

FAIRIES AND DRUIDS OF IRELAND.



THE trouble with the old archæologists was, and it remains the trouble with those Irishmen who refuse to look at their island as a part of Europe subject to the laws governing humanity everywhere, that they treated Erin as if it belonged to some other planet. This comes from the great wealth of legend with which the country teemed after it had almost vanished from the larger part of the rest of Europe—at least from that part which was educated. If in “Pagan Ireland” I have asserted that we have strong evidences in the island of the primeval warfare between intrusive Kelts and the Turanian or Finno-Ugrian tribes which at one time held all Europe, it is not done to belittle the Irish, as some of that sensitive folk may suppose. The Turanian element is not wanting in Germans, Frenchmen, and Italians; it is present among the English in a very marked degree, and will be acknowledged some day when prejudices based on false teachings, ignorance, or pride shall give way before the arguments of scholars. The selection of Ireland as the place where these arguments are applied brings into relief the now well-known value of her old literature, manners, customs, and myths as documents in reading the past of our common family of nations.

The Fenians have always been a stumbling-block to native and foreign students, owing largely to the oriental allusions in the old literature and the similar sound of Phœnicians, but also to ignorance of the literature itself. So with Druidism. It has been denied to Ireland outright, because in the records that came through Christian hands there were fewer allusions to the order than were to be expected. As definite facts about these bodies of men were wanting, the native archæologists drew on their imagination, having always behind them, however, the traditions that lurk obscurely in the people. The distinction between historical figures enveloped in an atmosphere of myth, and mythical figures to whom historical events have been fitted, is naturally difficult to draw; it is hard enough with all the facts that are now at our command, and was manifestly impossible in previous periods. The earliest records of Ireland refer to bands of settlers coming from the mainland, to gods and guardian deities so closely connected with places and specific human acts that their divinity is almost gone, and to historical tribes and men to whom semi-

divine or magical attributes have been given. Where are we to draw the line between man and myth, between fact of history and shadow of some old superstition? It will be something gained if we can assign the chief fairies of Ireland to those invading swarms whose deities they appear once to have been. For be it known to those little read in Irish literature that of old the fairies were not trivial folk at all, but powerful champions and wizards who lived in great state inside the hills with their horses and hounds, banquets and retinues, like the nobles they were. Fairy princesses had too often a leaning for mortal heroes, and lured them into their palaces for a year and a day. It seems at one time to have been the fashion in Ireland to couple the name of a fairy with each hero or great chief, as we find Latin legendary giving Egeria the nymph to the wise Roman king. It will be a gain, too, if we can connect Druidism by the aid of languages with a simple religion that lies at the bottom of all the old pagan faiths, just as the Turanian race seems to enter into the composition of most of the peoples of Europe. I shall continue to draw attention to the analogies between the Finnic past as seen in the Kalewala and the Irish past as shown by her literature, because the Finns have kept themselves least mixed with other stocks and therefore represent best the population of Ireland when the Kelts arrived. But we must not understand this arrival in the sense of sudden conquest by an entirely different race. The Kelts would conquer Turanians in Gaul and Holland, and the first swarm into Ireland would be a mixed swarm. At a later date came the horde of purer Kelts.

In 1857, while living in Brooklyn, L. I., John O'Mahony translated a history of Ireland written in Gaelic by Geoffrey Keating. It is only one of many instances of his wisdom that he should have put his finger on the key to the meaning of many obscure points concerning the earliest inhabitants of Ireland. Speaking of Cichol Gri the footless, a chief of the Fomorians, he says: “There are traces of such people, *living by fishing and fowling*, a people of perhaps Lapponian type, and they it was that probably left those stone implements improperly called Celtic.” And again, speaking of those who think the Fomaraigh came from the Baltic, he says: “They must have been Finns or Laps, who perhaps were the predecessors of both Celts and Teutons in Western Europe, for in those times it is not

likely that there were any Gothic or Teutonic nations in North-western Europe. It is remarkable that the Welsh, Gaelic, and Breton resemble the Uralian dialects in one or two important points wherein all three differ from their kindred Indo-European tongues." Had he lived he would have found so many proofs of this guess by comparing the old literature of Ireland and the manners and customs of its more or less purely Celtic tribes with those of Finland that he would have avoided certain minor errors and spoken with certainty on the subject.

The Finnic harpers and dispensers of magic are Irish Druids of a very primitive type, such as Cæsar came too late to find in Gaul. Wainamoinen makes a great harp from the head of the monster pike—the Salmon of Knowledge of the Irish tales—and with it either delights the world or renders his foes powerless. Lemminkäinen is a younger, less wise, Druid, who falls into mishaps, is sliced to pieces by a blind beggar whom he scorns, as Balder is slain by the blind god who was overlooked; he is thrown into the River of Death and fished out piecemeal by his mother. With his harp he puts his enemies to sleep or drives them like cattle into the River of Death. He journeys westward to an island where every good thing exists and all the women fall in love with him. This is the Tir na n'óg or Land of the Young visited by Fion, Cuchulinn, Oisín, and other heroes. It is a later version of the Isles of the Blessed or Paradise of the Kelts, where pigs trot about roasted and the streams run with beer, of which place modern Germany has a humorous reminiscence in Schlaraffenland. Reports of this cloudland, hidden land, or vanishing archipelago in the Atlantic may really have induced St. Brendan of Kerry to cross the ocean during an epoch when holy men sought the most inaccessible places. They were discovered by the Norse even in Iceland. Such firmly seated traditions may well have induced Columbus to try the solution of the enigma of the Atlantic. It is Madoc's land and the fabled Atlantis.

The foes of the Kaleva heroes are like the magicians who interrupt Fion and his comrades in their hunts. The Lapp of Pohjola is even more malignant than the Sidhé or fairy of the Irish, who is generally considered a survival of the Dé Danann people, one of primitive swarms from over-sea. Fion and his comrades lived the life of hunters and their methods of cooking were extremely archaic. A pit was dug and a fire built therein to heat stones. Then the fire was drawn off, flesh wrapped in leaves placed in the pit, hot stones laid on, another layer of meat added, and thus the pit filled. The practice is still found among

some savage tribes; it is still with us a favorite process for a clambake. Parallels between the Kalewala and Irish legends are endless. Magic horses that carry men off like the wind, nymphs who become the wives of heroes, archers who knock enchanted pins from the hair and save people from magic, wizards who cast men into a "Druidic sleep" to force them to reveal the truth, boats of skin or copper that go of themselves, runners who have to bind one leg for ordinary occasions lest they go too fast, enchanted boars or elk that only talking weapons can slay, and swords which have a life and vengeance of their own—these and other singular fancies in Irish literature can be found with little radical difference in the Kalewala. We associate these ideas with pagans or simply enjoy them in the nursery for their wild, preposterous boldness. Oscar pursues a fairy who has bewitched Fion, follows him to a mound, digs after and finally captures him. Shiefner has published a similar story among Siberian tribes. Bearing in mind the eternal quarrel of Iran against Turan in Persia and the battles of Gaels on two Tura-Plains in the west of Ireland, mentioned in "Pagan Ireland," and recalling the hatred shown by the Gaels for the wicked, misshapen, giant-like or pigmy Fomoraigh, we can understand better how gods and heroes of the conquered Finno-Ugrians appear in Gaelic stories with non-Aryan traits.

The Fomorians have been sometimes explained as the Fir-muir, or men of the ocean. We have a ballad in English, found in the Shetlands, which does something to support the view that the Fomorians belonged to the same race as the Finns, though it will also aid Professor John Rhys in his argument that Fomor means under the sea, and refers to an entirely mythical race of submarine fairies. The two ideas are not incompatible; for in popular tales a detested and feared race of sea-robbers holding islands off the coast might readily merge into baleful fairies after they had been destroyed and time had been allowed for myths to grow up round their former sites. But to the Shetland story. According to a ballad in Professor Child's collection there is a human race of seals in Shetland, who come on shore, throw off their skins, and enjoy themselves in the dance. If you can secure the skin, its owner, man or woman, is your booty. This is the familiar idea of swan-maidens and fairies, whose feathery dress, whose green or red cap, you must try to seize. But the singular part of the Shetland story is that they are called Finns.

Another explanation of Fomoraigh is Fir-morca, men of horses, and the old histories indeed speak of a King Horsehead among their leaders. Giraldus de Barry reported in the twelfth century a "New and Monstrous

Way of Inaugurating their Kings" practiced by a tribe in Donegal, the very part of Ireland where Christianity least penetrated and the non-Kelts must have survived in largest numbers. A new king had to bathe in broth made from the flesh of a white mare, and feast on the flesh and broth with his people. This story is probably one that was handed down from heathen days and from malice or ignorance told to Giraldus when in Leinster as a practice of his own epoch.

However this may be, these and other primitive inhabitants are strangely like the Finnic heroes. Fintann, the only man who survived the deluge, was such an early Irishman with pronounced Finnic traits. He partakes of some of Wainamöinen's characteristics, for he is a Methuselah, lives in the shape of a fish through the flood, passes into other disguises, and is thus able to form the bridge whereby knowledge of the past is handed down to the true Gaels. He recalls Japanese legends of transformations at the other side of Asia. He crops up in St. Finnian's day just as Oisín returns to quarrel with St. Patrick and delight him with "Fenian tales." He brings us naturally to the Salmon of Knowledge already mentioned, for he and it are probably one and the same.

Fion the hero comes as a lad to the river Boyne in search of a teacher of poetry. His youth has been unfortunate, for his father Cumhal is killed and he is hidden and reared by a Druidess. The poet is fishing the Boyne for a magical creature called the Salmon of Knowledge, which gives prophetic and poetic genius to him who eats it. The Salmon once caught, the pupil is ordered to prepare it for the table; but in cooking it he burns his hand, puts the finger to his mouth, and receives the gift his master intended for himself. At once he knows the past and future and understands the speech of animals. His master sees that Fion is destined to greatness. Taking far distant ideas from Finno-Ugrian sources, Oannes of the Chaldeans, the adventures of Wainamöinen the Finnic god with various magic fish, and still others, we can form at least some idea of the meaning of this, one of the most mysterious passages in Irish legend. The trail goes back to some primeval god of the Turanians who united the attributes of Apollo, science and prophecy, with the habitat of Poseidon.

In this way Fion gained a "magic thumb." When the Fianna are disturbed by portents or do not recognize a giant or goblin coming towards them, they ask their leader Fion to put his thumb in his mouth and prophesy. Later bards represent him chewing his thumb to the blood, to the bone, and finally to the marrow in the fury of his prophetic trance. We know the old English phrase used by hectoring

fellows, "Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?" It suggests that biting the thumb at a man was at one time a piece of dumb show, meaning clearer than print that the victim of that gesture was held by the man who made it no better than a foul, sinful Druid. It explains, perhaps —

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes —

an idea found in Rune 26 of the Kalewala:

Comes the hour of the departing
Of the hero Lemminkäinen,
Right hand ready, left unwilling,
All his anxious fingers pain him,
Till at last in full obedience
All his members give permission.

Fion is a race-hero of the subdued but not obliterated Ugrians of Ireland. We may well imagine that the Fianna, of whom he was captain, represent a militia formed by some ancient statesman from this nomadic hunter-stock to keep turbulent tribes at peace and the sea-robbers off the shores of Erin. Growing too strong and arrogant to suit a powerful ruler, the Fenians were destroyed like the Mamelukes in Egypt. Fion's harper and jester is a dwarf of the fairy stock. In the Kalewala a curious effect is produced by the sudden appearance of some pigmy to do tremendous labors, or to stop the path of a hero. Or again it is an infant, not a pigmy, who suddenly speaks up and rebukes or rails or scoffs at a powerful wizard. The name of Cumhal, Fion's father, means "bondage" in Gaelic, and may refer to the enslaved condition of his stock. An uncle has survived the slaughter of that father and of the clan. When Fion discovers him in the extreme west, whither the Firbolgs retired when defeated, he is very old, "and some of the old Fianna along with him who were wont to chase for him." This raises Fianna from the name of the militia to the wider meaning of the tribe or nation from which they were recruited.

In many regards the Gaelic stories, treasuring, as they do, ideas of a vanished race which peopled Europe in remote epochs, contain customs far more archaic than anything in the Kalewala. A bath is prepared for Cuchulinn by heating pieces of metal red hot and casting them into water. This has gone out in all but a few parts of the world. He and his men are called "the distorted ones," owing to their frantic behavior when filled with battle rage. He becomes deformed as if he were a goblin. This allies him with the Fomorians and other non-Keltic monsters and giants; it also recalls the grimaces, contortions, and accouterments of savages whereby they hope to terrify the foe. As the war-witches of Irish legend are far more primitive than the Valkyrs of the



A DESCENDANT OF THE FAIRY STOCK.

Norse, so the frenzied fighters of Ireland are more archaic than the Berserkers of Norway. As a rule in Irish poems the magic-making and slaughter are divided between Druids and heroes, while in the Kalewala both occur in the same person; yet occasionally Wainamoinen, Lemminkainen, and Ilmarinen cease their magic, lay aside their harps, and drawing sword whip off somebody's head. An Irish Druid such as Cathbad, however, is like Wainamoinen in his mastery of swordsmanship as well as witchcraft; he goes on "Fenian" expeditions about Ulster, and is a very bloody and disagreeable person to meet. The heroes who fight for or against Queen Meave, who has been assigned to the earlier cycle, rely more on magic than do those of the Fion cycle. One of Fion's sisters is Fairy, famous for supernatural speed; another is Goat, married to Hound of the World. His aunt is turned by a wizard into a dog, and his wife is transformed into a doe by a Druid whose love she rejects, whereupon she gives birth to the hero Oisín, "little fawn." In Irish ballads, as in the Kalewala, we have the enchanted house into which the hero penetrates. In Finland he confounds the wizards there assembled; in Ireland he is generally enchanted until released by the sword of a comrade. It must always be remembered that these resemblances do not suggest the in-

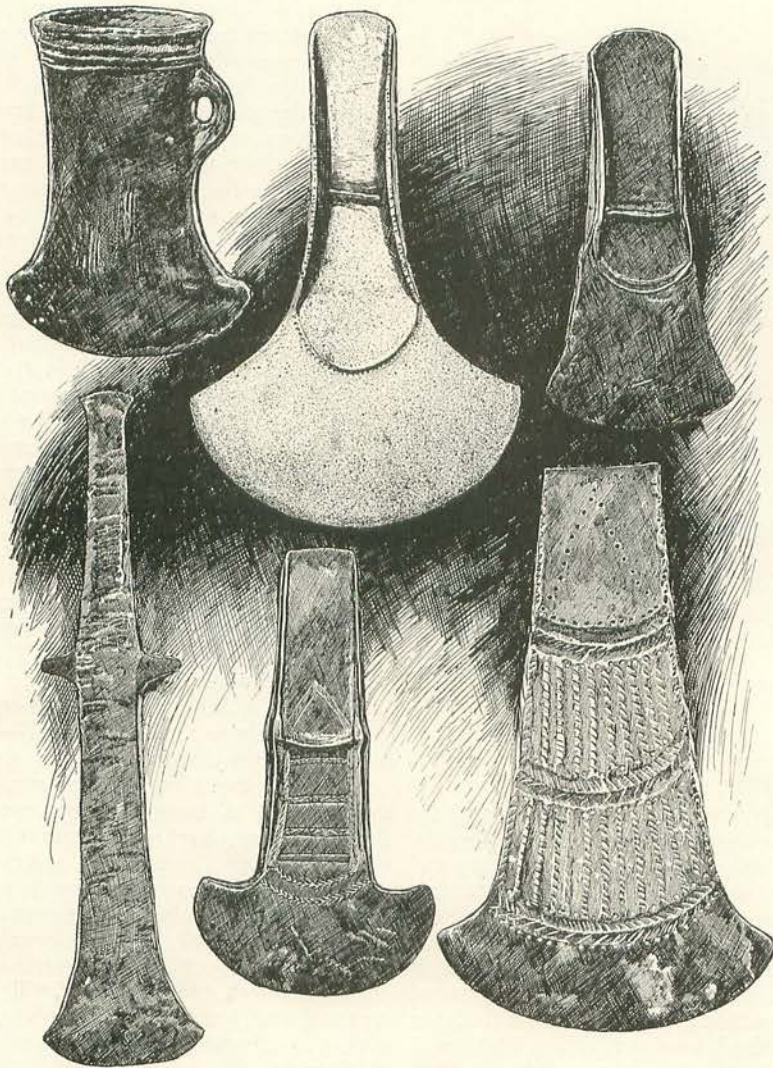
fluence of Finland on Ireland or the reverse; they are rudimental, as we may expect in long-separated branches of the same race which in one case, certainly, has suffered overwhelming mixture with an Aryan stock. Irish legends are profoundly influenced by the overbearing and bloodthirsty Aryan. These characteristics are as strong in the Kelt as they are weak in the Finn.

Cuchulinn represents a Finno-Ugrian demigod who has been so completely absorbed by the Gael that the name has been altered to a Gaelic meaning, then a story fabricated to account for it. Doubtless we get it nearer the original in Cichol, the Fomorian king, round whose name the Gaels placed attributes of gods mixed with memories of past race conflicts. A diminutive of affection, owing to his great popularity in song, made him Cicholín. As the Gaels did not know what that meant, they invented the story of the boy Setanta, who destroys the watch-dog (*cu*) of his host (*Culann*) and promises thenceforth to be his guardian in the place of the dog. Hence his name arose as Cuchulinn, dog of Culann. The etymology was popular because of the great respect the Gaels had for the dog, the defender of sheep against the wolf—a respect shown in the number of tribes and heroes who have the dog's term, *cu*, *cyn*, or *con*, in their names. A more striking veneration of the dog among Aryans is found in the Avesta of the primitive Parsees, also of Aryan races.

Druidism appears to have made a profound impression on the Irish and Britons. We learn how a poet in the Christian age sought Druidic powers. While performing the rite he recited the incantation, *Imbas Forosnai*, "Illumination by the Palms," or the *Teinm Laegha*, "Illumination of Rhymes," which were forbidden by St. Patrick.

This is the way it is to be done: the poet chews a piece of the flesh of a red pig, or of a dog or cat, and he brings it afterwards on a flag behind the door and chants an incantation upon it and offers it to idol gods; and his idol gods are brought to him, but he finds them not on the morrow. And he pronounces incantations on his two palms; and his idol gods are also brought to him in order that his sleep may not be interrupted; and he lays his two palms on his two cheeks, and thus falls asleep; and he is watched that no one may disturb or interrupt him, until everything about which he is engaged is revealed to him, which may be a minute, or two, or three, or as long as the ceremony requires.

Lessons by Christians and their denunciations will not account for the abhorrence for Druidism which has cut its way into the language of the Gaels, and even into English, if we



BATTLE-AXES OF THE OLD HEROES OF LEGEND.

imagine that the Druids were as Lucan and Cæsar described them. Druidism must have been greatly modified for the better in Gaul when Cæsar arrived, but at the same epoch it might easily retain its worst features in an island apart. Lucan drew his knowledge of Druids from Spain, and his picture of them is consequently more savage and uncivilized. And it was the Spaniards who in after-centuries burned heretics by the thousand. In moral vileness as well as fiendish cruelty seems the origin of such words. With time all Druids became more philosophers, less necromancers; but the bad odor of their deeds hung round the name. Those of Gaul disappear from history suddenly because they were on the wane. Pliny tells us that the Druids made much of the serpent. He was the lucky one

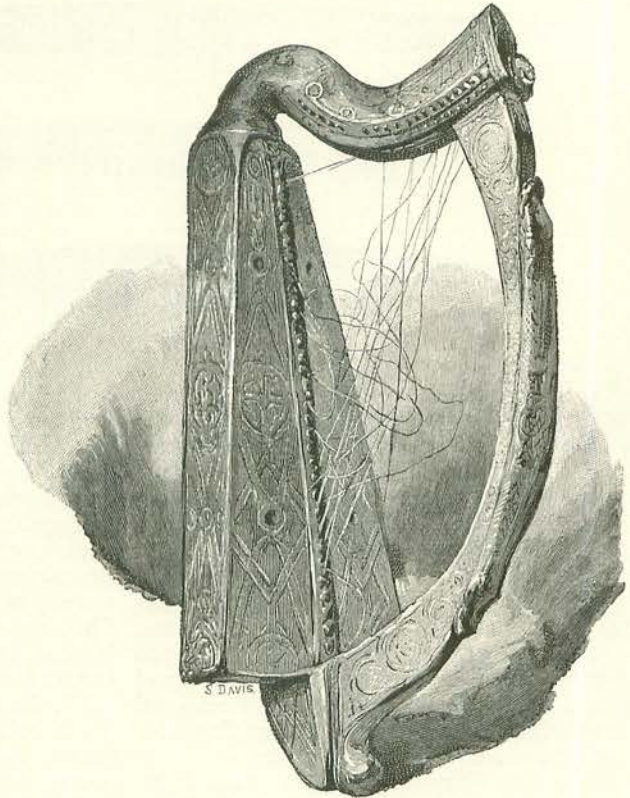
who found a mass of adders bringing forth the Mystic Egg, which must be caught in his cloak as it rose up from their coils. He must then spring on his horse and race for his life to the nearest stream, like Tam o' Shanter, to escape the goblin snakes. If overtaken, he was enveloped and bitten to death. Pliny saw such an egg "about the size of a large round apple; it has a cartilaginous rind studded with cavities like those on the arms of a polypus." Apparently it was an oak-apple of unusual size. That excrescence was a mysterious one to the ancients, and we know that other things, like mistletoe, when found on the oak were sacred. The Druids taught in forests and used the awe of mighty trees to enhance reverence for their lessons and rights. The religion is one that belongs to a hunter race living in wood-

lands, and has many points foreign to the Keltic character. But Druidism, especially on its necromantic side, fits well to the strange scenes of the Finnic epic and some of the oldest lays of Ireland. The magician who throws a mist round the strong fighter, makes the champions of Ulster as weak as women, brings on a hero the pains of childbirth, or enchants the weapons of his enemy, and the satirist who compels men, in dread of his occult power, to deliver up to him their wives and choicest possessions — these are persons who have little but a name in common with the respectable and comparatively stately Druids of Gaul in Cæsar's time.

To bring back to life the pagan past of Ireland, and with it that of Britain, philology is not without its use. The Greek word for the oak, *drus*, with its captivating derivative, Dryads, the nymphs of the oak tree, is no longer accepted as the origin of Druid. But a satisfactory explanation has not, so far as I know, been offered. Bearing in mind the Finno-Ugrian and Irish tendency to slur out a harsh consonant between vowels, we may readily suspect between the two syllables of Gaelic *Dráoi* a rough breathing which took the place of an earlier guttural. The plural is *Dráoithe*. Inserting the guttural, *Dráoit* would give a word whose first syllable, "drag," contains the meaning "fire" and "anger." *Droch*, chariot-wheel, sun-wheel, and *troghain*, sunrise, are other helps, connecting the word with the celestial bodies worshiped by the Finno-Ugrians and pagan Gaels. *Dragart*, a flint or firestone, *Dragaigean*, a fire shovel, are other Gaelic words in point.

The sentiment inspired by the Druids was that of fear, horror, wrath. They were the executioners in pagan Europe and burned in osier frames those who were accused of crimes against the state. Hence "burning in effigy" remains the popular form of threat against political offenders. They superintended the burning of the firstborn of men and cattle to propitiate the sun, moon, and elemental influences. In modern times the hangman is the only person who enjoys or suffers the same distinction of abhorrence from the people, and it is well known how much magic is attributed by the ignorant to the hangman. Owing to this feeling towards the Druid, languages are full of words referring to him which have been misunderstood because they

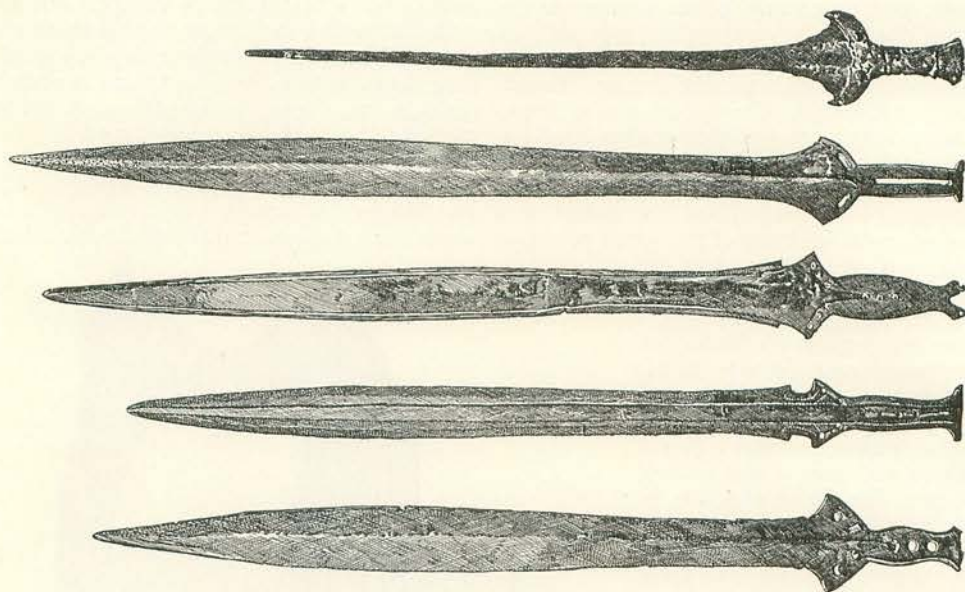
retain that guttural which dropped out of "Druid" before the Latins fixed it as we see it now. Whence came into Welsh *droog*, wickedness; into German *Trug*, deception; in French dialects *truc*, fraud; in English trick, truck, truckle. But there are others presenting the fire-meaning only, such as drought, dry, drug (herbs that are dried), dree or dry (wizard), and others. So that we have not far to seek as to the meanings underlying *Dráoi*. Here



OLD HARP, THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF THE NON-KELTIC ELEMENT.

is the root of dragon, Greek *drakon*, the fiery monster with the terrific side of sun-worship uppermost. A root like *drag* will always be found as *darg*. In Sanskrit *tárkshya* is a dragon representing the sun-wheel, and *tarka* adds another element of Druidism, being a philosophical system. Thus in many directions are words that throw light on the hated priesthood as fire-worshippers, philosophers, and tyrants, justifying the tradition that they were the Magi of the West. Men of the classic epoch and the Middle Ages sought ever a direct transfer from east to west to explain such resemblances, but the analogies sprung from roots far back in the past, namely, the religious ideas of the same widely separated stock.

The pagan past of this singular bit of Europe may be divided tentatively into four epochs:



BRONZE SWORDS WHICH THE PEASANTS ATTRIBUTE TO FAIRY WARRIORS.

I. The primeval, represented by an aboriginal race of cave-dwellers completely in the stone age, cannibals who used paint in place of clothes, and moon-worshippers.

II. The Ugrian, in which an unsubstantial form of architecture existed along with subterranean dwellings, grave mounds, cromlechs, stone circles, crannogs, and lake dwellings, and remains like Stonehenge in Britain, pointing to star and sun worship. Shamanism and a very crude Druidic type of religion obtained among people mainly hunters, fishers, and pirates. Slavery, polygamy, and occasional cannibalism existed along with burning as a punishment for offenses to the tribe.

III. The Firbolg-Danann, in which Ugrians from the mainland, much mixed with Kelts, reached the island by north and south Britain, bringing a higher type of Druidism and belief in the immortality of the soul. A wood and wattle architecture suited to a partly pastoral, partly agricultural, people, and the raths, lioses, duns, and "Danes' forts" of earth, thickly scattered over Ireland, may be assigned to them.

Architecture for palaces and temples lacks the arch and is similar to remains in Yucatan. Remains in Ireland are the "bee-hive" huts of the Aran islands, the type surviving under Christianity in the Church of Glendalough, oddly enough in connection with the round tower, which is also a pagan survival among Christian architects.

These art and song loving mixed tribes brought horses and war-chariots, beautiful objects in gold and silver, bronze weapons and

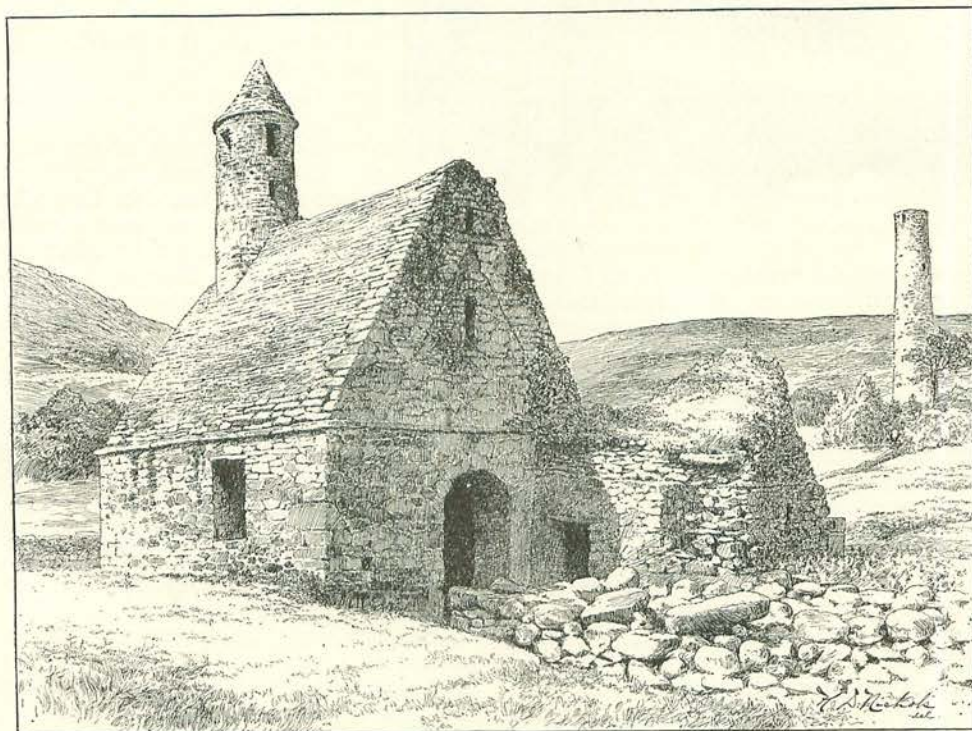
tools of exquisite workmanship, such as are figured herewith. The Bolg-men were those who left on the Continent the name of Belgium to their former seats in the rich country to the south of the Rhine. The men of the goddess Danann, pushed out by Keltic swarms of purer stock, or it may be by the Teutonic advance-guard, left the name Denmark to the country near the Baltic over against Britain. They had slavery, polygamy, burning as punishment, and burning as voluntary or forced honors to the gods.

IV. Lastly we reach the epoch of Miledh (Latin *miles*, soldier), when the purest Keltic swarm, pushed without doubt by Roman conquests, crossed from south France and northern Spain into Munster, and with superior brains and weapons succeeded for a time in subjugating the kindred but mixed tribes already amalgamated into the Irish folk. They formed a governing caste, and were in all probability at once in antagonism with the Druidic profession, whose grossness and tyranny could not please them. Iron as well as bronze was now in use, but bronze is more plentiful in the finds because it rusts less. Laws were made and intrusted to a special class, the newcomers being influenced by the example of the Romans before whom they fled. Probably they used some stone in their forts and houses, but the true arch and stone architecture of an elaborate sort were not general in Ireland till the Normans. The Milesians were more warlike than art-loving; probably the Firbolg-Dananns surpassed them in almost all branches of art. But they brought letters to Ireland, such as

they were, though writing did not thrive under the adverse teachings of the Druids, who objected to it as weakening to the memory and allowing laymen to pry into their mysteries and loosen their hold on the ignorant. It was this caste, hating Druids and ready for a better law, that governed Ireland after a fashion when Christianity arrived.

The aristocracy was largely in favor of Christianity, which might curb the Druids and make subjects more content with their lot. Nevertheless people might be baptized in shoals and driven to chapel, but not lose consciousness of paganism. Few peasants like to put a spade into a so-called "Dane's fort" for fear of the wrath of the "good people" who dance there of moonlight nights. The fort, like the tradition, existed long before the eighth-century Danes appeared. On the 24th of June

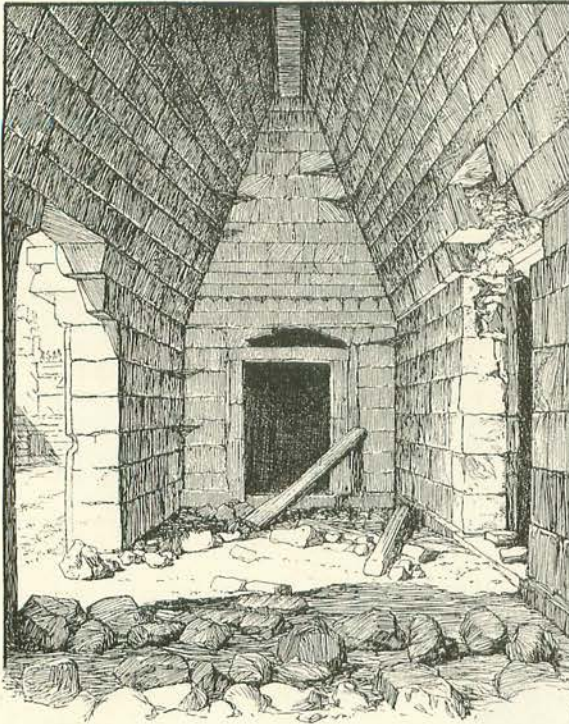
round young mothers to scare the fiends of darkness with the symbol of the sun. In Ireland it is bad luck to meet a hare; it is a demon that loves to sport in moonlight, is able by day to vanish into its form and start up like magic from the plowed field where no one saw it. It is bad luck to meet a red-haired woman. Why? Badb the war-witch used to meet heroes in the guise of a red-haired woman. Red of head was the unscrupulous Queen Macha, who beat in war certain princes, drove them into exile, followed and cajoled them with the charms of her person, and brought them back to toil at her fortress on the hill of Navan near Armagh. Popular prejudice against red hair points to a hated race that showed more than the usual number of red-haired men and women. The fishermen of the Claddagh, a suburb of Galway, led by a priest who has



CHURCH OF GLENDALOUGH, RETAINING PRIMITIVE TURANIAN ARCH IN ROOF AND KELTIC ROUND-HOUSE IN TOWER.

thousands of fires blaze from the hills in honor of—St. John! They descend from the pagan festival of the summer solstice. Burning brands are seized by the fleetest boys and carried to arable fields; if the embers are alive when the field is reached, a good crop is assured. The Shetland fisherman thinks he will have bad luck if he cannot turn his boat *with* the sun. To make a vow he marches round a well in the same direction. In the Hebrides fire is carried in the right hand round homesteads and

taken the place of a Druid, repeat yearly a ceremony at sea intended to bring success to the fisheries. The mayor of Limerick takes possession of the Shannon's mouth by throwing a spear into the sea. Hundreds of "holy wells" show by the rags or round pebbles thrown about or into them that nature worship is not dead; these propitiate nymphs, nixies, and gods of healing. Old querns in which grain was broken by hand, as well as spangles of gold for personal decoration, bear a cross on them.



INTERIOR OF ANCIENT YUCATAN PALACE, SHOWING PRIMITIVE ARCH IN CEILING LIKE TURANIAN OF EUROPE.

The woodcut shows such a gold leaf. Claimed as Christian, they are really pagan, and symbolize the fertile sun, like the Sampo or wonder-mill of the Finns. A weird quern is that which the heroes of Kaleva rescued from the cavern where the foul hostess of Pohjola locked it. Its broken fragments were enough to bring back light, fertility, and wealth to Kaleva-land. In Ireland sun-worship lurks traditionally round the "hag's beds," Druid altars, or "beds of Grainné," which are also called cromlechs. Grainné was a maiden who had *grian*, the sun, in her name. During her elopement from Fion, son of Cumhal, she slept at the places marked by cromlechs with her lover Diarmuid, the Irish Adonis, who had a beauty-spot which deprived women of their reason. Mr. Wake-man reports that in Fermanagh a peasant who is about to be evicted has been known to meet his persecutor with a fire of stones. He fills his hearth with stones, as if they were peats, and kneeling down prays that evil luck attend his landlord and family forever. Then he scatters the stones far and wide in fields and streams lest they be collected and a counter-course be uttered over them. In the island Innismurray is an ancient stone fort with three "beds," or Cyclopean dwellings. On the largest are certain round stones. The person who wishes to curse an enemy makes the circuit of the bed nine times, reciting the

prayers of the Catholic Church used at the "stations" about a cathedral. He then turns the stones:

They loosed their curse against the king,
They cursed him in his flesh and bones,
And daily in their mystic ring
They turned the maledictive stones.¹

If guilty, the enemy will die or go mad. Here again Christianity of no uncertain kind has been ineffectual to remove the paganism rooted in the people.

Thus we can learn more of the religion of our pagan ancestors from the Irish records than from any other source; for a conservatism which is a trait of the Irish as a whole—shall we say a trait derived from the Finno-Ugrian substratum?—caused them to treasure the echoes of heathenism in histories, annals, ballads, customs, and traditions handed down from generation to generation among the illiterate. The old gods have been degraded into ghosts or demons, or else humanized and connected with heroes and heroines like Cuchulinn, Queen Mab, Fion mac Cumhal, Grainné the beautiful, and Diarmuid

the irresistible; or again baptized into saints and put in the calendar. Some are retired into mounds and Dane's forts; and others have gone to Tir na n'òg, the elysium beyond the setting sun, the Indian's happy hunting-ground.

Putting minor divisions aside, and keeping in mind the two grand divisions among the old Irish, namely, the imaginative, persistent, stolid, revengeful, superstitious Ugrian, and the quick-tempered but kind-hearted, generous, unsteady, quick-tongued, pleasure-loving Kelt, we can understand perhaps better than before the reason for anomalies in the national character. We may perceive in the individual Irishman, it may be, the contest still going on between Aryan and Ugrian, between Iran and Turan. Have we not here a clue to contradictions in Irish natures, their fiery threats and actual peaceableness, their turbulence and relative freedom from crime, their reputation for ferocity among those who do not know them, and the charm they exercise through kindness and hospitality when treated with regard? It is not fanciful to trace here the singular mixture of sharpness and stupidity in the peasant, nor will it be found on reflection hazardous to assert that the Irish owe to the sturdy, plodding Ugrian element their ability to support suffering and their dogged love for the soil—traits hitherto given to the Kelt, al-

¹ "Lays of the Western Gael," by S. Ferguson.

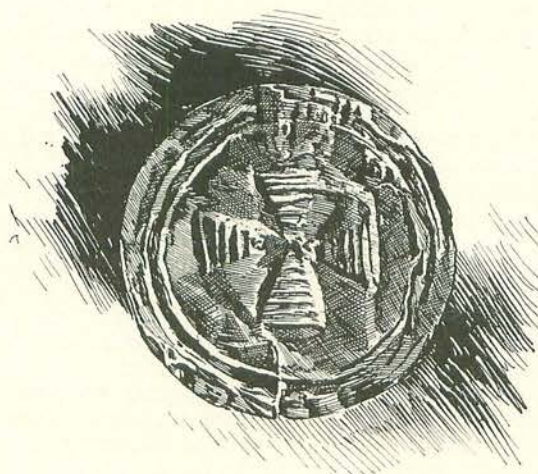


CROMLECH NEAR SLIGO, WEST COAST—THE HAUNTED MOUNT BULBIN IN THE DISTANCE.

though history is full of examples of the Keltic passion for roving about the world. It is an element that gives the counterpoise to the hot-headedness natural to those in whom Keltic blood is strong; it explains the caution of many Scots and Irishmen, for both are apt to talk with violence but to act with great circumspection. It may also supply the sad poetical side of the Irish. It accounts best of all for their essential law-abiding character when humanely treated, their freedom from crimes other than agrarian, to which the latest trials in London bear testimony. It may offer an explanation for the petty though vindictive nature of misdemeanors like moonlighting, houghing cattle, and destroying crops—traits which seem foreign to the Keltic genius. Moreover it affords

a reason for the virulence of class hatred in Ireland and for anomalies like the siding of the Roman Catholic upper classes with the enemies of the nation, though the enemies are all that is most bigoted in contempt of their old faith. But it must also be obvious to those who have followed me through these two papers full of strange-looking names and, it is to be feared, wearisome arguments, that the key to the Irish nation fits more or less well the lock of many other peoples. The ancestors of every one of us have fought, conquered, and suffered in that endless quarrel between Aryan and Turanian which took place all over Europe and a large part of Asia, and which still goes on in the breast of every American who is descended from that primeval mixture of races.

Charles de Kay.



HAMMERED GOLD SPANGLE WITH PAGAN SUN-CROSS.