made his peace, transferring all his possessions to the king. To him as vassal the king regranted Leinster, but reserved Dublin and a few other maritime towns. So vanished for ever Strongbow's dream of founding an independent kingdom in Ireland.

CHAPTER IV

KING HENRY IN IRELAND

Henry sailed from Milford with a fleet of 400 large ships carrying 4,000 men-at-arms and 400 knights with horses and arms, accompanied by Strongbow, Hugh de Lacy, William Fitz Adelm de Burgo, and many others of his barons. On the 18th October, 1171, he landed at Crook, below Waterford. Proceeding to Waterford, he was met there by Dermot Mac Carthy king of Desmond, who was the first Irish prince to submit and pay tribute. While the king was here a number of the men of Wexford came to him bringing Fitzstephen in fetters, saying that they had arrested him, and now delivered him up, because he had dared to make war on them without the royal license, and had in this and in other ways been guilty of perfidy towards the king. They probably dreaded his anger on account of their treatment of Fitzstephen, and they made this hypocritical pretence to pass the matter off. The king's action was as hypocritical as theirs. He pretended to be very angry with Fitzstephen, loudly rated him, and sent him back to Waterford chained to another prisoner, with orders that he should be imprisoned in Reginald's Tower. But after a few days, 'being touched with compas-

sion for a brave man who had been so often exposed to such great perils, he heartily forgave and pardoned him at the intercession of some persons of rank about his court, and restored him to his former state and liberty.'[1] The whole proceeding was a piece of acting on the part of the king, to give the Irish to understand that he had come to protect them from the rapacity of his barons.

Henry next marched leisurely by Lismore to Cashel, where he received the submission of Donall O'Brien of Limerick and of many others of the southern princes. After this he returned to Waterford; and having taken possession of Wexford, he proceeded to Dublin, where he was received in great state. Here he was visited and acknowledged by the other Irish princes, all except the Ard-ri Roderick O'Connor, and the chiefs of Ulster. O'Connor however came as far as the Shannon to meet De Lacy and Fitz Adelm de Burgo, through whom he sent his submission; but O'Neill of Tyrone held aloof, and never submitted in any shape or form.

The king on his part received graciously those that came to meet him, and confirmed them in possession of their several territories. From first to last there was no attempt at resistance, for the Irish chiefs saw that it was hopeless to contend with an army so well disciplined and equipped. King Henry spent the Christmas in Dublin, and celebrated the festival in a very sumptuous manner. The Irish princes and nobles were invited; and they were astonished at the magnificence of the display, and much pleased with the attention shown to themselves.

During his stay he made arrangements for the government of the country in accordance with the feudal model of England. Neither did he forget the affairs of the church. It will be remembered that the main object he pretended to have at heart in the invasion of Ireland was the good of religion. To carry out this object, or to keep up the appearance of carrying it out, he caused a synod of the archbishops and bishops of Ireland and several Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics to be held at Cashel early in the

[1] Girald. Cambr. Book I. chap. xxxi.

ensuing year, 1172, in which certain decrees were drawn up for the regulation of church discipline.[1]

Henry now rewarded his barons by grants of large tracts of country, giving away the lands belonging to the natives without the least scruple. It may be said that he gave the whole of Ireland to ten of his nobles, leaving them to take possession of their several portions whenever they were able to conquer them. Leinster was granted to Strongbow with the exception of Dublin and some other maritime towns; Meath—then much larger than now—to Hugh de Lacy; and Ulster to John de Courcy.[2]

The king appointed, from among his followers, governors of all the principal towns that had submitted to him, with orders to build castles; and he granted Dublin to the people of Bristol with De Lacy as governor, who is generally regarded as the first viceroy of Ireland.[3] Having completed these arrangements, he embarked at Wexford in April, and returned to England, leaving Ireland in charge of his subordinates.

During his short stay of six months he acted with a skilful mixture of prudence and dissimulation. In order to disarm resistance he treated the Irish princes and chiefs with kindness, and led them to believe that he wished to protect them from the rapacity of the barons. It would have been better for the natives had he remained longer. While he was present the country was quiet; and no doubt he would have kept it so. For although he gave away lands that did not belong to him, the general body of the people would no doubt have remained undisturbed. He would have established some settled form of government, would have held his barons in check, and would probably have won over the Irish to a general acknowledgment of

[1] The general scope of these decrees has been already noticed at p. 247. They may be seen in full in Giraldus, Book i. chap. xxxiv.

[2] Harris's *Ware*, ii. p. 190.

[3] The governors of Ireland, at this time and for centuries after, were designated by various titles, such as viceroy, lieutenant, lord lieutenant, lord justice or justiciary, governor, &c. A person appointed to govern temporarily in place of an absent lord lieutenant or viceroy was designated deputy or lord deputy. A list of all the governors down to 1745 may be seen in Harris's *Ware*, vol. ii. chap. xv.

his authority. As it was he took no serious steps to maintain the authority he assumed over the country. He built no castles and planted no garrisons, 'neither left he behind him,' says Sir John Davies, 'one true subject more than those he found there at his coming over, which were only the English adventurers.' After his departure his arrangements were all disregarded; and his followers did just as they pleased, plundering and harassing the unfortunate natives without mercy and without restraint. The natives naturally resisted and the invaders retaliated, so that the country was soon filled with tumult and bloodshed.

The turmoil began the moment the king had left. Ternan O'Ruarc, Dermot's old adversary, disputed the grant of his territory of Meath to De Lacy; and they agreed to hold a conference to settle the dispute on the ancient Tlachtga, now the Hill of Ward, near Athboy in Meath. But it appears obvious from Giraldus's account that the meeting was a mere treacherous trap for O'Ruarc; and the Four Masters state so directly. De Lacy's followers came fully armed, prepared for fight; a quarrel was provoked; O'Ruarc was killed in the fray; and his followers fled. His head was soon after spiked over one of the gates of Dublin, while the body was hung, feet upwards, at the north side of the city—the first of those ghastly exhibitions which subsequently became so common in Ireland; and after some time the head was sent to England as a present to King Henry.

Strongbow now proceeded to subjugate those portions of Leinster granted to him by the king, and, making Kildare his head-quarters, he sent to O'Dempsey chief of Offaly to demand submission and hostages, which the chief refused. Whereupon with an army of 1,000 men he devastated Offaly; but on his return laden with plunder, O'Dempsey fell on his rear in a narrow pass, slew a number of his men—among them the earl's son-in-law De Quenci, the standard bearer and constable of Leinster—routed the marauding party, and captured the banner. Before Strongbow could take steps to avenge this defeat he was summoned to England by the king. But he had been only a

short time there when reports of the disturbed state of Ireland came to hand; whereupon Henry, early in the following year, 1173, sent him back again as viceroy.

CHAPTER V

RAYMOND LE GROS

No sooner had Strongbow entered on his new duties as viceroy than troubles began to thicken round him. He found most of the Irish princes, notwithstanding their submission, already in revolt against the king and himself; and there was disunion among his own people. His uncle Hervey Mountmaurice, commanded the army, under whom Raymond, a far abler soldier, served as lieutenant; and between these two a bitter rivalry had grown up. The soldiers hated Mountmaurice, who was a man more inclined to peace than to war; while Raymond was their idol, for he was a brave and dashing leader, and in all his expeditions gave them full license to plunder. The money the earl had brought with him did not last long, and at length he had no pay for his soldiers. So they, having now neither pay nor plunder, presented themselves in a body before him to demand that Raymond should be placed at their head, threatening if this were not done to return to England or join the Irish. And Strongbow forced by necessity, appointed Raymond to the chief command.

The very first use Raymond made of his authority was to lead his men on one of his plundering raids. He ravaged Offaly; and from that he marched south to Lismore, which he plundered, both town and district. Loading a number of boats with part of the spoils near the mouth of the Blackwater, he sent them on towards Waterford, while he and his army set out in the same direction along the coast, driving before them 4,000 cows. The boats were attacked by a small fleet of Irish and Dano-Irish from Cork, and the land army was intercepted near Lismore by Dermot Mac Carthy prince of Desmond—he who had submitted to the king two years before. Both attacks were

repulsed; and Raymond and his companions made their way with all the plunder to Waterford.

Raymond now growing more ambitious with continued success, solicited in marriage Strongbow's sister Basilea, to whom he was much attached; and he asked also to be made constable or commander of Leinster. But the earl refused both requests; whereupon Raymond threw up his post, in 1174, and returned to Wales; and Mountmaurice was restored to the chief command.

Acting on Mountmaurice's advice, Strongbow now led an expedition, composed of his own men and the Ostmen or Danes of Dublin, against Donall O'Brien king of Thomond, who had long since renounced his fealty to the English. But on their march southward they were attacked at Thurles by O'Brien and King Roderick—these two having meantime become reconciled—with the united armies of Munster and Connaught, and utterly defeated with the loss of a great part of the army—1,700 men according to the Four Masters. And Strongbow, having escaped from the battlefield, fled southwards with a small band of the survivors, and full of grief and rage, shut himself up in Waterford.

As soon as news of this victory had got spread abroad, the Irish rose up in arms everywhere; and the earl was besieged in Waterford, so that he was in daily fear for his life. In this strait he was forced to send for Raymond, offering now all he had before refused. Raymond accordingly returned with a band of archers, rescued the earl from his perilous position, and conducted him safely to Wexford. Here he was married to Basilea, and at the same time the earl made him standard bearer and constable of Leinster.

In the midst of the festivities tidings came that Roderick had entered Meath, had expelled the English settlers and destroyed their fortresses, and was now almost at the walls of Dublin (1175). Without a day's delay Raymond marched northward; but on his arrival at Dublin he found no enemy to contend with: for Roderick, instead of following up his success by capturing Dublin, had allowed his army,

after the first wild raid on Meath, to disperse and return to their homes. And now Raymond made preparation to avenge on Donall O'Brien the defeat of Thurles. He led his troops to Limerick; and in the face of enormous difficulties he forded the deep and rapid river, stormed the city, and gave it up to slaughter and plunder. Then, leaving a sufficient garrison under the command of Miles de Cogan, he returned to Leinster.

Meanwhile Roderick, finding that he could not prevent the daily incursions of English raiders, and despairing of being able to hold his own province, determined to claim the protection of King Henry. Accordingly he sent three ambassadors to England, and a treaty was arranged in 1175 between the two kings. Under this treaty, which was signed at Windsor, it was agreed that Roderick was to remain king of Connaught, which he was to hold directly as vassal to Henry; that he was to rule the rest of Ireland also as vassal; and that through him the other kings and chiefs of the country were to pay tribute to King Henry.[1]

Raymond having settled his quarrel with Earl Richard, was now exposed to another and greater danger; for his enemy Hervey Mountmaurice, of whom Giraldus gives a very bad and probably prejudiced account, keeping a close watch on him, sent messengers from time to time to the king with several accusations, representing that Raymond secretly aimed at making himself king of Ireland. The king distrusted and feared the barons in Ireland, and Raymond perhaps most of all as being the ablest; so in 1176 he sent hither four commissioners, with a command to conduct him to England; two of whom returned soon after. At this very time, even while Raymond was preparing to obey the king's command, news came that Donall O'Brien had laid siege to Limerick. And when Strongbow ordered out the army for its relief, the men refused point blank to march except under their favourite general. From this difficulty there was only one escape; and Strongbow and the commissioners were forced to yield. Raymond was replaced in command and marched

[1] Hoveden, 1175. See also Harris's *Ware*, ii. 67.

away in triumph at the head of his men. On his way south the princes of Ossory and Hy Kinsella with a large body of troops joined him to guide him to Limerick and aid him against their countrymen. When O'Brien heard of Raymond's approach, he marched from Limerick with his whole force and intercepted the advancing army on Easter-eve in a pass near Cashel (1175). But after hard fighting the Thomond men were repulsed with great loss; O'Brien submitted; and Raymond proceeded to Limerick.

Having arranged matters, he went to Desmond to settle a dispute between Dermot Mac Carthy and his son. One day while he was here a courier arrived post haste from Dublin with an odd message from his wife Basilea:—'Be it known to your sincere love that the great jaw-tooth which used to trouble me so much has fallen out. Wherefore if you have any regard for me, or even for yourself, return with all speed.'[1] She took this enigmatical way of telling him that her brother the earl was dead (1176). Knowing well the dangerous position of the colony in Dublin, and fearing the Irish might rise if they knew of his death, she determined to keep the matter secret till Raymond should be present. Raymond at once divined the meaning, for he had been aware of Strongbow's illness, and he returned hastily to Limerick. Having no one of note among his followers who would undertake the command in his absence, he made a virtue of necessity and entrusted the city to the keeping of its old master Donall O'Brien; after which he set out for Dublin. But scarcely had the last of his men filed across the river when the bridge was broken down and the city set on fire by O'Brien. On Raymond's arrival in Dublin the earl was buried in Christchurch Cathedral; and the funeral obsequies were conducted with great pomp and solemnity by the archbishop Laurence O'Toole. After this the two remaining commissioners, seeing that this event required new plans, embarked for England, leaving Raymond as governor till the king's pleasure should be known. It would appear that King Henry had not got rid of his jealousy of the

[1] *Girald. Cambr.* Book ii. chap. xiv.: Bohn's transl.

brilliant soldier Raymond le Gros: for as soon as he was made aware of Strongbow's death he appointed William Fitz Adelm de Burgo viceroy (1176), with John de Courcy, Robert Fitzstephen, and Miles de Cogan to assist him. As soon as Raymond heard of their arrival he set out from Dublin with a body of troops and met them near Wexford, and having given them a most respectful reception, he delivered up all his authority to the new viceroy without a murmur. A circumstance occurred during this ceremonial, as recorded by Giraldus, that showed the jealousy of De Burgo towards the Geraldines, and foreshadowed the long and deadly feuds of the Anglo-Irish barons among themselves. De Burgo, seeing a number of young men, Raymond's retinue, in gallant trim, engaged in martial exercises, with shields all emblazoned with the Geraldine arms, said in a low voice to his friends:—'I will put an end to all this parade; these shields shall soon be scattered.' And Giraldus goes on to say that from that hour De Burgo and all the other governors envied the Geraldines and took every opportunity to injure them.[1] But we must remember that there is animus in everything Giraldus writes about the enemies of the Geraldines.

After this we hear little more of Raymond le Gros in public life. He retired to his estates in Wexford, where he resided quietly till his death, which took place in 1182.

Among the numerous families that descended from these great Anglo-Norman lords, there were three that subsequently rose to great eminence and played an important part in the history of Ireland: the Fitzgeralds or Geraldines, the Butlers, and the De Burgos or Burkes.

The Geraldines were chiefly descended from Maurice Fitzgerald. One branch of them settled in and around Kildare, and their chiefs were first created barons of Offaly, afterwards earls of Kildare, and finally, dukes of Leinster. The other chief branch had granted to them large tracts in Munster soon after the advent of the Anglo-Normans, and the heads were created earls of Desmond.

[1] *Conquest of Ireland*, Book ii. chap. xv.

And there were several minor branches, such as the knight of Glin, the knight of Kerry, the seneschal of Imokilly, &c.

The founder of the Butler family was Theobald Gaultier or Walter, who settled in Ireland in the time of Henry II. He received extensive tracts in Leinster, with the hereditary office of *Boteler* or Butler to the king of England, which imposed the duty of attending the king at coronation, and presenting him with the first cup of wine after the ceremony. For these offices the family enjoyed certain dues of plate and wine. After a time they adopted the family name of Butler instead of Fitzwalter. The heads of the family were first created earls and afterwards dukes of Ormond.

The family of De Burgo, De Burgh, or Burke, was founded by William Fitz Adelm de Burgo. They settled in Connaught, and ultimately separated into two main branches, the heads of whom became earls of Mayo and earls of Clanrickard respectively, as related farther on in Chapter XII.

CHAPTER VI

JOHN DE COURCY

[Chief authorities:—Girald. Cambr.; Four Masters, and other Irish Annals; Ware's Annals; Stanyhurst; Hanmer's Chronicle.]

GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS gives us a very bad character of William de Burgo, the new viceroy: that he was crafty, treacherous, selfish, and avaricious. But Cambrensis, who was a Geraldine, is quite unworthy of credit in cases of this kind; for he hated De Burgo as De Burgo hated all the Geraldine race. One thing is certain, however: the new governor was from the first disliked by the English colonists in Ireland. For he wished for peace, and discouraged outrage on the natives; whereas war was what the colonists most desired, as it brought them plunder and sure increase of territory. Whether De Burgo chose peace because it enabled him the better to enrich himself by

getting bribes from the Irish, as Giraldus says, or because of a better motive, it is now hard to determine.

In the very first year of his viceroyalty (1176) a serious disaster befel the English in Meath. Richard Fleming, one of De Lacy's followers, had built for himself a castle at Slane, from which he constantly sent out marauding parties to plunder the surrounding districts. The Irish, provoked at last beyond endurance, marched to Slane, under the leadership of Mac Loghlin, chief of the Kinel-Owen, stormed the castle, and in their cruel rage massacred all the men, women, and children, with Fleming himself, so that not a living being escaped. The Annals of Ulster say that 100 men were killed; the Four Masters 500, which seems unlikely. This created such panic among the English of those parts that they abandoned three other castles—those of Kells, Galtrim, and Derrypatrick—and fled to a place of safety.[1]

Among all De Burgo's followers not one was so discontented as Sir John de Courcy. He was a man of gigantic size and strength—brave and daring; and he now resolved to remain no longer inactive, but to attempt the conquest of Ulster, which King Henry II. had granted to him five years before. So gathering round him a small band of knights and archers—to the number of about 320 according to Giraldus,[2] all picked men, and as discontented with forced idleness and abstention from plunder as De Courcy himself, he set out from Dublin for the north.

There were at this time certain prophecies current among both the Irish and the Welsh, some of which were believed to have been uttered by the Irish saint Columkille, and others by the Welsh wizard and prophet Merlin. It was foretold that Ulster should be conquered by a fugitive and pauper knight from another country, a white knight mounted on a white steed, bearing birds upon his shield: and the carnage was to be so great that the invaders were to wade up to their knees in blood. De Courcy believed, or pretended to believe, that he was the destined knight;

[1] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1176.

[2] He had probably 1,000 or more, counting attendants: see note, p. 255.

and he kept by him continually a book of St. Columkille's Prophecies, though, as they were written in Irish, he could not read a word of them. It so happened, partly by accident, and partly no doubt by design, that in several striking particulars he resembled the prophesied knight:—he was a pauper adventurer from beyond the sea, for he had no fortune except what he could win by his sword; he was of a fair complexion; he rode a white steed; and he had figures of birds—the heraldic bearing of his family—painted on his shield.

Whatever may be thought of De Courcy's sincerity, it would appear that both parties, Irish and Welsh, recognised him as the knight described in the prophecies, which, doubtless, more or less damped the spirits of the Ulstermen in resisting him. For the Prophecies of St. Columkille, though mere forgeries written long after the saint's death, were then, and for ages subsequently, very generally known and believed in Ireland.

Passing northwards with all speed, he arrived on the morning of the fourth day—the 2nd of February 1177—at Downpatrick, then the capital of the sub-kingdom of Ulidia. So rapid had been his march that the townspeople knew nothing of it till they were startled in the early morning by the martial sounds of bugles and the clattering of cavalry in the streets. The freebooters were half-starved as they entered the town; and now they fell upon everything they could lay hands on—they ate and drank, plundered, killed, and destroyed, till half the town was in ruins.

It happened that at this very time Cardinal Vivian, the Pope's legate, was in Downpatrick, and was witness of the whole proceedings. He tried to induce De Courcy to withdraw to his own territories, promising, at the same time, that Mac Dunlevy, the prince of Ulidia, would pay tribute, in accordance with the treaty of Windsor (p. 267); but De Courcy rejected the proposal. Whereupon the cardinal, indignant at the outrage on an unoffending people, exhorted the Ulidians to fight for their fatherland, and expel the strangers. At the end of a week, Mac

Dunlevy, who had made his escape on the first appearance of the invaders—having no means of opposing them—returned with a large undisciplined army, and advanced on the town. De Courcy, nothing daunted, went out to meet them, and chose a favourable position to receive the attack. The Irish rushed on with tumultuous bravery, but they were not able to break the disciplined ranks of the enemy; and after a furious fight they were repulsed with great loss, and chased over the country.

In this battle it was believed that a portion of St. Columkille's prophecy was fulfilled; for the victors, pursuing the Irish along the shore, sank to their knees in the sand, already wet with the blood of the wounded fugitives. After this victory, De Courcy erected a fortress at Downpatrick, in which he entrenched himself; and his army was continually recruited by other adventurers from Dublin.

Notwithstanding this defeat and the discouragement caused by the prophecies, the Ulidians continued to offer the most determined resistance. The valiant De Courcy battled bravely through all his difficulties, and three several times in this same year, 1177, he defeated in battle the people of the surrounding districts. But as time went on he met with many reverses, and he had quite enough to do to hold his ground. In the following year, 1178, he went on a plundering raid into Louth, and was returning with a great prey of cows, when he was attacked in his encampment in the valley of the Newry river by the armies of Oriell and Ulidia, and routed with the loss of 450 of his men. Soon after this—in the same year—he made an incursion into Dalaradia, when he was intercepted and defeated by the Dalaradian chief Cumee O'Flynn. He escaped from this battlefield with only eleven companions; and having lost their horses, they fled on foot for two days and two nights, closely pursued, without food or sleep, till they reached a place of safety. But in several other battles he was victorious, so that as years went by he strengthened his position in Ulster; and as opportunities offered he built many castles in suitable situations. When Prince John was recalled from Ireland in 1185 (p. 280), De

Courcy was appointed viceroy, and took up his residence in Dublin. Some time after this he was created earl of Ulster.

During his viceroyalty he determined to attempt the conquest of Connaught, which was then torn and weakened by internal strife (Chap. VIII.). Collecting all the English forces at his command, he crossed the Shannon in 1188, and began to burn and waste after his usual fashion. But before he had advanced far into the province he was confronted by the two kings of Connaught and Thomond—Conor Mainmoy and Donall O'Brien—with their united armies. Not venturing to give battle to this formidable force, he retreated northwards, his only anxiety now being to save himself and his army from destruction. But when he had arrived at Ballysadare on the coast of Sligo, he found himself in worse plight than before; for the news of the filibustering expedition had spread quickly, and now his scouts brought word that Flaherty O'Muldory prince of Tirconnell was at Drumcliff, a little way north, marching down on him in front, while his pursuers were pressing on close behind. Setting fire to Ballysadare, he fled south-east; but as he was crossing the Curlieu Hills, he was overtaken by Conor Mainmoy and O'Brien, who fell upon him and killed a great number of his men; and it was with much difficulty he escaped with the remnant of his army into Leinster.

When De Courcy was removed from the governorship of Ireland in 1189 to make way for his rival Hugh de Lacy (p. 282), he retired to Ulster, greatly offended. Here he resumed his wild raids, burning, ravaging, and plundering, like the Danes of old, and like them often suffering disastrous defeats. And he lived as an independent prince, building castles and founding churches all over Ulster, making war and peace as he pleased, and acknowledging no authority. He even coined silver money in his own name.[1] His influence in North-east Ulster was greatly strengthened by his marriage with Affreca daughter of Godred, the Norse king of Man and of the Western Isles.

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys of Ireland*, p. 60.

In 1196 he marched north-west till he came to the Bann; and he built a castle at Mount Sandal, on a high bank over the river, a little above Coleraine, which he left in command of an officer named Russell. This Russell, issuing daily from his fastness, devastated all the district; till venturing too far west, he was intercepted by Flaherty O'Muldory, at Faughanvale on the shore of Lough Foyle, and defeated with great loss. Soon afterwards O'Muldory died; and De Courcy, apparently taking advantage of this, crossed the Foyle westward to invade Tirconnell. Being opposed by O'Doherty, the newly elected chief, he defeated and slew him, together with 200 of his men; after which he plundered Innishowen and carried off vast spoils.

Next year (1198) he again marched west from Downpatrick, plundering and burning churches and homesteads as he went along, and encamped at Derry, then a mere village, where he remained nine days devastating all Innishowen. When O'Neill prince of Tyrone heard of this, he sailed to the coast of Antrim and attacked the English settlement there by way of reprisal, prudently avoiding a direct encounter with De Courcy. Whereupon the English of those parts mustered their forces and intercepted him; but O'Neill defeated them; and afterwards, during their hasty flight, he routed them five several times before they reached their ships. As soon as intelligence of this reverse reached De Courcy, he hastily left Derry and made his way back to Downpatrick, probably dreading an attack on his head-quarters in his absence.

Two years later (1200) he was induced to try his fortune a second time in Connaught; but with no better result than before. He and Hugh de Lacy were both induced by Cahal Crovderg to come to his assistance in the struggle for the throne. But the rival king, Cahal Carrach, caught the allies in an ambuscade in a wood near Kilmacduagh in Galway, and inflicted on them a crushing defeat, slaying more than half of the English army. De Courcy had a narrow escape here, being felled from his horse by a stone. Recovering, however, he fled from the battlefield northwards till he reached Rindown Castle on

the western shore of Lough Ree, where he proceeded to convey his army in boats across the lake. He had been a week engaged at this, when, on the very last day, Cahal Carrach pounced down on those that still remained at Rindown and killed and drowned great numbers of them; while De Courcy and the rest, being safe at the far side, made good their escape.

The chequered career of this extraordinary man ended in ruin and disgrace. There was a bitter feud between him and the De Lacys; and Hugh de Lacy (the younger) took every means to poison King John's mind against him. We are told, too, that De Courcy let fall some imprudent expressions against the king, which, being reported, tended further to draw the royal vengeance on him. He was proclaimed a rebel and a traitor; and De Lacy, now lord justice, was commissioned to arrest him. After several unsuccessful attempts he was at length betrayed by some of his own servants, who led De Lacy's men to his retreat at Downpatrick, where he was taken (1204). Some records relate that his enemies came down on him on Good Friday, when he was barefoot and unarmed, doing penance in the cathedral of Downpatrick, and that he snatched the nearest weapon—a great wooden cross standing on a grave—with which he dashed out the brains of thirteen of his assailants before he was overpowered.

It would appear from a somewhat obscure entry in the Irish Annals under 1204, that on his arrival in England he was forced to go to Palestine on a crusade. After this we lose sight of him; for though there are plenty of legends handed down by English writers, we do not find him mentioned subsequently in any authentic historical records. Some peerage compilations of the last century, of doubtful authority, make him the father of Miles de Courcy whom Henry III. created baron of Kinsale, and whose descendants for many generations claimed the strange privilege of wearing their hats in presence of the king.

After his departure from Ireland, the earldom of Ulster was conferred on Hugh de Lacy the younger.

CHAPTER VII

HUGH DE LACY (THE ELDER): PRINCE JOHN

IN the second year of De Burgo's viceroyalty (1177) there was an invasion of Connaught by the English, which was disgraceful to the Irish prince that instigated it, and equally so to the English; for it must be remembered that Roderick O'Conor had Connaught secured to him only two years before by the treaty of Windsor (p. 267). Roderick's son Murrogh, having some quarrel with his father, induced Miles de Cogan to head an expedition into the province; and Morrogh himself was their guide. But the Connaught people, having notice of their approach, retreated to the mountains with their cattle, burned some churches and all the houses, and destroyed whatever provisions they could not bring away or hide. The English advanced by Roscommon to Tuam, destroying everything—houses, churches, and farmsteads—but soon began to suffer from want of provisions; and hearing that Roderick was coming down on them with his army, they fled precipitately towards the Shannon. But they were overtaken at the ford of Athleague at Lanesborough before they had time to cross, where a great number of them were killed, and the rest escaped with difficulty. The traitor Murrogh was captured by the Connaughtmen, who with the consent of his father put out his eyes.[1]

William de Burgo became at last so unpopular with the colonists that King Henry removed him from the viceroyalty (1178), and appointed Hugh de Lacy in his place, with Robert le Poer to assist him. At the same time the king made a grant of South Munster to Miles de Cogan and Robert Fitzstephen, and another of North Munster to Philip de Braose; and he appointed Robert le Poer

[1] *Four Masters* and *Ann. of Innisfall*, A.D. 1177. Giraldus (II. xvii.) gives an improbable account of this expedition and its results.

constable of Waterford and Wexford. De Cogan and Fitz-stephen proceeded to Cork, where they were well received; and they made an allotment between them of their new territory. They then marched towards Thomond with De Braose and a large party, to help him to take possession of his district. But when they approached Limerick they saw the city in flames; for the citizens had set fire to it rather than let strangers take possession of it. Whereupon De Braose was so intimidated that, in spite of the expostulation of his friends, he at once returned to Cork and left the country for the time.

Soon after De Lacy's appointment he married (in 1180) a daughter of King Roderick O'Conor. This marriage greatly increased his power and influence among the Irish, insomuch that it excited the jealousy and suspicion of the king, who in consequence dismissed him from his office. But De Lacy yielded up his authority with such prompt obedience that the suspicions of his royal master were for a time allayed, and after three months he was reinstated (in 1181). During the whole time of his administration he busied himself with great energy in building castles at points of vantage, not only in his own principality of Meath, but all over Leinster; of which the ruins of many remain to this day.

The country still continued to be very much disturbed by the raids of the colonists, by the reprisals of the Irish, and by the mutual quarrels of all. King Henry, rightly believing that it required only a strong hand to put an end to these destructive turmoils, determined at last to send his son Prince John to govern the country, hoping that his presence would restore tranquillity. In order to prepare for his reception, the king, in 1184, sent over John Comyn, an Englishman, who had been appointed archbishop of Dublin on the death of St. Laurence O'Toole. And being still jealous of De Lacy and suspicious of his intentions, he removed him once more from the viceroyalty and appointed Philip of Worcester in his place. This man is described as a brave soldier and very liberal; yet one of his first acts was a raid on Armagh during Lent, when he

extorted an immense sum of money from the clergy, while his soldiers plundered from them all they could lay hands on. Prince John, then nineteen years of age, sailed from Milford and landed at Waterford on the Wednesday after Easter with a splendid retinue and a large body of cavalry. He had for his adviser Ralph Glanville, a great lawyer, chief justice of England; and his secretary and tutor was a Welsh priest named Gerald Barry, now better known as Giraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald of Wales. Though the prince had eight years before been created king of Ireland by his father, he did not now assume that title, but designated himself lord of Ireland and earl of Moreton.

King Henry's expectations of his son's government were doomed to early disappointment. The prince soon raised the whole country in revolt by his silly and vicious conduct. He turned even the colonists against him; for he and the worthless young fops by whom he was surrounded looked down on the brave rough barons, and took every occasion to show their contempt for them. Then, even at that early time, began that fatal policy of favouring the 'new English' and slighting the old, which brought heartburnings and jealousies and countless evils for centuries afterwards. Giraldus was sharp enough to see this:—'As the veteran soldiers by whose enterprise the way into the island was opened were treated with suspicion and neglect, and our counsels [i.e. the counsels of Prince John and his court] were communicated only to the new comers, who only were trusted and thought worthy of honour, it came to pass that as the veterans kept aloof, and rendered no assistance to those who did not ask for it, the others [i.e. the new comers] had little success in all their undertakings.'[1] The Irish chiefs crowded to the prince in Waterford, both to pay him respect and to acknowledge him as their lord; but his insolent young associates—close-shaven dandies—ridiculed their dress and manners, and insulted them by plucking their beards, which they wore long, according to the custom of the country.

[1] *Conquest of Ireland*, II. xxxv.: Bohn's transl.

Incensed by this treatment, the proud Irish nobles withdrew to their homes, brooding mischief. Sending their women and children to the west for safety, the several septs combined for a general attack on the English settlements; while John continued his miserable career unmindful of the ominous signs gathering everywhere around him. He had built castles in Lismore, Ardfinnan, and Tibberaghney, from which parties continually issued to plunder the surrounding districts. But suddenly the storm-cloud burst; the settlements were attacked at all points; and the most active of the assailants was the valiant Donall O'Brien of Thomond. A great number of the strongholds were taken, and many of the bravest of the Anglo-Norman chiefs were slain. The colonists were driven to take refuge in the towns; and almost the whole of John's splendid army perished in the various conflicts.

When the country had been for some time in this state of turmoil, King Henry heard how matters stood, and at once recalled the prince after a stay of about eight months, appointing De Courcy viceroy, in 1185. The prince, both before and after his return, threw the whole blame of the disturbances on De Lacy, who, he said, exasperated by his dismissal from the viceroyalty, instigated the Irish to revolt; and he accused him moreover of seeking to make himself king of Ireland. This was probably true; for he had settled in Meath a great number of powerful barons and leaders, all of whom built strong castles, and were completely at his command; and from them descended some of the chief Anglo-Norman families of Ireland.

De Lacy never lived to clear himself. He had demolished the venerable monastery of Durrow—St. Columba's chief establishment in Ireland, the fame of which even yet survives in the exquisite Book of Durrow (p. 105); and he had erected a castle on the site. When the building was nearly finished he came one day to inspect the works, attended by only three soldiers, when a young Irishman named O'Meyey suddenly drew forth a battle-axe which he had concealed under his cloak, and smote off the great baron's head with a single blow, so that body

and head both fell into the trench (1186). Instantly taking flight, he escaped from his pursuers through the neighbouring wood of Kilclare, and never halted till he reached the house of his foster father, O'Caharny or Fox, chief of the district, to announce the news. It is believed that this deed was instigated by O'Caharny to avenge the seizure of his lands by De Lacy, as well as the desecration of St. Columkille's sanctuary.

Thus fell the greatest of the Anglo-Norman barons. He was not the greatest warrior; but he was more far-seeing—more of a statesman—than any of his contemporary barons. He seems to have been well disposed towards the natives, and we have seen how he married the daughter of the Irish king Roderick. It is probable that if he had got his own way, he would—once they had submitted—have given them fair play, and would have protected them from violence and spoliation.

CHAPTER VIII

CAHAL OF THE RED HAND KING OF CONNAUGHT

EVER since the treaty of Windsor (p. 267) King Roderick confined himself chiefly to his own kingdom of Connaught, making little or no pretensions to the sovereignty of Ireland. But he was not permitted to possess even that in peace; for in 1179 King Henry, in open violation of the treaty, granted Connaught, with the city of Limerick, to William de Burgo (Fitz Adelm) and his heirs. It does not appear that De Burgo made any attempt to depose or expel the old king—no doubt for lack of power—though he took possession of some Connaught territory.

But King Roderick's worst troubles came from another quarter; for his latter years, like those of his great contemporary, Henry II., were embittered by the misconduct of his sons. Wearied with care, both public and domestic, he retired for a time (in 1183) to the monastery of Cong,

leaving his son Conor Mainmoy to govern in his place. But when, two years later, he returned, his son refused to reinstate him: and an unnatural and destructive war ensued, the end of which was that Conor Mainmoy banished his father into Munster, in 1186, and retained the sovereignty. He was however a brave and active king; and we have seen (p. 274) how in 1188, in conjunction with Donall O'Brien, he defeated De Courcy. After a short reign he was assassinated in 1189 at the instigation of his own brother; and Connaught was once more plunged into civil strife.

King Henry died in the year 1189 and was succeeded by his son Richard the Lion Hearted. Richard took no interest in Ireland, and left the whole management of its affairs to his brother John, who, in 1189, appointed Hugh de Lacy (son of the great De Lacy) lord justice, in place of John de Courcy. De Lacy held office till 1191, when the viceroyalty was conferred on William Earl Marshal of England and Seneschal of Leinster, who retained it till 1194. Marshal married Isabel, the only child of Strongbow and Eva; and through her, as the daughter of Strongbow and granddaughter of Dermot Mac Murrogh, he inherited vast territories both in England and Ireland, including nearly the whole of Leinster. William Marshal and Isabel had five sons and five daughters: the five sons died without issue; and the whole of Leinster was divided among the five daughters, all of whom married English noblemen.

On the death of Conor Mainmoy his father Roderick made a feeble attempt to regain his throne; but he soon laid down his arms in despair, and again retired to the monastery, while two stronger claimants contended:—Cahal Carrach son of Conor Mainmoy, and Cahal Crovderg (of the Red Hand) Roderick's youngest brother, one of the most able and valiant chiefs of that period. After a short struggle Cahal Crovderg triumphed for the time, and in 1190 became king of Connaught.

Some stirring events took place in the south about this period. The English of Leinster set out in 1192 with a

large force on an expedition into Munster, and, making leisurely march, erected on their way the castles of Knockgraffon and Kilfeakle in Tipperary. But Donall O'Brien prince of Thomond intercepted them at Thurles and defeated them with great loss. To avenge this they crossed the Shannon at Killaloe, intending to ravage Thomond: but they had scarcely arrived on the farther bank when they were unexpectedly attacked by O'Brien, who drove them back after slaying great numbers. This brave king died two years later (1194); and his death delivered the Anglo-Normans from the most active and formidable opponent they had yet encountered.

In 1198 the old King Roderick ended his troubled career in peace and penitence in the monastery of Cong. That he was king of Ireland when the invaders came was the crowning misfortune of the country. Had he possessed even moderate foresight and strength of character he would have crushed the invasion at its insignificant beginning, before it had time to grow formidable. But he had neither the judgment to realise the gravity of the situation nor the ability to grapple with serious difficulties when they arose. Nevertheless, while we despise him for his feebleness and indecision, it is impossible not to feel a degree of pity for him in his misfortunes as the last representative of independent Irish monarchy.

Cahal of the Red Hand held the throne of Connaught for eight or nine years undisturbed, and appears to have been very active; for we read in the Four Masters that in 1195, with some English and Irish allies, he made an incursion into Munster as far as Emly, and destroyed four large castles belonging to the English, and several small ones. In 1199, however, Cahal Carragh, instigated by William de Burgo, whose interest it was that the Irish princes should be at strife, reasserted his claim to Connaught, and brought De Burgo and the English of Limerick to his aid: and Connaught was again all ablaze with civil war. Cahal Crovderg was defeated and fled north to Hugh O'Neill prince of Tyrone and to John de Courcy: and the victors committed frightful outrages over a large

part of the province—sparing neither church nor homestead, neither priest nor layman. Twice again he attempted to regain the throne, aided on the first occasion by O'Neill, and on the second (in 1200) by the redoubtable John de Courcy and by Hugh de Lacy as already related (p. 275); but in the resulting battles he and his auxiliaries were utterly defeated by his rival.

Cahal Crovderg, in no way cowed by these terrible reverses, again took the field, aided this time by the cunning De Burgo, who had now changed sides; and he encamped with a large force at Roscommon. Cahal Carrach, nothing daunted, attacked him, but was killed in an obscure skirmish (1201); and Cahal Crovderg once more took possession of the throne.

Now that the war was ended, Cahal and De Burgo directed their men to go among the people of Connaught and levy their pay by coyne and livery: after which they both proceeded to Cong. While the English were thus dispersed, a false report went round that William de Burgo was dead: whereupon the people rose up simultaneously, and each householder murdered his own guest. The Four Masters (under 1201), in their brief notice of this event, say that De Burgo intended foul play towards Cahal, and that accordingly the Connacians attacked his men and slew 700 of them: but the annalists of Lough Key (under 1202) tell the horrible story in detail, and do not attempt to hide the people's treachery—a striking testimony to their fairness. They add that 900 *or more* were killed. There is no reason to believe that Cahal had any hand in this foul business. A few years later (1204) De Burgo died, after playing a very important part in this great invasion.

From this period forward Cahal ruled without a native rival. With all his power, however, he saw that he could not, unaided, preserve his dominions from the greedy and powerful English barons who had settled on his borders. Accordingly, in 1206, in order to secure even a portion, he surrendered two parts of the province, and agreed to hold the remaining third from the king, for which he was

to pay 100 marks yearly. And he presented himself to John on the occasion of that king's visit to Ireland in 1210 (next chapter) and made formal submission to him. Yet in the face of these treaties the king (in 1215) granted the whole of Connaught to William de Burgo, as it had formerly been granted to his father Fitz Adelm. And in 1218 this grant was confirmed by Henry III. to Richard de Burgo, but with a proviso that it should not take effect till the death of Cahal.

Cahal defended his territories with great spirit against the illegal encroachments of the barons. Thus when in 1220 the De Lacys of Meath went to Athleague on the Shannon, and began to build a castle on the eastern bank to serve as a key to Connaught, he promptly crossed the river into Longford, and so frightened them that they were glad to conclude a truce with him; and he demolished the castle, which they had almost finished.

Cahal seems to have remained faithful to his engagements with the English monarchs, notwithstanding their breaches of trust with him. For in 1221, when De Lacy landed in Ireland in open rebellion against Henry III. (p. 289 *infra*), Cahal joined Earl Marshal against him, and wrote to the king to warn him, complaining in his letter how hard he found it to maintain his position against the king's enemies—De Lacy and others.

Cahal of the Red Hand was an upright and powerful king, and governed with firmness and justice. The Annals record of him that he relieved the poor as long as he lived, and that he destroyed more robbers and rebels and evil-doers of every kind than any other king of his time. In early life he had founded the abbey of Knockmoy, into which he retired in the last year of his life; and in this quiet retreat he died in the habit of a Cistercian monk in 1224.

CHAPTER IX

KING JOHN IN IRELAND

King Richard died in 1199 and was succeeded by his brother John. The new king appointed as governor Meiler Fitz Henry, who had come over as a youth with the first Anglo-Normans: he was lord justice during the first four years of John's reign.

The years immediately following the death of Donall O'Brien (in 1194) present a weary record of strife and turmoil. The Irish chiefs were encouraged in their dissensions by the English nobles—though indeed they needed but small encouragement; and while they continued to enfeeble each other, their watchful enemies gradually extended their possessions and tightened their grasp on the country. These English nobles also quarrelled among themselves; and their broils caused quite as much devastation and misery as those of the Irish chiefs. Hugh de Lacy became governor as lord justice in 1203 in succession to Fitz Henry. This did not mend matters: for his tyranny in exacting taxes for King John caused great exasperation and several downright rebellions. In 1208 a battle was fought at Thurles between the colonists on the one side, aided by the natives, and the lord justice on the other, in which a great number of the royal troops were killed.

Even Dublin, the centre of government, felt the effects of the general state of lawlessness. The reader will recollect that Henry II. granted this city to the citizens of Bristol in 1172 (p. 263). The dispossessed people took refuge among their kindred, the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles of Wicklow, brooding over their wrongs and biding the time for vengeance. The settlers were in the habit of resorting for amusement on holidays to a place a little south of the city, then and still called Cullenswood. While they were so engaged on Easter Monday, 1209, a party of the O'Byrnes

and O'Tooles, who had been lying in ambush, suddenly fell on them and killed 300 of them.[1] In memory of this event Easter Monday was for generations afterwards called by the name of Black Monday; and the place, which is now being built over, is to this day called the Bloody Fields. It ought to be remarked that the authorities for this story are exclusively English: it is not mentioned at all in the Irish annals, so that we have no opportunity of hearing the other side.

King John was kept well informed of the disturbed state of the country. What seems to have troubled him most, so far as Ireland was concerned, was that some of the great nobles, and notoriously William de Braose and Hugh de Lacy, had followed in the footsteps of De Courcy, throwing off all authority and making themselves to all intents and purposes independent princes. With the object of reducing these turbulent barons to submission and of restoring quiet, and probably also in order to forget for a time the troubles his own tyranny and misgovernment had brought on his head in England, the king—at this time under excommunication—resolved to visit Ireland. He landed at Crook, near Waterford, in the month of June, 1210, with a formidable army. The mere presence of such a force was enough to awe the restless chiefs, Irish and English; and from the very day of his landing the whole country became tranquil. The two De Lacys—Hugh and his brother Walter—fled to France. De Braose also made his escape, but his wife and son fell into the king's hands, and having been brought to England were, after some time, starved to death in prison by the tyrant's order.

A romantic story is told of the adventures of the De Lacys. They were reduced to destitution in France, and had at last to earn their bread by working as garden labourers for two or three years in the abbey of St. Taurin. The abbot, thinking he saw in them something above the common, at last questioned them, and gradually drew from them a confession of their name and rank, and the whole story of their misfortunes. He appealed on their behalf

[1] *Hanmer's Chronicle*, ed. 1809, p. 370.

to King John, who restored them to their estates (about 1213) on the payment of fines, Hugh 4,000 marks for the earldom of Ulster, and Walter 2,500 marks for Meath. The story adds that they brought the abbot's nephew with them to Ireland, and, having made him a knight, bestowed on him the lordship of Dingle.

The king proceeded to Dublin, and from thence to Meath, where Cahal Çrovderg, who at this time ruled his Connaught kingdom in peace (p. 285), visited him and 'came into his house,' as the Four Masters express it—that is, made formal submission. John received him kindly and made him a present of a splendid charger, which Cahal—first removing the saddle—mounted, and with his retinue accompanied the king for a long distance. Many other Irish kings and chiefs came also and submitted; but these submissions were, as Sir John Davies says, 'a mere mockery and imposture,' made under compulsion, and quite disregarded from the moment the king's back was turned.

As John had no fighting to do, he employed himself more usefully in making arrangements for the better government of the country. Those parts of Ireland which were under English jurisdiction he parcelled out into twelve shires or counties: namely, Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Uriel (or Louth), Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, and Tipperary. He directed that in all these counties the English laws should be administered, and for this purpose he erected courts of justice and appointed sheriffs and other officers. But it must be always borne in mind that all these arrangements, including the administration of the law, were for the settlers only, not for the natives, who were then and long afterwards outside the pale of the law.

The king returned to England in August 1210, leaving John de Grey lord justice, to whom he committed the task of carrying out his arrangements. During the remainder of his reign Ireland was comparatively quiet, and no events occurred necessary to notice here.

CHAPTER X

A CENTURY OF TURMOIL

[Chief authorities for Chaps. X. and XI.: Irish Annals; Clyn's Annals; Histories of Ireland by Mac Geoghegan, Cox, and Leland; Ware's Annals; Gilbert's Viceroys; Hanmer's Chronicle; Davies's Discoverie; Carew Papers; Richey's Short History.]

KING JOHN was succeeded, in 1216, by his son Henry III., who was then a boy of nine years old.

The century that elapsed from the death of John to the invasion of Edward Bruce was a period of strife and bloodshed, from which scarce any part of the country was free, a period of woe and misery for the common people. There was as usual no strong central government, and the whole nation was abandoned to anarchy. It is necessary to relate the most important events of this period, so as to make a connected narrative, and in order that the reader may have some idea of the hard ordeal of suffering the country had to pass through.

We have seen that, according to the tradition, Hugh de Lacy, three or four years after his expulsion by King John in 1210, was permitted to return at the instance of the abbot of St. Taurin. Whatever truth may be in this tradition, we find that he was abroad in 1219 watching his opportunity, when William Marshal the great earl of Pembroke—the husband of Eva's daughter—died, leaving his titles and estates to his son William Marshal the younger. De Lacy seeing his powerful antagonist gone, determined on an attempt to regain his lost earldom, and the Irish annalists record that in 1221 he landed in Ulster in defiance of the wishes of the king, and in open rebellion. He enlisted Hugh O'Neill of Tyrone on his side; and they invaded Ulster, Leinster, and Meath, demolished the castle of Coleraine, and committed terrible ravages all over the three territories. The young Earl William Marshal, a man of energy and foresight, having been appointed lord justice,

at once crossed over—in 1224—to oppose De Lacy; and he was aided by most of the other English leaders, as well as by some native chiefs, among them Cahal Crovderg, who had good reasons for hostile feelings towards the De Lacys.

The contest that followed, in which public as well as private interests were enlisted, and which continued till the whole of Meath was wasted, attained almost the magnitude of a civil war: it is indeed sometimes designated as the War of Meath. At last when both parties were wearied out they made peace; a peace in which the De Lacys and O'Neill acknowledged no error and gave no hostages; and obtained very much their own terms.

Let us now turn to the west. We have seen how Henry III., in violation of treaties with Cahal Crovderg, granted Connaught to Richard de Burgo. But the O'Conors clung to their territory, so that De Burgo found it no easy matter to dislodge them; and when Cahal died (in 1224) his son Hugh assumed the government. Whereupon the English king directed William Marshal the lord justice to seize on the province and deliver it up to De Burgo. At the same time the two sons of the old King Roderick claimed the throne, in opposition to both De Burgo and their cousin Hugh; and among these several claimants the ill-fated province was plunged into a long and desolating civil war.

Marshal appears to have made no immediate attempt to execute the king's order. Adopting a more astute course, he remained with his army at Athlone, on the border of the province, to watch the course of events, leaving the Irish to fight it out among themselves, and taking a part only when asked to do so.

The sons of Roderick, aided by O'Neill of the north, were at first successful, and one of them was actually inaugurated king. But no sooner had O'Neill returned home, than Hugh applied to Marshal, who gladly marched to his assistance from Athlone. The new king and his brother, being now forced to fly, were pursued by Hugh and his English allies, who ravaged the country mercilessly

as they went along. The annalists, when recording this terrible and cruel raid (1225), mention a pathetic incident, which gives us a vivid insight into the miseries suffered by the poor people. A frightened crowd of peasants—men, women, and children—fleeing northwards from the pursuing army, perished by scores on the way. In their headlong flight they attempted to cross the wide and deep river flowing from Bellacong Lake in Mayo, half-way between Ballina and Foxford, where great numbers were drowned; and next day the baskets of the fishing weirs were found full of the bodies of little children that had been swept down by the stream.

This state of horror lasted in Connaught for many years; and the struggles among the several claimants of the O'Conor family went on unceasingly: battles, skirmishes, and raids without number. The English, under Marshal, De Burgo, or others, were mixed up in most of these contests, now siding with one of the parties, now with another, but always keeping an eye to their own interests. And thus the havoc and ruin went on unchecked. Meantime the wretched hunted people had no leisure to attend to their tillage; famine and pestilence followed; and the inhabitants of whole towns and districts were swept away.

At length Felim the brother of Hugh—for Hugh had been killed in a private broil—established himself, in 1249, by sheer force of energy and bravery, on the throne of Connaught, in spite of all enemies both English and Irish, and reigned without interruption till his death in 1265.

We have sketched the War of Meath: there was also a War of Kildare, which resulted in the destruction of one of the noblest of the Anglo-Irish earls by the villainous treachery of one man, and of those he induced to join with him in the conspiracy. William Marshal the younger died in 1231, while still a young man, leaving all his titles and estates to his brother Richard, a handsome, valiant, and noble-minded knight. This young man, like most spirited Englishmen of the time, very properly resented the king's

foolish preference for Frenchmen; whereupon the king banished him from the kingdom: most ungratefully, for he owed his crown to the young earl's father. Richard now entered into alliance with Llewellyn prince of Wales, and made open war on King Henry, who thereupon confiscated all his vast estates. Geoffrey Marisco now induced the lord justice Maurice Fitzgerald, Hugh de Lacy, and Richard de Burgo to enter into a base conspiracy for the ruin of Marshal, hoping to share his estates among them. He began by forging letters purporting to be from the king, ordering the Irish vassals to arrest Earl Richard for treason if he should appear among them. Having accomplished this, he put on the guise of friendship, and induced the young nobleman to come to Ireland to defend his estates against De Lacy and De Burgo; and when it was agreed to hold a conference of the hostile parties on the Curragh of Kildare, he persuaded him to insist on such terms as he knew De Lacy and the others would reject.

At this conference (1234) a quarrel was provoked; and when they prepared to fight, all Earl Richard's men, having been previously bribed, left him, with the exception of fifteen faithful knights. The treacherous De Marisco too, professing all along to be on his side, abandoned him at the last moment; and then for the first time it flashed upon him that he was betrayed. Seeing his young brother Walter, who was a mere boy, following him into the fray, he sent him back with an attendant to a place of safety; and then he and his fifteen companions dashed in among their enemies. The chief conspirators, fearing to encounter Marshal, had withdrawn to shelter and left the fighting to their mercenaries. Richard, who was a man of great strength, and renowned as a swordsman, did terrible execution. With one blow he lopped off the two hands of a gigantic Irishman who had stretched out his arms to seize him: and he cleft the body of another mercenary from head to waist. The unequal struggle went on for six hours—15 against 140—but it could have only one termination. They brought the noble knight to his feet at last by disabling his horse; and then while he was en-

gaged with his enemies in front one of the rascals plunged a dagger into his back through a joint of the armour, and he was overpowered. This ended the fight. He was taken to the castle of Kilkenny, where he would have recovered by his native strength of constitution; but the doctor who attended him—bribed like the others—wilfully killed him with the severity of his treatment. Geoffrey Marisco met some punishment. He was banished by the indignant king, to whom the whole villainous plot had been revealed, and died in exile; and his son who had espoused his cause, having been captured, was executed by being torn in pieces between horses.

Except the small territory conquered by De Courcy, Ulster had up to the present preserved its independence. But here also dissension opened the way for the invader. Maurice Fitzgerald, second baron of Offaly, one of the conspirators in the war of Kildare, who had been twice lord justice, and who had on a former occasion temporarily reduced both O'Neill and O'Donnell, now resolved to bring Ulster completely under English rule. He marched with his army northwards through Connaught in 1257; but was intercepted by Godfrey O'Donnell chief of Tirconnell, at a place called Credran-Kill at the Rosses near Sligo town, where a furious battle was fought. The two leaders, Fitzgerald and O'Donnell, met in single combat and wounded each other severely; the English were routed and driven out of Lower (or North) Connaught; and Fitzgerald retired to the Franciscan monastery of Youghal, where he died the same year, probably of his wounds.

As for O'Donnell, he had himself conveyed to an island in Lough Veagh in Donegal, where he lay in bed for a whole year sinking daily under his wounds; and all this time the Tirconnellians had no chief to lead them.

There had been for some time before much dissension between this O'Donnell and Brian O'Neill the neighbouring prince of Tyrone; and now O'Neill, taking advantage of his opponent's helplessness, instead of greeting him as he ought, after his victory over Fitzgerald, gathered an

army, and marching towards Tirconnell, sent to demand submission and tribute. O'Donnell, as soon as he had received this message, ordered a hasty muster of his people ; and summoning the chiefs to his bedside, he told them of O'Neill's demand, and of his determination to resist it ; and as he was not able to march with them—expecting death daily—he directed them to make him a bier, on which they were to carry him at the head of his people to meet O'Neill (1258).

On they marched till they met the men of Tyrone face to face at the river Swilly ; and while the bier supporting the dying chief was raised aloft in full view of the Kinel Connell, the two armies attacked each other. After a long and fierce struggle the Tyrone men were routed and fled, leaving many of their men dead on the battlefield. Then the victors set out on their homeward journey ; but had proceeded only as far as Letterkenny when they had to lay down the bier, and the heroic chief died. And the same bier from which he had witnessed his last victory was now made use of to bear him to his grave.

In this year (1258) some of the Irish chiefs, including Teige O'Brien of Thomond, made a feeble attempt to unite against the common enemy ; and they chose Brian O'Neill of Tyrone as their leader. But this confederacy was of short duration ; for two years later, in 1260, in a bloody battle fought at Downpatrick against the English of the north of Ireland, O'Neill was defeated and slain, together with a large number of the chiefs of Ulster and Connaught.

The south had its own share of disturbance, and here the English were less fortunate. The Mac Carthys of Desmond, seeing their ancient principality continually encroached upon by the Geraldines, became exasperated ; and led by their chief Fineen or Florence, attacked them in the year 1261 at Callan near Kenmare ; where the Geraldines were defeated and a great number slain, including several of their chiefs. The Irish followed up this victory by demolishing the English castles over a great part of Desmond ; and for a dozen years, as we are told, no Geraldine durst put a plough in the ground. But the Irish began

soon again to quarrel among themselves, and the Geraldines gradually recovered all they had lost.

There was almost as much strife among the English themselves as there was between Irish and English. The two great families of Fitzgerald and De Burgo had a bitter dispute, which began in 1264, about some lands in Connaught, so that they filled the whole kingdom with war and tumult. At last the king intervened, and wrote, in 1265, commanding peace. Two years later David Barry the lord justice ended the dispute by depriving the Fitzgeralds of all their Connaught lands; and he forced the parties to make peace; which was however of no long duration.

But the country got no rest; for the Irish rose up and burned and spoiled the English settlements everywhere. In Connaught there was a dispute between Walter de Burgo earl of Ulster and the Connaught king Hugh O'Conor the son of Felim (p. 291), so that they proceeded to open war. The earl accompanied by the lord justice, who now became alarmed at the general rising of the Irish, crossed the Shannon and invaded Connaught in 1270; but he was defeated in battle by Hugh, who slew nine of his principal knights and a great number of men. These wars were followed as usual by great famine and pestilence.

While this universal strife was raging in Ireland, Henry III. died, and was succeeded by Edward I. (1272).

The manner in which the natives were despoiled of their lands at this period and for many a generation afterwards, is well exemplified in the proceedings of Thomas de Clare son of the earl of Gloucester; and the story shows how the native chiefs facilitated the work of conquest by their own miserable dissensions. This nobleman had been granted a large tract of land in Clare, a part of Thomond. It happened at this time (1277) that there were two native competitors for the principality of Thomond, Brian Roe O'Brien and Turlogh O'Brien, who were at open war with each other; and De Clare instantly turned their quarrel to his own advantage. He first took the part of Brian Roe and helped him to defeat his opponent; after

which he entered into solemn bonds of friendship with him.

But soon afterwards he took the other side; and having inveigled Brian Roe into his power, he treacherously seized him and had him torn asunder by horses.[1] Then he took possession of all the district east of the river Fergus, distributed the land among his followers, and built two strong castles at Clare and Bunratty. The sons of the murdered prince however rose up against De Clare, and defeating him in several engagements, drove himself and his father-in-law—Maurice Fitz Maurice Fitzgerald—to take refuge in the solitudes of the Slieve Bloom mountains. Here they were reduced to such want that they subsisted for a time on horseflesh. They had to yield themselves prisoners at last, and were treated by the Irish with more clemency than they had a right to expect: they were set at liberty on engaging to give satisfaction for O'Brien's death, and to surrender the castle of Roscommon.

After the English settlement in 1172 there were two distinct codes of law in force in Ireland—the English and the Brehon. A man might live safely enough under either; but it was very unsafe and dangerous for an Irishman to live under both. Yet this was the position of a large proportion of the native Irish, viz., of all those who in any way came in contact with the colonists. The English law did not apply to them. An Irishman who was in any manner injured by an Englishman had no redress. He could not seek the protection of English law; and if he had recourse to the Brehon law, the Englishman need not submit, and would naturally repudiate it. An Englishman might even murder an Irishman with impunity, for Irishmen 'were so farre out of the protection of the Lawe, as it was often adjudged no fellony to kill a meere Irishman in the time of peace.'[2] Accordingly we find that when Robert de Waleys was put on his trial in Waterford in 1310 for the murder of John Macgillemory, he admitted the murder,

[1] *Ann. Four Masters*, and *Ann. Clonmacnoise*, 1277.

[2] Davies, *Discoverie*, ed. 1747, p. 102.

but pleaded that it was no felony, inasmuch as Macgillemory was a mere Irishman: and the plea was admitted in court, so that he was let off without any punishment.[1] But an Irishman who injured an Englishman came at once under English law: and if Macgillemory had murdered De Waleys he would have been hanged for it.

Yet the Brehon law was often made use of by the English, but almost always perverted for their own purposes. We have seen (p. 78) how the old Irish custom of *coiney* was abused in the form of coyne and livery. But there was something much worse than this. We know that under the Brehon law, if a man were in debt and absconded his family had to pay (p. 53). This law was turned to use against the natives in a most convenient way: in a manner indeed that would hardly be credited if we had not the Act of Parliament before us. 'A.D. 1476, 16 Edward IV. In a parliament held at Dublin, the following act was passed:—If any person of Irish name, not sufficient or amenable to the common law, commit any offence to any of the king's subjects, it shall be lawful to him [the person injured] and his aiders to arrest and take such Irish persons as shall be sufficient, being of the nation of him which committed the offence, and to retain them with their goods and chattels until they and the remnant of the same nation make amends according to the discretion of the governor and council.'[2] This means that if an Irishman were indebted in any manner to a colonist and was unable to pay or absconded, the colonist might arrest any Irishman he pleased, or any number of Irishmen, and seize their goods, till the debt was paid.

Although it was no felony to kill a native, yet we must not judge of this state of things more severely than it deserves. It was not so much a positive law as the absence of law; and when the government placed the colonists under English law and took no cognizance of the Irish people, we must not suppose the authorities made the omission with any direct intention that Englishmen

[1] Gilbert, *Account of Facsimiles of Nat. MSS. of Ireland*, p. 101.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 320.

should have unlimited license to kill or rob or injure Irishmen: probably they never thought of the consequences at all. And when an attempt was made to bring an Englishman to justice for murdering or maltreating an Irishman, he was let off, not because the judges had any sympathy with him or his evil deed, but simply because they had no power to try the case: it was not within their jurisdiction.

At the same time we must not let ourselves be carried too far on the other side by these mitigating considerations. There was something more than mere negation or neglect in the act of 1476 quoted above: and we know that the attention of the government was more than once directed —and directed in vain—to the need of legal protection for the native Irish. It was no wonder that under the circumstances the Irish should wish to have the protection of the law; and accordingly many individuals and families, from the time of Henry II. to the accession of James I., obtained from the government, by purchase or for some other reason, what were called 'charters of denization,' which gave them the benefit of English law—which protected them from injury on the part of any colonist, and enabled them to sue a colonist the same as if they themselves were colonists:[1] but this was always granted as an act of special favour. And there were five Irish families who for some reason, not now known, had from an early time the benefit of English law:—'By this record it appeareth that five principal blouds or septs of the Irishry were by special grace enfranchised and enabled to take benefit of the lawes of England: namely, O'Neill of Ulster; O'Melaghlin of Meath; O'Conor of Connaught; O'Brien of Thomond; and Mac Murrough of Leinster.'[2]

But perhaps the most discreditable record of all is this. On two well-known occasions, the first in the reign of king Edward I., and the second in that of Edward III., the general body of the Irish petitioned the king that an act might be passed to make all the Irish subject to the

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 320; Gilbert, *Acct. of Nat. MSS.*, pp. 101–2–3; Davies, *Discoverie*, ed. 1747, p. 105.

[2] Davies, *Discoverie*, ed. 1747, p. 104; Harris's *Ware*, ii. 88.

English law. These two great kings would have been glad to comply with the prayer of their Irish subjects; but it did not suit the selfish purposes of the Anglo-Irish barons, who 'persuaded the king of England that it was unfit to communicate the Lawes of England unto them; that it was best pollicie to holde them as Aliens and Enemies and to persecute them with continuall warre . . . . wherefore I must stil cleare and acquit the Crown and State of England of negligence or ill pollicie, and lay the fault uppon the Pride, Covetousnesse, and ill Counsell of the English planted heer, which in all former ages have been the chiefe impediments of the final Conquest of Ireland.' [1]

Elsewhere in the same essay Davies writes:—'This then I note as a great defect in the civill policy of this Kingdom, that . . . . . the English lawes were not communicated to the Irish, nor the benefit and protection thereof allowed unto them, though they earnestly desired and sought the same.' [2] This measure 'would have prevented the calamities of ages, and was obviously calculated for the pacification and effectual improvement of their country. But it would have circumscribed their [the barons'] rapacious views and controlled their violence and oppression.' [3] The barons accordingly opposed it on various pretences, and the two petitions came to nothing.[4]

The Irish, totally unprotected as they were, and heartily sick of turmoil, would have been only too glad to live under English law and be at peace with their English neighbours; for then, as now, they would cheerfully submit to the law if they believed it to be just:—'For there is no nation of people under the sunne that doth love equall and indifferent (i.e. impartial) justice better then the Irish; or will rest better satisfied with the execution thereof, although it bee against themselves; so as they may have the protection and benefit of the law, when uppon just cause they do desire it.' [5]

[1] Davies, *Discoverie*, pp. 145, 146. [2] *Ibid.* p. 118.

[3] Leland, *Hist. of Ireland*, i. 245.

[4] *Ibid.* i. 243, 289. See also *Carew Papers*, 1603–1624, p. 165; and Richey's *Short History of the Irish People*, pp. 176, 177.

[5] This is the concluding sentence of Davies' thoughtful and valuable essay, *A Discoverie of the True Causes, &c.*

The war and turmoil continued without intermission till the end of this reign. Neither did the accession of the new king, Edward II. (1307), bring any improvement; for Ireland was left to work out its own miserable destiny; and under the circumstances change of kings was a matter of scarcely any consequence to the Irish people.

CHAPTER XI

EDWARD BRUCE.

ABOUT the time of the beginning of Bruce's invasion, the Irish princes under the leadership of Donall O'Neill king of Ulster wrote a dignified remonstrance, in the form of a letter to Pope John XXII., which is a most interesting and important document.[1]

After glancing at the early history of Ireland, and drawing attention to the zeal for religion of its clergy and people, they say that Pope Adrian IV., an Englishman, moved by false representations, unjustly transferred the sovereignty of Ireland to Henry II., the instigator of the murder of Thomas à Becket. They show that Henry and his successors had violated the conditions of the bull, and instead of reforming the Irish, had plundered the church and perverted the papal grant to their own selfish purposes. They complain that they are not protected by law: that an Englishman may prosecute an Irishman in any action, but that an Irishman cannot prosecute an Englishman; that if an Englishman kill an Irishman there is no way to prosecute, and no penalty on the murderer; that an Irishwoman who marries an Englishman is, on her husband's death, deprived of one-third of her property; that if an Englishman compass the death of an Irishman by violence, he can seize all the Irishman's property; and that Irishmen are excluded from monastic institutions governed by Englishmen; with many other grievances.

[1] The original Latin is in Fordun's *Chronicle*, and in O'Sullivan's *Hist. Cath. Hib.* ed. 1850, p. 70. There is a translation of the most important portions in Mac Geoghegan's *History of Ireland*, p. 323.

They then go on to say that they have resolved to defend their lives and liberties by force of arms; and they inform his Holiness that they have invited Edward Bruce, the descendant of their own ancient kings, to come to their aid.

The Pope did not reply directly to this remonstrance; but he did what perhaps was better; he sent the document to King Edward II., with a letter earnestly recommending that he should take all these matters into consideration and redress the grievances of the Irish. He complains that neither Henry nor his successors paid any regard to the object of Adrian's bull; but that on the contrary they heaped upon the Irish unheard-of miseries and persecutions, and imposed on them a yoke of slavery which could not be borne.

Immediately after this, the Pope, probably through English influence, issued instructions to the Irish archbishops to excommunicate all those Irish who should take up arms to help Edward Bruce, or who should aid him in any way, openly or secretly, by furnishing counsel, arms, horses, or money. It was enjoined that all such persons were to be shunned as under the ban of the church; and the sentence of excommunication was to be read aloud by the clergy on Sundays and holidays, with candles lighted and bells tolling.[1]

The preceding hundred years I have designated a century of turmoil; but it was peace itself compared with the three and a half years of Bruce's expedition to Ireland.

The Irish people, especially those of the north, viewed with great interest and sympathy the struggles of their kindred in Scotland for independence; and Robert Bruce's glorious victory at Bannockburn filled them with joy and hope. Soon after the battle, the native chiefs of Ulster, headed by Donall O'Neill prince of Tyrone, with the De Lacys and with the Bissets who then owned Glenarm and Rathlin, despatched deputies praying Bruce to send his brother Edward to be king over them. He eagerly accepted the invitation; and on the 25th of May, 1315, Edward Bruce, accompanied by many of the Scottish

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 137; Leland, i. 275.

nobles, landed at Larne with an army of 6,000 of the best soldiers of Scotland. He was immediately joined by Donall O'Neill, and by numbers of the northern Irish; and the combined forces overran a great part of Ulster, destroying everything belonging to the English that came in their way, and defeating them in several battles. Moving southwards, they stormed and burned Dundalk and Ardee; and at this latter place they set fire to the church in which a number of people had taken refuge and burned them all to death.

From first to last the campaign was carried on with great cruelty, and with reckless waste of life and property. All food, except what was needed for the use of the army, was destroyed, though there was a famine and the people were starving all over the country. The Bruces were humane, high-minded men. It is related that on one occasion during the hurried march from Limerick to Ulster described further on (p. 306), a poor washerwoman was taken with the pains of childbirth; and Robert Bruce, at a time when every hour was a matter of life and death to him, halted the whole army till the woman was fit for travel. Let us not, then, heap more blame on them than they deserve for the barbarous conduct of the campaign. It was the custom of the time; if indeed that can be accepted as a palliation of inhumanity. Wallace did much the same in England, and the English often enough in Scotland. But it would be satisfactory to have to record a different and more merciful line of action on the part of the Bruces.

The two leading Anglo-Irish noblemen at this time were Richard de Burgo the Red Earl of Ulster, and Sir Edmund Butler the lord justice. The Red Earl was lord of the two provinces of Connaught and Ulster, the earldom of Ulster having come to his father by marriage with the daughter and heiress of De Lacy; and he was by far the most powerful nobleman in Ireland: even the lord justice was of small account in comparison with him. He raised a large army, chiefly in Connaught, and set out in quest of the invaders. His march north through the Irish districts was perhaps more savagely destructive than that of

Bruce, if indeed that were possible. No doubt he considered that all the Irish were in sympathy with Bruce, which was not the case. On his way he met Sir Edmund Butler with a Leinster army, bound also for the north; but he haughtily rejected the lord justice's aid, asserting he was himself quite a match for Bruce. He found the Scottish army posted near Ardee in Louth, and there was some skirmishing; but Bruce, acting on the advice of O'Neill, retraced his steps northwards, followed by De Burgo, and took up a position on the Bann.

Among the Red Earl's adherents was Felim O'Conor, the young king of Connaught, with a large contingent of native Irish. But having received some secret messages from Bruce, O'Conor became desirous to withdraw; and as he heard at the same time that one of his kinsmen had taken advantage of his absence to revolt and proclaim himself king, he returned to Connaught to suppress the rebellion.

The Red Earl, finding himself weakened by this defection, retreated eastwards, but was overtaken by Bruce at the village of Connor near Ballymena; where after a furious contest he was utterly defeated, losing a great part of his army. His brother William and several English knights were taken prisoners, and he himself fled back crestfallen to Connaught, with the broken remnants of his forces. A body of the English fled eastwards to Carrickfergus and took possession of the castle, which they gallantly defended for months against the Scots. Soon after the battle Bruce had himself proclaimed king of Ireland and formally crowned.

Towards the end of the year he received some reinforcements from Scotland, and having vainly endeavoured to take Carrickfergus Castle, he left a small party to carry on the siege and marched into Meath. At Kells he routed an army of 15,000 men under Sir Roger Mortimer, who had come over from England to defend his Irish lands. The De Lacys, who had been in the English army, stood by and took no part in the fight, and soon afterwards they openly joined the Scots. After the battle the victorious general proceeded with his army to Lough Sewdy,

now called Lough Sunderlin, in Westmeath, where he halted and spent the Christmas. At the opening of the new year (1316) he marched to Kildare; and beside the great moat of Ardscull near Athy, he defeated the lord justice, Sir Edmund Butler, who lost a great number of his best men.

Bruce had now been successful everywhere; and the native Irish rose up in many parts of the country. Among the insurgents were the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes of Wicklow, and the O'Moores of Leix; but they were all promptly crushed, and with great loss, by the lord justice.

The harvest had been a bad one, and scarcity and want prevailed all over the country. Nevertheless the Scottish army, wherever they went, continued to ravage and destroy all they could not consume or bring away, multiplying tenfold the miseries of the people, both English and Irish. Their proceedings reacted on themselves at last, for Bruce was forced by want of provisions to retire to Ulster, where for a time he held court and discharged all the functions of a king.

Felim O'Conor, having crushed in blood the revolt in Connaught, now declared for the Scots; and being joined by the chiefs of Connaught and by O'Brien of Thomond, he made preparations to expel the English wholly from the province. Marching to Athenry with a large army, he was there confronted by an army of English equally numerous, under William de Burgo and Richard Bermingham. The English were well armed, well equipped in every way, and well disciplined; while the Irish fought as usual in their irregular fashion, clad only in their saffron tunics. The pitched battle that followed was long and desperately contested; but at length the Irish were utterly defeated, leaving 11,000 men dead on the field. The brave young Felim, then only twenty-three years of age, from whom, as the Four Masters say, the Irish had expected more than from any other Gael then living, fell himself, fighting side by side with his men. This was by far the most decisive and fatal defeat inflicted on the Irish since the invaders first set foot on Irish soil. In it almost all the native

nobility of Connaught perished; and the Irish annalists state that in the whole province there remained of the O'Conors only one chief—Felim's brother—able to bear arms. For this service King Edward created Bermingham baron of Athenry.

But the English, while victorious at Athenry, suffered serious reverses soon after in the south. They were defeated by O'Carroll in Ely in South Leinster;[1] and the O'Briens inflicted a much worse defeat on the De Clares in Dysart O'Dea, where fell Richard de Clare himself, and a vast number of his followers, both Irish and English.[2]

The band of English who had taken possession of Carrickfergus Castle held out most heroically; and now Bruce himself came to conduct the siege in person. Meantime, towards the end of the year, King Robert arrived from Galloway with reinforcements, and was joyfully received by his brother. The brave garrison were at last driven to extremity by downright starvation; and they surrendered on condition that their lives should be spared. Our admiration of their bravery is somewhat damped by an act of treachery during the siege. At one time they agreed to surrender the castle; but when thirty Scottish soldiers were sent to take possession, instead of carrying out their promise, they seized the Scots on entrance and cast them into the dungeon. Here the prisoners were starved to death; and we are told that the famishing garrison devoured their bodies.

The brothers having now an army of about 20,000 Scots, and some Irish, set out early in spring (1317) for Dublin, burning, wasting, and destroying everything on their march. They encamped at Castleknock; but the citizens of Dublin took most determined measures for defence, burning the suburbs in their desperation, both houses and churches, to deprive the Scots of shelter; so that the Bruces did not think it prudent to enter on a siege; and they resumed their destructive march till they reached Limerick. But as they found this city also well prepared for defence, and as there was still great scarcity

[1] *Four Masters*, 1318. [2] Clyn's *Annals*, 1318.

of provisions, they returned northwards after a short stay. They had to traverse the very districts they had wasted a short time before; and in this most miserable march vast numbers of them perished of cold, hunger, and disease—scourged by the famine they had themselves created. Half-starved, helpless, and demoralised as they were during this retreat, the Scottish army could have been quite easily crushed by the English; yet such was the terror inspired by Bannockburn and the name of Bruce, that though the Anglo-Irish leaders had an overwhelming army of 30,000 ready for action, they did not dare to attack; and the famishing Scots reached Ulster in the beginning of May, greatly reduced by deaths and desertion.

And now Robert Bruce, having seen things with his own eyes, and being convinced that it was hopeless to attempt to conquer the country, and unite the divided people under one stable government, returned to Scotland; but Edward remained behind, determined to hold his ground as king of Ireland. During all this time the country continued in the same miserable state: starvation, sickness, death, and gloom everywhere, aggravated by this most pitiless war.

The two armies remained inactive till the autumn of the next year (1318), probably on account of the terrible dearth. But now came an abundant harvest, and both sides prepared for action. Bruce turned south for another conquering progress; at the same time Sir John Bermingham with an army very much more numerous marched north from Dublin to intercept him, and came in sight of the Scottish army at the hill of Faughart, two miles north of Dundalk, where they had encamped. Bruce's chief counsellors, both Scottish and Irish, earnestly advised him to wait for reinforcements daily expected from Scotland, and not to engage a force so much larger than his own: but he was naturally rash; and now his long series of victories—eighteen without a reverse—had rendered him so confident, that he declared he would fight even if the enemy were four times more numerous.

The battle fought here on Sunday, 14th of October, 1318,

terminated the war. The issue was decided chiefly through the bravery of Sir John Maupas, an Anglo-Irish knight, who made a dash at Bruce and slew him in the very midst of the Scots. Maupas was instantly cut down; and after the battle his body was found pierced all over, lying on that of Bruce. The Scottish army was defeated with great slaughter; and the main body of the survivors, including Hugh and Walter de Lacy, escaped to Scotland. Bermingham, with barbarous vindictiveness, had the body of Bruce cut in pieces, to be hung up in the chief towns of the colony, and brought the head salted in a box to King Edward II., who immediately created him earl of Louth and gave him the manor of Ardee.

'John de Lacy and Sir Robert de Culragh, who fell into the hands of the colonial government, were, as adherents of Bruce, starved to death in prison, under a sentence which allowed each of them but three morsels of the worst bread and three draughts of foul water on alternate days, till life became extinct.' [1]

And so ended the celebrated expedition of Edward Bruce. It was crushed by the colonists themselves without any help; for at this time 'England was not able to send either men or mony to save this Kingdome.' [2] Though it resulted in failure, it shook the Irish government to its foundation and weakened it for centuries. Ulster was almost cleared of colonists; the native chiefs and clans resumed possession; and there were similar movements in other parts of Ireland, though not to the same extent. In proportion as the invasion enfeebled the central authority, the lords both of Irish and English blood became more independent, and consequently more tyrannical. Having now no check, they made incessant war on each other; and they ground down and robbed the wretched inhabitants by merciless exactions of all kinds. The law had almost ceased to act: the will of the local lord was now the law.

There had been such general, needless, and almost insane destruction of property, that vast numbers of the

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 147.
[2] Davies, *Discoverie*, ed. 1747, p. 86.

people lost everything and sank into hopeless poverty. Settlers and natives, peasants as well as the chiefs who depended on them, the dwellers of the farmsteads and the masters of the castles, all alike shared in the general ruin. The whole country was thrown into a state of utter disorder from which it did not recover till many generations had passed away. And to add to the misery there were visitations of famine and pestilence—plagues of various strange kinds—which continued at intervals during the whole of this century.

The Irish annalists regarded Bruce's expedition with great disfavour. They looked upon it as having caused the whole—and it was indeed answerable for a large part —of the evils and miseries that afflicted their unfortunate country. The following record of the Four Masters may be taken as an example:—'1318. Edward Bruce, the destroyer of [the people of] Ireland in general, both English and Irish, was slain by the English, through dint of battle and bravery at Dundalk. . . . And no achievement had been performed in Ireland for a long time before, from which greater benefit had accrued to the country than from this; for, during the three and a half years that this Edward spent in it, a universal famine prevailed to such a degree that men were wont to devour one another.'

CHAPTER XII

FUSION OF RACES: THE STATUTE OF KILKENNY

[Chief authorities:—Irish Annals; Ware's Annals; Richey's Short History; Davies's Discoverie; Gilbert's Viceroys.]

EDWARD III. succeeded to the throne of England in 1327, after the death of his father Edward II.

The Irish government emerged from the Bruce struggle weak: it now grew weaker year by year, engaged in defence rather than invasion; and the causes were not far to seek. The Irish, taking advantage of the dissensions and helplessness of the English, recovered a great part of

their lands. The English all over the country were fast becoming absorbed into the native population; and the natural tendency to incorporation was powerfully stimulated by two artificial influences. In the first place, the colonists, seeing the natives prevailing everywhere around them, joined them for mere protection, intermarrying with them and adopting their language, dress, and customs.

The second influence was this. We have seen that as early as the time of the visit of Prince John the distinction began to be made between old English and new English, English by blood and English by birth (p. 279), a distinction which then and afterwards was the cause of endless trouble. In other words, the government favoured Englishmen, appointing them to almost all situations of trust or emolument over the heads of the older settlers, those who had borne the brunt of the struggle. These imported officials looked down with contempt on the colonists and never lost an opportunity of humiliating them. This most unwise and exasperating policy estranged a large proportion of the Anglo-Irish from the government, converted them from loyal to disloyal subjects, and was a powerful additional inducement to them to merge into the Irish.

From these causes combined the movement of incorporation became very general during the present reign among the English settlers of all classes, high and low. These 'degenerate English,' as they were called, were regarded by the loyal English with as much aversion as the Irish; they returned hate for hate quite as cordially; and in later times some of the most determined and dangerous leaders of rebellion were Anglo-Irish noblemen. So completely did they become fused with the native population, that an English writer complained that they had become *Hiberniores Hibernicis ipsis*, more Irish than the Irish themselves.

The whole country was now feeling the consequences of the Bruce invasion. It would be wearisome to relate the murderous broils, at this time of constant occurrence among the English themselves; and the reader may be content with an account of a few of the most sanguinary

and notorious. Sir John Bermingham had, it seems, drawn on himself the envy and hatred of some of his neighbours on account of his victory at Faughart. At Bragganstown near Ardee, in 1329, he was led into a trap and treacherously slain, together with his brothers, nephews, and retainers, to the number of 160, by the Gernons and Savages. Among those that fell were the great harper Mulrony Mac Carroll and twenty of his pupils, who were on a visit with Bermingham. Such was the weakness of the government that the murderers successfully resisted all attempts to bring them to justice, and this great crime was never punished. About the same time a similar outrage was perpetrated in Munster, when Lord Philip Hodnet and 140 of the Anglo-Irish were massacred by their brethren, the Barrys, the Roches, and others.

The uprising of the Irish became so general and alarming that, in 1330, the viceroy called in the aid of the most powerful nobleman in the country, Maurice Fitzgerald, who was at the same time created first earl of Desmond. This only made matters worse; for though the viceroy had promised to pay all expenses, he was in the end unable to do so for want of money; and Fitzgerald, after some successful expeditions against the Irish, quartered his army, to the number of 10,000, on the colonists, to pay themselves by exacting coyne and livery. This, it appears, was the first time the English adopted the odious impost, which afterwards became so frequent among them.

When Fitzgerald was made earl of Desmond, Kerry was granted to him as a 'county palatine'; Tipperary having been two years before, in 1328, granted in the same way to James Butler earl of Carrick, who was then created first earl of Ormond. These counties palatine, of which there were now nine altogether, occupying about two-thirds of the whole English colony, had great special privileges. The lords who ruled over them were allowed to make war or peace as they pleased; they held royal courts, created barons and knights, appointed their own judges and sheriffs, erected courts for civil and criminal cases, and took

into their hands the entire administration of the law. They were in fact petty kings, exercising royal jurisdiction; and within their districts the king's officers had no authority. The palatine counties were originally instituted partly to enrich and ennoble individuals, and partly that they might be a barrier against the native Irish; and their rulers, unrestrained by any check from above, kept the people, both natives and settlers, in a state of complete subjection.

Nothing could better illustrate the vacillating character of the government of Ireland than the treatment dealt out to those great Anglo-Irish lords. The king, with good reason, feared their vast power; and he had before his eyes every day the tremendous evils resulting from it:—the people oppressed, the country in perpetual civil war, the very existence of the settlement endangered. Yet in order to purchase their loyalty, and to use them as a protection against the 'Irish enemies,' he made some of them more powerful than ever by conferring on them higher titles, and by creating them sovereigns, nominally subordinate, but practically independent.

And after all this had been deliberately done, King Edward changed his mind, and came to the resolution to pull down those he had only lately raised up, especially the earl of Desmond, 'the most exorbitant offender of all.' He made three attempts by three different governors, and failed in all.

The first was Sir Anthony Lucy, a stern Northumbrian baron, who was sent over in 1331 as lord lieutenant. Soon after his arrival he held two parliaments, one in Dublin and the other in Kilkenny; and as some of the lords refused to attend, he had them arrested, among others the earl of Desmond and Sir William Bermingham. Bermingham, who was suspected of being implicated in a rebellious outbreak that had lately taken place in Leinster, was executed in the following year.

Shortly after this, Lucy was recalled and Sir John d'Arcy was appointed lord justice. One of his first acts was to release the earl of Desmond, after an imprisonment of

eighteen months. How little Lucy, with all his severity, had done to end the feuds of the Anglo-Irish was shown a year after his recall by the murder (in 1333) of William de Burgo the Brown Earl of Ulster, grandson and successor of the Red Earl of Bruce's days: a crime that caused more fierce indignation than any other in the dark record of those days. The young earl, then only twenty-one years of age, was on his way to Carrickfergus church on a Sunday morning, and when crossing a stream, he was struck down from behind by Richard de Mandeville, his own uncle by marriage, and killed by him and his confederates. This crime had been instigated by Mandeville's wife, the earl's aunt, for motives of private revenge; but it did not pass unavenged like the Bermingham massacre. The Anglo-Irish people of the neighbourhood, with whom the earl seems to have been a favourite, rose up in a wild and passionate burst of vengeance, and seizing on all whom they suspected of having a hand in the deed, killed 300 of them. Many were captured also by the lord justice D'Arcy, and afterwards hanged and quartered.

The murder of this young earl lost a great part of Ireland to the government, and helped to hasten the incorporation of the English with the Irish. He left one child, a daughter, who according to English law was heir to her father's vast possessions in Ulster and Connaught, about one-fourth of the whole Anglo-Irish territory. The Connaught De Burgos, members of the family, refused to be vassals of an infant girl, knowing that whenever she got married the estates would pass from their family to her husband. Accordingly two of the most powerful of them, Sir Ulick (or William) Burke, ancestor of the earls of Clanrickard, and Sir Edmund Albanach Burke, ancestor of Viscounts Mayo, seized the estates, declared themselves independent of England, and adopted the Irish dress and language. 'On the banks of the Shannon, in sight of the royal garrison of Athlone, they stripped themselves of their Norman dress and arms, and assumed the saffron robes of Celtic chieftains.' [1]

[1] Richey, *Short History*, p. 202.

They took also, after the manner of the Irish (p. 119), a family name by prefixing 'Mac' to the christian name of their father Sir William Burke, who had been viceroy in 1308. As Sir Ulick owned South or Upper Connaught, he called himself Mac William Oughter (Upper), while Sir Edmund, who was lord of North or Lower Connaught, took the name of Mac William Eighter (Lower). And the rebellious chiefs, in spite of the authorities, kept the estates, which subsequently descended to their families. As the De Burgos were great and powerful, their example was followed by many other Anglo-Irish families, especially in the west and south.

The loss of territory in Connaught was followed by other disasters in rapid succession. The strong and important castles of Athlone, Roscommon, Rindown, and Bunratty were wrested from the English; the Leinster septs recovered a large part of the south-east of the province; the districts of Leyny and Corran in North Connaught were seized; and O'Moore regained his ancestral fortress of Dunamase and many other castles. The settlers of the county Louth felt themselves so much at the mercy of the neighbouring native clans that they made a public written compact with the sept of O'Hanlon, agreeing to pay a yearly tribute for protection from the attacks of the natives. Agreements such as this became afterwards very common, and the payments were known as 'black rents.'

After a considerable interval, Sir John Morris came in 1341 as deputy (for Sir John d'Arcy) to attempt what Lucy had failed in. The proud Irish lords were very indignant that a mere knight should be sent to govern them; but Morris was not deterred by their contemptuous reception. He began with a very sweeping measure. Following out the instructions given him, he took back all the lands and all the privileges which either the king himself or his father had granted; and he re-claimed all debts that had been cancelled. This order had two objects: to raise money for the king, which he much needed on account of his continental wars; and to humble and lessen the power

of the nobles. It was followed by a much more humiliating decree: and now the policy of administering the affairs of the country solely by Englishmen was for the first time openly promulgated. The king issued an ordinance in 1342 that all natives, whether of Irish or English descent, who were married and held public offices in Ireland, should be dismissed, and their places filled up by English-born subjects who had property in England.

These measures caused intense surprise and indignation among the Anglo-Irish of every class. Morris became alarmed at the storm he had raised, and summoned a parliament to Dublin in October 1342, hoping in some way to allay the excitement. But the lords, headed by Desmond and Kildare, refused to attend, openly spoke of armed resistance, and convened a parliament of their own in Kilkenny. Here they drew up a spirited remonstrance to the king. They complained bitterly of the intolerable conduct of the English officials, exposed their selfishness and fraud, and represented that to their corruption and incompetency were due the recent losses of territories and castles. They exposed the evils of absenteeism, and showed that many colonial districts had been ruined, as their proprietors, resident in England, extorted as much money as they could and cared for nothing else, never expending a farthing either to protect or improve their properties. They enumerated their own services and those of their ancestors, and prayed the king that they might not be deprived of their justly earned rewards. The appeal was successful; which was owing not so much to the king's appreciation of the justice of their case as to the fact that he was just then beginning a war with France. He granted almost everything they asked: the resumed estates were after some time restored, and the dismissal of the Anglo-Irish officials ceased for the time. These concessions the king accompanied by a request for further assistance in his French wars.

But after all this, still another attempt was to be made. Sir Ralph Ufford, who was now (1344) appointed lord justice, and whose wife was Maud, widow of the Brown Earl

of Ulster, applied himself with great determination to the task of reducing the refractory colonial lords. But strong as he was, his efforts were no more successful than those of his predecessors. He attempted, by the king's order, to recover the lands seized by the De Burgos and others in Connaught and Ulster, but the settlers' resistance was so determined that he was unable to do so.

He summoned a parliament, and again Desmond refused to attend: whereupon Ufford, marching south, in 1345, seized his estates, captured two of his chief castles in Kerry, and hanged the two knights who had command of them. Having captured the earl's seneschal, John Cotterel, he had him hanged, and his limbs and head set up on spikes; and by a piece of treachery he seized Maurice the fourth earl of Kildare, and threw him into prison, because he had been one of the leaders of the parliament held in Kilkenny three years before.

It would be wearisome to recount all this viceroy's arbitrary proceedings, which caused the ruin of numerous colonists. But he overshot the mark; and his harshness at last caused a universal uprising against him. The chronicles of the time say that, in addition to his violence, he was dishonest, and enriched himself by robbery and unjust exactions. His wife was worse than himself, and, it was believed, instigated him to some of his worst deeds. He died in 1346 in the midst of his plans for crushing the Anglo-Irish lords—'to the great joy of everyone'; and so fierce was the rage of the people against him that his wife, who had lived with the grandeur and state of a queen, had now to steal away from Dublin Castle through a back gate, with the coffin containing her husband's body.

Very soon after Ufford's death his whole administration was reversed, Desmond's wrongs were redressed, the earl of Kildare was released, and both noblemen were received into the king's favour. Kildare joined the royal army in 1347 at the siege of Calais, where the king knighted him for his bravery. Desmond rose so far in the favour of his royal master that, in 1355, he was made lord justice for life; a distinction he did not long enjoy, for he died

half a year afterwards. With these proceedings of Ufford's the attempts of the king to break down the power of the Irish nobles may be regarded as having terminated.

During all this time the natives continued to encroach, the English lost castles and territories, and the Pale became more and more circumscribed. The government had to secure the services of several chiefs near the borders, to protect the English from further inroads, by paying them 'black rents'—among others the O'Tooles and the Mac Murroghs.

While all these wars and high political games were passing, the people of the country, English and Irish alike, were sunk in a state of misery that no pen can describe. At this time the black death was in full swing. Coming from the East, it swept over Europe and killed one-third of the inhabitants; in England one-half of the people perished. Friar Clyn, the Kilkenny Franciscan, has left us in his annals (at 1348) a vivid picture of its ravages in Ireland. Once it entered a house all the family generally fell victims; and it swept away the inhabitants of whole towns, villages, and castles. A mere touch was enough to convey the infection; people were afraid to visit the sick or bury the dead; and so swiftly came contagion and death that the penitent and his confessor were often borne together to the grave. I have already mentioned that during the whole of the fourteenth century there were frequent plague visitations in Ireland; but this was probably the most destructive of all. Clyn describes it during the first months of 1348 when it was at its worst; before and after it was not so bad. The plague was not all: the people's cup of misery was filled to overflowing by perpetual war and all its attendant horrors.

The Pale was, if possible, in worse plight than the rest of Ireland. The Irish septs, notwithstanding the payment of black rents, continually harassed the districts near the marches; and the misery was greatly intensified by continual squabbles between 'English by blood' and 'English by birth.' Troops were kept near the borders for defence against the Irish; but they were almost as oppressive on

the colonists as the Irish themselves, for they exacted payment by coyne and livery, and practised all sorts of knavery. A trooper might have a billet for six horses but kept only three, while he exacted livery for the whole six; and often a single trooper having a billet took livery in two or three places. The purveyors for the viceregal household got the goods but seldom paid, keeping the money for themselves. The Irish prelates, lords, and commons, wrote to the king that these hardships had reduced the colonists to 'a state of destruction and impoverishment, and caused them even to hate their lives.'[1] The colonists, exposed to all these exactions and hardships, and scourged by pestilence, quitted the doomed country in crowds—everyone fled who had the means—and the settlement seemed threatened with speedy extinction. The king attempted to stop the emigration by a proclamation, which seems to have had little effect either then or subsequently.

In this critical state of affairs King Edward resolved to send over his third son Lionel, afterwards duke of Clarence, as lord lieutenant: 'For'—wrote the king—'our Irish dominions have been reduced to such utter devastation, ruin, and misery, that they may be totally lost if our subjects there are not immediately succoured.' This young prince had married Elizabeth the only child of the Brown Earl of Ulster, and in her right had become earl of Ulster and lord of Connaught. With a force of 1,500 experienced English soldiers he came to Ireland in 1361, having two main objects in view—to save the colony from destruction, and to recover the estates of his wife, which had been taken by the Irish and by the 'degenerate English.' At the same time proclamation was made in England that all persons having lands in Ireland should proceed thither or send proper persons to represent them.

He had an insane hatred of the Irish, whether of native or English blood, partly inspired by his wife, who remembered the murder of her father and the treatment of her mother; and he showed it in a very indiscreet manner immediately after his arrival, reviving in its bitterest form

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 291.

the old distinction between English by birth and English by blood. Being about to march with his English army against the O'Briens of Thomond, he issued an ill-conditioned order that none of the old English should join him, or even come near his camp. But a very little experience brought him to his senses. Having no person who knew the country to guide him, he continually lost his way or got entangled in bogs and forests; and his march was harassed by the O'Briens, who killed great numbers of his men. The upshot was that he issued another order for the settlers to join him, which they did—being themselves anxious for the defeat of the natives; and he soon succeeded in dispersing the Munster army. But his conduct of the war in Ireland was on the whole unsuccessful, so that in the following year the king was obliged to send aid to 'his very dear son and his companions who were in imminent peril.'

The prince came to Ireland three times as lord lieutenant: in 1361, 1364, and 1367; and believing, after this much experience, that it was impossible to subdue the Irish, he caused the government, during his last visit, to frame and pass an act of parliament—the celebrated Statute of Kilkenny—in order to save the miserable remnant of the settlement.

This act[1] contains thirty-five chapters, of which the following are the most important provisions.

Intermarriage, fosterage, gossipred, traffic, and intimate relations of any kind with the Irish, were forbidden as high treason—punishment death.

If any man took a name after the Irish fashion, used the Irish language, or dress, or mode of riding [without saddle], or adopted any other Irish customs, all his lands and houses were forfeited, and he himself was put into jail till he could find security that he would comply with the law. The Irish living among the English were permitted to remain, but were forbidden to use the Irish language

[1] It is published with translation and valuable notes by James Hardiman, M.R.I.A., for the Irish Archæological Society, in the volume *Tracts relating to Ireland*, 1847.

under the same penalty. To use or submit to the Brehon law or to exact coyne and livery was treason.

The act complains that the Irish, when defeated in war by individual English leaders, were often let off with a small tribute. Accordingly no Englishman was to make war on the Irish without the special warrant of the government, who would conduct, supply, and finish all such wars, 'so that the Irish enemies shall not be admitted to peace until they be finally destroyed or shall make restitution fully of the costs and charges of that war.'

The Irish were forbidden to *booley* or pasture on those of the march lands belonging to the English: if they did so the English owner of the lands might impound the cattle as a distress for damage; but in doing so he was to keep the cattle together, so that they might be delivered up whole and uninjured to the Irish owner if he came to pay the damages. This clause, which seems fair, and which shows some consideration for the natives, was probably framed to prevent quarrelling between English and Irish.

According to Brehon law, the whole sept were liable for the offences and debts of each member. In order to avoid quarrels. the act ordains that an English creditor must sue an Irish debtor personally, not any other member of the sept. This at least was a wise provision.

No native Irish clergyman was to be appointed to any position in the church within the English district; and no Irishman was to be received into any English religious house.

It was forbidden to receive or entertain Irish bards, pipers, story-tellers, or mowers, because these and such like often came as spies on the English.

The Statute of Kilkenny, though not exhibiting quite so hostile a spirit against the Irish as we find sometimes represented, yet carried out consistently the vicious and fatal policy of separation adopted by the government from the beginning. It was intended to apply only to the English, and was framed entirely in their interests. Its chief aim was to withdraw them from all contact with

the 'Irish enemies'—so the natives are designated all through the act—to separate the two races for evermore; or so far as there was to be any unavoidable intercourse between them, to make it an intercourse of hostility: 'Whereby it is manifest that such as had the government of Ireland under the crowne of England, did intend to make a perpetuall separation and enmity betweene the English and the Irish—pretending (no doubt) that the English in the end should roote out the Irish; which the English not being able to do, did cause a perpetuall warre betweene the two nations, which continued foure hundered and odd yeares.'[1]

This measure it was hoped would put a stop to all further fusion of the races, would reclaim many of those who had already gone over to the Irish, and would preserve the settlement from further degeneracy and diminution. But it proved to be impracticable, as anyone who knew Ireland might have foreseen. The Irish and English all over the country had been living for generations—when their rulers let them—on terms of kindly intercourse, and had intermarried, trafficked, gossiped, and fostered with each other. Human nature proved too strong for law, and it was now too late to arrest the intermixture of the races by artificial restrictions. The new law designed to effect so much, turned out after a little while a dead letter. Coyne and livery continued to be exacted from the colonists by the three great earls, Kildare, Desmond, and Ormond, and the Irish and English went on intermarrying, gossiping, fostering, and quarrelling on their own account, just the same as before.

Moreover some of the provisions turned out to be more prejudicial to the colonists than to the natives: and there were soon many petitions from the inhabitants of towns to be permitted to traffic with the Irish—otherwise ruin was certain or taxes could not be paid—to foster and parley with them, to entertain Irish minstrels, and other such petitions; most of which seem to have been granted.[2]

[1] Davies, *Discoverie*, ed. 1747, p. 114.
[2] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 289.

The act had more effect on the church than on the laity. But the prohibition against Irish clergy and monks was of much older standing than the Statute of Kilkenny: for we see that it formed one of the grounds of complaint of the Irish chiefs to the Pope in the time of Bruce (p. 300): it was indeed as old as the invasion. So stringently and consistently was it carried out, that we find the government often granting licenses, for one reason or another, to the Anglo-Irish bishops to appoint certain individual Irishmen to benefices within English territory. But this separation, which was chiefly the work of the government, did not constitute 'two churches,' as is sometimes erroneously stated. There was one church all through, of which the clergy and religious belonging to the two nations simply kept—or perhaps we should rather say, were kept—apart. 'There are no grounds for supposing that throughout the island there was any dispute or difference as to doctrine, or that in the fifteenth or sixteenth century there was any variance even as to questions of discipline. There was an English population in allegiance to the English crown, which had an English clergy. There was also a population styled by the English *the Irish enemy*, which had an Irish clergy. Their respective clergies preached and prayed with their respective flocks.' [1]

The reign of Edward III. was a glorious one for England abroad, but was disastrous to the English dominion in Ireland. Great battles were fought and won for the French possessions, bringing glory and nothing more; while Ireland, which was more important than all the French possessions put together, was neglected. The country was simply going to destruction. At the very time of the battle of Cressy the settlement had been almost wiped out of existence—not more than four counties now remained to the English; and the English power did not extend beyond the Pale; for the three great earls of Kildare, Desmond, and Ormond acted as independent princes, and did not acknowledge the authority of the English king.

[1] Richey's *Short History of the Irish People*, p. 272.

If one half of the energy and solicitude expended in France had been directed to Ireland the country could have been easily pacified and compacted into one great empire with England.

Almost as soon as the English had made permanent settlements in Ireland the evil of absenteeism began to make itself felt. A number of speculators got possession of large tracts of land, and while they lived out of the country and discharged none of the duties expected from holders of property, they drew their rents from their Irish estates and drained the country of its capital. Things became much worse in this respect towards the close of Edward's reign; for, as we have already stated, there was a vast exodus of the well-to-do Anglo-Irish to England, who left their Irish properties to be managed by local agents.

Many attempts to remedy this evil were made about this time. The parliament of 1368 complained that the Irish continued to despoil the English territory, so that the land was likely to be wholly lost, and declared that the country could not be saved unless those persons who had properties in Ireland came to reside on them in person or sent proper representatives. And complaints to this effect were now very frequent. In 1369 an act was passed to enforce residence on pain of forfeiture, and many estates were seized whose owners did not comply with the order.

During the reign of Richard II., who succeeded Edward III. in 1377, there was more determined legislation in this direction. A law was passed that all having estates in Ireland should reside on them, or if absent for reasonable cause should send responsible persons to live on and defend them, otherwise they should give up two-thirds of their Irish incomes for that purpose. And later on, in 1392, an attempt was made to revive the same law.[1] This law was for some time enforced, but only by fits and starts. Under its provisions there were many seizures of land in Ireland during this and the next three reigns. But many evaded it, and at last it gradually fell into disuse. It pro-

[1] Cox, ed. 1689, p. 137.

duced no lasting results; and absenteeism has descended through seven centuries to our own times, one of the permanent and one of the worst evils of Ireland.

CHAPTER XIII

ART MAC MURROGH KAVANAGH

[Chief authorities:—Those mentioned at head of last chapter; Johnes's Froissart; Archæologia, xx.; Thomas D'Arcy McGee's Memoir of Art Mac Murrogh.[1]]

THE man that gave most trouble during the reign of Richard II. was Art Mac Murrogh Kavanagh, king of Leinster. This renowned chief was born in 1357, and was a direct descendant of Donall Kavanagh, son of the arch-traitor Dermot Mac Murrogh. In early youth, even in his sixteenth year, he began his active career as defender of the province; and at eighteen (in 1375) he was elected king of Leinster, in succession to Donogh Mac Murrogh Kavanagh, who had been treacherously killed by the English.[2]

Some time after his election he married Eliza le Veele baroness of Norragh (now Narraghmore in Kildare), daughter of Maurice Fitzgerald fourth earl of Kildare; whereupon the English authorities seized the lady's vast estates, inasmuch as she had violated the Statute of Kilkenny by marrying a mere Irishman. In addition to this, the black rent—eighty marks a year—which had been paid to him, as it had been for many years to his predecessor, was for some reason stopped, soon after the accession of Richard II.; probably through the poverty of the exchequer. Exasperated by these proceedings, he collected an army and devastated and burned many districts in the counties of Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow, and Kildare, and declared

[1] After this the enumeration of authorities at the heads of the chapters will be discontinued. I will henceforward content myself—and I hope content the reader—by quoting the authority for each individual statement whenever I deem it necessary.

[2] *Four Masters*, 1375.

that he would make no peace till his demands had been paid. The Dublin council were at last forced to pay him his eighty marks, after which they admitted him to the 'king's peace.' About the same time Murrogh O'Brien made a raid from Thomond on the Leinster settlement, and demanded a hundred marks as the price of retiring; but as there were only nine marks at the time in the treasury, the rest was made up by subscription from the chief colonists.[1]

Meantime Ireland had been going from bad to worse; and at last the king resolved to come hither himself with an overwhelming force, hoping thereby to overawe the whole country into submission and quietness. He made great preparations for this expedition; and on the 2nd of October, 1394, attended by many of the English nobles, he landed at Waterford with an army of 34,000 men, the largest force ever yet brought to the shores of Ireland.

As soon as Mac Murrogh heard of this, far from showing any signs of fear, he swept down on New Ross, then a flourishing English settlement strongly walled, burned the town, and brought away a vast quantity of booty. And when the king and his army marched north from Waterford to Dublin, he harassed them on the way after his usual fashion, attacking them from the woods and bogs and cutting off great numbers. The king suffered other reverses: his troops were repulsed with loss by O'Conor of Offaly and by O'Carroll of Ely, whose lands he had attempted to ravage.[2]

That the Irish chiefs could resist this mighty force was however out of the question; so they resolved to yield quietly when they saw it was inevitable; and at a place called Ballygorry near Carlow, Mowbray earl of Nottingham received the submission of a number of the southern chiefs in 1395, and amongst them Mac Murrogh, the most dreaded of all. On this occasion Mac Murrogh was for a short time kept in captivity on some accusation brought against him by the earl of Ormond, and was released only

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 243.
[2] *Four Masters*, 1395.

when he had given hostages. His submission and arrest cannot have been a very humiliating proceeding; for in the end his black rent was restored to him, and it continued to be paid to his descendants till the time of Henry VIII.[1] It was agreed also that his wife's property, the barony of Narraghmore, should be restored to her.

The king himself afterwards received O'Neill prince of Ulster, and other northern chiefs, as well as Brian O'Brien of Thomond, in great state at Drogheda, whither he had gone from Dublin to meet them; and all made formal submission.

No conditions of any consequence were exacted from the northern leaders, except the usual promise of fealty for the future. But the Leinster chiefs were treated very differently. They and their people were sentenced to give up by a certain day their homes and their lands in Leinster, and to leave the province, taking with them however their cattle and other movable goods. As a sort of compensation, the chiefs were to get pensions for life: and they and their people were permitted to occupy such lands as they could seize from the 'Irish enemies' elsewhere. The lands to be thus left vacant—all the mountain district between Dublin and Wexford—the king intended to plant with a colony of English settlers.[2]

Altogether about 75 chiefs submitted to Richard and his deputy Mowbray on this occasion. They were afterwards invited to Dublin, where they were feasted sumptuously for several days by the king. It was with some difficulty they were persuaded to dress and dine after the English manner; and their strange appearance and fierce demeanour caused great astonishment among the English nobles. The four provincial kings, O'Neill, O'Conor, Mac Murrogh, and O'Brien, were told that King Richard intended to confer on them the honour of knighthood; at which they appeared surprised, and said they did not need it as they were knights already: for it was the custom of every Irish king to knight his sons at seven years of age.

[1] Cox, *Hist. of Irel.* ed. 1689, p. 138.
[2] Davies, *Discoverie*, 224; Cox, ed. 1689, p. 140.

In the end, however, they yielded; and the ceremony was performed by the king in a very imposing fashion (1395).[1]

Richard, with all his silly vanity and feebleness of character, was shrewd enough to perceive the real causes of the miserable condition of Ireland. In a letter to his uncle the duke of York, his regent in England, he describes the Irish people as of three classes:—Irish savages or enemies (the old natives, who were outside the pale of the law), Irish rebels (i.e., those of the English settlers and of the natives who had once obeyed English law, but who were now in rebellion), and English subjects. He tells his uncle plainly that the 'rebels' were driven to rebellion by injustice and ill-usage. He goes on to say that if they were not treated wisely and considerately, they would most probably join themselves with the king's enemies (the natives); and he announces his intention to admit them all to favour and protection, by which he hoped to make them good subjects.

But the king's sympathies did not extend as far as the 'Irish enemies,' who might just as easily have been made good subjects: on the contrary, he had no hesitation to set them slaughtering each other in order to make room for his projected colony in Leinster.

But this magnificent and expensive expedition produced no useful result whatever. In the words of Sir John Davies,[2] the king 'returned into England with much honour and smal profit; for though he had spent a huge masse of treasure, yet did hee not encrease his revennew thereby one sterling pound, nor enlarged the *English* borders the bredth of one Acre of land; neither did he extend the jurisdiction of his courtes of justice by one foote further than the English colonies, wherein it was used and exercised before.'

As for the submission and reconciliation of the Irish chiefs, it was all pure sham. They did not look upon King Richard as their lawful sovereign; and as the

[1] So far the account of Richard's proceedings is taken from Froissart (ii. 577) as it was given to him by a French gentleman named Castide or Crystede, who had lived seven years among the Irish.

[2] *Discoverie*, p. 51.

promises they had made had been extorted by force, they did not consider themselves bound to keep them. And the vicious and cruel arrangement by which the people of Leinster were to leave their homes and seek other lands by making war on their neighbours—this seems never to have been carried out, or it was carried out only to a very trifling extent.

After a stay of nine months the king was obliged to return to England in 1395, leaving as his deputy his cousin young Roger Mortimer earl of March, who, as Richard had no children, was heir to the throne of England. Scarcely had he left sight of land when the chiefs one and all renounced their allegiance, and the fighting went on again, victory now with one side, now with the other. The English of Leinster made a treacherous attempt of some kind, of which we have no details, to capture Mac Murrogh; 'but,' say the Four Masters (1395), 'this was of no avail to them, for he escaped from them by the strength of his arm and by his valour.'

At last in a battle fought at Kells in Kilkenny in 1397 against the Leinster clans, amongst them a large contingent of Mac Murrogh's kern, the English suffered a great overthrow, and Mortimer was slain.[1] When news of this catastrophe reached King Richard he flew into a mighty rage; and although things were at this time going on very badly for him in England, yet in the midst of all his troubles and dangers, he foolishly resolved on a second expedition to Ireland, in order, as he said, to avenge the death of his cousin, and especially to chastise Mac Murrogh.

Another army was got together quite as numerous as the former. Of this unfortunate expedition we have a very interesting account, written in verse by a French gentleman who accompanied the army of the king and was an eye-witness of all the proceedings. From this account, which I have closely followed, the details given here are chiefly taken.[2]

[1] Dowling, *Annals*, A.D. 1397.

[2] It is translated by Sir George Carew, as published in Harris's *Hibernica*, p. 49; and in a more scholarly manner by Rev. J. Webb in *Archæologia*, xx. This French writer is very fair to the Irish.

In the middle of May 1399 the king landed with his army at Waterford, and after a short delay he marched to Kilkenny on his way to Dublin. But instead of continuing on the open level country, he turned to the right towards the Wicklow highlands to attack Mac Murrogh: and here his troubles began. Mac Murrogh, whose wife's barony of Narraghmore, it should be remarked, had in violation of the compact of 1395 been granted by the king to the duke of Surrey,[1] retired within his fastnesses, avoiding open conflict like the skilful general that he was, and declaring that he would defend the land to the death; and the royal army soon began to suffer from want of provisions.

Making their way slowly and toilsomely through the hills, they at length descried the Leinster army, about 3,000 in number, high up on a mountain side, coolly looking down on them, with dense woods between. Having waited for some time vainly hoping to be attacked, the king had the adjacent villages and houses burned down; and while they were blazing, he knighted Henry of Lancaster, then a lad of thirteen, afterwards the great King Henry V. of England. Then getting together 2,500 of the inhabitants, whose homes he had destroyed, he caused them to cut a way for his army through the woods: and the passage having been cleared, he pushed on, determined to overwhelm the little body of mountaineers.

But he was soon beset with difficulties of all kinds: bogs, fallen trees, hidden gullies, and quagmires in which the soldiers sank up to their middle. At the same time flying parties of the Irish continually darted out from the woods on every side, flinging their lances with terrible force and precision that no armour could withstand, cutting off foraging parties and stragglers, and then disappearing in the woods, 'so nimble and swift of Fote,' says the Frenchman, 'that like unto Staggs they run over Mountains and Valleys, whereby we received grete Anoyance and Damage.' And so the army struggled on day by day, never able to overtake the main body of the mountaineers who continually retired before them; and besides those

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, 281.

that fell by the Irish, great numbers were all this time perishing of hunger and hardship.

Mac Murrogh was well aware of the terrible plight of the royal army; and when King Richard sent him a message demanding submission and offering pardon and reward, he returned answer 'that for all the Goold in the World he wuld not submit himself, but he wuld continue to Warr and endamage the King in all that he mought.' He probably did not trust in the good faith of the king, remembering the treacherous attempt to capture him four years previously, and the breach of contract regarding his wife's property.

In this dire strait the army made their way across hill, moor, and valley, men and horses starving, and perishing with rain and storm; till at the end of eleven days of toil and suffering they came in sight of the sea, somewhere on the south part of the Wicklow coast. Here they beheld with joy three vessels off shore which had been sent from Dublin laden with provisions; and the starving multitude, breaking through all restraints of discipline, plunged into the water and struggled and fought for every morsel of food. The timely arrival of these ships saved the whole army from annihilation. Next day they resumed march, moving now along the coast towards Dublin; while Mac Murrogh's flying parties hung on their rear and harassed their retreat, never giving them an hour's rest.

But even Mac Murrogh saw that he could not hold out to the end; and now he sent a messenger with an offer of submission, and a request to the king to send one of his nobles to arrange terms of peace. 'This News brought much Joy into the *English* Camp, every Man being weary of Toile and desirous of Rest'; and the young earl of Gloucester was deputed to confer with the chief, taking with him 1,200 men as guard, and accompanied by the French gentleman who afterwards told the story.

When they had come to the place of conference Mac Murrogh was seen descending a mountain side between two woods, accompanied by a multitude of followers. He

rode, without saddle, a noble horse that had cost him four hundred cows, and he galloped down the face of the hill so swiftly, says the French writer, 'that I never in all my life saw hare, or deer, or any other animal go with such speed as his horse.' He brandished a long spear, which, when he had arrived near the meeting place, he flung from him with great dexterity. Then his followers fell back, and he met the earl alone near a small brook; and those that saw him remarked that he was tall of stature, well knit, strong and active, with a fierce and stern countenance.

The parley lasted for a long time, but it ended in nothing; for Mac Murrogh insisted on what Gloucester refused to grant—that he should be free from any blame for all that had passed in Ireland since the king's first visit; and he declared he would never agree to any other conditions. So they parted; and on Gloucester's return with the news, the king was greatly disappointed and incensed, and swore he would never leave Ireland till he had taken Mac Murrogh living or dead. And he resumed his march to Dublin without further delay; for the great army still suffered from want of food. Dublin must have been in those days a prosperous city; for though the king remained there with his whole army—30,000 or thereabouts—for six weeks, yet, as the metrical narrative informs us, there was no rise in the price of provisions.

The king's first step, after his arrival in Dublin, was to divide the army into three parts to hunt down Mac Murrogh; and he offered a large reward for his apprehension. But before these arrangements could be carried out he was recalled to England by alarming news; and when he had arrived he was made prisoner, and a new king, Henry IV., was placed on the throne (1399).[1]

Notwithstanding the disasters of the English, and the spirited resistance of Mac Murrogh, he suffered severely by this royal visit. Many of his sub-chiefs, including his own uncle, terrified by the immense display of force,

[1] Here ends that part of the French Metrical Narrative relating to Ireland.

withdrew from him and submitted to the king. And we find the following entry in the Annals of Clonmacnoise :—'A.D. 1398 [correctly 1399]. Richard king of England arrived in Ireland this year, by whom Art Mac Murrogh was mightily weakened and brought low.'

After the king's departure, Mac Murrogh's raids became so intolerable that the government agreed to compensate him for his wife's lands, and prayed him for respite till they should send to England for instructions as to other claims he made. In their communication they inform King Henry IV. that Mac Murrogh had given notice that he would never have peace but would make open war unless his wife's lands were restored and his other claims satisfied before the next feast of St. Michael: and they express their fears that he would ultimately destroy the country.[1] He seems, however, to have got such satisfaction as kept him quiet for some time. Two years later (1401) he made a terrible raid into Wexford, in which numbers of the settlers were slain.[2] But this was avenged soon after by the English of Dublin. Encouraged probably by the arrival of Thomas the young duke of Lancaster, the new king's son, a boy of twelve years old, who had been sent over as lord lieutenant, they marched south along the coast, in 1402, led by the mayor John Drake, and defeated the O'Byrnes near Bray, killing 500, including some Munster kern who happened to be present under their chief O'Meagher. For this and other services, the king granted to the city of Dublin the privilege of having a gilt sword carried before the mayor.

The position of governor of Ireland was in those days not a comfortable one. The young prince governed the country by a council, who found it very hard to get his salary from England, and impossible to raise money in Ireland; so that after spending every penny of their own

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 292.

[2] *Annals of Lough Key*, ii. 97. The annalist adds: 'Retaliation for this was committed by the foreigners of Dublin on the Gael of Leinster, and a great many of the retained kern of Munster under Teige O'Meagher were slain there.' This obviously refers to the raid on the O'Byrnes, related above.

money they had to pawn nearly all the prince's jewels and plate to maintain the court.[1]

After a short period of quietness Mac Murrogh renewed the war in 1405, plundered and burned Carlow and Castle-dermot, two English settlements, and again overran the county Wexford. The young lord lieutenant, having sojourned in Ireland for two years, returned to England. Sir Stephen Scroop, his deputy, now determined to invade Mac Murrogh's territory; and accompanied by the earls of Desmond and Ormond and by the prior of Kilmainham, he marched southwards through Kildare. Mac Murrogh, in no way scared, met them near Callan in Kilkenny, where in 1407 was fought a well-contested battle. For a long time in the beginning the Irish had the upper hand, and it seemed very likely they would win; but at the critical juncture some fresh English forces coming up turned the fortune of the day, and Scroop gained a complete victory. Immediately after the fight he marched suddenly on Callan, where he surprised O'Carroll lord of Ely, and killed O'Carroll himself and 800 of his followers. Altogether 3,000 of the Irish fell in these two conflicts—the greatest reverse ever sustained by MacMurrogh.[2]

This defeat kept him quiet for a time. But in 1413 he inflicted a severe defeat on the men of Wexford, slaying many and taking a great number of prisoners.[3] Three years after this (1416) the English of Wexford combined, with the determination to avenge all the injuries he had inflicted on them. But he met them on their own plains, defeated them with a loss of 320 in killed and prisoners, and so thoroughly frightened them that they were glad to escape further consequences by making peace and giving hostages for future good behaviour.[4]

This was the old hero's last exploit. He died in New Ross a week after the Christmas of 1417, in the sixtieth year of his age, after a reign of forty-two years over Leinster. O'Doran his chief brehon, who had been spending the Christmas with him, died on the same day; and there are

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 295.
[2] Grace, *Annals*, 1407.
[3] *Four Masters*, 1413.
[4] *Ibid.* 1416.

good grounds for suspecting that both were poisoned by a woman who had been instigated by some of Mac Murrogh's enemies.

The Four Masters, recording his death, praise him as 'a man who had defended his own province against the English and the Irish from his sixteenth to his sixtieth year; a man full of hospitality, knowledge, and chivalry; a man full of prosperity and royalty; and the enricher of churches and monasteries.'

He was the most heroic, persevering, and indomitable defender of his country from Brian Boru to Hugh O'Neill; and he maintained his independence for near half a century just beside the Pale, in spite of every effort to reduce him to submission.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW IRELAND FARED DURING THE FRENCH WARS AND THE WARS OF THE ROSES

HENRY V., who ascended the throne in 1413, was so engrossed with France that he gave hardly any attention to Ireland: so that there was little or no change in Irish affairs during his reign. There was strife everywhere; and the native chiefs continued their fierce inroads on the Pale. Matters at last looked so serious for the English settlement that in 1414 the king sent over an able and active military man as lord lieutenant, Sir John Talbot Lord Furnival, who subsequently distinguished himself in the wars against France.

One of his first proceedings shows that notwithstanding the Statute of Kilkenny the colonists practised fosterage with the Irish as much as ever. He appointed commissioners to traverse the Pale and seize all Irish infants at fosterage among the loyal English. There were also no doubt just as many infants of the colonists among the Irish whom the commissioners could not reach.

He commenced his military operations in 1415 in a

decided way by making a circuit round the Pale. Beginning in the south with Leix, he devastated the whole district; till at last its chief, O'Moore, was forced to sue for peace; which was granted to him, but only on the humiliating condition that he should help the English against his neighbours. He next, with O'Moore, attacked and reduced Mac Mahon of Oriell, whom he forced to accept the same condition; and with the help of these two he reduced two other powerful chiefs, O'Neill and O'Hanlon.

But, in the words of Sir John Davies, Furnival 'had power to make them [the Irish chiefs] seeke the king's peace, but not power to reduce them to the obedience of subjects.' At first, indeed, the people of the Pale were dazzled and delighted at his brilliant success. But it brought them far more evil than good, and their joy soon gave place to execration; for while the relief was merely temporary, he subjected them when all was over, in violation of the Statute of Kilkenny, to coyne and livery, having no other way of paying his soldiers; exactly as the earl of Desmond had done eighty-five years before. The poor people of the Pale were now and for a long time afterwards plagued with this hateful exaction; and by degrees, to use the words of Davies, 'coyne and livery, which the Statute of Kilkenny had for a time abolished, was risen again from hell.' Yet it remained treason by act of parliament; and consequently it was always dangerous to resort to it, as we shall see in the case of the great earl of Desmond.

Nothing could better show the miseries of the colonists than their total lack of manliness and self-respect as exhibited in the whining and beseeching tone of some of their memorials about this time. In 1416 the principal men—ecclesiastics, nobles, knights, mayors, &c.—wrote to the king that they were 'in a land environed by Irish enemies and English rebels, and in point to be destroyed'; and they go on to say, 'We humbly beseech your gracious lordship that it would please you of your special grace to think upon your said land, and in the works of charity to have mercy and pity on us your poor lieges thereof, who

are environed on all sides with English rebels and Irish enemies.'[1]

When Talbot was recalled in 1419, he 'went to England carrying along with him the curses of many, because he, being run much in debt for victuals and other matters, would pay little or nothing at all.'[2] No sooner had he embarked than the Irish resumed their attacks, and for years incessantly harried and worried the miserable Palesmen, except, indeed, when kept quiet in some small degree by the payment of black rent. To such desperate straits were these brought, that in a statement of grievances laid by them before the king in 1420, they prayed him that he would lay the whole statement of their misfortunes before the Pope in order that his holiness might institute *a crusade* against the Irish, whom no doubt they thought as bad as Saracens, 'for the relief and salvation of the land and of your lieges in that behalf, and in perpetual destruction of those enemies by the aid of God.'[3]

The accession of Henry VI. (1422) made no improvement in the country, which continued to be everywhere torn by strife. Ireland was now indeed, and for generations before and after, in a far worse condition than at any time under native management, even during the anarchical period after the battle of Clontarf.

The people of the Pale probably fared neither better nor worse than those of the rest of the country. But to add to their misfortunes, there arose, about the time of the king's accession, a deadly quarrel between the great Ormond family—the Butlers—on the one hand, and on the other the Talbots: namely, Richard Talbot, archbishop of Dublin, and his brother Lord Furnival, who came twice again to Ireland as lord lieutenant. This feud was so violent that it put a stop to almost all government business for many years; and each party, when in power, oppressed the other to the utmost:[4] till at last, in 1423, the king and council had to send peremptory orders that all legal proceedings between them should be annulled, and that

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 306.
[2] Ware, *Annals*, 1419.
[3] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, p. 314.
[4] Cox, *Hist. of Irel.* ed. 1689, p. 158.

the quarrel should finally cease. But the cessation was only temporary: the feud broke out more fiercely than before, so that twenty years later (in 1443) the king had again to interpose.

Meantime in 1423 the Irish of parts of Ulster made a terrible raid on Louth and Meath, defeated the army sent against them, and carried off great booty; till at last the inhabitants had to buy peace by agreeing to pay black rent. The viceroy Ormond was quite powerless to repress this and other attacks; and the king was at last forced to send money from England to raise another army and subsidise some of the border chiefs, which enabled Ormond to repel the Irish for the time being. Of the next score of years it is enough to say that the miseries of the country, and of the Pale in particular, increased rather than diminished; and the Irish when not bought off made constant plundering incursions on the borders. Within the Pale all was disorder and corruption. The leading officials seldom paid debts, while at the same time they robbed the king and enriched themselves. We read of one lying in wait for another, capturing him after slaying some of his attendants, and holding him in durance till ransomed. Fitzwilliam of Dundrum near Dublin, with an armed troop, broke into the house of the chief baron at Bagot Rath beside the city, and murdered him while at dinner. And the settlers in the south—in and around Cork, Kinsale, Waterford, Wexford, Youghal, &c.—were in just as bad plight.[1]

In 1449 Richard Plantagenet duke of York, a prince of the royal blood and heir to the throne of England, was appointed lord lieutenant for ten years, with such extraordinary powers and privileges that he was more like a king than a governor. He was connected with Ireland by several ties, being earl of Ulster and lord of Connaught and Meath by descent from Lionel duke of Clarence; and he possessed a vast amount of property in the country.

He had strong hopes of becoming king of England; and as he had many powerful enemies among the Lancas-

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, 343.

trian party, he did his best from the first to win the warm-hearted Irish to his side, treating the natives, both of English and Irish descent, with great fairness and consideration.[1] He chose the two earls of Ormond and Desmond to stand sponsors for a son who was born to him in Dublin; thus connecting himself with the two great Anglo-Irish ruling families by the Irish tie of gossipred. He was, accordingly, very popular on all hands, and the Irish chiefs paid him great respect. They were delighted with what they were so little accustomed to—fair treatment—and they sent him as many beeves for his own use as it pleased him to ask.[2]

In his first year of office he had a bill passed in a parliament held in Dublin, to prevent those living on the marches sending the soldiers they kept for defence on coyne and livery among the husbandmen: directing that no marcher should keep more mercenaries than he himself could support. In the preamble to the bill there is a frightful picture of the condition of the people (i.e. the colonists). In time of harvest companies of the soldiers were in the habit of going *with their wives, children, servants, and friends*, sometimes to the number of a hundred, to the farmers' houses, eating and drinking, and paying for nothing. They 'many times rob, spoil, and kill the tenants and husbandmen, as well by night as by day'; and their horses were turned out to graze in the meadows and in the ripe corn, ruining all the harvest. And if there was any show of resistance, 'they burn, rob, spoil, and kill; and for the most part the land is wasted and destroyed.'[3]

It is worthy of remark that this parliament, under the influence of the popular duke, asserted the independence of the Irish legislature: that they had a right to a separate coinage, and that they were absolutely free from all laws except those passed by the lords and commons of Ireland. This sentiment must have grown up gradually; and it attained strength in proportion to the weakness of the

[1] Davies, *Discoverie*, 227–8. [2] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1449.
[3] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, pp 355–6.

English influence in Ireland; but it was now for the first time formally and distinctly asserted.[1]

The Pale was now reduced to such a low ebb that when Mac Geoghegan with some other neighbour chiefs made inroads, and burned some towns and villages, the duke, for want of money, was unable to raise men enough to repel them, and had to come to terms. Whereupon in 1450 he wrote a passionate letter to his brother, the earl of Salisbury, lord chancellor of England, saying that if his promised payment was not sent he would be forced to resign, 'and very necessity will compell mee to come into England to live there, upon my poor livelihood, for I had lever bee dead than any inconvenience should fall thereunto in my default: for it shall never be chronicled, by the grace of God, that Ireland was lost by my negligence.'[2] He probably got the money, for he still held his post.

He had not been in Ireland for more than a year when Jack Cade's rebellion broke out; on which he went to England in 1451 to look after his own interests. During his absence Ireland was governed by deputies appointed by himself.

Amidst all this heartless tumult, it is pleasing to be able to record that literature still retained its fascination for the native mind. In 1451 died Margaret wife of O'Conor of Offaly and daughter of O'Carroll of Ely, a woman who is greatly praised by the Irish for her unbounded benevolence and love of learning. The annalists relate that twice in one year she invited to a great banquet the learned men of Ireland and Scotland—poets, musicians, brehons, antiquaries, &c. The first meeting was held at Killeigh near Tullamore, when 2,700 were present; and the second at Rathangan in Kildare, to which were invited all who were absent from the first. Margaret herself was present; and she sat high up in the gallery of the church in view of the assembly, clad in robes of gold, surrounded by her friends and by the clergy and brehons. All were

[1] Ball's *Hist. Review of Irish Parl.* p. 27; Leland, ii. 42; Richey, *Short Hist.* 232.

[2] Campion's *Historie of Ireland*, ed. 1809, p. 147.

feasted in royal style, seated according to rank; after which each learned man was presented with a valuable gift; and the names of all present were entered in a roll by Gilla-na-Neeve Mac Egan chief brehon to O'Conor the lady's husband.[1]

From the first arrival of the Anglo-Normans, the colony was only able to maintain itself by occasional help from England: help in men and money at dangerous junctures. For the past century and a half however the English kings had been so taken up with wars in France, Scotland, and Wales, that they had little leisure to attend to Ireland, and the colonists were left in a great measure to shift for themselves; for the spasmodic action of Richard II. and Lord Furnival produced only temporary results. Accordingly we have seen the Irish encroaching, the Pale growing smaller, and the people of the settlement more oppressed and more miserable, year by year.

But now, about this time (1454), began in England the tremendous struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster, commonly known as the Wars of the Roses, which lasted for about thirty years, and during which the colony fared worse than ever. This great civil war profoundly affected Ireland, for all the chief Anglo-Irish lords took part in it. The Geraldines sided with the house of York, and the Butlers with the house of Lancaster; and the leading gentlemen of these two houses, as well as most of those of the other Anglo-Irish families, went to England to take part in the several battles, going and returning as occasion demanded, and generally leaving Ireland almost wholly unprotected in their absence.

Then the Irish rose up everywhere, overran the lands of the settlers, and took back whole districts, some of which they ever after retained. It came to this pass at last, that they obtained possession of the whole of Ireland, except the Pale and some few places along the coast of Ulster. The Pale itself became smaller than ever, till it included only the county Louth and about half those of Dublin,

[1] *Annals of Ireland*, translated by Mac Firbis, *Irish Arch. Miscel.* vol. i. p. 227; and *Four Masters*, A.D 1451.

Meath, and Kildare. In this little tract alone did English authority and English law prevail; and the wretched inhabitants, surrounded on three sides by the fierce native tribes, had to pay yearly black rents—now so heavy as to be well nigh intolerable—to the Irish chiefs to purchase peace.[1] To so low a state had the Pale been reduced that at one time not more than 200 men could be got together to defend it.

Looking back at this distance of time, it seems extraordinary that the Irish did not seize the opportunity to regain possession of the whole country. Long before, in far less favourable circumstances, they had fought valiantly under Brian Boru, Donall O'Brien, and Mac Murrogh; and ages afterwards at the Yellow Ford, Benburb, the Boyne, and Aughrim. But now it required, as it were, nothing more than to stretch forth a hand to wipe out the colony. The explanation is that there was no Irish leader patriotic and powerful enough to unite the Irish chiefs: the opportunity was come but the man was wanting: and they were so insanely bent on their own wretched broils, or so meanly satisfied with black rents, that they never troubled themselves about the interests of the country at large.

At the end of eight years the duke of York returned to Ireland, in 1459, this time as a fugitive fleeing from the Lancastrians, who had got the upper hand for the time. After the battle of Northampton, in which the Yorkists gained the day, he returned to England with a great following from Ireland, and claimed the throne. But he was defeated at the battle of Wakefield (1460), where fell a great part of the Anglo-Irish nobility and gentry; and the duke was taken and beheaded on the battlefield. The

[1] In 1461 the following black rents were paid:—
To O'Conor of Offaly from Meath and Kildare, £80.
To O'Carroll of Ely from Kilkenny and Tipperary, £40.
To O'Brien of Thomond from Limerick, £40.
To Mac Carthy of Desmond from Cork, £40.
To Mac Murrogh of Leinster from Wexford, £40. Besides a salary of 80 marks (£53. 6*s*. 8*d*.) from the Dublin exchequer.
To O'Neill from Lecale and Louth, £60: with a collar of gold from the king.—(Gilbert, *Viceroys*. 376.) (Multiply by 15 for present value.)

very next year, however, witnessed the triumph of the Yorkists; and the duke's eldest son was proclaimed king of England as Edward IV., the first king of the house of York (1461). It is almost needless to say that during this king's reign Ireland fared nothing better than before; for he had too much home business on his hands to attend to anything else.

The Geraldines both of Desmond and Kildare, were now in high favour, while the Butlers were in disgrace. These two factions enacted a sort of miniature of the wars of the Roses in Ireland. Sir John Butler, the young earl of Ormond, a Lancastrian, landed with a body of English soldiers, and was joined by his kinsman Edmund Mac Richard Butler. Then there was open war between the Desmonds and the Butlers. Ormond captured Waterford and took the son of the earl of Desmond prisoner. 'But afterwards they on both sides ordained to deside their variances by sett batle; and so they have donne, meeting each other with an odious ireful countenance.' This battle was fought in 1462 at Pilltown in Kilkenny, where the Butlers were defeated and 400 or 500 of their men killed.[1] As a curious illustration of how completely those Anglo-Irish families had adopted the Irish language and customs, it is worthy of mention that the ransom of Mac Richard Butler, who had been taken prisoner in the battle, was two Irish manuscripts, the Psalter of Cashel and the Book of Carrick. A fragment of the Psalter of Cashel is still preserved in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and in one of its pages is written a record of this transaction.[2] The contest between these two great Anglo-Irish factions continued for long after; the Desmonds had the upper hand for some time, but the Ormonds ultimately regained their position of equality.

Thomas the eighth earl of Desmond—the Great Earl as he was called—was appointed lord deputy in 1463 under his godson the young duke of Clarence, the king's brother,

[1] *Annals of Ireland*, by Mac Firbis, *Irish Arch. Miscell.* vol. i. p. 247; see also *Four Masters*, 1462.

[2] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1462, p. 1021 and notes.

who, though appointed lord lieutenant for life, never came to Ireland. Desmond was a great favourite with the king, and he was well received by the Irish of both races. Year by year his power and popularity increased; the king continued to shower favours on him; and he became the greatest and most powerful man of his family that had yet appeared. The Irish annalists describe him as favouring learning, and bountiful to the clergy and to all learned in Irish, such as poets and antiquaries. His love for learning is shown by the fact that he founded the college of Youghal, which was richly endowed by him and his successors; also a university in Drogheda; but this latter project fell to the ground for want of funds.

It appears that, notwithstanding the Statute of Kilkenny, the number of Irish dwelling within the Pale had been greatly on the increase; which no doubt alarmed the government; for we find that in 1465 several feeble measures were passed by the Dublin parliament to make them conform to English customs. Every Irishman dwelling in the Pale was to dress and shave like the English, and take an English surname:—from some town, as Trim, Sutton, Cork; or of a colour, as Black, Brown; or of some calling, as Smith, Carpenter, &c.—on pain of forfeiture of his goods. Another and more mischievous measure forbade ships from fishing in the seas of Irish countries, *because the dues went to make the Irish people prosperous and strong*. But the worst enactment of all was one providing that it was lawful to decapitate thieves found robbing 'or going or coming, having no faithful Englishman of good name or fame in their company, in English apparel.' And whoever did so, on bringing the head to the mayor of the nearest town, was licensed to levy a good sum off the barony for his own use.[1] This really put it in the power of any rascal who needed money to behead the first Irishman he met, pretending that he was a thief, and to raise money on the head. But here we may make an observation similar to that made at page 297. The act was aimed at Irish thieves; but we must not assume that

[1] Gilbert, *Viceroys*, pp. 382–3.

it was framed with the rancorous intention of setting the colonists to kill Irishmen. The real fact was that the Pale was now in a hopeless state of disorder—swarming with marauders—which the authorities were quite powerless, and probably not very anxious, to repress; and this measure was the reckless or despairing act of an imbecile and corrupt government, who, unable to afford protection to the community, and not looking very nicely into the consequences, deputed to individuals the duty of protecting themselves by private violence.

With all the earl of Desmond's popularity he was unable to restore tranquillity to the distracted country. He was defeated in open fight (1466) by his own brother-in-law O'Conor of Offaly, who took him prisoner and confined him in Carbury Castle in Kildare; from which however he was rescued in a few days by the people of Dublin. Neither was he able to prevent the septs from ravaging the Pale; and he was forced to purchase peace from O'Brien of Thomond by granting him a part of Tipperary and the whole of Limerick, with a black rent of 60 marks yearly from the people of Limerick city.[1]

The Great Earl was struck down in the midst of his career by an act of base treachery under the guise of law. He was first replaced in 1467 by John Tiptoft earl of Worcester—the butcher as he was called from his cruelty—who came determined to ruin him. There has been much difference of opinion as to Tiptoft's motives; but there seems no reason to doubt the correctness of the account subsequently given by Desmond's grandson in a memorial to the English council.[2] According to this the Great Earl had let fall some imprudent words regarding the queen, who never forgave him for it, and who influenced the king to appoint Tiptoft in his place. Tiptoft, soon after his arrival, acting on the secret instructions of the queen,

[1] *Four Masters*, A.D. 1466.

[2] Written in the Irish language; it was translated at the time for the council, and this old translation is given in *Carew Papers*, 1575 to 1588, Introd. cv.

caused the earls of Desmond and Kildare to be arrested; and in a parliament held at Drogheda had them attainted for exacting coyne and livery, and for making alliance with the Irish by fosterage and other ties, contrary to the Statute of Kilkenny. Desmond was at once executed, and his two infant sons were also killed by order of Tiptoft. Kildare was pardoned and set at liberty; and Tiptoft, having accomplished what he came for, returned to England in the following year. This was all done without the knowledge of the king, who was very indignant on becoming aware of it. As for Tiptoft, he was himself, three years later on, beheaded by the earl of Oxford, whose father 'the butcher' had executed some years before.

CHAPTER XV

POYNINGS' LAW

THE accession, in 1485, of Henry VII., who belonged to the Lancastrians, was the final triumph of that great party. The preceding king, Richard III., was son of the Irish favourite Richard duke of York; and the news of his defeat and death at Bosworth Field was received by the Irish with dissatisfaction. At this time all the chief state offices in Ireland were held by the Geraldines; but as the new king felt that he could not govern the country without their aid, he made no changes, though he knew well they were all devoted Yorkists. Accordingly the great earl of Kildare, who had been lord deputy for several years, with a short break, was still retained.

But the Yorkists continued to be the favourites in Ireland, where the people still retained a fond memory of the government of Duke Richard; and accordingly when the young impostor Lambert Simnel came to Ireland (1486), and gave out that he was the Yorkist prince Edward earl of Warwick, he was received with open arms, not only by the deputy, but by almost all the Anglo-Irish—nobles, clergy, and people. The Butlers and the St. Laurences

alone among the nobles remained loyal to the king. And although the young Prince Edward himself was at this very time a prisoner in London, and was publicly exhibited there by the king in order to expose the fraud, still the Irish maintained that he was a counterfeit, and that they had the real prince in Ireland. But the city of Waterford rejected Simnel and remained steadfast in its loyalty, whence it got the name of *Urbs Intacta*, the 'untarnished city.'

After a little time an army of 2,000 Germans came to Ireland to support the cause of the impostor; and he was actually crowned as Edward VI. by the bishop of Meath, in Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin, in 1487, in presence of the deputy Kildare, the archbishop of Dublin, and a great concourse of Anglo-Irish nobles, ecclesiastics, and officers, all of whom did homage to 'King Edward VI.,' and renounced their allegiance to Henry VII.

But this foolish business came to a sudden termination when Simnel was defeated and taken prisoner in England. The whole Irish government were involved in the conspiracy; and now, when the imposture was laid bare, Kildare and the others sent a humble message to the king to acknowledge their error and to crave his pardon. The king, dreading their power if they were driven to rebellion, took no severer steps than to send over Sir Richard Edgecomb as a special commissioner, to lay down conditions of pardon and to exact new oaths of allegiance. Edgecomb, having administered the oaths at Kinsale, in 1488, and having visited Waterford, where he stayed for a short time and commended the people for their loyalty, landed at Dublin. After much negotiation and bickering, the earl of Kildare and the other chief lords took the oath of allegiance. Then there was a solemn religious ceremony of thanksgiving for the reconciliation; after which Sir Richard entertained the lords at a banquet; and as a present from the king and a token of pardon and goodwill he hung a chain of gold round the earl of Kildare's neck.

Although the king had pardoned these nobles, yet he kept a watch over them; and the year following (1489) he

invited them to meet him in London. Soon after their arrival he entertained them at a splendid banquet in Greenwich; and although his manner was kind, yet they felt humiliated and crestfallen, for one of the waiters who attended them at table was their idolised *prince* Lambert Simnel.

A little later on reports of new plots in Ireland reached the king's ears; whereupon, in 1492, he removed Kildare from the office of deputy, and put in his place Walter Fitzsimons, archbishop of Dublin. At the same time Sir James Butler was made lord treasurer in place of Kildare's father-in-law Sir Rowland FitzEustace. The inhabitants of the Pale had good reason to lament these changes. Kildare was the only man able to keep down the Irish living round the marches; and now, offended at the indignity put upon him, he withdrew his protection, and straightway the septs rose up and burned and ravaged the English settlements, especially Meath, without let or hindrance.

The secret information given to the king was not without foundation, for now a second claimant for the crown, a young Fleming named Perkin Warbeck, landed in Cork (1492), and announced that he was Richard duke of York, one of the two princes that had been kept in prison by Richard III. He stated that he had escaped from the Tower, though the story generally believed then and since was that both princes had been murdered by Richard. After the ridiculous termination of Simnel's imposture one would think it hard for another to gain a footing in Ireland. Yet Warbeck was at once accepted by the Anglo-Irish citizens of Cork, who espoused his cause very warmly; and they were in great joy when he received an invitation from the king of France (with whom Henry was then at war) to visit his court. He came to Ireland more than once after this; and nearly all the Munster Geraldines, including Maurice the tenth earl of Desmond, with a great many others of the leading southern Anglo-Irish, both lay and clerical, were mixed up in this conspiracy, and were often in arms in his favour. It was

chiefly the English colonists who were concerned in the episodes of Simnel and Warbeck; the native Irish took little or no interest in either claimant.

Meantime among the native tribes the quarrels, raids, and battles went on as usual; for there was no central government sufficiently strong to keep the restless chiefs quiet. But though these broils are recorded by the Irish annalists in minute and painful detail, they are quite unimportant, so far as the general destinies of the nation were concerned—many of them little more than faction fights—and it is not necessary to notice them here; they will be found fully set forth in the pages of the Four Masters.

During all this time the fusion of the two races went on in spite of law; and as generations rolled by, the descendants of the old settlers became more and more Irish in their habits, sentiments, and language—became quite incorporated with the natives and undistinguishable from them in everything except their family names. This was especially the case with the great and powerful family of the Fitzgeralds in both branches. How strong the tendency had become is shown by the fact that although the great earl of Desmond had suffered for the alleged crime of forming Irish alliances (p. 344), yet his son, James the ninth earl, married a daughter of O'Brien of Thomond; and the Kildare family were, as we shall see in next chapter, connected with many leading Irish families.

The reception given to Simnel and Warbeck and the secret information received by king Henry from his spies convinced him that his Irish subjects were hopelessly Yorkist in their sympathies, and that they were ready to rise up against his government at every favourable opportunity. He might have attainted and executed the heads of the disaffected families; but this would leave the colony open to the attacks of the Irish, and possibly ruin the settlement. He came to the resolution, therefore, as the best thing to be done under the circumstances, to lessen the power of his Irish subjects by destroying the independence of their parliament. With this object he

appointed Englishmen to the most important government posts in Ireland; and, in 1494, he sent Sir Edward Poynings as lord deputy, with instructions to make such changes as would bring Ireland more directly under the power of the English parliament.

Poynings' first act was to lead an expedition to the north against O'Hanlon and Magennis, who had given shelter to some of the supporters of Warbeck; and Kildare, to prove his loyalty, accompanied him. While Poynings was on this expedition, a rumour reached him through one of the Ormonds—in all likelihood a false rumour—that the earl was conspiring with O'Hanlon and Magennis to intercept and destroy himself and his army; and news came also at this same time that Kildare's brother had risen in open rebellion, and had seized the castle of Carlow. On this, Poynings patched up a hasty peace with the northern chiefs, returned south, and recovered the castle after a hard siege of ten days. But no steps were taken against the earl till the meeting of parliament.

Poynings now applied himself to the main object of his mission; and for this purpose he convened a parliament at Drogheda in November 1494: the memorable parliament in which the act since known as 'Poynings' law,' was passed. The following are the most important provisions of this law:—

1. No parliament was in future to be held in Ireland until the Irish chief governor and privy council had sent the king information of all the acts intended to be passed in it, with a full statement of the reasons why they were required, and until these acts had been approved by the Irish council,[1] and also approved and permission granted under the great seal by the king and privy council of England. This single provision is what is popularly known as 'Poynings' law.' Thus the members of this Irish Parliament, whose fathers had forty years before boldly asserted the absolute independence of the Irish legislature (p. 337), now permitted themselves to be bullied into passing an

[1] Ball's *Hist. Review of Irish Parliaments*, p. 243.

act that quite destroyed their own independence; one of the most discreditable acts ever passed by any legislature.

2. It was also enacted that all the laws lately made in England affecting the public weal should hold good in Ireland. This enactment referred only to English laws then existing: it did not refer to the future, and it gave no power to the English parliament to make laws for Ireland.

3. The Statute of Kilkenny was revived and confirmed, except the part forbidding the use of the Irish tongue, which could not be carried out, as the language was now used everywhere, even through the English settlements.

4. For the purpose of protecting the settlement, it was made felony to permit *enemies* or *rebels* to pass through the marches; and the owners of march lands were obliged to reside on them or send proper deputies on pain of losing their estates.

5. The old exaction of coyne and livery was forbidden in any shape or form.

6. Many of the great Anglo-Irish families had adopted the Irish war-cries; the use of these was now strictly forbidden.[1]

In this same parliament an act was passed attainting the earl of Kildare and his adherents of high treason for various crimes and misdemeanors, but mainly on account of his supposed conspiracy with O'Hanlon to destroy the deputy; in consequence of which he was soon afterwards arrested and sent a prisoner to England.

Up to this time the Irish parliament had been, as we have said, quite independent; it was convened by the chief governor whenever and wherever he pleased; and it made its laws without any interference from the parliament of England. Now Poynings' law took away all this

[1] The war-cry of the O'Neills was *Lamh-derg abu*, i.e. the Red-hand to victory (*lamh*, pron. lauv, a hand). That of the O'Briens and Mac Carthys, *Lamh-laidir abu*, the Strong-hand to victory (*laidir*, pron. lauder, strong). The Kildare Fitzgeralds took as their cry *Crom abu*, from the great Geraldine castle of Crom or Croom in Limerick; the Earl of Desmond *Shanit abu*, from the castle of Shanid in Limerick. Most of the other chiefs, both native and Anglo-Irish, had their several cries. (Harris's *Ware*, ii. 163.)

power and reduced the parliament to a mere shadow, entirely dependent on the English king and council. But inasmuch as it was the parliament of the English colony only, it mattered nothing to the great body of the Irish people what became of it. No native Irishman could take part in its proceedings; and its laws were obeyed only within the little strip called the Pale. All the rest of Ireland, inhabited by the native Irish and 'degenerate English,' was governed by the Brehon law and by old Irish customs. It did not even represent the Pale, for it was entirely in the hands of a few great nobles, who got any laws they pleased passed; the Geraldines or the Butlers, according as the one or the other family had the upper hand. Accordingly, Poynings' law was of small consequence at the time. But when, at a later period, English law was made to extend over the whole country, and the Irish Parliament made laws for all the people of Ireland, then Poynings' law, which still remained in force, was often selfishly misused by the English parliament, and was felt by the people of Ireland to be one of their greatest grievances.

During the whole time that this parliament was sitting, the Warbeck party were actively at work in the south. When Warbeck landed in Munster in 1495 he and Desmond laid siege to Waterford; but Poynings marched south to relieve the city, and by his aid the assailants were repulsed: whereupon Warbeck sailed for Scotland. The rest of his career belongs to English rather than to Irish history. It is enough to say here that, not getting as much support from Ireland as he had expected, he ultimately retired to Cornwall; and that in 1499 he was hanged at Tyburn with John Walter mayor of Cork, his chief supporter in that city.

The English rule in Ireland, which had been steadily declining from the time of Henry II., owing to general mismanagement and to the dissensions of the colonists, attained almost its lowest point at the time of Poynings' parliament. The Leinster settlement now was reduced to the county Dublin, with portions of Kildare, Meath, and

Uriel or Louth; and the English influence was almost annihilated in the rest of Ireland. One of Poynings' enactments directed that the inhabitants of the marches of those four counties should build a double ditch or wall six feet high, on the boundary, from sea to sea, as a defence against the Irish. Notwithstanding that black rents were paid to the Irish chiefs all along the frontier, it was now found necessary to complete this dike, which enclosed what became known as the English Pale. It need hardly be said that this proved but a poor protection, and that it was often broken through. The Pale remained so circumscribed for many years, but afterwards became enlarged from time to time.

CHAPTER XVI

GARRETT FITZGERALD THE GREAT EARL OF KILDARE

Garrett or Gerald Fitzgerald, who is known as the Great Earl of Kildare, became the eighth earl in 1477. This nobleman was more intimately allied with the Irish than any of his ancestors. His sister Eleanora was married to Conn O'Neill chief of Tyrone (father of Conn Bacach): and his children married into several other leading Irish families. We have seen in last chapter that, although a devoted Yorkist, he was retained as deputy by Henry VII.; that he joined in the Simnel conspiracy and was pardoned; that in 1492 he was removed from the deputyship; and that he was attainted by the parliament of Poynings for conspiring against that deputy. Though this last accusation was nothing more than suspicion, he was sent to England a prisoner.

Hitherto Henry had endeavoured to govern Ireland chiefly by English officials, and found good reason to be dissatisfied with the result. He now wisely resolved to try the experiment of governing through Kildare, who was the most powerful nobleman in Ireland. Accordingly the Great Earl, having been for some time in custody, was permitted in 1496 to defend himself before the king. But

this was no easy matter, for he had made many enemies in Ireland, and he was now to face a whole crowd of accusers. One of the charges against him was that he had sacrilegiously burned the cathedral church of Cashel; to which he replied, with a rough sort of simplicity, that it was true enough, but that he would not have done so only he thought the archbishop was in it. The archbishop himself was present listening; and this reply was so unexpectedly plain and blunt—the excuse being the greatest aggravation of the crime—that king Henry, who we have seen was disposed in his favour, burst out laughing. The king advised him to have the aid of counsel, saying that he might have any one he pleased; to which the earl, having first obtained the royal pledge that he should have any man he chose, answered that he would have the best counsel in England, namely, the king himself; at which his majesty laughed as heartily as before. At last when one of his accusers exclaimed with great vehemence: 'All Ireland cannot rule this man!' he ended the matter by replying: 'Then if all Ireland cannot rule him, he shall rule all Ireland.' [1]

Thus the Great Earl triumphed; and the king restored him to his honours and estates, and made him lord lieutenant of Ireland. But as a matter of precaution he kept his eldest son Garrett or Gerald as a hostage in the court for about seven years. The king's confidence was not misplaced; for earl Garrett during the remainder of his life proved a loyal servant to the crown.

A little before this time (in 1491) a war broke out between the O'Neills and the O'Donnells which was carried on with great bitterness and with varying success for a dozen years or so, causing terrible havoc and loss of life.[2]

[1] This story of the scenes at the earl's trial is considered by some as an invention of one of Kildare's Anglo-Irish Lancastrian enemies, to turn him into ridicule by representing him as a simple half-savage Irishman.

[2] The Irish historians relate that Conn O'Neill claimed tribute from O'Donnell, and wrote to him in Irish in the following terms: 'O'Donnell: Send me my rent, or if you don't——': to which O'Donnell promptly wrote in reply: 'O'Neill: I owe you no rent, and if I did——': whereupon O'Neill flew to arms, and the war began.

Kildare took a part in many of these feuds; and he made several excursions time after time to the north, in support of his brother-in-law Conn O'Neill. Indeed this restless earl took as much delight in fighting for its own sake as the most pugnacious of the Irish chiefs.

In 1498 Kildare convened a parliament, the first held under Poynings' act; in which the enactments against Irish dress and manner of riding, and against absenteeism were renewed: proprietors who left Ireland without license were to forfeit half their property, which was to be expended in providing defence against the Irish.

The most important event the Great Earl was ever engaged in was the battle of Knockdoe, which came about in this way. In the course of a quarrel between Mac William Burke of Clanrickard and O'Kelly chief of Hy Many, Burke had the upper hand and captured three of O'Kelly's castles. Whereupon O'Kelly, no longer able to withstand his powerful foe, applied for help to the earl of Kildare. Burke had married the earl's daughter, and had used her so ill that she was forced to leave him. Now came the earl's opportunity to punish his son-in-law; and he had an excuse for interfering, inasmuch as Burke had forcibly taken possession of Galway, contrary to the provisions of its charter. He went very deliberately to work, and enlisted on his side the native chiefs of almost the whole north of Ireland except O'Neill, and also some of the Anglo-Irish lords. On the other side Burke, knowing what was coming, collected a considerable army, being joined by many of the native chiefs of the south, among others O'Brien of Thomond, Macnamara, O'Carroll, and others; and he awaited the approach of his adversary on a low hill called Knockdoe—the hill of the battle-axes—about eight miles from Galway.

The battle that followed—in 1504—was the most obstinate and destructive fought in Ireland since the invasion, with the single exception of the battle of Athenry. The southern men, who were far outnumbered by the earl's forces, held the field against great odds for several hours; but in the end they suffered a total overthrow.

The loss sustained by the vanquished army has been variously stated, but the lowest estimate makes it 2,000; and the other side also suffered very severely. The victors encamped on the battlefield for twenty-four hours; and the next day Galway and Athenry opened their gates to the earl.

Though the battle of Knockdoe was the result of a private quarrel, and though many of the Anglo-Irish were engaged on both sides, yet it was chiefly Irish against Irish—north against south—one of those senseless battles by which the Irish strengthened their enemies by slaughtering each other. It was considered to have done great service to the English cause by weakening the power of the Irish chiefs; and accordingly King Henry rewarded Kildare by making him a knight of the Garter.

On the accession of Henry VIII., in 1509, the Great Earl was retained in the government as lord justice; and soon afterwards he was made lord deputy. The next year (1510) he set out on an expedition which did not end so well for him as the battle of Knockdoe. He marched into Munster against some of the southern septs, with an army of the Irish and English of Leinster, and a small body of troops under O'Donnell lord of Tirconnell. In South Munster he met with no serious resistance, and took several castles, wasting and depopulating the whole country as he went along. He now turned north to the county Limerick, where he was joined by the Munster Geraldines under the son of the earl of Desmond, and by some of the Mac Carthys; and crossing the Shannon near Castleconnell, prepared to make a raid on Thomond, O'Brien's country.

Meantime an army had been collected to oppose him by O'Brien, Burke of Clanrickard, and the Macnamaras—the earl's old opponents at Knockdoe; and they encamped for the night so close that the men of both armies could hear each others' voices from camp to camp. In the morning the earl, seeing that matters looked unpromising, marshalled his army for retreat, and attempted to reach Limerick by a short cut; but O'Brien fell on them as

they were crossing the bog of Monabraher near the city, and routed them, with the loss of a great many of the earl's best men. The remnant of the army saved themselves by flight; and O'Brien returned in triumph with abundant spoils.

This defeat, however, did not check the warlike activity of the earl. Two years later (1512) he crossed the Shannon at Athlone, took Roscommon, and devastated a large extent of country. Shortly after this he went north, captured the castle of Belfast, and plundered the Glens of Antrim, the Scottish Mac Donnells' district. The following year, 1513, he swept through both north and south, plundering Ulster to Carrickfergus and Munster as far as the lakes of Killarney.

He next made an unsuccessful attempt to take O'Carroll's castle of Lemyvannan, now Leap in the present King's County, near Roscrea; and retiring to collect more forces to renew the siege, he was taken ill, and after a few days died at Athy in 1513.

This extraordinary man, who occupied the foremost place in the affairs of Ireland in his day, is described by Stanihurst as 'of tall stature and goodly presence; very liberal and merciful; of strict piety; mild in his government; and passionate, but easily appeased.' And the Four Masters in recording his death say that 'he was a knight in valour, and princely and religious in his words and judgments.'

CHAPTER XVII

GARRETT OGE FITZGERALD, NINTH EARL OF KILDARE

AFTER the death of the Great Earl of Kildare his son Garrett Oge (the young) was appointed lord justice by the Irish council, and a little later on lord deputy by the king. The new deputy followed in the footsteps of his father. The O'Moores of Leix, the O'Reillys of Brefney, and the O'Tooles of Wicklow, having risen in rebellion and ravaged

the English settlements, he defeated them all in 1514, desolated their lands, and killed the chiefs of the O'Reillys and O'Tooles, with many of their minor chiefs—sending Shane O'Toole's head as a present to the lord mayor of Dublin; and he captured after a week's siege in 1516 O'Carroll's castle of Leap, which had baffled his father. In the same year he marched to Clonmel, which was surrendered to him; after which he returned to Dublin.[1]

Turning his arms next against the north, he took by storm the castle of Dundrum (1517), which the Irish had some time before taken from the English. Then defeating and making prisoner Magennis lord of Iveagh, he captured and burned the castle of Dungannon, and overran the whole district. In the same year he again defeated the O'Carrolls and demolished their stronghold of Garrycastle in the present King's County.

This career of uninterrupted success excited the jealousy of some of the other Anglo-Irish lords, especially the Butlers, the hereditary foes of his house. Pierce Butler earl of Ormond—Pierce Roe (the Red) as the Irish called him—though his wife was Kildare's sister, employed every means in his power to turn the king against him: and the lady was still more bitter than her husband. But Kildare counteracted all these schemes so skilfully, that for a long time his enemies were unsuccessful; till at last Ormond managed to gain the ear of Cardinal Wolsey, then in the full swing of his great power. Through his influence Kildare was summoned to England, in 1519, to answer charges of enriching himself from the crown revenues, of holding traitorous correspondence with the Irish enemies, and in general of 'seditious practices, conspiracies, and subtle drifts.'[2]

Soon after his arrival in England, Thomas Howard earl of Surrey was, at Wolsey's instance, sent to Ireland as lord lieutenant (1520). He had scarcely landed when he had to employ himself in a thoroughly Irish fashion. He marched forth against Conn (Bacach) O'Neill, prince of

[1] *Four Masters* and Ware's *Ann.* 1514, 1516.
[2] Ware's *Ann.* 1519; *Carew Papers*, 1575 to 1588, Introd. xxxviii.

the O'Neills of Tyrone, who had suddenly invaded the English settlements of Meath: but O'Neill, not caring to wait for the encounter, retreated to his Ulster fastnesses, whither Surrey could not follow him. This chief made his peace soon after, acknowledging the king as his sovereign, and binding himself to be faithful for the future: and the king sent Surrey a chain of gold for him as a token of pardon and friendship.[1]

Surrey's next proceeding was to make a much needed peace between the earls of Ormond and Desmond, who had been actively keeping up the old enmities and feuds of their families. Aided by Ormond he again (1521) marched against some of the Irish septs, the O'Moores of Leix, the O'Carrolls of Ely, and the O'Conors of Offaly, who had given trouble by threatening or rising against the English settlements; and he burned their corn and destroyed everything that came in his way. He took O'Conor's castle of Monasteroris; but O'Conor obstinately refused to come to terms, saying he would make no peace till the English were driven from the country.[2]

About this time there arose great disturbance in the south. James the eleventh earl of Desmond, in a lawless mood, invaded, in 1521, the territories of two powerful chiefs of the Mac Carthys—Cormac Oge and Mac Carthy Reagh—and continued to waste and ravage in spite of all expostulation. At length the two chiefs, uniting their forces, turned on him and gave him battle at Mourne Abbey or Ballinamona between Mallow and Cork, and utterly routed him. Two thousand of his men were slain—among them being several of his own kinsmen; and he himself barely escaped by a hasty flight from the field.

In the end Surrey intervened and brought them to terms of peace. In his letter to Wolsey he says of these two chiefs—the Mac Carthys:—'They are two wise men, and I find them more conformable to good order than some Englishmen here'; and he goes on to say 'I have motioned them to take their lands and to hold them of the king's grace [instead of by their own old law of tanistry], and

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, p. 15. [2] *Ibid.* p. 20.

they will be content to do so, so they may be defended. I know divers other Irishmen of like mind.'[1]

Surrey, however, had other business in hands besides war. From the very day of his arrival he applied himself most industriously to collect evidence against the earl of Kildare; taking down vague rumours and accusations of every kind, aided all through by Pierce Roe of Ormond.[2] During all this time Kildare was detained in England attending the king's court, for he was never treated like a person in disgrace; and he had no suspicion of the underhand work going on behind his back in Ireland.[3] If he had been brought to trial it would have been impossible to convict him; for though there were plenty of charges there was no proof. Yet his enemies had influence enough to delay his regular trial and acquittal. Meantime he married Lady Elizabeth Grey, daughter of the marquis of Dorset, a near relative of the king, which stopped for the time all further proceedings against him.

Surrey at last became heartily tired of his mission. He began to see that these Irish wars were interminable. He succeeded, indeed, in putting down for the time every rebellious movement, though he seldom had the satisfaction of defeating the Irish in battle, as they always retreated before him to their inaccessible bogs, forests, and hills. But he produced no permanent results; and after all his efforts to tranquillise the country, it continued as disturbed as ever. He grew sick in mind and sick in body; and besought the king for leave to retire. This was at last granted; and he returned to England in the end of 1521 after a stay of nearly two years.

One of the ever-recurring feuds between the O'Neills and the O'Donnells broke out in 1522, and attained such magnitude as almost to deserve the name of civil war. The chief of the O'Neills, Conn Bacach, who had been inaugurated three years before, made a great gathering, determined to march into Tirconnell and bring the O'Donnells under thorough subjection. Besides his own

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, p. 16.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 10, 12, 13. [3] *Ibid.* p. 15.

people of Tyrone, he was joined by Mac William Burke of Clanrickard, and by several of the Irish septs of Connaught and Munster. He had also a party of the Mac Donnells; and large contingents of both the English and Irish of Leinster, who took his side out of affection for the Geraldines; for it will be remembered that Conn Bacach's mother was sister of the Great Earl of Kildare (p. 351). With these powerful auxiliaries at his back he began to make preparations for his expedition.

To oppose this great muster O'Donnell had an army very much smaller, composed merely of his own people of Tirconnell; but what he wanted in numbers he made up in generalship. He posted his little army at the dangerous pass of Portnatrynod on the river Foyle, near Lifford, thinking that O'Neill would make that his way westward into Tirconnell. But O'Neill taking a more southerly route arrived at the castle of Ballyshannon in Tirconnell before O'Donnell knew anything of his movements, and captured that and some other strongholds in the neighbourhood. As soon as O'Donnell was made aware of this, he sent a party eastward and southward under his son Manus to desolate Tyrone, O'Neill's territory, while he himself made his way south-west through the Gap of Barnesmore in pursuit of O'Neill, whom however he did not overtake. Meantime O'Neill, in retaliation of Manus O'Donnell's raid, crossed the Finn northwards and harried and spoiled a large part of Tirconnell, after which he pitched his camp at Knockavoe hill near Strabane.

O'Donnell, not finding O'Neill, returned with his son Manus through Barnesmore, and halted in the neighbourhood of Knockavoe. O'Neill's Connaught and Munster auxiliaries had not yet come up; they had paused in their march to lay siege to Sligo Castle, which they found more difficult to take than they had anticipated, for it was obstinately defended by some of O'Donnell's people. And now O'Donnell, fearing that if he waited for all his enemies to join muster they would overwhelm his little army, resolved to be beforehand with them, and planned a bold attack on O'Neill's camp.

Marching silently in the depth of night, he took O'Neill by surprise; and almost before the sentinels were aware of how matters stood, the two armies were fighting furiously in pitch darkness in the midst of the camp. After a long and fearful struggle, in which men found it hard to distinguish friend from foe, the O'Neills were routed with a loss of 900 men; and O'Donnell took possession of the camp, with an immense quantity of booty. Making no delay, he next marched rapidly back again through Barnesmore to Sligo. The besiegers here, having heard of what had taken place at Knockavoe, sent to the victorious chief to sue for peace; but such was their terror of him that they broke up camp before the messengers had time to return, and fled in a panic clear out of danger.[1]

This battle of Knockavoe, which was one of the bloodiest ever fought between the Kinel Connell and Kinel Owen, did not end the quarrel. Kildare tried hard to make peace; but in spite of his efforts the war continued for many years afterwards, causing quite as much ruin and misery among the poor country people as any of the ordinary wars of the English invasion.

Let us now return to Earl Garrett. When Surrey went back to England in 1521, Pierce Roe earl of Ormond, Kildare's old enemy, was appointed lord deputy. The chief use he made of his power was to advance his own interests and to injure Kildare, several of whose castles he took and destroyed. But while he was still deputy, Kildare was permitted to return to Ireland in 1523, and, as might have been expected, the feud now blazed up with tenfold fury; so that the king had to send over commissioners to investigate the dispute. Their decision was favourable to Kildare; they found that Ormond had been guilty of exacting coyne and livery, and of other misdemeanors; and they removed him from his post in 1524, and made his triumphant rival deputy in his place.[2] At the installation, which was a grand ceremony, Kildare's cousin Conn Bacach O'Neill bore the sword of state before him.[3]

[1] *Four Masters*, 1522, where this war is related in detail.
[2] Carew *Papers*, 1515 to 1574, pp. 32 to 35. [3] Ware, *Ann.* 1524.

But now Kildare got exposed to danger from another quarter. His kinsman James earl of Desmond had foolishly entered into correspondence with the king of France to bring about an invasion of Ireland, engaging to join the French forces with 10,000 Irish troops. But he was a mere tool in the hands of the French monarch, who had no other object in view than to frighten and distract the English. When King Henry heard of this he was mightily incensed, and forthwith summoned Desmond to London. But Desmond knowing well what was in store for him, refused point blank to go; whereupon Kildare as lord deputy got orders to arrest him. Kildare led an army southwards on this unpleasant mission in 1524; but Desmond eluded pursuit, and the deputy returned without him to Dublin. It was afterwards alleged against him that he had intentionally allowed Desmond to escape arrest, which was probably true.

Kildare's enemies, especially the two most powerful, Pierce Roe in Ireland and Wolsey in England, still kept wide awake watching his proceedings and continually sending damaging reports about him. They succeeded at last so far as to have him summoned to England to answer several charges:—that he had failed to arrest Desmond, that he had formed affinities with the Irish enemies, that he had hanged good subjects because they were friends to Ormond, and that he had confederated with O'Neill, O'Conor, and other Irish lords to raid Ormond's territories while Ormond was deputy.[1] Accordingly Earl Garrett proceeded to London in 1526, leaving his brother James Fitzgerald of Leixlip in his place, who, however, was soon removed, and Richard Nugent baron of Delvin was made vice-deputy.

There is no record that Kildare was ever brought to trial; but at his own urgent request he was examined by the lords of the privy council. Wolsey began the proceedings with a bitter speech, accusing him of conniving at the escape of Desmond; and he was about to go on with other charges, when he was interrupted by Kildare, who

[1] Ware, *Ann.* 1526.

asked to be allowed to reply to the charges one by one as they were made:—'My lord chancellor, I beseech you pardon me; I am short witted, and you I perceive intend a long tale. I have no schoole trickes nor art of memory. Except you hear me while I remember your words your second process will hammer out the former.' This was agreed to, and he began his defence with this speech:—

'It is good reason that your grace [Wolsey] beare the mouth of this chamber. But, my lord, those that put this tale [about Desmond's escape] into your mouth have gaped long for my wreck, and now at length for want of better stuff are fain to fill their mouths with smoak. Cannot the earl of Desmond shift but I must be of counsell? Cannot he be hid except I wink? This is a doughty kinde of accusation which they urge against mee. *You would not see him*, they say:—Who made them so familiar with mine eyesight? Or who stood by when I let him slip, or where are the tokens of my wilfull hoodwinking? *Oh, but you sent him word to bewarre of you*: Who was the messenger? Where are the letters? My lords, either they have my hand [writing] to shew, or can bring forth the messenger, or were present at a conference, or privy to Desmond, or somebody bewrayed it to them; which of these parts will they choose?

'Of my cousin Desmond they may lye lewdly, since no man heere can well tell the contrary. Touching myselfe, I never noted in them either so much wit or so much faith, that I could have gaged upon their silence the life of a good hound, much lesse mine owne. I doubt not, if it please your honours to oppose [i.e. sift] them as to how they came to knowledge of these matters which they are so ready to depose, but that you shall find their tongues chayned to another man's trencher, suborned to say, sweare, and stare the uttermost they can.

'But of another thing it grieveth mee, that your good grace should bee so farre gone in crediting those corrupt informers. Little know you, my lord, how necessary it is not onely for the governours but also for every nobleman in Ireland, so to hamper their vincible neighbours at dis-

cretion, wherein if they wayted for processe of law they might hap to loose their owne lives and lands without law. You [in England] heare of a case as it were in a dreame and feele not the smart that vexeth us [in Ireland]. In England there is not a meane subject that dare extend his hand to fillip a peere of the realm. In Ireland, except the lord have cunning and strength to save his owne, and sufficient authoritie to racke theeves and varletts, hee shalle find them swarme so fast, that it will bee too late to call for justice.

'As touching my kingdome (my lord): I would you and I had exchanged kingdomes but for one moneth, I would trust to gather up more crummes in that space, then twice the revenues of my poore earldome; but you are well and warme, and so hold you and upbraide not me with such an odious storme. I sleepe in a cabbin, when you lye soft in your bed of downe; I serve under the cope of heaven, when you are served under a canopy; I drinke water out of a skull [helmet], when you drink [wine] out of golden cuppes; my courser is trained to the field, when your jennet is taught to amble; when you are begraced and belorded and crowched and kneeled unto, then I finde small grace with our Irish borderers, except I cut them off by the knees.'[1]

Campion, who reports this speech, goes on to say, 'The cardinall perceived that Kildare was no babe and rose in a fume from the council table, committed the earle [back to the Tower], deferred the matter till more direct probations [proofs] came out of Ireland.'

Meantime things began to go on very badly in Ireland. The baron of Delvin had neither the influence nor the strong hand of the great Geraldine: and all round the Pale the chiefs, both Irish and Anglo-Irish, began to give trouble. O'Conor of Offaly, the most powerful of them, a friend of Kildare, carried off in a sudden raid in 1528, a great prey of cattle from the Palesmen; whereupon Delvin, who was too weak to punish him in any other way, stopped his 'black rent' when it became due. This

[1] Campion's *Hist. of Irel.* ed. 1809, p. 164.

enraged O'Conor and made matters worse. A conference was arranged between him and Delvin at Rahan in King's County: and while the parley was going on a party of O'Conor's followers who had been lying in ambush suddenly rushed out, attacked the baron's people, several of whom were killed in the fray, and carried off the baron himself captive.[1]

This outrage caused intense alarm and indignation; and Pierce Roe—now the earl of Ossory, having lately changed his title—was appointed vice-deputy. He exerted himself to obtain the release of Lord Delvin: but O'Conor, knowing his own strength and the weakness of the government, took a high stand, and insisted on the restoration of his black rent and the payment of ransom for the imprisoned baron as conditions of his release: to which Ossory was forced to agree.

These disturbances were laid at the door of the earl of Kildare, who was openly accused by his enemies in London of having instigated O'Conor and others to attack the Pale. And it was also stated that he had sent his daughter, the wife of the baron of Slane, to stir up his Irish friends against the vice-deputy, whose lands were now pillaged on all sides by the Geraldines.[2] Yet he was all this time allowed to retain his post of lord deputy. And when the king proposed that he should be removed, Wolsey opposed it, not indeed through love for Kildare; but he dreaded that if the earl were removed his numerous friends in Ireland would combine and destroy all the English of the Pale.[3]

But Kildare's extraordinary influence, popularity, and good fortune again prevailed: he was released and restored to favour and confidence. As to the deputyship, a middle course was adopted: Sir William Skeffington was appointed deputy in 1529, and Kildare was sent with him to Ireland to advise and aid him.[4] It was easy to foresee that this arrangement would not last long: for Kildare was too high and proud to act as subordinate to any English

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, p. 39.
[2] Ware's *Ann.* 1528.
[3] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, pp. 40, 41.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 144–5.

knight. But for some time they worked harmoniously together, attacking and reducing several of the most turbulent of the Irish chiefs.

O'Neill and O'Donnell still continued at enmity; and now O'Donnell adopted a new plan of assailing his adversary. He sent a message to the deputy, announcing himself King Henry's liege subject, and asking for the protection of the English against O'Neill. And as O'Neill had about the same time begun to threaten the English settlements, the deputy led an expedition against him in 1531, accompanied by Kildare and Ossory. Kildare evidently joined the expedition to save appearances; for it is not to be supposed that he was earnest in taking part in a war on Conn O'Neill his cousin and friend, who had borne the sword of state at his installation seven years before.

There had been before this time jealousies and bickerings between Skeffington and Kildare; and while they were in the north the old enmity between Kildare and Ossory almost broke out into open war. So this expedition, led as it was by divided commanders who hated each other heartily, was not likely to be very formidable. Having been joined by O'Donnell, they wasted part of Monaghan and demolished some of O'Neill's castles; but on the appearance of O'Neill himself with his army, they did not wait to be attacked, but retreated southwards and separated to their several homes. The enmity between Kildare and the deputy at last broke out openly; and after much mutual recrimination the earl proceeded to England in 1532 and laid his case before the king. The result was that Skeffington was removed, and the earl became deputy once more.

As Wolsey was now dead, there was no single enemy that Kildare feared; and he used his great power unsparingly. He removed Archbishop Allen from the chancellorship, and put George Cromer archbishop of Armagh in his place. He drew around him the most powerful of the Irish chiefs, and gave one of his daughters in marriage to O'Conor of Offaly, and another to O'Carroll tanist of Ely. He ravaged the territory of the Butlers in

Kilkenny; and at his instigation his brother James Fitzgerald and his cousin Conn O'Neill entered Louth—a part of the Pale—burned the English villages and drove away the cattle.[1] In 1533 he laid siege to Birr castle, which had been some time before taken from his son-in-law O'Carroll; but here he received a gunshot wound in the thigh from which he never after fully recovered.

All these proceedings were eagerly watched and reported with exaggeration by Kildare's enemies; and at last the Dublin council, one of whom was the deposed chancellor archbishop John Allen, sent (in 1533) the master of the rolls, whose name also was John Allen, with three detailed reports to the king and to the English chancellor, Thomas Cromwell.

In these reports they describe the miserable disordered state of the country, which they attribute to the frequent change of deputies, to the constant imposition of coyne and livery, black rents, and other exactions; above all to the vast power and privileges in the hands of the great Anglo-Norman lords—especially Kildare, Ossory, and Desmond—and to their continual quarrels. They state that the Pale, where alone the English language, dress, and customs were used, was only twenty miles long, and that the English settlers, driven from their homes by violence and oppression, were fleeing from the country, their places being taken by the Irish, so that the Pale was likely in a little time to become like the rest of Ireland. They express their opinion that neither Kildare nor Ossory should be appointed deputy on account of their continual dissensions; and as no other Irish lord would be obeyed, they recommend the appointment of an Englishman. They wind up by telling the king that reformation should begin with his own subjects:—'When your grace has reformed your earls, English lords, and others your subjects, then proceed to the reformation of your Irish rebels.'[2] All through these reports they direct particular attention to Kildare's misdeeds; and in addition to this they gave

[1] Ware, *Ann.*, and *Four Masters*, 1532.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, pp. 50–2.

Allen secret instructions to make heavy charges against him to the king.

The result was that for the third time Kildare was summoned to England by the king, to give an account of his government. There is some reason to suspect that he contemplated open rebellion and resistance; for now he furnished his castles with great guns, pikes, powder, &c., from the government stores in the Castle of Dublin, although Allen the master of the rolls expressly prohibited him in the name of the king. At any rate he delayed obeying the order as long as he could. But at last there came a peremptory mandate which admitted of no further evasion or delay; and the earl, with a heavy heart, set about preparing for his journey.

The Geraldines had become thoroughly Irish. They were always engaged in war, exactly like the native chiefs, they spoke and wrote the Irish language, read and loved Irish books and Irish lore of every kind, kept bards, shanachies, and antiquaries, as part of their household; and intermarried, fostered, and gossiped with the leading Irish families. They were as much attached to all the native customs as the natives themselves; and when Henry VIII.'s schism and the Reformation came, they were active and faithful champions of the Catholic religion. When we add to all this that they were known to be of an ancient and noble family, which told for much in Ireland, we have a sufficient explanation of the well-known fact that the native Irish were rather more attached to those Geraldines than to their own chiefs of pure Celtic blood.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE REBELLION OF SILKEN THOMAS

WHEN the lord deputy, Garrett Oge Fitzgerald, made up his mind to go to England in obedience to the king's mandate, he decided to leave his son, the young Lord Thomas, as deputy in his place. Accordingly, in the

presence of the council at Drogheda, where the members then (1534) happened to be sitting, he proceeded to deliver up the sword of office to the young nobleman, and addressed him in these words:—

'Son Thomas: You know that my sovereign lord the king hath sent for me into England, and what shall betide me God knoweth, for I know not. But however it falleth, I am now well stept in years; and so I must in haste decease, because I am old. Wherefore, insomuch as my winter is well near ended, and the spring of your age now buddeth, my will is, that you behave so wisely in these your green years, as that with honour you may grow to the catching of that hoary winter in which you see your father fast faring.

'And whereas it pleaseth the king his majesty, that upon my departure here hence I should substitute in my room such a one for whose government I could answer: albeit I know your years are tender, and your judgment not fully rectified; and therefore I might be with good cause reclaimed from putting a naked sword in a young man's hand; yet forsomuch as I am your father I am well contented to bear that stroke with you in steering your ship, as that I may commend you as your father and correct you as my son for the wrong handling of your helm.

'And now I am resolved day by day to learn rather how to die in the fear of God, than to live in the pomp of the world. Wherefore, my son, consider that it is easy to raze and hard to build; and in all your affairs be ruled by this board, that for wisdom is able to lesson you with sound and sage advice. For albeit in authority you rule them, yet in counsel they must rule you. My son, although my fatherly affection requireth my discourse to be longer, yet I trust your good inclination asketh it to be shorter. And upon that assurance, here in the presence of this honourable assembly, I deliver you this sword.'[1]

Thus in tears the earl spoke his last farewell; and committing his son and the members of the council to

[1] Holinshed's *Chronicles*. See Cox, p. 226.

God, he set sail for England. On his arrival he was arrested on the ground that he had furnished his own castles from the king's stores (p. 367); and he was sent to the Tower, there to await his trial on this and other charges still more serious. He might possibly have got through his present difficulties, as he had through many others, but for what befell in Ireland, which will now be related.

Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, who was afterwards known as 'Silken Thomas,' from the gorgeous trappings of himself and his retinue, was then in his twenty-first year, brave, open, and generous. But the earl his father could not have made a more unfortunate choice as deputy; for there were in Dublin, and elsewhere within the Pale, plotting enemies who hated all his race; and they led the young man to ruin by taking advantage of his inexperience, and of his unsuspicious disposition.

With the object of driving him to some rash, illegal act, they treacherously spread a report that his father had been beheaded in England, and that all his relations in Ireland were to be treated in the same manner. The impulsive young lord fell easily into the trap. Having first confederated with several of the Irish chiefs, who eagerly entered into his plans, he proceeded to Dublin. With his brilliant retinue of seven score horsemen he rode through the streets to St. Mary's Abbey; and entering the chamber where the council sat, he openly renounced his allegiance, and proceeded to deliver up the sword and robes of state.

Archbishop Cromer, his father's friend (p. 365), now lord chancellor, besought him with tears in his eyes to forego his purpose; but at that moment the voice of an Irish bard was heard from among the young nobleman's followers, praising the Silken Lord, and calling on him to avenge his father's death. Casting the sword from his hand, he rushed forth with his men to enter on that wild and hopeless struggle which ended in the ruin of himself and his family. The confederates proclaimed that they rose against the king in defence of the Catholic religion;

which appears to have been a mere watchword, for religion had no influence on their conduct.

Collecting a large force of the Irish septs of the Pale, Lord Thomas led them to the walls of Dublin. The city had been lately weakened by a plague, so that the inhabitants could offer no effectual resistance; and on promise of protection for themselves and their property, they admitted him. He then laid siege to the castle, which still remained in the hands of the authorities, and to which several of the leading citizens, including archbishop Allen, had retired on the first appearance of danger.

The archbishop, having good reason to dread the Geraldines, for he had always been bitterly hostile to them, attempted during the siege to make his escape by night in a vessel that lay in the Liffey. But the vessel got stranded at Clontarf; and the archbishop, who had taken refuge at Howth, was discovered by the rebels, dragged from his bed, and brought half-naked to Artaine to the presence of Lord Thomas and his uncles. There has been some difference of opinion as to how far the young nobleman was responsible for what followed; but the account given by Cox, who was no friend either to the Geraldines or to the Irish, may probably be regarded as correct. Cox states that the archbishop threw himself on his knees and implored mercy. Lord Thomas, having compassion for him, but assuming an appearance of sternness, turned aside, saying, in Irish, 'Take away the clown,' meaning that he was to be taken away in custody. But the servants, wilfully misconstruing their master's words, murdered the archbishop in the very act of supplicating mercy.[1] This fearful crime, which would have sealed the fate of the rebellion even if there had been any chance of success, brought a sentence of excommunication against Lord Thomas and his followers. A copy was sent to the earl in the Tower, but it is doubtful if he ever saw it; for on first

[1] Cox, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1689, p. 234. The very words used by Lord Thomas, who spoke in Irish, as reported by Cox and others, are, '*Beir uaim an bodach*,' literally, 'Take the clown away from me.' These, obviously, did not mean violence to the archbishop.

hearing of his son's rebellion, he took to his bed, and being already sick of palsy, he died in a few days.

Lord Thomas now tried to induce his cousin James Butler, son of the earl of Ossory, to join him; but that young lord rejected the proposal with scorn. Whereupon, having left a sufficient force to carry on the siege of Dublin Castle, he invaded and burned the county Kilkenny—the earl of Ossory's territory. He sent also for aid to the Pope, and to the Emperor Charles V., but from these nothing ever came but promises. Meantime his men made no impression on Dublin Castle; and the citizens having received an encouraging message from the king, and tired of the disorders of the besiegers, turned on them, and killing some, chased the rest outside the walls. Lord Thomas returning soon after from his Kilkenny raid, attempted to enter; but the citizens closed their gates and repulsed his assaults. Then there was a truce, and Lord Thomas raised the siege (1534).

As time went on, O'Conor Faly, O'Moore, and O'Carroll—three powerful chiefs—joined his standard; and he had on his side also O'Neill of Tyrone, and O'Brien of Thomond. But many other Irish chiefs, in and around the Pale as well as elsewhere, refused to commit themselves to so desperate an enterprise. He and O'Conor Faly now invaded Meath, and burned Trim, Dunboyne, and the surrounding territory.

Soon after the breaking out of the rebellion, when news reached the king, he appointed Sir William Skeffington lord deputy. But Skeffington delayed coming over for several months; and when at last he arrived with a small company of 500 men, he was ill—so ill that he could do nothing; and the rebels wasted and burned the English settlements without opposition.

The new deputy remained inactive during the whole winter. But in March 1535 he laid siege to the castle of Maynooth, the strongest of Fitzgerald's fortresses, which was defended by 100 men. After a siege of nine days, during which the castle was battered by artillery, then for the first time used in Ireland, he took it by storm, except

the great keep; and the garrison who defended this, now reduced to thirty-seven men, seeing the case hopeless, surrendered, doubtless expecting mercy. How they fared we learn from the report of the deputy himself:—'Their lives [were] preserved by appointment, until they should be presented to me your deputy, and then to be ordered as I and your council thought good. We thought it expedient to put them to execution, as an example to the others.'[1] Lord Thomas heard the news of the fall of his castle as he was on his way from Connaught with an army of 7,000 men to relieve it; and from that day his followers gradually deserted him, all but sixteen, with whom he fled south and took refuge with his friend O'Brien of Thomond. He soon returned, however, and with the aid of the Irish chiefs got together another army; and the war, and ruin, and havoc went on as before. But the fall of Maynooth damped the ardour of his adherents; and one of his best friends, O'Moore of Leix, was induced by the earl of Ossory to withdraw from the confederacy.

But though O'Moore was now on the side of Skeffington, his sympathies seem to have been still with the rebels; and the war was prolonged by a feeling of pity for the young nobleman. In some encounters with the government troops, his own immediate followers were spared, while those of his confederates were killed without mercy; and on one occasion the O'Moores and O'Dempsies, having captured Lord Thomas himself, let him escape.[2]

But now the report went round that the Irish chiefs of Munster, with O'Neill and O'Donnell, were preparing to invade the Pale. So messengers were sent in all haste to England to the king to report how matters stood. They complained bitterly of Skeffington's inactivity, and gave a frightful account of the state to which the rebellion had brought the English Pale—three-fourths of Kildare and a great part of Meath burned and depopulated; while to add to the ruin and misery of the people, the plague was raging all over the country. In consequence of these representations, Lord Leonard Grey, marshal of Ireland,

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, p. 65. [2] *Ibid.* p. 71.

was directed to place himself at the head of the army, and to take more active measures. He made short work of the rebellion. Lord Thomas's remaining allies rapidly fell off; and seeing now that all was lost, he and his faithful friend O'Conor sent offers of submission. O'Conor was received and pardoned; and Lord Thomas delivered himself up to Lord Grey, on condition that his life should be spared.[1] It cost the government £40,000 to crush this rebellion, equivalent to about half a million of our present money.

The king was displeased that any promise of safety had been held out to Lord Thomas. He wrote a growling sort of letter to the deputy, in which he says: 'If he [Lord Thomas] had been apprehended after such sort as was convenable to his deservings,[2] the same had been much more to our contentation; but nevertheless we give you hearty thanks for your pains.'

Lord Thomas was conveyed to England (1535) by Lord Leonard Grey, and on his arrival was formally arrested on his way to Windsor and imprisoned in the Tower. Here he was left for about eighteen months neglected and in great misery. There is extant a pitiful letter written by him while in the Tower to an old servant in Ireland, asking that his friend O'Brien should send him £20 to buy food and clothes:—'I never had any money since I came into prison, but a noble, nor I have had neither hosen, doublet, nor shoes, nor shirt but one; nor any other garment but a single frieze gown, for a velvet furred with budge [i.e. instead of a velvet furred with lambskin fur], and so I have gone wolward [shirtless] and barefoot and barelegged divers times (when it hath not been very warm); and so I should have done still, but that poor prisoners of their gentleness hath sometimes given me old hosen and shoes and old shirts.'

Immediately on the arrest of the young lord, and before

[1] *Carew Papers*, 74; *Four Masters*, 1535.

[2] Brewer, the editor of the *Carew Papers*, says the king meant if he had been slain: but the meaning might be, if he had been taken without any promise of mercy. *Carew Papers*, 1575 to 1588, Introd. p. liii. See also *Four Masters*, A.D. 1535, p. 1421. The State Papers and the Annals make it quite plain that he was promised his life would be spared.

it became known in Ireland, his five uncles, having been invited to a banquet in Kilmainham by Grey, now lord deputy in succession to Skeffington, were, on their arrival, seized, manacled, and marched prisoners to Dublin; though it was well known that three of them had openly discountenanced the rebellion. But the king was determined, so far as lay in his power, to exterminate the Kildare Geraldines, root and branch; and notwithstanding the promise made to Lord Thomas and that his uncles had held aloof, the whole six were executed at Tyburn in February 1537.

And this was the end of the rebellion of Silken Thomas, which had been brought about by the villainy of his enemies, and during which, though it lasted little more than a year, the county Kildare was wasted and depopulated, and the whole Pale, as well as the country round it, suffered unspeakable desolation and misery. It was a reckless enterprise, which no man of sense or capacity would have entered upon, for there never was the remotest chance of success; the only palliation was the extreme youth and inexperience of Lord Thomas Fitzgerald.

Notwithstanding the efforts of King Henry VIII. to extirpate the house of Kildare, there remained two direct representatives, sons of the ninth earl by Lady Elizabeth Grey. Gerald (or Garrett) the elder, then about twelve years of age, succeeded to the earldom on the death of Lord Thomas. At the time of the apprehension of his uncles (in 1535) he was at Donore in Kildare, sick of small-pox. His faithful tutor Thomas Leverous, afterwards bishop of Kildare, fearing with good reason for his safety, wrapped him up warm in flannels, and had him secretly conveyed in a *cleeve* or basket to Thomond, where he remained under the protection of O'Brien. The other son, then an infant, was in England with his mother. The reader should be reminded that the lord justice Leonard Grey was uncle to these two children, for their mother Lady Elizabeth was his sister.

Great efforts were now made to discover the place of young Gerald's retreat; and as he had been declared an

enemy to the state, certain death awaited him if he should be captured. But he had friends in every part of Ireland, for the Irish, both native and of English descent, had an extraordinary love for the house of Kildare; and priests and friars preached day by day in favour of young Gerald. By sending him from place to place—now secretly at night, now in open day, disguised—his guardians managed to baffle the spies that were everywhere on the watch for him. Sometimes the Irish chiefs that were suspected of harbouring him were threatened, or their territories were wasted by the lord justice, and sometimes large bribes were offered to give him up; but all to no purpose.

When Thomond became an unsafe asylum, he was sent by night to Kilbrittain in Cork, to his aunt Lady Eleanor Mac Carthy, widow of Mac Carthy Reagh and sister of the boy's father, who watched over him with unshaken fidelity. While he was under her charge, Manus O'Donnell, who had lately succeeded his father as chief of Tirconnell, made her an offer of marriage; and she consented, mainly, it is believed, for the sake of securing a powerful friend for her outlawed nephew. In the middle of June 1537 the lady travelled with young Gerald all the way from Cork to Donegal, through Thomond and Connaught, escorted and protected everywhere by the chiefs through whose territories they passed. The illustrious wayfarers must have been well known as they travelled slowly along, yet none of the people attempted to betray them; and the journey was performed without the least accident.

Some suppose that the deputy, though pretending to be very active for his nephew's arrest, connived at his escape; and as a matter of fact this was one of the charges subsequently brought against him. Whoever reads his letters however will be convinced that he was in downright earnest in his efforts to arrest the boy; and judging from his own words he was not particularly scrupulous in his methods. Early in 1539 he had arranged to meet at a friendly conference O'Neill and O'Donnell, who promised to bring Gerald: but they never came. Soon afterwards Grey writes to the king that if they had brought the boy

they would have to leave him 'behinde theim quick or dede.'[1]

When Lady Eleanor arrived at O'Donnell's mansion, she found there Conn Bacach O'Neill, who was a near relative of the youth (p. 351); and without delay she and O'Donnell were married. About this same time O'Neill, O'Donnell, O'Conor of Connaught, O'Conor Faly, O'Brien of Thomond, and several other powerful southern chiefs, with some of those of Leinster, entered into a confederacy, commonly known as the First Geraldine League (1537), to take up arms if necessary, with the object of restoring the young nobleman to his rightful place. And they appointed a guard of twenty-four horsemen to wait continually on him both as a protection and as a mark of honour. This confederacy greatly frightened the government officials in Dublin, who expressed their anxiety to have the young Geraldine alive or dead: the lord chancellor wrote from Dublin:—'As long as this young traitor and his company be abroad we shall never be in security here': and Lord Grey tried in vain to induce O'Neill and O'Donnell to surrender him.

At the end of two years, Lady Eleanor, having reason to believe that her husband was about to betray Gerald to the government, had him placed, disguised as a peasant, on board a vessel which conveyed him to St. Malo. On the Continent he was received with great favour and distinction. He was however dogged everywhere by spies greedy to earn the golden reward for his capture; but he succeeded in eluding them all. And he was pursued from kingdom to kingdom by the English ambassador, who in vain demanded from the several sovereigns that he should be given up. He found his way at last to Rome to his kinsman Cardinal Pole, who gave him safe asylum, and educated him as became a prince.

After many extraordinary vicissitudes and narrow escapes, he was reinstated in all his possessions by Edward VI., in 1552; and in 1554 Queen Mary restored his title, and he became the eleventh earl of Kildare.

[1] Gilbert's *Account of Facsimiles of Irish National MSS.* p. 140. In this book Dr. Gilbert has published several of Grey's letters. See also *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, p. 149.

CHAPTER XIX

GENERAL SUBMISSION

MATTERS had now (1535) come to such a pass in Ireland that the English government had to choose one or the other of two courses: either to relinquish the country altogether, or to put forth the strength they had hitherto held back, and reassert their sovereignty. Henry VIII. with his strong will determined to attempt the restoration of the English power, and as we shall see, succeeded.

A few years before the time we have now arrived at, King Henry VIII. had begun his quarrel with Rome, the upshot of which was that he threw off all allegiance to the Pope, and made himself supreme head of the church in his own kingdom of England. He made little or no change in religion; on the contrary he did his best to maintain the chief doctrines of the Catholic church, and to resist the progress of the Reformation. All he wanted was that he, and not the Pope, should be head. Ireland was almost free from such dreadful scenes as were taking place in England during this struggle, probably because it was too remote to come much under his direct notice.

As Henry was now head of the church in England, he was determined to be head in Ireland also; and to the deputy Skeffington and the earl of Ossory, the latter of whom had all along taken sides with the king, was intrusted the task of bringing the Irish to acknowledge his spiritual supremacy. They employed as their chief ecclesiastical agent George Brown, formerly an Augustinian friar in London, now by the king's appointment archbishop of Dublin in succession to the murdered archbishop John Allen. Brown went to work with great energy; but he was vehemently opposed (1535) by Cromer archbishop of Armagh; and he made no impression on the Anglo-Irish of the Pale, who showed not the least disposition to go with him.

Seeing that so far his efforts resulted in failure, he

advised the deputy Lord Leonard Grey, to convene a parliament in Dublin, hoping that it might influence the people to follow the example of England. But when this parliament had assembled (1536), an unexpected difficulty appeared. There were certain members called 'spiritual proctors,' representing the clergy, three from each diocese, who sat in the Commons and like other members exercised the right of voting. The proctors to a man opposed the new measure —making the king head of the church—and it was found impossible to carry it so long as they sat. So the parliament got rid of them altogether by deciding that their office was merely to advise, and that they had no right to vote, though they had exercised that right from time immemorial; that they were in fact not members of parliament at all.

Then after several sittings this year (1536) and the next, the following measures were passed. The king was to be supreme head of the church of Ireland. An oath of supremacy was to be taken by all government officers, i.e., an oath that the king was spiritual head of the church; and anyone who was bound to take it and refused was adjudged guilty of treason. There were to be no appeals to the Pope in ecclesiastical matters. The clergy were to pay to the king, instead of to the Pope as heretofore, firstfruits, i.e., the first year's profits of any bishopric or parish or living; and also the twentieth part of the subsequent yearly income. All religious houses, except a few in some remote districts, were suppressed, the monks were turned out on the world without any provision, and the property was either kept for the king or given to laymen: little or none was returned to the church.

As to lay matters. An act was passed under which the king seized all lands belonging to absentees, which applied to the duke of Norfolk and to several other great English absentee proprietors. The English language, apparel, and manner of living were to be used by all subjects; and the old laws against marrying and fostering with the Irish were revived. Black rents and all other tributes paid by the colonists to the Irish were abolished;

inasmuch as the English forces—it was declared—were now sufficient to protect the Pale.

Among all those subjects of legislation the question of supremacy was considered the most important. It was the test of loyalty. All who took the oath were deemed loyal; all who refused disloyal. Yet on this very question the act was an entire failure; for the great body of the people took no notice of it whatever.

The disturbances created by the rebellion of Silken Thomas were still kept up in some parts of the country by the chiefs of the Geraldine league. To break up this league was now the main object of the deputy Lord Grey, especially to subdue the two most powerful southern members, O'Brien and the earl of Desmond; and he entered on the task with great energy. At this time the Shannon was spanned, a little below Killaloe, by O'Brien's Bridge, which was fortified at the ends with great solid towers. This bridge had long been a source of trouble, as it enabled the O'Briens, who had built it, to cross the Shannon whenever they pleased and plunder the English of Limerick and Tipperary. Several unsuccessful attempts had been made to destroy it; but now (1536) at last the deputy succeeded through the treachery of Donogh O'Brien, son of the chief of Thomond. This man was married to the daughter of the earl of Ossory; and he took the part of the government against his own father. On condition that he should get for himself the strong castle of Carrigogunnell, he led the deputy's men to the bridge by an undefended path hitherto unknown. The first tower was taken by assault, after which the garrison retired across the river and the bridge was destroyed. After this the deputy proceeded to Carrigogunnell, took it after a brave defence, executed all its defenders on the spot, and then gave it up to the traitor Donogh.[1]

This is a proper place to observe that one of the well-recognised and most effectual means of reducing the Irish chiefs was setting them by bribes to war against each other; and in the very next year (1537) the Irish govern-

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, pp. 107, 108.

ment urged the necessity of keeping a supply of money in Dublin for this purpose:—'Finally, because the nature of Irishmen is such that for money one shall have the son to war against the father, and the father against the child, it shall be necessary for the king's grace to have always treasures here as a present remedy against sudden rebellion':[1] a record not creditable either to English or Irish, and aptly exemplified in Gray's capture of O'Brien's Bridge and Carrigogunnell.

Lord Grey next (in 1537) turned his arms against O'Conor of Offaly, who was again in hostility, notwithstanding his late submission, but who was at this time much weakened by quarrels with his brother. He forced some of O'Conor's sub-chiefs to join his expedition, and with their help captured several castles, executing all their defenders; so that this chief, forced at last by sheer distress, submitted and obtained pardon. He engaged not to exact any more black rents, and he was permitted to hold his lands from the crown according to English tenure. At this same time the English recovered the castle of Athlone, which had been taken from the English some time before; a most important stronghold, as it commanded the passage into Connaught.

In the summer of the next year, 1538, the deputy, attended by several lords of the Pale, as well as by O'Conor and some other Irish chiefs, set out on a military progress through the country south and west, during which he received the submission of the chiefs as he went along, and met with no resistance.[2]

In May of the year following, 1539, he proceeded north against Conn Bacach O'Neill, who had lately been in correspondence with several kings and chiefs, both foreign and native, for a general rising in Ireland; and he plundered and wasted the country round Armagh, but spared the city itself.

In the following August (1539) O'Neill and O'Donnell made a hosting southward into Meath, intending to march

[1] *State Papers*: *Henry VIII*. pt. 3, p. 485.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, p. 145.

to Maynooth and form a junction with the Geraldines. They advanced however no farther than Tara, probably not finding co-operation, from which they returned north, sweeping before them the plunder of the whole country. But Grey pursued and overtook them at Lake Bellahoe in Monaghan, and inflicted on them, encumbered as they were with booty, a crushing defeat, killing 400 and recovering all the spoils. The power of the northern chiefs was greatly broken by this disaster, and continued weak for many years afterwards.

At the close of the year (1539) the deputy undertook a second journey into Munster, for another attempt to detach O'Brien and the earl of Desmond from the Geraldine league. As usual he received the submission of most of the chiefs, both native and Anglo-Irish, through whose territories he passed. But as to O'Brien and Desmond, he failed to reduce them, and he had to return without accomplishing the main object of the expedition.

This Geraldine league, which was originally formed for the restoration of Gerald Fitzgerald, seems to have extended its aims; and now contemplated the overthrow of the English government in Ireland, and the ultimate independence of the country. The chiefs expected foreign aid, which never came. Failing this they made no serious attempt to combine their own forces; and the only result was a number of detached raids, bringing ruin or death to hundreds of poor people, but quite profitless for the main purpose.

Lord Leonard Grey was an active and faithful servant to his master the king. He was a Catholic, assenting, however, to the king's supremacy; but this seems to have had no influence on his subsequent fate. He greatly broke down the power of the northern chiefs; nearly annihilated the Geraldines; and restored the English power in Ireland, which had become almost extinct. But he was imprudent and of a violent temper. By his reckless, high-handed conduct he made enemies everywhere, and put himself continually in their power. They carefully noted down all his proceedings and sent reports to the king, some of them

villainous concoctions, putting the very worst construction on all his actions.[1] At last they succeeded. He was recalled in 1540 and brought to trial for treason, the chief accusation being his alleged partiality for the Geraldines, and allowing young Gerald Fitzgerald to escape; and he was executed as a traitor in 1541: the end of many of the most faithful servants of the Tudors.

There was not under the crown in those days, more especially during this reign and that of Elizabeth, so harassing, disagreeable, and dangerous a post as that of Irish governor. Ireland—or that part of it under English rule—was then a land of intrigue, jobbery, and corruption. The deputy could not possibly discharge his duty impartially in the midst of so many jarring elements without making powerful enemies, who thwarted him in every possible way, set spies on him, and sent unfavourable reports to the king or queen, who was always too ready to give ear to them. By these means many were ruined and none escaped censure. Yet no sooner was a deputy recalled than his place was filled up by some other eager aspirant, doomed to be soon in his turn harassed, disgusted, and anxious for recall. Much of the blundering of the English government in Ireland, and much of the misfortune of the country, arose from this double authority. While many of the Irish governors were tyrannical, selfish, and wrong in their mode of government, some were just men, anxious for the amelioration of the country; but they were always liable to be thwarted by ignorant and mischievous orders from London, where Irish affairs were not understood; which interference often spoiled the best measures of the best governors.

One of the greatest difficulties the deputies had to contend with was the want of money. The whole available revenue of Ireland was only about £5,000,[2] which was ridiculously small considering the resources of the country, and was not nearly sufficient to carry on the war. 'I have been commanded to the field,' writes Sussex, 'and I have not one penny of money; I must lead an army to the field,

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, pp. 164 to 171. [2] *Ibid.* p. 119.

and I see not how I shall be victualled; I must fortify, and I have no working tools.' And this was the story of every deputy. Money had to be sent over from England, and the king was continually grumbling at the expense. The soldiers had often to go without pay, and sometimes they broke out into open mutiny.[1] On one occasion Lord Grey set out for an expedition into O'Brien's country; but the men refused to cross the Shannon unless they got their arrears, and the expedition had to be abandoned.[2] The Dublin council wrote to the king complaining that they got as much trouble from their own mutinous soldiers as from the Irish enemies.[3]

In reality, however, a large revenue was raised, though the government got only £5,000 of it. The smallness of this sum led the king to suspect that there was something wrong. He ordered inquiry, and the result was given in a long letter, written soon after Grey's recall, by Robert Cowley, master of the rolls in Ireland. After enumerating the various sources of revenue, he showed why they produced so small a sum: scheming, embezzlement, and mismanagement everywhere. No accounts were kept; and while scores of knavish officials enriched themselves without any check or fear of detection, the poor defenceless people were trodden down and robbed, and the soldiers were left without pay. But with characteristic negligence as regarded Irish affairs, no serious steps were taken; and notwithstanding Cowley's exposure, this amazing state of things was allowed to go on unchecked; and the soldiers starved, the people were plundered, and the knaves flourished as before.

On the recall of Grey in 1540, Sir William Brereton was appointed lord justice, till a lord deputy should be selected. A report now went round that there was to be a rising of the septs living round the Pale, and that a general muster of the Irish was appointed to take place at Finnea in the north of Westmeath. Whereupon Brereton hastily collected a motley army of eight or ten thousand

[1] Hamilton, *Cal.*, p. 216, No. 35.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, p. 109.
[3] *Ibid.* 118.

men, which included not only the regular militia, but also vast numbers of the professional classes—judges, bishops, priests, peers, lawyers, and others.

On arriving at Finnea, however, he found no sign of the Irish gathering—the whole story was probably an invention; but, unwilling that they should have their trouble for nothing, they 'concluded'—as Brereton himself says—'to do some exploit.' As O'Conor had lately burned and spoiled some English settlements in his neighbourhood, they turned into Offaly, 'and, encamping on sundry plains, destroyed his (O'Conor's) habitations, corns, and fortalices, as long as their victuals lasted'—i.e., for twenty days. 'Albeit,' adds the lord justice, 'he (O'Conor) remaineth in his cankerde malyce and ranker, and so do all his confederates' (1540).

About this time the Irish chiefs showed a general disposition for peace, and the king was equally anxious to receive them. The two great northern princes, O'Donnell and O'Neill, were the first to make advances; they wrote in respectful terms to the king, who sent a gracious reply to each. At this important juncture a sensible man—Sir Anthony Sentleger—was by good chance appointed lord deputy. He was all for a conciliatory policy, and he told the king in a letter 'I perceive them [the chiefs] to be men of such nature that they will much sooner be brought to honest conformity by small gifts, honest persuasions, and nothing taking of them, than by great rigour.' Accordingly he took full advantage of their present pacific mood; and by wise and skilful management he induced them to submit, the greater number by persuasion, some few by more or less compulsion. He led two separate expeditions in 1540 against two troublesome Leinster chiefs, Mac Murrogh of Idrone in Carlow, and Turlogh O'Toole of Imail in Wicklow, burning and wasting their territories till he forced them to come to terms; but once they had submitted he treated them kindly. The former renounced the old title of Mac Murrogh and took the name of Kavanagh; and he agreed to hold his lands by the English tenure of knight service.

O'Toole was an eccentric old chief. He expressed a wish to go to England to see the mighty king of whom he had heard so much, and to petition him for certain concessions that Sentleger refused to grant. The deputy wisely humoured him, and gave him £20 to pay his way. He was received kindly by the king, who granted all he asked; and he returned satisfied and loyal. O'Conor of Offaly, with the example of Mac Murrogh and O'Toole before his eyes, proffered submission and was gladly accepted; and several of his subordinate chiefs came in with him.

The earl of Desmond next asked for a conference, which was granted (1541); but before this took place three hostages had to be given up to him as a guarantee for his safety:—the archbishop of Dublin, Sentleger's brother, and another. For a great many years the Desmonds had claimed and had been allowed the curious privileges of not attending parliament and of not entering any walled town; which were conceded partly on account of the seventh earl's good government of the southern counties, partly from the danger and difficulty of the journey to Dublin, and in part also on account of the treacherous seizure and execution of the Great Earl by Tiptoft (p. 344). Now Sir James, the fourteenth earl, made submission and renounced these privileges.

The earl of Ormond had set up a claim to the earldom of Desmond in right of his wife, who was the only daughter and heir of the eleventh earl of Desmond; and this dispute was settled by arranging a cross marriage between the children of the two earls. After all these affairs had been amicably settled, Desmond invited Sentleger and Ormond to Kilmallock, his capital, where he entertained them in royal style; and, what was better still, he gave them much sound advice regarding the management of Ireland. In a letter to the king, Sentleger describes him as 'undoubtedly a very wise and discreet gentleman.'

From Kilmallock the deputy went to Limerick, where he had a 'parle with Obrian, who is the greatest Irishman of this western land.' But the 'parle' led to no immediate result, for the deputy would not agree to some of the

chief's proposals; and besides, O'Brien said he should consult his people before submitting; for although the captain of a nation, he was still but one man. Three years later, however, he made formal submission.

Hitherto the English kings, from the time of John, had borne the title of Lord of Ireland. It was now considered that a higher title would add weight to the king's authority; and it was resolved to confer on him the title of King of Ireland. With this object a parliament was assembled in Dublin on the 12th June (1541); and in order to lend greater importance to its decisions, a number of the leading Irish chiefs—among others, Kavanagh, O'Moore, and O'Reilly—were induced to attend it; and O'Brien of Thomond yielded so far that he sent deputies to represent him. This was the first parliament attended by native Irish members. The earl of Desmond also, and several other Anglo-Irish lords—some who had not come to a parliament for many years, and some never before—attended. The presence of all these made the present parliament the most remarkable yet held in Ireland. The Irish lords, and some also of the Anglo-Irish, did not understand a word of English; and they were greatly pleased when the earl of Ormond translated into Irish for them the speeches of the lord chancellor and the speaker.

The act conferring the title of King of Ireland on Henry and his successors was passed through both houses rapidly, and with perfect unanimity. It was hailed with great joy in Dublin, for it gave promise of peace; and on the following Sunday Archbishop Brown celebrated a high Mass with a *Te Deum* in solemn thanksgiving, before an immense congregation.

The two most powerful chiefs of all still held back, although they had been the first to propose submission in the preceding year. At length O'Donnell announced his intention to submit; and after some time Conn Bacach O'Neill followed his example. These two, as well as the earl of Desmond and several others of the great chiefs, both Irish and Anglo-Irish, went to England in 1542, and all were received at Greenwich most graciously by King

Henry. O'Neill renounced his ancient title—'The O'Neill'—and surrendered his territory to the king; after which he was created earl of Tyrone, and was permitted to hold his lands direct from the crown. At his request his (reputed) illegitimate son Ferdoragh or Matthew was made baron of Dungannon, with the right to succeed to the earldom of Tyrone.

About the same time O'Donnell was promised to be made earl of Tirconnell, though the title was not actually conferred till a considerable time after. Murrogh O'Brien, who had succeeded his brother Conor—the great O'Brien (p. 385)—was created earl of Thomond in 1543; and his nephew Donogh, he who had betrayed his father at O'Brien's Bridge, was made baron of Ibrickan; and Mac William Burke, who is commonly known as Ulick-na-gann or William of the Heads, was made earl of Clanrickard.

Every chief of any consequence in the whole country submitted; and the king on his part was gracious to all, and bestowed honours and titles very freely. There was a general acquiescence, chiefly brought about by the conciliatory disposition and skilful management of Sentleger; and the distracted country saw for the first time since the invasion a prospect of lasting peace in the future.

It may be observed that this was the fourth general submission since the first landing of the Anglo-Normans: the first to Henry II.; the second to King John; the third to Richard II.; and this, the fourth, to Henry VIII., through Sentleger. The first three were shams: the fourth was a real submission.

The chiefs not only submitted to the king's temporal authority, but they also, to a man, acknowledged his spiritual supremacy. This was included in the declaration of submission signed by each individual.[1] It may be urged in extenuation of their easy compliance on this score, that the subject of spiritual supremacy had not been brought much under notice in these countries up to that time; the chiefs hardly understood its full scope; and they did not think themselves the worse Catholics for renouncing the

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515 to 1574, pp. 183 to 195.

supremacy of the Pope. It did not much disturb their consciences, and it satisfied the king. Besides it was an empty formality—mere ink and paper—and so no doubt they considered it: they were not called upon to change in any particular their creed or their mode of worship; and they still followed the ministrations of their clergy, who of course were faithful spiritual subjects of the Pope.

But this spiritual submission, even such as it was, was confined to the chiefs, who were only a few individuals. The mass of the people made no such submission—knew nothing of it; and the attempt to impose on Ireland the doctrine of the king's spiritual supremacy was—then, as well as before and after—a failure.

With the career of Henry VIII. in England we have no concern here: I am writing Irish, not English, history. Putting out of sight the question of supremacy and the suppression of the Irish monasteries, Henry's treatment of Ireland was on the whole considerate and conciliatory, though with an occasional outburst of cruelty. There was indeed in his time a great deal of foolish and harassing legislation regarding dress, language, customs, &c., all aiming at an impossibility—to anglicise the native Irish. But he never contemplated the expulsion or extermination of the Irish tribes to make room for new colonies, though often urged to it by his mischievous Irish executive. These officials were all for starving, burning, killing, and extirpating the natives, and bringing in English people in their stead; and they gave the king much bloodthirsty advice, which he steadily disregarded. His policy, as carried out by Sentleger, was thoroughly successful; for the end of his reign found the chiefs submissive and contented, the country at peace, and the English power in Ireland stronger than ever it was before.[1] Well would it have been, for both England and Ireland, if a similar policy had been followed in the succeeding reigns. Then our history would have been very different; and the tragical story that follows would never have to be told.

[1] Cusack's Report, in *Carew Papers* (1515 to 1574), pp. 235 to 247.

PART IV

THE PERIOD OF INSURRECTION, CONFISCATION, AND PLANTATION

(1547—1695.)

THERE were four great rebellions during this period:—the Rebellion of Shane O'Neill; the Geraldine Rebellion; the Rebellion of Hugh O'Neill; and the Rebellion of 1641; besides many smaller risings.

The causes of rebellion were mainly two:—*First*, the attempt to extend the Reformation to Ireland: *Second*, the Plantations, which, though the consequence of some rebellions, were the cause of others. These and other influences of less importance will be described in a general way in the next chapter, and in more detail in those that follow.

Whenever a rebellion took place, the invariable course of events may be briefly summed up as:—Rebellion, Defeat, Confiscation, Plantation.

The Plantations began immediately after the Confiscation of Leix and Offaly (pp. 399, 435), and continued almost without a break during the whole of this period—that is, for a century and a half.

CHAPTER I

NEW CAUSES OF STRIFE

If there had been no additional disturbing influences after the reign of Henry VIII., it is probable that Ireland would have begun to settle down, and that there would have been no further serious or prolonged resistance. But now two new elements of discord were introduced; for the government entered on the task of forcing the Irish people to become Protestant; and at the same time they began to *plant* various parts of the country with colonies of settlers from England and Scotland, for whom the native inhabitants were to be expelled. The Irish on their part resisted, and fought long and resolutely for their religion and their homes; and the old struggle was intensified and embittered by religious rancour. The Plantations succeeded, though not to the extent expected: the attempt to Protestantise the Irish, though continued with determined persistency for three centuries, was a failure. These two projects were either directly or indirectly the causes of nearly all the dreadful wars that desolated this unhappy country during the period comprised in the present part of our history.

Two other evil influences also began to make themselves felt about this time.

The titles conferred by Henry VIII. on the native chiefs, with the accompanying land grants, gave rise to long and bitter disputes in the succeeding reigns. It was commonly the acknowledged chief of the district at the time who received the royal title. His successor, both in title and in position as head, was, according to English law, his eldest son or his next heir; but according to the Irish law of tanistry, that member of the family whom the tribe selected was the person to succeed to the chiefship. This was mixed up with the question of land, a further and a worse complication. According to English law, the chief who relinquished his land to the king, and

to whom the king regranted it, became the owner, and it would descend to his heir after his death. But according to Brehon law, as the chief well knew, he had no right of ownership; and the person to succeed him in possession was the tanist. Thus when this titled chief died, English and Irish law came, in a double sense, into direct antagonism; and there was generally a contest, in which the government supported the heir, and the tribe the tanist. This was mainly the origin of the disturbances among the O'Briens of Thomond and the O'Neills of Tyrone, to be related in Chapter III.; as well as of many others.

The disturbing influence next to be mentioned was in some respects the most general and far reaching of all. Ireland was then, as it has always been, the weak point of the empire in case of invasion from abroad: and there was some truth in the old rhyme:—

He who would England win,
In Ireland must begin.

For some time before the accession of Elizabeth, and all through her reign, there were continual rumours, both in England and Ireland, of hostile expeditions from Spain or France to Ireland. These rumours, some of which, as we shall see, were well founded, generally caused great terror, sometimes panic, on the part of the government.

To provide against this danger, the government, in dealing with the Irish people, might have adopted either of two courses:—one a policy of reasonable conciliation, governing them so as to attach them to the empire and make them ready to rise in its defence; the other a government by force, keeping them down to prevent them from giving aid to an invader. The first was not only possible but easy:—'The policy of conciliation graciously carried out would have been the only wise alternative.'[1] But the government deliberately chose the other, and carried it out consistently and determinedly. And not only did they rule by force but they made themselves

[1] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, x. 298.

intensely unpopular by needless harshness. Even their own colonists turned against them, and became some of the bitterest and most dangerous leaders of rebellion. So odious was their treatment of the people that any invader, no matter from what quarter, would have been welcomed and aided:—'The Irish were not to be blamed if they looked to the Pope, to Spain, to France, to any friend in earth or heaven, to deliver them from a power which discharged no single duty that rulers owed to subjects.'[1] The existence of this universal feeling of detestation is found repeatedly set forth in the letters of officials as published in the State Papers, so that it was perfectly well known to the government: and 'the hostility of the English against the natives became a madness.'[2]

There was here no room for half-hearted measures. If a chief, encouraged by the prospect of help from abroad, rose in rebellion, it was not enough, as it would be under ordinary circumstances, to reduce him to submission, inflict reasonable punishment, and take guarantees for future good behaviour. It was necessary to crush him utterly; and such thorough precautions were taken as that an invader should have neither help nor foothold in the country. The chief was executed, or banished, or brought prisoner to London; and the people, who were mostly blameless, were expelled or exterminated, and the whole district turned into a desert.[3]

And so were the unhappy destinies of this country in great measure shaped; not by what was needed for the protection and welfare of the people, but merely that Ireland might be made unsuitable as a point of attack. The views of the government on this point are exactly expressed by the earl of Sussex, lord lieutenant, in a letter to the queen, when he says that the possibility of danger ought to be guarded against, 'not so much for the

[1] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, x. 262.

[2] Richey, *Short History*, p. 493.

[3] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, pp. 220, 221; Spenser, *View*, ed. 1809, p. 166. See also the end of Chap. XVI. *infra* for Carew's declaration of policy, and for his description of his operations in Munster.

care I have of Ireland, which I often wished to be sunk in the sea, as for that if the French should set foot therein, they should not only have such an entry into Scotland as her majesty could not resist, but also by the commodity of the havens here, and Calais now in their possession, they should take utterly from England all kinds of peaceable traffic by sea, whereby would ensue such a ruin to England as I am afraid to think on.'[1]

A disquieting agency less serious than any of the preceding, but still a decided element of disturbance, was the settled policy of the Tudors to anglicise the Irish people. It would appear indeed that in the time of Elizabeth, the government were more anxious to change the people's language and dress than to change their religion. In the Act of 1569 establishing free schools, the master should be an Englishman; and as not understanding one word of the language spoken by the children, his first and main effort would be, not to learn Irish himself, for Irish was an abomination to the government, but to teach his little scholars to speak English—a thing impossible under the circumstances—and then probably to instruct them in the Protestant faith. And in the same parliament it was ordained that in certain districts, all of them Irish speaking, no clergyman should be appointed unless he could speak English, where English could be of no use to him. The persons contemplated in the act would be of course Englishmen, who could not speak Irish: though Irish was the only possible medium of communication.

To anglicise the people the government employed all the agencies at their disposal, and employed them in vain. Acts of parliament were passed commanding the natives to drop their Irish language and learn English, and to ride, dress, and live after the English fashion. The legislators undertook to regulate how the hair was to be worn and how the beard was to be clipped; and for women, the colour of their dresses, the number of yards of material they were to use, the sort of hats they were to wear, with many other such like silly provisions. There had been

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 302, letter written 11th Sept. 1560.

occasional legislation in the same direction in older times: but the Tudors, with all their strong will and despotic power, made a more determined attempt than any of their predecessors. These laws were, as might be expected, almost wholly inoperative; for the people went on speaking Irish, shaving, riding, and dressing just the same as before. But like all such laws they were very exasperating, inasmuch as they put it in the power of any ill-grained English resident to insult his Irish neighbours without the possibility of redress; and they were among the causes that rendered the government so universally odious in Ireland.

CHAPTER II

MUTATIONS OF THE STATE RELIGION

IT will be convenient in this place to tell briefly how the state religion fared in Ireland after the time of Henry VIII.

King Henry died in 1547 and was succeeded by his son Edward VI., then a boy of nine years old. His death removed all check to the Reformation, which was now pushed forward vigorously in England by the young king's protector the duke of Somerset, and by Archbishop Cranmer.

In the fifth year of Edward's reign (1551), the chiet Protestant doctrines and forms of worship were promulgated in Ireland by Sir Anthony Sentleger. He did so much against his will, not on account of any religious scruples, but because he foresaw that this innovation if attempted in good earnest to be carried out, would obstruct and disturb the civil government of the country and undo all his skilful work of pacification (p. 387):—'This measure may be fairly considered to have been introduced as part of the established policy of assimilating Ireland to England, without the slightest reference to the feelings or wants of the people, or the propriety of the innovation.'[1]

[1] Richey, *Short History*, p. 400.

George Brown archbishop of Dublin exerted himself to spread the new doctrine: but the movement was resolutely opposed by the archbishop of Armagh, George Dowdall, a man of the highest character; whereupon the lord deputy Croft, acting on the orders of the king and council of England, deprived him of the primacy of all Ireland, which had hitherto been held by the archbishops of Armagh, and conferred it on Brown and his successors in the see of Dublin (1552). On this, Dr. Dowdall left the country and went to the Continent.

The destructive spirit of the Puritans of later times began about this time to manifest itself among the English soldiers. We find it recorded that the venerable monastery of St. Kieran at Clonmacnoise was plundered by the English of Athlone; so that, as the Four Masters (1552) express it, 'there was not left a bell small or large, an image, an altar, a gem, or even glass in a window that was not carried off.' But there was on the whole little disturbance in Ireland on the score of religion during Edward's short reign. The government officials of Dublin, whose religion was the religion of the king or queen for the time being, adopted the new form of worship without hesitation. But no serious attempt was made to impose it on the general body of Catholics, either of Dublin or elsewhere, and the Reformation took no hold on the country.

Queen Mary, who succeeded Edward VI. in 1553, restored the Catholic religion in England and Ireland. Archbishop Dowdall was recalled and reinstated; those of the bishops who had conformed in Edward's reign were removed, or anticipated removal by flight; and, in 1557, the Irish parliament restored to the church the first fruits and tenths. There was as little disturbance in Ireland now as there had been on the accession of Edward; for the castle officials once again conformed without any trouble; and the body of the people, being Catholic all through, were not affected, by the change. The property of the monasteries which had been confiscated by Henry VIII. was not restored. On the contrary, those who held

the ecclesiastical lands were now confirmed in possession of them; and the Catholic church in Ireland, though it had full freedom, was very much poorer and weaker than it had been before the suppression of the monasteries.

During Mary's reign Ireland was quite free from religious persecution. The Catholics were now the masters; but neither the Catholic authorities nor the Catholic people showed any disposition whatever to molest the few Protestants that lived among them. There were no insulting proclamations; and Protestants were not forced to attend Roman Catholic worship. Ireland indeed was regarded as such a haven of safety, that many Protestant families fled hither during the persecutions of Mary's reign.[1]

On the death of Mary in 1558, Elizabeth became queen. Henry VIII. had transferred the headship of the church from the Pope to himself; Edward VI. had changed the state religion from Catholic to Protestant; Mary from Protestant to Catholic: and now there was to be a fourth change, followed by results far more serious and lasting than any previously experienced. A parliament was assembled in Dublin in 1560, to restore the Protestant religion; and in a few weeks, though after much opposition and clamour, the whole ecclesiastical system of Mary was reversed.

The firstfruits and tenths were again taken from the church and given to the queen. The act of supremacy was put in force: all clergymen and persons holding government appointments were required to take the oath declaring the queen spiritual head of the church; and those that refused were dismissed. Any person openly maintaining that the Pope was spiritual head was liable to fine and imprisonment; and if he committed the offence three times he was adjudged guilty of treason. The regulations for forcing the Catholic people into Protestantism were much more stringent and far reaching than had been ever before experienced. The act of uniformity was re-introduced, by which the use of the Book of Common Prayer (the Protestant Prayer Book), was ordained; and

[1] Ware's *Annals*, 1554, where several are named.

all persons were commanded to attend the new service on Sundays under pain of censure and a fine of twelve pence for each absence—about twelve shillings of our money. How far these regulations were carried into practice will be told as we go along.

The queen being by law now head of the Irish church, was supposed to have the appointment of all the Irish bishops. But as the English power reached only a small part of the country, many bishops were appointed by the Pope; so that in most of the dioceses a regular succession of Catholic bishops can be traced from the old Catholic times to the present day. Those appointed by the queen were, with few exceptions, men of a very unworthy stamp, distinguished more for greed than for piety, who made it their chief object, not to advance religion, but to plunder their several dioceses.[1]

Wherever these new regulations were enforced, the Catholic clergy had of course to abandon their churches, for they could not hold them without taking the oath. At the same time, as there was no adequate provision made for the support of the new Protestant pastors, those that were induced to come were poor, ignorant, and rude. But the crowning folly of the government was exhibited in the regulation that none were to be appointed except those who could speak English, which in those days meant that they could not speak Irish; so that these new ministers, not being able to make themselves understood, went about as mere dummies among their parishioners.[2] It came to this: that the government, while proscribing one religion, rendered the ministration of the other impossible; thus doing all that lay in their power to deprive the people of religion altogether.

But the Catholic religion, though proscribed by law, was well cared for. The priests, who had been turned out

[1] Abundant examples will be found in Harris's *Ware's Bishops*: in which see for instances pp. 416, 462, 484, 634, &c. See also Richey, *Short History*, 502.

[2] Ball, *The Reformed Church of Ireland*, p. 84; Spenser, *View*, 139 to 142.

of their parishes, and the inmates of the suppressed monasteries who had been sent adrift on the world, especially the 'mendicant friars,' who lived on alms and cared nothing for privations, went about among the people; and while they actively and successfully opposed the reformed doctrines, they ministered to the people in secret and kept alive the spirit and practice of religion. Meanwhile, numbers of the churches being neglected, fell to ruin. Half a century later Sir John Davies found them in ruins all through the Pale. But in some places at least the Catholic clergy must have gradually returned, or more probably, never left, for Davies writes (in 1607) that in those parts of Ulster he visited, the churches were utterly waste, and the incumbents were 'popish priests.'

In many places the new statute of uniformity was now brought sharply into play. In Dublin fines were inflicted on those who absented themselves from church; and to avoid the penalty, many went to Mass in the morning and to church in the evening. But the churchwardens tried to prevent even this by *calling a roll* of the parishioners at the morning service.[1] In Kilkenny lord justice Drury bound the chief men to attend service with their wives and children under a penalty of £40.[2] And Sir Henry Malbie writes:—'At this sessions [in Galway] a great number of malefactors were indicted for a Solemn Mass they were at for welcoming William Burcke.'[3]

This persecution prevailed however only in the Pale, and in some few other places. In far the greatest part of Ireland the government had no influence, and the Catholics were not interfered with. Even within the Pale the great body of the people took no notice of proclamations, the law could not be enforced, the act of uniformity was a dead letter, and the greater number of the parishes remained in the hands of the priests.

It is worthy of mention, as illustrating the government way of managing Irish affairs in those days, that

[1] Ware, *Annals*, 1563.

[2] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 145; Cox, i. 354. £40 meant about £500 of our present money.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 264.

the several proclamations, which are still extant, calling on the Roman Catholics to conform, are worded in terms as coarse and insulting as possible to themselves and their religion; which as anyone might foresee, so far from converting, only exasperated them, and tended to fill them with hatred for the very name of the Protestant religion.

From the time of Elizabeth, Protestantism remained the religion of the state in Ireland, till the disestablishment of the church in 1869.

CHAPTER III

SHANE O'NEILL

ON the accession of Edward VI. in 1547, Sentleger was continued as deputy. As there were some serious disturbances in Leinster, Edward Bellingham, an able and active officer, was sent over in May this year as military commander, bringing a small force of 600 horse and 400 foot. His first expedition was against O'Moore and O'Conor, who had again broken out and burned and plundered part of the county Kildare. He and Sentleger desolated all Leix and Offaly; proclaimed the two chiefs traitors; and as many of the people as they could reach they hunted from house and home—a new way of dealing with the peasantry. The chiefs, fleeing from place to place, and reduced to the verge of starvation, were at last forced to give themselves up. Sentleger treated them mercifully—other governors would have hanged them; and when he was recalled next year, he brought them to England, where they were received on the whole kindly, and each got a pension of £100 a year: but they were retained in London. O'Moore died in the first year of his exile. After some time—in 1553—Queen Mary permitted O'Conor, at the intercession of his daughter, to return to Ireland. He was however arrested by the lords justices on his arrival in Dublin, and imprisoned in the castle. Meanwhile the two territories were annexed to the Pale, and Bellingham built a number of castles to keep down the people for the

future. How land and people were dealt with is told in Chapter V.

We have seen (p. 387) that when Conn Bacach O'Neill was created earl of Tyrone, his (reputed) illegitimate son Ferdoragh or Matthew was made baron of Dungannon, with the right to succeed to the earldom. Conn had adopted this Matthew—who was a bold dashing young fellow and a tried soldier—believing him to be his son, though there was then, as there has been to this day, a doubt whether the boy was the son of O'Neill or of a Dundalk blacksmith named Kelly. The whole story of his O'Neill paternity rests on the word of the mother, Kelly's wife; and she never made the claim till on her deathbed, long after the death of Kelly, and when the boy was fully sixteen years of age.

The earl's eldest legitimate son Shane, afterwards well known by the name of *Shane-an-diomais* or John the Proud, was a mere boy when Matthew was made baron. But now that he was come of age and understood his position, he claimed the right to be his father's heir and to succeed to the earldom, alleging that Matthew was not an O'Neill at all, but merely the son of a blacksmith. On this question there was at first a good deal of quarrelling between Shane and his father; but in the end they became reconciled, and the earl was won over to favour the claims of Shane as against the baron.

On this, the baron laid his complaints before the authorities, rightly expecting that they would support him, as being the heir according to English law (p. 391); the result of which was that the earl was allured to Dublin, where he was seized by the lord deputy Sir James Croft, in 1551, and detained within the Pale in a sort of honourable captivity.[1] Shane was instantly up in arms, determined to avenge his father's treacherous capture, and to maintain what he conceived to be his right against Matthew and the English: and so commenced a quarrel that cost England more men and money than any single struggle they had yet undertaken in Ireland.

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 234.

The O'Neills of Tyrone were at this time, as they had been from the earliest historic period, the most powerful family in Ulster. They commonly claimed, and often exercised, sovereignty over the other Ulster tribes, all except the O'Donnells of Tirconnell, who, claiming to be of equal dignity,[1] never acknowledged their sway, and who were generally able to hold their own. Hence the O'Neills and the O'Donnells regarded each other with mutual hostility, and were nearly always at war.

Croft now undertook to reduce the young rebel chief to obedience, and it came to open war: the deputy and the baron on the one side, against Shane and his adherents on the other. Croft made three several attempts in Ulster in quick succession, and failed in all. He first, in 1551, sent an expedition of four ships to attack the Scots of Rathlin Island—the Mac Donnells, who were Shane's allies; but they unexpectedly fell on his army and destroyed them utterly, only one man escaping alive, who was taken prisoner and afterwards ransomed.[2] Again, the following year, he marched north, but his advance party received a severe check at Belfast by one of Shane's adherents; and Matthew on his way to join the deputy was surprised at night by Shane himself, and routed with heavy loss. His third attempt was made in the autumn of the same year (1552); but the only injury he was able to inflict, a serious one for the poor people, was to destroy a great extent of standing corn.[3] These hostilities went on till a great part of Ulster became waste. Still O'Neill showed not the least disposition to yield. On the contrary, the authorities complain that when they went to 'parle' with him (in 1553) they 'found nothing in Shane but pride and stubbornness.'[4] At last they thought it as well to let him alone, and for five or six years after this no serious attempt was made to reduce him.

Meantime the earl was released at the end of 1552,

[1] The O'Neills or *Kinel-Owen* were descended from Eoghan (Owen), and the O'Donnells or *Kinel-Connell* from Conall Gulban, both sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages.

[2] *Four Masters*, 1551.

[3] *Four Masters*, 1552.

[4] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 244.

though not till he had engaged not to make war on the baron of Dungannon or on any other of the adherents of the government.[1] But scarce had he arrived home when he and his sons wrangled and fought, so that a large district round Armagh was turned into a wilderness. To end this the earl and countess were brought once more to Dublin in 1553, where they were retained till the earl's death in 1559. And the deputy sent soldiers north to restore quiet; but—as the State Paper expresses it—'that country was not amended but reduced to a worse state than before.'

Shane now got mixed up—to his own loss—in a bitter family feud among the O'Donnells. Manus O'Donnell chief of Tirconnell, and his eldest son Calvagh, had been at war with each other for some time; and at last Calvagh, aided by the Scots, defeated the old man in 1555, placed him in captivity, and made himself chief instead. Two years later (1557) O'Neill collected a large army of Irish and English to invade Tirconnell, hoping to bring the whole of Ulster under his sway, or as he said himself, 'that there should be but one king in Ulster for the future.' Being joined by Calvagh's brother Hugh, who seems to have been exasperated at the ill treatment of his father, he marched westwards and finally pitched his camp at Balleeghan on the shore of Lough Swilly, in the heart of Tirconnell.

Calvagh seeing that with his small force he was not able to meet this attack in open fight, asked the advice of his father, whom he still held captive. Old Manus, remembering how he and his father Hugh had surprised Shane's father at night in his camp at Knockavoe thirty-five years before (p. 359), advised another surprise now. Calvagh accordingly sent two trusty friends who, passing off as Tyrone men, mingled with the crowd in O'Neill's camp at the beginning of the night without being detected; and when supper-time came round, they got for their share a helmetful of meal and some butter. Slipping out from the camp, they returned safely with the

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 235.

news that the invading army, confident in their strength, had become quite careless, and that the camp was not properly guarded: and they showed the oatmeal and butter as a proof that their story was true.

Calvagh instantly ordered his small band to arms, and came silently on the camp. The tent of Shane himself was easily distinguished. At the door stood a huge torch thicker than a man's body, blazing bright amid the glimmer of the camp fires; and near it, as guard over the tent, stood sixty tall galloglasses armed with battleaxes, and sixty grim-looking Scots with claymores ready drawn. But all were now taken completely by surprise. One party of the O'Donnells made a dash for the blazing torch to capture the chief; but he was beforehand with them, and escaped in the darkness and confusion with two of his followers. They fled on foot and swam across three rivers, the Deel, the Finn, and the Derg, all now swollen to torrents, as there had been a rain-storm; and so they made their way to a place of safety. O'Neill's whole army was routed and scattered; and Calvagh remained in possession of the camp with all its spoils.[1]

Shane appears to have soon recovered from this disaster, and without much delay turned his attention to other enemies. In the very next year, 1558, the year of the death of Queen Mary and of the accession of her half-sister Elizabeth, some of his people killed the baron of Dungannon in a manner that some writers do not hesitate to describe as assassination. It does not appear that Shane himself was present, though he was accused by the English of the murder of *his brother*: but he always maintained that *Matthew Kelly* was killed according to the laws of war.[2] As the earl his father died in captivity in Dublin in the following year, 1559, Shane assumed the

[1] *Four Masters*, 1557.

[2] The *Four Masters*' record of the transaction is:—'A.D. 1558. The baron O'Neill (Ferdorach the son of Conn Bacach) was slain (a deed unbecoming kinsmen) by the people of his brother John.' From the State Paper account also it appears obvious that he was killed by Shane's people, while Shane himself was absent. See also Campion, ed. 1809, p. 188.

old title—'The O'Neill'—and was acknowledged chief of Tyrone without any opposition.

The government looked on these movements of the great northern chief with deep uneasiness. The assumption of the chieftainship was an open defiance of the English law, according to which Matthew's eldest son became baron of Dungannon at his father's death, and should now succeed to the chiertainship and lands of Tyrone (p. 391). So the lord justice Sir Henry Sydney, leading his army to Dundalk, sent to Shane requiring him to come and explain his conduct. But the chief's adroitness averted the threatened storm. Taking no notice of the lord justice's imperious summons, he sent him a friendly invitation to come and stand sponsor for his child, which Sydney thought it better to accept. While he remained at Shane's castle, in February 1559, the chief gave such convincing explanations of his conduct, showing that he had acted in strict accordance with Irish law and custom, and at the same time he made such protestations of loyalty, that the lord justice seems to have been quite won over. Promising to lay the whole matter before the queen in this new light, and advising Shane to keep quiet meantime, he withdrew his army and returned to Dublin. Shane followed the advice, and there was peace during Sydney's stay in the country.

The earl of Sussex, the next governor, was appointed lord deputy in August 1559. Sydney's policy had been one of conciliation, and as long as he remained O'Neill was quiet enough. But Sussex had scarce any policy at all except one of general hostility; his military operations were nothing but mere destructive exasperating raids, leading to nothing; and in the end he drove Shane to renew the war.[1] But at the time of his arrival in Ireland, the chief had become so formidable that it was thought advisable not to attempt to reduce him just then. Accordingly the queen instructs Sussex that although the son of the late baron is the true heir, yet inasmuch as Shane is legitimate, and is now in possession, it is better to

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 366–7.

leave him undisturbed.[1] But this apparent respect for legitimacy was mere pretence, which the queen threw aside when it suited her purpose, as may be seen in next page.

At this time there was great strife and confusion in Thomond, as there had been ever since the traitor Donogh O'Brien had succeeded to the earldom on the death of his uncle, Murrogh O'Brien the first earl (p. 387). After Donogh's death—he was slain by his own brother—his son Conor became earl by English law; and for many years he maintained his position, but only by continual fighting, against rivals who claimed the chieftainship by the law of tanistry. Among others the two sons of Earl Murrogh rose up against him, and were aided by Garrett earl of Desmond, while the earl of Clanrickard and the Burkes took the part of Conor. After a good deal of skirmishing they fought a bloody battle in 1559, at Spancel Hill in Clare, where Conor and Clanrickard were driven off the field with great loss. This did not end the feud; for Thomond continued for years to be disturbed by rival claimants. But Conor ultimately recovered his earldom.

The laws passed by parliament for the spread of Protestantism (p. 396), which were now in full swing in Dublin, produced great excitement among the Catholics throughout the country; and the government saw with alarm many signs of coming trouble. It was known that one of the O'Briens had just returned (in 1560) from France with promises of aid; O'Conor had escaped from Dublin Castle (p. 399); the earl of Desmond had refused to pay cesses *and had masses publicly celebrated*; and mysterious messengers were continually passing from one great chief to another—Shane O'Neill, O'Brien, and the earls of Kildare and Desmond. There arose among the English colonists a general uneasy feeling that the Irish were bent on a rebellion this year. All this and much more is stated by the queen in her letter of instructions to the earl of Sussex when she sent him over as lord

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 287, 288.

lieutenant in 1560; and in Sussex's reports to the queen after his arrival.[1]

Perhaps it was these ominous signs that renewed the queen's dread of O'Neill, and induced her to issue fresh instructions to Sussex that 'Shane O'Neill may either by fair means or by force be compelled to be obedient to us'; and that the young baron of Dungannon, 'being the heir in right,' should be reinstated.[2] Meantime Shane was not idle: he maintained a voluminous correspondence, now with the queen, now with the government, in which he proved himself their match in diplomatic craft as well as in war. In one of his letters to the queen he requests her to procure him an English wife, and to give him £3,000 to enable him to go to England and explain his conduct personally.[3]

Rivals were now, by the queen's instructions, raised up all round him: O'Reilly of Brefney was made an earl, and it was proposed to create Calvagh O'Donnell earl of Tirconnell. It was arranged that he should be attacked at various points simultaneously. O'Donnell and O'Reilly were to fall on him from the west; the Scots were to be won over to assail him from the north and east, under Sorley Boy Macdonnell and his brother James; and Sussex prepared to march against him from the south.[4]

But Shane was too quick for them, and thwarted the whole scheme in his own fierce and decisive fashion. He first entered Brefney (1560) and laid it waste till he forced O'Reilly to submit and give hostages for obedience in the future. Next hearing that Calvagh and his wife were in the monastery of Killodonnell on the shore of Lough Swilly with only a few attendants, he swooped down from the hills and carried them both off. He owed Calvagh an old grudge (p. 403), and he now threw him into prison, where he detained him till he was ransomed. His subsequent conduct in this affair was very disreputable: he

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 296 to 304. [2] *Ibid.* p. 292.

[3] Some of his letters are in Latin; some in Irish. Several of them have been printed by Dr. J. T. Gilbert in his *National MSS.*

[4] *Carew Papers*, 1515-1574, p. 310.

kept the lady living with him in a state of dishonour from that time till the day of his death. And what rendered the crime all the more loathsome was the fact that his own wife was Calvagh's daughter by a former marriage, and therefore stepdaughter to the abducted lady. She was living at the time: and the Four Masters tell us that she died of horror and grief at the imprisonment of her father and the misconduct of her husband.

Calvagh's wife was sister to the earl of Argyle—she herself being commonly known as the countess of Argyle; and through her influence the intended attack of the Scots was averted, and they returned to their alliance with Shane. About this time, by way of venting his feelings, he built a castle on an island, to which he gave the name *Fooa-na-Gall*, the 'Hatred of the English.'

In this same year (1560) he made an irruption southwards into the Pale, wasting and destroying everything. He did not leave food enough even for his army, so that on the approach of winter he had to withdraw to his own territory.

In the summer of next year, 1561, Sussex marched north with the forces of the Pale and with some reinforcements he had brought from England, and fortified himself in the cathedral of Armagh, from which he sent a party of 1,000 men to ravage Tyrone. All went well till they were returning laden with booty, when Shane dogged them silently mile after mile; and falling on them suddenly at a favourable opportunity, he routed them and forced them to relinquish all their spoils, which he restored to the owners. He next made another furious raid into the Pale and wasted Meath and Louth. Turning his attention to Tirconnell, which had at this time no ruler except the infirm old chief Manus—Calvagh being still a prisoner—he made himself master of it, and now assumed the sovereignty of all Ulster, 'from Drogheda to the Erne.'[1]

At last the lord lieutenant Sussex hit on a plan, which

[1] *Four Masters*, 1561, where Sussex's expedition and defeat are related.

if it had been successful, would have most effectually quieted the dreaded chief for evermore: he hired a man to murder him. The intended assassin was a fellow named Nele Gray, one of O'Neill's own servants: and the whole plot is detailed in a letter written on the 24th August 1561 by Sussex himself to the queen:—'In fine I brake with him [Nele Gray] to kill Shane, and bound myself by my oath to see him have a hundred marks of land. . . . I told him the ways he might do it, and how to escape after with safety.'[1] It fell through because Gray got afraid in the end and backed out of the business. The plot afterwards came to the knowledge of O'Neill. 'Elizabeth's answer—if she sent any answer—is not discoverable. It is most sadly certain however that Sussex was continued in office; and inasmuch as it will be seen that he repeated the experiment a few months later, his letter could not have been received with any marked condemnation.'[2]

In the autumn (1561), Sussex made another attempt to reduce him: a legitimate attempt this time. At the instance of Calvagh O'Donnell, whom O'Neill had released on ransom a little time before, he marched with a large army into Tyrone, attended by the five earls of Desmond, Kildare, Ormond, Thomond, and Clanrickard, and wasted the whole country as far as Lough Foyle. But this was a mere useless foray; for O'Neill retired out of the way, and the deputy had to return, having done much harm and no good.[3]

Finding that force was of no avail, the queen resolved to bring about Shane's long promised visit to London, hoping that a personal interview would settle matters. She sent the earl of Kildare, his near cousin (p. 351), to

[1] Hamilton, *Calendar*, 1509–1573, Preface, xvi. and pp. 179, 208. The full text of the letter may be seen in Froude, *History of England*, ed. 1870, vii. p. 133. Moore (*History of Ireland*, iv. 33) remarks on this 'frightful letter,' as he calls it, that there is not in it 'a single hint of doubt or scruple as to the moral justifiableness of the transaction.'

[2] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, vii. 133.

[3] *Four Masters*, 1561, p. 1587.

treat with him, with a letter from herself inviting him to visit her court. This succeeded for the time, for Shane was himself anxious to visit the queen. As a preliminary step, peace was now concluded between him and Sussex, in which it was agreed that he was to be chief of Tyrone till such time as the claims of Matthew's eldest son should be investigated. The English were to be withdrawn from Armagh; but here an intentional ambiguity was slipped in: it was indeed nothing better than a discreditable bit of knavery, described by Sussex himself to the queen:—'The earl of Kildare was put as surety for the fetching away the soldiers from Armagh; *and no word forbidding others to be at any time brought thither*': and he adds that this trick 'with such a traitor might very well be allowed.'[1] This part of the stipulation, as we might expect, was not carried out. A safe conduct was brought to him by Kildare, in which it will be seen there was another crooked twist, and an engagement that no injury was to be done to his territory or people during his absence.

In December (1561) he went to Dublin on his way to England. Sussex, who was opposed to the journey, detained him there as long as he could, and he wrote to the minister Cecil suggesting that the queen should treat him coldly. But this spiteful recommendation was disregarded, and she received him very graciously. The redoubtable chief and his retainers, all in their strange native attire, were viewed with curiosity and wonder. He strode through the court to the royal presence, between the two lines of wondering courtiers; and behind him marched his galloglasses, their heads bare, their long hair curling down on their shoulders and clipped short in front just above the eyes. They wore a loose wide-sleeved saffron-coloured tunic, and over this a short shaggy mantle flung across the shoulders.[2] On the 6th January 1562 he

[1] Hamilton, *Calendar*, 1509–1573, Preface, xix. and p. 182, No. 71.

[2] Camden, *Annals*, ed. 1639, p. 69, from which the above description of the appearance and dress of Shane and his retinue is translated.

made formal submission in presence of the court and the foreign ambassadors.[1]

Shane was perfectly well aware of the danger he incurred by going to England; he had no reason to trust those who had attempted his assassination only a few months before. Yet it had been a favourite project with him for a long time to have a personal interview with the queen, trusting probably to his adroitness to get from her the most favourable terms. As a matter of fact it was the settled intention of the government to entrap him, and they deliberately drew out his safe-conduct with a cunning flaw. Sir William Cecil expressed this intention even before the visit:—'In Shane's absence from Ireland something might be cavilled against him or his for non-observing the covenants on his side; and so the pact being infringed the matter might be used as should be thought fit'[2]—that is to say, Shane might be arrested. 'The submission being disposed of,' says Mr. Froude, 'the next object [of the government] was to turn the visit to account. Shane discovered that, notwithstanding his precautions, he had been outwitted in the wording of his safe-conduct. Though the government promised to permit him to return to Ireland, the time of his stay had not been specified.'[3]

He was kept in London on various pretences: and it was decided that the young baron of Dungannon was to come over so that the rival claims might be investigated. But what they wanted was delay, so as to detain Shane as long as possible: and they carried on the dishonest trick by publicly summoning the baron to London while they privately directed that he should remain in Ireland.[4] Shane understood perfectly well the game that was being played, and he took the course of all others most likely to succeed: he wrote letter after letter to the queen, flattering and cajoling her; again asking her to procure an English

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 312.
[2] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, vii. 135.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 137.
[4] Hamilton, *Calendar*, 1509–1573, p. 188, No. 44, and p. 190, No. 28.

wife for him, promising to crush all her enemies in Ireland, assuring her of his admiration for her greatness, requesting to be taught the English manner of dressing, shooting, riding, and hunting, and telling her she was his only refuge. And he seems to have succeeded in winning her to his side. At length matters were brought to a crisis by the news that the young baron of Dungannon had been killed in a skirmish by Turlogh Lynnagh O'Neill. Whereupon the queen and government permitted Shane to return, and paid all his expenses. The queen issued a proclamation to the effect that O'Neill's submission had been accepted, and that he was now to be regarded as a good and faithful subject.

These terms were regarded by both himself and his people as a triumph over his enemies; and it was considered that he had obtained from the English court all that he had demanded. Yet, taking advantage of his detention, they forced him to agree to and sign certain severe conditions, the principal of which were that he was to claim no sovereignty or levy contributions or hostages outside Tyrone; that he should keep no soldiers in pay except those of his own principality, which would oblige him to dismiss his Scottish mercenaries; that he was not to wage war without the sanction of the Irish deputy and council; and that he was to reduce to obedience to the queen certain of the surrounding tribes, including the Scots, his allies, which would of course convert them from friends to enemies. He was merely permitted to retain for the present his lordship over Tyrone, till the claim of the remaining son of the baron of Dungannon should be investigated.[1]

He returned to Dublin in May 1562 with the proclamation in his pocket, and making no delay in this dangerous place, he hastened to Ulster, where he was welcomed with unbounded joy by the people of Tyrone. Considering all the circumstances it was marvellous that he was permitted to leave London so easily. Others before him, like the earl of Kildare, had worn out their lives in

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 313, 314.

the Tower. We may perhaps account for his escape partly by his skilful flattery of the queen, and partly that the government knew that if he were put out of the way, Turlogh Lynnagh would succeed to the chieftainship, and might prove equally or more troublesome. 'To whatever he owed his escape,' observes Dr. Richey, 'it was not to the justice, magnanimity, or honour of the English government.'

If the London authorities had acted straight, O'Neill would probably have returned loyally disposed, and all might be well. They took a different course; and the natural result followed. He resented being forced to sign conditions under compulsion and in violation of agreement; and probably he never meant to carry them out. It was craft against craft, and the queen and her crooked ministers met their match. His position and his intentions are very clearly set forth in his own speech made afterwards to the commissioners Stukely and Dowdall (p. 416):—'Whom am I to trust? When I came unto the earl of Sussex upon safe-conduct, he offered me the courtesy of a handlock. When I was with the queen, she said to me herself that I had, it was true, safe-conduct to come and go; but it was not said when I might go; and they kept me there until I had agreed to things so far against my honour and profit, that I would never perform them while I live. That made me make war; and if it were to do again I would do it.' [1]

He now pursued just the same course as before, as if he had never signed any conditions. Maguire of Fermanagh had made himself obnoxious by his alliance with Calvagh O'Donnell and by his subserviency to the English government. Assisted by Hugh O'Donnell, who aspired to the chieftainship of Tirconnell as against his brother Calvagh, Shane now, in direct disregard of the conditions, invaded Fermanagh, and brought Maguire to utter ruin.

Sussex having in vain expostulated with him, at length laid another plot for his destruction. In 1563, he sent

[1] Hamilton, *Calendar*, 1509–1573, p. 289, No. 33; Froude, *Hist. of Eng*. ed. 1870, vii. 544.

him an urgent request to meet himself and some other English captains for a parley at Dundalk, enclosing him a safe-conduct, cunningly worded so as to leave a loophole for his arrest. Sussex himself describes this treacherous piece of double-dealing in a letter to the queen.[1] But O'Neill, taught no doubt by his London experience, did not present himself at the meeting.

This having failed, Sussex next threw out a more tempting bait. Shane had often expressed a wish for an English wife (pp. 406, 410) and seems to have cast his choice on Sussex's sister. When Sussex came to hear of this he wrote to him (1563), 'that if he would come [to Ardbraccan] and see her, and if he liked her and she him, they should have his good will'; all which was simply a trap. 'The present sovereign of England'—writes Mr. Froude—'would perhaps give one of her daughters to the king of Dahomey with more readiness than the earl of Sussex would have consigned his sister to Shane O'Neill. . . . Had he trusted himself to Sussex he would have had a short shrift for a blessing, and a rough nuptial knot about his neck.' O'Neill got warning of danger from some friend living in the Pale, and never came to claim the lady.

These repeated attempts only the more exasperated him, and he made a series of crushing raids on those Ulster chiefs that had declared against him. Sussex marched north once more in May 1563; but he had no pay and but poor provisions for his soldiers, who were mutinous and unmanageable; and he effected nothing but the capture of some herds of cows and horses.[2]

At length the queen, heartily sick of this interminable war, instructed Sussex to end it by any reasonable concessions; and peace was signed, on the 8th November 1563, in O'Neill's house at Benburb, on terms very favourable to him. He was confirmed in the old name, 'The O'Neill,' 'until the queen should decorate him by another honourable name.' He was not bound to come in person to the

[1] Hamilton, *Calendar*, 1509–1574, p. 202, Nos. 72, 73.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1573, pp. 349–352.

supreme governor of Ireland. 'The said Lord O'Neill was to have all pre-eminence, jurisdiction, and dominion, which his predecessors had . . . over all who were accustomed to pay service to his predecessors.' The English garrison to be removed from Armagh. All spoils taken from Tyrone while Lord O'Neill was in England were to be restored.[1]

Almost immediately after this a determined attempt was made to poison him, and well nigh succeeded. The time was skilfully chosen—after the peace—when Shane would naturally be unsuspicious, and there is scarce a doubt that it was planned by Sussex, though there is no absolute proof. Sussex had in his employment a man named Smith, whom he often sent as a confidential messenger to O'Neill.[2] This man was the agent in the attempt. He sent the chief some wine from Dublin as a present, which Shane and his family and guests unsuspectingly drank at table. But the assassin missed the main mark; for though all that drank were taken sick, and nearly the whole household were brought to death's door, no one actually died. The crime was traced to Smith, who confessed his guilt, but protested that he did it on his own responsibility—which no one believed. He was of course arrested, and much noise was made about his 'horrible attempt' as the queen called it: but he well knew he had nothing to fear; and early in the following year he was set at liberty.[3]

For some time after this, Shane was left very much to himself; we read of no further attempts to assassinate him; and the country enjoyed unusual quiet.

It will be necessary here to pause in our narrative to say a few words about the Scots of Antrim, who in those times figured much in Irish affairs. The Irish colonists who had settled in early days in Scotland ultimately, as has been related (p. 151), obtained the sovereignty of the whole

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 352, 353, 362.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 349, 350.

[3] See also Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870. vii. 156, where the whole transaction is related: and Richey, *Short Hist.* p. 476.

country. Like their kinsmen in Ireland they were divided into tribes and septs, of whom the most distinguished were the Mac Donnells of the Hebrides—'the Lords of the Isles.' A little before the time we are now treating of, these Mac Donnells and others had begun to form settlements in Antrim, the home of their ancestors. They were a bold, brave, pugnacious race; and they leagued with the Irish chiefs and took part in their wars, as naturally as if they had never left the old country. The English government looked on them with an unfriendly eye, and their increasing power gave great uneasiness; for not only were they themselves formidable, but being enemies of the English, they fanned disaffection through the whole province. Expeditions were sent against them from time to time, which sometimes made great havoc, and were sometimes repulsed. But these expeditions and losses in no way deterred the Islesmen: fresh swarms of 'Redshanks,' as they were often called, poured in; and year by year they obtained firmer footing in the Glens of Antrim. They often hired themselves as mercenaries to the Irish chiefs; and part of Shane O'Neill's bodyguard usually consisted of a company of gigantic Scottish galloglasses.

O'Neill had a twofold ambition. He meant to make himself king of Ulster like his forefathers, and to rule altogether independently of the English, though still acknowledging the queen as his sovereign. And he aimed at bringing all the Ulster tribes, great and small, under his absolute dominion. The English on their part were equally resolved to extend and maintain their authority over Ulster, and they tried every means at their disposal, fair or foul—force, craft, assassination—to crush him. If he had united the Ulster chiefs in friendly alliance with himself, he might have withstood the English to the end. But in his efforts to subjugate, he created enemies all round him; and the defeat that finally crushed him was inflicted, not by the English, but by his neighbours the O'Donnells.

The London treaty bound him to reduce certain tribes, including the Scots. We know how little this treaty

influenced him. But anyhow he now broke with the Scots and made preparations to attack them, whether to please the queen, as he himself asserted, or more probably thinking that they were growing too powerful to be safe as neighbours. In 1565 he crossed the Bann in curraghs, and after several conflicts, gained a decisive victory over them at Glenshesk near Ballycastle, where 700 of them were slain. Of their three leaders—the Mac Donnells, brothers—Angus was slain, and Sorley Boy and James were made prisoners; but James died of his wounds.[1]

The news of this victory at first gave great joy to the English, and the privy council sent to congratulate him. But seeing how much it increased his power, their joy soon turned to jealousy and fear. The queen directed Sir Henry Sydney, who had been again appointed deputy in the beginning of this year (1565), to call on O'Neill for an explanation why he went to war without leave, and why he kept the prisoners and the castles he had taken, instead of handing them over to the government, acting as if the country were altogether his own. In the meantime, to make matters worse, he made a successful raid on Tirconnell early in the following year (1566), spoiled Clanrickard, expelled Shane Maguire chief of Fermanagh, and plundered that part of the Pale lying near Newry; and he also burned the cathedral of Armagh to prevent the English getting shelter there again.

In this same year, two commissioners, justice Dowdall and Thomas Stukely were sent to have an interview with him. But he gave them no satisfaction, and uttered this speech, alluding in it contemptuously to the fact that Mac Carthy of Desmond had recently been made earl of Clancarty:—'I care not to be made an earl, unless I may be better and higher than earl; for I am in blood and power better and higher than the best of them; and I will give place to none but my cousin of Kildare, for that he is of my house. You have made a wise earl of M'Carty More; I keep a [servant-] man as good as he is. For the queen I confess she is my sovereign; but I never made

[1] *Four Masters*, 1565, p. 1605

peace with her but at her own seeking. My ancestors were kings of Ulster, and Ulster is mine, and shall be mine. O'Donnell shall never come into his country, nor Bagenall into Newry, nor Kildare into Dundrum or Lecale. They are now mine. With the sword I won them; with this sword I will keep them.'[1]

Sir Henry Sydney, a much abler and more far-seeing man than Sussex, now (1566) took decisive and well-planned measures to reduce the great rebel chief. He recalled all the sub-chiefs who had been expelled by O'Neill, and who now—every man—engaged to make war on Shane,[2] threatening him on all sides: he sent a garrison to Derry—in O'Neill's rear—under a brave and experienced officer, Colonel Randolph, and he put Dundalk in a state of defence. Shane now—1566—made an inroad into the Pale, doing immense damage, but he met with a serious repulse when he attempted to take Dundalk. He was also defeated with great loss at Derry; though here the English purchased victory dearly by the death of the brave Colonel Randolph: and to complete the tragedy his men were soon afterwards attacked by some mysterious deadly plague, which carried off almost the whole garrison. Sydney next marched into Tyrone, which he wasted as he went along: and he restored to their castles many of the chiefs whom he had recalled, including Calvagh O'Donnell;[3] but O'Neill himself retired to his fastnesses, and the deputy had to return without bringing him to terms.

When Calvagh O'Donnell died he was succeeded in 1567 by his brother Hugh. This was the same Hugh who some years before had been in alliance with Shane; but he was now an enemy, and on the side of the English: and in the year of his inauguration, acting probably at the instance of Sydney, he led a plundering expedition into Tyrone, and committed great damage. Shane retaliated by crossing the Swilly into Tirconnell; but he was met by O'Donnell at the other side and utterly routed. The fugitives, attempting in their flight to recross the Swilly, were

[1] See references in note, p. 412.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 373. [3] *Ibid.* 1575–1588, p. 335.

drowned in great numbers, as the tide had risen in the meantime; and Shane himself, crossing a ford two miles higher up, barely escaped with his life and made his way into Tyrone.[1]

This action, in which 1,300 of his men perished, utterly ruined him. He lost all heart, and the annalists say 'his reason and senses became deranged,' in which they are not far wrong: for the chief now formed the insane resolution of placing himself at the mercy of the Scots, whose undying enmity he had earned by the defeat at Glenshesk two years before. He came to their camp at Cushendun (in 1567) with only fifty followers, trusting in their generosity, having previously sent them his prisoner Sorley Boy to propitiate them. They received him with a show of welcome and cordiality; but in the midst of the festivities, they raised a dispute, which was probably preconcerted, and suddenly seizing their arms, they massacred the chief and all his followers.[2]

The body of O'Neill was wrapped up in a shirt and thrown into a pit. Four days afterwards, Captain Pierce, commander of Carrickfergus, who is strongly suspected of having a hand in the plot that led to Shane's destruction, brought the head to Dublin to the deputy, who gave him 1,000 marks, the reward offered in the proclamation. And the deputy caused the head to be impaled on a spike over one of the towers of Dublin Castle. O'Neill's rebellion cost the government £147,407, about a million and three-quarters of our present money, besides the cesses laid on the country, and the damages sustained by the subjects.[3] At the time of his death he was only about forty years of age.

Of all the Irish chiefs, the English most feared and hated Shane O'Neill. English writers persistently defamed him, and they continue to do so to this day. 'So thoroughly has Shane's personal character been blackened that the Irish have never attempted to make him a

[1] *Four Masters*, 1567.
[2] Campion, *Historie*, 191, 192; *Four Masters*, 1567. Ware, *Annals*, 1568.

national hero; and he enjoys the unfortunate position, between the two nationalities, of being defamed by the one and repudiated by the other. . . . No possible charge against him has been omitted: but though they all contain some element of truth, they are manifestly exaggerated, and generally made by men who were themselves, with less excuse, open to similar imputations.'[1]

We know that his life was stained by one black crime. But taking him all in all, there is no reason to believe that he was worse than the general run of Irish chiefs and English noblemen of the time; and he certainly never practised secret assassination. In his manner of ruling his principality he compared favourably with the contemporary chiefs in other parts of Ireland. Of this we have the testimony of several writers, among others the Jesuit Campion, a contemporary and rather hostile writer:—'[O'Neill] ordered the north so properly, that if any subject could approve the losse of money or goods within his precinct, he would assuredly either force the robber to restitution, or of his own cost redeeme the harme to the looser's contentation. Sitting at meate, before he put one morsell into his mouth, he used to slice a portion above the dayly almes, and send it namely to some beggar at his gate, saying it was meete to serve Christ first.'[2] Sydney when he went north was surprised at the prosperous look of the country, and says Tyrone was 'so well inhabited as no Irish county in the realm was like it'; which statement may be contrasted with his account of the state of Leinster and Munster at the same period, under the government of the earls of Desmond, Ormond, and Kildare (p. 421). If in private life he was much like his contemporary chiefs, he rose head and shoulders above them all in military genius, in the arts of diplomacy, and in administrative ability.

[1] Dr. Richey, the writer of these words, has, after a searching examination of the State Papers, vindicated the character of Shane O'Neill; and from his valuable and suggestive lecture I have derived material help in writing this account of the great Irish chief. (*Short History of Ireland*, chap. xvii).

[2] *Historie of Ireland*, ed. 1809, p. 189.

CHAPTER IV

THE GERALDINE REBELLION: FIRST STAGE

While the North was convulsed by the war of Shane O'Neill, the South was kept in a state of unspeakable confusion and misery by the never-ending feuds of the Butlers and Geraldines. These two great families, it will be remembered, had taken opposite sides all along, the Butlers being for the English, the Geraldines for the Irish. They had now an additional incentive to quarrel: for the earl of Ormond had conformed to the Protestant faith, while Desmond—Gerald the 'rebel earl'—was regarded as the great champion of Catholicity. Sussex writes in 1560 that all the evil-disposed (i.e. disloyal) persons depended on the Geraldines: all the loyal people on the Butlers.[1]

On one occasion Desmond, who claimed jurisdiction over Decies in Waterford, crossed the Blackwater with his army to levy tribute in the old form of coyne and livery. The chief of the district, Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, a relative of the Butlers, resisted the claim, and called in the aid of the earl of Ormond. Desmond, taken unawares, was defeated in a battle fought in 1565 at Affane in the county Waterford, beside the Blackwater; many of his men were slain; and he himself was wounded and taken prisoner. It is related that while he was borne from the field on a litter, one of his captors tauntingly asked him:—'Where is now the great earl of Desmond?' To which he instantly replied, 'Where he ought to be: on the necks of the Butlers!'

In this same year the earl of Sussex, who was then in England, sent a report to the queen, with a long catalogue of Desmond's misdeeds: his lawless invasion of Decies, disobedience to the deputy's orders, refusal to aid the queen's forces, and several spoilings of Ormond's territories

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 301.

during the time Ormond himself was serving the queen.[1] Matters at last came to such a pass between the two earls that the queen commanded both to her presence to have their differences settled. Ormond was permitted to return almost immediately, but Desmond was detained for some time. He was at last pardoned and set at liberty: but he had to bind himself to certain conditions, among others to assist the government in pacifying the country, to abolish the Brehon law, coyne and livery, and all such imposts, and to discourage minstrels, rhymers, and story-tellers. He was made to promise in short to anglicise himself and his people; but all this had little result, for on his return matters went on much the same as before.

Not only did these two earls desolate the country by their contentions, but they crushed and ruined the people, by impressing men for their wars, by levying coyne and livery, and by every other possible form of tyranny. Sir Henry Sydney the deputy at last made a journey south early in 1567 to reduce Desmond, and to investigate the causes of quarrel. He found the country all ruined. In a letter to the queen he gives a vivid description of the desolation and misery he witnessed with his own eyes on his way through Munster and Connaught; and it may well astonish a reader how things could have come to such a pass in any civilised land having even the name of a government. The farther south he went the worse he found the country. Speaking of the districts of Desmond and Thomond he states that whole tracts, once cultivated, lay waste and uninhabited: the ruins of burned towns, villages, and churches everywhere: 'And there heard I such lamentable cries and doleful complaints made by that remain of poor people which are yet left, who hardly escaping the fury of the sword and fire of their outrageous neighbours, or the famine which their extorcious lords have driven them unto either by taking their goods from them or by spending the same by their extort taking of coyne and livery, make demonstration of the miserable estate of that country. . . . Yea, the view of the bones

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 370–3.

and skulls of the dead subjects, who partly by murder, partly by famine, have died in the fields, as in troth hardly any Christian with dry eyes could behold.'[1] The smaller chiefs imitated their more powerful neighbours, and impoverished by their grinding extortion the few people that were left.

During his progress he hanged or imprisoned great numbers of those he deemed the worst criminals; and acted throughout with excessive and imprudent harshness. While sternly reproving the chiefs whom he found in fault as he went along, he looked upon Desmond as the greatest culprit of all, and treated him more severely than the others; though he was indeed in little or nothing worse than Ormond. At great risk, he arrested him publicly in Kilmallock—his own capital town—and brought him to Limerick, where he had him indicted for breaking the peace against Ormond, and for unlawfully levying men, and fined him £20,000. At the same time, having knighted the earl's brother John Fitzgerald, or John of Desmond as he is usually called, he appointed him seneschal and ruler of the Desmond principality during the earl's absence in captivity.[2]

In South Connaught the whole country had been kept in a state of constant strife on account of the mutual wrangling of the earl of Clanrickard's sons, and also of Clanrickard himself with the other chiefs of the province. The deputy in his way through Connaught forced all these to a temporary peace, and left the province quiet for the time. He returned to Dublin through Athlone, bringing Desmond and other prisoners, whom he consigned to the castle on his arrival.

Sydney's endeavours to settle matters between Ormond and Desmond satisfied neither. Ormond was related to queen Elizabeth, and had been educated with her; and she now insisted that right or wrong he should be sustained. Accordingly Sydney's decisions went generally against Desmond; but Ormond was incensed that they

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, Pref. lviii.
[2] *Ibid.* 1575–1588, p. 337.

were not still more favourable to himself; and he sent continual complaints of the deputy.[1] This, coupled with the commotion caused by Sydney's unsparing severity, turned the queen against him; and finding it impossible to please all, he asked and obtained permission to retire. He returned to England in 1567, bringing several of the Irish chiefs, and leaving the earl of Desmond in Dublin Castle, whose brother John continued to govern South Munster in his place.

Ormond persisted in his mischievous complaints of the Fitzgeralds to the queen: and he now accused John of Desmond of practising gross injustice towards the Butlers. The consequence of these representations was that without consulting or advising with Sydney, who knew best what course to adopt, or with anyone else, John of Desmond was treacherously arrested, and both he and the earl were brought over to London this same year (1567) and consigned to the Tower, where they were detained for six years. Whatever show of justice there was in the arrest of the earl of Desmond, there was none at all in the treatment of his brother: and when Sydney subsequently heard of the proceeding he strongly condemned it: pronouncing it the origin of the rising under Fitzmaurice—about to be related. John of Desmond had been in fact well affected towards the government up to that time: but his wanton arrest and imprisonment converted him from a loyal subject to an irreconcilable rebel.[2]

After a year's absence Sir Henry Sydney returned to Ireland as deputy in 1568; and by the queen's command he summoned a parliament early in the following year. He wished to pass certain measures which he knew would be vehemently opposed: and in order to make sure of success he had the elections carried on in a most irregular and unconstitutional way. Some mayors and sheriffs elected themselves members; some members represented non-corporate towns, i.e. towns that had no right to have members at all; and many were returned for places which

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 336.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 341, where all this is related in detail.

they had never even seen. A large number of Englishmen were elected merely to vote with the deputy—men who knew nothing of the country, and had no interest in it.

There was a powerful opposition headed by a very able man, Sir Christopher Barnewell, who was seconded and aided by Sir Edmund Butler, the earl of Ormond's brother, whose motive for opposing the government will be seen farther on. The opposition insisted on an inquiry into the gross illegality of the elections; which was granted, with the result that those who elected themselves and those elected for non-corporate towns were all disqualified. But still it was a packed house, and the court party—'the English faction,' as the opposition called them—had a majority.

Then, during three sessions, which were held in 1569, 1570, and 1571, Sydney had his measures passed, though with great difficulty. The principal were:—one for suspending Poynings' law while the present parliament lasted, so that acts could be passed without consulting the English council: one for attainting Shane O'Neill, for confiscating his lands, and for abolishing the title of The O'Neill, making it high treason to use it. There was also an act for the erection of free schools, or 'charter schools,' whose teachers were to be Englishmen, and of course Protestants: the precursor of all those attempts to proselytise the Irish through the instrumentality of education, which were continued with great persistency far into the present century. Sydney would have brought forward measures still more stringent and sweeping if the opposition had not been so determined.

The discontent and alarm caused by the turn of the tide against the Catholic religion, and by the high-handed and harsh proceedings of Sydney, had been brought to a crisis by the arrest of Desmond and his brother. The nearest representative of the Desmond family remaining in Ireland was James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald the earl's first cousin. He keenly resented their arrest, but took no immediate steps, as he expected to see them released after a short imprisonment. But when he found that Sydney returned

to Dublin the following year without bringing them, he went among the southern chiefs in 1569 exhorting them to combine in defence of their religion. This Fitzmaurice was a man of great ability, both in civil and military affairs, enthusiastic in temperament, of active habits, a scorner of luxury and ease, who preferred the bare ground to a bed after a hard day's fighting.

About this time or a little before, a project to colonise a large part of Ireland was seriously entertained by the English government: it was a matter of secrecy, but the secret leaked out; disquieting rumours ran through the country; and there was a ferment of alarm among the chiefs both native and Anglo-Irish. That these reports were not without foundation was brought home to them in a manner not to be mistaken by the proceedings of an English adventurer, Sir Peter Carew. He was a Devonshire knight who had lately come to Ireland to claim large territories in Leinster and Munster, in virtue of his descent from Robert Fitzstephen who had lived 400 years before, and who as a matter of fact left no heirs. On this fraudulent claim, which he supported by a forged roll, Carew harassed the owners with crooked legal proceedings pertinaciously pursued for years, encouraged by the weak and corrupt law courts: so that many were induced to offer compromises. Moreover he expelled the old inhabitants of several districts, and in doing so was guilty of many acts of great cruelty. But in the end most of his ridiculous claims were disallowed and came to nothing: and he died in 1575 before he had time to do more mischief.[1] It may be added here that the projected extensive colonisation was turned aside for a time by the course of events.

Fitzmaurice, acting on the request of the earl of Desmond and his brother John, which was conveyed to him privately from London, issued a manifesto in 1569 to the 'prelates, princes, lords, and people of Ireland,' proclaiming himself the leader of a holy league for the

[1] See *Four Masters*, 1580, p. 1736, note *b*; and Cox, *Hist. of Irel.* A.D. 1575.

defence of the Roman Catholic religion.[1] The grounds set forth in the manifesto are purely religious: but the Irish chiefs all over the country were as we have seen already well disposed to combine; and thus arose the second Geraldine league.[2] The distinction of race was forgotten: both Anglo-Irish and native Irish joined this league to defend their religion and their homes, till it included 'all the English and Irish of Munster from the Barrow to Mizen Head.'[3] Among the noblemen was the newly created earl of Clancarty, who now renounced his allegiance and claimed his position as Mac Carthy More, native chief of Desmond.

Among the lands seized by Carew was a large district belonging to Sir Edmund Butler, brother of the earl of Ormond, Ormond himself being at this time in England. Butler, who was 'a cholerick man,' as Cox describes him, a man of a restless pugnacious disposition, at once resented Carew's impudent intrusion: and he and his two brothers Pierce and Edward, both of whom acted under his influence, joined the league. Sir Edmund had a bitter personal quarrel with the deputy in the parliament, and Sydney's stinging insults formed an additional motive for rising in rebellion. But the Butlers were not very earnest, and their action was in a great measure a fit of ill-temper. They had no religious grievances like the others, and at no time did they contemplate anything more than to recover their lands and take revenge on Carew. They never dreamed of throwing off altogether their allegiance to the queen. They were very active at first; but they soon retired and made submission.

On the surface, however, the Geraldine rebellion was purely a religious one, which is plain, not only from Fitzmaurice's manifesto, but also from the statements of Sir Nicholas Malbie and other English officers.[4] The archbishop of Cashel and the bishop of Emly, with James

[1] See *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 397, for full text.
[2] For the first Geraldine League see page 376, *supra*.
[3] *Four Masters*, 1569, p. 1631.
[4] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, pp. 310, 314.

Fitzgerald the youngest brother of the earl, were sent to the Pope and to the king of Spain for aid 'to rescue the country from the tyranny and oppression of Queen Elizabeth.'

Sir Edmund Butler began hostilities by traversing a great part of Leinster, wasting and destroying the English settlements. Then marching to Enniscorthy, where the people were assembled at the annual fair, he spoiled the town and brought away a vast quantity of booty.

When Sydney heard of the alarming combination of the southern chiefs, and of the proceedings of Sir Edmund Butler, he proclaimed them all traitors (1569), and prepared for a campaign in Munster to break up the confederation. Carew, whom he commissioned to proceed against Sir Edmund Butler, began his operations by taking the Butlers' strong castle of Clogrennan near Carlow. Next marching to Kilkenny, which was then besieged by Sir Edmund, he attacked the Butlers unexpectedly and routed them, killing 400 and relieving the city; after which he marched to Sir Edward Butler's house and massacred all he found in it, men, women, and children.[1]

Sydney himself set out for the south in the autumn of this year (1569), and after a week's siege he took Castlemartyr in Cork, one of Desmond's strongholds; after which he marched to Cork city, where he received the submission of several of the weaker and more timid confederates. Leaving Cork he proceeded towards Limerick, burning and destroying everything on his way, and executing every man he found in arms. In this campaign he was severe, often merciless: but he was mercy itself compared with one of his subordinates, Colonel Gilbert, who himself describes his exploits in a letter to Sydney:—'After my first summoning of any castle or fort, if they would not presently yield it, I would not afterwards take it of their gift, but win it perforce, how many lives soever it cost, putting man, woman, and child of them to the sword.'[2] And for all this Sydney had nothing but praise for him.

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, pp. 310, 314.
[2] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, x. 252.

At Limerick Sir Edmund Butler made submission to Sydney, and after some time he and his brothers were pardoned by the queen. The deputy next proceeded through Thomond to Galway, taking many castles as he went along, and returned through Athlone to Dublin.

By Sydney's advice it had been determined a few years before, to place Munster and Connaught under the government of 'presidents,' each with a council, so as to bring these provinces more directly within the range of English law; which, it was hoped, would remedy the disorder that everywhere prevailed. And he now (1569) left Sir Edward Fitton at Athlone as president of Connaught. These presidents with their councils were invested with almost unlimited power: they were instructed to prosecute with fire and sword all rebels or those they considered rebels, and for this purpose they could levy men in any numbers they pleased and force them to serve; they held sessions and heard and adjudicated on all manner of cases; they could use torture in examining witnesses; they could execute martial law, which to all intents and purposes gave them power of life and death over the people they governed. It will be seen as we go along that they generally used their terrible powers to the fullest extent.

Sir William Drury, who was appointed president of Munster in 1576 may be taken as a fair average representative of the class, neither the best nor the worst. In the first year of his office he made a circuit through his province, holding courts as he went along for the trial of those brought before him as evil-doers. In Cork he hanged forty-three and pressed one to death; in Limerick, twenty-two; in Kilkenny, thirty-six, besides a blackamoor and two witches who were executed without any regular trial, *by natural law*, as he found the law of the realm did not reach them. In his second year of office he hanged 400. Yet he thought it necessary to apologise to the government for his excessive mildness and moderation.

But these presidents tortured, hanged, and quartered all to no purpose; for, as might be expected, they utterly failed in the main object for which they were appointed.

'The history of each president is merely a monotonous recital of petty battles, sieges, and executions, by which not a step was gained towards the settlement and civilisation of the country; all local authorities which might have assisted, and who would have been interested in assisting in good government were ignored and destroyed, and the whole population insulted and exasperated to the utmost. Thirty years of presidential government did not establish order in Munster.'[1]

This circuit of Sydney's went a good way to break up the confederacy; many of the leaders were terrified into submission, among others the earl of Clancarty, who excused himself to Sydney by saying that he had been led into rebellion by Sir Edmund Butler.

At the approach of winter Fitzmaurice, deserted now by so many of his confederates, retired to the inaccessible fastnesses of the Galtys, and established himself in the great wooded glen of Aherlow. It never entered into his head to yield. On the contrary he renewed the war early next year (1570) by suddenly appearing before Kilmallock, which had been held by an English garrison ever since the arrest of Desmond (p. 422). Scaling the walls before sunrise, he plundered the town; after which he set it on fire and retired to Aherlow, leaving the stately old capital a mere collection of blackened walls.

The reckless and overbearing conduct of president Fitton roused the people of Connaught to resistance everywhere: even Conor O'Brien earl of Thomond, hitherto the friend of the English, was driven to revolt, and Fitton had to fly for life, pursued as far as Galway by the enraged earl. But the deputy Sydney intervened, and the earl was in his turn forced to fly to France. Here through the mediation of the English ambassador Norris with the queen, he obtained his pardon; after which he returned to Ireland and again became a loyal subject. Meantime Connaught, under Fitton's rule, continued as disturbed as ever; and a bloody battle was fought in the summer of this year (1570) at Shrule on the borders of Galway, by

[1] Richey, *Short History*, p. 516.

Fitton and the Galway Burkes under Lord Clanrickard on the one hand, against the Mayo Burkes and the O'Flahertys on the other. This appears to have been a senseless affair, and resulted in nothing but great slaughter on both sides, for each party claimed the victory.[1]

Many members of the league surrendered during this year (1570); and as time went on it became more and more clear that Fitzmaurice's cause was growing hopeless. Sir John Perrott, a bluff, brave, hasty-tempered old soldier, was appointed president of Munster in 1571, and entered on his first campaign against the insurgents with extraordinary energy, hanging, burning, shooting, and quartering all before him like the others. Fitzmaurice sent him a challenge to single combat, like the knights of old, which Perrott accepted; but the challenger, fearing treachery, failed to appear; and Perrott resumed his murderous progress, threatening 'to hunt the fox (Fitzmaurice) out of his hole.' He battered down with his powerful siege train castle after castle of the Geraldines, and pursued the insurgents through woods, glens, and bogs with untiring activity. He failed in his first attempt on Castlemaine in Kerry, Desmond's chief stronghold in that district; but he laid siege to it again next year, 1572; and after a gallant defence of three months, the garrison were forced to surrender by sheer starvation. Meantime at the end of the preceding year Sir Henry Sydney had been recalled at his own request, and was succeeded by Sir William Fitzwilliam.

Sir Edward Fitton summoned a court in Galway in March 1572, to which came, among many others, the earl of Clanrickard and his sons. These were the same two young men who had formerly given so much trouble (p. 422): and now hearing some rumour of evil designs on the part of Fitton, they fled from the town; whereupon the president arrested their father and brought him to Dublin to the lord deputy. This did harm instead of good. The sons were enraged; and they and Fitzmaurice, who joined them from the recesses of Aherlow, aided by

[1] *Four Masters*, 1570.

1,000 Scots, traversed Connaught and Leinster for more than four months, burning and wasting the settlements of the English and their adherents. Fitton took the field against the rebels; and the sort of warfare he carried on we know from his own mouth. Describing his capture of one of their castles, he says:—'And the ward, being sixteen men, *besides women and children*, all put to the sword saving one.'[1] The council in Dublin thought better now to liberate the earl; and as the rebels about the same time met with some serious reverses, there was a brief lull in those Connaught disturbances.

A small company of Scots had been serving as mercenaries under James Fitzmaurice. With these he crossed the country from the Galtys to Kerry in this same year (1572); but finding on his arrival that Castlemaine, his last stronghold, had been taken, he made his way back to Aherlow after indescribable perils and hardships. In October, the garrison which Perrot had left in Kilmallock surprised his party at night, and slew a number of his Scots. This blow crushed his spirit: he was worn out body and mind; and on an intimation being sent to him that he would be pardoned if he promised loyalty, he sent to the president early in 1573 to proffer his submission. Two days later, in the ruined church of Kilmallock, he made his submission in humiliating fashion on bended knees before the president, who held a naked sword at the suppliant's breast. Soon after this he fled to France.

Some little time after the earl of Desmond and his brother had been sent to London the countess joined them, and remained with them during the rest of their stay. They were not imprisoned: they went at large on parole with a small allowance for support from the queen. But it was not near enough; and all three were exposed to great privations, not having as much of their own as would buy them a pair of shoes. As the insurrection was now considered to be at an end, they were set free immediately after Fitzmaurice's submission, and returned to Ireland: but Desmond was forced to promise that he

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 421.

would suppress the authority of the Pope and help the Reformation. On his arrival in Dublin with the others, he was for some reason—O'Daly[1] says by private direction of the queen—again placed under arrest, and severer conditions were required of him. But he refused to make any further promises; and he considered that his unjustifiable arrest in Dublin absolved him from those forced from him in London. He managed to escape, making his way during the dark nights to his own territories in Kerry: whereupon the government proclaimed him a traitor, and offered a large reward for his apprehension. So ended the first episode of the Geraldine rebellion.

Sir Henry Sydney came to Ireland as deputy for the third time in September 1575. He found the country in a deplorable state, and the English if possible worse than the natives; for the plague was raging in Dublin and all through the Pale, while rebellion was seething throughout the rest of the kingdom. He set out on a military progress through the provinces; and going first to Ulster received the submission of Turlogh Lynnagh and other Ulster chiefs; after which he proceeded through Munster and Connaught. At Dungarvan the earl of Desmond came to him and made his peace. Sydney remained for six weeks in Cork, where he spent the Christmas; after which, at the opening of the new year (1576), he proceeded through Limerick to Galway. Both in Cork and Galway a large number of the leading gentry, Irish and Anglo-Irish, wearied out with the perpetual state of turmoil, expressed to him their anxious desire that all should be placed under the protection of English law; but this request, like others of the same kind in former times (p. 298 *supra*), came to nothing. During this journey also he was as free of the rope as before, causing great numbers of malefactors to be hanged.

Clanrickard's two sons had been at their old work, and had reduced the whole country round Galway almost to a desert. He brought them prisoners to Dublin; but

[1] *History of the Geraldines*, translated by the Rev. C. P. Meehan, ed. 1878, p. 72.

soon released them, merely administering a severe rebuke. Scarcely had they crossed the Shannon however when they resumed their evil courses, and matters became as bad as ever. On this Sydney marched rapidly west in mid-winter (1576) and seized many of Clanrickard's towns and castles, burning the corn and slaying every human being the soldiers could find; and he sent the earl himself, who was suspected of encouraging his sons, a prisoner to Dublin. But the young men fled to the hills where the deputy could not get at them. He next appointed Sir William Drury president of Munster, whose talent for hanging and quartering has already been glanced at (p. 428); while he made Sir Nicholas Malbie 'colonel' of Connaught, dropping the title 'president,' which had become odious from the tyranny of Fitton.

No sooner had the deputy quieted the outlying provinces than he raised a new trouble at home on the question of taxes. Ireland had been all along a continual source of heavy expense to the English sovereigns. During the fifteen years that had elapsed from the queen's accession to the year 1573, she had sent over £490,779, or about six millions of our present money; while the total revenue of Ireland during the same period did not amount to quite one-fourth of that sum.[1] It would seem that Sydney now resolved to remedy this state of things by making Ireland pay its own expenses. Having obtained the consent of the English court, and without consulting the Irish parliament, which he knew would never agree, he proceeded, in 1577, to impose a new cess on the people of the Pale, who were already grievously overburdened with exactions. This tax, which was quite as illegal as that for which in after times Charles I. lost his head, caused violent commotion all through the Pale. And when the lords and leading gentlemen sent representatives to lay their complaints respectfully before the queen, she committed the delegates to prison. At the same time the leaders at home were, by the queen's command, brought before the deputy and thrown into the Castle prison for daring to

[1] Ware, *Annals*, 1573.

question the royal prerogative. Thus at a time when there was a ferment of rebellion all over the country, and when the government were kept in continual alarm by rumours of a foreign invasion under James Fitzmaurice, the authorities, with blind pertinacity, did all in their power, by harshness and tyranny, to exasperate the loyal gentlemen of the Pale and turn them into rebels; and in the case of some, as we shall see, they succeeded.

At last the clamour rose to such a pitch that the queen sent word to Sydney to settle matters as best he could. Then a compromise was agreed to, by which the people consented to pay by instalments an amount sufficient for seven years; the agents were released; and the disturbance quieted down. This transaction earned much odium for Sydney, who was justly blamed for the imposition of this tyrannical cess. He ended his third deputyship in the following year (1578), and returned to London, bringing Clanrickard with him as prisoner.

CHAPTER V

THE PLANTATIONS

The Geraldine rebellion slumbered for some years after the submission of Fitzmaurice: let us employ the interval in sketching the earliest of the plantations.

In the time of Queen Mary, who succeeded Edward VI. in 1553, an entire change was made in the mode of dealing with Irish territories whose chiefs had been subdued. Hitherto whenever the government deposed or banished a troublesome chief, they contented themselves with putting in his place another, commonly English or Anglo-Irish, more likely to be submissive: while the general body of occupiers remained undisturbed. But now when a rebellious chief was reduced, the lands, not merely those in his own possession, but also those occupied by the whole of the people over whom he ruled,[1] were confiscated—seized by the

[1] See pp. 67, 68, *supra*.

crown—and given to English adventurers, *undertakers* as they were commonly called. These men got the lands on condition that they should bring in or *plant* on them a number of English or Scotch settlers. It was of course necessary to clear off the native population; for which the undertakers got military help from the government.

The Irish nation formed a part of the population over which the kings of England claimed sovereignty: so that here the government colonised by banishing or exterminating one portion of their people to make room for another portion, a kind of colonisation which the world has seldom witnessed. Not one tenth of the people under the rule of a chief ever take part in a rebellion; and it should be the business of a government to find out the actual rebels and to punish them according to their deserts. But in Ireland whole tribes, nine-tenths of whom had no hand in rebellion, and all of whom were subjects, the innocent and guilty, men, women, and children alike, were all doomed to one common destruction—all extirpated—because a small proportion of them, headed by the chief, had risen in rebellion. And not unfrequently even this excuse was wanting, for districts were sometimes cleared and planted in which there had been no rebellion or provocation of any kind. All this was quite unnecessary. The humane and sensible course would have fully answered the needs of the case, would have been much easier, and would have spared all concerned immeasurable woe and misery, viz., having punished the actual rebels where there had been rebellion, to let the native tillers remain and live under the ordinary law.

Our first example of this kind of colonisation occurred in Leix and Offaly. After the banishment of O'Moore and O'Conor in 1547 (p. 399 *supra*), these two territories were given to an Englishman named Francis Bryan and to some others, who proceeded straightway, with all their might, to expel the native people and parcel out the lands to new tenants, chiefly English. 'To these intending colonists they [the Irish] were of no more value than their own wolves, and would have been [and were] exterminated

with equal indifference.'[1] But the natives resisted; and the fighting went on during the whole of the reign of Edward VI., with great loss of life to both sides, and with enormous expense to the government, who supplied soldiers to help the work of extermination. The settlement, exposed to constant vengeful attacks, decayed year by year: and in the early part of Mary's reign all the English had been driven out, and all the castles built by Bellingham (p. 399) destroyed.[2]

If the Catholic O'Moores, O'Conors, and others, expected peace and protection after the accession of Mary, they soon found their mistake: for now they were if possible more ruthlessly hunted down than before. And there was no mitigation of harshness in the dealings of the government with the Irish chiefs in general, but rather the reverse. Now came the new departure (p. 434); and the course so often vainly urged on Henry VIII. by the Irish officials (p. 388) was adopted. Leix and Offaly were made crown property and formed (in 1555–6) into two counties, Leix being included in Queen's County and Offaly in King's County. The old fortress of Campa or Port Leix was called Maryborough, and the fort of Dangan Philipstown: these four names given in honour of Queen Mary and her husband Philip.

All this district was now to be re-planted; and the lord deputy—the earl of Sussex—was empowered, in 1558, to build castles in place of those that had been destroyed, and to make surveys and divide into estates and farms which were to be let to new settlers.[3] Many came; but they had to fight for their lands from the day of their arrival. For the natives struggled for their homes as determinedly as ever; and during Mary's reign, as well as subsequently, a war of extermination was carried on against them. Driven to desperation, the Irish retaliated in fierce and savage reprisals. Some clung to their homes despite every effort of the undertakers; and those who were expelled hung

[1] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, x. 233–4.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. 344.
[3] Ware's *Annals*, 1557; *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 291, 292, 302.

round the borders, sheltering themselves in woods and bogs, and made harrying and plundering inroads at every opportunity.

'The warfare which ensued,' writes Dr. Richey, describing this miserable struggle, 'resembled that waged by the early settlers in America with the native tribes. No mercy whatever was shown [to the natives], no act of treachery was considered dishonourable, no personal tortures and indignities were spared to the captives. The atrocities of western border warfare were perpetrated year after year in those districts; and the government in Dublin acquiesced in what was done and supported their grantees. Atrocities were committed which have not yet been forgotten. In retaliation, the natives robbed, burned, and slew the settlers when opportunity offered. The merciless struggle went on far into Elizabeth's reign, until the Celtic tribes, decimated and utterly savage, sank to the level of banditti, and ultimately disappeared.'[1] The State Papers afford us appalling glimpses of the effects of the inhuman career of Sussex here and elsewhere:—"A man may ryde Southe, West, and Northe 20 or 40 myles, and see neither house, corne, ne cattell': and again:—'Many hundreth of men, wymen, and chilldren are dedde of famyne.'[2]

The sort of warfare carried on against the natives can perhaps be better understood from the following narrative of a transaction which took place in the nineteenth year of Elizabeth's reign (1577); and those who read it will not be surprised that the Celtic tribes, as Dr. Richey says, ultimately disappeared. The strife had at this time somewhat quieted down; and many Irish families who had successfully resisted expulsion were living in Leix and Offaly at peace with the settlers all round them. The heads of these families were on one occasion invited by the settlers to a friendly conference at the hill of Mullamast near the village of Ballitore in Kildare, with as many of their followers as they could muster. They came to the number

[1] Richey, *Short Hist.* 440.
[2] Hamilton, *Calendar*, 1558, p. 145, No. 45.

of 400—the O'Moores, O'Lalors, O'Kellys, O'Dowlings, and others, quite unsuspicious of treachery; and they were received by the Cosbys, the Hartpools, the Hovedens, and other undertakers and adventurers.

On the summit of the hill is an ancient circular fort, with the usual low earthen wall enclosing a level space. Here the conference was to be held; and as soon as the last of the Irish had filed in through the entrance, they were surrounded by four lines of soldiers, who opened fire on them and massacred them all. It would appear from a document written by an English officer of the time, Captain Thomas Lee, that this deed of horror was planned and perpetrated with the knowledge and connivance of the lord deputy Sir Henry Sydney: but this may be doubted. Anyhow it is remarkable and suspicious that there never was any investigation or any attempt to bring the miscreants to justice. The Irish chroniclers simply record the event without offering any explanation. Religion had nothing to do with it; for more than half the murderers were Anglo-Irish Catholics, and with them, helping in the foul work, was one native Irish Catholic family. It was obviously an outcome of the plantations: a sure and ready way of getting rid of the old proprietors in order to gain possession of their lands.[1]

The desperation of those who were driven from their homes, and their tremendous reprisals on the settlers, are well exemplified in the career of Rory Oge O'Moore. He was chief of the O'Moores of Leix; and for many years he waged incessant and unrelenting warfare on the settlers who had taken possession of his principality. In conjunction with the O'Conors the ancient owners of Offaly, he kept the borders of the Pale in a continual state of alarm. His movements were astonishingly rapid, and he appeared at places far distant from one another at incredibly short intervals. Sir Henry Sydney, in a letter to the council, expresses a doubt whether such feats 'were performed by swiftness of footmanship, or rather, if it be lawful

[1] *Four Masters*, 1577, p. 1695; and O'Donovan's interesting and valuable note *a*, p. 1694.

so to deem, by sorcery or enchantment.' On many occasions when his pursuers thought he was securely surrounded he escaped in some unaccountable way.

In the course of one year (1576) he and Conor O'Conor desolated a large part of the English settlements of Leinster, Meath, and Fingall. The next year, the very year of Mullamast, he suddenly appeared before Naas in the dead of night—the night of the annual patron festival: and while the wearied townspeople were sunk in deep sleep after their festivities, his men entered the town at some unguarded point, carrying lighted torches on long poles, and set fire to the houses, which were all roofed with thatch. Rory himself sat coolly at the market-place to enjoy the spectacle of the blazing houses: but he did not suffer his kern to injure or insult the terrified inhabitants. In this same year he burned Carlow, Leighlin Bridge, and many other English towns and villages in Leinster.

He was, as I have said, the lawful prince of Leix; yet Sydney, knowing this perfectly well, speaks of him as 'an obscure and base varlet called Rorye Oge O'Moore [who] stirred and claimed authority over the whole country of Leish.' [1] Sydney put forth all his efforts to hunt him down and capture him, but for a long time without success. 'The only gall,' he writes in 1578, 'is the rebel of Leinster: I waste him and kill of his men daily. To repress the arch-traitor James Fitzmaurice and that rebel Rory Oge, I am forced to employ no small extraordinary charge.' [2]

On one occasion (in 1577) O'Moore seized Sir Henry Harrington—Sydney's nephew—and one of the Cosbys, and carried them off to his fastness in the woods. Sydney strove to get them released; but Rory would not give them up except on conditions that Sydney declined to grant. At last one of his own servants betrayed him; he led Robert Hartpool constable of Carlow in the middle of the night to his retreat; and the house was surrounded before the inmates were aware of danger. On the first

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 355. [2] *Ibid.* p. 127.

alarm of attack, Rory, instantly divining how matters stood, rushed into Harrington's room and struck at him furiously in the dark till he nearly killed him. He would no doubt have killed him downright but for the darkness; and he had besides to look to his own safety. Rushing out he cleft a way through the military and escaped with four companions. But his wife and all the others were killed; and Harrington and Cosby were rescued.

His daring and his confidence in his powers of escape amounted to rashness, and led in the end to his destruction. Mac Gilla Patrick baron of Upper Ossory, a strong partisan of the government—the title had purchased his loyalty—had long been on the watch for him with a party of royal troops and woodkern. It happened (in 1578) that Rory, at the head of a few of his men, incautiously reconnoitring, met them in one of their excursions; when Brian Oge Mac Gilla Patrick, the son of the baron, rushed towards him and thrust his sword through his heart. After a sharp fight his body was borne away by his followers: but his head was subsequently sent to Sydney, who after the usual fashion spiked it on Dublin Castle.

After the attainder of Shane O'Neill, more than half of Ulster was confiscated; and the attempt to clear off the old natives and plant new settlers was commenced without delay. In 1570 the peninsula of Ardes in Down was granted, without the least thought of the rights of the actual owners, to the queen's secretary Sir Thomas Smith, who sent his illegitimate son with a colony to take possession. But this plantation was a failure, for the owners, the O'Neills of Clandeboy, not feeling inclined to part with their rights without a struggle, attacked and killed the young undertaker in 1573.

The next undertaker was a more important man, Walter Devereux earl of Essex. In 1573 he undertook to plant the district now occupied by the county Antrim, together with the island of Rathlin; and he was joined by several English nobles, all expecting to make their fortunes. The better to enable him to carry out the project with facility, he was given power to make laws; to make

war; to harry and destroy the castles, houses, and lands of 'Irish outlaws'—i.e. of the natives in general, and to annoy them by fire and sword; to impress them to work as slaves in his service: and as we shall see he took advantage of his powers to the fullest extent. He was to get for himself half the lands: the rest was to be given to settlers at a rent of twopence an acre: and the planting was to go on till two thousand English families were settled.[1]

He selected for his first attempt Clandeboy, the territory of Brian O'Neill, in which at this time large numbers of Scots were living. From that time forward during the two years or so that he remained in the north, 'his dealings with the native chiefs seem almost a counterpart of those of the Spaniards with the Mexican caciques.'[2]

On his arrival he gave out that he came merely to expel the Scots, and that he meant no harm to the Irish: and by orders of the queen the deputy Fitzwilliam spread a report to the same effect. But the northern chiefs were not to be hoodwinked by such shallow knavery. Brian O'Neill had at first unsuspectingly submitted: but it was not long till he and his neighbours—Turlogh Lynnagh, the Mac Mahons, Sorley Boy chief of the Mac Donnells, and others—saw good reason to be alarmed for their lands: and open hostilities commenced and never ceased while Essex remained. He waged savage war on the natives, stopping short at no amount of slaughter and devastation—burning their corn and depopulating the country to the best of his ability by sword and starvation. Most of the nobles who had come over with him grew tired of this sort of life, and after a time left him; and he found it hard to hold his ground; for his men, being most of them mere farmers and artisans, were quite unfit for service as soldiers.

At last when open warfare failed him he adopted other means to retrieve his failing fortunes. He induced Conn O'Donnell son of Calvagh (chief of Tirconnell) to enter into alliance with him (1573); but no sooner had the

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, pp. 439 to 443.
[2] Richey, *Short History*, 517.

young chief come to the English camp than the earl, on some pretence or another, seized him, sent him to Dublin a prisoner, and took possession of his castle of Lifford.

Finding that he was unable to wrest Clandeboy from Brian O'Neill, he made peace with him in 1574; after which O'Neill, glad no doubt to have an end of the strife, invited the earl with a large party to a banquet. When they had spent three days very pleasantly, the festivities came to a sudden and tragical termination. The earl suddenly called in his guards, and—in the words of the Four Masters—'Brian, his brother, and his wife, were seized upon by the earl, and all his people put unsparingly to the sword, men, women, youths and maidens, in Brian's own presence. Brian was afterwards sent to Dublin together with his wife and brother, where they were cut in quarters.' [1]

But all the other deeds of this planter are thrown into the shade by his treatment of the Scots of Clandeboy and Rathlin Island. How he dealt with these is related in detail by himself in one of his letters to the queen. He first attacked those of Clandeboy, who do not appear to have at that time given any provocation, and defeated them several times, killing them mercilessly whenever they fell under his power; of which he relates many revolting details. At last their chief, Sorley Boy, finding himself unable to resist any longer, made an offer of submission, asking to be allowed to keep his lands in the service of the queen; and he sent day by day suing for peace.

At this period, and for a long time before, the Scots had a settlement on the island of Rathlin. It seems that Sorley Boy, having come to hear of the impending attack on Clandeboy, had sent his children and valuables, and the wives and children of the neighbouring gentlemen, with all the old and the sick, to the island for safety, so that the place now swarmed with defenceless people. None of those living on the island had given any provocation whatever; yet while the offer of their chief was

[1] *Four Masters*, 1574.

pending, an expedition was secretly and suddenly sent by the earl on the 20th July, 1575, from Carrickfergus, with orders to attack the island and kill all that could be found there. This expedition was commanded by Captain John Norris—of whom more will be heard further on in this book. Essex himself did not accompany it. The Scots defended themselves bravely for some time, but were at last driven to take refuge in their stronghold, now a ruin known as Bruce's Castle. The garrison consisted of about fifty men, with about 150 refugees, chiefly women and children. The rest of the transaction is best told in Essex's own words in his letter to the queen:—

'Before day they called for a parle, which Captain Norreys, wisely considering the danger that might light upon his company, and willing to avoid the killing of the soldiers . . . was content to accept and hear their offers . . . upon which he [the constable or captain of the castle] came out, and made large requests, as their lives, their goods, and to be put into Scotland, which request Captain Norreys refused, offering them as slenderly as they did largely require—viz. to the aforesaid constable his life, and his wife's, and his child's, the place and goods to be delivered at Captain Norreys' disposition; the captain to be a prisoner one month; the lives of all within to stand upon the courtesy of the soldiers. The constable, knowing his estate and safety to be very doubtful, accepted the composition, and came out with all his company. The soldiers being moved and much stirred with the loss of their fellows that were slain, and desirous of revenge, made request, or rather pressed to have the killing of them; which they did, all saving the persons to whom life was promised. There were slain, which came out of the castle of all sorts [i.e. refugees and non-combatants as well as soldiers] 200.'[1]

The massacre did not end here, however. The rest of the people of the island, including the crowds of women and children, were hunted down day after day and slaughtered. 'News is brought me,' the earl continues,

[1] *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, i. 115, 116.

'that they be occupied still in killing, and have slain, that they have found hidden in caves and cliffs of the sea, to the number of 300 or 400 more.'

While this frightful work was going on the old chief Sorley Boy stood on the shore of the mainland, from which he could plainly see—some four miles off—the movements of the soldiers; the smoke of their guns; the blaze of burning houses; and the groups of refugees as they rushed to the shelter of the sea-caves; and he ran about distracted, tearing himself in the madness of his grief and despair. Essex got a full account of the expedition immediately after, including the pathetic incident of the old man's grief, all which he describes in a letter to an English friend. 'Sorley then also,' he writes, 'stood upon the mainland of the Glynnes, and saw the taking of the island, and was likely to run mad for sorrow, tearing and tormenting himself, as the spy sayeth.' It appears from this letter that, as Dr. Richey [1] observes, 'far from being indignant at this butchery, he thought the conduct of the soldiers highly commendable.'

But Essex's prospects did not grow the brighter for all this villainy. The native tribes still proved too strong for him; he was thwarted by his enemies at court; and after many attempts to obtain further support, he returned to Dublin, broken in spirit, where he died in 1576: some say poisoned by his rival the Earl of Leicester. A bystander has left us a most sanctimonious description of this man's death: 'More like that of a divine preacher or heavenly prophet than a man'; 'he never let pass an hour without many most sweet prayers'; [2] he piously bewailed the general prevalence of infidelity, but not a word about his own murderous career; and he passed from the world as calmly as if he had lost all memory of the

[1] *A Short History of the Irish People*, p. 521. Dr. Richey writes with fairness to both sides; but having told here with natural indignation the whole story of Essex's atrocities, he has a note at p. 122: 'Irish writers naturally misrepresent the earl of Essex,' which reads like grim irony. Where is the need for misrepresentation?

[2] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, p. 545.

shrieks of the women and children in the sea-caves of Rathlin.[1]

In order to make the reader understand what the plantations were, I have described the foregoing in some detail: the others will be told more briefly. They kept the country in a state of civil war, incited and fostered by the government: civil war of the worst kind, because its object was not so much victory on either side as mutual extermination. They all from first to last present much the same general features:—massacre and extirpation on the one hand; resistance, desperate, vengeful, and persistent, on the other. It is doubtful whether, within the range of history, any government ever decreed a measure dealing with its own people that caused such wholesale destruction of human life, such widespread and long-continued misery, as these plantations. The massacres of Rathlin and Mullamast and the great rebellion of 1641 were only a part of their tremendous consequences. They left to posterity a disastrous legacy of strife and hatred; and to their malign influence we owe in part the long and bitter land-war that still continues to convulse the country.

CHAPTER VI

THE GERALDINE REBELLION: SECOND STAGE

JAMES FITZMAURICE had resided in France since the time of his flight from Kilmallock (p. 431). His mind continued as active as ever, and his whole thought was to obtain aid from the Catholic sovereigns for his fellow-countrymen at home. In 1579 he applied to Henry III. of France and to Philip II. of Spain, but got no help from either, as both happened then to be at peace with Queen Elizabeth. Philip however recommended him to Pope Gregory XIII.; and to Rome he next bent his way. The Pope fitted out for him a small squadron of three ships

[1] For a detailed account of Essex's proceedings see *The Macdonnells of Antrim*, by the Rev. George Hill, pp. 152–185.

with 700 Italian soldiers; and at the request of Fitzmaurice it was placed under the command of one Thomas Stukely: the same Stukely who had formerly figured as a commissioner to Shane O'Neill (p. 416). He was a clever, unprincipled English adventurer, who managed to hoodwink his employers into a belief of his sincere attachment to the cause of Ireland. On the voyage he touched at Lisbon. Here he met with King Sebastian of Portugal, who was at this very time preparing an expedition against the king of Morocco. Captivated by the brilliancy of this new adventure, the volatile Stukely was easily persuaded to join it; and the Irish never heard any more of him or his squadron.

Meantime Fitzmaurice embarked for Ireland (1579) in three small ships which he had procured in Spain, with about eighty Spaniards, accompanied by Dr. Allen, a Jesuit, and by Dr. Sanders, a celebrated English ecclesiastic, the Pope's legate. Expecting to meet Stukely on the Irish coast, he landed in 1579 at the little harbour of Smerwick in Kerry, and took possession of a fort called Dunanore—the fort of gold; which the Spaniards, translating the name into their own language, called Fort-del-or; perched on top of a rock jutting into the sea. Here he was joined by Desmond's two brothers, John and James Fitzgerald, and by 200 of the O'Flahertys of West Connaught, who had come round by sea expecting all Munster to rise in arms.

The earl of Desmond himself, who was timid and vacillating, still held aloof; and though his heart was in the cause, he took great pains to convince the authorities of his loyalty. Long before the expedition of Fitzmaurice, the government had received through their spies alarming information of a projected invasion; and a month before his arrival at Smerwick, three strangers were landed from a Spanish ship at Dingle:—Dr. Patrick O'Haly bishop of Mayo, the Rev. Cornelius O'Rourke, and another. They were instantly seized by the government officials and brought before Desmond, who sent them straight to president Drury, a man, as he well knew, of merciless severity. By him they were put to horrible torture to force them

to tell what they knew of Fitzmaurice; and when he found that they either could not or would not tell him anything, he had them hanged.

While Fitzmaurice was in Dunanore Sir Henry Davells constable of Dungarvan, and Arthur Carter provost-marshal of Munster, were sent by the lord justice Sir William Drury to the Earl of Desmond, directing him to attack Dunanore. On their return journey they stopped at an inn in Tralee, whither John Fitzgerald followed them, and forcing his way into the inn at night, murdered them both in their beds. It is difficult to discover the motive for this deed, which could not in any possible way serve the cause of the confederates; and what made it all the blacker was the fact that Fitzgerald and Davells had been before that intimate friends. It was hard for an undertaking to succeed that began with so foul a crime.

About a week after the expedition had landed, the O'Flahertys, seeing that the Munster people did not rise as they expected, sailed away home; and on the 26th July (1579) Fitzmaurice saw his own three vessels captured before his eyes by a government war-ship. And now the doomed little band, abandoning Dunanore in desperation, fled northwards under the three Fitzgeralds, John, James, and Fitzmaurice, to reach the great wood of Kylemore near Charleville, which had often afforded Fitzmaurice a safe asylum in days gone by. Desmond had invested the fort in accordance with Drury's directions; but the government believed he was not in earnest, and that he intentionally allowed the little garrison to escape. Nevertheless he now closely pursued them, so that the fugitives were forced at last to separate into three parties headed by the three Fitzgeralds.

Fitzmaurice with his men made for the Shannon, intending to cross into Clare; but while passing through Clanwilliam in the county Limerick, their horses became so jaded that they had to seize the horses from a plough belonging to William Burke of Castleconnell, who was nearly related to Fitzmaurice. Burke's two sons with

O'Brien of Ara pursued them to recover the animals. When they had come up with them at Barrington's Bridge, Fitzmaurice appealed to them not to quarrel with their cousin for the sake of a couple of *garrons*: but the Burkes fired on the little party, and Fitzmaurice was mortally wounded. Rushing into the midst of his assailants, with two furious blows he slew the two Burkes, whose followers instantly fled; and he died in a few hours in the arms of Dr. Allen, from whom he received the last sacraments. His body was afterwards found by the English, who cut it into quarters, which they hung on the gates of Kilmallock. William Burke was soon after created baron of Castleconnell, with a pension, as a reward for the destruction of Fitzmaurice, and in some sort as a recompence for the loss of his sons.

James Fitzmaurice was a man of noble mind and of pure patriotic motives, able, active, and steadfast in purpose; he was the life and soul of the movement, and his death was an irreparable loss to the Geraldine league. John Fitzgerald now took command of the Munster insurgents; and soon collected a considerable force, which was disciplined by the Spanish officers who had come over with Fitzmaurice. As for the earl of Desmond, he came to lord justice Drury, who was then at Kilmallock, to assure him he had nothing to do with the rebellion; but his conduct had been so suspicious that Drury had him arrested. He was liberated however in a few days, on giving up his only son James—then a child in charge of a nurse—as a hostage for his loyalty in the future: and a promise was made that his territory should be respected.

Drury now mustered his forces, and dividing them into several bodies, he despatched them in different directions in search of the insurgents. One of these parties came upon the Irish army under John and James Fitzgerald, at a place called Gort-na-tubbrid or Springfield in the south of the county Limerick; and after a desperate fight the English were defeated with a loss of 300 men. After this Drury, quite worn out by fatigue, anxiety, and worry, took sick; and, leaving Sir Nicholas Malbie in

command of the army, he retired to Waterford, where he died early in October. Malbie soon after came up with the rebel army to the number of 2,000 at Monasteranenagh near Croom. Here was fought another battle in which the English retrieved their recent loss; for the Irish were defeated with a loss of 260 killed, among whom were Dr. Allen and several of Desmond's kinsmen. Desmond witnessed this battle from the top of Tory Hill about a mile distant, but made no move to join either party. After the battle he sent to congratulate Malbie, who, we are told, received the message with coldness and contempt.

Up to the present the earl had not joined the insurgents: but Malbie was determined to goad him into rebellion; and with this object he marched—without any provocation and in violation of the engagement made with him—through his territories, wasting and ruining town and country, abbey and homestead; and as usual killing all whom the soldiers could find. Malbie was now joined by Sir William Pelham, the newly appointed lord justice, with the earls of Ormond and Kildare; and Ormond, who had been appointed general of the army, including large reinforcements that had just arrived from England, was sent to the earl with a summons that he should present himself at the camp; join the royal forces against the rebels; deliver up the papal legate Dr. Sanders, as well as the Spanish strangers; and surrender his castles of Askeaton and Carrigafoyle. Judging from the earl's response, he could have been managed easily enough if Pelham had wished for peace. Knowing the men he had to deal with, he naturally refused to come to the camp. But he sent his countess (in the end of October 1579) and wrote letters complaining of the wrongs Malbie had inflicted on him, and offering, if his castles—those taken by Malbie—were restored and his losses recompensed, to serve in the royal army 'against my unnatural brethren, the traitor Dr. Sanders, and their adherents.' Pelham's reply was to issue a proclamation after two days, declaring him a traitor. His crimes and misdemeanors are enumerated, many of them, such as the murder of Davells, being matters he had

nothing to do with; and there was really no sufficient reason at all for proclaiming him.[1]

At last Desmond, driven to desperation, joined his brothers and rose in open rebellion; but his accession was of small advantage to the confederates, for he had no firmness of character, and was quite unfit to command. The frightful civil war broke out now more virulently than before; and brought the country to such a state as had never yet been witnessed. It was indeed hardly a war at all in the proper sense of the word. Several hostile bands belonging to both sides traversed the country for months, destroying everything and wreaking vengeance on the weak and defenceless, but never meeting, or trying to meet, in battle.[2]

Desmond, passing through the territories of the Barrys and the Roches in Cork—who, looking on passively, made no attempt to prevent him and gave no information[3]—plundered, burned, and utterly ruined the rich and prosperous town of Youghal, at Christmas 1579, so that not a house was left fit to live in. So thorough had been the work of destruction, that when the earl of Ormond, in *his* fearful march of havoc, fire, and slaughter, through Desmond's territories, came round that way a little later, he found no human being in the town but one poor friar, who had charitably brought the body of Davells all the way from Tralee to Waterford to have it interred in the family sepulchre. But the town was rebuilt soon afterwards.

Pelham and Ormond carried fire and sword through the country, sparing no living thing that fell in their way. The rebels burned and spoiled; but we find no evidence that they massacred. Hear now the account Pelham himself, writing in March 1580, gives of his manner of carrying on hostilities. In a single day's march from Shanid Castle towards Glin:—'Finding the country plentiful and the people but newly fled . . . there were slain that day by the fury of the soldiers above 400 people

[1] See all this related in *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, pp. 160–164.
[2] *Four Masters*, 1580. [3] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 189.

found in the woods [i.e. the poor common people fleeing with their families from the destroyers], and wheresoever any house or corn was found, it was consumed by fire.'[1] Here also is the Four Masters' account[2] of the same journey:—'He [lord justice Pelham] sent forth loose marauding parties into Kylemore (in Cork), into the woods of Clonlish (in Limerick), and into the wilds of Delliga (in Cork). These, wheresoever they passed, showed mercy neither to the strong nor to the weak. It was not wonderful that they should kill men fit for action: but they killed blind and feeble men, boys and girls, sick persons, idiots, and old people.' Those of the country people that escaped the sword, who had nothing to do with the rebellion, being deprived of their means of subsistence, died in hundreds of mere starvation. Great numbers of the English also perished, partly by famine and partly by the avenging reprisals of the peasantry.

Before the end of the year (1580) the queen received a full account of what was passing in Ireland. She was incensed at the conduct of Pelham in needlessly proclaiming Desmond, and at the destruction of Youghal; and she wrote him angry letters of censure.[3]

For the rebels it was a losing game all through. Pelham and Ormond took Desmond's strongholds one by one. Carrigafoyle Castle on the south shore of the Shannon was his strongest fortress. It was valiantly defended by fifty Irishmen and nineteen Spaniards, commanded by Count Julio an Italian engineer: but after being battered by cannon till a breach was made, it was taken by storm about the 27th March. Without delay the whole garrison, including Julio with six Spaniards and some women, were hanged or put to the sword.[4] And here it may be observed that the general practice of the English commanders throughout this rebellion was to execute all persons found in castles surrendered after siege. In a few days after the capture of this fortress the garrisons of some others of

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 236. [2] A.D. 1580, p. 1731.
[3] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 186.
[4] This is Pelham's own account: *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, pp. 237–8

Desmond's castles, including Askeaton, abandoned them, terrified by the fate of Carrigafoyle. They attempted to blow up Askeaton: but they only injured, not destroyed it.[1]

James Fitzgerald, the earl's youngest brother, was captured while making a raid on the territories of Sir Cormac Mac Carthy the sheriff of Cork. He was straightway sent to Cork where he was hanged and quartered; and his head was spiked over one of the city gates.

How thoroughly odious the authorities had made themselves in Ireland is evidenced all through the State Papers of this time:[2] even their own servants secretly sympathised with the rebels. Pelham writes repeatedly that there was a settled hatred of the English government, and believed that if only a fair opportunity should offer, such as the landing of even 1,000 Spaniards, the whole body of chiefs, native and Anglo-Irish, would rise in rebellion. His manner of providing against this contingency was quite characteristic. He invited the lords and gentlemen of Munster to a conference at Limerick; men who had never given any indication of sympathy with the rebels: and no sooner had they unsuspectingly presented themselves than he had them all arrested; and he kept them locked up till such time as he thought they could be liberated with safety.[3]

Meantime while Pelham and Ormond still traversed Munster, burning, destroying, and slaying, from Limerick to the remote extremities of the Kerry peninsulas, the insurrection blazed up in Leinster under James Eustace viscount Baltinglass, who, exasperated by the illegal and oppressive cess imposed by Sydney as well as by his imprisonment—for he was one of those thrown into jail at the time (p. 433)—and alarmed at the steps taken by the government to force Protestantism on the people, flew to arms. And he had for his allies the O'Byrnes under their chief the famous Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne—'the firebrand of the mountains'—as well as the O'Tooles, the Kavanaghs,

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, pp. 241, 243.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 189, 209, 220, 258, 284.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 280, 282.

the O'Moores, and some of the Fitzgeralds. But this rising was an insane proceeding; for considering the complete isolation of the rebels and the slender means at their disposal, they might have foreseen that there never was the remotest chance of success.

The newly appointed justice, Lord Grey of Wilton, who succeeded Pelham, at once mustered his men, including 600 he had brought from England, and in August 1580 marched into the heart of Wicklow in pursuit of this insurgent army, who had retired into the recesses of Glenmalure. He had with him the earl of Kildare, James Wingfield, and two brothers, George and Peter Carew, nephews of Sir Peter Carew already mentioned (p. 425). This glen was the most savage and inaccessible of all the defiles of Wicklow. Shut in by steep hills and frowning crags, it was then clothed with woods from the hill-tops down to the very torrent—the Avonbeg—by which it is traversed. Hooker, a contemporary English writer, who was probably present,[1] describes it as:—'Under foot boggy and soft, and full of great stones and slippery rocks, very hard and evil to pass through; the sides are full of great and mighty trees upon the sides of the hills, and full of bushments and underwoods.'

Into this dangerous defile Lord Grey, with foolish confidence, eager to signalise himself by some glorious exploit, ordered the main body of his infantry, while he himself encamped on an eminence towards the mouth. Meantime Fiach and the others had placed their men in ambush high up the valley, among the trees on both sides of the stream. The English made their way with the greatest difficulty, perplexed with bogs, rocks, and thick brushwood. Suddenly the silence was broken by a deadly volley, which was repeated over and over again, though not an enemy was to be seen. The advance party were almost all shot down without the possibility of striking a blow, and among them fell four distinguished officers:—Colonel John Moore, Francis Cosby general of the kern

[1] He was agent to Sir Peter Carew, and wrote a *History of Ireland* from 1546 to 1586.

of Leix, Sir Peter Carew, and another named Audley. And Grey with the remnant of his army hastily returned crestfallen to Dublin. After this, Baltinglass plundered and devastated the Pale almost to the walls of Dublin, without any opposition.

The dying hopes of the Munster insurgents were somewhat revived by the news from Glenmalure; and now their fortune seemed to take another favourable turn. The long expected aid from the Continent at length arrived: 700 Spaniards and Italians landed about the 1st October 1580 from four vessels at Smerwick, bringing a large supply of money and arms. They took possession of the ill-omened old fort of Dunanore, and proceeded to fortify it. They expected to see the people join them in crowds: but Ormond and Pelham had done their work so thoroughly that the peasantry held aloof, trembling with the fear of another visitation.

After nearly six weeks' effort to collect forces, Lord Grey, breathing vengeance after his recent defeat, arrived at Smerwick, having been joined on the way by the earl of Ormond; and accompanied also by Sir Richard Bingham and many other experienced captains. At the same time admiral Winter arrived early in November with the English fleet, so that the fort was invested both by sea and land. The siege was now carried on vigorously: trenches were dug and cannons battered the defences; and at the end of a few days the garrison, seeing they could not hold out, surrendered. The Irish authorities, including the Four Masters, say that they were promised their lives: the English, including Grey himself, assert they surrendered at discretion; which is very improbable, inasmuch as they had plenty of arms, ammunition, and provisions. But all this seems of small consequence in face of the episode of horror that followed, which may be told in the deputy's own words:—'I sent streighte certeyne gentlemen to see their weapons and armoires laid down, and to guard the munitions and victual then left from spoyle; then put I in certeyne bandes who streighte fell to execution. There were 600 slain.' After the execution

the few women found there were hanged. Leland, who, though not an unprejudiced historian, always recoiled from inhumanity by whomsoever perpetrated, concludes his description of the siege with these words:—'The Italian general and some officers were made prisoners of war; but the garrison was butchered in cold blood; nor is it without pain that we find a service so horrid and detestable committed to Sir Walter Raleigh. The usual and obvious excuses were made for this severity. . . . But such pretences and such professions could not excuse the odiousness of this action. On the Continent it was received with horror.'[1]

Many of the rebels would now gladly make submission; but Pelham attached a horrible condition:—'I do not receive any'—he writes—'but such as come with bloody hands or execution of some person better than themselves.'[2]

During the next year (1581) Grey and his officers carried on the war with relentless barbarity. 'I keep them from their harvest'—Pelham writes—'and have taken great preys of cattle from them, by which it seemeth the poor people that lived only upon their labour, and fed by their milch cows, are so distressed that they follow their goods and offer themselves with their wives and children rather to be slain by the army than to suffer the famine that now in extremity beginneth to pinch them.'[3]

None seem to have been spared, whether rebels or those well affected to the government; and Grey drove many loyal men, both old English and native Irish, to rebellion and ruin. David Purcell, the owner of Ballyculhane, who had hitherto 'assisted the crown from the very commencement of the Geraldine war,' on one occasion went out to resist a number of soldiers from Adare who were plundering his lands; and he slew nearly the whole party. Whereupon, when the few survivors arrived with their story, Captain Achen who commanded at Adare, marching straight to Ballyculhane, took the castle in Purcell's

[1] Leland: *History of Ireland*, ii. 283.
[2] *Carew Papers* 1575–1588, p. 287. [3] *Ibid.* p. 293.

absence, and 'slew 150 women and children, and every sort of persons he met with inside and outside the castle.' Purcell was captured soon after in Scattery Island by Mac Mahon of Corcobaskin in Clare, who hanged all his followers and sent David himself to Limerick where he was executed.[1] 'Thus from year to year the plundering and killing went on, until there was nothing left to plunder, and very few to kill.'[2]

A report now (1581) went round of treason even within the Pale: that there was a plot to seize Dublin Castle and massacre the English. When this came to Grey's ears he took up a number of the supposed conspirators and, as the mania for hanging still possessed him, he sent forty-five of them straight to the gallows; among others Lord Nugent baron of the Irish exchequer. He also arrested on suspicion the earl of Kildare and his son, and the baron of Delvin, and being probably afraid to hang these powerful persons, sent them for trial to England. But they proved their innocence; and now indeed it was made clear that many or all of those he had hanged were equally innocent.

The fortunes of the Munster insurgents sometimes rose and sometimes fell; but gradually, as time went on, their cause became weaker. John Fitzgerald, the earl's brother, still maintained a desperate struggle in Cork. But on one occasion, in 1582, as he rode attended by a few followers, their steps were dogged by a spy, who gave information to Zouch, governor of Munster. Quite suddenly they found themselves surrounded by soldiers; and in attempting to escape, Fitzgerald was cut down and killed: and his head was sent to Dublin, where it was spiked on the Castle. His death extinguished the last hopes of the insurgents.

But the massacre at Dunanore and the savage cruelty of lord deputy Grey got noised all through England; and it began to be felt that instead of quieting Ireland he was rather fanning rebellion by his barbarities. In the words

[1] *Four Masters*, 1581, p. 1759. [2] Richey, *Short Hist.* p. 494.

of Leland:[1]—'Repeated complaints were made of the inhuman rigour practised by Grey and his officers. The queen was assured that he tyrannised with such barbarity that little was left in Ireland for her majesty to reign over but carcases and ashes. And such was the effect of these representations that a pardon was offered to those rebels who would accept it [from which however the earl of Desmond was excluded]: Lord Grey was recalled (1582): and Loftus archbishop of Dublin, and Sir Henry Wallop, treasurer at war, were appointed lords justices.'

And now (1582) the great earl of Desmond, the master of almost an entire province, the inheritor of vast estates, and the owner of numerous castles, was become a homeless outlaw, with a price on his head, dogged by spies everywhere, and hunted from one hiding place to another. Through all his weary wanderings he had been accompanied by his faithful wife and by Dr. Sanders. The unhappy countess never left him except a few times when she went to intercede for him. On one of these occasions she sought an interview with lord justice Pelham himself, and on her knees implored mercy for her husband:[2] but her tears and entreaties were all in vain. In the preceding winter he had lost his faithful friend Dr. Sanders, who sank at last under the cold and hardship of their miserable life.

Sometimes we find him with not more than four followers, sometimes at the head of several hundred. Hear the description of their mode of life left us by the contemporary Anglo-Irish writer Hooker:—'Where they did dress their meat thence they would remove to eat it in another place, and from thence go to another place to lie. In the nights they would watch: in the forenoon they would be upon the hills and mountains to descry the country: and in the afternoon they would sleep.'

On one occasion in the depth of winter, in January 1583, when he was hiding in the wood of Kilquegg near his own old capital, Kilmallock, a plan was laid to capture

[1] *Hist. of Irel.* ii. 287.

[2] So writes Pelham, *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 293.

him and earn the reward. The soldiers, led by the spy, John Walsh, had actually arrived at the hut, when the earl heard the noise of footsteps, and he and the countess rushed out in the darkness to the river that flowed hard by, which was swollen by rains; and plunging in, concealed themselves under a bank with only their heads over the water, till the party had left.

Another time, when he had a company of sixty galloglasses, Captain Dowdall surprised them in the glen of Aherlow while they were cooking part of a horse for their dinner. Many of the galloglasses were killed in their master's defence: twenty were captured and executed on the spot; and the others with the earl himself escaped.

At last he got among his own mountains of Kerry; and a party of the O'Moriartys, from whom the earl's people had taken some cows for subsistence, traced him to Glanageenty, about five miles east of Tralee. Late on a November evening, Donall O'Moriarty, with a company of soldiers and some others, ascended an eminence and saw a light in the glen beneath; and one of them going down, discovered a small party in a hut. He returned noiselessly with the news, and they remained there till the dawn of next morning, when they approached the hut and suddenly rushed in with a loud shout. They found however only one venerable looking man, a woman, and a boy: all the rest had made their escape. One of the soldiers named Kelly broke the old man's arm with a blow of his sword; on which he cried out—'I am the earl of Desmond; spare my life!' But Kelly dragged him forth and cut off his head. The head was afterwards sent for a present to the queen, who had it spiked on London Bridge.

The Geraldine rebellion as well as the rising in Leinster may be said to have ended with the death of the earl of Desmond. Viscount Baltinglass fled to Spain, where he died broken-hearted. The war had made Munster a desert. In the words of the Four Masters:—'The lowing of a cow or the voice of a ploughman could scarcely be heard from Dunqueen in the West of Kerry to Cashel.'

To what a frightful pass the wretched people had been

brought by the constant destruction and spoiling of their crops and cattle, may be gathered from Edmund Spenser's description of what he witnessed with his own eyes:—'Notwithstanding that the same [province of Munster] was a most rich and plentiful countrey, full of corne and cattle, yet ere one yeare and a halfe they [the people] were brought to such wretchednesse as that any stony hart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glynnes they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legges could not beare them; they looked like anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eate the dead carrions, happy where they could finde them, yea and one another soone after, insomuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and if they found a plot of watercresses or shamrocks there they flocked as to a feast for the time: that in short space of time there were none [i.e. no people] almost left, and a most populous and plentifull country suddainely left voide of man and beast.'[1]

It is but justice to observe that Spenser did not write these words—sympathetic as some of them are—with any kind or merciful intention. On the contrary, he suggested, plainly enough though indirectly, that the same thing should be done over again: that the means of subsistence should be destroyed and the people killed off by starvation, not only in Munster but all over Ireland, as the best way to reduce the country to subjection.

One other individual tragedy formed a fitting close to the gory horrors of the rebellion. The Pope had consecrated as archbishop of Cashel, Dermot O'Hurly an Irish priest then resident in Rome, who immediately proceeded to Ireland to take up his dangerous duties, knowing well his fate if he should be arrested. His arrival was known and the spies were on his track, but for two years he eluded them through the faithful watchfulness of his people. He was at length taken; and some suspicious papers being found on him, he was brought before the Dublin council consisting of Loftus archbishop of Dublin and Sir

[1] *View of the State of Ireland*, ed. 1809, p. 166.

Henry Wallop, and examined; but he positively refused to give information. Archbishop Loftus, who had the chief management of the business, writes:—'Not finding that easy method of examination to do any good, we made commission to put him to the torture such as your honour [Walsingham in London] advised us, which was to toast his feet against the fire with hot boots.'[1] There is hardly need to go beyond this: but the Irish accounts say that the boots were of tin, into which boiling oil was poured till the flesh fell off the bones. As he would confess nothing material, Loftus and Wallop, having obtained permission from England, had him executed in June 1584.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST PLANTATION OF MUNSTER

THERE was a calm, the calm of exhaustion, all over the country; and in June, 1584, Sir John Perrott was appointed lord deputy. At the same time Sir Thomas Norris was made president of Munster, and Sir Richard Bingham governor of Connaught, in place of Sir Nicholas Malbie, who had recently died at Athlone. Perrott's first proceeding was to make a circuit through the west and south; and as he had the reputation of being a just man, he was well received everywhere. Yet he was not able to lift his mind above the brutal customs of the times. At Quin in Clare the sheriff brought to him Donogh Beg O'Brien, who had been active in the rebellion. By order of the deputy he was first hanged from a car, and, while still living, his bones were broken with the back of a heavy axe; after which he was taken, half dead, and tied with ropes to the top of the steeple of Quin Abbey, and left there to die: a spectacle to all rebels and evil-doers.[2] Perrott proceeded to Limerick, resolved to follow up the executions, when news was brought to him that Sorley Boy

[1] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ed. 1870, x. 619.
[2] *Four Masters*, 1584, p. 1819.

Mac Donnell of Antrim had risen in revolt and was plundering the country. Whereupon he proceeded north, and reduced Mac Donnell without much difficulty.

Munster was now, as we have seen, almost depopulated; and at the end of all the fearful work described in last chapter, the deputy, in order to prepare for the subsequent steps—confiscation and plantation—convened a parliament in Dublin in 1585. This was attended by a great number of native chiefs, who were summoned in order to lend importance to the proceedings.[1] One of its first acts was to attaint James Eustace viscount Baltinglass for his part in the rebellion, and of course to confiscate his lands. In the second session (1586) an act was passed, though with much opposition, attainting the earl of Desmond and 140 of his adherents, all landed proprietors. By this act all their vast estates—574,628 acres[2]—were confiscated to the crown; and their owners, or those of them that survived the rebellion, were to be sent adrift on the world without any provision.

Proclamation was now (1586) made all through England, inviting gentlemen to 'undertake' the plantation of this great and rich territory. Every possible inducement was held forth to tempt settlers. Estates were offered at two pence or three pence an acre; no rent at all was to be paid for the first five years, and only half rent for three years after that. Every undertaker who took 12,000 acres was to settle eighty-six English families of various trades and occupations as tenants on his property, and so in proportion for smaller estates down to 4,000 acres. No native Irish were to be taken either as tenants or as under-tenants, 'and in no family are any mere Irish to be entertained.'[3]

Many of the great undertakers were absentees: English noblemen who never saw Ireland. Those who came over to settle down on their estates generally took up their

[1] Chiefs and territories are given in detail in the *Four Masters*, A.D. 1585, with valuable notes and identifications by O'Donovan.

[2] This is the estimate as we find it in the parliamentary papers; but it amounted probably to a million of our present English acres.

[3] The whole scheme is detailed in *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, pp. 412–420.

abode in the castles of the attainted lords and gentlemen. Two of them are well known: Sir Walter Raleigh got 42,000 acres in Cork and Waterford, and resided at Youghal, where his house is still to be seen; and if incessant activity in destroying the peasantry is to be regarded as a merit, he well deserved the reward. Edmund Spenser the poet received 12,000 acres in Cork, and took up his residence in one of Desmond's strongholds, Kilcolman Castle, the ruin of which, near Buttevant, is still an object of interest to visitors.

In the most important particulars, however, this great scheme turned out a failure. No provision was made for the natives that were to be expelled; but the English farmers and artisans did not come over in sufficient numbers—20,000 had been expected; and the undertakers, finding it the cheapest and easiest plan, received the native Irish everywhere as tenants, in violation of the conditions. Some English came over indeed; but they were so harassed and frightened by the continual attacks of the dispossessed owners, that many of them abandoned their settlements and returned to England. And lastly, more than half the confiscated lands remained in possession of the owners; as no others could be found to take them. So the only result of this plantation was to root out a large proportion of the old gentry, and to enrich a few undertakers; the body of the population—that is, the remnant that survived the slaughter—remained much the same as before.

The deputy Sir John Perrott treated the Irish chiefs with some consideration; and he sought peace rather than war. But this was not what the people of the Pale wished for; they hated him for his moderation, and the military were dissatisfied that he did not seek out occasion for war. His violent temper also turned many against him; and the earl of Ormond, Bingham of Connaught, and Sir Nicholas Bagenal were his deadly enemies. His character was blackened in the eyes of the queen by every possible misrepresentation; even treasonable letters were forged in his name and sent to her majesty. And so far was she

turned against him by these calumnies that when, in 1586, he asked for leave to go to England to clear himself, he was refused. Yet he continued to discharge his duties with zeal and ability.

His governor of Connaught, Sir Richard Bingham, was a man of a very different stamp, as may be gathered from the following sketch of some of his proceedings. He held a sessions in Galway in January 1586, and seventy men and women were executed. In the same year he laid siege to Cloonoan Castle, near Corofin in Clare, held by one of the O'Briens, who had shown symptoms of disloyalty; and when the garrison surrendered after a brave defence, they were all massacred on the spot.

He next attacked the Hag's Castle situated on an island in Lough Mask, in which two of the Burkes had fortified themselves to escape his oppression. In this attack many of his men perished; but the defenders, believing that they could not hold out, escaped by night in two boats with their wives and children. Then Bingham razed the castle and hanged Richard Burke, one of the defenders who had fallen into his hands. After this he sent seven or eight companies of soldiers through West Connaught in search of other insurgents; and not succeeding in catching those they wanted, they plundered and ruined the whole country, and slaughtered all they met, young and old, not sparing even those under government protection.

Perrott was very indignant at all this savagery, and endeavoured more than once to put a stop to it. But the council in Dublin took Bingham's part, who consequently had his own way. There was now another uprising of the Burkes (1586), and Bingham, having first hanged their hostages, proceeded against them in his usual fashion, chasing them from their fortresses and hanging or hacking to pieces all of them that fell into his hands.

While this was going on in Connaught, a fleet of Scots had, at the instigation of the Burkes, landed in Innishowen (1586), and marching south-west they arrived at Lough Erne. Here they were met by messengers from the Burkes, who guided them towards Connaught. Bingham,

hearing of their arrival, marched against them, and there was some skirmishing; till at last, by a quick and well-concerted movement, he came on them as they lay in camp quite unprepared, at Ardnaree on the river Moy, beside Ballina. Here he defeated them utterly; great numbers were drowned in attempting to cross the river, and altogether 2,000 of them perished.

After this victory the usual executions followed. Edmond Burke, whose two sons were implicated, was hanged merely because he was their father, though he was so old and decrepit that he had to be carried to the gallows on a bier. Another session was held in Galway in December (1586), and many were executed, both men and women. But perhaps the reader has had enough for the present of Bingham's frightful career.

The great Geraldine rebellion and all the minor disturbances resulting from it had now been crushed, and there was no longer even the semblance of resistance. The miseries endured by the people in those times from the soldiery are beyond description. Even within the Pale, where some protection and safety might be expected, this was the state of things, as we find it described in a State Paper. Each man of the horse companies kept two horses with a boy for each. Bands of these horsemen with their horseboys, and also companies of foot-soldiers with their attendants and idle followers, traversed the Pale, marching leisurely hither and thither as the humour seized them, living entirely on the people, using up their provisions, and beggaring them with all sorts of extortion. They even took their clothes and farming utensils; and if they met with any resistance, they beat and sometimes even killed the poor people.[1] In the towns and villages all through Ireland there were detachments of military, who did whatever they pleased among the inhabitants of the surrounding districts. And when the state of things described above existed in the Pale, we can perhaps imagine how it fared with the people of the rest of Ireland.

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 260–265.

CHAPTER VIII

HUGH ROE O'DONNELL[1]

So long as Shane O'Neill was an object of dread, the government favoured and supported his enemies the O'Donnells. But no sooner had he fallen than there was a change of tone; and the O'Donnells found themselves treated with coldness and suspicion. Among other measures adopted by the government, sheriffs were sent to Tirconnell; but the chief, Sir Hugh O'Donnell—the same Hugh who defeated Shane O'Neill in 1567 (p. 417)—refused point blank to admit them. This indeed could scarcely be wondered at, seeing that the sheriffs of this period were generally corrupt, knavish petty tyrants, who made it their chief aim to enrich themselves by plundering and outraging the people. The council in Dublin were sorely puzzled how to act. They happened at this time to be particularly weak in soldiers, so that they were scarcely in a position to enforce their order; and as Hugh O'Neill (whose early career will be sketched in next chapter) was married to Sir Hugh O'Donnell's daughter, there was danger that these two great families, the O'Neills and the O'Donnells, might combine against them. There was another and a worse source of inquietude; for all this time the Armada was in course of preparation, and might any day descend on the Irish or English coasts.

The deputy, Sir John Perrott, in anticipation of hostilities with Spain, had already secured hostages from many of the Irish chiefs, but none from the O'Donnells, whom he feared more than all; for the loyalty of the O'Neills

[1] The narrative in this chapter is founded mainly on that of the *Four Masters*, who have copied into their Annals a great part of O'Clery's *Life of Red Hugh O'Donnell* (see p. 31, *supra*). Philip O'Sullivan Beare, in his *Historiæ Catholicæ Iberniæ Compendium* has given many circumstances omitted by the Four Masters, which I have also used. The treacherous capture of Red Hugh by Perrott is found in the same authorities; but this is related also by English writers, including Perrott himself.

seemed secure so long as they were let alone. In this strait he bethought him of a treacherous plan to seize either Sir Hugh or his son and heir, it mattered little which.

Sir Hugh O'Donnell chief of Tirconnell had a son Hugh, commonly known as Hugh Roe (the Red), who was born in 1572, and who was now (1587) in his fifteenth year. Even already at that early age, he was remarked for his great abilities and for his aspiring and ambitious disposition. 'The fame and renown of the above-named youth, Hugh Roe, had spread throughout the five provinces of Ireland even before he had come to the age of manhood, for his wisdom, sagacity, goodly growth, and noble deeds; and the English feared that if he should be permitted to arrive at the age of maturity, he and the earl of Tyrone [his brother-in-law] might combine and conquer the whole island.' [1]

Perrott's plan for entrapping young Red Hugh was skilfully concocted and well carried out. In the autumn of 1587 he sent a merchant vessel laden with Spanish wines to the coast of Donegal on pretence of traffic. The captain entered Lough Swilly and anchored opposite the castle of Rathmullan; for he had ascertained that the boy lived there with his foster father Mac Sweeny, a powerful chief, the owner of the castle. When Mac Sweeny heard of the arrival of the ship, he sent to purchase some wine. The messengers were told that no more was left to sell; but that if any gentlemen wished to come on board they were quite welcome to drink as much as they pleased. The bait took. A party of the Mac Sweenys, accompanied by Hugh, unsuspectingly went on board. The captain had previously called in all his men; and while the company were enjoying themselves, their arms were quietly removed, the hatchway door was closed down, and the ship weighed anchor. When the people on shore observed this they were filled with consternation, and flocked to the beach; but they were quite helpless, for they had no boats ready. Neither was it of any avail when Mac Sweeny

[1] *Four Masters*, 1587, p. 1861.

rushed to the point of shore nearest the ship, and cried out in the anguish of his heart, offering any amount of ransom and hostages. Young Hugh O'Donnell was brought to Dublin and safely lodged in Bermingham Tower in the Castle, where many other nobles, both Irish and old English, were then held in captivity.

This transaction however, so far from tending to peace, as Perrott no doubt intended, did the very reverse; for, as Leland justly observes, it was 'equally impolitic and dishonourable.' [1] It made bitter enemies of the O'Donnells, who had been hitherto for generations on the side of the government. In young O'Donnell himself more especially, it engendered feelings of exasperation and irreconcilable hatred; and it was one of the causes of the O'Neill war, which brought unmeasured woe and disaster to both English and Irish. Years afterwards O'Donnell gave to the English commissioners, as one of his reasons for entering on rebellion, his imprisonment in Dublin Castle.[2]

Three years and three months passed away: Perrott had been recalled, and Sir William Fitzwilliam was now, 1590, lord deputy; when O'Donnell, in concert with some of his fellow prisoners, made an attempt to escape. Round the castle there was a deep ditch filled with water, across which was a wooden bridge opposite the door of the fortress. Early one dark winter's evening, before being locked into their sleeping cells, and before the guard had been set, they let themselves down from a window on the bridge by a long rope, and immediately fastened the door on the outside. They were met on the bridge by a youth of Hugh's people with two swords, one of which Hugh took, the other was given to Art Kavanagh, a brave young Leinster chief. They made their way noiselessly through the people along the dimly lighted streets, guided by the young man, while Kavanagh brought up the rear with sword grasped ready in case of interruption. Passing out through one of the city gates which had not yet been closed for the night, they crossed the country towards the

[1] *Hist. of Irel.* ii. 310.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 142. See also chap. x. p. 485, *infra*.

hills, avoiding the public road, and made their way over the eastern face of Slieve Roe [1]—that slope of the Three Rock Mountain overlooking Stillorgan. They pushed on till far in the night; when being at last quite worn out, they took shelter in a thick wood, somewhere near the present village of Roundwood, where they remained hidden during the remainder of the night. When they resumed their journey next morning O'Donnell was so fatigued that he was not able to keep up with his companions; for the thin shoes he wore had fallen in pieces with wet, and his feet were torn and bleeding from sharp stones and thorns. So, very unwillingly, his companions left him in a wood and pursued their journey, all but one servant who went for aid to Castlekevin, a little way off, near the mouth of Glendalough, where lived Felim O'Toole, one of Hugh's friends. O'Toole was rejoiced at O'Donnell's escape, and at once took steps for his relief and protection.

Some considerable time after the fugitives had left the castle, the guards going to lock them up in their cells for the night missed them, and instantly raising an alarm, rushed to the door; but finding themselves shut in, they shouted to the people in the houses at the other side of the street, who with some delay removed the fastening of the door and released them. They were not able to overtake the fugitives, who had too much of a start, but they traced them all the way to the hiding-place. O'Toole now saw that his friend could no longer be concealed, for the soldiers had surrounded the wood; and making a virtue of necessity, he and his people arrested him and brought him back to Dublin. The council were delighted at his capture; and for the better security they shackled him and his companions in the prison with heavy iron fetters.

Another weary year passed away. On Christmas night 1591, before supper time, Hugh and his two companions Henry and Art O'Neill, the sons of Shane O'Neill, who were also in the prison, cut through their iron fetters

[1] Slieve Roe, or the Red Mountain, was the name of the range extending from the Three Rock Mountain to Glenasmole.

with a file which had somehow been conveyed to them, and let themselves down on the bridge by a long silken rope, which had been sent with the file. Art O'Neill when descending was struck on the head by a loose stone which had become dislodged, and was greatly hurt; but he was able to go on. They crept through the common sewer of the castle, and making their way across the ditch, were met at the other side by a guide sent by the great chief Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne of Glenmalure.

They glided through the dim streets as in their former attempt at escape, the people taking no notice of them; and passing out at one of the city gates which had not been closed, they made their way across the country; but in this part of their course they lost Henry O'Neill in the darkness and did not meet him again. Greatly distressed at this, they still pressed on; but they found it hard to travel and suffered keenly from cold; for the snow fell thick, and they had thrown aside their soiled outer mantles after leaving the castle. They crossed the hills, shaping their way this time more to the west, up by Killakee, and along the course of the present military road.

But Art O'Neill, who had grown corpulent in his prison for want of exercise, and who still felt the effects of the hurt on his head, was unable to keep pace with the others: and Hugh and the attendant had to help him on at intervals by walking one on each side, while he rested his arms on their shoulders. In this manner they toiled on wearily across the snowy waste through the whole of that Christmas night and the whole of next day without food, hoping to be able to reach Glenmalure without a halt. But they became at last so worn out with fatigue and hunger that, although Glenmalure was only a few miles off, they had to give up and take shelter under a high rock, while the servant ran on for help. Fiach, with as much haste as possible, despatched a small party with a supply of food, who found the two young men lying under the rock to all appearance dead:—'Unhappy and miserable was the condition [of the young chiefs] on their arrival. Their bodies were covered over with white-

bordered shrouds of hailstones freezing around them, and their light clothes and fine-threaded shirts adhered to their skin, and their large shoes and leather thongs to their legs and feet: so that, covered as they were with snow, it did not appear to the men who had arrived that they were human beings at all, for they found no life in their members, but just as if they were dead.' [1]

They raised the unhappy sufferers and tried to make them take food and drink, but neither food nor drink could they swallow, and while the men were tenderly nursing them Art O'Neill died in their arms. And there they buried him under the shadow of the rock. Hugh, being hardier however, fared better: after some time he was able to swallow a little ale, and his strength began to return. But his feet still remained frozen and dead so that he could not stand: and when he had sufficiently recovered, the men carried him on their shoulders to Glenmalure. Here he was placed in a secluded cottage where he remained for a time under cure, till a young chief named Turlogh O'Hagan, a trusty messenger from Hugh O'Neill earl of Tyrone, came for him.

Meantime the council hearing that O'Donnell was in Glenmalure with O'Byrne, placed guards on the fords of the Liffey to prevent him from passing northwards to his home in Ulster. Nevertheless, as O'Neill's message was urgent, Fiach sent O'Donnell away with O'Hagan, and a troop of horse for a guard; but the young chief's feet were still so helpless that he had to be lifted on and off his horse. They crossed the Liffey at a deep and dangerous ford just beside Dublin, which had been left unguarded; passing unperceived near the green of Dublin Castle. Here O'Byrne's escort left them; and from Dublin they made their way northwards, attended by Felim O'Toole and his brother. Having escorted them to a safe distance beyond Dublin, the O'Tooles 'bade Hugh farewell, and having given him their blessing, departed from him.'

There were now only two, O'Donnell himself and

[1] *Four Masters*, 1592, p. 1919.

O'Hagan, and they rode on till they reached the Boyne a little above Drogheda, at a place where a man kept a ferry: here O'Donnell crossed in the boat while O'Hagan brought the horses round by the town. They next reached Mellifont, where resided a friend, Sir Garrett Moore, a young Englishman, with whom they remained for the night; and in the evening of the following day set off with a fresh pair of horses.

They arrived at Dundalk by morning, and instead of taking the byways, which were all guarded, they rode through the town in open day without attracting any notice: and at last they reached the residence of Hugh O'Neill's half-brother, Turlogh Mac Henry O'Neill, chief of the Fews in Armagh. Next day they crossed Slieve Fuad and came to the city of Armagh, where they remained in concealment for one night. The following day they reached the house of Earl Hugh O'Neill at Dungannon, where O'Donnell rested for four days; but secretly, for O'Neill was still in the queen's service.

The earl sent him with a troop of horse as an escort to Enniskillen Castle, the residence of O'Donnell's cousin Maguire of Fermanagh, who rowed him down Lough Erne, at the far shore of which he was met by a party of his own people. With these he arrived at his father's castle at Ballyshannon, where he was welcomed with unbounded joy.

There is good reason to believe that the deputy Fitzwilliam, who was avaricious and unprincipled, was bribed by the earl of Tyrone to connive at the escape of O'Donnell and the two O'Neills; for the earl, suspecting that a struggle was impending, was anxious to have the help of his brother-in-law O'Donnell; and he wished to secure the sons of Shane O'Neill lest they might give trouble by claiming the chieftainship. Some years afterwards the queen plainly stated in a letter to lord deputy Borough that O'Donnell escaped 'by practice of money bestowed on somebody';[1] both Cox and Moryson say that a certain

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 219; see also *Four Masters*, 1590, p. 1898, note *z*.

great man was privy to their escape; and Leland expressly names Fitzwilliam.

An incident that occurred immediately after O'Donnell's arrival well illustrates how the miserable people had been oppressed and terrorised by the military. Two English captains, Willis and Conwell, with a party of 200 soldiers from Connaught, had taken possession of the monastery of Donegal after expelling the monks, and also of the castle of Ballyboyle near the town; and from these two robbers' nests they sent out parties day by day to plunder the surrounding country. Young O'Donnell, without loss of time, proceeded with a party of his people to Donegal, and sent an imperative message to the two captains to march off and leave behind them all their prisoners and plunder. So terrified were they at this mandate that they did exactly as they were bidden, very thankful to escape with their lives: and the monks returned to the monastery.

At Ballyshannon Hugh remained under cure for two months. The physicians had at last to amputate his two great toes; and a whole year passed away before he had fully recovered from the effects of that one terrible winter night in the mountains.

In May this year, 1592, a general meeting of the Kinel-Connell was convened; and Sir Hugh O'Donnell, who was old and feeble, having resigned the chieftainship, young Hugh Roe—now in his twentieth year—was elected The O'Donnell, chief of his race, and was inaugurated amid the acclamations of his people.

CHAPTER IX

HUGH O'NEILL, EARL OF TYRONE[1]

During the war of Shane O'Neill, his first cousin Turlogh Lynnagh was on the side of the government, who played him, as they played many another chief, against that

[1] In addition to the authorities quoted in this chapter, the reader may consult *The Life and Times of Aodh* [*Hugh*] *O'Neill*, by John Mitchel: Duffy, Dublin.

formidable rebel. He was elected The O'Neill immediately after the death of Shane, although he well knew it was a matter of high treason. After this period he did not receive much countenance—the authorities no longer needed him; and there was now coming to the front another member of the family, a powerful rival in government favour.

It will be remembered that Matthew baron of Dungannon had two sons, the elder of whom succeeded to the title. On the death of this young man (p. 411) the younger brother Hugh, the subject of our present sketch, while still a mere boy, became by law baron of Dungannon; but his claim was for many years disregarded. There is good reason to suspect that Matthew was not an O'Neill at all (p. 400); but anyhow, this Hugh assumed, and probably believed that he was really of that great family; and he subsequently became the most distinguished man that ever bore the name. He is described by his contemporary Moryson[1] as 'of a mean [medium] Stature but a strong Body, able to endure Labours, Watching, and hard Fare, being withal industrious and active, valiant, affable, and apt to manage great Affairs, and of a high, dissembling, subtile, and profound wit.'

As his father had been always on the side of the government, Hugh was educated among the English, and began his military life in the queen's service as commander of a troop of horse. He served through the Geraldine war, and was constantly commended for his zeal and loyalty. The government gave him possession of the south-east of Tyrone, restricting Turlogh Lynnagh to the north-west. After this he kept continually quarrelling with Turlogh, in which he was rather encouraged by the government, who were not ill pleased to see that troublesome old chief kept down. He attended the late parliament (1585, p. 461), as baron of Dungannon; and before the close of the proceedings he was made earl of Tyrone in succession to his (reputed) grandfather Conn Bacach. But the parliament declined to grant him the

[1] *Hist. of Irel.* i. 16.

inheritance attached to the title, saying that none but the queen could do that, inasmuch as the land had become the property of the crown by the attainder of Shane O'Neill.[1]

Accordingly he went to England in 1587, furnished with a warm recommendation from Perrott to Queen Elizabeth, whose favour and confidence he soon gained by his courtly and insinuating manners; and she sent him back fully confirmed in both title and inheritance. She imposed however these important conditions:—that Turlogh Lynnagh should still remain Irish chief of Tyrone—this evidently with the intention of keeping the power of both balanced; that earl Hugh himself should not claim authority over the other Ulster chiefs; and lastly, he was to give up 240 acres on the Blackwater as a site for a fort. This fort was built soon after and called Portmore; it commanded a ford which was the pass from Armagh into Tyrone, O'Neill's territory; and its site is now marked by the village of Blackwatertown.

On his return he was received with great honour, both by the government authorities and by his own countrymen. For the Irish looked up to him as the most powerful representative of their ancient kingly race, and they believed that though an officer in the English army his heart was with their cause; while the Irish government regarded him as a favourite of the queen, and as their best safeguard against the disaffected of Ulster. And with great astuteness he made full use of his influence with both to increase his power.

Sir John Perrott, worn out by the untiring persecution of his enemies, was recalled at his own request, being greatly regretted by the people of Dublin, who on the day of his departure turned out in immense crowds to see him off. He was succeeded in 1588 by Sir William Fitzwilliam, a man of no principle, who had been governor several times before. He thought he had not been sufficiently recompensed for his former services; and he now resumed the government, fully determined to enrich him-

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1575–1588, p. 407.

self by every means in his power. He had not been long in office before he turned the whole of Ulster against the queen's government. Soon after his arrival, in 1588, some shipwrecked sailors belonging to the Armada were treated kindly by O'Ruarc of Brefney and by Mac Sweeny-na-Doe. The deputy came to hear of this, and heard moreover what interested him a great deal more—that the Spaniards before re-embarking had buried a tremendous quantity of treasure somewhere near the shore. Without a moment's delay he hastened north, 'wishing,' as Cox expresses it, 'to have a finger in the pie.' But he found no treasure; neither did he succeed in arresting O'Ruarc and Mac Sweeny, for they had fled on his approach. Enraged at this double disappointment, he seized without any provocation the first two chiefs that came to hand, Sir John O'Gallagher and Sir John O'Doherty, 'who,' as Cox says, 'were the best affected to the State of all the Irish,' and threw them into prison in Dublin. O'Gallagher died of a broken heart in his dungeon, and at the end of two years O'Doherty was set free when at the point of death, and even then only on paying a heavy bribe to the deputy. 'This hard usage of two such Irish persons,' says Ware, 'caused a general dissatisfaction among the gentlemen of Ulster.' O'Ruarc escaped to Scotland, but was given up to the queen by the Scotch and executed soon after.

But the deputy did much worse than even this. Hugh Mac Mahon of Farney in Monaghan had occasion to go to Dublin in 1589 to settle in the courts some matters connected with his succession; when Fitzwilliam, before he would even hear the case, made him pay a bribe of 600 cows. Having settled the affair, he accompanied Mac Mahon in friendly guise to Monaghan, where he suddenly had the unfortunate chief put on his trial on a trumped-up charge, kept the jury without food till they brought in a verdict of guilty; and had him executed at his own door. Then he proceeded to divide Mac Mahon's estate; and everyone believed that he got heavy bribes from those to whom he gave the lands.[1]

[1] Moryson, i. 24; Cox, 399.

It would appear that the earl of Tyrone had fallen under suspicion of having had friendly communication also with the shipwrecked Spaniards. At any rate he thought it best to go to England, in May 1590, to represent his own case to the queen. As he had not obtained from the deputy the license to quit Ireland required by law, he was arrested on his arrival and put in prison; but he was released at the end of a month and made his peace with the queen. He now proposed various reforms in his principality, reforms which he knew would be highly pleasing to the queen and to the government, and he bound himself on his honour to carry them out. He would renounce the name of O'Neill; would have Tyrone made shire ground, and permit a jail to be built at Dungannon. He would cause his people to hold their lands by English tenure, under rent, and to dress English fashion; he promised not to admit monks or friars into his country unless they conformed, and not to hold any correspondence with foreign traitors—along with several other proposals tending in the same direction.

Scarcely had this pleasant business ended when a son of Shane an Diomais O'Neill—Hugh Gaveloch or Hugh of the Fetters—appeared in London and openly accused the earl of plotting with the Spaniards to make war on the queen. Whereupon Tyrone was straightway brought before the council board to answer this serious charge; but he simply denied it and was believed. How could a man who had promised to do so much for the government be disloyal? After his return to Ireland one of his first acts was to arrest this Hugh Gaveloch; and having put him to trial he had him hanged (1590). This brought angry expostulations from the authorities; but he pleaded that he had merely, by virtue of his privilege of executing martial law, hanged a known traitor. And he stopped further inquiry on this and other doubtful proceedings by permitting Tyrone to be marked out into shire ground with Dungannon for its county town (1591).

At this time Sir Henry Bagenal, marshal of Ireland, had his headquarters at Newry, where his sister Mabel,

a beautiful girl, lived with him. O'Neill, whose wife had died some time before, having met Miss Bagenal, they fell in love with each other, and earnestly wished to be married. But Bagenal was bitterly opposed to the match, and sent the lady out of the way to the house of his sister Lady Barnwell, who lived near Dublin. O'Neill followed her and managed to have her conveyed to the residence of a friend at Drumcondra, where early in August 1591 they were married by Thomas Jones the Protestant bishop of Meath.[1] Bagenal was greatly enraged, and made a violent complaint to the government, which came to nothing; but from that day forth he was O'Neill's deadliest enemy. Moreover he persistently refused to give the lady her fortune—£1,000, which had been left her by her father. He kept it himself; and this further embittered the quarrel.

There were still continual disputes and recriminations between the earl and Turlogh Lynnagh; and the government officials, whenever they were called in to settle matters, always took the side of the earl. At last old Turlogh, wearied with the contest, retired with an assured income for life; and the earl gained the great object of his ambition: he became, in 1593, master of all Tyrone. But now he never made the least move to carry out his promised reforms. He knew well indeed that it was as much as his life was worth to attempt to do so; for his people would have risen to a man against the introduction of English customs.

The queen and government were greatly puzzled how to deal with Tyrone. His proceedings excited secret suspicions and alarms; and they now sorely repented having placed so much power in his hands. For the purpose of repressing attempts at insurrection in Ulster, he proposed to keep up a small standing army of Irish; to which the government could see no objection. An army

[1] This poor lady's married life was short; she never witnessed the final fatal struggle between her husband and her brother; for she died some time before the battle of the Yellow Ford (*Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 151).

must be trained; and now the training and drilling went on steadily. But he changed some of his men almost every day, sending home those who had been sufficiently drilled and supplying their places with new recruits; and in this way he managed to make expert soldiers of nearly all the men of Tyrone. For the purpose of roofing his new house at Dungannon he brought home vast quantities of lead; and the deputy in Dublin was made uneasy by a rumour that it was intended not for roofs but for bullets.[1] He secured the friendship of the most powerful of the Ulster chiefs, instead of seeking to subjugate them like Shane O'Neill. He gave his son in fosterage to O'Cahan; kept up amicable relations with the Scots of Clandeboy and the Glens; and his late wife was daughter of Sir Hugh O'Donnell lord of Tirconnell, the most powerful of all his neighbours. We have seen how he aided young O'Donnell to escape from Dublin Castle.

Complaints now began to reach the government that he was exercising authority over many of the smaller chiefs, contrary to his agreement with the queen; but he managed things so adroitly that the complaints came to nothing. He was very careful not to commit himself openly, so that the authorities, though feeling suspicious and uneasy, had no grounds for active interference. Judging however that it might not be safe to place himself directly in the power of the government, he absented himself from the council in Dublin, of which he was a member.

Yet he still continued in the queen's service. For when the lord deputy marched into Connaught in 1593 to attack Maguire and O'Ruarc, who had been goaded into rebellion by the sheriff of Fermanagh, the earl accompanied the expedition, though with much secret unwillingness. Maguire, driven to bay, defended with great obstinacy the ford of Culuan on the Erne, a little west of Belleek. and it was only after 400 of his men had fallen that the passage was forced. In this action Tyrone was wounded while crossing the river at the head of his cavalry; but this was the last time he fought on the side of the govern-

[1] Ware's *Annals*, 1593.

ment. We are told that on this occasion Red Hugh O'Donnell was on his way to aid the two Connaught chiefs, but was induced to refrain by a private message from O'Neill, who did not wish to fight against his young friend.

In the following year, 1594, deputy Fitzwilliam, following up his hostilities against Maguire, took his chief castle of Enniskillen, which was built on an island—it was delivered up by the warders for a bribe; in which he left a strong garrison. And Sir Richard Bingham governor of Connaught, who was present, having executed all the men that fell into his hands, gathered the women, children, and old people of the place, and flung them into the river from the battlements of the bridge.[1] But Maguire and O'Donnell laid siege to the town, plundered the adherents of the English in the surrounding country, and cut off all supplies. At the end of about six weeks, when the garrison had been reduced to great distress, the deputy directed Sir Henry Duke and Sir Edward Herbert with Sir Richard Bingham, to proceed towards the town with a considerable force and attempt to throw in provisions. When news of this reached Enniskillen, O'Donnell, who was becoming impatient at O'Neill's persistence in holding aloof, sent him an earnest and half-angry request for help for Maguire. O'Neill, wishing to avoid an open breach with the government, took no steps in the matter; but his brother Cormac joined Maguire with a small troop of 400 horse and foot, in such a manner that it was impossible to tell whether or not it was done with the consent of the earl.

With his augmented forces Maguire intercepted the advancing relief party, on the 7th of August, 1594, at a ford on the river Arney, now spanned by Drumaňe bridge, five miles south of Enniskillen. Here the royal forces were defeated with a loss of 400 men; and the survivors fled, abandoning all their stores, so that the place was afterwards called Bellanabriska, the ford of the biscuits. When the garrison of Enniskillen heard of this disaster they capitulated; and Maguire permitted them to depart

[1] O'Sullivan Beare, *Hist. Cath. Ibern.* ed, 1850, p. 160.

unharmed, sending an escort with them till they reached a place of safety.[1]

O'Neill had been making bitter complaints of the treatment he received at the hands of the deputy and Sir Henry Bagenal: the consequence of which was that the queen, obviously anxious to conciliate him, recalled Fitzwilliam and appointed Sir William Russell deputy in his place: and she sent orders to Bagenal not to molest the earl or his people any more: but he was not directed to give up the £1,000 that belonged to O'Neill's wife. Newry where he was stationed was just beside O'Neill's border, and he used his great power as marshal in every possible way to mortify and exasperate him. Later on, when O'Neill in his anxiety to avoid a breach with the government, wrote letter after letter of submission and explanation to the deputy, Bagenal intercepted them; and there is no doubt that he was one of the chief agencies in driving him to rebellion.[2]

O'Neill had long held aloof from the council in Dublin: but now to the surprise of everyone, he unexpectedly made his appearance there. He handed to the deputy a formal written submission, acknowledging his fault in absenting himself from the council, but giving as a reason that he feared treachery from Fitzwilliam. Marshal Bagenal was instantly up and charged him openly and bitterly with corresponding with the rebels and with other treasonable practices, and did his best to have him arrested. But O'Neill answered the charges by simply denying them and by challenging him to single combat—a usual mode of settling disputes in those days; which the marshal declined. And he made such protestations of loyalty and promised to do so many things for the benefit of the government that the council permitted him to depart in peace.[3]

There really was nothing that could be proved against him, so that it would have been nothing less than treachery

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 95; *Four Masters*, 1594.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 151; see also next chapter, p. 485, *infra*.
[3] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, pp. 97, 98.

to arrest him. Yet the queen was very angry that he was let off, and expressed her rage in unmeasured terms of censure to the council. 'When voluntarily he came up to you, the deputy, it was overruled by you, the council, to dismiss him, though dangerous accusations were offered against him. This was as foul an oversight as ever was committed in that kingdom. Our commandments to you in private for his stay ought otherwise have guided you.' And elsewhere she says in a letter to Russell :—'We hold it strange that in all this space you have not used some underhand way to bring in the earl.' [1]

The friendly relations between the earl and the government may be said to have ended with the close of this year (1594). And here it may be asked, had he all this time been deliberately preparing for rebellion and following a career of deception and duplicity? 'Was he, while professing the utmost loyalty to the queen, a crafty traitor, as English writers surmise?' Dr. Richey, a writer of great judgment and fairness, from whom I quote, answers his own question :—'An attentive study of his life and letters (or rather official documents) leads to the opposite conclusion.' There is no doubt that Dr. Richey's conclusion is the true one. O'Neill was an Englishman by education: he knew well the sort of men he had to deal with; he understood the character of the queen; he was cool and calculating and had learned all their statecraft; and he used their own weapons successfully against them all. This was his real crime. His fixed intention was to regain all the power and privileges of his predecessors; and his struggle to accomplish this, coupled with the bitter hostility and untiring machinations of marshal Bagenal, drew him gradually on till he drifted at last into open rebellion. But he did so after much doubt and hesitation: and the correspondence all through shows that it was with the greatest reluctance he broke with the government.

In the year 1592 the University of Dublin, now commonly known as Trinity College, was founded by Queen Elizabeth

[1] See *Carew Papers*, pp. 101, 109. The above letter written 31st October, 1594.

while Adam Loftus was archbishop. The buildings were erected on the site of the Augustinian monastery of All Saints *near* Dublin, which had been founded in 1166 by Dermot Mac Murrogh; and the site was granted for the purpose to archbishop Loftus by the corporation of Dublin.

CHAPTER X

THE REBELLION OF HUGH O'NEILL, EARL OF TYRONE

The first notable exploit of the new deputy, Sir William Russell, was a well-planned attempt to capture 'The firebrand of the mountains'—Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne. Guided by some of Fiach's false friends, he surprised the castle of Ballinacor one night in January 1595; but the chief and his family, having been accidentally alarmed by the sound of a drum, escaped by the back during the forcing of the front entrance. The deputy left a garrison in the castle: but in the August of the following year O'Byrne surprised it in his turn and regained possession. In retaliation for the deputy's attack, Fiach's son-in-law, Walter Reagh Fitzgerald, with some of the old chief's sons, swooped down by night on Crumlin near Dublin, burned the village, and carried off the leaden roof of the church. And though the blaze was plainly seen from Dublin, the party got clear off before there was time to intercept them. Soon after however in the same year (1595), Fitzgerald, while lying wounded in a cave, was taken by the treachery of the physician that attended him, and hanged in chains.

A couple of months later, the deputy, attended by a party of military, made a journey through Wicklow, of which the sanguinary details are given by himself. Every human being that fell in their way, whom they judged to be a traitor, was killed on the spot and his 'head brought in' to the camp. Among others they captured the wife of the great chief O'Byrne himself, and sentenced her to be burned alive for treason.[1]

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 228.

There were now many alarming signs and rumours of coming disturbance; and at the request of the deputy, a force of 3,000 troops was sent over, under the command of Sir John Norris president of Munster, an officer of great ability and experience, on whom was conferred the title of 'lord general.' We have already unpleasantly made his acquaintance; for it was he who on Essex's commission massacred the people of Rathlin (p. 443). O'Neill evidently regarded this movement as the first step towards the subjugation of the whole country, including his own province of Ulster; and he decided on immediate action. He probably thought too that by taking a bold stand he could exact better terms. Accordingly, no doubt by his direction, his young brother Art, proceeding early in 1595 with a small party to the Blackwater, seized the recently erected fort of Portmore, and having expelled the garrison, he dismantled the fort, thus averting, so far as could be done, the danger of invasion from that quarter. Immediately afterwards the earl committed himself to open rebellion by plundering the town of Cavan and the English settlements of the surrounding district.[1]

He next laid siege to Monaghan, and reduced its English garrison to great distress; but they managed to send word to Dublin that they wanted provisions. On the receipt of this message, Sir John Norris and his brother Sir Thomas marched north in the same year (1595) with a large force and reached the town with a store of provisions without meeting any opposition from the Irish. But on their return march to Newry they found O'Neill with his army drawn up on the far bank of a small stream at Clontibret, six miles from Monaghan.

Norris determined to force the passage; and leading his men in person, dashed bravely across: but in spite of every effort he was forced back. A second time he crossed, and again he was driven back. At this juncture a gigantic Anglo-Irish officer named Segrave spurred across at the head of a body of cavalry, and furiously charged the Irish horse which was commanded by O'Neill.

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 109.

Segrave singled out O'Neill himself, and at the first onset they shivered their lances on their corslets. Then Segrave closing on him attempted to pull him from his horse by main force; and both rolled to the ground in mortal struggle. The activity of O'Neill proved more than a match for the vast strength of his adversary: grasping his short sword he plunged it to the hilt into Segrave's body beneath his armour, and sprang up victorious. Then the Irish horse with a vigorous charge scattered their opponents, who fled in confusion. In this battle the two Norrises fought with great bravery, and both were severely wounded. After the fight they made their way to Newry, leaving arms, horses, and other spoils in the hands of the victors.[1]

For some time past Red Hugh O'Donnell had been incessantly active. He made two terrible raids on the English settlements of Connaught. During the first, in the spring of 1595, he took revenge for Bingham's butcheries at Enniskillen in the previous year, by killing every man above fifteen that fell into his hands who could not speak Irish: a cruel and useless slaughter; not quite so bad however as Bingham's, inasmuch as the women and children were spared.[2] He demolished the castle of Sligo and several others, to prevent them from being garrisoned by the English; and he succeeded in winning to his standard most of the septs of North Connaught, and in uniting those of Ulster that had not already joined the league. But now his presence was required elsewhere.

In Midsummer (1595) the deputy and lord general Norris marched north, determined to recover Portmore: the expedition was nominally under the deputy, but Norris was the real commander. They proceeded to Dundalk, and thence by the Moyry Pass to Newry. O'Neill immediately sent word to O'Donnell, who promptly left his own territory, though sorely needed there: and the two

[1] See for this battle, O'Sullivan, *Hist. Cath. Ibern.* ed. 1850, p. 173; *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 109 (Tucker's Report); and *Four Masters*, 1595. I have attempted to reconcile the various accounts, which are somewhat conflicting, both as to time and circumstance.

[2] O'Sullivan, *Hist. Cath. Ibern.* ed. 1850, p. 168.

chiefs formed an entrenched camp with their united forces beside the Blackwater, near Portmore.

The deputy and Norris proceeded with their army to Armagh, and thence towards Portmore; but when they had reconnoitred the position of the Irish they did not venture to attack. O'Neill on his part did not offer battle in force, but contented himself with continual skirmishing. At last the English returned to Armagh, and converting the church into a fort, in which was left a garrison, they returned to Newry, and thence to Dundalk, harassed by O'Neill the whole way.[1]

Yet O'Neill, knowing well the tremendous power he had to deal with, did not wish to follow up this rebellion, if by any other means he could obtain reasonable terms. He wrote to the earl of Ormond and to the treasurer Wallop declaring that he wished to live in peace, provided he and his people were allowed to profess and practise their religion. At the same time, probably at his suggestion, O'Donnell and some other chiefs wrote to the same effect. O'Neill also sent conciliatory letters to the deputy and to Norris, but Bagenal, who did not wish for reconciliation, intercepted them.[2] The deputy, knowing nothing of these overtures, proclaimed O'Neill a traitor on the 28th June, 1595, the proclamation, which came from the queen, being worded as usual in the most insulting terms.[3] About this time the English settlements over a great part of Leinster and Connaught were spoiled and wasted by the Irish.

In consequence of the manifestoes to Ormond and Wallop, however, a conference was arranged between the Irish chiefs and two commissioners from the queen, Wallop and chief justice Gardiner, which took place in an open field near Dundalk. When the chiefs were questioned why they rebelled, O'Neill gave as one of his reasons the insults and false accusations of Bagenal; O'Donnell brought up in bitter complaint his treacherous seizure and imprisonment; and the other chiefs advanced their own several grievances.

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 232; *Four Masters*, 1595.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 151. [3] *Ibid.* 1589–1600, p. 111.

The commissioners thought many of their complaints and demands reasonable; and agreed to refer them to the queen; but they demanded that the insurgents should at once lay down their arms, repair the forts they had demolished, and admit sheriffs into their several districts: to place themselves in fact at the mercy of the government. These preliminary conditions the chiefs rejected, and the conference ended without result.

At the conclusion of the short truce—made for the conference—the deputy and Norris marched to Armagh with the intention of crossing the Blackwater into Tyrone; whereupon O'Neill destroyed and abandoned Portmore and burned Dungannon, including his own house; after which he followed the same tactics as before: harassing the enemy with constant skirmishes and avoiding open battle. But the negotiations were renewed; and in October (1595) things had come to this pass, that O'Neill and O'Donnell made formal submission; and a truce was agreed on till the following January.[1] Meantime old Turlogh Lynnagh died; and the earl, in accordance with native custom, was made The O'Neill.

From the day of Norris's arrival there had been serious jealousy and disagreement between him and the lord deputy. Norris, as Leland observes, 'had judgment and equity to discern that the hostilities of the Irish had been provoked by several instances of wanton insolence and oppression. He was therefore for adopting measures of kindness and conciliation which would certainly have restored peace.' But deputy Russell—Leland goes on to say—'declared for a vigorous prosecution of the rebels.'

The English government took Norris's view, for the queen most earnestly wished the war ended; and again, in January 1596 there was a conference with a truce of two months. O'Neill and O'Donnell demanded, amongst other concessions, pardon for all the insurgents, and full liberty of conscience. As to the first, the queen refused to pardon the other chiefs through O'Neill and O'Donnell, insisting that each should ask pardon on his own account.

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 125.

The petition for liberty of conscience she branded as downright disloyalty, being offended that it should have been even mentioned. And thus the negotiations came to nothing.

But all this time O'Neill, in common with several of the other chiefs, was in secret communication with Spain, knowing well that he could not succeed in his struggle against the great power of England without foreign aid; and he strongly urged the despatch of two or three thousand Spanish troops, which he believed would be sufficient for his purpose. Hoping for these from month to month, he protracted the negotiations, wasted time, and played a waiting game with consummate coolness and skill. At the same time the queen and the government unconsciously played into his hands by their refusal to listen to the reasonable terms of the Irish, and by their evasive and often wilfully equivocating replies. Thus matters went on without any decided or permanent agreement. Sometimes there were truces and conferences and negotiations, sometimes pardons and partial settlements, and sometimes open hostilities; so that from this time (1596) till the battle of the Yellow Ford, it was hard to say whether the country was in a state of peace or war. But as time rolled on, the national league became more and more extended under the persuasion and guidance of O'Neill, till at last it included nearly all the chiefs of Ireland.

Soon after the break up of the resultless conference held in January of this year (1596), Sir John Norris headed an expedition into Connaught to reduce the confederates there. But he was not able to accomplish much; for he was followed by O'Donnell the whole time; and having run short of provisions, he had at last to return to Athlone. He left garrisons however in several castles between Galway and Athlone.[1] About this time three Spanish vessels arrived on the Donegal coast, bringing a supply of military stores, which were delivered up to O'Donnell with encouraging letters from the king of Spain.

[1] *Four Masters*, 1596, p. 2001.

Towards the close of the year (1596) peace was agreed on, at the urgent desire of the queen, each chief receiving pardon on his own account, and not through O'Neill. Yet O'Neill, though apparently yielding here, gained his point, for it was by his direction they surrendered, and the terms, as being dictated by him, were all identical.[1] But this peace was not of long duration; for the deputy soon after made an attack on the Leinster confederate, Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne. This was fiercely resented by O'Neill, who in retaliation suddenly attacked Armagh, expelled the garrison after surrender, and dismantled the fortress.[2] And he sent an expedition southwards which ravaged the English settlements as far as the Boyne.[3] Yet even after this, the English authorities, conscious of weakness, sent another commission to treat with him, but without any decisive results in pacifying the country.

The queen, who seems to have had secret sources of information, rightly suspected that O'Neill was in correspondence with some foreign power; and as nearly all the Irish chiefs were now in revolt, she became greatly alarmed. She would gladly have had peace, but could not bring herself to yield to the demands of the Irish; yet she was unable to fully assert her authority, for the army in Ireland was in a state of deplorable inefficiency. She was most anxious that there should be no unnecessary irritation of the Irish; and she was accordingly greatly exasperated at the continual reports that reached her of Bingham's atrocious tyranny in Connaught. She ordered inquiry, and was made aware that it was he who had driven the chiefs of his part of the country into rebellion. He was recalled in January 1597, and the Queen was so indignant that when he appeared in London to justify himself she caused him to be cast into prison. She appointed in his place, as governor of Connaught, Sir Conyers Clifford, a just and humane man; and as the Four Masters say, 'there came not of the English into Ireland in latter times a better man than he.'

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, pp. 185, 186, 204.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 186.
[3] Ware's *Annals*, 1596.

In the month of May this year (1597) Russell led an expedition through Wicklow, when the great old chief Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne met his fate. The soldiers, led to his retreat by a treacherous relative, captured him and killed him on the spot—'to the great comfort and joy of all that province,' says Russell in his diary. And they brought his head to Dublin, where it was spiked on the castle.[1] Immediately after this last exploit Sir William Russell, having been continually thwarted, as he states, by the queen following other people's advice, asked for and obtained his recall; and Thomas Lord Borough was appointed in his place. One of the first acts of this new deputy was to deprive Sir John Norris of his high command as lord general, and send him back to his presidency of Munster; and this humiliation, 'with the baffles and abuses put upon him by Tyrone,' so preyed on him that he pined away and died.[2]

Borough found all Ulster, except seven castled towns, nearly all Connaught, and a great part of Munster, in the hands of the rebels. And having made up his mind to bring the entire military resources of the country in one grand effort against the northern confederates, he organised movements from three different points. He himself was to march from Dublin towards the Blackwater against O'Neill; he directed Sir Conyers Clifford to move from Galway towards Ballyshannon against O'Donnell; and young Barnewell son of Lord Trimblestone was ordered to proceed from Mullingar to join the main body; the intention being that all three should effect a junction somewhere near Ballyshannon. O'Neill and O'Donnell hearing of these preparations cast about them to prevent the intended junction, and arranged that each of the three expeditions should be intercepted.

In July (1597) the deputy mustered the forces of Leinster at Drogheda, whence he marched towards Portmore attended by the earl of Kildare and Lord Trimblestone. He was attacked by O'Neill in a dangerous pass

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589-1600, p. 259.
[2] Ware, 1597; Moryson, i. 48.

near Armagh which the Irish had *plashed*, but forced his way through in spite of all opposition; and taking possession of the ruined fort of Portmore, encamped at the Tyrone (or west) side of the river. He was however unable to advance farther, and was greatly harassed and lost many of his men in constant skirmishing. At last O'Neill unexpectedly attacked him in force at the hill of Drumflugh near the camp, where Battleford Bridge now stands, and defeated him with heavy loss. The deputy Borough, fighting gallantly in front, was wounded; and Kildare who then took command was struck down severely wounded, while his two foster brothers were killed by his side defending him. Among the slain were Sir Francis Vaughan the deputy's brother-in-law, sergeant-major Turner, and several other officers; and Kildare died almost immediately after at Drogheda. Borough himself was carried in a litter from the battlefield, and died soon after, as will be told farther on.[1]

Notwithstanding this serious repulse, the deputy accomplished one important object of the expedition—regaining possession of Portmore. He built a new fort in place of the old one; and leaving a garrison of 300 men there in charge of a brave and capable officer, captain Williams, he returned to Dublin.

Sir Conyers Clifford, accompanied by many of the nobles and chiefs of Connaught, mustered in great force at Boyle, whence he marched north to the river Erne. O'Donnell had posted guards at all the fords, but Clifford forced his way across at Culuan in spite of the fierce opposition of the Tirconnellians, though many of his officers and men were killed—among others Murrogh baron of Inchiquin, who was much lamented by both Irish and English. Having received some cannon from Galway by sea, he laid siege to O'Donnell's castle at Ballyshannon, which was valiantly defended by the garrison consisting of eighty men, commanded by a Scotchman named Crawford. For three days the heavy cannon battered without

[1] *Four Masters*, 1597, p. 204; *Carew Papers*, 1598–1600, p. 269; Ware's *Annals*, 1597.

cessation; and a determined attempt to sap the walls was made by a party in armour under cover of a testudo formed by their shields. But the defenders poured down such a tremendous shower of fire, logs of timber, and great blocks of stone, that the attacking party were forced to retire after great loss.

O'Donnell had but a small force on the arrival of the president; but his men increased daily, and he now harassed the English by incessant flying attacks day and night. He stopped the supply of fodder for the horses, so that the president was reduced to great distress, and instead of besieging was now himself besieged. Having held an anxious council of war, which lasted all night, it was agreed to recross the river and retreat. But as it was impossible now to reach the ford of Culuan three miles higher up, they had to take the deep and dangerous ford nearest to them, the old ford of *Casan-na-gurra*, the 'Path of the Champions,' just above the waterfall of Assaroe beside Ballyshannon. Abandoning all their ordnance, carriages, horses, and stores, they began to ford the river in silence; but before all had time to cross, the rear was set upon by the garrison; and what with the frantic haste and the depth and strength of the current, great numbers were swept down over the falls and drowned, and many were killed by the garrison. O'Donnell, hearing in his tent the noise of battle, started up, and crossing the river with his men, pursued the retreating army for four or five miles; but a heavy rain came on which wetted their ammunition, for in their haste they had left their outer garments behind; so they gave up the pursuit and returned. And thus governor Clifford accomplished nothing by this expedition.[1]

To meet the third detachment from Mullingar, Tyrone despatched a small force of 400 men under captain Tyrrell chief of Fertullagh in Westmeath, a guerilla chief of consummate skill and bravery, who knew every hill, valley, bog, and pass from Dublin to the Shannon. Tyrrell

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589-1600, p. 269; *Four Masters*, 1597, pp. 2025-2035.

marched south, and making his way by Offaly reached his own territory of Fertullagh, where he rested his men, till word was brought to Mullingar of his approach. Young Barnewell, despising the small body sent to oppose him, marched boldly with his 1,000 to destroy the rebels; whereupon Tyrrell fell back till he reached Tyrrell's Pass, a perilous place for an army to be caught in, with deep bogs on both sides, which Tyrrell had made more dangerous by obstructing the passage with felled trees. In a copse beside the way by which the English were to pass Tyrrell concealed half his little army under a brave officer, Owney O'Conor, one of the dispossessed chiefs of Offaly.

When Barnewell came in sight of the small party in the pass he made straight for them, while Tyrrell slowly retreated. When the last of the pursuing party had filed past the ambuscade, O'Conor started up from his lair, and the bagpipes struck up 'The Tyrrell's March,' which was to be the signal to the other party. Then Tyrrell turned suddenly round, and the English were attacked front and rear. Gallantly fighting under such tremendous disadvantages, they all fell—every man—except the leader and one other who hid himself in a quagmire hard by, and who afterwards carried the fatal news back to Mullingar. Young Barnewell was captured without hurt, and sent a prisoner to the earl of Tyrone. It is stated that O'Conor's hand became so swollen with fighting that day, that it had to be released by cutting the hilt of the sword with a file.[1]

CHAPTER XI

THE BATTLE OF THE YELLOW FORD [2]

PORTMORE was now (1597) occupied by captain Williams and his garrison of three hundred; and the minor events

[1] Mac Geoghegan's *Hist. of Irel.* 505.

[2] We have very detailed contemporary accounts of this battle, all English, which may be seen in the *Kilk. Arch. Journ.* for 1856–1857, p. 256; and in *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 280; see also Gilbert, *Facsimiles*, Pt. iv. xliii, plate xxiv.

of which it was the centre led ultimately to the battle of the Yellow Ford. No sooner had lord deputy Borough turned southward (p. 490) than O'Neill laid siege to it; and watching it night and day, tried every stratagem; but the vigilance and determination of Williams completely baffled him. At last he attempted a storm by means of scaling ladders: but the ladders turned out too short, and the storming party were met by such a fierce onslaught that they had to retire discomfited, leaving thirty-four of their men dead in the fosse. After this O'Neill tried no more active operations, but sat down, determined to starve the garrison into submission. But lord deputy Borough, when he heard how matters stood, marched north, and after some sharp fighting succeeded in throwing in supplies. Returning thence he had to be borne on a litter, either on account of sickness or of wounds, till he reached Newry, where he died.[1]

Near the end of the year (1597) the earl of Ormond was appointed lord lieutenant, with command of the army. He had instructions to bring about a peace if possible, and on the 22nd of December he held a conference at Dundalk with O'Neill, who handed in a formal submission, with a petition in which the very first thing asked for was liberty of conscience. A truce was agreed on till May (1598), and a formal pardon was sent to him, but he never made use of it.[2] He appears to have again intentionally delayed the negotiations, using them as a means of gaining time; for he still hoped for help from Spain. But on expiry of the truce he suddenly broke off negotiation, and appeared again in person before Portmore, 'swearing by his barbarous hand that he will not depart till he carry the fort.' Having already had sufficient experience of captain Williams, he ventured no more assaults, but turned the siege into a blockade. When this had continued for some time, Williams and his men began to suffer sorely; and they would have been driven to sur-

[1] Moryson, i. 51. The accounts of his death are somewhat conflicting.

[2] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 274; Ware's *Annals*, 1598; *Four Masters*, 1597, p. 2045.

render by mere starvation but for the good fortune of having, by some stratagem, seized and brought into the fort a number of O'Neill's horses, on which they now chiefly subsisted. Even with this supply they were so pressed by hunger that they ate every weed and every blade of grass they could pick up in the enclosure: but still the brave captain resolutely held out.

When tidings of these events reached Dublin, the council sat in long and anxious deliberation. They decided at last, in the absence of marshal Bagenal, to send directions to captain Williams to surrender on the best terms he could obtain. But the marshal, through whom the letters were sent, held them back, and coming direct from Newry to Dublin, persuaded the council, though with some difficulty, to entrust him with the perilous task of relieving the fort. It was decided to divide the army. Lord Ormond himself was to lead one half against the Leinster insurgents, and the marshal the other half—'the most choice companies of foot and horse troops of the English army'—against O'Neill.[1] A prudent and skilful strategist would have directed the whole available government forces—about 10,000 men—against O'Neill: the queen would certainly have ordered it had she been consulted; but Bagenal was filled with a rash confidence that with half the army he could rout the Ulstermen.

As for Ormond, he attempted to relieve Port-Leix, which was besieged by the Irish; but he met with a severe repulse from captain Tyrrell, Redmond Burke, and Owney O'Moore, and escaped with difficulty. Then he shut himself up safely in Kilkenny, and did nothing more against the Leinster insurgents.

Marshal Bagenal arrived at Armagh with an army of 4,000 foot and 350 horse. The five miles highway between the city and Portmore was a narrow strip of uneven ground, with bogs and woods at both sides; and right in the way, at Bellanaboy or the Yellow Ford, on the little river Callan, two miles north of Armagh, O'Neill had marshalled his forces, determined to dispute the passage. His army

[1] Moryson, i. 58.

was perhaps a little more numerous than that of his adversary, well trained and disciplined, armed and equipped after the English fashion, though not so well as Bagenal's army—they had no armour for instance, while many of the English had; and he had the advantage of an excellent position selected by himself. He had with him Hugh Roe O'Donnell, Maguire, and Mac Donnell of the Glens, all leaders of ability and experience. At intervals along the way he had dug deep holes and trenches, and had otherwise encumbered the line of march with felled trees and brushwood; and right in front of his main body extended a trench a mile long, five feet deep, and four feet across with a thick hedge of thorns on top. Over these tremendous obstacles, in face of the whole strength of the Irish army, Bagenal must force his way if he is ever to reach the starving little band cooped up in Portmore.

But Bagenal was not a man easily daunted; and on the morning of the 14th August 1598 he began his march with music and drum. The army advanced in six regiments, forming three divisions. The first division—two regiments—was commanded by colonel Percy, the marshal himself, as commander-in-chief, riding in the second regiment. The second division, consisting of the third and fourth regiments, was commanded by colonel Cosby and Sir Thomas Wingfield, and the third division by captains Coneys and Billings, The horse formed two divisions, one on each wing, under Sir Calisthenes Brooke, with captains Montague and Fleming. The regiments marched one behind another at intervals of 600 or 700 paces.

On the night before, O'Neill had sent forward 500 light-armed kern, who concealed themselves till morning in the woods and thickets along the way, and the English had not advanced far when these opened fire from both sides, which they kept up during the whole march past. Through all obstacles—fire, bog, and pitfalls—the army struggled and fought resolutely, till the first regiment reached the great trench. A determined rush across, a brief and fierce hand to hand struggle, and in spite of all opposition they got to the other side. Instantly reforming, they pushed

on, but had got only a little way when they were charged by a solid body of Irish and utterly overwhelmed. It now appeared that a fatal mistake in tactics had been made by Bagenal. The several regiments were too far asunder, and the men of the vanguard were almost all killed before the second regiment could come up. When at last this second line appeared, O'Neill with a body of horse, knowing that Bagenal was at their head, spurred forward to seek him out and settle wrong and quarrel hand to hand. But they were not fated to meet. The brave marshal, fatigued with fighting, lifted his visor for a moment to look about him and take breath; but hardly had he done so when a musket ball pierced his brain and he fell lifeless.

Even after this catastrophe the second regiment passed the trench, and were augmented by those of the first who survived. These soon found themselves hard pressed; which Cosby becoming aware of, pushed on with his third regiment to their relief; but they were cut to pieces before he had come up. A cannon had got bogged in Cosby's rear, straight in the line of march, and the oxen that drew it having been killed, the men of the fourth regiment made frantic efforts to free it, fighting for their lives all the time, for the Irish were swarming all round them. Meantime during this delay Cosby's regiment was attacked and destroyed, and he himself was taken prisoner.

While all this was taking place in the English front, there was hard fighting in the rear. For O'Neill, who with a small party of horse had kept his place near the trench fighting and issuing orders, had, at the beginning of the battle, sent towards the enemy's rear O'Donnell, Maguire, and Mac Donnell of the Glens, who passing by the flank of the second division, hotly engaged as they were, fell on the last two regiments, which after a prolonged struggle to get forward, 'being hard sett to, retyred foully [in disorder] to Armagh.'

The fourth regiment, at last leaving their cannon, made a dash for the trench; but scarcely had they started when a waggon of gunpowder exploded in their midst,

by which they were 'disrancked and rowted' and great numbers were killed, 'wherewith the traitors were encouraged and our men dismayed.' O'Neill, observing the confusion, seized the moment for a furious charge. The main body of the English had been already wavering after the explosion, and now there was a general rout of both middle and rear. Fighting on the side of the English was an Irish chief, Mailmora or Myles O'Reilly, who was known as Mailmora the Handsome, and who called himself the queen's O'Reilly. He made two or three desperate attempts to rally the flying squadrons, but all in vain; and at last he himself fell slain among the others.

The multitude fled back towards Armagh, protected by the cavalry under captain Montague, an able and intrepid officer, for Sir Calisthenes Brooke had been wounded; and the Irish pursued them—as the old Irish chronicler expresses it—'by pairs, threes, scores, and thirties.' Two thousand of the English were killed,[1] together with their general and nearly all the officers; and the victors became masters of the artillery, ammunition, and stores of the royal army. On the Irish side the loss is variously estimated from 200 to 700. This was the greatest overthrow the English ever suffered since they had first set foot in Ireland.

The fugitives to the number of 1,500 shut themselves up in Armagh, where they were closely invested by the Irish. But Montague, with a body of horse, most courageously forced his way out and brought the evil tidings to Dublin. In a few days the garrisons of Armagh and Portmore capitulated—the valiant captain Williams yielding only after a most pressing message from Armagh—and were permitted to retire to Dundalk, leaving colours, drums, and ammunition behind.

Captain Tyrrell, Owney O'Moore, and Redmond Burke

[1] Two thousand according to captain Montague, who wrote an account of the battle two days afterwards (*Kilk. Arch. Journ.* 1856, p. 272); but other English accounts give the number as 1,500; the *Four Masters* say 2,500. I adopt Montague's estimate.

now proceeded to Munster, by direction of O'Neill, plundering the English territories as they went along. On their arrival with the news of the great northern victory they were joined by the southern chiefs; and the Munster rebellion broke out like lightning. The confederates, among whom were the sons of Thomas Roe brother of the late (i.e. the rebel) earl of Desmond, attacked the settlements to regain the lands that had been taken from them a dozen years before. They expelled or slew the settlers; and before long they had recovered all Desmond's castles except those of Castlemaine, Mallow, and Askeaton.

The lord lieutenant and Sir Thomas Norris president of Munster were, so far, quite unable to cope with the southern rebellion. They met at Kilmallock but did not venture to attack the rebels; and at last they retired, Ormond to Dublin and Norris to Mallow, leaving Munster to its fate.

O'Neill, who now exercised almost as much authority as if he were king of Ireland, conferred the title of earl of Desmond on James Fitzgerald (or FitzThomas), the son of Thomas Roe. This new earl was called in derision by his enemies the Sugan earl (*sugan*, a straw rope); and by this name he is now best known in history. The true heir, the son of the rebel earl, was still in London (p. 448).

O'Neill had hitherto acted chiefly on the defensive. It may be asked why he did not now assume the offensive? Why did he not march on Dublin? There was not a soldier left there; the lords justices were quaking with terror; and 500 men would have taken it without resistance. The whole country seemed ready for the decisive blow. Ulster and Leinster were nearly all in the hands of the rebels; and Munster and Connaught were rising or were already in successful revolt. In this state of affairs had O'Neill seized Dublin the English sovereignty would probably have been wiped out for the time. But then we must remember that he had no standing army—the great defect of the Irish military system. His men joined, as men always joined in Ireland, for a single campaign or expedition, and expected to be disbanded

when it was over. It was now harvest time, when the crops had to be gathered in; and he found it impossible to keep his forces well together. Even O'Donnell and his men were forced to return home immediately after the battle for want of provisions. Then again the Irish forces were not concentrated; they were scattered all over the country without unity of action. He had hardly any stores, no commissariat, no battering train, no means of carrying on and sustaining campaign or siege. It was quite impossible that he could succeed by native resources without help from outside. No one was better aware of all this than O'Neill himself; and he does not deserve the censure passed on him by some for not more decisively following up his victory at the Yellow Ford.

CHAPTER XII

THE EARL OF ESSEX

THE queen was exasperated beyond measure when news reached her of the battle of the Yellow Ford; and she wrote to the Irish council, bitterly censuring them, and expressing her belief that this disaster and many others were owing to their incapacity and mismanagement. Matters had now become very serious in Ireland; and at this grave juncture the queen, in March 1599, appointed as lord lieutenant her favourite, Robert Devereux earl of Essex, the son of that ill-fated nobleman whom we have already mentioned in connection with the plantation of Ulster. He had distinguished himself as a soldier abroad; but something more than a mere soldier was now needed to govern Ireland. He was provided with a fine army of 20,000 men, and the queen invested him with almost as much power as if she had made him king of Ireland. He got distinct instructions to direct all his strength against the earl of Tyrone and the other rebels of Ulster, and to plant garrisons at Lough Foyle and Ballyshannon.[1] This latter direction he quite neglected:

[1] Moryson's *Hist. of Irel.* i. 91.

we shall see how he attended to the rebels of the north.

Soon after his arrival in Dublin he foolishly scattered a good part of his army by sending detachments to various stations through the country. Then probably deeming it not yet quite safe to attempt the reduction of O'Neill, he deliberately disobeyed the queen's instructions by setting out for the south on the 21st May with 7,000 men, chiefly with the object of chastising the Geraldines. Through the whole of this disastrous journey, which occupied about six weeks, the insurgents constantly hung round the army and never gave him an hour's rest, so that he had to fight every inch of his way; and each successive skirmish resulted in a diminution of his numbers.[1] In one of these encounters Owney O'Moore chief of Leix, son of Rory Oge (p. 438), killed 500 of his men in a defile near Maryborough, which was afterwards called the Pass of the Plumes, from the number of English helmet plumes that remained strewn about after the battle. He pushed on to Caher in Tipperary, where he took the strong castle, after a siege of ten days, from Thomas Butler, one of the confederates in alliance with O'Neill: the only successful exploit of the whole expedition. It may be remarked here that this castle was recovered by the rebels in May of the following year, and recaptured by the government three months later.

During the time Essex was in Caher, Sir Thomas Norris president of Munster, while waiting for him at Kilmallock, employed himself in scouring the district all round for the queen's enemies. In one of his excursions he accidentally encountered Thomas Burke of Castleconnell, at the head of a small party at Kilteely, and was mortally wounded in the skirmish that followed. He died in a fortnight after at Mallow.[2]

From Caher the earl marched to Limerick; thence to Askeaton, where he strengthened and provisioned the garrison by throwing in supplies; and next by Adare

[1] The whole journey is described in *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 301; and in *Four Masters*, 1599, p. 2111. [2] *Four Masters*, 1599, p. 2115.

and Bruff to Kilmallock. While passing near Adare the Sugan earl and the other Geraldines suddenly set upon him at Finniterstown and killed many of his men, including one of his best officers, Sir Henry Norris, the third of those distinguished brothers who perished in these wars.

Leaving Kilmallock he marched to Ardskeagh, and on by the northern skirt of the Ballyhoura Mountains to Fermoy; thence through Lismore and Waterford, and next northwards towards Dublin. The Geraldines kept still hanging on his rear, and harassed him as far as the Decies in Waterford, where they left him and returned to their own country. But he had next to deal with the Leinster clans—the O'Byrnes, the O'Tooles, and the O'Moores—who attacked him near Arklow and inflicted great loss.

Towards the end of June (1599) 'his lordship,' says Moryson, 'brought back his forces into [the safe part of] Leinster, the soldiers being weary, sick, and incredibly diminished in numbers.' And the earl himself returned to Dublin 'without having achieved in his progress any exploit worth boasting of except only the taking of Caher Castle.'[1]

In the month of June, while the earl was still in Munster, Sir Henry Harrington, marching with 600 men from Wicklow against the insurgents of those parts, was intercepted at Ranelagh near Baltinglass and defeated with heavy loss by Felim O'Byrne the son of Feagh. In this action the English soldiers, in spite of the exertions of Harrington and some of his officers, threw down their arms and fled in a panic without striking a blow. Essex, on his arrival in Dublin, was so enraged at this disgraceful flight, that he had the officers who were to blame cashiered, and caused every tenth man of the soldiers to be executed.[2]

All through this great revolt O'Conor of Sligo had remained in the queen's service. He had fought against O'Neill at the Yellow Ford, and had accompanied Essex during a part of his march through Munster; after which he

[1] *Four Masters*, 1599, p. 2121.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 312.

retired to his strong castle of Collooney in Sligo, the only stronghold now in his possession. As soon as O'Donnell received intelligence of this, he suddenly marched from his headquarters at Ballymote, seven miles off, and surrounded the castle, determined to reduce it by blockade; for it was too strong to be carried by assault. O'Conor after some time contrived to send news of his distressed condition to Dublin; whereupon Essex directed Sir Conyers Clifford governor of Connaught to proceed by land to relieve the castle, and to send also an expedition by sea from Galway with materials for rebuilding the castle of Sligo which had been destroyed four years before by O'Donnell (p. 484). The ships were under the command of Theobald Burke, commonly called Theobald-na-Long (of the ships) son of the celebrated Grace O'Malley. Clifford himself proceeded with an army of 2,100 from Roscommon to Boyle, where he halted to make preparations for his final march.

O'Donnell having been apprised of these movements prepared to counteract them. He first sent a small party to guard the shore, who on Burke's arrival prevented him from landing. Then he made preparations to intercept Clifford, though against the advice of several of his officers, as he had not near so many men as the English.

In order to go from Boyle into Sligo, Clifford had to cross the low range of the Curlieu hills by a difficult way called Ballaghboy or the Yellow Pass. O'Donnell with a small detachment of picked men encamped at the Sligo end of this pass, leaving a sufficient force to guard the beleaguered castle under the command of his cousin Niall Garve O'Donnell, of whom more will be heard hereafter: while he sent Brian Oge O'Ruarc to take a position a short way off at the eastern end of the range, lest Clifford might make that his way. Here O'Donnell waited for two months, keeping scouts on the hill tops every day to look out for the approach of the enemy: and meantime he *plashed* the pass, i.e. made it more difficult by felled trees and other obstructions. At last in the afternoon of the 15th of August a messenger ran down full speed to the

camp with news that the English were in motion. O'Donnell and his men had spent that morning as well as the evening before in devotions, for it was Lady-day, a solemn festival in the Catholic Church; and the ceremonies were scarce ended when the bugles rang out the call to arms. He divided his little army into two parts. One consisting of about 400 young active men, he sent forward with orders to attack the English at the beginning of the ascent, but to retire after the first onset, and harass them as best they could afterwards. He himself at the head of his veterans followed after at a slow steady pace.

The English advanced in three divisions. Near the entrance to the pass, the van commanded by Sir Alexander Ratcliff was encountered by the 400 Irish sharp-shooters, who having discharged their weapons from behind a barricade, retired, but continued to assail the advancing column from a distance, never waiting for close quarters. The way now led through bogs and brushwood; and the English having cleared the barricade, advanced twelve abreast —there was no room for more—till they met O'Donnell and his veterans: and then the real battle began. Ratcliff, fighting at the head of his men, was first disabled and soon after shot dead; and the van after some sharp fighting at length turned and fled right in the faces of the 'battle' or centre division. In a few moments all was confusion; and the whole army rushed back down the hill-slope in spite of the utmost efforts of their leaders. The brave and high-minded Sir Conyers Clifford, disdaining to fly, endeavoured in vain to rally his men; when two of his officers perceiving that he was in imminent danger, drew him back some distance by main force. But he burst from them in a fury; and facing the advancing Irish, fought single handed, till overpowered by numbers, he fell dead in the middle of the pass.

O'Ruarc, hearing from his encampment the sounds of battle in the distance, hastened forward with his Brefney men, and arrived just in time to complete the rout. The fugitives were saved from utter destruction by Sir Griffin Markham, who at the head of a small body of horse,

charged the pursuers with great spirit over difficult ground of rock and bog, and thus made time for escape.[1]

Sir Conyers Clifford was greatly regretted by the Irish, especially the people of Connaught, to whom he was a just and merciful ruler—a complete contrast to Bingham; and he was honourably buried by the victors in the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Lough Key.

After the battle O'Conor surrendered his castle and joined the northern confederates; and O'Donnell with characteristic nobleness of mind, restored his lands and gave him cattle to stock them. Theobald-na-Long, who was O'Conor's brother-in-law, also submitted and entered into friendship with O'Donnell, after which the fleet returned home.

Essex's fine army of 20,000 had melted away in a few months (of 1599). At his own urgent request he now got 2,000 more from the queen, who however was greatly exasperated, and wrote him a bitter letter peremptorily commanding him to proceed against O'Neill. On the receipt of this he set out for the north in August 1599, with an inadequate little army of 2,500 foot and 300 horse. On a high bank overlooking the little river Lagan between the counties of Louth and Monaghan, he found O'Neill's army in a camp so strongly fortified that he did not attempt an attack. O'Neill sent him a courteous message asking for a conference, which he at first refused, but next day granted.

At the appointed hour, on a day early in September, the two leaders rode down from the heights on either side, wholly unattended, to the ford of Ballaclinch, now spanned by Anaghclart bridge near the village of Louth. O'Neill saluted the earl with great respect, and spurring his horse into the stream to be near enough to hold con-

[1] The *Four Masters* give a full account of this battle and the circumstances that led to it, A.D. 1599, pp. 2121–2133; see also 'A Brief Relation of the Defeat in the Curlieus,' by John Dymmok, published by the Irish Arch. Soc. in *Tracts relating to Ireland*, 1842, p. 44; and Sir John Harrington's account of the battle in his *Nugæ Antiquæ*, i. 264. A good description of site and battle will be found in the Rev. Dr. O'Rourke's *Hist. of Sligo*, ii. 294–305.

verse, remained there up to his saddle girths during the conference, which lasted more than half an hour. He declared himself ready to submit to her majesty on the following conditions:—That the Irish should have complete liberty to practise their religion: that O'Donnell, the earl of Desmond (i.e. the Sugan earl) and himself should enjoy their patrimonial lands: that the judges and the principal officers of state should be natives of Ireland: and that half the army of Ireland should be Irishmen.[1]

It is believed that the earl was quite won over by the open and kindly address and chivalrous bearing of the Irish chief, who with his usual ability laid his country's claims in the most favourable light before him.

After this there was another conference, in which O'Neill and Essex were attended by six of the principal men on each side. O'Neill, standing all the time on horseback in the water with his men, saluted the earl's companions respectfully and spoke a good deal, with head uncovered all the time. In the end a truce was agreed on till the 1st of May, which might be broken at any time by either side on giving a fortnight's notice.[2]

This was Essex's last act of any moment in Ireland. On his return to Dublin he found awaiting him another angry letter from the queen, full of coarse insult and bitter reproaches. Whereupon he suddenly sailed for England; and nothing ever came of his conference with O'Neill. The remainder of his short career, ending in the block, belongs to the history of England.

For some time after the departure of Essex there were negotiations for peace; but they were all rendered fruitless by the obstinacy of the queen and government on the one vital point. O'Neill always insisted on perfect freedom of religious worship; but this was persistently refused; and he was told that he must ask something more reasonable.

There had not indeed been much active interference with religion. In every part of the country Mass was

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 321; *Four Masters*, 1599, p. 2139.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 324.

regularly celebrated; and so long as this was done quietly the worshippers were not molested. Yet this lenity was not prompted by any spirit of toleration but simply by fear. For the vast majority of the lords and gentlemen of Ireland of both Irish and English blood that had remained neutral during the war were Catholics, who, as Carew states, sympathised with the rebels, and might be driven to join them by any general attempt to suppress Catholic worship. The State Papers afford curious glimpses of the feeling of the government on this matter. The English privy council, on the 30th September 1600, write to Sir George Carew complaining that, in Waterford especially, there were 'mass-houses,' with priests, friars, nuns, &c., openly celebrating their religion. He was directed to attempt to put a stop to all this, but very quietly for fear of rebellion.[1] Carew himself was quite anxious to punish the 'popish insolency' of the citizens of Waterford: but fearing to do so openly, he makes a most characteristic[2] proposal to the council to get the names of the worst offenders, and then 'matters of treason not tending to religion may be sufficiently proved to convince [convict] them: but if it do appear in the least that any part of their punishment proceeds for matter of religion, it will kindle a great fire in this kingdom.'[3] And when the queen appointed Mountjoy lord deputy she instructed him not to take any violent measures on the score of religion till she should have established her power in Ireland; but short of this she directed him to be very exact.[4]

O'Neill, seeing that he could not come to terms with the government, broke off negotiations, and resolved to visit Munster in order to unite the southern chiefs more closely in the confederacy. He set out in January 1600 with an army of 3,000 men, and marching southwards through Cashel, where he was joined by the Sugan earl,

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 457.

[2] Quite characteristic of Carew's 'witt and cunning:' see p. 508, farther on.

[3] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 470, written 25th October 1600. See also the same volume, p. 388.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 356.

he finally encamped at Inniscarra on the Lee, six miles above Cork. Here most of the southern chiefs visited him and acknowledged him as their leader.

While here he lost one of his best officers, Hugh Maguire chief of Fermanagh, who is designated by Sir John Davies 'a valiant rebel, and the stoutest that was ever of his name.' It chanced that Maguire, riding with only three attendants, fell in with Sir Warham Sentleger, one of the two temporary governors of Munster, with a party of horse. Both were renowned for personal prowess, and here meeting face to face, neither would retire. Maguire advanced with poised spear, but was met by a pistol bullet from his adversary which mortally wounded him. Spurring on with his remaining strength he transfixed Sentleger in the neck, and then fought his way through the English lines back to camp. He had barely time to receive the last sacraments when he died: Sentleger survived the encounter only a few days.

For the last two years victory and success had attended the Irish almost without interruption; and Hugh O'Neill earl of Tyrone had now attained the very summit of his power. But after this the tide began to turn; and soon came the day of defeat and disaster. In the next five chapters I will relate the waning fortunes of the earl of Tyrone and the waning fortunes of his country.

CHAPTER XIII

LORD MOUNTJOY AND SIR GEORGE CAREW

THE person chosen by the queen to succeed Essex as deputy was Charles Blount, better known as Lord Mountjoy, a man of great ability and foresight, and a more formidable adversary than any yet encountered by O'Neill. This man took an active interest in the morals of his soldiers, for he had a dash of the missionary in his character, and was pious in his way; and I see no reason to doubt his sincerity. But he must have had strange

notions of religion: for at the very time the soldiers were dutifully endeavouring to obey his stern order against profane swearing, they were busily employed under his direction, killing men, women, and children, and destroying the poor people's crops to bring on a famine: all which will be duly related in this and the following chapters.

He came to Ireland in February 1600, accompanied by Sir George Carew the newly appointed president of Munster. O'Neill was at this time in his camp at Inniscarra where he had tarried about six weeks. As soon as he heard of the arrival of the new deputy he broke up his camp, and successfully eluding the guards sent to intercept him, he arrived safely in Ulster.

Sir George Carew, though nominally under the authority of Mountjoy, was really as powerful; he had the confidence of the queen, and the friendship and support of the English minister Cecil. He was a man of great courage and ability, but avaricious, crafty, and unscrupulous; and he delighted, as he himself says, to accomplish his ends by 'witt and cunning.' It will be remembered that his brother had been killed in 1580 in Glenmalure (p. 454), which inspired him with the most rancorous hatred of the Irish; and his great comfort on entering on his new position was, as he states, that it gave him an opportunity of taking revenge on those who had a hand in his brother's death.[1] One of his first acts after his arrival in Ireland in 1583 was to murder with his own hand, in open day on the quays of Dublin, in presence of several persons, a man who, he was told on mere hearsay, had boasted of being concerned in the deed. For this he was never brought to account.[2]

Before entering on his history let us note another creditable feature of his character. He had considerable literary taste and talent, and he made a very important collection of historical documents relating to Ireland, a work of much labour, which has lately been published in six volumes, commonly known as the Carew Papers, so

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1515–1574, p. xiv. [2] *Ibid.* xvi–xix.

often quoted in this book: a collection quite indispensable to every student of Irish history. In addition to this he has given us a full history of events occurring in Ireland during his presidency, in a book called *Pacata Hibernia* (Ireland pacified), written by himself or under his direction by his secretary. The *Pacata Hibernia*, though full of bitter prejudice against the Irish, is a highly valuable and interesting book; and much of the materials for this and the three following chapters has been derived from it.

The following account given by him[1] of his plot to capture the Sugan earl of Desmond is a good example of what he meant by 'witt and cunning.' One of the most trusted confederates in the south was Dermot O'Conor Donn, a Connaught chief who commanded 1,400 Bonnaght-men or hired troops drawn from Connaught and Ulster. He was married to Lady Margaret daughter of the late earl of Desmond—the rebel earl—and first cousin to the present (Sugan) earl. Her brother, the true heir to the earldom, was still detained in London (p. 418), and she was naturally anxious for his restoration. Carew knew all this, and he sent a confidential messenger to her, to propose that her husband should betray the Sugan earl—should in fact seize and give him up—which would of course open the way for the restoration of her brother; and for this service he promised O'Conor a reward of £1,000 and a commission in the queen's army. Lady Margaret was captivated by these proposals, and induced her husband to enter into the scheme.

When the plan had been all arranged it happened that one Nugent, who had been a servant to Sir Thomas Norris, and had turned over to the rebels after the death of his master, now thinking that he could do better by returning to the service of the crown, came to Carew and offered for pardon and reward to kill either the Sugan earl or his brother John FitzThomas. As the Sugan earl had been already provided for, Nugent was commissioned to murder John; but his part of the plot did not

[1] *Pacata Hibernia*, p. 90, ed. 1810, the edition I quote from all through.

succeed, for he was caught in the very act of levelling his pistol and hanged on the spot.

The conspirators went to work very cautiously. In order that O'Conor might have some excuse, Carew wrote a letter from himself addressed to the Sugan earl, acknowledging his many secret services to the state—as if he had been a secret traitor—and directing him to deliver up O'Conor alive or dead, which of course was all pretence; and this letter was given to O'Conor, who was to say that he intercepted it. Immediately afterwards the traitor obtained an interview with the Sugan earl, bringing a sufficient number of followers. During the conference he took occasion to raise a quarrel, and producing the forged letter he accused the earl of treachery to the confederates, arrested him on the spot in the name of O'Neill, and sent him a prisoner with some companions to the fortress of Castle Lishen near Dromcollogher.

He then sent his wife to the president for the money. But the rebels were too quick for him; for John FitzThomas and some others of the confederate leaders hastily mustered 4,000 men, and before Carew had time to come up, surrounded the castle and rescued the captive, dismissing his guards unharmed. After this O'Conor, disappointed and crestfallen, was expelled the province by the earl and returned to Connaught. He got a reward indeed, but not what he had expected; for in this same year (1600), while marching through Galway on his way to Limerick to meet his brother-in-law, the young earl of Desmond who had come over from London, he was attacked near Gort by Theobald-na-Long, who seized him and cut off his head.

But Carew, though given to that low cunning he so well describes, was able and vigorous in his military operations. On the 8th of July (1600) he took the castle of Glin on the Shannon belonging to the knight of Glin, one of the confederates, after an obstinate defence, and executed all that remained of the garrison, with—as the Four Masters say—some women and children. When O'Conor Kerry heard of this, he was so frightened that he surrendered his castle of Carrigafoyle, also on the

Shannon, the strongest fortress in all Kerry, and made his submission to the president. After this many of the minor chiefs demolished their castles and fled to the mountains with their families.

During all this time Carew, like the deputy elsewhere (pp. 516, 519), destroyed the crops wherever he went. He got the two garrisons of Askeaton and Kilmallock to traverse Connello in all directions, burning and spoiling everything they could reach; and he says 'scarcity already begins, and when famine shall succeed, there is no means for the rebel long to subsist.'[1]

Notwithstanding that Carew wrote triumphant accounts of his successes, the authorities were still in great apprehension; and they never felt themselves secure in the south so long as the Sugan earl remained at the head of the confederates. As they had failed to capture him, a device was now resorted to for destroying his influence: to liberate the son of the rebel earl and restore him to his titles. Accordingly he was despatched from London after his twenty-one years' absence from Ireland, with two letters to Carew, one from the queen and the other from her minister Cecil. Cecil instructs Carew to be careful not to let the young lord escape, but if he should turn out to be useless, then some excuse was to be invented for arresting him: either he was to be allured to join the rebels by some person employed for the purpose, or if this failed, then some one was to be suborned to swear treason against him: a piece of crooked statecraft which it would be hard to surpass. Yet Cecil writes worse than even this:—'Take this from me, upon my life, that *whatever you do to abridge him, which you shall saie to be done out of providense*, shall never be ymputed to you as a fault. . . . Remember what I say to you: blame shall not betide you for any caution (how curious soever) in the managing of this young *puer male cinctus*.' All which conveys a suggestion not to be misunderstood.[2]

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1859–1600, pp. 413, 414.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 463, 464; and *Life and Letters of Florence Mac Carthy Mor*, p. 318.

Reports now (1600) went through all Munster of the young lord's return, and when at last he arrived in Kilmallock, the old town rang with acclamations of joy; the people thronged the streets and windows, and even climbed on the gutters and roofs to catch a glimpse of the son of their old master; so that it was with great difficulty he made his way to his lodging.

Next day, Sunday, instead of accompanying the people to Mass as they expected, he went to the Protestant church, for he had been reared a Protestant in London. They were astonished and shocked; they crowded round him, and in their own expressive language passionately implored him not to desert the faith of his fathers. But he did not understand one word of Irish, and taking not the slightest notice of their entreaties, he passed on quietly to church. Then their feelings of affection were changed to loathing, and 'after service and the sermon was ended the earle comming forth of the church, was railed at and spet upon by those that before going to church were so desirous to see and salute him.'[1] The people returned to their homes, and never again took the least notice of him; and as he was useless now to the government, a mere shadow, insignificant and characterless, he was sent back to London in March 1601, where he soon after died.

The activity of Carew now began to tell on the rebellion all over Munster. The garrison of Kilmallock inflicted on the Sugan earl a crushing defeat, after which he was reduced to the condition of a mere fugitive, fleeing with a few followers from one hiding-place to another, like his uncle some years before. The president offered large rewards for taking him alive or dead, and there was scarce a man of note in Munster that he did not tempt to apprehend him.[2]

When all these plans failed, Carew tried another. He traversed the plain of Limerick, burning all the houses and all the corn—now stacked in the haggards, for it

[1] *Pac. Hib.* p. 164.

[2] All this is taken from the letter written by Carew himself on 2nd November 1600: *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 471.

was December. This continued till the poor people over an immense extent of country were left without food or shelter. And Carew expressed his intention to destroy and burn till the earl was given up. Yet no one ever thought of betraying him, for he was, as Carew states, 'a man the most generally beloved of all sorts as well in this town [Cork] as in the country.'[1]

He was at last taken in the great Mitchelstown cave by his old adherent the white knight, who delivered him up to Carew for a reward of £1,000. He was tried and found guilty of high treason; but he was not executed, lest his brother John might be set up in his place and give more trouble. He and Florence Mac Carthy, who had submitted some time before, were sent to the Tower of London, where they remained till their death. With the capture of these two, the most powerful of the Munster confederates, the rebellion in the south came to an end for the time.

While these events were taking place in the south, O'Neill and O'Donnell were kept busy in the north. The English had a garrison in Carrickfergus, from which they dominated the surrounding country: and the authorities now determined to carry out their long cherished project of building forts and planting garrisons on the shores of Lough Foyle, which would enable them to command the north-western districts. For this purpose a powerful armament of 4,000 foot and 200 horse, under the command of Sir Henry Docwra,[2] with abundance of stores and building materials, sailed for Lough Foyle in May 1600. At the same time, in order to divert O'Neill's attention and draw off opposition, Mountjoy marched north from Dublin as if to invade Tyrone.

His strategy was quite successful. O'Neill and

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 487, and *ibid.* 1601–1603, p. 76.

[2] He wrote two interesting tracts relating to the transactions in Ireland in which he was engaged:—'Relation of Service done in Ireland' and 'A Narration of the Services done by the Army ymployed to Lough-Foyle,' which have been published in the *Miscellany of the Celtic Society* for 1849. Both have been consulted and made use of in this chapter.

O'Donnell marched to oppose him, and took possession of the Moyry Pass, a narrow and dangerous defile five miles north of Dundalk, then the chief highway from the south into Eastern Ulster. But the English forced the pass after a sharp conflict on Whitsunday 1600, and made their way to Newry, where they remained till Mountjoy judged that he had given Docwra sufficient time to land. He then returned to Dublin in June, making his way back, not by the Moyry, but round by Carlingford.[1]

Meantime Docwra succeeded after some trifling opposition in landing at Culmore at the mouth of the Foyle, where he erected a fort and left a garrison. Leaving another garrison in O'Doherty's castle of Ellagh a little inland, he sailed up the river and landed at Derry, the site of St. Columkille's establishment, then almost uninhabited, where stood the ruins of a castle and of several churches. Here he began the erection of two forts, intending this to be his principal settlement on the Foyle. In the midst of their work they were attacked by O'Neill and O'Donnell, who had marched towards the Foyle the moment Mountjoy had returned, but the garrison were able to repel the attack and the Irish retired.

A little later on Docwra sailed still further up the river and landed at Dunnalong, five miles from Derry, at the Tyrone side, where in spite of the opposition of O'Neill he built a fort and left a garrison. After this the two chiefs hovered round the several settlements, attacking at every opportunity and cutting off stragglers; but through all difficulties and privations the garrisons bravely held their ground.

Let us now turn for a moment to the affairs of Leinster. Owney O'Moore, the chief of Leix, had carried on the war vigorously and successfully, and up to the present the English had on the whole got the worst of it. 'In this summer many conflicts, battles, sanguinary massacres, and bloodsheds, in which countless troops were cut off, took place between the English and Irish of Leinster.'[2]

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600. p. 388. [2] *Four Masters*, 1600, p. 2179.

On the 10th of April 1600 a conference was arranged between O'Moore and the earl of Ormond near Ballyragget in Kilkenny. To this meeting Ormond invited the earl of Thomond and also Sir George Carew, who happened to be then in Kilkenny on his way from Dublin to his presidency. During the parley some angry altercation was carried on between Ormond and Father James Archer, an Irish Jesuit who accompanied O'Moore. Some of the clansmen, imagining that the priest was in danger, rushed forward and attempted to seize the whole party. They pulled Ormond from the saddle; but Carew, Thomond, and the others, putting spurs to their horses, escaped through the crowd: and Ormond was carried off by O'Moore to his fastness. He was however released in the following June at O'Neill's request. Carew says this affair was an act of treachery, plotted by Archer; the Irish writers represent it as accidental and unpremeditated; but Mountjoy then and afterwards suspected that Ormond himself, secretly sympathising with the rebels, had arranged the whole thing with them to avoid fighting against them.

By this time O'Moore had succeeded in winning back all his own principality of Leix, except the fortress of Port Leix or Maryborough. The people with his strong hand to protect them had settled down in peace, had brought back their land to cultivation, and were prosperous and contented: and the country had quite recovered from the effects of the desolating wars of the plantations. Fynes Moryson, Mountjoy's secretary, who saw the district at this time, says:—'It seems incredible that by so barbarous inhabitants'—the English writers generally speak of the Irish as barbarous—'the ground should be so manured [tilled], the fields so orderly fenced, the towns so frequently [fully] inhabited, and the highways and paths so well beaten as the lord deputy found them. The reason whereof was that the queen's forces during these wars never till then came among them.'[1]

But now all this was to be changed, for Mountjoy

[1] Moryson, i. 178.

returning in July from a journey north against O'Neill, prepared for an expedition into Leix to punish the people for their share in O'Neill's rebellion. And he adopted the plan foreshadowed by Spenser (p. 459) and carried out at this same time by Carew in the south (p. 511), of starving the whole population by destroying the growing crops. He began this policy in Leix and continued it systematically elsewhere during the whole period of his deputyship.

Setting out from Dublin in August with a force of horse and foot, *and a supply of sickles, scythes, and harrows*, to cut and tear up the unripe corn,[1] the deputy entered Leix and Ossory and soon changed the face of the country, burning, spoiling, and destroying everything. 'Our captains,' says Moryson, 'and by their example (for it was otherwise painful) the common soldiers, did cut down with their swords all the rebels' corn to the value of £10,000 and upwards (more than £120,000 now; in a tract of about twenty miles long by fifteen broad), the only means by which they were to live.'[2] Mountjoy seems to have thought this a pleasant and enjoyable sort of work; for in his letter to Carew he makes it the subject of a joke:—'I am very busy at harvest [work] in cutting down the honest gentlemen's corn.'[3] Moryson, as we saw, calls the people barbarous; but here the real barbarians were certainly not the poor people but Mountjoy and his subordinates.

This kind of warfare was new to O'Moore, and in the anguish of his heart he wrote to the earl of Ormond, with whom he was on terms of personal friendship, asking him to put a stop to 'this execrable and abominable course, and badd example to all the world,' as he described it.[4] But as this just expostulation produced no effect, O'Moore with the small force at his command attempted to save his people by attacking the destroyers on every available opportunity; and he lost his life in the attempt. In one of the skirmishes he separated himself incautiously from

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 430; and *Four Masters*, 1600, p. 2187.
[2] Moryson, i. 178. [3] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 422.
[4] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 439.

his party, and was struck dead by a musket-ball on the 17th August 1600.[1] After the death of the chief—'this bloody and bold young man' as Moryson calls him—there was no further resistance, and Mountjoy continued his work of destruction unchecked till he had ruined the whole country; after which he returned to Dublin, leaving the people to despair and hunger, their smiling district turned to a black ruin. And forthwith the English took possession of Leix, and proceeded to repair all their dismantled castles.

We left O'Neill and O'Donnell struggling against Docwra at Lough Foyle. But now a circumstance befel that quite crippled them in their efforts; for two of their leading sub-chiefs, Sir Art O'Neill the son of Turlogh Lynnagh, and Niall Garve O'Donnell the cousin and brother-in-law of Red Hugh, deserted them in the hour of trouble and danger, and went over to the English. The queen promised to make Sir Art earl of Tyrone in place of the great rebel Hugh; but he died in the same year (1600) in the English camp.

Niall Garve was a man of much greater consequence. Next to O'Neill and O'Donnell he was the ablest and most influential of the northern chiefs, and as a reward for joining the English he stipulated that he should get Tirconnell, O'Donnell's principality; but he afterwards extended his demands by claiming every district over which O'Donnell had at any time exercised authority, not only Tirconnell, but also Fermanagh and even Connaught. He carried out his traitorous design in the following manner. O'Donnell, setting out in October on a hostile expedition against the earls of Clanrickard and Thomond, left him in command to keep watch on the English garrisons. But as soon as he had got to a safe distance, Niall Garve went over to the English at Derry with his three brothers and a body of troops.

It was a lucky moment for the English that he did so, for the garrison, cooped up and closely invested by O'Donnell, had lost great numbers by death, and the men

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 431.

were in the last extremity of distress from bad food, sickness, and hardship.[1]

But Niall Garve relieved them from all this, and by directing them where to send their plundering parties, enabled them to supply themselves with plenty of provisions. In the words of Docwra, 'the garrison both heere [at Derry] and at Dunalong set divers of Preys and of Catle, and did many other services all the winter longe; and I must confess a truth, all by the help and advise of Neale Garvie and his Followers and the other Irish that came in with Sir Arthur O'Neale, without whose intelligence and guidance little or nothing could have been done of ourselves, although it is true withall they had theire owne ends in it, which were always for private Revenge, and we ours to make use of them for the furtherance of the Publique service.' Immediately after his desertion Niall Garve, with a detachment of English, seized the castle of Lifford, one of O'Donnell's fortresses, and held it for Docwra.[2] Meantime a messenger had been despatched hot haste after O'Donnell to tell him of these proceedings. Amazed and grieved he hastened back and encamped beside Lifford; but he was unable to recover possession of it, for his traitorous cousin was an able and valiant leader. He remained near the town however for a month to enable the people of the neighbourhood to gather their harvest and secure it from plunder; after which he retired.

During all this time the deputy Mountjoy was as active in his own district as Docwra and Carew in north and south. He had scarce rested after his destructive raid in Leix (p. 516) when he made another journey north in September, the third to Ulster this year, and encamped at Faughart near Dundalk. Here he remained a month; and he had to fight almost every day, for O'Neill kept in his neighbourhood the whole time and attacked him at

[1] *Four Masters*, 1600, p. 2211.

[2] It may be worth while to note here that Niall Garve's wife—Nuala, Red Hugh's sister—was so shocked at his treachery that she left him and never afterwards rejoined him.

every opportunity. Though Mountjoy, like his secretary Moryson, writes boastfully about his victories while here, it is obvious that he was hard set to hold his ground; for he had to write to Dublin for reinforcements, and he requested that the Dublin garrison should take steps to draw off the rebels' attention from him: and the Four Masters give a very unfavourable account of the result of his expedition.[1]

In October he forced his way through the Moyry Pass, and built a fort and planted a garrison at a place which he called Mountnorris in honour of Sir John Norris. He then by the queen's command proclaimed O'Neill a traitor and offered £2,000 for bringing him in alive or £1,000 dead. Having remained altogether two months in the north, still burning and destroying the people's corn, he made his return journey round by Carlingford. Here in the narrow passage between Carlingford mountain and the sea he was intercepted by O'Neill, and after a severe action attended by much loss on both sides, he forced his way through and got back to Dublin.

The O'Byrnes of Wicklow, under their chief Felim, the son of the old 'firebrand of the mountains,' had for some time been giving trouble, making nightly inroads down the hill-slopes towards Dublin. At Christmas time Mountjoy made a sudden raid on them, and coming unawares on Felim's house captured his wife and eldest son, the chief himself barely escaping through a window. Here the deputy remained a month driving away the cattle, and burning and destroying the houses and corn.

In the following year (1601) towards the end of May he set out from Dublin on another expedition to the north, and again encamped at Faughart. The Moyry Pass, which lay a little north of the camp, was in some way left unguarded by O'Neill; and the watchful deputy, taking instant advantage of this, built a castle in the middle of it, in which he left a garrison of 200 men; so that this most dangerous pass was ever after open to him.

[1] *Four Masters*, 1600, pp. 2223–2225; *Carew Papers*, 1589–1600, p. 465; Moryson, i. p. 296 and preceding pages.

From Faughart he went to the Blackwater, and took possession of the old fort of Portmore, which had remained in the hands of the Irish since the battle of the Yellow Ford. He built a new fort and remained encamped beside it for six weeks; and every day he sent out parties of men to destroy the green corn. He made several attempts to penetrate farther into O'Neill's territory; but he was always forced back with more or less loss. While here he renewed his proclamation of reward for bringing in O'Neill alive or dead; but 'the Name of O'Neal was so reverenced in the North as none could be induced to betray him upon the large reward set upon his head.'[1] But danger came from another quarter. 'One Walker an Englishman' offered to assassinate him. The offer was made to Sir Henry Davers governor of Armagh, who by the consent and advice of Mountjoy accepted it, and passed Walker through the English lines on his way to the Irish camp. At the last moment however this fellow failed through cowardice. When he returned he 'behaved himself in such sort, as his lordship [Mountjoy] judged him frantic, though not the less fit for such a purpose' [i.e. to murder O'Neill]: and Mountjoy, *in order to clear himself and Davers from the discredit of having failed*, sent the fellow a prisoner to England to give an account there of his proceedings.[2]

Leaving captain Williams governor of the new fort at Portmore, who had so valiantly defended it three years before, Mountjoy returned to the Pale in the end of August. He had served the queen well in this excursion, for he forced many of the smaller chiefs to submit, and left garrisons in several important strongholds.

By this time the rebellion may be said to have been crushed in the three southern provinces. In Ulster, though O'Neill and O'Donnell were still actively engaged in defensive warfare, they had become greatly circumscribed; for the deputy had possession of all the main strongholds, and was daily gaining a firmer grasp on the province. But the rebellion was now fated to be renewed in another quarter of the island.

[1] Moryson, i. 276. [2] *Ibid.* 289, 290.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SIEGE AND BATTLE OF KINSALE[1]

IT had lately been rumoured in England and Ireland that Philip III. of Spain had sent a fleet with troops to aid the Catholics of Ireland. The rumour proved correct. On the 23rd of September 1601 the Spanish fleet entered the harbour of Kinsale with 3,400 troops under the command of Don Juan del Aguila. They immediately took possession of the town and placed garrisons in two outlying castles at both sides of the entrance to the harbour, Rincorran on the east and Castle-na-park on the west. And Del Aguila despatched a message to Ulster to O'Neill and O'Donnell, earnestly urging them to come south without delay.

But from the very beginning this expedition seems to have been attended by ill-luck. The force, which originally consisted of 6,000, became reduced by delays in embarking; and after sailing, the fleet was scattered by a storm, so that seven of the ships laden with artillery, small arms, and stores, had to put back into Corunna. The help came at the wrong time, for the Irish had greatly lost ground. The choice of commander was unfortunate. Del Aguila, though he had seen some service and was a brave soldier, was quite unfit to lead such an expedition, which required patience and cool judgment; whereas he was hot-tempered, self-willed, and impatient under difficulties. And worst of all, instead of landing in Ulster, now the chief seat of the rebellion, they chose Munster, where Carew had, only a few months before, thoroughly crushed the power of the insurgents: but for this last Del Aguila could not be blamed, as he had not heard of what had lately taken place in Munster.

[1] Detailed descriptions of the siege and battle of Kinsale are given by Carew in *Pacata Hibernia*; by the *Four Masters*; and by Philip O'Sullivan Beare in his *Hist. Cath. Ibern. Compendium*: and chiefly from these the account in this chapter is taken.

The Spanish commander had expected that all Munster would be up in arms on his arrival; but he was bitterly disappointed when he found that the Sugan earl and Florence Mac Carthy had been taken (p. 513), and that only three chiefs of any consequence joined him: Donall O'Sullivan Beare, O'Driscoll, and O'Conor of Kerry. All the others were now either prisoners or allies of the English: and the peasantry, thoroughly cowed by the recent proceedings of Carew, showed no disposition to join the Spanish standard.

Mountjoy and Carew were sitting in council in Kilkenny when an express arrived from Sir Charles Wilmot, who then commanded in Cork, with the news that the Spanish fleet had arrived. They set out instantly; and on their arrival in Cork, they sent out couriers in every direction to muster troops. At the end of three weeks they encamped on the north side of the town with an army of 12,000 men; and after some time they were joined by the earls of Thomond and Clanrickard, with additional reinforcements.

The receipt of Del Aguila's letters placed the northern chiefs in great difficulty. Their presence was urgently required in Ulster, where they still kept up a brave defensive struggle; and now they must either abandon their own province to its fate or leave Del Aguila to fight his battles unaided. Yet they never hesitated, but made instant preparations for their march south, though winter was now setting in.

O'Donnell was first. After a hasty preparation he set out from Ballymote with about 2,500 men of the septs of Tirconnell and North Connaught. Crossing the Shannon near the present Shannon Harbour in King's County, he proceeded into Tipperary, and encamped on Moydrum Hill, midway between Roscrea and Templemore, where he remained for nearly three weeks awaiting O'Neill; after which he moved farther south one day's march and again encamped near Holycross. While here his scouts brought him word that Sir George Carew had been despatched by the deputy to intercept him, and was now encamped six or eight miles off near Cashel.

O'Donnell, wishing to reserve his strength, was determined to reach Kinsale without fighting. But the president lay right in his path: the Slieve Felim mountains on his right—to the west—were impassable for an army with baggage on account of recent heavy rains; and he dared not go roundabout east through Kilkenny, as he might encounter the army of the Pale, so that there seemed no way by which he could move south. Luckily there came a sudden and intense frost on the night of the 22nd of November, which hardened up bog and morass and made them passable. The Irish general, instantly taking advantage of this, set out that night westwards, crossed the Slieve Felim mountains with his hardy followers, making his way through the transverse glens, and passing Abbey-Owney (now Abington), he reached Croom the next night after a march of forty English miles—'the greatest march with [incumbrance of] carriage,' says Carew, 'that hath been heard of.' But in this journey he had to abandon much of his baggage.

When Carew was told of O'Donnell's sudden departure, he started in pursuit four hours before day on the morning of the 23rd, hoping to intercept him in a dangerous pass near Abington; but by the time he had arrived at Abington O'Donnell was far in front, and he barely reached Kilmallock when the Irish had got to Croom. So finding he could not overtake them he turned south and made a hasty march to Kinsale. O'Donnell now moving leisurely in order to rest his men, arrived at Castlehaven where he encamped for a few days. At this same time the missing part of the Spanish fleet sailed into Castlehaven, bringing 700 Spanish troops. Part of these were now sent to garrison the castles of Castlehaven, Baltimore, and Dunboy: the remainder, under their officer Don Alfonso Ocampo, joined O'Donnell and marched with him to Kinsale.

During the month of November the English had carried on the siege vigorously. The two castles of Rincorran and Castle-na-park were reduced by cannonade and taken from the Spaniards, and a fleet of English ships blockaded

the bay, so that the town was completely invested. There were daily skirmishes between besiegers and besieged. The English ordnance made a breach in the walls, and a storming party of 2,000 attempted to force their way in, but after a desperate struggle were repulsed. On the other hand, one stormy night, 2,000 of the Spaniards made a determined sally to destroy some siege works, but were driven off after a sharp contest, without accomplishing their object.

After O'Donnell's arrival things began to go against the English, who were hemmed in by the town on one side and by the Irish army on the other, so that they were now themselves besieged. They were threatened with famine; they could procure no fodder for their horses; and the weather was so inclement that they lost numbers of their men every day by cold and sickness.

O'Neill arrived on the 21st December with an army of about 4,000, and encamped at Belgooly, north of the town, about three miles from the English lines. He saw at once how matters stood, and his plan was to avoid fighting—to remain simply inactive and let the English army melt away. Already, during three months of siege, more than 6,000 of the English had perished;[1] and had his counsel been now followed, success was certain. But he was overruled. The Spanish commander Del Aguila, who was ignorant of the country and of its mode of warfare, and should have submitted to O'Neill's experience, grew impatient under his own privations, and sent pressing letters to the Irish chiefs to attack, believing that the English were so worn out as to be unable to fight well. O'Donnell, fiery and impetuous as he was, sided with him; and against O'Neill's judgment it was decided that a simultaneous attack should be made by the Irish on one side and the Spaniards on the other, on the night of the 3rd of January, 1602 (New Style).

But a traitor in the Irish camp, Brian Mac Mahon, gave secret warning to captain William Taaffe, one of Mountjoy's officers. Taaffe instantly told Mountjoy, who

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1601–1603, p. 305.

placed his army in readiness; and the communication between the Irish and Spaniards miscarried, so that Del Aguila's attack never came off. The Irish set out under cover of the darkness in three divisions: captain Tyrrell led the van; O'Neill, under whom were O'Sullivan Beare and Ocampo, commanded the centre; and O'Donnell the rear. The night was unusually dark, wet, and stormy; the guides lost their way, and the army wandered aimlessly and wearily; till at length at the dawn of day O'Neill unexpectedly found himself near the English lines, which he saw were quite prepared to receive him. Instead of surprising Mountjoy, he was himself surprised. His own men were wearied and his lines in some disorder, and O'Donnell had not yet come up; so he ordered the army to retire a little, either to place them in better order of battle or to postpone the attack.

But Mountjoy's quick eye caught the situation, and sending back Carew to guard the camp against the sallies of the Spaniards from the town, he hurled his cavalry on the retreating ranks. For a whole hour O'Neill defended himself, still retiring, till his retreat became little better than a rout. Tyrrell and O'Donnell, when they were able to take part in the battle, fought tenaciously as they always did. But nothing could retrieve the rout of the centre; the superhuman efforts of O'Neill and Red Hugh, of Tyrrell and O'Sullivan, to rally their men, were all in vain; and they lost the battle of Kinsale.

According to the English accounts 1,200 of the Irish were killed; but the Four Masters on the Irish side say that 'although they were routed the number slain was not very great on account of the fewness of the pursuers.' Carew states that the English loss was comparatively trifling, which is no doubt true. Of 300 Spaniards that entered the field under Ocampo only forty-nine with their leader survived. The earl of Clanrickard—a Catholic—fought with great fury on the side of the deputy; he killed twenty kern with his own hand in the pursuit, and he gave orders that all Irish prisoners should be killed the moment they were taken. Those of the Irish who were

captured by other officers were sent at once to the camp and hanged.

On the night following that fatal day the Irish chiefs retired with their broken army to Innishannon. Here they held a sad council, in which it was resolved that O'Donnell should proceed to Spain to solicit further help from king Philip, leaving his Tirconnellian forces in command of his brother Rory. And inasmuch as it was now the depth of winter, when another campaign was out of the question, it was decided to suspend active operations pending the issue of O'Donnell's mission. Accordingly O'Neill made a rapid retreat to Ulster, and Rory O'Donnell led his own men back to Sligo.

After the dispersal of the Irish army the lord deputy continued the siege vigorously. But Del Aguila lost heart and offered to surrender on honourable terms. The deputy was only too glad to end hostilities, and agreed to everything demanded; for he anticipated another expedition from Spain, and he dreaded a continuance of the war in the weakened state of his army. Nine days after the battle, Del Aguila gave up possession of the town, marching forth with colours flying and drums beating, with all his arms, ammunition, and valuables; and he agreed to surrender the castles of Castlehaven, Baltimore, and Dunboy. Mountjoy on his part agreed to convey him and his army back to Spain.

After the capitulation Del Aguila formed a friendship with Carew, and expressed himself about the Irish in the most contemptuous terms, blaming them for the defeat before Kinsale, which had been chiefly brought about by his own impatience and incompetency. When news of the defeat reached Spain the king wrote to him to hold out till another expedition—then in preparation—should arrive, which he might have done, as he had sufficient men, arms, and provisions. But in his haste he had capitulated even before the letter was written; and when the king subsequently heard of the surrender of the town and of the capture of Dunboy, he abandoned for the time all intention of further expeditions. Del Aguila was justly

blamed for his conduct, and soon after his arrival in Spain he was placed under arrest, which so affected him that he died of grief.

Immediately after the council at Innishannon O'Donnell went on board a Spanish ship and sailed for Spain. He was treated everywhere with the greatest respect and honour. The king received him most cordially and with all the high consideration due to a prince, and assured him that he would send with him to Ireland an armament much more powerful than that of Del Aguila.

But Red Hugh O'Donnell never saw his native Ulster more. He took suddenly ill at Simancas, and his bodily ailment was intensified by sickness of heart; for he had heard of the surrender of Kinsale and of the fall of Dunboy; and he died on the 10th September in the twenty-ninth year of his age. His death however was not brought on by natural illness: there is the best reason to believe that he fell a victim to foul play. The Irish annalists and people of the time had no knowledge of what went on, and we derive all our information on the point from English authorities, including Carew.

In the month of May 1602 a miscreant named Blake came to president Carew and offered to follow O'Donnell into Spain and kill him. He did not say how it was to be done, but he assured the president that he would accomplish it. Carew applauded the design, and eagerly closed with the offer. He himself tells the whole story in a letter written—partly in cipher—to Lord Mountjoy, who was also in the secret. 'God give him strength and perseverance,' says Carew, 'I told him I would acquaint your lordship with it.'

Blake accordingly set out, and after his arrival in Spain he kept Carew well informed of how matters progressed. Meantime O'Donnell was suddenly carried off as related above: and in October of the same year, when news of his death had reached Ireland, Carew again writes to Mountjoy, gloating over the event in this fashion:—'O'Donnell is dead. . . . and I do think it will fall out that he is poisoned by James Blake, of whom

your lordship hath been formerly acquainted. At his [Blake's] coming into Spain he was suspected of O'Donnell because he had embarked at Corke, but afterwards he insinuated his access—*and O'Donnell is dead.*'[1]

The body of O'Donnell was brought to Valladolid, and by command of King Philip was buried with royal honours in the church of the Franciscan monastery. The church has long since disappeared; and now no monument marks the grave of Red Hugh O'Donnell.

CHAPTER XV

THE SIEGE OF DUNBOY[2]

THE Irish chiefs were very indignant with Del Aguila for surrendering Kinsale; and they were incensed beyond measure when they heard that he had agreed to hand over to the deputy the castles of Baltimore, Castlehaven, and Dunboy. Donall O'Sullivan Beare especially, whose castle of Dunboy was the strongest and most important of the three, denounced the transaction as cowardly and dis-

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1601–1603, pp. 241, 350, 351. Besides the attempts or incentives to assassinate Shane O'Neill, John Fitzthomas, Hugh O'Neill earl of Tyrone, Red Hugh O'Donnell, and the young earl of Desmond related at pp. 408, 413, 414, 509, 511, 520. and 527, the State Papers reveal many other similar plots; and it is proper to observe that the authorities for these are all English, several being the letters of the very plotters themselves. Even the bluff old soldier Perrott engaged one Thady Nolan to poison Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne; and in a letter to the council (3rd October 1590) he justifies it by Sussex's attempt to poison Shane O'Neill (*Cal. of State Papers, Eng. Domest.* 1590, p. 691). Carew employed 'one Annyas an Irishman' to kill Florence Mac Carthy More (*Life of Florence Mac Carthy Reagh* by Daniel Mac Carthy, 1867, p. 302). We may expect to find many more instances when more State Papers are published. No doubt the plotters thought their fearful letters were consigned to everlasting secrecy; but the editors of the State Papers, with unrelenting impartiality, have brought them forth to the light of day. I fear we must admit that during the reign of Elizabeth assassination was not merely a thing of occasional occurrence, but a recognised mode of dealing with Irish chiefs.

[2] The narrative in this chapter is founded chiefly on those of Carew in *Pacata Hibernia*, and of O'Sullivan Beare in his *History of the Irish Catholics*.

honourable; for he had intrusted his castle, as he said, to the safe-keeping of Del Aguila, who was bound in honour to return it to the owner.

Dunboy had not yet been given up however; and O'Sullivan resolved to regain possession of it. It was still held by the Spanish garrison; and at the dead of night, while the Spaniards were sound asleep, O'Sullivan, by breaking a hole in the wall, in February 1602, threw in a body of native troops under the command of Richard Mac Geoghegan and Thomas Taylor an Englishman. The Spaniards were overpowered and sent away, all but a few cannoniers who were kept to serve the artillery. And now Mac Geoghegan's whole garrison amounted to 143 men, who straightway began to make preparations for a siege.

It might seem an act of madness for such a small garrison to attempt a defence against the overwhelming force at the disposal of Carew: but O'Sullivan hoped that O'Donnell would return with help from King Philip, and that the fortress could hold out till the arrival of the Spaniards.

For a considerable time before this, O'Sullivan had been strengthening the castle and fortifying the approaches; and it had now the reputation of being impregnable. It was situated on a point of the mainland jutting into the channel west of Beare Island; it was almost impossible to reach it by land, because the approach lay through a vast extent of hills, bogs, and rocks; and it was hard to come at it by sea on account of the ruggedness of the coast.

When Carew began preparing to besiege this castle, his friends tried to dissuade him from what they believed a rash and impossible enterprise. But his resolution was proof against all persuasion. Knowing well that the castle was regarded by the southern Irish as their most important stronghold, he expressed his belief that its capture would discourage the Spaniards from further invasion—which indeed turned out true; and he declared that nothing should hinder him from making Queen Elizabeth mistress of Dunboy.

He set out from Cork with an army of 3,000 men, accompanied by O'Brien earl of Thomond; and on the 30th

of April 1602 encamped near Bantry to await the arrival of his ships with the ordnance and stores. Sir Charles Wilmot, who had been employed with 1,000 men reducing the insurgents in North Kerry, now directed his march south to join the president. His passage was disputed near Mangerton mountain by the indefatigable Tyrrell (of Tyrrell's Pass: p. 492); but he forced his way and entered the camp on the 11th of May. On the same day the ships appeared at the mouth of Bantry Bay: a glad sight to the president and his men, who had by that time consumed nearly all their provisons.

On account of the insurmountable difficulty of the land journey, the whole army was conveyed to Great Beare Island by sea in the first few days of June. On the 6th they entered the narrow strait at the north of the island, and landed near the present Castletown Beare. Then marching west they encamped near the ill-starred castle. The devoted little garrison never flinched at sight of the powerful armament of 4,000 men, and only exerted themselves all the more resolutely to strengthen their position.

And now the siege was begun in good earnest, and day after day the ordnance thundered against the walls. On the 17th of June the castle was so shattered that Mac Geoghegan sent to Carew offering to surrender, on condition of being allowed to march out with arms: but Carew's only answer was to hang the messenger and to give orders for a final assault. The storming party were resisted with desperation and many were killed on both sides; but the defenders were driven from turret to turret by sheer force of numbers: till at last they had to take refuge in the eastern wing which had not yet been injured.

The only way to reach this was by a narrow passage where firearms could not be used; and a furious hand to hand combat was kept up for an hour and a half, while from various standpoints the defenders poured down bullets, stones, and every available missile on the assailants, killing and wounding great numbers.

While this was going on some of the besiegers, by clearing away a heap of rubbish, made their way in by a

back passage, so that the garrison found themselves assailed on all sides; whereupon forty of them sallying out, made a desperate rush for the sea, intending to swim to the island. But before they had reached the water they were intercepted and cut down, all but eight who plunged into the sea; and for these the president had provided by stationing a party with boats outside, 'who,' in Carew's words, 'had the killing of them all.'

This furious struggle had lasted during the whole long summer day, and it was now sunset; the castle was a mass of ruins, and the number of the garrison was greatly reduced. Late as it was the assault was vigorously renewed; and after another hour's fighting the assailants gained all the upper part of the castle; and the Irish, now only seventy-seven, took refuge in the cellars. Then Carew, leaving a strong guard at the entrance, withdrew his men for the night; while those in the castle enjoyed their brief rest as best they could, knowing what was to come with the light of day.

On the next morning—the 18th of June—Taylor was in command; for Mac Geoghegan was mortally wounded; and the men resolved to defend themselves to the last, except twenty-three who laid down their arms and surrendered. Carew now directed his cannons on the cellars till he battered them into ruins on the heads of the devoted band; and at length Taylor's men forced him to surrender. When a party of English entered to take the captives, Mac Geoghegan, who was lying on the floor, his life ebbing away, snatched a lighted candle from Taylor's hand, and exerting all his remaining strength, staggered towards some barrels of powder which stood in a corner of the cellar. But captain Power, one of Carew's officers, caught him and held him in his arms, while the others killed him with their swords.

On that same day Carew executed fifty-eight of those who had surrendered. Fifteen others, among whom were Taylor and a friar named Dominick Collins[1] 'the lord

[1] This was Donogh Oge O'Cullane chief of the O'Cullanes of the territory round Castlelyons in Cork, who, when Boyle earl of Cork had seized

president reserved alive, to try whether he could draw them to do some more acceptable service than their lives were worth.' [1] But after some time, finding that they could not be tempted to inform on their associates, he had them all executed.

We might perhaps expect that a brave man would show some mercy to brave men who had done their duty. But no mercy here: and Carew is able to boast that of the 143 defenders of Dunboy 'no one man escaped, but were either slaine, executed, or buried in the ruins; and so obstinate and resolved a defence had not been seene within this kingdom.' The powder that was in the vaults was heaped together and ignited; and all that remained of Dunboy was blown into fragments, except two parallel side walls which still remain.[2]

CHAPTER XVI

THE RETREAT OF O'SULLIVAN BEARE

AFTER the capture of Dunboy, Donall O'Sullivan the lord of Beare and Bantry had no home; for his other chief fortress on Dursey Island had also been taken, and its garrison, and all the people of the little island, men, women, and children, were put to the sword.[3] He was however at the head of a formidable band, which he and Tyrrell held together among the glens of Cork and Kerry, still fondly hoping for help from King Philip. But towards the end of the year (1602) ill news came from Spain—

his property, went abroad, and after extraordinary vicissitudes, joined the church. He was really a Jesuit, a non-combatant, though Carew calls him a friar. (Rev. Edm. Hogan, S.J., in the *Month*, July 1890.)

[1] *Pac. Hib.* 574.

[2] Mr. T. D. Sullivan has related in verse the story of this siege in his fine poem of *Dunboy*.

[3] 'He [Sir Charles Wilmot] sent Captaine Flemming with his pinnace, and certaine souldiers into Osulevans land [Dursey Island]. . . . They tooke from thence certaine cowes and sheepe, which were reserved as in a sure storehouse, and put the churls to the sword that inhabited therein.'—*Pac. Hib.* p. 659.

that O'Donnell was dead, and that King Philip, on hearing of the fall of Dunboy, had countermanded the intended expedition.

Many of O'Sullivan's followers now abandoned him in despair; and at last even Tyrrell and his party had to leave him. The English forces were gradually hemming him in, and towards the end of December Sir Charles Wilmot encamped in Glengarriff within two miles of him. For several days there was skirmishing between the outposts of the two armies, and at last the English succeeded, after a bitter fight of six hours, in driving off from before the camp of the Irish a vast number of horses, cows, and sheep, their chief means of subsistence.

Finding that he could no longer maintain himself and his followers where he was, O'Sullivan resolved to bid farewell to the land of his inheritance and seek a refuge in Ulster. On the last day of the year 1602 he set out from Glengarriff on his memorable retreat, with 400 fighting men, and 600 women, children, and servants. The march was one unbroken scene of conflict and hardship. They were everywhere confronted or pursued by enemies, who attacked them when they dared; and they suffered continually from fatigue, cold, and hunger.

They fled in such haste that they were able to bring with them only one day's provisions, trusting to be able to obtain food as they fared along; for O'Sullivan had plenty of money, which had been sent to him from Spain. But they found the country people too much terrified by Carew's threats to give them help or shelter or to sell them provisions. As they could not buy, they had either to take by force or starve, which explains much of the hostility they encountered; for no man will permit his substance to be taken without resistance. But it must be confessed that some of the Irish chiefs attacked him on his way for no other motive than to gain favour with the government. Scarce a day passed without loss: some fell behind or left the ranks overcome with weariness; some sank and died under accumulated hardships; and others were killed in fight.

The first day they made their way to Ballyvourney, after a journey of about twenty-four miles over the mountains. Here they rested for the night; and going to the little church next morning before resuming their march, they laid offerings on the altar of the patron—the virgin saint Gobinet—and besought her prayers for a prosperous journey. On next through Duhallow, fighting their way through a hostile band of the Mac Carthys, till they reached Liscarroll, where John Barry of Buttevant attacked their rear as they crossed the ford, and after an hour's fighting killed four of their men, but lost more than four himself. Skirting the north base of the Ballyhoura Mountains by Ardskeagh, they encamped one night beside the old hill of Ardpatrick. Their next resting place was the Glen of Aherlow, where among the vast solitudes of the Galtys they could procure no better food than herbs and water; and the night sentries found it hard to perform their duty, oppressed as they were with fatigue and hunger. For the first part of their journey they made tents each evening to sleep in; but they were not able to continue this, so that they had to lie under the open sky, and they suffered bitterly from the extreme cold of the nights.

Next northwards from the Galtys across the Golden Vale, over the great plain of Tipperary, fighting their way through enemies almost every hour. While one detachment of the fighting men collected provisions, the others remained with the main body to protect the women and children; and the whole party were preserved from utter destruction only by the strict discipline maintained by the chief.

O'Sullivan's wife, who accompanied the party, carried and nursed so far through all her hardships her little boy, a baby two years old; but now she had to part with him. She intrusted him to the care of one of her faithful dependants, who preserved and reared him up tenderly, and afterwards sent him to Spain to the parents. We are not told how it fared with this lady and some others; but as they did not arrive with the rest at the end of the journey, they must, like many others, have fallen behind

during the terrible march, and been cared for, as they are heard of afterwards.

The ninth day of their weary journey found them beside the Shannon near Portland in the north of Tipperary; and here they rested for two nights. But their enemies began to close in on them from the Tipperary side, and no time was to be lost; so they prepared to cross the broad river opposite the castle of Kiltaroe or Redwood. Among them was a man, Dermot O'Hoolahan by name, skilled in making *curraghs* or hide boats. Under his direction they constructed boat-frames of boughs, interwoven with osier twigs in the usual way. They then killed twelve of their horses, and carefully husbanding the flesh for food, they finished their curraghs by covering the skeleton boats with the skins. In these they crossed the river; though at the last moment their rearguard had a sharp conflict with the sheriff of Tipperary, Donogh Mac Egan the owner of Redwood Castle, who with his party came up, and in spite of O'Sullivan's earnest expostulations, attacked them, and attempted to throw some of the women and children into the river. But O'Sullivan turned on him, and killed himself and many of his men.

Nothing better awaited them on the other side of the Shannon. Pushing on northwards through O'Kelly's country, they had to defend themselves in skirmish after skirmish. As most of the horses had by this time quite broken down, O'Sullivan had to abandon the wounded to their certain fate; and their despairing cries rang painfully in the ears of the flying multitude. Sometimes when they came near a village, a party was despatched for provisions, who entered the houses and seized everything in the shape of food they could lay hands on, satisfying their own hunger while they searched, and bringing all they could gather to their starving companions.

At Aughrim they were confronted by captain Henry Malbie and Sir Thomas Burke of Clanrickard, with a force much more numerous than their own. O'Sullivan,

addressing his famished and desperate little band of fighting men in a few encouraging words, placed them so that they were protected on all sides except the front, where the assailants had to advance on foot through a soft boggy pass. Malbie, despising the fugitives, sprang forward at the head of his followers, but fell dead at the first onset. On rushed O'Sullivan and his men: it must be either victory or destruction; and after a determined and bitter fight, they scattered their assailants, and freed themselves from that great and pressing danger.

Onwards over Slieve Mary near Castlekelly, and through the territory of Mac David Burke, where the people, headed by Mac David himself, harassed them all day long to prevent them from obtaining provisions. Near Ballinlough in the west of Roscommon they concealed themselves in a thick wood, intending to pass the night there. But they got no rest: for a friendly messenger came to warn them that Mac David and his people were preparing to surround them in the morning and slay them all. So they resumed their march and toiled on wearily through the night in a tempest of sleet, splashing their way through melting snow, and in the morning found themselves pursued by Mac David, who however was cowed by their determined look, and did not dare to come to close quarters.

Arriving at another solitary wood, they found the people friendly; and they lighted fires and refreshed themselves. They next crossed the Curlieu Hills southwards to Knockvicar, beside the river Boyle where it enters Lough Key, and here they took some rest. For days past they had undergone unspeakable sufferings. Avoiding the open roads, they had to cross the country by rugged, rocky, and unfrequented ways, walking all the time, for horses could not be used. The weather was inclement, snow falling heavily, so that they had sometimes to make their way through deep drifts; and many of those who continued able to walk had to carry some of their companions who were overcome by fatigue and sickness.

Their hope all through had been to reach the territory

of O'Ruarc of Brefney; and next morning when the sun rose over Knockvicar, their guide pointed out to them, a few miles off, the towers of O'Ruarc's residence, Leitrim Castle. At eleven o'clock the same day they entered the hospitable mansion, where a kind welcome awaited them.

They had set out from Glengarriff a fortnight before, one thousand in number; and that morning only thirty-five entered O'Rourke's castle: eighteen armed men, sixteen servants, and one woman, the wife of the chief's uncle, Dermot O'Sullivan.[1] A few others afterwards arrived in twos and threes; all the rest had either perished or dropped behind from fatigue, sickness, or wounds.

How it fared with South Munster after the capture of Dunboy may now be told in a few words.

When setting out from Glengarriff, O'Sullivan left in the deserted camp some weak women and little children, with a number of wounded and sick people who could not be moved, thinking probably that their infirmity would be a sufficient protection. But in this he miscalculated. The women and children were able to escape in time; but Wilmot had all the wounded men massacred on the spot:—'Next morning,' says Carew, 'Sir Charles [Wilmot] coming to seeke the enemy in their campe, hee entered into their quarter without resistance, where he found nothing but hurt and sicke men, whose pains and lives by the soldiers were both determined.'[2]

Though Munster was now quiet enough, yet several of the rebels were still at large, and there were rumours of other intended risings. Against these dangers Carew took precautions of a very decided character. Twenty years before, the province had been almost depopulated by war and artificial famine: now the same dreadful work was repeated, though on a smaller scale: the country was

[1] This old couple, who survived the hardships of the journey, were then seventy years old. Their son Philip O'Sullivan Beare afterwards wrote in Latin a book called *Historiæ Catholicæ Iberniæ Compendium*, a compendium of the History of the Irish Catholics, from which, and from the *Four Masters*, the account in this chapter is chiefly taken.

[2] *Pac. Hib.* p. 659.

turned into a desert:—'Heereupon Sir Charles [Wilmot] with the English regiments overran all Beare and Bantry, destroying all that they could find meet for the reliefe of men, so as that country was wholly wasted. . . . The president therefore, as well to debarre those straglers from releefe as to prevent all means of succours to Osulevan if hee should returne with new forces, caused all the county of Kerry and Desmond, Beare, Bantry, and Carbery to be left absolutely wasted, constrayning all the Inhabitants thereof to withdraw their Cattle into the East and Northern parts of the County of Corke.'[1]

CHAPTER XVII

THE FLIGHT OF THE EARLS

From the autumn of 1600 to the end of 1602 the work of destroying crops, cattle, and homesteads was busily carried on by Mountjoy and Carew, and by the governors of the garrisons, who wasted everything and made deserts for miles round the towns where they were stationed. We have already seen how thoroughly this was done in Munster and Leinster (pp. 459, 513, 516): it was now the turn of Ulster. In June 1602 Mountjoy himself marched north to prosecute the rebels, and remained in Ulster during the autumn and winter, traversing the country in all directions, and destroying the poor people's means of subsistence.

And now the famine so deliberately planned swept through the whole country, and Ulster was, if possible, in a worse condition than Munster. For the ghastly results of the deputy's cruel policy we have his own testimony, as well as that of his secretary the historian Moryson. Here is Mountjoy's description of what he found on his arrival in Ulster (written 29th July 1602):—'We have seen no one man in all Tyrone of late but dead carcases merely hunger starved, of which we found divers as we

[1] *Pac. Hib.* pp. 659, 680.

passed.' And again: 'O'Hagan protested that between Tullaghoge and Toome [seventeen miles] there lay unburied 1,000 dead, and that since our first drawing this year to Blackwater there were about 3,000 starved in Tyrone.'[1] But this did not satisfy him; for soon after we find him invoking the Almighty to aid him in completing this horrible work:—'To-morrow (by the grace of God) I am going into the field, as near as I can utterly to waste the county Tyrone.'[2]

Next hear Moryson.[3] 'Now because I have often made mention formerly of our destroying the rebels' corn, and using all means to famish them, let me by one or two examples show the miserable estate to which the rebels were thereby brought.' He then gives some hideous details, which show, if indeed showing were needed, that the women and children were famished as well as the actual rebels. And he goes on to say:—'And no spectacle was more frequent in the ditches of towns than to see multitudes of these poor people dead with their mouths all coloured green by eating nettles, docks, and all things they could rend up above ground.'

It will be remembered that after the battle of Kinsale O'Neill and Rory O'Donnell made good their retreat to the north. But O'Neill was not able to make any headway against Mountjoy and Docwra, both of whom continued to plant garrisons all through the province. With the few followers that remained to him, he retired into impenetrable fastnesses; and far from taking active measures, he had quite enough to do to preserve himself and his party from utter destruction. But he refused to submit, still clinging to the hope of help from abroad.

About the 10th August 1602 Mountjoy collected a force of 8,000 men to proceed against him. He first took possession of Dungannon, which on his approach O'Neill had abandoned and burned; and from this he proceeded to attack the strong fort of Inisloughlin, in which O'Neill and the other chief men of the country had for safety de-

[1] *Carew Papers*, 1601–1603, p. 287.
[2] Moryson, ii. 191. [3] *Ibid.* 283.

posited all their plate and other valuables. It was situated in the middle of a great bog in the south of Antrim, near the village of Moira in Down; and on the first appearance of the English army the little garrison of sixty-two surrendered, and Mountjoy brought away all the treasure. He then returned to Dungannon, still burning and destroying, and having fortified the town, he left it in charge of a garrison. In his destructive progress through the country he came to Tullaghoge, which for many centuries had been the inauguration place of the O'Neills; 'and there he spoiled the corn of all the country, and Tyrone's own corn, and brake down the chair wherein the O'Neills were wont to be created [princes of Tyrone], being of stone planted in the open field.' [1]

At this time O'Neill was in the great fastness of Glenconkeine in the south of the county Londonderry, a little to the north-west of Lough Neagh, with all that remained of his army—600 foot and 50 horse. Mountjoy attempted to follow him, but was not able to get nearer than twelve miles. So leaving Sir Henry Docwra and Sir Arthur Chichester there with instructions to 'clear the county of Tyrone of all inhabitants, and to spoil all the corn which he could not preserve for the garrison,' he returned to Dublin.

The news of the death of Red Hugh O'Donnell, which came while O'Neill was in Glenconkeine, crushed the last hopes of the chiefs; and Rory O'Donnell and O'Conor Sligo submitted in December, and were gladly and favourably received. O'Neill himself, even in his fallen state, was still greatly dreaded; for the government were now, as they had been for years, haunted by the apprehension of another and more powerful armament from Spain. They well knew that on the slightest encouragement the whole population, Anglo-Irish as well as native, would rise in revolt. Carew writes: [In case the Spaniards should land] 'the loss of one field or one day's disaster would absolutely lose the kingdom.' [2] The authorities

[1] Moryson, ii. 197.
[2] *Carew Papers*, 1621–1603, p. 305: written 11th August 1602.

were heartily sick of this war, and Mountjoy was most anxious to receive O'Neill; but the queen, now sickly, old, and cross-tempered, was so exasperated against him that it was with the greatest difficulty she was persuaded to consent. At length she empowered Mountjoy to offer him life, liberty, and pardon, with title and territory.

The sort of enemy Tyrone had to deal with may be gathered from Mountjoy's own words, written *after* he had got authority to receive the submission. 'I have omitted nothing, both by Power and Policy, to ruin him and utterly to cut him off, and if by either I may procure his Head, before I have engaged her royal Word for his Safety, I do protest I will do it, and much more be ready to possess myself of his person, if by only Promise of Life, or by any other Means whereby I shall not directly scandal the Majesty of public Faith, I can procure him to put himself into my power.'[1] O'Neill however knew the man thoroughly, and was too watchful for the assassins and too wary to be caught in any trap, however skilfully laid. At length Sir Garrett Moore of Mellifont, O'Neill's old friend, was commissioned to treat with him; and riding north to O'Neill's camp with Sir William Godolphin, he conducted him back to Mellifont.

While the negotiations were going on here, Mountjoy received private intelligence that the queen had died on the 24th March 1603. Keeping the news strictly secret, he hurried on the arrangements. On the 30th of March at Mellifont the chief made his submission to the deputy in the usual form. On his knees, after the fashion of the time, he acknowledged his offences, supplicated the queen's pardon, renounced the title of O'Neill, abjured all foreign power, and promised to serve the crown in future with all his ability. He received full pardon for himself and his followers, and was to be restored to his titles and lands, except certain small portions reserved by the government.

The deputy, accompanied by O'Neill, now rode to Dublin. The day after their arrival the queen's death was publicly announced; and it was observed that when

[1] Moryson, ii. 293.

O'Neill heard of it he shed tears. He said himself it was nothing more than sorrow for the queen; but many believed that his tears were caused by regret that he had not delayed his submission a few days longer, when he might have forced better terms from the new sovereign.

James I. of England, who had been James VI. of Scotland, was the first English king who was universally acknowledged by the Irish as their lawful sovereign; and they accepted him partly because he was descended in one line from their own ancient Milesian kings, and partly because they believed that though outwardly a Protestant he was at heart a Catholic.

There was now a very general belief in Ireland that the Catholic religion would be restored, as it was on the accession of Mary. The citizens of Cork, Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, and Limerick forced their way into the churches—their own churches, which only a few years before had been taken from them; and they restored the altars and had Mass openly celebrated.

But they were soon made sensible of their mistake. Mountjoy, when he heard of their proceedings, marched south in May (1603) with a formidable army; and when the citizens of Waterford shut their gates on him, he sent them word that if he had to enter by force he would raze the city and strew salt upon the site. Whereupon they admitted him; and forthwith he suppressed the Catholic worship and restored the churches to the English ministers. Cork in like manner submitted, and all the other towns followed.

This disturbance was not a remnant of the late insurrection, with which it had no connection; for the inhabitants of those towns were then chiefly English or of English descent, and were thoroughly loyal. But they were all Roman Catholics; and their action was merely a struggle for liberty to exercise their religion: it was the beginning of an agitation which continued from that time to a period within our own memory.

Niall Garve O'Donnell, almost from the hour he joined the government, had given great trouble. He had done

the English good service; but he was grasping, quarrelsome, and unmanageable; and nothing that was done for him pleased him. He was now enraged at the favour shown to his rival Rory O'Donnell; and while Mountjoy was in Munster, he rose in open rebellion and had himself proclaimed The O'Donnell. But he was easily defeated by Docwra and taken prisoner, though not dealt with severely; and in the end he had to content himself with the possession of his own patrimonial estates, and nothing more.

Deputy Mountjoy now petitioned to be allowed to retire from the government of Ireland. Whereupon the king conferred on him the higher title of lord lieutenant, with permission to reside in England. He forthwith sailed for London, accompanied by O'Neill, Rory O'Donnell, and others. The king received the Irish chiefs kindly and graciously; confirmed O'Neill in the title of earl of Tyrone; made Rory O'Donnell earl of Tirconnell; and restored both to most of their possessions and privileges.

Although the war was now ended, yet the country was in a very unsettled state; for there were everywhere numbers of people that had taken part in the rebellion, who now lived in a continual state of apprehension. In order to put an end to this state of things, the king caused to be proclaimed 'an Act of Oblivion and Indemnity,' by which all offences heretofore committed against the crown were forgiven, never to be revived: a merciful act which would not have been entertained in the preceding reign.

When Mountjoy sailed for England he left as his deputy Sir George Carey, treasurer at war (also called Carew, but to be distinguished from Sir George Carew of the preceding chapters). During Carey's short administration—from June 1603 to February 1604—English law was established in Tyrone and Tirconnell, and sheriffs and judges were sent for the first time into these two districts. The first judges were Sir Edward Pelham and Sir John Davies: the latter the author of the valuable treatise on Ireland, already so often quoted in these pages.

A little later (in 1605), during the administration of Sir Arthur Chichester, who became lord deputy in 1604,

tanistry and gavelkind (pp. 84, 85) were abolished, and the inheritance of land was made subject to English law.

The extension of English law to all Ireland, which was accomplished a little later on, placed all the people for the first time under government protection. This measure had often been sought by the Irish, and persistently refused; and full credit for the concession should be accorded to King James I. But its sudden application to the tenure of land was harsh, and was attended with great injustice. By the abolition of tanistry probably no one seriously suffered; but the case was different with gavelkind. When this was declared illegal, all those who happened at the time to be in possession became the legal owners; and no account was taken of the numerous junior members of the septs who had a right to their portions in subsequent distributions. These were all deprived of their inheritance to enrich the actual possessors, and were turned out on the world without any provision: as great an injustice as if the tenants of the present day were suddenly made absolute owners of their farms, and the landlords and mortgage holders sent adrift without compensation. Sir Henry Maine [1] strongly condemns the sudden introduction of this measure, and complains of the injustice done to a number of children all through the country for the advantage of individuals. A just and thoughtful legislator would have provided for compensation, or would have made the act prospective, so as to avoid wronging any living member of the community.

Notwithstanding that the earl of Tyrone had been received so graciously by the king, and was now settled down quietly as an English subject, yet he was looked upon with suspicion and hatred by the officials and adventurers, who could not endure to see him restored to rank and favour. Those who had looked forward to the forfeiture of his estates and to the confiscation of Ulster were bitterly disappointed when they found themselves baulked of their expected prey, and they determined to bring about his ruin. He was now constantly subjected

[1] *Anc. Institutions*, p. 206.

to annoyance and humiliation, and beset with spies who reported the most trivial incidents of his everyday life. Montgomery the Protestant bishop of Derry and O'Cahan one of O'Neill's sub-chiefs harassed him with litigation about some of his lands; and when the cases came to be tried in the council chamber, the lawyers decided that neither O'Neill nor O'Cahan had any title at all accordign to English law: a decision in direct violation of the king's order restoring the earl all his lands. At the same time the earl of Tirconnell was persecuted almost as systematically.

At last matters reached a crisis. There had been rumours of a conspiracy for another rebellion; and now (1607) an anonymous letter addressed to the clerk of the privy council was dropped at the chamber door, which spoke of a design to murder the deputy Chichester and other officials, and to seize the castle of Dublin; and of a general revolt which was to be assisted by a Spanish army. No conspirators were named in the letter, but the earls of Tyrone and Tirconnell, the young baron of Delvin, and others, were freely talked of. It was stated that they held their meetings at the castle of Maynooth, belonging to the dowager countess of Kildare, though the Kildare family knew nothing of what was going on.

This letter—'a rambling and absurd document,' as Richey calls it—was concocted by Christopher St. Laurence baron of Howth, a man wholly devoid of honour or principle, who had served against the Irish under Lord Mountjoy: but probably he was in collusion with others. Even the government officials distrusted him; and Chichester, in a letter to the earl of Salisbury, speaks of him in the most contemptuous terms:—'I find him so wavering and uncertain that I am enforced to hold him to particulars. . . . I like not his look and gesture when he talks to me of this business.'[1] In some short time afterwards St. Laurence brought charges of disloyalty and treason against Sir Garrett Moore of Mellifont, O'Neill's old friend, which Moore easily proved before the king and council to be all

[1] Gilbert, *Account of Nat. MSS.* 284.

false. Although the government obviously disbelieved St. Laurence, yet he afterwards managed to obtain considerable grants from the crown.

The whole story of the conspiracy was an invention without the least foundation; yet rambling and absurd as St. Laurence's statement was it led to very important consequences; for in a short time the whole country was startled by the news that the two earls of Tyrone and Tirconnell had secretly fled from Ireland.

Tyrone had been on a visit at Slane with the deputy Chichester, intending to proceed to England, when he heard of the matter; and at the same time both he and Tirconnell were assured that it was intended to arrest them. 'There is no reason to believe that he was engaged in any conspiracy; but he was utterly disgusted with his position, irritated with the annoyances he was continually subjected to, and must have foreseen that it was impossible for him to live in Ireland as an English subject, and that sooner or later he should be forced into rebellion or accused of treason.'[1] Keeping his mind to himself, he took leave of the deputy and went to Sir Garrett Moore of Mellifont, where he remained for a few days. On a Sunday morning he and his attendants took horse for Dundalk. He knew that he was bidding his old friend farewell for the last time; and Sir Garrett, who suspected nothing, was surprised to observe that he was unusually moved, blessing each member of the household individually and weeping bitterly at parting. They rode on in haste till they reached Rathmullan on the western shore of Lough Swilly, where a ship that had been purchased by O'Ruarc awaited them. Here he was joined by the earl of Tirconnell and his family.

Tyrone had with him his wife and children; while with Tirconnell went his son a child of a year old, his sister Nuala wife of the traitor Niall Garve, and his brother Cathbarr: the countess, being from home, was left behind in the haste of flight. There were several other relatives of both earls; and the total number of exiles taking ship

[1] Richey, *Short Hist.* 597.

was about one hundred. At midnight on the 14th of September they embarked, and bidding farewell for ever to their native country, they made for the open sea. After a long, stormy, and perilous voyage, they landed in France, where they were received with great distinction by all, from the king downwards. From France the earls and their families proceeded by leisurely stages to Rome, where they took up their residence, being allowed ample pensions by the Pope and the king of Spain. O'Donnell died in the following year, 1608; and O'Neill, aged, blind, and worn by misfortune and disappointment, died in 1616. His son Henry was mysteriously murdered in Brussels in 1617; at whose death that branch of the family became extinct.[1]

Let us conclude the tale of the flight of the earls by quoting Dr. Richey's weighty and well-considered words:[2]—'The extreme impolicy of the English government throughout these transactions is remarkable. If, instead of being harassed and insulted by English bishops and garrisons, he had been frankly and loyally dealt with, his services [in maintaining order in Ulster] acknowledged, and his hands strengthened for good, instead of an Ulster *reformed* by a Scotch and English plantation, we might have an Ulster as thriving and cultivated, but inhabited by the descendants of its original possessors; and the rising of 1641 and all its consequences might have been spared this country. But the hatred and suspicion of all that was Irish, the desire to utilise the country for the benefit of the English, and the greed for grants of lands and forfeited estates, in this as on many other occasions influenced the conduct of the government, the miserable results of which form the staple of our subsequent history.'

For some time after the suppression of the great rebellion there was profound quiet, till it was suddenly broken by the hasty and reckless rising of Sir Cahir

[1] For all details of the flight of the earls, the reader is referred to the Rev. C. P. Meehan's valuable work *The Fate and Fortunes of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell.*

[2] *Short Hist.* 597.

O'Doherty. This chief, then only twenty-one years of age, had hitherto been altogether on the side of the English: he had fought with Sir Henry Docwra against O'Neill and was knighted for his bravery. He was *the queen's* O'Doherty, appointed by the government in opposition to his uncle, who had been inaugurated by the earl of Tyrone; and his rebellion was a mere outburst of private revenge, having nothing noble or patriotic about it.

On one occasion, in 1608, he had an altercation with Sir George Paulett governor of Derry, who being a man of ill-temper, struck him in the face. O'Doherty, restraining himself for the time, retired; and under the advice of his foster-brothers the Mac Devitts, and of Niall Garve O'Donnell, he concerted his measures for vengeance. He invited his friend captain Harte the governor of Culmore fort and his wife to dinner. After dinner the governor was treacherously seized by O'Doherty's orders, and threatened with instant death—himself and his wife and child—if he did not surrender the fort. Harte firmly refused; but his wife, in her terror and despair, went to the fort and prevailed on the guards to open the gates. O'Doherty and his men rushed in and massacred the whole garrison, sparing Harte and his wife however; and having supplied himself with artillery and ammunition from the fort, he marched on Derry that same night. He took it by surprise, slew Paulett, slaughtered the garrison, and sacked and burned the town. He was joined by several neighbouring chiefs, and held out from May to July 1608, when he was shot dead near Kilmacrenan in a skirmish with Marshal Wingfield. The rising then collapsed as suddenly as it had begun. Some of those implicated were executed, and others were sent to the Tower of London, among whom were Niall Garve O'Donnell and his son, who were kept there in confinement for the rest of their days.

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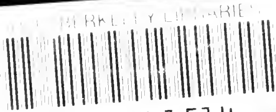

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