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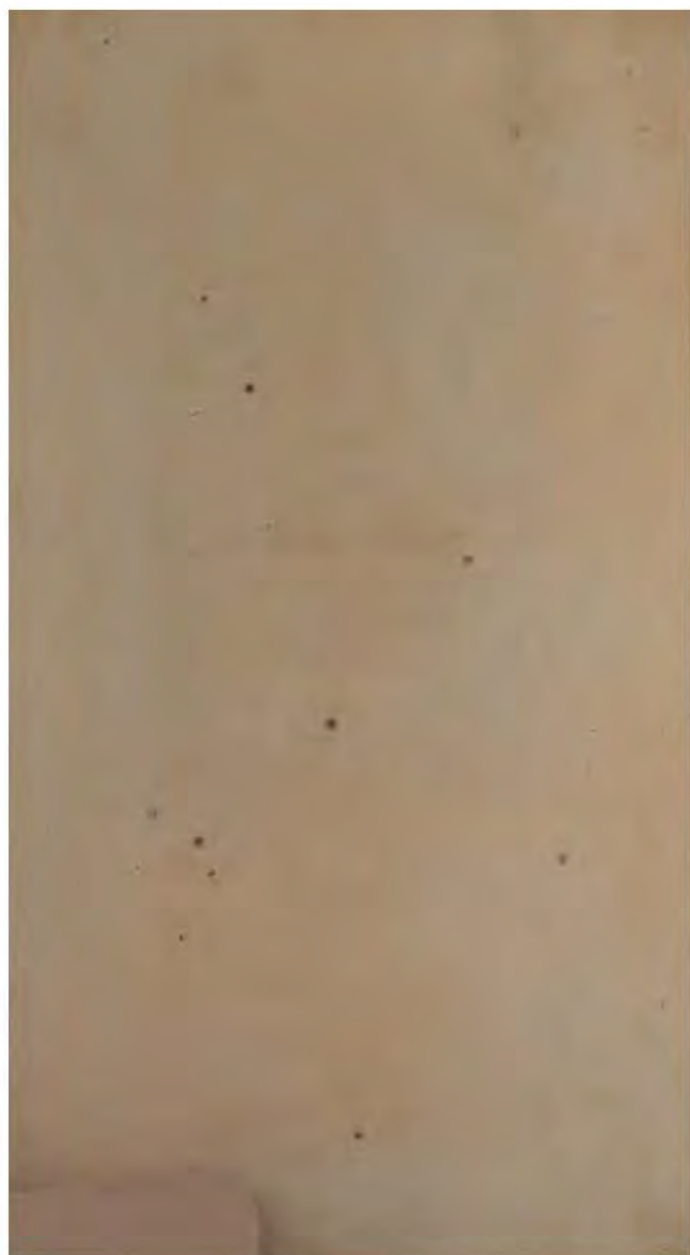


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THE
HISTORY
OF IRELAND.



ANALYTICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL

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THE HISTORY OF IRELAND.

CHAPTER XV.

Invasion of Ireland by the Danes.—Supposed Intercourse with the Northern Nations at an early Period.—The Black Strangers and the White Strangers.—Reign of King Niell of the Showers.—Battle of Almhain.—State of Ireland at this Period.—Weakness of the Monarchy.—Increasing Strength of the Throne of Munster.—Causes of Both.—Reign of the Monarch Aidus.—Devastations of the Danes.—Political Connection of the Irish Kings with Charlemagne.—Inroads of the Monarch into Leinster.

ACCORDING to the most trustworthy of English records,* it was in the year 787 that those formidable pirates of the north of Europe, known by the general name of Danes, made, for the first time, their appearance upon the coasts of Britain.† This expedition, which consisted but of three ships, had been, most probably, sent to ascertain the localities and resources of these regions, and to see how far they held forth temptations to the invader and the spoiler. It would appear that the report made by this party, on their return, was of no very encouraging nature, as nearly eight years elapsed before another experiment of the same kind was tried; and the attempts upon the English and the Irish coasts took place nearly about the same time;—the small island of Rechrán, at

* Chron. Sax.

† Usher, *Ind. Chron.* Some foreign historians date the first of this series of northern invasions so early as the year 700. "Pontanus et Torvus," says Langebek, "nimia vetustatem in illis inausu dominium ab anno 60 circiter tribuerunt."—*De Servitiis quæ Reguli Maniæ, &c.*

present Raghlin,* having been, in the year 795, laid waste by the Danes.†

At what period these nations of the north became for the first time acquainted with Ireland has been a subject of much doubt and controversy among our historians. While, according to some, the calamitous epoch we are now approaching witnessed the first descent of northern adventurers upon these shores, there are others who maintain that traces of habitual intercourse between the people of Ireland and the Lochlans, or Danes, may be discovered in the Irish annals, as far back as the first century of our era. There is, indeed, no doubt that the appellation Lochlan, or Dwellers on Lakes, by which the Irish from about the beginning of the ninth century, are known to have designated their Danish invaders, was employed also in their earlier annals to denote some northern nation with which they were at that time in habits of intercourse and commerce. But whether these earlier Lochlanders were of the same race or region with those who afterwards poured from the great Scandinavian reservoir, there appears to be no means of ascertaining.

In proof of the Danes having been the people with whom this early intercourse was maintained, the authority of a number of northern historians has been adduced, according to whose accounts it would seem that, from a period preceding the birth of Christ, a suc-

* Seward, *Topog. Hibern.* According to the Rev. Mr. Hamilton, however, who has given an account of this island (*Letters concerning the Coast of Antrim*), it is at present called Raghery; meaning, as he rather fancifully conjectures, Ragh-Erin, or the Fort of Erin. To this secluded spot Robert Bruce fled for refuge when driven to extremities by the English king; and the remains of a fortress which tradition has connected with his name are still visible on the northern angle of the island.

† The annals of Ulster refer to A. D. 747, the date of this attack upon Rechrain, by the Danes, and record as the first achievement of these marauders, the drowning of the abbot of Rechran's pigs.—“Badudh Arascaich abt. Muiccinnæ re guil.”

† The Welsh chronicler, Caradoc of Lancarvan (whom Usher, in this instance, inconsiderately follows), states the greater part of Ireland to have been devastated in the same year, 795: “Maximam Hiberniæ partem populati Rechreyn quoque vastaverant.” The Danes, however, did not penetrate into the interior of the country until several years later.

session of invasions of this island from Denmark had been commenced;* and that, for some centuries after, a course of alternate hostility and friendship marked the relations between the two countries. Imposing, however, as is the array of northern authorities for this statement, the entire value of their united evidence may be reduced to that of the single testimony of Saxo Grammaticus, from whose pages they have all copied; and it is well known that, for all the earlier portion of his eloquent writer's history, the foundation is as unsound and unreal as Scaldic fable and fallacious chronology could make it. The only circumstance that lends any semblance of credit to the accounts given by northern historians of the early fortunes of Ireland, is the known fact, that the chief materials of their own history were derived from records preserved in Iceland; to which island, inaccessible as it might seem to have been to the rude navigation of those days,† it is certain that a number of Irish missionaries of the seventh and eighth centuries contrived to find their way. We learn, from more than one authentic source, that, when the Norwegians first arrived in Iceland, they found there traces of its having been previously inhabited by a Christian people; and the Irish books, bells, and holy staves, left behind by the former dwellers, sufficiently denoted the religious island from whence they had migrated.‡

* The Scandinavians were very early practised in navigation; insomuch that the Sueones who occupied anciently the present Sweden and the Danish isles are said by Tacitus to have dwelt in the ocean,—"ipso in oceano."—*German.* c. 44. See also Pliny, lib. iv. 30.

† It is said that these northern navigators carried ravens with them in their expeditions, for the purpose of discovering distant land by the direction of the flight of these birds. See Barrow's *Voyages into the Polar Regions*.

‡ Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, c. ii. By Forster it is supposed that these articles may have been left at Iceland by some of the Norman pirates, who, after plundering Ireland, may have directed their course to the westward with their booty. (*Northern Voyages*.) The following is the account given of this interesting circumstance in the *Antiquitat. Scando-Celt.*—"Before Iceland was inhabited by the Norwegians, there were men there whom the Norwegians call *Papas*, and who professed the Christian religion, and are thought to have come by sea from the West; for there were

The title of Papas, which it appears was borne by them, has led to the conclusion that they must have been Irish priests who had adventurously fixed themselves in this desolate region; and, under the same name, they were found in the Orkneys when the Norwegians conquered those islands.

Unless we were to suppose, however, that among the books left by these missionaries in Iceland, there were any relating to Irish history of which the chroniclers consulted by Saxo might have availed themselves, the incident, though curious and well attested, affords but slight grounds for placing reliance on these early northern annals, whose sources of information are known to have been spurious, and to whose general character for extravagant fictions, the few brief notices which they contain respecting Irish affairs can hardly be expected to furnish an exception. Nor is any more serious credit due to them, when they represent Dublin to have been in possession of the Danes a short time before the birth of Christ,* than when they assert that London was built by these northern people about the very same period.

Fabulous, however, as are these accounts, yet that, long before either the Danish or even the Saxon invasions, the coasts of the Baltic had sent forth colonies to some of the British Isles, is a fact to which foreign as well as domestic tradition bears testimony. The conjecture of Tacitus, that the people called Picts were a Germanic, or northern race, is confirmed by the traditional accounts of this people, preserved in the chronicles of Britain; and all the early Scandinavian legends concur with the annals of Ireland in intimating, at some remote

left by them Irish books, bells, and crooked staves, and several other things were found which seemed to indicate that they were west-men."

* The Danish king, Frotho, who, according to their accounts, seized upon Dublin, at this remote period, found so much wealth, as they tell us, in the royal treasury of that city, that no regular partition of the booty was made, but every soldier was allowed to carry away as much as he pleased.

—Pet. Olai, *Chronica Reg. Dan.*

period, relations of intercourse between the two countries. We have seen, in a preceding part of this work, what almost certain grounds there are for believing that those Scythians, or Scots, who, at the time when Ireland first became known to modern Europe, formed the dominant part of her people, were a colony from some region bordering on the Baltic Sea which had, a few centuries before gained possession of this island. From whatever part these Scythian adventurers may have arrived, whether from the Cimbric peninsula, the islands of the Baltic, or the Scandinavian shores, it may be concluded that with that region the occasional intercourse was afterwards maintained, and those alliances and royal intermarriages formed of which, in our ancient traditions and records, some scattered remembrances still remains.*

With respect to those swarms of sea-rovers who, throughout the dark and troubled period we are now approaching, carried on their long career of havoc and blood, though known most popularly in English history by the general name of Danes, they are but rarely, and not till a late period, thus designated in our annals. By Tigernach, the earliest existing annalist, they are invariably called Gall, or Strangers; while, in the Annals of Inisfallen, of Ulster, and of the Four Masters, they are styled indifferently either Galls, Gentiles, Dwellers on the Lakes, or Pirates; but, in not more than two or three instances, are they called Normans,† and as seldom Danes.

In the present kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark, including, as the latter does, Norway, was comprised the vast extent of territory which, in those days, poured forth almost its whole population over the waters, and made all the coasts of Europe tributary to its unnumbered Sea Kings. Though confounded therefore, ordinarily

* See Vol. I. p. 98. of this Work.

† In one instance (*IV. Mag. ad. an. 797.*) we find the term "Norman" inserted by a more recent hand.

under the general name of Northmen, these daring adventurers, among whom piracy was, as among the Greeks of the Homeric age, accounted an honourable calling, were, it is clear, a miscellaneous aggregate of Norwegians, Danes, Swedes, Livonians, Saxons, and Frisians,* whose expeditions, independent respectively of each other, and having no common object but plunder and devastation, kept all the maritime districts of the west of Europe in a state of constant dismay. The only distinction employed by the Irish to denote any difference between the several tribes that invaded them, was that of Black Strangers and White Strangers; and under these distinctive appellations we find two great bodies of these foreigners designated, who, about the year 850, contested fiercely with each other the possession of Dublin and its adjoining territories. It may be remarked as at least a curious coincidence in favour of the opinion of those who regard the Picts, or Caledonians, as of a congenerous race with these later invaders,† that the very same distinction was applied to that people by the Romans of the fourth century; who, as we learn from Ammianus, divided them into *Ducalidones* and *Vecturiones*, signifying the Black Picts and the White Picts.

Between the political institutions of Britain and Ireland, there existed, at the time when the northern invasions we are about to notice took place, a very strong similitude; rendering them both, perhaps, in an equal degree, incapable of presenting that firm front to an invader which, in countries less parcelled out into dynasties,‡ and therefore more compact in will and power,

* "La vaste étendue de la Scandinavie étant partagée alors entre plusieurs peuples peu connus, et seulement désignés par des noms généraux, comme ceux de Goths et de Normans, par exemple, on ne pouvoit savoir exactement de quelle contrée chaque troupe étoit originaire."—Mallet, *Introduc.*

† See Vol. I. of this Work, pp. 102, 103.

‡ During the Heptarchy Britain contained about fifteen kingdoms, Saxon, British, and Scotch; and the kingdom of Kent, the smallest of them all, could at one time boast no less than three kings.

would have been most probably displayed. In the one single kingdom of Northumbria, we find represented, upon a smaller scale, almost a counterpart of those scenes of discord and misrule which form the main action of Irish history in those times; the same rapid succession and violent deaths of most of the reigning chieftains, and the same recklessness of the public weal which in general marked their whole career.

The two predominant pursuits of the Irish in those days—war and religion—are most strikingly exemplified in the different fates of the successive monarchs, whose uninteresting existence is drily recorded throughout this period. For while most of them, as one of their own historians expresses it, died with swords in their hands, there were also many who, exchanging the camp for the cloister, devoted the close of their days to penitence and seclusion; and the monarch Niell of the Showers,* who died in pilgrimage at Iona, was deposited, with three others of his royal countrymen, in the Tombs of the Kings in that island. †

During the century that elapsed previously to this period, notwithstanding the advancement of a great portion of the people in all the knowledge of those times, the character of the civil transactions of the country still continued to be at the same low and barbarous level; and the few efforts made from time to time to get rid of some of the numerous sources of strife,—as in the instance of the odious Boarian tribute, which the monarch Finactha, as we have seen, remitted “for himself and his successors for ever,” ‡ were rendered unavailing

* *Niell Trassach*.—“He was so surnamed, because, as some authors say, in his reign (but more authentic authors say the night he was born), three Showers, viz. a Shower of Honey, a Shower of Silver (we have some of the same yet in the kingdom, called the twelve-grain penny), and a Shower of Blood, happened in Ireland; and the names of the certain places wherein they fell are mentioned in the *Antiquity Books*.”—Mc. Curtin, *a Brief Discourse in Vindication of the Antiquity of Ireland*.

† “The tomb on the southe syde foresaid has this inscription, *Tumulus Regum Hybernice*, that is, The tomb of the Irland kinges; for we have in our auld Erische cronickells, ther wer foure Irland Kinges eirdit in the said tombe.”—Monro’s *Western Isles*.

‡ A. D. 693. See Vol. I. of this Work, p. 296.

either by the force of old habit, or by new demands of violence and rapacity. Not half a century had elapsed from the time of the renunciation of this tax, when the claim to it was again brought forward by the monarch A.D. 722. Fergall; who, at the head of an army of 21,000 men, invaded Leinster to enforce its payment.* The force assembled by the king of that province to repel this inroad amounted, we are told, to no more than 9000 men; but they were the flower of his kingdom, and were commanded on this occasion by about 100 champions of the highest military renown.

It was at Almhain, a spot memorable in the Finian songs and legends† for having been the residence of the Leinster hero, Fin-Mac-Cumhal, that the shock of the two hostile armies took place; and, notwithstanding the gallantry of the Lagenian troops, and the inspirations of the better cause for which they fought, their great inferiority in numbers would have rendered the issue but for a short time doubtful, had not an interposition, in which the hand of heaven was supposed to be visible, given an unexpected turn to the fortunes of the day. On the very first onset of the combatants there appeared a holy man, or hermit, among the ranks, who, regardless of the dangers that surrounded him, raised his voice in bold and awful denunciations of the impious wrong of which Fergall and his people were guilty, in violating the engagement entered into by his predecessor to abolish the Boarian tribute for ever. Seized with a panic at these denouncements, the royal army almost unresistingly gave way; the monarch himself, with his select body-guards, to the number of 160 knights, were among the slain; and, of the two armies, no less than 7000, among whom Tigernach‡ reckons 200 kings, were the number slaughtered on that day.

* IV. Mag. ad ann. 718. (*Æra Com. 722*)

† See Vol. I. c. vii. p. 136, 137, of this Work.

‡ Ad ann 722. For a similar prodigality of the regal title among the Carthaginians, see Larcher upon Herodotus. *Polymus*.

Of the system of polity established in Ireland, from the earliest periods of her history, some account has been given in a preceding part of this work.* But a few further remarks, suggested by the events to which we are hastening, will enable the reader to understand more clearly their precise character and course. The nature of the quintuple division of the island, in ancient times, has been variously and somewhat confusedly represented. It may be collected, however, to have been a sort of pentarchy, in which, in addition to the four great provinces of Leinster, Ulster, Munster, and Connaught, was included, as a fifth province, the district called Meath;† which, though belonging naturally to Leinster, was set apart, on account of its position in the centre of the kingdom, to form the seat of the monarchy. The limited extent of this portion, as compared with the four other principalities, was supposed to be compensated as well by its commanding position and superior fertility, as by the ample supplies and tributes which, in his capacity of supreme ruler, the king of Tara was entitled to receive from the subordinate princes. In the course of time, however, it was found expedient to extend the limits of the royal domain; and a tract of land taken from each of the other provinces was added to the original territory, forming altogether the country now called Meath and West Meath, with

* Vol. I. chsp. ix. p. 174.

† According to some authorities, among whom is Giraldus Cambrensis, the quintuple number of the provinces was made out by the division of Munster into two, North and South, which, together with the other three provinces, Ulster, Connaught, and Leinster, constituted, they say, the Pentarchy. Dr. O'Connor pronounces Meath to have been a sixth portion, adding, somewhat nationally, "Talis fuit Hibernorum Pentarchia."—*Prol.* 2. 59.

The omission of Meath by Giraldus, in his quintuple division of the kingdom, is thus strongly objected to by Lynch: "—Divisio regni a Giraldio instituta, cum ei Mediam inserere omisit manca est et mutila. . . . Media vero, cum extra provinciarum aliarum fines posita, et nullius in Hibernia Regis, nisi Monarchæ solius imperiis obnoxia sit, ut unum Pentarchiæ regnum à cæteris sejunctum per se constituat necesse est."—*Cambrens. Evers.*

the addition, probably, of a great portion of the present King's County.

The want of a controlling power and influence in the monarchy, as regarded its relations with the provincial governments, had been always an anomaly in the Irish scheme of polity productive of weakness, insubordination, and confusion; and this source of evil, at the time of the irruption of the Danes, had, by a number of concurrent circumstances, been increased. As some modification of the evils of an elective monarchy, measures had been taken, as we have seen, in the reigns of Hugony and Tuathal,* to confirm the right of succession to one royal family only. The frequent intrusion, however, of usurpers among the successors of these monarchs, shows how little even the strong feeling of the Irish in favour of the legitimate blood could avail against the blind zeal of popular factions, and the reckless ambition of the provincial chiefs. Far more successful, in his provisions for the descent of the monarchy, was the great O'Neill of the Nine Hostages; whose will, bequeathing his hereditary possessions to the descendants of his eight sons, was adhered to with such remarkable fidelity, that, for more than 500 years, with but one single exception, all the monarchs of Ireland were chosen from the Hy-Niell race. Through the very same causes, however, by which the power of this illustrious house was perpetuated, it was also weakened and divided. In providing for his innumerable royal descendants such means of aggrandisement,† both in the north and in the south, he was, as it were, launching so many brands of discord into future times;

* See Vol. I. of this work, chap. vii. pp. 117, 127.

† "His (Niell's) posterity, the Hy-Niells, or Nelideans, distinguished into South and North, were descended from his eight sons, four of whom remained in Meath, which, by a decree of king Tuathal, belonged always to the reigning monarch, until it was divided among the sons of king Niell. The other four went to Ulster."—*O'Flaherty's Ogygia*, part. iii. c. 85. In the same place, he gives an account of the different territories assigned respectively to the eight sons.

for, the four great families, or clans, into which, under the denominations of North Hy-Niells and South Hy-Niells, his posterity was subdivided, never ceased to disturb the kingdom by their conflicting pretensions, rendering the contests for the crown as stormy as its possession was insecure. And thus the discord and mutual enmity of the kindred clans who enjoyed a right to succession, were added to jealous and hostile feelings of those who were by law excluded from it.

Besides these fertile sources of weakness and division, the monarchy had also to cope with a rival power in the provincial kingdom of Munster; a power, the foundation of which had been laid in earlier ages, but which had now for a long time been growing formidable to the weakened throne of Tara,* and at last usurped upon it, to the utter overthrow of the old Tuathalian constitution.† The origin of this kingdom in Munster, which extended over the greater part of the south of Ireland, is to be sought in that ancient division of the island into two equal parts, northern, and southern, called Leath Con, or Con's Half, and Leath Mogh, or Mogh's Half.‡

* The first encroachment of the power of Munster on the rights of the monarchy was the act of Ollioll-Olim, an early king of that province, in forcing the princes and states of Leinster to pay to him, instead of to the monarch, the fine, or mulct, called the Tribute of *Eidiregeol*, which had been imposed upon them by the monarch, Conary More. In the Psalter of Casbell, as cited in those Munster annals from which Vallancey drew his materials, it is said of Luig Meann, a successor of Ollioll-Olim, that he was not only king of Leath Mogh, but was considered equal to the monarch of Ireland in power and influence over the natives.

† To such a height had the power of the kings of Munster attained, at the time when the *Leabhar na Cceart*, or Book of Rights, was drawn up (*Transact. of the Ibero-Celtic Society*, art. *St. Benin*), that, as appears from that curious document, they then assumed a right, which had been exercised originally only by the monarch, of subsidising and demanding tribute from the other pentarchs and provincial princes. Vallancey himself, who has traced historically the progress of the power of this province, yet seems unable to believe in its assumption of such rights: "which subsidies, however (he says), I do not suppose to have been given or received, as a mark of superiority in the king of Munster over the other pentarchs."—*Law of Tanistry illustrated*.

‡ "The bounds fixed between these two halves (says Vallancey) were from Athcliath na Mearuidhe, now called Clarin's Bridge, near Galway, to the ridge of mountains called Eigir-Riada, on which Cluainmacnoiss and Cluinirard are situated, and so on to Dublin"—*Law of Tanistry illustrated*.

The greater portion of the territory included in this latter moiety constituted the kingdom of Munster; and this kingdom was again subdivided into two principalities, North and South Munster, which, by the will of Ollill Ollum, an ancient king of the province, were bequeathed to the descendants of his two eldest sons, Eogan and Cormac Cas. From the former, whose kingdom of Desmond, or South Munster, comprehended the present counties of Waterford, Cork, and Kerry, the people of these districts were called Eoganachths, or Eugenians; while from Cas, whose descendants held, as their patrimony, Thomond, or North Munster,—including the counties of Clare, Limerick, and the country about Cashel, as far as the mountains of Sliabhlama in Ossory,—the people of this principality derived the name so memorable in Irish warfare, of Dalgais, or Dalcassians. By an arrangement, complex, and, like most other of the rules of succession in Ireland, pregnant with the seeds of strife, it was settled that the crown of all Munster, or Leath Mogh, should be enjoyed alternately by these two kindred families; and that, while one exercised its turn of dominion over the whole province, the other was to rule only over that portion which formed its own separate patrimony. For instance, when the Eugenians succeeded to their alternate right of giving a sovereign to Leath Mogh, the Dalcassians were confined to their principality of Thomond, or North Munster; and, in like manner, when it came to the latter family to furnish the sovereign of Leath Mogh, the Eugenians relapsed into their subordinate station of kings, or dynasts, of South Munster.

I have been anxious to explain clearly, even at the risk of falling into tediousness, the complex nature of the form of government by which the affairs of this province were administered, both because it affords a striking instance of the mode in which kingship was, in those times, subdivided and complicated, and because, from the prominent part taken by the princes of Mun-

ster, in most of the transactions about to be narrated, some knowledge of the territorial relations of these dynasts to each other is absolutely necessary towards a clear understanding of the course of the general history.

While such as has been just described was the complex system by which that moiety of the island called Leath Mogh was governed, the control over the northern portion, or Leath Cuinn, was all that remained,—and, in some respects but nominally remained,—in the hands of the monarch, whose power of asserting his supreme rights, or even of maintaining the decent dignity of the crown, had been, from other causes, considerably diminished at this period. Those royal demesnes which, under the designation of the Mensal Lands of the House of Tara, had been, in early times, set apart for the support of the monarchy, were again, after the lapse of a few centuries, diverted from that purpose; and, at last, the district of Meath itself, the ancient appendant to the crown, came to be partly, if not entirely, severed from it,* leaving little more, perhaps, of the original royal demesnes than the lands immediately surrounding Temora, or Tara. To Niell the Great, as we have seen, the mischievous policy which dictated this dismemberment of the royal territory, is to be attributed;—that prince having parcelled out the state lands, in order to provide for and aggrandise some of those numerous branches of the Hy-Niell race, both northern and southern, which had then spread

* Proofs of this separation of Meath from the monarchy occur continually in the annals of the eighth and ninth centuries. Thus, *Annal. Ult. ad an.* 863, we are told that Lorcan, the king of Meath, was deprived of his eyes by Aodh, king of Temora, i. e. the monarch. In the IV. *Mag. ad an.* 769, another monarch of the same name is stated to have divided Meath between the two sons of his royal predecessor, Douchad. Meath itself, indeed, appears to have been partitioned in these times into almost incredibly small principalities, as we find not only kings for the two chief divisions of that district, namely, North Bregia and South Bregia, but even a “king of the half of South Bregia.”—*Annal. Ult. ad an.* 814.

“Hy-Niellia (South), another name for the whole territory of Meath, after it was possessed by the posterity of Neill-Mor, king of Ireland, and was divided into many inferior territories.”—*Wars.*

themselves over the whole island, weakening that noble stock by their diffusion.

Among the various other causes, therefore, which had combined, at this crisis, to enfeeble the Irish monarchy, and reduce a power, at all times more imposing than efficient, to little better than a mere shadow of sovereignty, is to be numbered this diminution of his fiscal resources,—leaving no other support for the maintenance of the regal power and state, than in those contributions and military supplies derived from the provincial princes, and furnished in general with a feeling of reluctance which only force could overcome.

From the foregoing statements, though too much partaking, I fear, of the inherent complexity of their subject, it may be collected that the government of Ireland, though originally a pentarchy, and still nominally retaining that form,* had, by the course of events, become divided into two great rival sections, or kingdoms, between which a struggle was, at the period we have now reached, carrying on, which ended in the triumph of the throne of Munster, and the downfall of Tara's ancient dynasty.

A. D.
795.

The name of the monarch who filled the throne at the time when the Northmen made their first serious incursions was Aidus, or Aedan, a son of the king Niell Trassach; and during his long reign the incursions of these pirates increased in frequency and violence.† Landing on the north-west coast of Ireland, they penetrated as far as Roscommon, laying waste all the surrounding country, and giving to the inhabitants of the interior their first bitter foretaste of the desolation and misery that were yet in store for them. The ravagers, previously to this expedition, had twice visited the sainted

* Thus, in Annot. IV. Mag. *ad an.* 836, Connaught is called the fifth part, *Choico*, or *Coige*. "This word," says O'Brien, "being prefixed to the names of the five different provinces of Ireland, as they are esteemed each a fifth part of the kingdom, though they are not all of equal extent."—In voce, *Coige*.

† Ware, *Antiq.* chap. xxiv. *ad ann.* 807.

island of Iona, and, with that feeling of hatred to all connected with Christianity which marked their fierce career, had set fire to the monastery of Icolumbkill, and caused a great number of its holy inmates to perish in the flames. The results of their second attack were no less disastrous; and but a small proportion, it is said, of the monks of that famous fraternity were left alive. Whatever spot, indeed, had been most distinguished by popular reverence, thither these spoilers bent their course. Even the small island, Inia-Patrick, the supposed residence of the Irish apostle, did not escape their unholy rage; * and an Irish geographer of that period,† in describing the waste and desolation they left behind them, says, that, in many of the smaller islands of these seas, not even a hermit was to be found.

At length, rousing themselves from the state of panic and dismay into which visitations so new and alarming had at first thrown them, the natives ventured to front their invaders in the field; and, in two or three instances, with complete success. In the year 810 the annals of Ulster record a slaughter of the Galls, foreigners, in that province. The year following, they are said to have been defeated by an army of Thomonians, under the "king of the Lake of Killarney;" and, in 812, a sanguinary battle took place, of sufficient importance to be mentioned by foreign chroniclers,‡ one of whom states that the Northmen, after losing a considerable part of their force, were compelled to betake themselves to a disgraceful flight, and return to their own country.

Among those usurpations on the historical fame of the Irish, which, under cover of the ambiguous title of

* *Annals of Ulster*, ap. Johnstone, *Antiq. Scando-Celt.*

† Dicuil, who flourished in the latter part of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century. His geographical work is entitled, "A Survey of the Provinces of the Earth."

‡ Regino, Hermanous Contractus, Eginhart. The last of these chroniclers thus records the event:—"Classis Nordmannorum Hiberniam, Scotorum insulam, aggressa, commissoque cum Scotis prælio, parte non modicâ Nordmannorum interfectâ, turpiter fugiendo domum reversa est."

Scots, their descendants in North Britain have so often and dexterously practised, must be numbered the claim set up by Scottish antiquarians to the honour of an alliance of some kind, at this period, between one of their kings and Charlemagne;* whereas it was with Ireland that this league, whatever may have been its extent or object, was formed,—the name of Scotia not having been extended to the Irish settlement of Albany for nearly two centuries after this period. We have already seen by how many learned and eminent Irishmen the schools of France and Italy were, in the reign of Charlemagne, adorned; and it appears from a passage in the life of that prince by Eginhart,† that, in addition to this literary intercourse, some understanding also of a political nature had been at that time entered into between France and Ireland. In referring to instances of the extended fame of Charlemagne, his secretary says, “So devoted to his will had he rendered the kings of the Scots, by his munificence, that they never addressed him otherwise than as their lord, and declared themselves his faithful subjects and vassals.” He adds, that there were letters extant, addressed by these kings to the emperor, in which their submission and allegiance were in express terms announced. There is yet another proof adduced of this alliance, which, if not convincing, is at least curious. We know that the historians of the Norman conquest have found materials for their task in the

* To their king, Eocha IV., or Achaius, the Scotch attributed this league; and the double treasure in the Scottish arms was supposed to have originated in the event. But one of their own countrymen, lord Hailes, and, before him, a learned German, Schoepflen, have abundantly exposed the utter groundlessness of the pretension. See Pinkerton, also, on the subject, *Enquiry*, part iv. c. v. “It is certain,” says this writer, in another part of the same work, “that the Irish alone are the Scots of Eginhart, and that the correspondence he mentions between Charlemagne and the reges Scottorum, kings of the Scots, refers solely to Ireland. That emperor procured learned men from Ireland, but did not probably know even of the existence of the Dalreudini, or British Scots.”

† “Scotorum quoque Reges sic habuit ad suam voluntatem per suam munificentiam inclinatos, ut eum nunquam aliter, quam dominum seque subditos ac servos ejus pronuntiant. Extant Epistolæ ab eis ad illum misse, quibus hujusmodi affectus eorum erga illum indicatur.”—Eginhart, *de Vit. et Gest. Carol. Magni*.

tapestry of Bayeux; and, in like manner, a confirmation of the account of this league between Charlemagne and the Irish has been sought for in an ancient piece of tapestry at Versailles, where the king of Ireland is represented as standing in a row of princes all in amity with Charlemagne, and is drawn, as a mark of distinction, with the Irish harp by his side.*

Constant as was the state of alarm in which these incursions had kept every part of the kingdom, still this harassing scourge from without had no effect whatever in suspending their mutual animosities within. Twice in one month, as we are told by the annalists, the lands of the Lagenians, or people of Leinster, were laid waste by the monarch;—the resistance made by them to the old Boarian tax being assigned as the cause of this infliction;—though it seems even then to have been felt how disgraceful and melancholy was all this waste of the national strength in discord, as a verse cited by the Four Masters says, in reference to a battle fought on one of these occasions, "The poet sung not the slaughter of that field, for he came away from it with sadness in his heart."†

It was in proceeding upon one of these expeditions against Leinster that an occurrence is recorded to have taken place, affecting materially the discipline and privileges of the Irish clergy. According to the practice, for sometime prevalent in Ireland, of summoning bishops and abbots to attend the kings in their martial enterprises, the monarch, on the present occasion, was accompanied by Connach, archbishop of Armagh, and the abbot Fothadus; the latter of whom, on account of his great knowledge of the canons of the church, was called Fo-

* Kennedy, *Genealog Stuart*. That there existed a tradition of some of the Irish kings having made their appearance at the court of Charlemagne, seems not improbable, from the introduction of Oberto, "il re d'Ibernia," by Ariosto, and the account he gives of this young Irish prince having been brought up in France.—*Orlando Furioso*, canto xi. 61.

† IV. Meg. ad ann. 799.

"Ni ran an tetrí tad each, con do farcaibh im brogh nu."

A. D. 799. *thadius de Canonibus.* Arrived on the frontiers of Leinster, the clergy in attendance having represented to the monarch how great was the injury to ecclesiastical discipline arising from the custom of requiring persons of their profession to attend on military expeditions, besought, for themselves and their successors, an exemption from the duty. The king, appealing to the authority of Fothadius, professed himself ready to abide wholly by his decision;* and that learned canonist, having drawn up a treatise in favour of the claims of the clergy, of which the title alone is preserved,† they were declared to be thenceforth exempt from all military service.

CHAPTER XVI.

Traditions of the Northmen respecting Ireland.—Achievements of the Sea-King, Ragnar Lodbrog.—Arrival of Turgesius with a large Fleet in Ireland.—Hatred of the Northmen to Christianity.—Persecution of the Saxons its Cause.—Reign of the Monarch Concobar.—Depredations of the Danes.—Dissensions of the Irish among themselves.—Life and Triumphs of Feidlim, King of Munster.—Death of Turgesius, and Expulsion of the Foreigners.

THOUGH the Northmen had been taught by those frequent and signal defeats, which at length forced them to quit the country, that they had an enemy to deal with of no ordinary stamp, and who wanted but concert and coalition to be unconquerable, they had been also, on the other side, made too fully acquainted with the disunited state of the people among themselves to abandon the

* *Annal. Ult. ad an. 803.* From a circumstance related with reference to this treatise of Fothadius, it is concluded that Ægus, the martyrologist, was his contemporary. The latter having lent, as we are told, his metrical works to Fothadius, the canonist returned the compliment by communicating to the poet his own Treatise on the Rights of the Clergy. (*Rer. Hib. Script. Ep. Numc.*) The name of Ægus, however, appears to have been common to more than one hagiologist about this period; and hence arises some confusion as to their respective dates.

† *Opusculum pro Cleri defensione et immunitate.*

hope of being able ultimately to master them. They were likewise sensible, it is clear, of the weakening effects of their own scattered mode of warfare. Acting in detached expeditions, each under its own separate chief, there was wholly wanting among them that concentration of means which alone produces great and permanent effects; nor had any names sufficiently eminent to descend to posterity been as yet placed at the head of their rude desultory enterprises.

Among the adventures told of their romantic hero, Ragnar Lodbrog, it is related that, after a series of victories in England, he carried his arms into Ireland; where, having slain the king of that country, whose name, as given by the Danish historians, was Maelbric, he honoured Dublin for a whole year with his heroic presence.* In the famous Death-Song,† attributed to this champion, his adventures in Ireland are, with peculiar pride, commemorated;—his combat with “Marstein, Erin’s king, who, whelmed by the iron-sleet, allayed the hunger of the eagle and wolf;” his “stubborn struggle against three kings in Leinster, when few, we are told, “went joyous from the conflict;” and when “Erin’s blood, streaming from the decks, flowed on the deep beneath.”‡

* “Cumque in Anglia annum victor exegisset, arma in Hiberniam transtulit; occisique insulæ rege Melbrico per integram annum Dublini commoratus est.”—*Torfaus*, lib. iii. c. 10. Thus, too, in another of the Danish historians, it is said of Lodbrog, “Post hoc in Hiberniam arma movit cujus rege occiso Dubliniam civitatem obsedit et cepit.”—Thomas Gheysmer, *Compend. Hist. Dan.* See also Langbek’s *Script. Rer. Danic.* for the *Chronicon Erici Regis*, and the *Chronicle of Peter Olauus*, in both of which the same fable is, in much the same terms, repeated. The original source, however, of all these fictions respecting Ragnar’s Irish adventures, is to be found in Saxo Grammaticus, lib. ix.

† *Lodbrokar Quida*, translated by the Rev. James Johnstone.

‡ “The fertile Erin was long the great resort of the Scandinavians, who, from the internal dissensions of the natives, gained considerable footing. They, however, met with a stubborn resistance. Hence, the Icelandic authors represent the Irish as most profuse of life, and the *Ira fār* was no less terrible to the sons of Lochlin, than the ‘*furor Normannorum*’ to the rest of Europe. Some of the Norwegian kings were fond of imitating the Irish manners, and one of them could speak no language perfectly but the *Cælic*. Several Runic pillars are inscribed to Swedes who fell in Erin.”—*Lodbrokar Quida*. Note by the Translator.

These romantic accounts of the great northern heroes resemble, in so far, the ancient Greek traditions, that they may be depended upon for the reality of the events which they relate far more than for that of the personages to whom they attribute them: and, in like manner as the genius of Grecian fable has collected round the head of one deified Hercules the scattered glory of various achievements performed by different heroes at different periods, so in the northern Sagas and songs, for the purpose of glorifying one great national champion, events that chronology would have widely separated, tradition has, without scruple, brought together; and the single life of their royal sea-rover, Ragnar Lodbrog, is made to condense within its compass the achievements of many a heroic career, spread over a long tract of time.* In a similar way, the adventures celebrated in the supposed Death-Song of the same hero, are probably but a series of poetical glimpses of the Danish warfare in these seas, and therefore little to be trusted as authority for the actual agency of Ragnar himself in those scenes.

It is clear that the Danes had, up to this period, considered Ireland but as a temporary field for their depredations; and the bitter hatred of the Christian creed, which so strongly marked their whole career, could not have been gratified more appropriately than in thus desolating a country which had become so distinguished for Christian zeal, as to have been styled by the nations of Europe the Island of Saints. When they came to be acquainted, however, with the interior of the

* Thus, while in some of these northern histories it is said that Ragnar was killed in Ireland in the ninth century, others state that one of his sons was the first founder of the city of London. "*Quin si vera sunt (says Torfæus) quæ nostrates de conditâ per Lodbrochis filium urbe Londinensi reſerunt, istum Lodbrochem a duobus aliis diversum esse oportet.*" Lib. iii. c. 12. The confusion that has arisen between the Ragnar Lodbrog of romance, and a chief of the same name supposed to have flourished in the ninth century, is explained thus by Mallet:—"A l'égard des autres merveilles aventures que Saxon met sur le compte de ce prince, il faut observer que, selon toutes les apparences, elles doivent appartenir en grande partie à un autre Regner, également surnommé Lodbrog, qui n'a vécu que vers la fin du neuvième siècle, et qui n'a jamais régné à Danemark, quoiqu'il descendit peut-être du roi de ce nom."

kingdom, and saw all its means and resources, experienced the mildness of the climate, and the great fertility of the soil, it was natural that a wish for the permanent possession of so fine a country should arise forcibly in their minds; and the scale of their subsequent expeditions to its shores evinced a resolution to see that wish accomplished. They were fully, it is evident, aware, that a more extended and combined plan of invasion was now called for, as well by the difficulty as by the value of the conquest. Accordingly, about the year 815, as the common accounts state, but, according to other authorities, later in the century, the Norwegian chief, Turges, or Turgesius, arriving with a large fleet of ships and a considerable force, made a descent upon this island; and having succeeded, no less through the treacherous alliance of the Irish themselves than by means of reinforcements poured in from the north, in establishing settlements on the coasts, continued, through thirty long years of tyranny and persecution, to retain possession of the country.

In addition to the naturally fierce character of these Scandinavians, and their habitual recklessness of the lives of others, as well as of their own, they were also stung into still more savage animosity against those countries in which Christianity flourished, by the remembrance, still fresh in the hearts of themselves and their fellow Northmen, of the cruelties inflicted on them by professed champions of that creed;* and such a visitation, following so quick upon the wrong,—even where, as in this case, the penalty lights upon the innocent,—is one of those dispensations full of warning.

* The open avowal of the persecuting spirit, in the following monkish verses, cited by Mallet from the *Accessiones Historiæ* of Leibnitz, amounts, in its boldness, almost to the sublime:—

“ Hinc statuit requies illis (*Saxonibus*) ut nulla daretur
Donec, Gentili cultu rituque relicto,
Christicolæ florent, aut deleerentur in ævum.
O pietas benedicta Deo!
Sicque vel invitos salvari cogeret ipsos.”

to the world, as showing that the bolt of offended justice will fall somewhere; and thus rendering responsible, by a sort of frank-pledge, the whole community of nations for all such outbreaks of violence, civil or religious, in any one of its members, as may be likely to lead to so desperate and indiscriminate a reaction.

It is to be recollected that, from kindred descent, similarity of language, and long habits of confederation, the Danes, or Normans,* and the Saxons, were become as one people. In the nominally Saxon conquest of Britain, the majority of those who achieved it were Danes;—the Angles and Jules having been tribes of that people from Jutland, and the present duchy of Sleswick.† But, among the ties that so closely connected and almost identified the nations of the north with each other, the very strongest, perhaps, was their common religion; and the same fidelity to their ancient gods, which the brave Saxons preserved unbroken through a long struggle of thirty years against the armies of Charlemagne, was equally felt and responded to along all the shores of the Baltic. Already one king of Denmark had taken up arms in aid of their national cause; at the court of another, their hero, Wittikind, had, in the intervals of his glorious bursts against their oppressor, found shelter and counsel; and when every effort proved unavailing, and the doom of Saxony was finally sealed,

* I have preferred using, in general, the term Danes, as being at once precise and sufficiently comprehensive. The term *Ostmen*, employed by so many of the writers on Irish history, is of comparatively recent introduction, and not found in any of our native annals. In *Johnstone's Extracts*, indeed from the *Annals of Ulster*, the Danes are called *Ostmen* (*ad an. 799*), but without any authority from the text.

A distinction between Danes and Normans is thus drawn by M. Thierry:—"Appelés Danois ou Normands selon qu'ils venoient des îles de la mer Baltique ou de la côte montagnonne de Norwège."—*Hist. de la Conquête de l'Angleterre*. "The Northmen," says sir F. Palgrave, "whom our historians usually term Danes, were Anglo-Saxons under another name."

† "On sait que les Angles et les Jules, qui partagèrent avec les Saxons l'honneur de cette conquête, étoient des peuples Danois sortis de la Jutlande et du Sleswick."—*Mallet, Introduct.*

to the Danes fell the tremendous task of taking vengeance for her sufferings, not merely on France itself, but on almost every Christian kingdom of Europe. The dominant feeling in all their ravages, was evidently hatred to the creed of their country's despoilers; and the blood of priests,* and the plunder of churches, were in all places their most powerful incentives and rewards. In the songs describing their murderous forays, it was said, with bitter mockery, "We chaunted the Mass of lances with the uprising sun;"† and the proudest boast of some of their chieftains was, that they had stabled their horses in the chapels of kings.‡

There have been sound writers so much under the influence, some of the religious, some of the heroic, qualities of Charlemagne, as to have attempted not merely to palliate, but even to vindicate the atrocious measures resorted to by him for the forcible subjection of the Saxons to his own creed and yoke. But Religion herself abhors such modes of advancing her temporal triumphs; and how little the result can be pleaded in favour of this method of propagating truth, appears convincingly from the fact, of all the Gothic nations, the Scandinavians were the very last to embrace the Christian creed.

Of the Norwegian chief, Turgesius, who, at the beginning of the ninth century, commenced his oppressive and desolating dominion in Ireland, not a vestige is to be found under this name in any of the northern

* "Clerici et monachi crudelius damnabantur."—*Script. Rer. Norm.*

† Lodbrokar Quida.

‡ "Hic (Ragner) per xi. annos urbes Francie vastavit, et Parisiis veniens in ecclesia S. Germani et Aquisgrani in palatio Imperatoris stabulum equorum fecit"—*Chron. Erici*.

For professedly historical details, respecting Ragnar, see *Hist. of Anglo-Saxons*, book 3. c. 4. In spite of the efforts of Mr. Turner to invest this phantom with a substance, the personal identity of Ragnar Lodbrog must still continue to evade the grasp of history.

I may take this opportunity of observing that, having followed Mr. Turner through most of his northern authorities, for the purpose of gleanings such scattered notices as might be found in them respecting Ireland, I am in so far qualified to bear humble testimony to the diligence and accuracy with which his valuable historical materials have been collected.

chroniclers. An effort has been made, indeed, as if in rivalry of the gross anachronisms of the Sagas, to identify him with a prince named Thorgils,* who is said by Snorro to have reigned in Dublin, but whose father, Harold Harfager, according to the same authority, was not born till many years after Turgesius died.† The name, whatever may have been its Scandinavian reading, continued to be long after in use among the Danes of Ireland; as we find, in the eleventh century, and Ostman bishop, who assisted at the synod convened at Kells by cardinal Paparo, bearing the name of Torgesius.

In the year 818, the monarch Aodh, after a reign of fifteen years' duration, was succeeded by Conobar, or Connor, son of Donchad. A circumstance recorded among the minor events of the former reign, shows with what reverence, even in the midst of scenes so stormy and calamitous, all that related to the power and im-

* One of Ledwich's crude and self-sufficient conjectures. In a long note upon the "Vita H. Elphegi, a Danish Martyr," Langebek has entered into an elaborate inquiry on the subject of Thorkill, or Torkill; but, among the various chiefs of that name whom he enumerates, does not once glance at the possibility of any one of them being the same with the Turgesius of Ireland. That the original name, however, of this tyrant might have been Thorgills, or Thorkill, in his own country, the same learned authority thus intimates:—"Turgesius ann. 815. 835. 845., Norwegus forte, cujus nomen in patria Thurgils sive Thorkillus."—*Note on the Genealog. Stirp. Reg. Dan. 8vo. Anacharitano.*

† Both in England, and, it is said, also in Ireland, some strange traditions were for a long time preserved, respecting a personage named Gurmundus, the son of an African prince, of whose achievements, in both countries, many wonders are related. See Giraldus Cambrensis (*Topograph. lib. Diat. iii. c. 38, 39, 40.*), who has been guilty of the absurd anachronism of making this Gurmundus a contemporary of the British king, Careticus, who flourished about A. D. 586, and yet, at the same time, supposing him to have acted under Turgesius, and to have been sent by that chief as his lieutenant to Ireland. The reader will find all that needs to be known on this subject in Usher (*Eccles. Primord. p. 568.*), who attempts to trace to the traditions respecting Gurmundus, the names of some of the streets of Dublin, as well as those of Grange-Gorman, Gormanstown, &c. &c. The name Gormo, applied by Usher to this chief ("Gormonis sive Gurmundi"), rather strengthens the conjecture respecting him which I find in a northern authority, though still leaving the chronology as irreconcilable as ever.—"Anno Domini 738, Gormo I., Haraldus filius, Biornonis nepos, regnat annos 33. Hic & Sylvestri Giraldo Cambrensi Gurmundus et ipsius legatus rerum bellicarum Torchillus Turchesius appellari videtur.—*Hamsfortii Chronologia.*

munities of the church was regarded. In the year 806,* say the annalists, a violent interruption of the Taltine Sports took place, owing to the seizure and retention, by the monks of Tallagh, of the monarch's chariot horses:—this step having been taken by them in consequence of the violation of their free territory by the O'Niells. It is added, that ample reparation was made to the monastery of Tallagh, as well as gifts in addition bestowed upon it by the king.

The first year of the monarch Concobar's reign was distinguished by an event so marvellously peaceful in its character, so widely departing from the natural course of affairs in Ireland, as to be attributed by the Four Masters to "a miracle of God." In consequence of some factious feud, the immediate cause of which is not specified, an army of the O'Niells of the north, commanded by Murtach, son of Maildun, marched in battle array to meet, on the plain near the Hill of the Horse, an army of southern O'Niells, led by the new monarch Concobar. But, no sooner had these two hostile forces come face to face, than each army, at the same moment, turned away from the other, and, without a drop of blood spilt, or even a blow exchanged, separated.†

A.D.
818.

The history of the proceedings of the Danes in Ireland, during the long and afflicting tyranny of Turgesius, presents but one dark and monotonous picture of plunder, massacre, and devastation; and though for thirty years the whole island may be said to have groaned under their yoke, it is plain that the footing they had acquired was not without much difficulty maintained. In the very amount and long continuance of their cruelties, we find a proof of the constant resistance they experienced; since not even fiends could so long have persisted in the persecution of a quelled and submissive people.

* Annal. IV. Mag. The Annals of Ulster place this event in the year 10.

† IV. Mag. ad ann. 818.

Their frequent plunder of the same shrines, and destruction of the same monasteries, shows at once the religious zeal of the natives, who were constantly repairing and rebuilding these holy places, and the persecuting industry of their oppressors, who were as constantly employed in destroying them. The monastery of Banchor, which could boast at one period of no less than 3000 monks observing its rule, and from whose schools those two remarkable men, St. Columba, and the heresiarch, Pelagius, were sent forth,—this celebrated monastery, which had been once before the object of their fury, was now again despoiled and plundered by these ravagers;* who having broken open the rich shrine of its founder, St. Comgall, wantonly scattered about the relics that were there inclosed. On this latter occasion the venerable abbot, and, it is said, 900 monks, were all murdered in one day.

The seat of the primacy, Armagh, appears to have been, more frequently than any other place, the object of their attacks;† owing, most probably, to the wealth collected in that city from the annual tribute sent thither under the Law of St. Patrick. Nor would the richly decorated tomb and pictured walls of Kildare have attracted so frequently the visits of these plunderers, did it not likewise present some temptations of the same substantial kind. Wherever pilgrims in great numbers resorted, thither the love at once of slaughter and of plunder led these barbarians to pursue them. The monastery of the English at Mayo; the holy isle of Inis-cathy, in the mouth of the Shannon; the cells of St. Kevin, in the valley of Glendalough; the church of Slane, the memorable spot where St. Patrick first lighted the Paschal fire;‡ the monastery of the Scelig Isles, on the coast of Kerry, a site of the ancient well-worship; all these, and a number of other such seats of holiness, are

* Annal. IV. Mag. and Annal. Ult. ad ar. 823.

† Its first time of devastation was in 830.

‡ See vol. I. of this Work, chap. x. p. 223.

mentioned as constantly being made the scenes of the most ruthless devastation.

It would not have been wonderful if, by such an uninterrupted course of oppression and cruelty, the spirit of the people had been as much broken and subdued as was that of the English, by the same scourge, at a later period. But, throughout the whole of this long course of persecution the Irish had never, it is plain, ceased to resist; and, on more than one occasion during this reign, we find them resisting with success. In repelling an invasion of their province by the Danes, the brave Ultonians, commanded by Lethlobar, king of Dalaradia, gained a decisive victory; and, at the same period, Carbry, king of Hy-Kingsellagh, was, in an encounter with these foreigners, equally successful.* Could the contentions of the Irish princes among themselves have been, even for a short time, suspended, the galling yoke under which all equally suffered might have been broken. But the curse of discord was then, as it has been ever, upon this land;† and, in selfish struggles between rival factions, the cause of the common country of all was sacrificed. It is, indeed, lamentable to have to record, that the prince who shines at this period most prominently in our annals, is one whose renown had been all acquired by victories over his own countrymen; and of whom not a single hostile movement against the common foe is recorded.‡

A. D.
825.
827.

* Annal. IV. Mag. and Annal. Ult. ad an. 826, 827.

† A writer, whom none can justly accuse of ill-will or unfairness towards his own countrymen, thus speaks of this lamentable stain on their historical character:—"Pendant qu'une partie de ce peuple se consacrait entièrement à Dieu par un renoncement parfait au monde, et servoit en cela de modèle aux nations voisines, l'esprit de discorde fut toujours nourri chez eux . . . ils étoient toujours armés les uns contre les autres, sans que l'évangile qu'ils venoient de recevoir avec tant de respect eût pu corriger cet esprit de discorde, qui fut cause de tant de désordres."—*Abbé Mac Geoghegan, Hist. d'Irlande*, part 2. c. 4.

‡ One historian (O'Halloran, book x. c. 1.) attributes to this prince a successful attack upon the Danes, but without any authority for the assertion. The *Polychronicon*, indeed, states that, at the time when Turgeisius landed, Feidlim was king of Munster;—"tempore Feldmidii Norwegenses, duce Turgeasio, terram hanc occuparunt,"—but of any con-

This selfishly ambitious ruler was the renowned Feidlim, king of Cashel; and a brief sketch of his bold unprincipled career will show that, in addition to what Ireland had to suffer from her tormenting invaders, she was also cursed with rival tormentors within her own bosom.

The extent of power attained by the provincial throne of Munster comprising in its range almost the whole of the southern moiety of Ireland, has already been fully shown; as well as the manner in which the succession to this throne was shared alternately by the Eugenic and Dalcassian princes. It was shortly after the landing of Turgesius, that Feidlim Mac-Crimthan, by right of his Eugenic descent, came into possession of the crown of Cashel; and his course from thenceforth was marked with the worst excesses of rude and lawless power. While, in one part of the country, the Northmen were, as we have seen, visiting with all the horrors of fire and sword * such devoted monasteries and religious houses as offered temptations to the spoiler, this Irish prince was to be found in another, pursuing zealously the same sacrilegious course. In many instances, too, the same holy communities which had served as victims to the rage of the foreign barbarians, were those selected for fresh ravage by their no less barbarous countrymen. Thus the monastery of Clonmacnois, which was one of those laid desolate by the Danes, had to experience a similar fate at the hands of the ruthless king Feidlim; who, besides burning all the lands of the abbey, "up to the church door,"† put numbers of its holy inmates to

flict between this prince and the Danes, neither the Polychronicon nor any other records make mention.

* Cum ducibus solitis Marte et Vulcano.—*Bromton*.

† The words of the annalist, "Go dorus a cille."—*Annal*. IV. Mag. ad an. 832.

"Umblacht i do ionnas gur ab Ian Righ Eirionn an la sui e."—*Annal*. *Inisfall*. ad an. 840. In this boast of the Munster annalist, originated, no doubt, the impression which led Giraldus to rank Feidlim among the monarchs of Ireland. "De gente igitur iste ab adventu Patricii usque ad Feidmíu regis tempora 33 reges per 400 annos in Hibernia regnaverunt." See Archdall (*Monast. Hibern. at Clonmacnois*), where, likewise on

death. In like manner,—except that, in this, case, the native depredators had the first fruits of the spoil,—a party of the Danes attacked and devastated Kildare but a short time after it had been forcibly entered by king Feidlim, and the clergy carried off from thence in captivity along with his own slaves.

In this year (832—3) died the monarch Conquovar, after a reign of about fourteen years, and was succeeded on the throne by Niell Calne, son of Aodh Ornidhe.

It has been shown how immensely the power of the kings of Leath-Mogh had, in the course of time, gained upon that of the monarchy; and a stirring ambitious prince like Feidlim could not fail to advance still further the usurpation. So daring were his inroads into the monarch's territory, that, on more than one occasion, the whole country from Birr to Tara was laid waste by his arms. Having revived also the ancient and bitter feud between the provinces of Munster and Connaught, respecting their claims to the territory now called Clare, he gained, in the course of this contest, a sanguinary victory over an army of Conacians, led by the O'Niells; and it is recorded of him, as a double triumph, that, on the very same day when he received hostages from the princes of Connaught, he swept with his army over the rich plains of Meath, and seated himself proudly in the ancient precincts of Temora.* A council was held immediately after, at Clonmacnois, where Niell the monarch delivered to him hostages; and on that day, says the Munster annalist, Feidlim was supreme king of all Ireland. But his turbulent career was soon brought to a miserable end. A few years after these brilliant events, which a poet of his own times commemorated, he received, while devastating the lands of the abbey of St. Ciaran, a wound from the staff of the abbot, and, at

A. D.
839.

the authority of the Munster Annals, the same dignity is attributed to Feidlim.

* Annal. IV. Mag. ad an. 839. (849.) The annals of Inisfallen add that, in the course of this inroad he carried off Gormflatha, daughter of the king of Meath, together with all her handmaids.

the same time, a curse from the holy man's lips, of the effects of which he never after recovered. Devoting the close of his days to penitence and the Church, he died in the following year;* and, in the very face of all the enormities which their own pages have recorded of him, is described by his ecclesiastical historians as "the most religious and learned anchoret that Erin could boast in his day."[†]

In the year 837, a considerable addition had been made to the Danish force in Ireland;—two fleets from the Baltic, consisting altogether, it is said, of 120 sail, having arrived, one in the river Boyne, and the other in the Liffey; from whence, pouring forth their swarms over the plains through which these rivers flow, they inflicted on the already sacked and exhausted country new varieties of desolation and ruin. It was their custom thus to avail themselves of the facilities which the fine inland waters of Ireland afforded; being enabled, by means of light barks which they launched on the rivers and lakes, to penetrate far into the country, and, by sudden landings, take the unguarded and panic-struck natives by surprise.

To attempt to follow, through all its frightful details, the course of outrage and massacre which continued to be pursued by the bands of Turgesius throughout the remainder of that tyrant's turbulent life, would be a task as wearisome as revolting. Let it suffice, therefore, to state that there is not a single spot of renown in the ecclesiastical history of our country, not one of those numerous religious foundations, the seat and monuments of the early piety of her sons, that was not frequently, during this period, made the scene of most fearful and brutal excesses. The repeated destruction by fire, year after year, of the same monasteries and

* Annal. IV. Mag. ad an. 845. (*Ærne Com. 845.*) *Rer. Hib. tom. i., in Catal. Regum.*

† Annal. IV. Mag. The Chronicon Scotorum calls him "the last king of the Scots." M'Curtin quotes, for his flattering character of Feidlim, the *Leabhar Irse*, or Book of Records.

churches, may naturally be accounted for by the material of these structures having been wood. But, as few things of any value could have survived such conflagrations, the mere wantonness of barbarity alone, could have tempted them so often to repeat the outrage. The devoted courage, however, of those crowds of martyrs who still returned undismayed to the same spot, choosing rather to encounter sufferings and death than leave the holy place untenanted, present one of those affecting pictures of quiet heroism with which the history of the Christian church abounds.

Though, in their assaults upon religious houses, the Danes in general put most of the inmates to death, they in some cases carried off the chief ecclesiastics, either as hostages, or for the sake of ransom. Thus Farannan, the primate of Armagh, was, together with all the religious and students of the house, as well as the precious church relics, taken away to the Danish ships at Limerick;* and, at a somewhat later period, Maelcob, the bishop of Armagh, and Mocteus, the Reader, were in like manner made prisoners by the invaders.

That the Northmen, in their first plundering incursions, may have found a quantity of gold and silver in Ireland, appears by no means improbable. Though coined money was not yet introduced among the natives,† and the word “pecunia,” which is often supposed to have implied coin, was employed in those days to express cattle and all other sorts of property, the use of the precious metals, in ingots, had long been generally known; and the ornaments of the shrines in which saintly relics were inclosed, appear to have been, in many instances, valuable.‡ The tomb of St. Brigid, at Kildare, was overhung, we are told, with crowns of

* The Four Masters place this event in 843. Usher, *Ird. Chron.* 848.

† Simon (*Essay on Irish Coins*) is of a different opinion; but having no authority in favour of his notion except in Sagas, his reasons are of but little weight.

‡ Shrines of gold and silver are mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster*, under the dates A. D. 799 and 800.

gold and silver;* and the relics of St. Columba, which the abbot of Iona removed for safety, in the year 830, to Ireland, are stated to have been enclosed in a shrine of gold.† The luxury of ornament, indeed, which we have reason to believe was bestowed on the illumination and covering of manuscripts at that period,‡ would lead us to give credit to much of what is related of the richness of the utensils found in monasteries by the Danes.

The power which these foreigners had now so long exercised, owed clearly its consolidation and continuance to one single directing mind; and the standard raised by Turgesius, however uneasily and amidst constant conflict upheld, presented a rallying point, not merely to the multitude of Northmen already in the country, but to all such swarms of new adventurers as were from time to time attracted to its shores. To these fierce and hardy assailants, combined under one head, and having one common object, was opposed a brave but divided people, whose numerous leaders followed each his own personal interest or ambition; and who, from long habits of indiscriminate warfare, had almost lost the power of distinguishing between enemies and friends. Yet notwithstanding all this, such was the unconquerable spirit of the Irish people, that while, about this very period, one of the fairest portions of France became the fief of the Northmen, and while England twice, in the course of a few centuries, passed tamely under their yoke, it was only during the short interval of the Turgesian persecution that their dominion can fairly be asserted to have prevailed over Ireland.

* *Coronis aureis et argenteis desuper pendentibus. Cogitosus, de Vita S. Brigid.*, a work which Vossius (*de Hist. Lat.* 1. 2.) pronounces to be of great antiquity; but whether of so early a date as is assigned to it, namely, the sixth century, appears doubtful. See Ware, *Writers*.

† *Iler. Hib. Scrip. tom. iv. p. 205. note.*

‡ For an account of the early manuscripts thus embellished, see Dr. O'Connor, *Ep. Nunc.*

That upon the life of their able leader the power of the Danes in this country chiefly depended, is proved by the rapid dissolution of their union, and, consequently, strength, which succeeded immediately upon his death. The obscurity which involves the details of this latter event has been turned to account by those ready and fluent historians who, when most stinted in facts, are then always most prodigal in details; and a story, briefly related by Cambrensis, respecting the circumstances which led to the Norse chief's death, has become amplified in this manner by successive historians, each adding some new grace or incident to the original tale. The following is the substance of the anecdote, as told by Giraldus:—The beauty of the daughter of O'Melachlin, king of Meath, having awakened a passion in the breast of Turgesius, that tyrant, accustomed to the ready accomplishment of all his desires, made known to her father the unlawful views which he entertained. Concealing his horror at such a proposal, the king, in appearance, consented to surrender to him his daughter; and a small island upon Loch-var, in the county of Meath, was the place appointed for the desired interview. Thither it was fixed that the princess, attended by fifteen maidens, should come at an appointed hour; and there Turgesius, with as many young Danish noblemen, was waiting impatient to receive her. The supposed handmaids, however, of the princess were, in reality, fifteen brave and beardless youths, selected for the purpose, who, hiding each a *skian* or dagger under his robe, took advantage of the first opportunity that offered, and, falling upon the tyrant and his followers, despatched the whole party. It is added, that the fame of this gallant achievement having spread rapidly through the country, the Danes were in every quarter attacked.†

A.D.
844.

* "Fabulam olent (says Dr. O'Connor) quæ de morte Turgesii a 15 puellis interfecto refert Giraldus."

† Anon. iv. Mag. 843. (844.) In the *Chronicle de Gest. Northman.* pub-

and either got rid of by the knife or sword, or else compelled to return to Norway and the different isles from whence they came.*

This romantic account of the death of Turgesius, resembling, in some of its particulars, a stratagem recorded by Plutarch in his life of Pelopidas, is not to be found in any of the Irish books of annals; wherein it is simply stated, that the tyrant fell into the hands of O'Melachlin, and was by him drowned in Loch-var.† But, whatever may have been the real circumstances attending the death of this pirate-king, of the great importance of its results there is not any reason to doubt; and although, to the wholesale assertion of Giraldus, that Ireland was from thenceforth entirely free from the yoke of the Danes, her subsequent history affords but too downright a contradiction, it is certain that their power was from thenceforth considerably reduced; and that, however harassing at all times, and even occasionally formidable, they never afterwards regained their former strength or sway.

lished by André du Chesne, this victory of the Irish over the Danes (which the chronicler places in the year 848), is thus triumphantly recorded:—"Scoti super Northmannos irroentes, auxilio Dei victores, eos à suis finibus expellunt."—*Hist. Franc. et Norman. Script. Antiq.*

* Fama igitur pernicibus aliis totam statim insulam pervolante, et rei eventum, ut assolet, divulgante Norwagienses ubique truncantur, et in brevi omnes omnino seu vi, seu dolo, vel morti traduntur: vel iterum Norwagiam et insulas unde venerant, uavigio adire compelluntur.—Girald. Cambrens. *Topog. Hibern.* Dist. iii. c. 41.

† Annal. Ult. ad an. 844 This lake is, by Seward (*Topograph. Hibern.*), placed near Mullingar. According to the Annals of Inisfallen, however, the scene of the tyrant's death was Lake Annin in Meath. Much doubt has arisen as to the exact year in which this event happened; some placing it in 844, when Malachy was still but king of Meath, while others (*Usher, Ind. Chron.*) advance it to 848, when he had been raised to the throne of Ireland. I have followed, as the reader will see, the ordinary date of our own annals; though the record cited above from the Norse Chronicles, fixing the reduction and expulsion of the Danes from Ireland at A. D. 848, would incline me to think that the date of the death of Turgesius should be referred to the same year.

CHAPTER XVII.

Arrival of Reinforcements to the Danes.—Alliances between these Foreigners and the Natives.—Demoralising Effects thereof.—Divisions among the Northmen themselves.—Arrival of Three Norwegian Brothers.—Tax called Nose-money imposed on the Irish.—Reign of the Monarch Aod Finliath.—Exploits of Anlaf the Dane.—Reign of the Monarch Flan Siona.—Retrospect of the Affairs of the Scots of North Britain.—Reign of Cormac Mac Culuan, King of Munster.—Death of Cormac in the Great Battle of Moyalbe.—His Character.

So signal and decisive appeared the advantage which had been gained over the common enemy, that Melachlin, who had now succeeded to the throne of Ireland,* despatched ambassadors to the court of France on the occasion, announcing his intention to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy City, as an act of thanksgiving for such a deliverance, and asking permission to pass through France on his way.† The constant influx of Irish missionaries into France during the eighth and ninth centuries, had brought the two countries, as has been already remarked, into amicable relations with each other; and the high repute which the learned Irishman, John Eriгена, now enjoyed at the French court, must have still more conciliated for his countrymen the good opinion both of the monarch and his subjects. The ambassadors sent on the solemn mission just referred to, were the bearers of costly presents to the French king; but the intended visit of the royal pilgrim, which they came to

* It would appear, from the instance of Malachy, that even when Lord of all Meath by inheritance, the monarch was not suffered to retain that principality after his succession to the supreme throne; as we shall find that, during Malachy's reign, Meath was held jointly by two other princes.

† "Rex Scotorum ad Carolum, pacis et amicitie gratia, legatos cum muneribus mittit, viam sibi petendi Romam concedi deposcens."—*Chron. de Gest. Norman.*

announce, was, by a return of the troubles of his kingdom, frustrated.

The Danes, though dispersed and apparently subdued, were still numerous in those parts of the island they had so long possessed; and waited but a reinforcement from the shores of the Baltic,* to enable them to reappear in the field as formidable as ever. With so strong a sense of the value of the possession they had lost, they were of course not slow in devising means for its speedy recovery; and accordingly, in the year 849,† a fleet from the north, consisting of 140 sail, landed a fresh supply of force upon the coast of Ireland:‡ and the war, which had slumbered but from want of fuel, was now with all its former vigour rekindled.

While the violence, too, of the contending parties continued, in its renewed shape, as fierce and barbarous as ever, there was now introduced in their relations to each other a material and demoralising change,—a readiness to merge their mutual hostility in the joint pursuit of plunder or revenge; and to fight side by side under the same banner, regardless of aught but the selfish interests of the moment;—a change, which, it is evident, to the moral character of both parties could not be otherwise than deeply and lastingly injurious. Upon the public mind of Ireland, in particular, the effects of such warfare must have been to the deepest degree degrading. The dissensions of a people among themselves, however fatal to the national strength, may not be inconsistent with a generous zeal for the national glory and welfare; but when, as in this instance, they invite the foreigner to cast his sword into the scale, they not only blindly invite slavery, but also richly deserve it.

The first example of such degeneracy at this period

* With an easterly wind the northern navigators calculated but three days as the average duration of a voyage to the British isles:—"Triduo, flantibus Euri, vela panduntur."—*Script. Rer. Dan.*

† *Annal. Inisfall.* ad an. 849.

‡ Ware, *Antiq* c 24—*Annals of Ulster*, ap. Johnstone, *Antiq Scand.*

was set by the Irish monarch, Melachlin himself; who achieved, with the assistance of the Danes, a dishonourable victory over his own countrymen. In like manner, a prince named Keneth, the lord of the Cianachta* of Meath, was enabled by the same base sort of confederacy to lay waste the territories of the princely Hy-Niells from the source of the Shannon to the sea.†

Had this spirit of disunion and faithlessness been confined to the natives alone, they must at once have fallen as easy prey to the stranger; but, luckily, the habit of serving as mercenaries soon estranged the loyalty of the Danes from their own cause: and, according as they became divided among themselves, they grew less formidable as enemies. There occurred an event, also, about the middle of this century, which added a new source of internal division to the many that already distracted and weakened their strength. An army of Northmen, called the Dubh-Galls, or Black Strangers, as being of a different race from those hitherto known in Ireland, having landed in considerable force in the year 850,‡ made an attack on the Fin-Galls, or White Strangers, already in possession of Dublin,§ and after defeating them with

* There were several other Cianachtas throughout Ireland; but this in Meath, and the other, called the Cianachta of Glingiven, in the North Hy-Nial, were the most noted. See *Dissert. on Hist. of Ireland*.—There was also another in Derry, from whence a sept of the O'Connors derived the title of O'Concubair Cianachta. O'Brien (*in vocis Cianachta*) interprets the use of the word, in this instance, as meaning that these O'Connors were descended from Cian, the son of the great Olliol Ollum; and this derivation of the term would seem to be countenanced by a similar application of the word Eoganachta to territories belonging to the descendants of Eogan More (see Ware, *Antiq.* c. 7.). But Cianachta appears to me to have had a more general import; and, from the manner in which it is used by Tigernach (*Rer. Hib. Script.* p. 44.), must have meant, I think, a particular measure of land, as he speaks there of "a thirty-fold Cianachta." — *Trichac. Ciansa*.

† Annal. IV. Mag. ad ann. 848.

‡ Ann. Ult.—Ware and Lanigan place it in the year 851. The Four Masters, as usual, antedate the event, making it in 849.

§ In Harris's *Annals of Dublin*, A. D. 838, it is said, "Dublin now submitted to them (the Ostmen, or Danes) for the first time, in which they raised a strong rath, and thereby curbed not only the city, but, in a little time, extended their conquests through Fingal to the north, and as far as Bray and the mountains of Wicklow to the south. These parts seem to have been soon after made the head of the Danish settlements in Leinster;

great slaughter, made themselves masters of that city and its adjoining territories. In the following year, however, the Fin-Galls, being reinforced from their own country, attacked the Black Gentiles, by whom they had been driven from Dublin; and, after a battle which lasted, according to the annalists,* three days and three nights, compelled them to abandon their ships, and regained possession of the city.

It was soon after this latter occurrence that the three brothers, Anlaf, Ivar, and Sitric, of the royal blood of Norway, arriving with a large army collected from the different isles of the North, took possession of the three great maritime positions,—Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford;† and while Anlaf and Ivar, to whom fell the sovereignty over the two former cities, enlarged considerably their boundaries, and, it is not improbable, fortified them, the remaining brother, Sitric, is generally allowed to have been the first founder of Waterford.‡

However suspicious, in most of its circumstances, is

and from them Fingal took its name, as much as to say, *The Territory of the White Foreigners*, or Norwegians, as the country to the south of Dublin was called *Dubh-Gall*, or the Territory of the *Black Foreigners*, from the Danes. This last denomination is not preserved in history, that we know of; but it remains by tradition among the native Irish of these parts to this day." The writer would have found, in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, the name of *Dubh-gall* applied to these strangers; while in the *Annals of Inisfallen* and of Ulster, they are styled *Dubh-gentis*, or Black Gentiles, and the others *Fionn-gentis*, or White Gentiles.

* *Annal. Ult.* ad an. 851 (852). *Annal. Inisfall.* ad an. 852.

† *Annal. Ult.* ad an. 852 (853). *Annal. Inisfall.* ad an. 853.

‡ Smith, *Hist. of Waterford*, c. 4.—"Were we to believe Giraldus Cambrensis," says Dr. Lanigan, "Sitric was the founder of Limerick." [c. xxi. sect. 14. note 143.] But this is an oversight; for it is to Ivar that Giraldus attributes the construction of this city. "Constructis itaque primò civitatibus tribus, Dublinia, Gwaterfordia, Limerici Yucoro."—*Topog. Hib. Dist.* iii. c. 43. It is clear that Dublin, of which Giraldus attributes the building to Anlaf, had been in existence, though probably but an inconsiderable place, long before this time; and the *Annals of Inisfallen* fix the first occupation of it by the Danes, in the year 837. Of Limerick, its historian, Ferrar, says, "According to a manuscript in the editor's possession, the Danes got possession of Limerick in the year 855." But we have seen that, about a dozen years earlier, that place had been used by the Northmen as a station for their ships.

the tale told by Cambrensis,* respecting the stratagems of their brother chieftains, in coming under the assumed guise of merchants, and thus obtaining for themselves and their followers a friendly footing in different parts of the country, it is by no means improbable that to their skill and success in commercial pursuits, as well as to that command over the Irish sea-coasts which their position and practice in seamanship gave them, they were mainly indebted for the acknowledged influence they so soon attained throughout the kingdom. How considerable was the amount of this power may be judged from two pregnant facts stated by the annalists,—that to these brothers not only the foreigners throughout the whole island submitted, but likewise the natives were all compelled to pay them tribute.†

What was the nature of the tribute they exacted from the Irish, or whether it resembled the famous Danegelt in its first form, when paid by the English to purchase a respite from Danish plunder, does not appear from any of the records. We are told, indeed, of a tax imposed by Turgesius, called *Agiod-Sron*, or *Nose-money*, from the penalty attached to its nonpayment being no less than the loss of the defaulter's nose. A sort of tax, bearing the same name, but not enforced by the same inhuman forfeit, appears, from one of the Sagas,‡ to have been in use among the ancient Scandinavians; and such, most probably, was the nature of the tribute now exacted by their descendants, though thus misrepresented, according to the usual bias of history when the hand of an enemy holds the pen.

On the death of the monarch, Melachlin, he was

* Topograph. Hibern. Dist. 3. c. 43.

† IV. Mag. ad ann. 851. Annal. Inisfall, ad ann. 852. The latter annalist thus states the fact:—*Gur ghuallsat Dochlannaicich Eirionu do, 7 cios o Ghadhlaibh do.*

‡ In the Yngtinga Saga, it is said that Odin introduced such laws as before were in use among the Asi; and, "throughout all Swedland, the people paid unto Odin a Scotpenny for each nose."

A. D. 863. succeeded in the throne by Aodh Finliath, a prince* of the northern Hy-Niell, who had just before his accession, in concert with the Danes, overrun and ravaged the kingdom of Meath. The principality, which formed no longer an inseparable adjunct of the monarchy, was, at the time of Aodh's succession, held in partition between the two princes, Lorcan and Concobar; on the former of whom the new monarch laid violent hands, and deprived him of his eyes; while the latter was drowned at Clonard by Aodh's accomplice and ally, Anlaf the Dane.†

The deeds of this adventurous Northman occupy a conspicuous space in the records of his time. Besides his various exploits in Irish warfare, among which the spoliation of the rich city of Armagh, and the burning of its shrines and hospitals was not the least memorable, he also refreshed his veteran followers with an occasional inroad into North Britain, where the now weakened Britons of Strath-Clyde opposed but a feeble resistance; and the renowned fortress of Alcluyd, after a blockade of four months, fell into his power.‡ At length, in one of these incursions into the Albanian territory, he was surprised by a stratagem of the Scots and slain.

The fame of Ireland, as a place of refuge for the exile and sufferer, was, even in these dark times, maintained; and we find Roderick, king of Wales, when compelled to abandon his own dominions to the Danes, seeking an asylum on the Irish shores.§

After a reign of sixteen years, the monarch, Aodh

* Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 863. According to these annals, it was through the aid of Anlaf and the Danes, that Aodh Finliath was raised to the throne.

† IV. Mag. ad an. 863 (863).

‡ Annal. Ult. ad an. 869, and 870. "Alcluyd was wholly rased to the ground. The 'Black Strangers' were resistless; and the Britons, Saxons, Angles, and Picts, were mingled in captivity beneath the yoke of Anlaf and Hingvar (Ivar)." — *Palgrave, English Commonwealth*, c. xiv.

§ Annal. Ult. ad an. 876.

Finliath, departed this life; and Flan Siona, a prince of the South Hy-Niell, succeeded to the throne. It has been seen, from the time of the first establishment of an Irish colony in North Britain,* how close and friendly continued to be the intercourse between that settlement and the mother country—cemented as it was by all those ties which consanguinity, perpetual alliance, and frequent intermarriages, could create. To this connection between the two kingdoms a new link had, during the late reign, been added by the marriage of the Irish monarch, Aodh Finliath, with Malmaria, the daughter of the renowned Keneth Mac-Alpine. A. D. 879.

Some time having elapsed since I last submitted to the reader any notice of the affairs of the Scots of North Britain,†—a people whose annals the parent country long identified with her own,‡—it may not be amiss to review briefly the course of that colony since the period at which our last notice of it terminated. The ruler of the Scoto-Irish settlement at that time was Aidan, the royal friend of St. Columba, under whose sway (A. D. 590.) it ceased to be tributary to the Irish crown, § and became an independent kingdom. On the small stage of this miniature realm,** we find acted over

* For accounts of the original settlements of the Irish in North Britain, see Vol. I. of this Work, c. vii. p. 131, and c. xi. p. 241.

† See Vol. I. of this work, c. 12. p. 256.

‡ Not unfrequently, too, the records of the affairs of Albany have been corrected by reference to those of the mother country: for an instance of this, see *Rer. Hib. Script. tom. i. p. 88*, and *tom. iv. p. 357*. "In rebus Albanicis," says Dr. O'Connor, "longe accuratiores sunt Hibernici Annales." He adds, that if Kennedy, in his *Chronological Genealogy of the Stuarts*, had been more diligent in consulting the Irish annals, he would not have fallen into so many errors.

§ See, for an account of the convention held at Dromceat in the year 590, Vol. I. of this Work, p. 256. "At that convention," says O'Flaherty, "Aidan obtained an exemption from paying tribute to the kings of Ireland; and, consequently, the honours and dignities attendant on a free and absolute sovereignty."—*Chronol. and Gen. Catalogue of the Kings of Scotland, Oxygia Vindicated*, c. 12.

** The region occupied by the Scoto-Irish colony, comprised only Kintyre, Argyre, and some of the islets. In a note on the annals of Tigernach, ad an. 503, Dr. O'Connor thus describes the extent of this small kingdom:—"Regiones quas filii Erci occupaverant tendebant à freto Dabrittanico, includentes Kentiream, Knapdaliam, Loarnam, Ardgetheliam, et

are told that, on one occasion, when each of the antagonist sovereigns had sent out a fleet composed of cur-rachs, or small leathern boats, to attack the dominions of the other, the two armaments met off Ardanesse, on the coast of Argyleshire, and a naval battle took place between them, which ended in a victory on the side of the belligerent who boasted his descent in the line of Fergus. At length an arrangement was brought about, by which, as in the alternate succession of the north and south Hy-Niells in Ireland, the rival races of Lorn and Fergus were, each in turn, to succeed the other on the throne.

During the whole of this state of affairs, of which the Picts, it might be supposed, would gladly have taken advantage, as opening so favourable a field for designs against the independence of their Scottish neighbours, no act indicative of such a policy appears to be recorded; and it was not till near the middle of the eighth century (A. D. 736.) that the series of fierce conflicts between the Scots and Picts commenced, which ended, after a long struggle and with alternate success, in placing a Scotch-Irish prince on the throne of the Pictish kings.

With the expectation, doubtless, of softening, by a family alliance, the mutual hostility of the two kingdoms, a marriage was contracted, early in the ninth century between Achy, or Achaius, king of the Scots, and a Pictish princess named Urgusia; and this connection, though it had not the effect of even abating the mutual enmity of the two kingdoms, was the means ultimately of conducing to that only issue of such a contest by which it could be summarily, and without chance of revival, extinguished. About the middle of the same century, Kenneth Mac Alpine, the grandson of the princess Urgusia, furnished with the double claim arising from military prowess and his maternal descent, took the field, assisted by Irish auxiliaries, against the Picts; and, after a battle, renewed, as the chroniclers tell us, no less than seven times in one day, gained a

victory over that people (A. D. 843.) so complete and decisive, as to have been exaggerated by panic and fiction into their total extirpation.* By this event the crowns of Albany and Pictland were both united on one head; and from the same epoch is to be dated the foundation of the Scottish kingdom in North Britain;—although it is certain that the application of the name of Scotia to that country did not begin to come into use before the eleventh century.†

At this time the celebrated Lia Eail, or Stone of Destiny, upon which the ancient kings of Ireland used to be inaugurated,‡ and which had been brought over into Albany by Fergus, the leader of the Dalriadic colony, was removed by the conqueror of the Picts from ~~Albany~~ to Scone, where it remained till the time of Edward I., by whom it was transferred to Westminster Abbey.

* The original source of this extravagant fiction was the ancient chronicler, Henry of Huntingdon, according to whom the very language of the Picts passed suddenly into oblivion:—"Non solum reges eorum, et principes, et populum deperisse, verum etiam stirpem omnem, et linguam et mentionem simul defecisse."—*Lib. i.* Buchanan mentions an ancient prophecy, which had foretold this utter extinction of the Picts by the Scots:—"Divinitus Pictis dictionem esse datam fore, ut aliquando tota gens a Scotis deleteretur."—*Lib. iv.*

† Usher is decidedly of opinion, that no instance can be produced of the name Scotia having been applied to the present Scotland before the eleventh century:—"Quod ut ante undecimum post Christi nativitatem seculum haud quaquam factum, in fine præcedentia Capituli declaravimus: ita neminem, qui toto antecedentium annorum spacio scripserit produci posse arbitramur qui *Scotiæ* appellatione Albaniam unquam designaverit."—*Eccles. Primord.* c. 16. Dr. O'Connor follows Usher in this opinion (*Proleg.* i. 60.); and Pinkerton, agreeing with both, says, "the truth is, that from the fourth century to the eleventh, the names Scotia and Scoti belonged solely to Ireland and the Irish."—*Enquiry*, part iv. c. 1. Sir Walter Scott, therefore, anticipates by a century or two, when, in speaking of Kenneth Macalpine, he says, "The country united under his sway was then, for the first time, called Scotland; which name it has ever since retained."—*Hist. of Scotland, Camb. Cyc.* vol. i. c. ii.

‡ Said to have been brought into Ireland by the Tuatha-de-Danaan.—See Vol. I. of this work, c. v. p. 78. Of this relic, and its removal, Drayton thus makes mention:—

"Our Longshanks, Scotland's scourge, who to the Orcaids raught
His sceptre; and with him, from wild Albania brought
The reliques of her crown (by him first placed here),
The seat on which her kings inaugurated were."

Polyolb, Seventeenth Song.

To return to the course of our history.—The marriage of Malmaria, the daughter of the conqueror of the Picts to Aodh Finliath, the monarch now ruling over Ireland, was, as we have seen, a continuance of the ancient ties of amity between the two kindred kingdoms of Ireland and of Albany. After Aodh's death,* his successor, Flan Siona (A. D. 879.), solicited also and won the hand of the widowed queen Malmaria, who became, through this double alliance, the means of connecting the three great branches of the Hy-Niell race, the Tyronian, the Clan-Colman, and the Slanian, to the utter exclusion of the fourth, or Tyrconnel branch from the succession to the monarchy.†

Among the deficiencies most to be complained of by a reader of our early history, is the want of the interest and instruction arising from the contemplation of individual character—the rare occurrence, not merely of marked historical personages, but of any actors in the tumultuous scene sufficiently elevated above their contemporaries to attract the eye in passing, or form a resting place for the mind. To this but too obvious defect of our early annals, a rare exception occurs at the period we have now reached, in the person of Cormac Mac Culinan, king and bishop of Cashel, whose connection with the literary as well as the political history of his country, imparts an interest to his name and reign but seldom attendant upon the records of his brother kings and bishops.

The union of the regal and sacerdotal powers in the same person was not without precedent in Cormac's own family;—two of his ancestors, Oncobar and Cenfilad, having been, at their respective periods, kings of Cashel as well as bishops of Emly.‡ As Cashel had, in the

* iv. Mag. ad ann. 876. (serm commun. 879.)

† Hinc sequitur O'Neillios Tironenses Clan Colmannos, et Clan Slanios per Maelmariam consociatos fuisse, et Tirconnallenses a Regimine Hibernorum prorsus exclusos.—*Rer. Hib. Script.* t. iv. ad ann. 878. *Note.* See also, *Dissert. on the Hist. of Ireland*, sect. xv.

‡ Ware's Bishops, at Emly and Cashel.

times preceding his reign, been comprised in the see of Emly, some wonder has been expressed at its appearance as a distinct bishopric in the instance of king Cormac. But though no record of the change exists, it may fairly be concluded that, as one of the consequences of the high political rank which Munster had now assumed, its capital city had been equally advanced on the scale of episcopal jurisdiction; and it seems even probable that the station of metropolitical see which Cashel afterwards attained had long before been held virtually by it as the capital of Munster.

In upholding the triple character of king, bishop, and warrior, this prince had been anticipated by his ancestor, Olchobar Mac-Kenedi, who, in like manner, though a bishop and abbot, illustrated the annals of his reign by a brilliant victory over the Danes.*

The very brief period during which Cormac held the sceptre was passed, unremittingly, by him in warfare both with the monarch and the king of Leinster; but whether through provocation originating with himself or his antagonists is a point variously represented by historians. Judging from the dates, however, assigned to the transactions by the annalists, it is clearly unjust to attribute the first hostile movement to Cormac, who, on the contrary, appears to have been administering the affairs of his kingdom in peace, when Flann-Siona, then monarch of Ireland, made an irruption into Munster, and laid waste the country from Gaura to Limerick.† An opportunity of taking revenge for this wanton inroad was not long wanting. In the following year, attended by Flaherty, the warlike abbot of Iniscathy, who was the chief prompter and adviser of his military enterprises, Cormac gave battle to the monarch A. D. 907. and his confederates, on the Heath of Moylena, a plain

* "It may be," says Lanigan, "that he was originally head bishop at Cashel, on account of his extraordinary merit, according to the Irish system of raising distinguished persons to the episcopal rank in places where previously there had been no bishops."—Chap. xxii. § iv.

† Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 906. Annal. Ult. ad an. 906.

memorable in the traditions of older times,* and having gained a decisive victory over them, obtained hostages as marks of submission from their royal leader. Still further to follow up his success and bring into subjection the proud power of the Hy-Niels, Cormac marched also into Roscommon, and there exacted similar pledges of submission; thus conferring upon the Church the rare and welcome triumph of seeing the northern portion of the island rendered tributary to an ecclesiastical sovereign.

The original source of the hostile feelings which had first given rise to this war appears to have been the part taken by the monarch in encouraging and aiding the people of Leinster in their refusal to pay the customary tributes to the king of Munster.† This right or custom of receiving tribute in exchange for subsidies or wages, which formed a part of the relations established between the superior and inferior princes, was originally excised by the subordinate kings only within the limits of their own provinces; while the supreme monarch asserted this right over all the provincial princes, and presenting subsidies to each, received tribute and supplies from each in return. In the course of time, however, when the throne of Cashel had become, in every respect, almost coequal with that of Tara, the king of Munster, no longer content with his own provincial resources, extended his demands over the whole of the southern moiety of Ireland, rendering tri-

* The plain of Lene, in the King's County, remarkable in our history for having been the scene of a great victory gained by Con "of the Hundred Battles" over his competitor for the sovereignty, Eogan Mogh-Nead, See *Tigernach*, ad an. 181. The hero, Goll, the son of Morni, whom Macpherson borrowed from Irish history, was one of the champions that fought and conquered on the side of Connaught in that battle. See *Rev. Hib. Scrip. Prolegom.* lviii, where a Poem on the Battle of Moylena, entitled "Cath Lene," is referred to as still extant.

† "The Book of Wars and Battles mentions at large the reason which induced Cormac this time to war upon the Lagenians; and says it was because their king, Cearbhull, refused to pay the usual tributes due from the kings in Leath Mogha to the king of Cashel."—*McCurtin's Brief Discourse, etc.*

butary to himself all the other states and princes of Leath Mogh.

Such was the origin and nature of the claim which the people of Leinster now strenuously resisted, and, with a natural jealousy of so usurping a power, were as strenuously abetted in their resistance by the monarch. Both parties prepared with energy for the encounter; though to Cormac himself is attributed, by most of his historians, a strong reluctance to commit his fame and the peace of his subjects to the chance of a contest so doubtful. To whatever extent, however, such scruples may have arisen in his mind, they were completely overborne by the rash counsels of his war-minister, the impetuous abbot of Iniscathy. The army of Munster was accordingly marched into the Lagenian territory,* where they were met by the united forces of the monarch and the king of Leinster, supported also by most of the princes of Leath-Cuinn. A foreboding that he should fall in this battle is said to have so strongly taken possession of Cormac's mind, that, under the avowed influence of this feeling he made his last will; and, though himself of the Eoganacht or Eugenian race, appointed, with a due regard to the alternate right of the Dalcassians, the prince of this tribe who was to succeed him.

A. D.
908.

The result of the battle was such as might have been expected from the disparity in numbers of the two armies engaged. After a long and desperate struggle, the troops of Munster were at length forced to give way; and Cormac himself, according to his foreboding, was among the slain; having, as some relate, been thrown from his horse in the heat and press of the engagement. A number of other princes and nobles of Munster, whose names are enumerated by the annalists, were, together with 6000 of their respective clans,† put to the sword, on

* Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 908. " "

† The Annals of Inisfallen mention particularly the clan of Eogan, and the clan of Neill:—*Chineoil Eogain 7 moran eile d'naistibh clainne Neill.*

that day. Among the most distinguished of the slain are mentioned the abbots of Cork and of Kinetty;* two of that numerous body of ecclesiastics who, forced by the overwhelming inroads of the Danes to take up arms in defence of themselves and their establishments, became at length but too much accustomed to this fleshly warfare,† and in more than one instance, like the fierce abbot of Iniscathy, embittered far more than they mitigated the horrors of civil strife.

As far as the few events known of his life enable us to judge of Cormac's character and career, he appears to have been an accomplished and gentle-minded ecclesiastic, raised late in life to the stormy possession of a throne, and made evidently the instrument, during his few years of sovereignty, of some of the more violent and aspiring spirits of his order. With the exception of a simple announcement of his accession to the see of Cashel, there occurs no mention in our annals of his name till after he had ascended the throne of Munster, which warrants the conclusion that his previous life had been passed in peaceful pursuits; while the memorable monuments of his taste and talent which he left behind in his famous Psalter, a work illustrative of Irish antiquities, and the beautiful chapel built by him at Cashel, which still retains his name, show that his leisure had not been unprofitably, nor without honour to himself and his country, employed.

When advanced to the throne, the views and counsels by which he was guided were those of others, it is manifest, not his own; and the same gentleness of nature which had fitted him for a life of peace will ac-

* IV. Mag.

† Hume, speaking of the same period in England, says, "The ecclesiastics were then no less warlike than the civil magistrates."—(Vol. i. cii.) and Mosheim, in his account of the internal state of the church in the ninth century, tells us,—"The bishops and heads of monasteries held many lands and castles by a feudal tenure; and being thereby bound to furnish their princes with a certain number of soldiers in time of war, were obliged also to take the field themselves at the head of these troops."—Cent. 9 part 2. c. ii.

count also for the culpable facility with which he now suffered himself to be involved in war. Once committed, however, in the strife, he appears to have deported himself in a manner becoming a king and general, in such exigencies; and the circumstances preceding the fatal battle in which he fell,—the making of his will, bequeathing gifts to his favourite friends and the principal churches,*—his sending for Lorcan, the head of the Dalcassian tribe, and declaring, in the presence of all his court and kinsmen, that this prince was his rightful successor in the throne—all these deliberate preparations for a fate which he felt to be near at hand, contrasted with the rash and vulgar turbulence of those who were hurrying him to that doom, presents altogether a picture of moral dignity, of calm encounter with fortune, which, to whatever age or country it might have belonged, could not fail to awaken interest and respect.

In endeavouring to secure, as far as was in his power, to the Dalcassian branch of his family their right of alternate succession to the throne of Munster, he made but a due return of justice and gratitude for all the generous services rendered by that gallant sept, as well to himself as to many of his predecessors,† though of the rival and too often usurping branch. Occupying a district which served as a frontier ground between Mun-

* The following is the list of his presents to the churches, as I find it in Keating :—"An ounce of gold, an ounce of silver, and a horse and arms or Adinnau; a golden and a silver chalice, and a vestment of silk, to Lismore; a golden and a silver chalice, 4 ounces of gold, and 5 of silver, to Cashel; 3 ounces of gold, and a mass-book, to Emly; an ounce of gold, and another of silver, to Glendaloch; a horse and arms, with an ounce of gold, and a silk vestment, to Kildare; 24 ounces of gold and of silver to Armagh; 3 ounces of gold to Iniscatha; 3 ounces of gold, and a silk vestment, with his royal benediction, to the successor of Mungaird (Mungret)." Whatever authenticity may be claimed for this part of Cormac's will, the bequests to his friends, which are enumerated in verse, bear evident marks of more modern fabrication; the list of articles comprising, among other things, "a clock," and a "coat of mail of bright and polished steel."

† The particulars of the many good services of the clan of Dalgais to the kings of Munster, in the disputes between that province and Leinster, are recorded in a poem composed by O'Dugan.—See *Appendix to Nicholson's Histor. Lib.*

ster and Connaught, it was upon these brave warriors that always fell the first brunt of invasion in any incursions from the latter province;* while, by means of their signal-fires, lighted up rapidly from hill to hill, they gave instant alarm to the neighbouring districts, and secured the inhabitants† from surprise. Among the recorded tributes to the high reputation of this brave sept, was one from the pen, as we are told, of Cormac himself; who said that, "in the vanguard was always the post of the Dalgais on entering an enemy's country, and in the rear when retiring from it."‡

Some writers have asserted that, in despite of the solemn will of Olill Ollum, enjoining that the succession to the throne of Cashel should be enjoyed alternately by the Eugenic and Dalcassian branches of his family, yet so often had the former tribe encroached on the rights of the latter, that little more than one third of the princes elevated to that throne had been of the Dalcassian race. Were this statement correct, so frequent an infringement of an old law of succession would have formed a rare exception to the general fidelity with which the ancient Irish were known to have adhered to such settlements. It appears, however, that the disparity in numbers observable between the Eugenic and Dalcassian kings of Munster, can be traced satisfactorily to the practice prevalent among the antiquaries of

* There existed, from an early period, a constant enmity between the two provinces, Connaught and Munster, and the present county of Clare was the bone of contention; the Conacians claiming it, as being included in Northern Ireland. At an early period the Momonians were obliged to make Fearan Cloidhimh, or Sword-Land, of all the western coast; as they were, after the death of Goll, of many other parts."—*Note on a Translation of the Ode of Goll, the Son of Morni, Transact. of R. I. Academy, 1788.*

† "It is curious, even at this day, to observe the judgment with which these beacons were placed. I have examined several of these eminences, and not only through the whole county of Clare were forts so disposed that in two hours the entire country could receive the alarm, whether the attempts were made by sea or land, or both, but in Lower Ormond stations were so judiciously placed that the least attempts or preparations, towards the Shannon side, were quickly made known."—*O'Halloran, Hist. of Ireland, book ii. c. 1.*

‡ Vallancey, *Law of Tanistry illustrated.*

some great houses, of lengthening out the series of the family succession by means of adscititious names. In this sort of genealogical imposture the seanachies, or antiquaries of the Eugénian race are said to have rather unwarrantably indulged; insomuch that were their catalogue of kings retrenched of its interpolated names, the excess of the number of their reigning princes over that of the Dalcassians would be found considerably diminished.*

By the monkish chroniclers, the reign of their favourite king, Cormac, is described as a period rich in all earthly blessings; an interval of sunshine between past and coming storms, in whose cheering light religion and learning revived, the song of peace was again heard upon the hills, and the smile of returning prosperity diffused brightness over the whole face of the land.† In writing of the reign of a bishop-king, the monastic historian may well be indulged in some flights of zeal; but unluckily the picture here presented can boast no semblance whatever of truth. So far from the short period of Cormac's reign having been an epitome, as here described, of the golden age, it was, on the contrary, marked throughout with all the worst features of violence and injustice that ordinarily disfigure the face of Irish history; rendered, in this instance, still more odious by the gross and prominent part which an un-

* In many instances, kings of Munster, who had been coreignants, or reigning at the same time in different parts of the country, were set down in the list of the Eugénian antiquaries as having reigned separately, and at different periods. To show the lengths to which this deception was carried, one example will suffice. From the year of the battle in which Cormac fell (908), to the death of Callaghan Cashel, king of Munster (964), (a period of forty-six years) there reigned over Munster three successive princes. But into this same interval, namely, between the death of Cormac and that of Callaghan Cashel, the Eugénian antiquaries have crowded no less than 13 kings, and distributed among them a series of 166 years.

A similar imposture seems to have been practised by the Scandinavian historians; and Torfæus, as quoted by Mallet, accuses Saxo Grammaticus of having inserted, in his list of kings, "*tantôt des princes étrangers, tantôt des seigneurs ou vassaux puissans.*"—*Mallet, Introduction.*

† See Keating, O'Halloran, M'Curtin, &c.

worthy pretender to the priestly character performed in the transactions of the scene.

In one respect only may the prospect of the country be said to have brightened to a certain extent at this period. The ascendancy of the Danes had, by some late victories over them, been considerably diminished; and the expulsion of great numbers of them from the island had but the year before Cormac's accession been effected.

This partial deliverance from foreign encroachment, accomplished chiefly by the brave efforts of the people of Leinster, who had too often on former occasions disgraced themselves by confederacy with this same foe, has been represented carelessly by some historians as a total expulsion of the Danish marauders from the island.* Whereas it is certain that at this period, and for a long time after, there continued to be stationary settlements of the Danes on various parts of the sea-coast, so well established in their several positions and engaged in commercial pursuits as to have become, to a great degree, incorporated with the population of the country. That the chiefs of these maritime settlements may have acted as leaders, occasionally, to some of those numerous swarms of adventurers that were from time to time wafted from the Baltic, may be fairly and rationally taken for granted. But it is not the less evident that, throughout all this period, there remained fixed in the four great holds of their power,—Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and Limerick,—a no inconsiderable portion of Danish population; and that those boasts of an entire expulsion of the Danes, which occur more than once in the records of this and the preceding century, imply nothing more than the total dispersion of some of those later swarms of freebooters, from whose visitation, arriving fresh as they did to the work of spoil and mur-

* "In 902 the Danes were slaughtered by the people, and the whole of them driven out of Ireland."—*Lamgan, Ecclesiast. Hist.* chap. 22. § 3.

der, it might well be considered a triumph and signal blessing to have been delivered.

In the year 908, but a very short time after the period when all the Northmen, it is pretended, were driven out of the country, we find them in full force under the command of Tomar, the Jarl of the Limerick Danes, pursuing their accustomed course of rapine and devastation; and, among other specified enormities, plundering the rich monastery of Clonmacnois, and laying waste the beautiful isles of Lough Ree,*—from all which places, it is added, they carried away “great spoil of gold and silver, and many precious articles.” In two years after this period a fleet arrived in Waterford from the Baltic, bringing to the Danes of that city a fresh accession of force; and it appears that, towards the end of the monarch Flan Siona’s reign, their numbers had augmented considerably throughout the whole province of Munster. Some jealousies, however, had evidently broken out between the different tribes of the Northmen; as, in a massacre which took place in the church of Mochelloc,† where a great number of the Waterford Danes were attacked and slaughtered by the people of Munster, the latter were assisted in perpetrating this outrage by the Danes of Limerick.‡

In the year 916, the monarch, Flan Siona, died, after a long reign of thirty-six years and some months, during a part of which he was engaged in open warfare with his roydamna and son-in-law, Nial Glundubh, who now succeeded him on the throne.

* *Annal. Inisfall. ex cod. Bodleian, ad an. 908.*

† Supposed to be the church of Kilmalloe, the foundation of which is attributed to St. Mochelloc; and its name a contraction, it is thought, of *Kil-mochellock*.—See *Lamigan, Eccles. Hist.*, c. 17. § 6.

‡ *Annal. Inisfall. ex cod. Bodleian, ad an. 911.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

State of Learning and Literature among the Irish in the Ninth Century.— Notices of Writers who Flourished at that Period.—Eogus, the Hagiologist.—Fothad, a Poet.—Maolmura, a Bardic Historian.—Flann Mac-Lonan, Chief Poet of all Ireland.—King Cormac, Author of the Psalter of Cashel.—His Chapel on the Rock of Cashel.—Date and Progress of Stone Architecture in Ireland.—Account of the Culdees.—Bishops styled Princes.—Usurpation of the See of Armagh by Laymen.

NOTWITHSTANDING the harassed condition of the country during the whole of the ninth century, and the repeated spoliation to which all the great monasteries, those seats of learning, as well as of piety, were exposed, there still survived enough of that ardent love of instruction, for which the Irish had long been celebrated, to keep the flame from wholly expiring beneath the barbarian's tread. Many of the schools appear to have been still maintained; and although Armagh, which had once towered among them as their university, was in this century burned, and its sacred edifices destroyed,—though Iona was now so much harassed by the pirates that the shrine and relics of her saint, Columba, had been sent from thence* for a chance of safety to Ireland,—yet that learning, such as was then cultivated, still continued to thrive in the schools of Clonmacnois, Devenish,† Kildare, and other such religious establishments, may be concluded from the great number of

* In the Annals of Ulster (ad an. 829) it is mentioned, that Diermit, the abbot of Hy, came to Ireland, bringing with him the relics of St. Columba. These remains of the saint were (as we are told by Walafrid, the biographer of Blathmac) inclosed in a shrine of gold; and, having been taken from Ireland to Albany in the year 828 (*Annal. Ult.*), were again transported back to Ireland in 830.

† An island in Lough Erne, on which St. Lasearian, otherwise called Molaisse, is said to have founded a monastery in the sixth century. (Ware's *Catalogue of the Bishops of Clogher*.) On this island stands one of the most perfect of our Round Towers, and near it are the venerable ruins of Devenish Abbey.

scribes, or men of letters, whose names are recorded in the obituaries of the time, as having adorned these different schools.*

Towards the close of the preceding volume I have in so far anticipated my task as to give some brief account of those natives of Ireland who, in the course of the ninth century, became distinguished for their learning and piety in foreign lands. It now remains for me to notice in like manner the most known and prominent among those who, during the same interval, and amidst all the distractions and commotions of their country, arrived at eminence in the same peaceful pursuits at home.

At the beginning of the century died Ængus, the learned hagiologist,† called, from the piety and austerity of his life, Ceile-De, or the Servant of God.‡ Near the monastery of Clonenagh, of which this holy man became abbot, there was in those days, as tradition tells us, a waste solitary place, to which he used to betake himself for meditation and prayer; and from this circumstance, it is added, the place in question bears to this day the name of Desert Ængus.§ Besides a select Martyrology, containing the names only of the chief saints, or, as he calls them, "the Princes of the Saints," Ængus was the author also of a more copious work of the same description, comprising saints of every nation and age, and including among the number some Britons, Gauls, Italians, and even Egyptians, whom he asserts to have

* See the iv. Mag. for ninth century, *passim*.

† A detailed account of Ængus and his writings may be found in the Transactions of the Ibero-Celtic Society.

‡ The term *Ceile*, or servant, was, it appears, a very frequent adjunct to names in those times. Thus, for instance, Cele-Christ, Cele-Peter, i. e. servant of Christ, servant of Peter; and sometimes Gilla or Giolla, was used with the same import,—as in Gilla-Patrick, servant of Patrick. See O'Brien, *in voce Gilla*. This name of Ceile-De, or servant of God, which was at first applied only to some eminently pious individuals, became, somewhat later, the designation of a whole order, or community;—the name "Culdees," adopted by a certain body of ecclesiastics, who made their appearance in Ireland early in the ninth century, having been most probably derived from Ceile-De.

§ Lanigan, *Ecclesiast. Hist. of Ireland.*, c. xx. § 9.

died in Ireland, and also mentions the several places where their remains are laid.*

With this work, which is called sometimes the *Psalter na Rann*, another, of the same name, but not by *Ængus*, nor of so early a date, is frequently confounded;—the latter being a sort of miscellany relating to Irish affairs,† and containing, among other fabulous matter, one of the earliest outlines of that famed Milesian story, to which succeeding writers have vainly endeavoured to lend some semblance of historical substance and shape.

Among the poetical writers of this age is commemorated Fothadh, the poet of the monarch Aodh Finliath; and one of the productions still extant under his name is an ode addressed to his royal patron on his coronation. A passage cited from this poem, relating to the fiscal rights or tributes of kings, will be found strongly to confirm and illustrate all that has been said in the preceding pages of the high station and authority, almost commensurate with that of the monarch himself, which the kings of Cashel had now, by gradual strides of encroachment, attained. "Rights," says this metrical jurisconsult, "are lawfully due to the descendants of Niell, except from the abbot of Armagh, the king of Cashel, and the king of Tarrah."

In tracing to the bardic historians of this age the origin of the Milesian fable, I have already mentioned the poet Maolmura as one of the chief and apparently most skilful of the successive fabricators of that fgment.‡ The following record of this poet's death, describing him in his mixed character of bard and historian, is found in the annals of the Four Masters, under the date, A. D. 884: — "Died Maolmura, a learned and truly well-taught poet, and an historian skilled in the language of the Scots."

Towards the close of the century flourished another

* Lanigan, *Ecclesiast. Hist. of Ireland*, c. xx. note 105.

† See extract from this work, given by Ware (*Antiquities*, c. 2.), who, however, confounds the author of it with *Ængus Ceile-De*.

‡ See Vol. I. of this Work, chap. viii. p. 156.

poet, Flann Mac Lonan,* who was called the Virgil of the race of Scots,† and held the distinguished office of Ard-Ollamh, or chief poet of all Ireland. The gift of poesy appears to have been hereditary in this lineage,—his mother, Laitheog, having attained such reputation in the art as to have affixed popularly to her name the designation of “the Poetic.”

Of many of the writings attributed to the authors I have above enumerated, there still exist copies in the hands of the collectors of Irish manuscripts; while some are to be found interspersed through those various “Books,” or Miscellanies, which constitute so large a portion of our ancient native literature.‡

It would be undoubtedly not the least interesting fact in our history at this period, could it be well ascertained that the great Alfred (as some English chroniclers have alleged) was sent by his father for religious instruction to Ireland, and there confided to the care of a female of high reputation for Christian knowledge, named Modwenna.§ The religious woman

* Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 896.

† Virgil sil Scots prius Phile Gaoideal uile.—IV. Mag. ad an. 891.

‡ In the titles of our ancient vernacular works, the use of the word *Leabhar*, or Book, is of constant occurrence. Thus we have the Book of Reigins, the Book of Rights, the Book of Battles, the Book of Invasions, &c., &c. See the Appendix and Index to Nicholson's *Irish Historical Library*, as well as the List of Irish MSS. given by Dr. O'Connor (*Ep. Nunc.*), where will be found enumerated the titles of more than fifty of such “Books,” all of them still extant.

It was also customary to name books from the colour of their bindings. Thus there is the *Leabhar Buidhe*, or Yellow Book; the *Leabhar Dubh*, or Black Book; the *Leabhar Ruadh*, or Red Book; and, (as this latter volume is sometimes called) the *Leabhar Breac*, or Speckled Book.

§ “If it be true, as some chroniclers intimate, that infirm health occasioned his father, in obedience to the superstition of the day, to send him to Modwenna, a religious lady in Ireland, celebrated into sanctity, such an expedition must, by its new scenes, have kept his curiosity alive, and have amplified his information.”—*Turner's Hist. of the Anglo-Saxons*, book i. chap. viii. Mr. Turner cites as the authorities for this supposition, *Hist. Aurea Johannis Tinnuth. MSS. in Bib. Bobl.*, and the chronicler Higden. He might have found others, and still stronger, in the following passage of Usher:—“Ut de Polydoro Vergilio et Nicolao Harpsfeldio nihil dicam, qui nono post Christum seculo *Modwennam* et *Ositham* floruisse volunt, illos secuti auctores, qui *Alfredum filium regis Anglorum* a *Monenâ* vel *Modwennâ* nostrâ gravi quo laborabat morbo liberatum magnum illum Aluredum, &c., &c.”—*De Brit. Eccles. Primord.* The cure, here said to

of this name. HERBERT in our ecclesiastical annals, is in general supposed to have flourished in the seventh century: but there exist positive grounds for assigning her to the ninth, which would remove one at least of the few difficulties that stand in the way of so interesting an episode in the great hero's life.

In the list of the authors of the ninth century must not be forgotten the name of Cormac, King of Munster; who, to his compound designation of prelate-king, superadds another, not I fear, less incongruous, that of poet-historian. Whether there be still extant any copy of his famous *Psalter of Cashel*,*—a work containing, as we are told, besides other matter, all the details of the Milesian romance, as then brought together and methodised by his pen,—appears a point by no means easy to be ascertained; nor, except as a subject of mere antiquarian curiosity, can it be accounted much worth the trouble of inquiry. The small

have been performed on Alfred by Medwecca, is mentioned also by Hammer. Unluckily Amer, in his *Life of Alfred*, a work worthy of its noble subject, makes no mention of the visit of his hero to Ireland: and it is most probable that some confusion between the great Alfred and a king of the Northumbrian Britons, named Alfrid, who really did pass some years of exile in Ireland (see Vol. I. of this work, p. 296), may have given rise to the tradition mentioned in the text. There is still extant an Irish poem, said to have been written by the Northumbrian king during his banishment, which the reader, curious in such matters, may find in Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*, vol. ii. notes: though of the genuineness of this poem, it is right to add, Dr. O'Connor gives the following cautious opinion:—"Ego minime asseram genuinum esse Alfredi factum"—*Annotat. &c.*

* "This was a collection (says Mr. O'Reilly) of Irish records, in prose and verse, transcribed from more ancient documents, such as the *Psalter of Tarah*, &c. It contained also many original pieces, some of them written by Cormac himself. This book was extant in Limerick in the year 1712, as appears by a large folio MS. in the Irish language, preserved in the library of Cashel, written in Limerick in that year, and partly transcribed from the original *Psalter of Cashel*." The writer adds:—"The original *Psalter of Cashel* was long supposed to be lost, but it is now said to be deposited in the British Museum."—*Transactions of the Iberno-Gelt. Society*. In the time of Sir James Ware this work was, according to his account, "yet extant, and held in high esteem;" and that some manuscript, professing to be this *Psalter*, was in the hands of Mr. Astle, appears from his own declaration:—"The oldest Irish MS. which we have discovered is the *Psalter of Cashel*, written about the end of the tenth century."—*Origin of Writing*. For other particulars respecting this celebrated *Psalter*, see Nicholson, *Irish Hist. Lib.*, Charles O'Connor's *Reflections*, &c. (*Collectan. de Reb. Hib.*, vol. iii.) and Stillingfleet, *Orig. Britann.* 224, 225, &c.

and beautiful chapel erected by him, on the Rock of Cashel, and still bearing his name, is assuredly, as an index of the progress of the useful and elegant arts at this period, a much more important object of interest and research.

By some of the inquirers into our antiquities it has been asserted, that neither in domestic or ecclesiastical architecture was stone and cement of lime used by the native Irish, at any period antecedent to the twelfth century;* while others, on the contrary, maintain that there existed structures of this kind for religious purposes as far back as the fifth and sixth centuries; and some have even been of opinion that both the Round Towers, and the ancient churches near which they stand, were alike the work of the Christian Irish in those ages.†

About half-way, perhaps, between these two widely different views may be found, as in most such disputes respecting Irish antiquities, the point nearest to the truth. That it was an unusual practice in Ireland, even so late as the twelfth century, to erect structures of stone for any purpose, domestic or ecclesiastical, may be concluded from one or two authentic anecdotes of that period. When the celebrated archbishop, Malachy, undertook, on his return from Rome to Ireland, to build, at Banchor, a small stone oratory, after the fashion of

* Thus Harris, in speaking of St. Malachy:—"He built a stone oratory at Banchor, which is said to be the first of the sort that was erected in Ireland" (Ware's Bishops, at *Malachy O'Morgair*.) In the Annals of Ulster, however, for the year 788, there is express mention of a stone oratory at Armagh; and a stone church is said, by the Four Masters, to have been built at Clonmacnois by the monarch, Flann Siona, in 904. In the following century the instances of such architecture are numerous; and a large church of Armagh is described, in 1020, as being not only constructed of stone, but having a leaden roof.—"In Damliacc mor con a thuighi do loisighe."—*Annal. Ult.*

† *Historical and Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Primitive Use of the Irish Pillar Tower*, by Colonel Hervey de Montmorency-Morris. Sir Richard Hoare, too, in speaking of Cormac's chapel, says, "Its masonry, architecture, and ornaments, are certainly the production of a very early age; and the Round Tower was probably erected at or near the same period." See for notice of this very untenable hypothesis respecting the Round Towers Vol. I. of this Work, p. 35.

those he had seen in other countries, considerable wonder was expressed by the people at the unusualness of the sight, stone buildings being then a novelty in that part of the country.* A few years later, too (1161), when Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, erected a palace or castle of stone at Tuam, so much surprise did the building excite in the natives, that it became celebrated among them under the name of the Wonderful Castle.

Notwithstanding all this, the remains still existing in Ireland of stone structures, manifestly of great antiquity, leave not a doubt that the art of building with cemented stone was, however rarely, yet very early practised in this country. Without laying much stress on the instance afforded in the ancient Damliag, or House of Stone, said to have been erected by St. Kienan as early as the fifth century, some of the ruins in the valley of Glendalough, and parts of the small church of St. Doulach, near Dublin, present features of remote antiquity which prove them to be of a much earlier date than the chapel of Cormac at Cashel; this latter structure being clearly a specimen of the more ornate stage of that old, circular style of architecture (called Saxon, but evidently a corruption of the Roman, or Grecian)†

* "Visum est Malachiam debere construi in Benchor oratorium lapideum instar illorum quæ in aliis regionibus extracta conspexerat. Et cum cepisset jacere fundamenta, indigenæ quidem mirati sunt, quod in terrâ illâ necdum ejusmodi ædificia invenirentur."—*S. Bernard in Vit. Malach.*

† "That the species of building which we call Saxon, or Anglo-Norman, and of which this island (England) possesses the most magnificent examples, was, in fact, intended as an imitation of Roman architecture, cannot be doubted."—*Whittington on Gothic Architecture*. Another writer, well acquainted with ecclesiastical architecture, says of the heavy, circular manner of building, "It is called the Saxon style, merely because it prevailed during their dynasty in Britain; but, in fact, it is the Grecian or Roman style, having the essential characters of that style, though, in consequence of the general decline of the arts, rudely executed."—*Milner's Treatise, &c.*

The following tribute to the ecclesiastical antiquities of Ireland comes from an authority of high value on such subjects:—"The stone chapel of Cormac at Cashel is nowhere to be surpassed, and is itself a host in point of remote and singular antiquity; and though her monastic architecture may fall short, both in design and execution, and be obliged to yield the palm of superiority to the sister kingdoms, yet Ireland, in her stone-roofed chapels, Round Towers, and rich crosses, may justly boast of singularities unknown and unpossessed by either of them."—*Sir R. C. Hoare, Tour in Ireland.*

which, in the church of St. Doulach, is seen in its ruder and yet undecorated form. It may be remarked, as peculiar to these ancient Irish churches, that their roofs are of stone; and that the crypts, instead of being subterranean, as in the ancient British churches, are situated aloft between the cieling and the angular roof of stone.

A certain perverse school of antiquarians, who take pleasure in attributing the credit of Ireland's remains to any other race of people than her own, finding it in vain to deny that buildings of cemented stone were existing among them in the ninth century, have, without a shadow of proof, ascribed all these early structures to the Danes. How entirely groundless is the supposition that the Round Towers were the work of these foreign marauders, has already been sufficiently shown; and the hypothesis, assigning to them the curious stone-roofed chapels, the mysterious sculptures in Glendalough, and other such early ecclesiastical remains, is to the full as gratuitous and absurd. It appears to be questionable, indeed, whether there exist any vestiges of stone buildings at present in Ireland that can, on any satisfactory grounds, be ascribed to the Northmen;* and it is probable that those raths, or earthen-works, raised as military defences, in the construction of which they took for models the artificial mounds used as fortresses by the natives, are the only remains of any description that

Of the two crosses at Monasterboyce, the same writer says, "They are by far the finest examples, and the richest in their sculpture, of any I have ever yet seen."

* "There are at present scarcely any traces of stone buildings which can, with a satisfactory calculation of correctness, be ascribed to a Danish origin . . . and the examiner who is averse to the indulgence of conjecture in antiquarian inquiries, will perhaps believe that the only military vestiges, satisfactorily attributed to the Danes, are the earth-works usually denominated Rathes."—*Brewer's Beauties of Ireland*.

"Some of these high moats (says the late Mr. William Tighe), particularly those that have any appearance of a fence round the summit, may be properly attributed to the Danes; and one of these seems to derive its name from them,—that of Lister-lin, Fort of the Easter-lins or Danes."—*W. Tighe's Survey of the County of Kilkenny*, 631.

can, with tolerable certainty, be ascribed to Danish workmanship.

In the life of king Cormac there occur some circumstances connected with the ecclesiastical affairs of his time, which might justify a brief review of the condition of the Irish church at this period. But, as a more fitting occasion will be found for such an inquiry, I shall here content myself with calling attention, for a short space, to a peculiar body of ecclesiastics called Culdees, who about this time make their first appearance in Irish history; though, in order to serve the purposes of religious party, it has been pretended by some writers that they took their rise in North Britain as early as the beginning of the fourth century; while others, by a somewhat more plausible hypothesis, place the time of their origin about the middle of the sixth.

With respect to the first of these wholly ungrounded assumptions, nothing further need be said to mark its true character and object, than that it came from the same mint of fiction* which sent forth the forty counterfeit kings of Scotland; being obviously invented to provide for that series of imaginary monarchs a no less shadowy array of priesthood under the denomination of Culdees. But the weak fable of the Forty Kings having been in the course of time abandoned, the date of the origin of the Culdees was in like manner relinquished, or rather was shifted, more conveniently, to about the middle of the sixth century, when the celebrated Irish saint, Columba, was assumed as the founder of their order.† Among a select body of believers surrounding

* "The first author of it," says bishop Lloyd, "is one that was much given to such things, John of Fordun." In the *Scotichronicon* of this fabler is to be found the source as well of the Forty Kings as of the pretended antiquity of the Culdees; and, in both fictions, he is followed by his countryman Buchanan, who refers the origin of this latter community to no less early a period than the time of Dioclesian.—*Rev. Scot. lib. iv.*

† From a mistaken notion that Columba and his successors did not consider bishops necessary for the ordaining of priests, the later Scotch writers, improving on the original fiction, converted all their Columbian Culdees into presbyterians: while Ledwich, and others of his school, claim this

this holy man at Iona, were preserved pure, as we are told, from the flood of Romanism which was then inundating all the rest of the British isles, not only the primitive doctrines and principles of Christianity, but also, according to some upholders of the hypothesis, the orthodox system of church government, as prescribed and established in the pure apostolic times.

It is almost needless to say, that, for all this crude speculation of there having existed, so early as the sixth century, any distinct body of ecclesiastics called Culdees, holding doctrines different, in any respect, from those of the clergy in general of Ireland and North Britain, there is not the slightest foundation in fact;—the polemic object of the fiction being the only part of it that is at all consistent or intelligible. How vague and shallow were the grounds on which the whole scheme rested, may be judged from the fact that while, by one party or section of its upholders, the Culdees of Iona were claimed as models of presbyterianism, they were held up by another party, with equal confidence, as most exemplary episcopalians. It may be added also, as conclusive against the existence of any authority for this fable, that neither in Adamnan's *Life of Columba*, nor in any other of the numerous records of that saint,

imaginary sect with which they have peopled the cells of Hy, as sound episcopalians. To crown all, the venerable Dr. O'Connor, who allowed himself to be haunted too much by Druidism in his antiquarian speculations, supposes the Culdees to have been the remains of that ancient priesthood, retaining still, in their Christian profession, some vestiges of paganism, and, by the austerity of their lives, and occasional display of false miracles, deluding and dazzling the credulous multitude. His only foundation for this fancy appears to have been a record in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, for the year 806 (the earliest mention, I believe, of Culdeeism in our history), where it is said, that "a Culdee had arrived, in that year, from beyond the sea, and with dry feet, though he had not come in any ship; and that, at the same time, there had come down a written proclamation from heaven."

While such have been the inventions broached on this subject, it is right to add, that by two learned divines, Dr. Lloyd, the celebrated bishop of St. Asaph, and, in our own times, Dr. Lanigan, the subject has been treated in a manner combining at once sound learning and common sense;—both the protestant prelate and the Roman catholic priest having contributed successfully their joint efforts to demolish the silly and dishonest fictions that had been conjured up out of this antiquarian topic.

is the slightest mention made of Culdees, or of any religious body answering to their description; and that Bede,* who refers so frequently to the affairs of Iona, and the proceedings of the Columbian monks, not only is silent as to the existence of Culdees at that period,† but has said nothing whatever that can be interpreted as in the remotest degree implying their existence.

As far as certainty can be attained in the history of this community, which, like many other such objects of research, owes its chief fame and interest to the obscurity still encircling it, the Culdees appear to have been one of those new religious orders or communities which a change of discipline, either general, or in particular churches, was from time to time the means of introducing; and it seems pretty certain that neither in Scotland nor in Ireland did they make their appearance earlier than the ninth century. With respect to their functions, they were evidently secular clergy, attached to the cathedrals of dioceses, and performing the office of dean and chapter to the episcopate; and while in North Britain they in general superseded those communities of monks by which the cathedrals had hitherto been

* In the whole history of the tricks of controversy, there can be found few more coolly audacious than that which the Rev. Dr. Ledwich has practised (*Antiq. of Ireland*), in assuming the authority of Bede as expressly sanctioning his own favourite hypothesis, respecting the identity of the Columbian monks and the Culdees. Himself, as it appears, being satisfied on this identity, he makes no scruple of applying to the latter body all that Bede has stated solely of the former. Accordingly, such passages as the following occur frequently in his argument:—"Bede, though closely attached to the see of Rome, yet with candour and truth confesses the merits of the Culdees:"—Bede, all the time, be it observed, having said nothing concerning Culdees whatsoever! How successfully, however, this air of confidence imposes on others, may be seen by reference to the article "Culdees," in Rees's Cyclopædia, where the writer, sed, it is clear, from this fountain of truth, thus plausibly improves on his original:—"Few writers have done justice to the Culdees . . . even Bede, venerable as he was, though he bestows upon them great and just commendation, cannot avoid passing some censure upon them, and seems to have regarded them as schismatics, in the worst sense of what word."

† "Selden (says Lloyd) who is, for aught I know, the first that brought this instance of the Culdees into the controversy, yet acknowledges that in Bede there is no mention of them." Not willing to be left behind in any species of forgery, Macpherson, in his pretended Ossian, has turned St. Patrick into a Culdee.—See *Transact. Royal Irish Academy for 1787*.

served, in Ireland the usual fidelity to old customs prevailed, and the monks were in but few instances displaced for the new Culdean chapters.*

There occurs more than once in the records of this century some mention of a law relating to ecclesiastical property, which, as much importance appears to have been attached to it, require some passing notice. It would appear that the revenue arising from those dues, which had ever since the time of St. Patrick been paid to the church of Armagh, was, amidst the convulsions of this period, interrupted or withheld; and, in the year 824, we find the authority of the warlike Feidlim, king of Munster, interposed in aid of Artrigius, archbishop of Armagh, for the collection of this tax.† A law had been established, indeed, about the year 731, by the king of all Ireland and the king of Munster in concert, to regulate the payment of the revenue of the primatial see;‡ and it is manifestly this regulation we read of, in the annals of the ninth century, as enforced under the name of "the Law of St. Patrick."

Among those bishops who held the see of Armagh during this century, there occurs one named Cathasach, who is styled Prince of Armagh;—a distinction traced by some writers to a practice which prevailed in the early ages, of calling bishops the Princes of the People, or of the Church.§ But there appears no reason why, upon this supposition, the title should not have been extended as well to every other bishop of the see. It

* Lanigan, *Ecclesiast. Hist.* chap. 31. Lloyd *On Church Government*, chap. 7. Chalmers's *Caledonia*, book iii. chap. 8. Usher, *Eccles. Primord.* p. 637, &c.

† *iv. Mag.* ad ann. 822. 824.

‡ Harris, on Ware's *Bishops*, at *Artigius*.

§ "St Hilary, in his Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel, expressly calls bishops *Principes Populi*, the Princes of the People; and St. Augustin, in his Commentary on the Forty-fourth Psalm, tells us that it grew into use in the early ages, to call all bishops *Ecclesiæ Principes*. But that the arch-bishops of Armagh should be called so, might be owing to another reason, viz. because they sat in the principal metropolis, and were constituted over the rest of the clergy of the whole kingdom; as the supreme moderators of the Jewish church were called *Principes Sacerdotum*."—Harris on Ware, *Bishops*, at *Cathasach*.

seems therefore probable, that those so designated were really chieftains, as well as bishops, of Armagh; and that to the encroachments of these powerful dynasts, who, as lords of the soil, claimed a temporal right over the see,* is to be ascribed the irreverent anomaly which, at a later period we shall have to record, of no less than eight laymen usurping in turn the primacy, and seating themselves intrusively in the hallowed chair of St. Patrick.

CHAPTER XIX.

Accounts of the Danish Transactions in Ireland meagre and obscure.—Confusion of Dates and Names.—Ragnar Lodbrog.—Traditions concerning him.—Reign of the Monarch Niell Glundubb.—His Successor Donogh.—Heroic character of the Roydamna, Murkertach.—His Victories over the Danes.—Exploits of Callachan, King of Cashel.—Alliances between the Northmen and the Irish.—Their Confederacy at the Great Battle of Brunanburh.—Norse Account of that Battle.—Irish Mode of Fighting.—Triumphal Progress of the Roydamna through the Kingdom.—Takes Callachan of Cashel Prisoner.—Death of the Roydamna.

THE extent and importance of the possessions of the Northmen in Ireland, and the footing maintained by them, with few interruptions for so many centuries, in all the strongest maritime cities of the island, gives them a claim on the notice of an historian of this country, which has but seldom been sufficiently regarded. One of the chief reasons of this neglect is to be found in the obscurity which involves the affairs of these foreigners, more especially at the early period of their settlement, when the meagre knowledge of their transactions, gleaned from our annals, is confined to a list of their acts of outrage on the different monasteries and their holy in-

*“This family was most probably that of the dynasts of the district of Armagh, whose ancestor Daire had granted to St. Patrick the ground on which the church and other religious buildings, etc. of that city had been erected.”—*Lanigan, Eccles. Hist.* c. xxii. § 13.

mates;—acts of more deep and immediate interest to the monkish writers of such records, than were any of those general events and movements by which posterity was to be affected.

While thus our own sources of information let in so little light upon that period, the records of the Scandinavians themselves leave it no less involved and dark. The first adventurers from the shores of the Baltic to the British isles, were all obscure and nameless searovers; men who, born in the dawn of their country's history, have furnished materials only for legend and song. It was, indeed, out of the real achievements performed by these first adventurers during the eighth and ninth centuries,* that arose the fanciful tales of Icelandic chroniclers respecting the sea-king, Ragnar Lodbrog, and his miraculous coat of mail, his fairy wife, who had been found cradled in a golden harp on the sea-shore,† and his numerous sons sweeping the waters with their fleet of 2000 sail. Towards the close, however, of this century, when the submission of all the Northmen in Ireland to one common king of their own race, reigning in Dublin, had, if not concentrated, afforded a rallying point for their scattered force, the operations and policy of their chiefs become more distinctly traceable. Instead of a confused horde of invaders, they begin to assume the shape of a regular community; and their kings, reigning in due succession, and forming alliances and intermarriages, stand forth to the eye as authentic and responsible personages of history.

* "Some of the apparent incongruities of the Sagas may be diminished by the supposition, that the exploits thus commemorated are traditional accounts of the conquests really effected by the Angles on the eastern coast, and in Northumbria, exaggerated and confused by the fancy or inventions of the Scalds."—*Palgrave, English Commonwealth*, c. 18.

† His wife, Aslang. The tradition of this fable was as follows:—"Etenim tractus illius incolæ constanter referunt, seque à majoribus suis accepisse perhibent, inventam apud se in exiguo quodam sinu angulove maris citharam auream, cujus cavitati unelusa fuerit parvula virgo."—*Serius Reg. Dan.* l. iv. c. 4.

The chieftain, Ivar, known by his enterprises against North Britain, in conjunction with his brother Anlaf, is, in the record of his death preserved by the annalists of Ulster (A.D. 872), described as king of all the Northmen of Ireland and of Britain. In conformity with this statement, we find the same Ivar represented by English historians as at that period wielding the sceptre of Northumberland, and assisting Ingwar and Ubbo, two of the sons of the hero Ragnar, in their enterprises against the Anglo-Saxons. But there is mixed up with most of these accounts of the warfare of the Danes in Northumbria, too much of the fabulous matter of the Sagas to entitle them to be received as history; and the union of the crowns of Northumbria and Dublin on the head of one Danish chief, wears all the appearance of being but an anticipation of what really, as we shall find, took place some years later. One chief cause of the frequent confusion, as well of periods as of persons, which occurs in the accounts of the transactions of the Danes in the British isles, arises from the circumstance of so many of their distinguished chieftains having been called by the same names; the two most popular and frequent of these favourite names having been Ivar and Anlaf.*

In the second year of the tenth century the expulsion of the Danes from Dublin, by the people of Leinster,† interrupted for a short time their possession of that seat of power. But, by means of the resources they could command from England, from the Orkneys, and the other isles, they were soon enabled to regain all their former dominion. In the course of but a few years we find Godfred, the grandson of Ivar, taking possession of Dublin;‡ and, shortly after, ranging with his fleet the

A.D.
902.

* The various modes also of spelling the name Anlaf, add not a little to the confusion. Thus, in the Irish annals, it assumes the various forms of Amlain, Amlaiph, Amblaith, Olave, etc. In some of the Sagas it is Olaf; and, by the English chroniclers, it is made Aulaf, Anlaf, Anlaven, Anelaph, and Onlaf. See Turner, book vi. c. 2. note 21.

† Annal. Ult. ad an. 901 (902), and Annal. Inisfall, ad an. 902.

‡ Annal. Inisfall 907.

southern coast of Ireland, and receiving hostages, in token of submission, from the native princes of that quarter.

The monarch who filled the throne of Ireland at the commencement of this century was, as we have already seen, Flan Siona, the second husband* of the princess Malmaria, Keneth Mac Alpine's daughter; and this lady, through the progeny of her double marriage, was the means of uniting the three most powerful branches of the Hy-Niells. Scarcely had Flan been seated upon the throne, when he availed himself of the aid of Danish mercenaries to attack and wantonly lay waste the province of Munster. After a long reign of thirty-seven years, this monarch was succeeded in the throne by Niell Glundubh,† a prince who may be regarded as the common father of the family of O'Niell, so long celebrated in our annals; and his short reign, which was, for a wonder, unsullied by the disgrace of alliance with the foreigner, was terminated, together with his life, in a sanguinary battle against the Danes. After the death of Niell,‡ the sceptre passed, according to the order of alternate succession, into the hands of Donogh, a prince of the other branch of the Hy-Niell family; and Murkertach, the son of the late monarch, became the Roydamna, or heir apparent, of his successor.

A. D.
917.

92.

During the dark and troubled transactions of this reign, which lasted for the space of five-and-twenty

* Her first husband was Domnald Mac Aod, prince of Alichia, in Inesowen.

† i. e. of the Black Knee.

‡ One of the most memorable events of the reign of Niell Glundubh, was his revival (A. D. 915.) of the ancient Taltine Games, or sports, which had of late years, owing to the incursions of the Danes, been very much discontinued. In recording a suspension of these games in the year 872, the Ulster Annals add that it was an event which had never before from early times occurred. These ancient sports, though little more, it is evident, than an annual fair, have been brought by some over zealous antiquarians into juxtaposition with the Olympic Games. "Hi enim ludi (says Dr. O'Connor) non minori frequentia nec minori Druidum solemnitate in Hibernia celebrabantur quam Ludi Olympici in Peloponneso." For the use made of these games by the ancient Irish in regulating the length of their year, see Vol. I. of this work, chap. iv. p. 72.

years, the two personages who stand forth the most prominently in our annals are the Roydamna, Murkertach, and the famous Callachan, king of Cashel; princes who, opposed to each other in character and in policy, may be aptly referred to as affording, in their respective careers, a fair sample as well of the vices as the virtues by which the chieftains of that turbulent period were characterised. The first great achievement of the Roydamna was a signal victory over the Danes, or Pirates of the Lakes,* in Ulster; on which occasion eighty of the Danish chieftains were slaughtered, and among them, Albdan, the son of Godfred, king of Dublin. The feeble remains of the defeated army, driven to a place called the Ford of the Picts,† were there surrounded, and on the point, it is added, of perishing by famine, when Godfred himself hastened from Dublin to their relief.‡

A. D.
926.

- Again, in a few years after, when a force of the Northmen, gaining possession of Loch Erne, laid waste and desolated the whole province of Ulster, "as far as
931. Mount Betha to the west, and Mucnamha to the south,"§ the gallant Roydamna, coming suddenly upon them, defeated and dispersed their whole force, carrying off with him, as trophies of his victory, 200 heads of the
936. slain.** With similar success, in the year 936, not-

* So called by the Annalists.—See Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 927, where the death of Sitric O'Imar, king of the Black Pirates and the White Pirates, is recorded. The Northmen did not, any more than the ancient Greeks, feel degraded by the appellation of Pirates. In the *Odyssey*, Nestor inquires of the strangers whom he had been feasting, 'whether they were merchants or pirates.

† "Ath Cruithne."—We have here an instance of that want of precision and definiteness which Pinkerton and others complain of in the Celtic language. The word Cruithne means indifferently either Picts or Harpers; and, accordingly, Dr. O'Connor, who, in his version of the *Four Masters*, calls the scene of this fight "The Ford of the Picts," in translating the record of the same battle, in the annals of Ulster, makes it "The Ford of the Harpers."

‡ iv. Mag. ad. an. 924. Annal. Ult. 925. *Æra Com.* 926.

§ iv. Mag. ad. an. 931. "Co sliabh Betha aiar 7 co Mucnamha fo dhona." I am at a loss to discover what places in Ulster are designated by these names.

** This custom of cutting off the heads of fallen enemies, which prevailed originally in Egypt, continued to be practised in Ireland so late as the reign

withstanding some recent differences between the monarch and himself,—such as the Roydamna's position in relation to the throne rendered frequent, and, indeed, inevitable,—MURKERTACH; forgetting all other considerations in that of the public weal, joined the forces under his command, as prince of Aileach, with those of the monarch; and, attacking the Northmen in their headquarters, carried devastation through all their possession round Dublin, from the city itself, as we are told by the chroniclers, to the Ford of Trustan.*

While thus this gallant, and, as far as we can now judge, patriotic and honest prince, was directing all the vigorous means within his power to the one great object of crushing the common foe, the career of his rival, the much more celebrated Callachan, presents a specimen of Irish character the very reverse of this description, and such as, unfortunately, has seldom been wanting in the country, from the days of Agricola to the present. Fighting almost constantly on the side of the Northmen, Callachan imitated also those spoilers of his country in their worst excesses of devastation; and in one instance, when the venerable monastery of Clonmacnois had been cruelly pillaged and sacked by them, it was again visited with similar horrors in the same year by the king of Cashel. † With a like disregard both of his country and her religion, Callachan, assisted by the Danes of Waterford, made an irruption into the district of Meath, and sacrilegiously plundering the abbey of Clonenagh, and the ancient church of Cillachie, carried off from those retreats two holy abbots as prisoners. ‡

To achievements like these the whole public life of this bold and unprincipled chief was devoted; nor is there on record more than one single instance in which

A. D.
939.

of Henry II.; and Dr. Meyrick (*Inquiry into Ancient Armour*), amusingly refers to this custom of the Irish, as lending "probability to their Asiatic origin, so earnestly contended for by general Vallancey."

* W. Mag. ad an. 936.

† W. Mag. ad an. 934 (æra com. 936)

‡ W. Mag. ad ann. 939.

he is stated to have fought on the side of his country, or rather against her despoilers;—a defeat of the Danes in the Desies country, with the slaughter of 2000 of their troops, being found attributed to him in the *Annals of Inisfallen*.^{*} There is little doubt, however, that this single redeeming record is erroneous, and that the people of the Desies themselves were in reality the victims of his triumph.[†]

A.D.
941.

Notwithstanding their feelings and habits of mutual hostility, alliances were frequently formed between the Northmen and the natives, and coalitions were now becoming almost as common among them as conflicts. Thus a dynast of the house of Niell, named Conaeg, gained a victory about this time, in concert with the Danes, over the Ulidians, a people of the present county of Down; in consequence of which the king of that district, Matudan, called in also the aid of the Northmen, and, in his turn, carried into the plains of the north the horrors of fire and sword.

But, among the instances of such confederacy, during this century, by far the most memorable was that exhibited at the battle of Brunanburh, in Northumbria; when the brave Anlaf, king of Dublin, and likewise of Northumbria, joining in the powerful league then formed against the Anglo-Saxon king, Athelstan, led an immense army of Northmen and Irish to the encounter,[‡] having entered the Humber, it is said, with a fleet of 615 sail.[§] At the head of the forces collected for this formidable invasion was Constantine, king of

A.D.
937.

^{*} *Inisfallen*. ad ann. 941.

[†] The Four Masters, who, in matters relating to Munster, are in general far more trustworthy than the *Annals of Inisfallen*, state that in the course of the same year (941.), two successive battles were fought between Cal-lachan and the people of the Desies, in the first of which the latter were defeated, with the slaughter of two thousand of their troops; but in the second, being assisted by the people of Ossory, they gained a complete victory over him.

[‡] The departure of the Danes from Dublin on this expedition "into ey," is recorded by the Four Masters, ad an. 935. (anno dom. 937.)
[§] Turner, *Hist. of Anglo-Saxons* (book vi. chap. 2.), who gives as his titles, the *Chronicle of Mailros*, *Simeon of Durham*, and *Hoveden*.

Alhary, whose daughter Anlaf had married; and the battle which decided the fate of their enterprise, and which has been described in detail both by Danish and Anglo-Saxon chroniclers, was considered, for length of duration and amount of slaughter, to be without parallel in English history.* After a contest maintained with alternate success from dawn until sunset, victory declared at length in favour of the fortunate Athelstan, who from thenceforth reigned, without a competitor, the first acknowledged English king. A retreat to their shipping, which they were able to effect with the wreck of their army, was all that remained to the vanquished Constantine and his son-in-law; and Anlaf, dislodged by this signal disaster from his Northumbrian throne, returned defeated, but, as will be seen, not subdued, to Ireland.

In the Saga of Egil, which contains the Norse account of this great battle—detailed with a minuteness rather suspicious—we find some particulars respecting the Irish troops engaged in the action, which, as characteristic of that people, are worthy of some notice. One of the Vikings, or northern sea-kings, who held a command on the side of Athelstan, is represented, in disposing his forces for action, to have appointed a particular battalion to engage the Scots or Irish, who, it is added, never fought in any regular order; but keeping constantly in motion, from one part of the field to the other, did often much damage to those whom they found off their guard; but, on being opposed, with the same alertness again retreated.† We have here an exact

* Unde inque ad præsens bellum prænominatur magnum.—*Ethelwardi Historia*. "The bloodiest fight, say authors, that ever this island saw."—*Milton, History of Britain*.

† Thus in Johnstone's version (*Antiq. Scando-Celt*), "*Scoti enim solent mobilis esse in acie; lucillac discurrunt, diversisque partibus incursantes, incantis sæpe damnum afferunt; si autem obsistitur illis sagraces existant.*" Giraldus has described, in pretty much the same terms, the peculiar manoeuvres of the Kerm: "*Quatenus et lapidum (quorum ictibus graves et armatos cominus appetere solent, et indemnes agilitatis beneficio crebris accedere vicibus et abecedere). è diverso eminus sagittis injuria propulsetur.*"—*Hibern. Expug.* lib. ii. c. 36.

picture of the mode of fighting practised by the light or light-armed infantry of the Irish, whose remarkable activity in returning constantly to the attack, together with their dexterous use of the missile weapons, rendered them a force, as even Giraldus acknowledges, not formidable.*

In the Anglo-Saxon poem, commemorative of the battle of Brunanburh, there occur some verses which have been, rather too sanguinely, interpreted as containing a eulogium upon the character of the people; whereas so hopelessly vague and obscure is the structure and language of these verses, that they leave full scope for every possible variety of conjecture as to their meaning; and the opinion given of them since by the poet Milton,† ought to have deterred such rash attempts to sound their fathomless obscurity. As the supposed eulogy, however, upon the Irish, has been conjured up out of them, is at least not undeserved, the passage, as rendered according to my view, may here be cited. After stating that Constantine left his own son on the field of battle, the poet is made to say that “neither was there aught of the *yellow-haired race, the bold in battle, and the valiant in genius*, to glory in; nor had Olaf, and his followers, any reason to boast.... The

* In professing to follow the northern account of this battle, Mr. Milner has, I must say, dealt rather unfairly as well by the meaning of the authority, as by the character of the Irish soldiery. The troops of the Irish engaged on that occasion he represents as “irregular” and “disorderly force,” who always flew from point to point, nowhere steady, injuring the unguarded.” But assuredly the account given of the fighting of the Irish Kerns, both in Egil’s Saga, and the passage of the just cited, conveys a totally different notion of that light, agile, and constantly harassing force. In the part of his descriptions, too, which seemingly following the Saga, Mr. Turner speaks of the *battalia of the T* “consisting of the *disorderly* Irish,” there is not, in the original by Johnstone, the slightest grounds for this disparaging epithet.

† “To describe which (battle) the Saxon annalist (who is a sober and succinct) whether the same or another writer, now under the weight of his argument, and overcharged, runs on as if such extravagant fancies and metaphors as bear him quite beside of being understood.”—Milton, *History of Britain*.

mainder, in the resounding sea, passed over the depths of the waves to Dublin.*

In about seven years after his defeat on the field of Brunanburh, the gallant Anlaf, finding the course for his daring ambition again thrown open by the death of Athelstan, renewed his pretensions to the Northumbrian throne; and, having been invited over from Ireland with that view, was appointed by the people of Northumbria their sovereign. Among the numerous errors occasioned by so many Danish princes bearing the name of Anlaf, may be reckoned the opinion entertained by some writers, that the brave competitor of Athelstan and of Edmund, just mentioned, was the same Anlaf whose name is found on an ancient Irish coin accompanied by a figure of the cross, denoting that the king, by whose orders this coin had been struck, was a Christian.† For this supposition, however, there appears not to be any foundation; as it was not till near seven years after the death of Anlaf of Brunanburh that the Danes of Dublin, to use the language of our annals, "received the faith of Christ, and were baptised." The coin in question, therefore, must have belonged to the reign of a later prince of the same name.

It was about the year 948 that the conversion of the Danes of Dublin to the Christian faith is, in general,

* The reader needs but to turn to the different versions of this passage by Gibson, Ingram, Turner, and Price, to perceive how utterly hopeless is the attempt to arrive at its real meaning; and of how little worth is the compliment to the Irish that has been extorted from it. He will find that the "yellow-haired youth," or "nation," which figures so poetically in the version of three of these interpreters, is, in that of the fourth, transformed into "a grizzly-headed old deceiver."

‡ If the Celtic tongue, as above intimated, be open to the charge of vagueness and want of precision, what is to be said of this specimen of the Gothic?

† For an account of this silver coin, see Ware's *Antiquities*, ch. xxxii., and Simon's *Essay on Irish Coins*. The whole subject of the coins supposed to have been struck in Ireland about this period, is beset with difficulty and obscurity; but, in the writers just quoted, in Bishop Nicholson's *Historical Library*, ch. viii., and in Kedar's "Nummorum in Hibernia Cusorum, etc.," a work compiled chiefly from the foregoing, the reader will find all that is known and conjectured on the subject. See also a note by Dr. O'Connor, on the *Ulster Annals*, ed. no. 937, and Dr. Laing's, ch. xii. note 138.

supposed to have taken place.* The Northmen of that city were, it is supposed, the first of their nation in Ireland who, in any great numbers, embraced the doctrine of the Gospel; but so little change did this conversion work in their general character,† that, were there not an express record of the fact, it would not be easy for a reader of their history to discover that they were not still immersed in all the darkness of heathenism. One early proof of religious zeal they indeed afforded, if it be true, as some historians state, that the celebrated abbey of St. Mary was founded by them in the neighbourhood of Dublin this very year.‡

Prosperous as appeared to be, in many respects, the affairs of the Irish Danes at this crisis, and vast as was the command of resources which their possession of all the chief seaports gave them, it is clear that the tenure of their power, however great its extent, was never for a single day certain or undisturbed. The indefatigable activity and bravery of the Irish people left not a moment of repose or security to their invaders; and though but too often, at the call of cupidity or revenge, the ever ready sword was drawn on the side of the foreigners,—though there were even found, as in the case of the Leinster men, large bodies of the natives almost habitually traitors, it is evident that the great mass of the population never ceased to resist, that they were strong in revenge and hatred against their oppressors, and wanted but one combined and vigorous effort to rid themselves of the yoke.

To go through all the monotonous details of battles

* Ware, *Antiq.* chap. xxiv. ad ann. 948.

† The insincerity of the conversion of the Danes of England is thus strongly represented by the author of the *History of the Descent of the Normans*:—"Plusieurs prirent, moyennant quelques concessions de terre, le titre et l'emploi de défenseurs perpétuels des églises qu'eux-mêmes, avoient brûlées; d'autres revêtirent l'habit de prêtres, et conservoient sous cet habit la fougue et la dureté d'âme des brigands de mer."

‡ Ware, in *loc. citat.* Lanigan, chap. xxii § 12. Archdall, *Monastic Hibern. at Dublin*. See for the churches dedicated by them to their own saints, St. Olave, St. Michan, etc., Mr. W. M. Mason's *History of St. Patrick's Cathedral*.

and scenes of pillage which form the staple of the Irish records for this century, would be to render these pages like a confused and deathful dream. All those monasteries and religious establishments, which have already been enumerated, as furnishing victims for the Northmen's rage, were again and again visited, during this period, by the still refreshed spirit of cruelty and rapine. The venerable church of Columba, at Kells, the cells of the religious upon the islets of Lough Ree, the sacred edifices of Armagh,* the school of Clonard, renowned for its learning through Europe, and the ancient abbey of Down, the hallowed resting-place of the remains of St. Patrick,—all these memorable and holy structures were, at different times, during this century, and in various forms of violation, profaned and laid desolate.† The rich shrines of Kildare, so frequently before an object of their cupidity, were broken and plundered by these spoilers on the very day sacred to the virgin saint. Even after the Danes themselves had professed to embrace Christianity, they did not the less desecrate and destroy its venerable temples; and, in an attack made by them upon Slane, in the year 950, when they set fire to the church of that ancient place, a number of persons who were at the time assembled in the belfry, among whom was Probus, the historian of St. Patrick, perished miserably in the flames.

It has been observed of the Danes of England, that had they, at the commencement of this century, united the whole of their force under one supreme head, they would have been probably more than a match for the whole power of Edward; and doubtless the same impolitic system of dividing their strength among a number of equal and independent chieftains, which so long de-

* In 921, when Godfred, king of the Danes of Dublin, attacked and plundered Armagh, he is said to have spared the Churches, the Colidei, or Culdees (who were the officiating clergy of the cathedral), and the sick.

† See our *Annals*, *passim*.

layed their complete conquest of England, was the cause likewise of their ultimate failure in Ireland. For, minute as was in this latter country the subdivision of sovereignty, a yet more multiple form of royalty was adopted by the nations of the north; where, in the time preceding the eighth century, there existed in Norway itself no less than twelve kingdoms; and the small territory around Upsal was under the rule of nineteen different kings.*

This enfeebling partition of the kingly power continued to be the system adopted by the Northmen in Ireland; and the weakening effects of such a policy were the more felt, from the detached districts they severally occupied, which rendered it still more difficult for them to act with speed and decision in concert. While in England, too, the original affinity between their language† and that of the Saxons afforded to the invaders such means of intercourse as greatly facilitated their progress and settlement in the country, the Danes in Ireland were, on the contrary, encountered by a language wholly and essentially different from their own, and forming in itself a complete wall of separation between them and the great mass of the natives. When such and so serious were the disadvantages under which they laboured, and boldly, constantly as every step of their way was contested, it is evident that nothing but a want of unity among the Irish themselves, from the divided nature of their government, the feuds

* "The Herrerar Saga mentions that, at one period, there were twelve kingdoms in Norway."—*Turner, Hist. Anglo-Sax.*, book iii. c. 1. "In Upsal, nineteen of these petty kingdoms are enumerated."—*Ibid.*

† *Lingua Danorum Anglicaque loquelæ vicina est.*—*Scrip. Her. Danic.* "The languages (of the Danes and Saxons), originally kindred, were melted into each other; their ancestors were of the same race, and might have been neighbours in their original seats."—*Mackintosh, Hist. of England*, c. ii.

According to a late learned work, however, (Bask's *Anglo-Saxon Grammar*), by which a new light appears to have been thrown upon this subject, the Anglo-Saxon deviates considerably from the Danish and other Scandinavian dialects.—*See Preface.*

and jealousies among the people, and, too often, the treachery of their princes, could have delayed so long the utter expulsion of the foreign intruder from out the land.

What the Irish wanted at this crisis was evidently the ascendancy of some one potent spirit, who, whether for his own aggrandisement, or from some more lofty motives, would devote ardently the entire energies of his mind to the task of arousing and uniting his fellow-countrymen, so as, by one grand and simultaneous effort, to rid the whole island of the pestilent presence of the foreigner.

It was hardly possible that two such ascendant and stirring spirits as the roydamna and the king of Cashel, should continue to move through the same sphere of action, and generally in adverse directions, without coming at last into collision; and the triumphant ease with which, in the encounter that ensued between them, Murkertach mastered his antagonist, presents one of those instances of what is called poetical justice, which occur but too rarely in real history. After a successful course of warfare in different parts of the kingdom, the roydamna proceeded at the head of his troops, and attended by a select and of 1200 warriors* from his own principality, to gather the fruits of his late successes, in the shape of tribute and princely hostages from the conquered. The Danes of Dublin, in acknowledgment of submission, surrendered to him their prince, Sitric; while, from the Lagenians, he not only enforced tribute, but carried away with him as hostage their king, Lorcar. But it was in Munster that the proudest trophy of this triumphal progress† awaited him. Entering

A.D.
939.

* *iv. Mag. ad an. 939.*

† There is still extant a poem on this circuit of Murkertach, said to have been written by a contemporary and friend of that prince, Corbmacan Eigea, the chief poet of Ulster. The monarch, gratified, we are told, by Murkertach's loyalty, in delivering to him all the hostages, returned them again into his hands, considering him their fittest guardian. To commemorate this event, and the mighty deeds of his prince, Corbmacan wrote his poem of 255 verses, beginning 'Oh Muirgeartach, son of worthy Niall, who hast

boldly into the very territories of his rival, Callachan, he required of the Momonians, no less as a pledge of future fealty than, as an atonement for past transgressions, that they should deliver up their king unconditionally into his hands. This humiliating demand was, after some hesitation and parley, complied with; and the fierce Callachan, led in bondage from his own dominions, was sent soon after by the triumphant roydamna, with all his other captives and hostages, to the monarch.* How long his state of captivity lasted does not very clearly appear; but there occurs once only, after this date, any particular mention of him; and then, faithful to his old habits of intestine warfare, he is found gaining a sanguinary victory at Maighduine, or the Field of the Fortress, over Kennedy, the father of the celebrated Brian Boru.†

A. D.
943.

Murkertarch survived but a short time his proud and triumphal circuit throughout the island, and died,‡ as he had for the greater part of his manhood lived, in fierce conflict with the Danes; leaving, as a poet of that day strongly expresses it, all his countrymen orphans.§ In the record of his death we find him described as "a warrior of the Saffron hue,** and the hero of Western Europe."††

received hostages from Falias's Isle.'—*Trans. Ibero-Celt. Society*. Mr. O'Reilly adds, that "a copy of this poem is in the O'Clery's Book of Conquests, and in the pedigree of the once royal family of O'Neill, which is in the hands of the assistant secretary of the society."

* Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 941.

† iv. Mag. ad an. 942. Annal. Ult. 943. (erræ com. 944.)

‡ iv. Mag. ad. an. 941. Annal. Ult. ad an. 942. (erræ com. 942.)

§ Verses quoted by the Four Masters, in loc.

** The use of this colour in their garments continued to be a favourite fashion with the Irish down to so late a period as the time of Henry VIII., when it was, like all other things Irish, rendered punishable by law; and there is a statute of that reign, forbidding any one to "use or wear any shirt, smocke, kerchor, bendol, neckerchour, mocket, or linnen cappe, coloured or dyed with saffron." See, for some amusing remarks upon this statute, Ledwich's *Antiquities* "Of the ancient Irish Dress." Camden, who wrote his account of Ireland in the sixteenth century, says, "They have now left their saffron, and learne to wash their shirts four or five times in a yeare."

†† "The Hector of Western Europe," as it is in the original of both the annals above cited.—*Ectoir tartair Eorpa*. According to Dr. O'Connor,

It is a fact both curious and instructive, as showing of what materials the idols of the multitude are most frequently fashioned, that while such, as we learn from authentic records, were the respective careers of these two warlike contemporaries, the fame of Callachan, as transmitted by tradition, has far outrun that of his patriotic rival; and that even some modern Irish historians, by whom Murkertarch is barely mentioned, have devoted whole pages to the narration of a wild and imaginary adventure related of the king of Cashel.* For this flimsy tale of romance there exist no grounds whatever in our annals; and the whole fable was probably the invention of some of those poet-historians, or seamachies, of the Eugenician princes, who sought to do honour to their royal masters by embalming in fiction the memory of a chieftain of their race. The very selection, however, of Callachan's name, as a theme for fable, shows that already he stood high in popular fame, having been handed down by tradition as the favourite champion of a period when valour was the virtue most in request; and when it mattered little to the fame of the hero whether he fought on the wrong side or the right, so he but fought boldly and successfully, and with the due heroic disregard to life, as well his own as that of others.

After a reign comprising in its duration nearly a quarter of a century, this year saw another of those shadows of royalty, which occupied in succession the throne of Tara, pass undistinguished into oblivion. This monarch's name, it may be remembered, was Denough; and the annalist, in recording his death, cites a distich inscribed by a poet of the day to his memory, in which the general condition of the country is thus lamentably,

however, *Ectoir* is a very ancient Irish word, signifying *hero*, and compounded, as he rather too fancifully supposes, of *Eacht*, an achievement, and *Oir*, golden, or splendid.

* On this farrago of fiction Keating has bestowed no less than ten or eleven of his folio pages, while Dr. Warner has filled fourteen of his quarto pages with a verbose dilution of the same trash.

and, we must believe, truly depicted. "Without law to guide her, with rulers treacherous, false, and factious, the realm of Erin hath sunk into darkness."*

Donough was succeeded in the supreme throne by a prince named Congelach, who, but a few months before his accession, had acquired considerable renown by a gallant attack on the city of Dublin, in which, being aided by the rare alliance of the people of Leinster, he reduced that city to a state of ruin and desolation, on which some of the annalists are not unpleased to dwell,† describing the burning of its ships and ramparts, the flowers of its warriors laid in the dust, and the blooming youths and venerable matrons all led away in chains. The repeated attacks, indeed, made by the natives upon Dublin, which was again retaken from them as often as they possessed themselves of it, showed with what obstinacy the work of warfare was carried on, and by how little else the attention of either party could have been occupied. In the course of the very next year Blacar, the Danish king, returning with fresh supplies of force, retook the city. The same alternations of success and reverse were exhibited some few years after when Godfred, the son of Sitric, having been forced with the loss, enormous for those times, of no less than 6000 men, to surrender and fly from Dublin, was enabled in like manner, in the course of the following year, to recover his dominions.‡

* IV Mag. ad an. 942 (ver. com. 944).

† IV Mag. ad an. 948.

‡ Ibid.

CHAPTER XX.

Early Life of Brian Boru.—His first Battles under his Brother Mahon.—Defeat.—Victory at Sulchoid.—Murder of Mahon.—Accession of Brian to the Throne of Munster.—Attacks and defeats the Murderers of his Brother.—Death of the Monarch Congelach.—Domnal, his Successor.—Charter of the English King, Edgar, a Forgery.—Power of the Kingdom of Munster.—Increased considerably under Brian.—Accession of the Monarch Malachy.—Gains a great Victory over the Danes.—Defeat of the People of Leinster by Brian.—Growing Jealousy between this Prince and the Monarch.—Irruption of the latter into Brian's Principality.—Cuts down the sacred Tree of the Dalcassians.—Invades and lays waste Leinster.—An Army marched against him by Brian.—Convention between the two Kings.—Joint Victories over the Danes.—Renewal of their mutual Hostilities.—Brian invades the Territory of the Monarch.

How far the heroic Murkertach, had he lived to attain the supreme sovereignty, was likely to have succeeded in delivering his country from the foreigner, the imperfect outline we have of his character renders it vain to attempt to speculate. But there had now appeared on the scene of strife a young and enterprising warrior, whose proud destiny it was, at a later period, to become the instrument of effecting this glorious work; and whose whole long life seems to have been a course of maturing preparation for the great achievement he succeeded in accomplishing at its close. This prince, to whose original name, Brian, was added afterwards the distinctive title of Boromh, or Boru,* was one of the numerous sons of Kennedy, king of Munster;† and, at

* A surname given to him, according to O'Halloran, M'Curtin, and others, in consequence of the tribute (*Boromha* signifying a tribute of cows and other cattle) which he exacted from the people of Leinster; but derived by others with more probability from the names of the town Boromh, which stood in the neighbourhood of his palace of Kincora in the county of Clare. See O'Brien's Dictionary, in voce *Borumha*.

† There is extant a poem, attributed to Mac Liag, the secretary of Brian, giving an account of the "Twelve Sons of chaste Cinneide" (Kennedy).—*Trans. Ibero-Celt. Society.*

the time of the accession of his brother, Mahon, to the throne of that kingdom, was in his thirty-fourth year. Being by birth a Dalcassian, he had naturally been nursed up, from earliest days, amidst all those traditional incitements to valour which the history of that chivalrous tribe afforded. Their proverbial character, as always "the first in the field, and the last to leave it," was in itself, as repeated proudly from father to son, a motive and pledge for the continued valour of the whole race. While yet a youth, his high reputation for soldiership had collected around him a number of young followers; with whom, posting himself at defiles and mountain passes, or lying in wait in the depths of the forest, he frequently intercepted the enemy in their plundering expeditions, or harassed and cut them off in their retreats.*

Upon the accession of his brother Mahon to the throne of Cashel, the constant and active career of warfare in which that intrepid prince engaged furnished a practical school for the ripening of Brian's military talents, and, by inuring him to service in a subordinate rank, rendered him the more fit for the highest. At a memorable slaughter of the Danes, by Mahon, near Lake Gur, it is supposed that Brian, though not expressly mentioned, may have been present; but the first important event connected with his name was an expedition led by Mahon beyond the Shannon, to the districts bordering on Lough Ree. There, by predatory incursions in various directions, they had succeeded in amassing considerable plunder; when Fergal O'Ruarc, with a large army of Conacians, pouring suddenly down upon them, the brother chiefs were compelled reluctantly to retreat. Followed closely as far as the banks of the river Fairglin, they there stood at bay and engaged their pursuers. But Brian's good genius had not yet exempted him from all failure. Notwithstand-

* Vallancey (from *Munster Annals*),—*Law of Tanistry, etc.*

ing the valour of Mahon, and the intrepid bearing of the future hero of Cloutarf, the Momonian troops were defeated; and Mahon, forced to swim across the river to save his life, was compelled ingloriously to leave his shield behind him.*

But the victory at Sulchoid over the Danes of Limerick, achieved principally through Brian's skill in partisan warfare, first gave earnest of the successful struggle he was destined to wage against the oppressors. A strong body of cavalry, detached from the Danish force stationed at Sulchoid,† having advanced to reconnoitre the army of Mahon, a sudden attack was made upon them by Brian at the head of some squadrons of light horse, and with such effect that one half of their number lay dead upon the spot. The remainder fled in confusion, pursued by Brian, to the main body of the army encamped at Sulchoid. Thither Mahon also followed rapidly with the whole of his forces; and a general engagement ensued, disastrous to the Danes, of whom no less than 3000 were slaughtered on the spot. The remainder fled, in confused rout, towards Limerick, pursued so closely and eagerly that the victors entered the city along with the vanquished, making prisoners of all whom they did not put to the sword; and then, having ransacked that rich city of all its gold and merchandise, they left it a mass of ruins and flames.‡

A. D.
969.

* IV Mag. ad an. 961 (scr. com. 963). Vallancey, whose guide is the *Munster Annals*, makes it 965. In the account here given of the result of this battle, I have followed the authority of the Four Masters, which appears to me far more trustworthy than that of the poem cited from the *Munster Book* by Vallancey, attributing all the victory and the glory to the Munster hero. On the incident of the shield, it is fair to add, the Four Masters are silent.

† "Sulchoid is frequently mentioned in subsequent ages and wars, even as far down as the last campaigns and revolutions that happened in this kingdom, as a noted post for the encampment of armies; being situated in a plain, which is guarded by heights on both sides, within one day's march of Limerick, and in the direct road from Dublin to that town by the way of Cashel."—*Law of Tanistry*.

‡ *Annal. Inisfall.* (Cod. Bodleian.) ad an. 961. The events in this series of the *Inisfall Annals* are in general antedated by fifteen, sixteen, or even a still greater number of years.

There were yet other triumphs, won by the two brothers in concert, on which it is unnecessary here to dwell. To the gallant Mahon, however, the constant success that attended him in all his enterprises proved in the end fatal. A mortified rival, named Maolmna, who, having failed against him in the field, was resolved to accomplish by treachery what he despaired of in fair battle, concerted a plan by which, under the pretence of an amicable meeting for the purpose of conference, he induced the unsuspecting Mahon to trust himself, with a few followers, in his power.* Thus unguarded, A. D. 976. the king was made prisoner by the traitorous Maolmna and his brother conspirators; and being then hurried away by night to a solitary place in the mountains, was there basely murdered.

The great importance attached by the Irish, from the earliest periods of their history, to the names and sites of places connected with memorable events, is shown in the instance of the supposed locality of Mahon's murder, which appears to have been as anxiously inquired into as it was variously stated. While some authorities mention, as the scene of the crime, a mountain now called Sliabh-Caon, near Magh-Feine, or the Sacred Plain, and describe the very spot where it was committed as being near the Red Gap, or fissure, in the hill of Caon,† there

* Annal. Ult. ad an. 975.

† Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 976. "In my copy of the Inisfallencea," says Vallaney, "*Bearna-Deage*, now *Red-Chair*, on the mountain which was then called Sliabh-Caoín, but now *Sleabh-Riach*, between the barony of Fermoy and the county of Limerick, is said to be the pass on which Maolmuadh and his brothers waited for the royal captive, and put him to death. But, as this place was much out of their direct road from Donovan's house to their own home near Bandon, I rather give credit to another designation which I find in an old roll or series of the kings of Munster, with an account of the years of their reigns, and the manner of their death; wherein it is mentioned that Mahon was murdered on the mountain of *Munstry*, near *Macroomp*, at a place called *Leacht-Mhaghthamhna*, or the *Grave of Mahon*, from his name. This place lies in the direct line between the places where Maolmuadh and Donovan (the murderers) had their residence."—*Law of Tanistry, &c.*

The reader has here, in the name *Mhaghthamhna*, a specimen, in addition to some others which I have already given, of the absurd mode of spelling by which the Irish language is disfigured. This heap of consonants is

are others which state the murder to have occurred on one of the Muskerry mountains, at a place called, from this melancholy event, *Leacht-Magama*, or *Mahon's Grave*.

On the death of this prince, his brother Brian, who had held for some time the subordinate sovereignty of Thomond, or North Munster,* succeeded to the throne of all Munster; and the very first act of justice he felt himself called upon to perform, was the infliction of summary vengeance on the base murderers of his brother. Attacking successively, in the very hearts of their own territories, the two princes, Donovan and Maolmua, who had been chiefly concerned in that treacherous plot, he succeeded, notwithstanding the aid afforded to these traitors by the Danes, in nearly exterminating the whole force of their respective armies.† To his son, Morrough, who in one of these battles made the first essay of his military prowess, fell the good fortune of encountering, hand to hand, the chief instigator of the base deed, Maolmua, and the glory of sacrificing him upon the spot to the manes of his murdered relative. Respecting the place where this latter victory was gained, there appears to be no less doubt and discussion than with regard to the site of the murder. But, that the battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Mahon's Grave, which is one of the opinions on the subject cited by the annalists, seems highly probable, from the name popularly given to the conflict being *Cath Bhealaig-Leachta*, or the Battle of the Road of the Sepulchre.‡

While engaged in this work of just retribution, Brian

pronounced simply *Magama*. I have before given the instance of *Tigernach*, which, in pronunciation, is softened into the graceful name of *Tiernas*.

The *Inisfallen* annalist, in noticing the different opinions as to the site of the murder, refers to a work which he calls "The History of the Saints of the Race of Conary."

* In the same manner, Mahon had enjoyed for some time the principality of Thomond before, in the course of succession, he was elevated to the sovereignty over all Munster.

† *Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 978.*—IV *Mag. ad an. 976*

‡ *Ibid.*

found time also to give battle to those Danes who had a few years before taken possession of the isle of Iniscathy, in the mouth of the Shannon; and who, through the aid of the Danes of Limerick, still maintained themselves in that station. This beautiful island, with its eleven churches,* and the ornamented tomb of its patron saint, Senanus, was one of those favourite places of pilgrimage and penance to which, in defiance of all danger, and even of death itself, religious persons had long continued to resort;† and still, as its shrines were enriched with new offerings by these visitors, they became but fresh objects of plunder and outrage. About the middle of this century the Northmen had used Iniscathy as a place of arms; and, in the year 972, Mark, a Danish chieftain, the son of Harold, appears to have established himself in the island. But Brian now landing there, at the head of 1200 of his own brave tribe, the Dalcassians‡ succeeded, though opposed by the Danes of Limerick, under their generals, Ivar, Amlaf, and Duibhan, in recovering the island from the hands of these foreigners; having slain, in the battle which led to this result, the chieftain Mark, and his two sons.§ After effecting these impor-

* The remarks of Mac Culloch, in speaking of the Western Isles, with respect to the proofs they afford of the strength and ardour of the religious feeling in early times, are equally applicable to the isle of Iniscathy, and its numerous churches and cells. "In comparing the former with the present state of the Western Islands, few circumstances are much more striking than the enormous disproportion of their religious establishments at that period; when also, if we may judge from the poverty of the territory, there could be but few temporal motives for such establishments. . . . Assuredly the rocky and barren mountains of Harris seem to have held out no great temptations beyond those of a spiritual nature, for the erection of twelve churches, while its present population, now, perhaps, more than doubled, would with difficulty fill one."

† For an account of this island, see Sir R. C. Hoare's *Tour in Ireland*. "The monument of St. Senan (says Archdall) is still to be seen here, with the remains of eleven small churches, and several cells. In the stone that closes the top of the altar window of the great church, is the head of the Saint, with his mitre boldly executed and but little defaced. An ancient Round Tower of 120 feet in height, and in complete repair, graces the scene. This island is remarkable for the resort of pilgrims on certain festivals." *Monast. Ibern. at Inniscattery*. See, for St. Patrick's prophecy respecting Senanus, Usher, *Eccles. Primord.*, 874.

‡ *Annal. Inisfall.* ad an. 977.

§ Archdall at *Inniscattery*.

tant objects, he proceeded to devastate all the other small islands of the Shannon, carrying off with him the treasures and effects of the Danes wherever he found them along those shores.

On the death of the monarch, Congelach (A.D. 956), who fell in a great battle with the Leinster people and the Danes, he was succeeded by Domnal, the son of the hero, Murkertach, and it was during the long reign of Domnal that the events just recounted took place. In the time of this monarch is placed the date of a pretended charter of the English king Edgar, claiming dominion over "the greatest part of Ireland, together with its most noble city, Dublin."^{*} Even were this strange document authentic, which has long ceased to be assumed, the pompous and boastful character of Edgar would account sufficiently for its large pretensions, without having recourse to any more substantial grounds. It is related of him, that when residing once at Chester he obliged eight of his tributary kings to row him in a barge upon the Dee.[†] But, in the list of these royal liegemen, there is not one from Ireland.

After a reign of twenty-four years, Domnal ended his days in penitence at Armagh,[‡] and was succeeded in the throne by Malachy the Great, a prince who, though eminently qualified by character and talents to uphold nobly the Hy-Niell sceptre, was doomed, under the spell of an ascendant genius, to see it pass away from his hands.

A. D.
980.

The consequences, moral as well as political, of that

^{*} "Maxima partem Hiberniæ, cum sua nobilissima civitate Dubliniâ." This charter may be found in Usher's *Sylloge*. The original, he says, is preserved in Worcester Cathedral, and there is a copy of it among the records in the Tower.

[†] Hume. These eight kings, according to Turner, were "Kenneth III., king of Scotland, Malcolm of Cumbría, Macchus of Anglesey and the Isles, three kings of Wales, and two others."—*Hist. Anglo-Sax.* c. vi. There is extant a charter of Edgar, professing to be signed by Kenneth III.,—"Ego Kinadus rex Albanicæ adqueivi,"—which has no less the appearance of being a forgery than the arrogant charter respecting Ireland.

[‡] Archdall, who quotes *Annal. Munst.*

endless division and subdivision of kingship,* which formed the principle of the Irish system of government, have been sufficiently dwelt upon and exemplified in the preceding pages. For this distraction of the public counsels and energies, a partial remedy would appear to have been devised, in that two-fold division of the whole island which took place, as we have seen, at rather an early period;—the northern half, *Leath Cuinn*, being allotted nominally to the monarch, while the southern portion, *Leath Mogh*, formed the dominions of the king of Cashel. But this improvement, as it might have been deemed, on the ancient quintuple division, while it left all the former sources of dissension still in full play, but added another provocative to strife and rivalry in the second great royal prize, which, by this new distribution of power, was to be held forth to the ambitious. Nor was it from the competition for these two prizes that the mischief chiefly arose,—the lines of succession to them being kept in general distinct,—but from the collision into which the respective parties were brought by their relative position afterwards. Had the monarch possessed a substantial control over the portion of the kingdom allotted to him, such a power, aided by the traditional reverence which still encircled the throne of Tara, might, in difficult conjectures, have enabled him to enforce his authority with success. But it is clear that, in his mere monarchical capacity, the power of the monarch was only nominal, or, at the best, occasional; and that, in the general struggle for plunder and pre-eminence in which all were alike engaged, his authority depended as much for its enforcement on the amount of troops, alliance, and subsidies he was able to command, as that of any one of those minor kings, over whom he was by courtesy sovereign.

* According to Procopius, the practice of bestowing the title of King on mere generals was prevalent among what are called the barbarous nations: —*Ἄλλα Ρηξ καλουμένος διεζῆα· οὗτος γὰρ σφίσι τοὺς ἡγεμῶνας εἰ βαρβαροὶ ἐπομικάζουσιν.*—Goth. l. 2

When to this it is added, that the monarchs themselves, considered in their personal characters, were, as may have been judged from the scanty space their names have occupied in these pages, a series, with but few exceptions, of weak and insignificant personages, it will not be thought wonderful that the throne of Munster, filled alternately from among the chiefs of two warlike tribes, each emulous of the other's valour and renown, should in the race of power have gained rapidly on its monarchical rival, and at length outgone and eclipsed it. Throughout the two centuries, indeed, preceding the period we have now reached, the acts and achievements of the kings of Munster furnish the chief material of Irish history; and how far, in the early part of the ninth century, they had already usurped on the power and station of the monarch, may be collected from an historical mistake committed by Giraldus Cambrensis, who, in speaking of Feidlim, the active and ambitious ruler of Munster at that period, was so far deceived by the prominent station this prince occupied, as to style him "king of all Ireland."* The several princes, whether Eugenian or Dalcassian, who succeeded Feidlim in the throne of Cashel, continued each to strengthen and advance the aspiring power of the province; till at length, under the military genius of Brian, it received an impulse onward, which not even the talent and public spirit of the monarch, Malachy, could avert: and accordingly, as we shall find, the venerable fabric of the Hy-Niell dynasty, rich as it was in the recollections and associations of nearly 600 years, sunk almost unresistingly beneath the shock.

When raised to the throne, the new monarch, Malachy, was in his thirtieth year; and a victory as important as it was splendid, which he gained over the Danes almost immediately on his accession, threw a lustre of hope and promise around the commencement

* Topog. Hibern. Diæt. 3. c. 43.

A. D.
980

of his reign. Invaded, in the heart of his own dominions, by the Northmen of Dublin and of the Isles, he not merely repelled the incursion with spirit, but, turning assailant in his turn, attacked the main body of the enemy's force, consisting of Danes collected from all parts of Ireland; and, continuing the conflict with but little interruption for three days and nights, forced them to submit to whatever terms he chose at the sword's point to dictate. Among other conditions, he stipulated for the instant release from captivity of all such natives as were held in bondage by the Danes; and the language of the "noble Proclamation," as it is justly styled, in which he announced to the country this result of his victory, was in substance as follows:—"Let all the Irish who are suffering servitude in the lands of the stranger return now to their several homes, and enjoy themselves in gladness and peace." *

How far this declaration of enfranchisement was allowed to have effect throughout the country, does not appear from the records; but the number of hostages, as well as of captives on other grounds, which the Danes, in obedience to this edict, released, is stated to have been no less than 2000, among whom were Donnall, the king of Leinster, and O'Niell, prince of Tyrone; while, as a further proof of submission, all the O'Niells, from the source of the Shannon to the sea, were declared to be exempt from all future payment of supplies or subsidies to the Northmen.† To judge from the results, indeed, attributed to this battle, which was called from the district where it commenced, the *Battle of Tara*, it may be pronounced that, next to the crowning achievement of Brian himself on the glorious field of Clontarf, it was by far the most signal and decisive advantage gained over the Danes during the whole course of their ruinous sway. Besides the immense slaughter of their troops, they had lost likewise nearly all their distin-

* Tigernach, ad an. 980. IV Mag. ad an. 979 (err. com 981).

† Ibid., and Ware's *Antiquities*, c. 24.

guished captains, and among them Reginald, the son of Anlaf, their king;* a loss which, combined with the humiliating sense of defeat, so deeply affected the royal father, that, to relieve his mind, he went on a pilgrimage to the island of Iona, and there died of grief.

As, by the subjection of the southern moiety of Ireland to the jurisdiction of the king of Munster, the province of Leinster was made a dependency on that kingdom, and forced to pay to its sovereign the tribute of *Eidirsgeol*,—a mulct imposed from early times,—frequent efforts had been made by the states and princes of Leinster to rid themselves of so humbling a mark of submission. With this view they joined in a confederacy now formed against Brian by O'Felan, prince of the Desies, in which were associated also the prince of Ossory, and the Danes of Cork and Waterford. But the rapid movements of the watchful Brian, who suddenly attacking their united forces at a place, called in our annals the Circle of the Sons of Conrad,† chased them from thence, with prodigious slaughter, into Waterford, completely disconcerted and broke up the whole confederacy. Proceeding directly after this achievement to Ossory, he forced the chiefs of that district to deliver up to him hostages, and made their hereditary prince, Mac-Gilla-Patrick, his prisoner. From thence sweeping over the plains of Leinster, and, according to the ordinary practice of Irish warfare, desolating them as he went, Brian succeeded for the time in reducing the refractory province to obedience. Hostages were given in pledge of future fidelity; and the two kings of Leinster, in person, tendered their allegiance and homage in the tent of the conqueror.

Placed as the monarch and his rival Brian were at this crisis, each flushed with recent victory, and meditating further enterprises, there could hardly have ex-

* Tigernach, and Ware's *Antiquities*, c. 24.

† "A bhfan me Conradh."—*An. Inisfall.* ad an. 979. See also, for this battle, Vallancey.—*Laws of Tanistry*, etc.

isted a doubt in the mind of either that they must ere long be committed together in the field; and, as usually happens, it was from the younger and least tried of the two parties that the provocative to the onset first proceeded. In pursuance of the will of Olill-Ollum, already more than once adverted to, the district of Dalcas, or Dalcassia, the present county of Clare, was inherited by Brian, as prince of the Dalcassian tribe. A predatory incursion under the monarch into this territory, at the commencement of his reign, gave a sufficiently clear indication of hostile feeling; but a still more wounding offence to the pride of the gallant tribe to which Brian belonged, was, about the period we have now reached, wantonly committed. The sacred tree in the Plain of Adoration, at Adair,* under whose boughs the Dalcassian princes used in former times to be inaugurated, was, by Malachy's order, in the course of this inroad cut down.†

A. D.
782.

But these pointed aggressions, among which the latter stands forth the most prominently in all our annals, having failed to arouse the resentment of the hero of Munster, the monarch again, in the following year, held forth the signal of defiance, by marching his troops into the province of Leinster, which, as forming a part of the kingdom of Leath Mogh, was now under the dominion of Brian, and there spreading havoc and de-

* Annal. Inisfall ad ann. 982. See an account of the practice of tree-worship among the ancient Irish, in the First Volume of this Work, c. ii. p. 45, etc.

† Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 982—983. Our antiquary, Ledwich, in his great anxiety to prove the Irish to have been of Teutonic origin—a supposition which, with regard to a small portion of her population, the Scots, has been shown to be highly probable,—has adduced, among other evidence, the ancient custom of inaugurating the kings of Cashel on a large stone. "This was a Firbolgian custom," he says, "introduced from the north; where the people erected great stones, or stone-circles, for the election and inauguration of their princes." He forgot, however, that though the Egegenian branch of the Munster kings adopted this form on their election, those of the Dalcassian line were inaugurated under the Bile-Magh-Adair, or sacred tree, in Thomond; a custom which, being, according to him, a proof of Celtic descent, is sufficient to neutralise at least the inference deduced by him from the other.

vastation over its plains "to the very sea." * Such an infringement of his royal rights was not to be submitted to by the king of Munster, who, putting himself at the head of a large force, marched directly against the monarch, and, by this prompt and decisive movement, rendered hostilities for the time unnecessary. Yielding to remonstrances so strongly backed, Malachy consented to acknowledge his rival's claims; and a sort of convention was then mutually agreed upon, confirming to Brian his right of dominion over the kingdom of Leath Mogh, in like manner as it assured to the monarch his right of sovereignty over Leath Cuinn. It was moreover stipulated on both sides, that all persons held in captivity by either, who belonged to the dominions of the other, should be forthwith delivered up; and lastly, in reference to the claim upon Leinster—the point immediately at issue,—it was settled that Donald, the king of that province, was bound to pay tribute to Brian.†

A.D.
983.

Through the four or five following years this amicable arrangement appears to have been respected by both parties; but, in the year 988, whether in revenge for some aggression, or moved by the one sole aim and object of his career, the supplanting of the power of the monarchy, we find Brian actively preparing, both by land and water, for the invasion at once of the two provinces, Meath and Connaught. Embarking the whole of his force in boats on the Shannon, he thus conveyed them as far as Lough Ree, laying the country on each side under contribution. Then dividing his forces into two corps, he detached one of them to the western parts of Connaught, which they plundered and laid waste, slaying Murgisius, the Roydamna of that province; while with the other he himself marched into Meath, devastating all that lay in his course, on the western

A.D.
988.

* "*Go Múir*,"—*Tigernach*, ad an. 983. IV *Mag.* ad an. 982. (*ære com.* 983.)

† *Inisfall.* ad an. 989.

bank of the Shannon, and returned to his palace of Kinkora, laden with rich spoils.*

The two great rivals were now again in open conflict; though, for the three following years, alternate inroads into each other's territories, for the purpose of spoil and plunder, appear to have been the only means of mutual annoyance resorted to by them. Against the Danes, however, the spirited monarch continued to carry on a brisk and effective warfare; and so closely laid siege to them in Dublin, for the space of "twenty nights," that they were at length reduced to salt water for their only drink. In this extremity, finding themselves compelled to submit, they agreed to pay to the monarch, in addition to the accustomed tributes, one ounce of gold out of every principal dwelling-house in Dublin, to be paid yearly on Christmas-night to him and his heirs for ever.†

A. D.
989.

In the year 994, Dublin must again have been the scene of his triumphs, as he is said to have then carried off from thence two trophies,—the collar of Tomar, and the sword of Carus; ‡ to which, from the emphatic manner in which they are always mentioned, peculiar interest must have been attached. In the course of the same year, during an inroad made by him into Munster, an engagement ensued between his forces and those of Brian, in which the latter was defeated.§

* IV Mag. Vallancey (*Laws of Tanistry*), from *Munster Records*. Vallancey gives to this Roydenma the name of Muiredach.

† Tigernach. ad. an. 989.

‡ Harris could not have seen this record, or he would not have asserted that the sword of Carus belonged to Caroles Knute, who was killed at Clontarf. The collar of Tomar was a golden torques, which the monarch Malachy took from the neck of a Danish chieftain whom he had conquered:—

"Let Erin remember the days of old.
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her,
When Malachy wore the collar of gold
Which he won from her proud invader.—*Irish Melodies*.

§ Inisfall. ad an. 994. With a spirit of partisanship which deserves praise, at least for its ardour, being ready to kindle even on matters as far back as the tenth century, Vallancey suppresses all mention of this defeat of his favourite hero; though, in the annals most partial to the cause of Munster—those of Inisfallen—it forms almost the only record for the year.

But this passing eclipse of the Momonian hero's good fortune was amply redeemed in the following year, when invading, in his turn, the dominions of the monarch, he gained a complete victory over him; and, carrying conflagration into the Royal Rath, in which stood the palace of the kings of Tara,* burned that ancient and stately structure to the ground. At length, recalled perhaps by some worthier feelings than appear in general to have actuated their conduct, to a sense of the lasting injury they were inflicting upon their country by these feuds, the rival sovereigns again formed with each other a treaty of peace, on the basis, as before, of mutual recognition of their respective rights, as rulers of the two great divisions of the island, Leath Cuinn and Leath Mogh.†

A. D.
997.

That an honest zeal for the public welfare bore some share in the motives that led to this step, may be fairly inferred from the first fruits of their reconciliation having been an active campaign in concert against the Danes. Marching with their united forces to Dublin, they there demanded and received hostages from the Northmen; and, in the same year, having renewed their joint invasion of that city, they carried off from thence both spoil and hostages, and, as the chroniclers exultingly add, "with much triumph to the Irish."‡ A yet more brilliant success awaited them in the following year, when, as they lay encamped with their respective armies in the valley called, in those times, Glen-Mama, the Danes poured forth from their seat of strength an immense force, with the hope of surprising and overwhelming the two sovereigns. But, in the conflict that then ensued, the superior fortune of the day was with the Irish; and, among the Danish princes and nobles

A. D.
1000.

* Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 996. These annals style the structure that was burned down "Teach aoidhe," or, the House of the Learned Man, or Preceptor; but, according to Vallancey's authorities, it was the Royal House, or Rath, of Meath.

† Inisfall. ad an. 997.

‡ IV Mag. ad an. 997. "Frisuabhaís do Gaoidheabhaibh."

who fell in the action, is recorded Harold, the son of Anlaf.*

Not long after this event the Northmen of Dublin, under the command of their king, Sitric, making an irruption into Leinster, carried away with them the king of that province, Donogh Mac-Donald; on hearing of which outrage upon his liegeman, the active Brian marched instantly with a select force to their city, and having delivered the royal captive, burned down their principal dun, or fortress, making himself master of the gold, silver, and other precious effects they had amassed, and then forced them to expel king Sitric, the author of the outrage, from the country. The Annals of the Four Masters represent Malachy as acting with Brian in this expedition; but Tigernach, the annals of Ulster, and of Inisfallen, all agree in attributing the credit of it to Brian alone.† It is, indeed manifest that, about this period, the monarch had seen reason to separate his interests from those of the aspiring king of Munster; whether from jealousy of that prince's increasing fame, or, as seems more probable, from a clearer insight into

* IV Mag. ad. an. 999.

† Tigernach and Inisfall. ad an. 999. We have here another historical partisan in the field. The author of Cambrensis Eversus, with whom Malachy is not undeservedly a favourite, assigns to him alone all the glory of this achievement. "He attributes (says Vallancey) the whole honour of this action to Malachy, with an utter exclusion of Brian, although the annals of Tigernach expressly mention Brian as solely engaged in the affair, without attributing any share of it to Malachy." Vallancey then proceeds, with much warmth and energy, to contend that Malachy had no share whatever in this exploit.

As long as this sort of partisanship confines itself within the bounds of honest zeal, it is, however misplaced, respectable; but too often unfairness is one of the weapons to which it resorts, and Vallancey himself is not always exempt from this charge. In order to palliate the violence of Brian's proceedings, attempts have been made by some of his enthusiastic admirers to make it appear that the first aggression came from Malachy; and, with this view, Vallancey, in giving an account of an attack upon Munster, in the year 988, by the people of Connaught, asserts, without the slightest authority from any of our authentic annals, that the monarch's own principality of Meath took a part in the aggression. "In 988," he says, "the people of Connaught, assisted by those of Meath, in open violation of their king's treaty with Brian, invaded the west of Munster. . . . Brian, to revenge this insult, marched at the head of a powerful army," etc.

the real nature of his designs, and a too late conviction, perhaps, that, in aiding so active a rival's schemes, he was but hastening forward the march of a power already threatening the rights and safety of the supreme throne itself.

Whatever may have been his real motives for such conduct, the fact of a change, at this time, in the policy of the monarch is sufficiently evinced by his marching his troops on a predatory expedition into Leinster (that province being now in relations of allegiance with Brian) in the very same year that had just been signalised by Brian's victory over the Northmen. In consequence, as it is said, of this overt act of hostility, but clearly in pursuance of his own long-meditated scheme of usurpation, Brian collected together a large army from the provinces of Connaught, Munster, and Leinster, together with an auxiliary corps furnished by the Danes of Dublin, whom he had now brought into obedience; and, at the head of this imposing force, marched towards Tara. Learning that the monarch had retired with his troops to the plain of Bregia, he detached to that place a squadron of Danish cavalry which, coming in conflict with the troops of Malachy, were, almost to a man, cut to pieces. A. D. 1001. On the appearance, however, of Brian, with the main body of his immense force, the monarch saw that to continue his resistance would be for the present unavailing, and that by concession only could he hope to purchase a brief respite for the monarchy. Accordingly, appealing to his rival's generosity, on account of the disparity in the numbers of their respective forces, and giving hostages in pledge of fidelity and present submission, he succeeded for the time in averting the danger with which he was threatened; and Brian, withdrawing his troops peaceably from the royal territory, departed, as the chroniclers express it, "without battle, without waste, without burning." *

* "Gan cath, gan indradh, gan loecc."—IV Mag. ad an. 1000 (see com. 1001).

According to some accounts* of this transaction, the monarch, in pleading the comparative weakness of his own force, requested that a certain time should be allowed him for the purpose of bringing into the field his whole military strength; engaging solemnly that if, within that period, he should find himself unable to try the question with the sword, he would at once resign his throne and pay homage and tribute to Brian as monarch. With this plausible arrangement the king of Munster, it is added, politely complied. That such instances of courtesy in warfare were not unfrequent among the Scandinavians, we learn from one of their own historians; who tells of a Danish general voluntarily reducing his force in order to be on a level with that of his antagonist.† But the story of Brian's still more chivalrous flight of complaisance, besides that it is mentioned in none of the authentic Irish chronicles, bears evident marks of modern fabrication.

CHAPTER XXI.

Usurpation of the Throne of Tara by Brian.—His Triumphant Progress through the Country.—Gifts and Privileges bestowed by him upon the Church.—State of the Country under his Dominion.—Unusually long interval of Peace.—Disturbed by the Restlessness and Perfidy of the People of Leinster.—Malachy, defeated by them, applies for Assistance to Brian.—Is Refused.—Preparations of the Northmen, in League with the Lagenians, for a Descent upon Ireland.—Forces collected from most of the Danish Dominions.—Great Battle of Clontarf and its Consequences.

A. D. 1001. THE following year beheld the accomplishment of the ambitious Brian's projects and hopes. It is commonly stated, with a view of exonerating him from the

* O'Halloran.

† Mallet, tom. i. 231.

odium of usurpation, and investing his acts with the sanction of popular approval, that he had been, previously to his first rebellion, solicited earnestly by the princes and states of Connaught to depose Malachy from the supreme throne, and take the sceptre into his own hands. But in none of our really trustworthy records is there to be found the slightest authority for this assertion; and the term "rebellion," applied by the annalists to Brian's first march upon Tara,* sufficiently points out the sort of aspect under which that aggression must have been generally regarded. Though left to linger on through a few more feverish months, in the mere semblance of sovereignty, the fate of the monarch was by that step finally sealed, and his rival's supremacy secured. In the following year, at the head of a force as formidable in numbers as before, Brian again marched to Tara; and there, in the palace of her ancient monarchs, received the homage of their last legitimate successor, the descendant of a series of fifty Hy-Niell kings, and was by him acknowledged supreme sovereign of all Ireland.

However strong and ascendant was the power acquired by Brian over the minds of his fellow countrymen, by a long life of military success, so daring a step as he had now ventured upon, in utter defiance of all those long cherished prejudices in favour of old and prescriptive rights which we have seen to be innate in the national character, could hardly have been risked by him without some misgivings, and even apprehensions, as to the result. Accordingly, though in no quarter does there appear to have been open resistance to his authority, nor any instance of a recourse to arms, in favour of Malachy, it is yet clear, from the constant and watchful activity with which the new monarch kept the field through the two or three following years, and his restless movements throughout all Ireland, demanding

* Tigernach, ad an. 1000. and IV Mag. ad an. 999 (*ære com. 1000*). Tigernach calls it "a rebellion through treachery;"—*impod tre meabhai*.

hostages in every quarter, that the apparently willing submission of the country was mainly the work of his own vigilance and vigour; and that what he had acquired by the sword, was chiefly by the sword maintained.

The powerful houses of the Hy-Niells, as well the two branches long excluded from the succession as those—the Tirone and Clan-Colman,—which had, down to this period, alternately enjoyed it,* made common cause in opposing and thwarting the new monarch, but only in one instance appear to have ventured on open hostilities with him in the field. The southern Hy-Niells having, with the aid of the forces of Connaught, taken up arms against his authority, he gave them battle in the neighbourhood of Athlone, and obtained an easy victory over them.†

The prince who governed at this time the Hy-Niells of the north was Aodh, the grandson of the heroic Murkertach,—a chief who, as being the roydamna, or successor apparent to Malachy, was the person, next to this prince the most aggrieved by his deposition. But a menacing movement or two, not followed up by any actual hostility, was all that the usurper had to encounter from the young Aodh; who, making war soon after (A.D. 1005.) on the province of Ulad, fell gallantly, as became a descendant of the Chief “of the Warriors of the Saffron Hue,” in an engagement called, from the place where it occurred, the Battle of the Wood of Tulka.‡ Among the few faint attempts at resistance made by the Hy-Niells of the north, was that of a prince of Ulidia, Flahertach O'Neill, who refused to give hostages to Brian. But the military dictator extorted these sureties by force;§ and, soon after, carried off Flahertach himself as his prisoner.

The ready acquiescence with which, in general, so violent a change in the polity of the country was sub-

* See *Dissertation, etc.* by O'Connor of Balenagar, sect. 15.

† IV Mag. ad an. 1001 (ærm com. 1003)

‡ “Cath Craoibhe Tulcha.” IV Mag. § Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 1006.

mitted to, may be in a great degree attributed to the example of patience and disinterestedness exhibited by the immediate victim of this revolution, the deposed Malachy himself. Nor, in forming our estimate of this prince's character from a general view of his whole career, can we well hesitate in coming to the conclusion, that not to any backwardness in the field, or want of vigour in council, is his tranquil submission to the violent encroachments of his rival to be attributed; but to a regard, rare at such an unripe period of civilisation, for the real interests of the public weal, and an unwillingness to risk, for his own personal views, the explosive burst of discord which, in so inflammable a state of the political atmosphere, a struggle for the monarchy would, he knew, infallibly provoke. Acting on this prudent, and, as far as we can judge, patriotic motive, he even generously lent his aid to the usurper in preserving the general peace of the country; and when Brian, attended by the kings of Leath-Mogh, proceeded on his circuit through the provinces,—passing, as his progress is described, “beyond the Red Cataract,* in Ula,”—we find Malachy, with the contingent of troops supplied by his principality, following quietly among the other liegemen in the royal train.

During one of these progresses, having remained a week in the city of Armagh, the new monarch left, as a devout offering, on the great altar of the cathedral, a gold collar weighing twenty ounces.† A most marked feature, indeed, in the policy of this prince, was the regard manifested by him for the interests of religion, and his liberal patronage of the ministers of the church. In the course of a subsequent visit to Ulster he afforded a substantial mark of his feeling on this subject, when, in order to repair the ravages committed by the North-

* *Easruaidh*, the present Ballyshannon,—called the Red Cataract, from the salmon-leap, for which this spot is celebrated.

† The value of gold was, I suppose, at that time, about five times as great as at the present day.

men, he granted, in addition to a gift of glebe lands to the churches of Ireland, a considerable extension of their immunities and rights. After depositing his pious oblation at Armagh, he proceeded, attended by the kings of the south, to the royal seat of the Dalriodans in Antrim, called Rath-mor-Muige-Line, or the Great Fortress near the Water,* where he received hostages from all the princes of that region, as well as from the whole of the remaining dynasts of Leth-Cuinn.

To follow in detail the various progresses of this description which he performed during the first few years of his reign, would be little more than a mere repetition of the same uninteresting and, for the most part, bloodless course of events; the few instances that occurred of resistance to his demands, having led rarely to any more serious result than the seizure of the refractory chieftains as prisoners; and all such captives of this rank as fell into his power were led in chains to his regal fortress at Kinkora.

This vigorous policy appears to have completely succeeded. An interval of peace for some years followed upon these measures, such as it has rarely been Ireland's fortune, whether in ancient or modern times to enjoy; and the void left by the dearth of the usual stirring events in the bloodless annals of these few tranquil years has been filled up, by the fancy of later writers, with a glowing picture of the peace, prosperity, and civilisation which was now diffused throughout the whole country, by the salutary laws and wise government of its ruler. In addition to the endowments and privileges newly conferred upon the church, the schools and colleges ravaged by the Danes were all restored to their former condition and new institutions of learning and piety founded. The wealth of the state devoted to objects of public utility was, we are told, employed in the erection of fortified places, in the building of numerous bridges, and the

* Inisfall, ad an 1004. See Beauford (*Ancient Topography of Ireland*), at Rath-mor-muighe-line :—Collectan vol iii.

construction of massive causeways; while, to provide also for the dignity of the regal state, the various royal houses and places throughout Munster, more especially the monarch's favourite abode at Kinkora, were, by his orders, all rebuilt and embellished. It is added likewise by the same romantic authorities, as a proof of the influence of Brian's laws on society, and the consequent purity of the public morals, that a beautiful maiden, adorned with gold and jewels, and bearing in her hand a white wand, with a costly ring on its top, travelled alone over the whole island without any attempt being made on her honour or her treasures.*

Through the whole of this prosperous picture it is easy to trace the florid colouring of the fabulist; and, with the exception of the endowment granted to the churches, and the repairs of some of the royal forts in Munster, there is not one of the acts attributed thus to Brian, of which any record is to be found in our genuine annals; while the story of the maiden, travelling safely with her ring and jewels over the island, is but an improvement on similar fables long current among the Danes and Anglo-Saxons. It was the boast of the Danish lawgiver, Frotho, that he could expose, without fear of theft, the most precious things on the public paths; and, in Alfred's time, as a similar test of the honesty of the people, rich bracelets were, it is said, hung up by the road-side.†

* Verses quoted by Keating. We find in Feller (*Dict. Hist.*) a translation of these verses by M. Lally-Tolendal:—"Les lois et les mœurs étaient tellement respectées, que les bardes Irlandais, en chantant le règne heureux de Brian Boroihiuh, ont dit,—

"Une vierge, unissant aux dons de la nature,
De l'or et des rubis, l'éclat et la valeur,
A la clarté du jour ou dans la nuit obscure
D'une mer jusqu'à l'autre allait sans protecteur,
Ne perdait rien de sa parure,
Ne risquait rien pour sa pudeur."

† "Il fit de si bons réglemens contre le brigandage, et veilla si bien à leur observation, qu'il exposait des bagues d'or sur les grands chemins sans que personne osât les prendre. Les historiens anglais racontent la même chose du grand Alfred."—Mallet, *Hist. de Danemarck*.

Of William the Conqueror's time, a similar romantic account is given.

But though, in the instance of our Irish hero,—and the same has been the fate of all such lights of obscure periods,—romance supplies the place amply of authentic history, there is yet enough, in the genuine records of his actions, to entitle him to the rank he holds in historic fame. Had he no other claim to distinction, his name would fully merit commemoration for the vigorous policy with which, when advanced to the supreme power, he succeeded in quelling and keeping down that whole swarm of petty kings and dynasts, who, at once tyrants and rebels, have been at all times the worst scourge of the country, leaving neither peace to the people, nor security to the throne. To his prompt vigour in suppressing, or rather coercing into harmlessness this most mischievous as well as most absurd of all forms of aristocracy, is to be attributed the rare and, in those times, unexampled tranquillity which the country enjoyed under his sway.

A storm, however, was now gathering, which boded interruption to this short interval of peace. The high hand with which Brian had carried his usurpation, setting at defiance all competitors and opponents, had the effect of awing also into submission the Danish princes of the island; and although, in the seaport towns, the Northmen were still numerous, being encouraged by a policy, dangerous under such circumstances, to continue their commerce with the natives, not an attempt appears to have been made by them to disturb the general peace. In the year 1013, however, the people of Leinster, who had been always the most shamefully forward among their countrymen, both in serving as auxiliaries to the foreigner, and in using his alliance for their own purposes, joined their forces to those of Súr, king of Dublin, and, with more than ordinary ferocity, invaded the province of Meath.* The king of Leinster,

A: D.
1013.

* Amongst other things, is not to be forgotten that good peace that he made in this land; so that a man of any account might go over his kingdom unhurt, with his bosom full of gold.—*Saxon Chronicle*.

* Inisfall ad an. 1013. IV Mag. ad an. 1012 (erro com. 1013)

Maolmorda, had, in the year 999, been aided by the forces of the Danes in usurping the crown of that kingdom, and now co-operated with them in this plundering expedition into Meath, despoiling and burning all that lay in their way, as far as "the Sacred Ground of St. Fechin, and the Plain of Bregia."*

To avenge this violation of his territory, the deposed monarch, now only king of Meath, set fire to the neighbouring districts of Leinster as far as Benadar,† the present Hill of Howth. There, being attacked by the combined force of Maolmorda and his Danish allies, he was entirely defeated with the loss of 200 of his best troops, his son, Flann, and several of the noble chiefs of Meath. Under the pressure of this defeat, and threatened with still further aggression, Malachy adopted the resolution of applying for assistance to Brian; and accordingly hastening to the palace of Kinkora, where the monarch's court was now held, he there presented himself as an humble suitor in the presence of that prince whom he had, but a few years before, looked down upon from the supreme throne. Representing in pathetic terms the constant alarm to which he was exposed by the joint hostility of two such formidable neighbours, he implored earnestly the aid and interference of Brian to avert from his territory so dreadful a scourge. To this entreaty the veteran hero, wholly untouched, as it would seem, by the appeals to his generosity, which the peculiar circumstances of the case involved, returned a stern refusal; and the king of Meath was left to defend his possessions by such means as his own narrow resources supplied.‡

In the summer, however, of that year, so menacing an aspect had the combined movements of the Danes and Lagenians begun to assume, that Brian, to meet the

* Our airg Tarmon Feithin ? Maigh Breagh.—*Inisfall*. ad an. 1013. Fechin was a saint of the seventh century to whom, in many parts of Ireland, this sort of Termon, or free lands, were dedicated.

† i. e. The Mountain of Birds.

‡ *Inisfall*. ad an. 1013.

coming danger, advanced his quarters to the neighbourhood of Dublin, laying waste the country of Ossory in his march. At the same time he detached into Leinster his son, Morrough, with a select body of troops which, in like manner, devastated the country with fire and sword as far as Glendalough, and the Sacred Ground of St. Caimip; and then returned, with a number of prisoners and abundant spoil, to Brian, whose camp was pitched on that ground, in the neighbourhood of Dublin, now called Kilmainham. Here he remained from the month of August until Christmas; when, finding that he could not succeed in bringing the Danes or Lagenians to action, he broke up his quarters and returned, laden with ample spoil, to Kinkora.

Meanwhile the Northmen, encouraged by his absence from Munster, had made a descent with a large fleet on the south of Ireland, and plundered and burned the city of Cork; but, before they could re-embark, were attacked with success by the natives, and lost in the action that ensued, among other distinguished leaders, the young Anlaf, son of Sitric, the king of Dublin.

No sooner had Brian withdrawn from his cantonments in the neighbourhood of Dublin, than the Danes of that city, as well as of every other part of Ireland where these foreigners were dispersed, began to prepare with the utmost activity for a combined effort against the Irish, by despatching envoys in every direction to summon auxiliaries to their banner. Not only from Scotland, from the Orkneys and Hebrides, the isle of Man, and the isles of Shetland,* did they muster together all the disposable force of their fellow Northmen, but even to Denmark, Norway, and other parts of Scandinavia,* messengers were sent to solicit immediate succours; and such were the accounts circulated by them of their prospects of success, that, as a French chronicler of that age states, a large fleet full of northern adventurers

* Joicefall ad an 1014

were induced by these representations to crowd to the Irish shores, bringing with them their wives and children, and hoping to share, as he adds, in the conquest and enjoyment of a country "which contained twelve cities, most ample bishoprics, and abundant wealth."^{*}

Though long prepared, by the unnatural alliance which had placed Leinster in the hands of the Danes, to expect a struggle of no ordinary description, Brian could little have foreseen so formidable an array of force as was now collecting to assail him. Nothing daunted, however, by their numbers, he put himself at the head of his own brave army of Munster; and, joined by Malachy with the troops of Meath, and by the forces of Connaught under the command of Teige, the king of that province, marched directly to the Plain of Dublin, and took up his station in front of the enemy on the very same ground which had been occupied by him in the summer of the preceding year. Having reconnoitred the state of the opposing force, he ventured to detach into Leinster a select body of troops, consisting of the choice of his Dalcassian warriors, together with a small body also of Eugenians, for the purpose of devastating the dominions of the king of Leinster, and thereby causing a diversion of the enemy's force. The command of this secret expedition the monarch entrusted to his son, Donough, with orders to dispatch his mission quickly, and return to the army within two days, before which period it was not expected a general engagement would take place.

Some traitor, however, in the camp of Brian, had contrived to apprise the Danes of the departure of this

* "His temporibus Normanni supradicti quod patres eorum nunquam perpetrasse ausi sunt, cum innumera classe Hiberniam insulam, quæ *Irlanda* dicitur, ingressi sunt, una cum uxoribus, et liberis et captivis Christianis, quos fecerant sibi servos, ut *Hirlandia* extinctis, ipsi pro ipsis inhabitarent opulentissimam terram, quæ XII civitates, cum amplissimis episcopatibus et unum regem habet, ac propriam linguam, sed Latinæ literas"—Ademar ap. Labbe.

detachment; urging earnestly, at the same time, the policy of commencing their attack before this gallant band should have returned. It is stated in the Annals of Inisfallen, but in that alone of all our native chronicles, that the traitor who conveyed this intelligence and advice to the enemy was no other than the deposed monarch, Malachy, who also promised, it is added, to draw off his own troops in the approaching engagement, and remain with his 1000 men of Meath inactive. Had this wronged and despoiled monarch, so lately a suitor in vain to the usurper of his crown for the means of defending the small remains of ancient dignity still left to him, been so far tempted by the present occasion of revenge as to forget at once all his sense of duty and patriotism, and close a long life of public virtue in disgrace, such a fall, hurried on as it had been by wrongs and insults, would have excited far more of painful regret than of surprise. It is no small relief, however, to discover that there exist no valid grounds for this story; that, as presently shall be shown, it is wholly at variance with subsequent established facts, and owed its origin solely to a wretched spirit of provincial partisanship which, in order to exalt by comparison the character of the popular hero, Brian, did not hesitate to blacken unjustly the fame of his competitor, Malachy.

The intimation, by whomsoever conveyed, of the diminution of Brian's force by the late detachment, appears to have been acted upon by the enemy; who, having spent the whole of the night in preparing for a general action, presented themselves at the first dawn of light before the Irish army, which had taken up its position at this time on the plain of Clontarf. It had been the wish, A. D. we are told, of Brian to avoid engaging on this day
1014. (Friday, April 23d), which, as being the anniversary of Christ's Passion, ought to have been kept sacred, as he felt, from the profanation of warfare. Being forced, however, to waive his scruples upon this point, he afterwards skilfully, as we shall see, turned the incident to

account; making it the means of calling forth the religious as well as the military zeal and enthusiasm of his countrymen.

While, according to Irish tradition, the motive of the Danes for provoking the conflict on this day was, the wish to avail themselves of the diminished state of Brian's force, the Scandinavian authorities, on the other hand, attribute it to supernatural suggestion; and tell of some oracular idol which, on being consulted by the Danish general, Bruadair, answered, that if the engagement took place on a Friday, king Brian would assuredly fall in the field.*

The confederate army of the Danes and Lagenians was composed of three separate corps, or divisions; the first of which consisted of the Danes of Dublin, led by two distinguished officers, Dolat and Conmaol, together with a select body of 1000 Northmen, clad in coats of mail from head to foot, and commanded by two Norwegian princes, Anrúd and Charles, the sons of White Danes. The second division, formed of the forces of Leinster, was commanded by Maolmurda, principal king of that province; and subordinately to him, by some minor dynasts, among whom were the prince of Hy-Falgia, and Tuathal, of the Liffey territory. With these were joined also a large body, or battalion of Danes.† The third corps consisted of the auxiliaries from the coasts of the Baltic, and from the isles, under the orders of Bruadair, the admiral of the fleet which had brought them to Ireland, and of Lodar, earl of the Orkney islands. Attached to this division, there were also a number of Britons from Cornwall and

* Niala Sage, ap. Johnstone, *Antiq. Celto-Scand.* Thus, in the Latin version:—"Hoc per veneficia explorante quemadmodum abitura esset pugna, responsum oraculi sic tulerat: si die Veneris pugna foret Brianem regem adepta victoria casurum; sin prius confingeretur, omnes qui hunc adversum consisterent, occasuros esse; hinc Broder ante diem Veneris acie dimicandum negavit

† Inisfall. ad an 1014. "Cath do Ghallaib;" the word ceth signifying both a battle and a battalion.

Wales, under the petty princes of their respective territories.*

To confront this array of the enemy's forces, the army of Brian was likewise divided into three separate columns; at the head of one of which he placed his eldest son, Morrourh, intending to oppose it to the first division of the enemy. This column was composed of the troops of the king of Meath, of the brave Dalgais, now diminished in numbers, but strong in valour and fame, and a body of men from Conmacnemara, a maritime district of western Connaught. Of the loyal devotion of the blood of Brian to the national cause, there was no want of pledges on that day; as, in addition to the intrepid Morrourh, there fought also in the ranks of this column four other sons of the monarch named Teige, Donald, Conor, and Flan, besides the grandson of Brian, young Turlough, the son of the commander, Morrourh.

The division whose task it was to oppose the second of the enemy's corps, was commanded by Cian and Donald, both princes of the Eugénian line, and of whom the former is said, by the annalists, to have exceeded in stature and beauty all other Irishmen. Under these chiefs were ranged, in addition to the warriors of their own gallant tribe, the forces of the king of the Desies, and of all the other various septs and principalities of the south of Ireland. Among the dynasts named as assisting with their troops in this division are found Scanlan, prince of Loch Lene, and O'Dubhlón, king of the O'Connells of Gabhra. Nor did the jealousy so long

* "Chein me Maolmuadh os e b. faide b. dheas an Éirinn"—*Inisfall* ad an. 1014. Cian was the chief of the Eugénians of Cashell, and son-in-law of Brian. There remain some lamentations or elegies on this warrior's death, written by Mac Giolla Caoimh, a poet who flourished, we are told, in the time of Brian. Of these elegies, which are found in the collection called the Munster Book, Mr. O'Reilly gives the following account:—"1st. A poem of forty-four verses, beginning, 'Dreadful the night, this night.' It is the lamentation of the poet after Cian, Brian, and his son, Morrourh. 2d. A poem of 108 verses, beginning, 'Raithlean's Rath of Corc and Cian,' upon the deserted state of Rath Raithlean, and other palaces, after the death of Corc, Cian, and other Momonian princes."—*Trans. Ibero-Celt Society.*

subsisting between the two moieties of the island prevent the northern portion from contributing its share of aid on this great occasion; as, in the list of the chiefs commanding the second column, we find O'Carroll, prince of Orgiall, in Ulster, and Maguire, prince of Fermanagh, —the two most illustrious Irishmen, says the chronicler, that graced the field on that day;* and therefore worthy, he adds, of fighting under the banner of Cian.

To the third division of Brian's army, which was under the command of O'Connor, son of the king of Connaught, was assigned the task of engaging the auxiliaries brought by the enemy's ships from Norway and the isles; and, in forming this corps, a number of Ultonian kings and chiefs combined their forces. Among these are found enumerated O'Hedian of Adnia, O'Kelly, of Hy-Mania, Aodh "the Wounder," king of Elly, and Echtigern, prince of Aradia.†

From the above enumeration of the forces of the Irish on this occasion, it will be seen that the emergency of the crisis, threatening danger not only to their liberties, but to their very existence as a nation, had aroused in them a spirit of unanimity, as rare then, as it has continued unluckily, ever since, though leaving noble evidence of the energies that a country like Ireland is capable of in a cause that rallies around it cordially the arms and hearts of all her sons.

Having thus arranged his order of battle, the veteran monarch went himself among the troops, accompanied only by his son Morrough; and, addressing them all, from the highest to the lowest, conjured them to summon

* "Ar na radh don dia ain, o b. hiad b. sia badh thuaidh an Eirin san sluaigh ain."

† This account of the disposition of the respective forces is taken chiefly from the *Annals of Inisfallen*. According to these and other native records, it does not appear, that there were any Danes in Brian's army; but that it was a purely national force. It would seem from Torfæus, however, that there were some Northmen on the side of Brian, as he mentions that Bruadair and Upsac, another of the pirate chiefs, fought on opposite sides: —"Evidens ex amplianis presentis scripti cap. 10 exhibit, Broderum et Unacum, piratus, Bello Brianico diversas partes secutos"—*Res. Orcad. Hist. Pref.*

up their utmost strength and fortitude against the base confederacy of pirates now before them. Fearing lest their confidence in their own good fortune might be diminished, by missing from among them so many of those brave Dalcassians who stood, in all emergencies, the brunt of the conflict, he explained to them the importance of the service on which that active corps had been detached, and the salutary effects it would produce in weakening and diverting the enemy's force. Then reverting to the crimes and enormities of the Danes throughout the long period of their tyranny over Ireland, he reminded them, how constantly and cruelly these swarms of foreign barbarians had employed themselves in murdering the native kings and chieftains, in spreading conflagration through all their castles and holy houses, laying prostrate the churches of God, and plundering and violating the rich shrines of the saints. "The blessed Trinity," he then exclaimed, in a loud and solemn voice, "hath at length looked down upon our sufferings, and endued you with the power and the courage, this day, to extirpate for ever the tyranny of the Danes over Ireland; thus punishing them for their innumerable crimes and sacrileges by the avenging power of the sword." On saying these words, he exhibited in his left hand a bloody crucifix, while in his right he waved triumphantly his sword; and then exclaiming, "Was it not on this day that Christ himself suffered death for you?" gave signal for action.*

Of the details of the memorable battle which then ensued, and which lasted without pause or breathing time, from a little after sunrise, till the dusk of the evening, there is but little told in our authentic annals; while the accounts derived from other sources, as well Scandinavian as Irish, come through channels which render them liable to suspicion, or at least suggest the necessity of caution in the use of them. According to some writers,

* Inisfall ad an. 1014.

the veteran monarch, notwithstanding his advanced period of life, being then in his eighty-eighth year, commanded in person throughout the battle. But the most probable and consistent accounts represent him as yielding so far to his infirmities as to retire early in the course of the action to a tent or pavilion in the immediate neighbourhood of the scene of conflict, where he could be consulted in every emergency, and preside in spirit, if not in person, over the field.

In the mean while his son Morrough, who had himself reached his great climacteric, directed actively the operations of the whole army; and, being followed into the thick of the fight by his son, Turlough, a youth but fifteen years old, performed such prodigies of valour and prowess throughout the day, as to concentrate almost solely upon himself the attention of most of the historians of battle.* Among the chiefs slain by him in personal combat during the action, was the gallant Sitric,† son of the earl of the Orkneys, whom he is said to have despatched by a single blow of his battle-axe, cutting the body of the Dane in two through his armour.

The prowess of the 1000 men in mail, commanded by the two Norwegian brothers, had, at the beginning of the action, struck panic into the troops opposed to them; but the bravery of Morrough and his gallant Dalgais soon broke through the spell that surrounded these mailed warriors, and not a man of the thousand escaped to tell the fortunes of that day. Nor did the hero himself who performed these deeds long survive his brave victims. Having put to the sword this chosen band of Northmen, and cut down with his own hand one of the chiefs who commanded them, Murrough had hurried away to another quarter of the field, and was there pursuing the same victorious career, when Anrud, the brother of the Norwegian prince he had just slain,

* *Isisfall*. ad an. 1014.

† Sitric is mentioned in the *Niala Saga* as commanding one of the wings of the Danish army.

singled him out for deadly conflict and revenge. On seeing him approach, the Irish hero rushed forward to meet him, and, seizing him firmly with his left hand,—the right having been enfeebled by constant use of his sword,—shook him fairly out of his coat of mail to the earth, and there transfixed him with his sword. The Norwegian, however, in dying, had his full revenge; for, as the conqueror stooped down over him, he drew forth the knife or dagger which hung by Morrough's side, and plunged it into his breast.

This fatal wound, though not followed by death for some hours, having robbed the Irish of their gallant leader, the active command devolved upon Malachy, the king of Tara; under whom, the ultimate success of the day was accomplished,* and the Danes and their traitorous confederates driven with immense slaughter from the field.†

It was in the midst of the rout and carnage of their

* IV Mag. ad ann. 1013 (nr. com. 1014). With the usual party view of depressing their hero's rival, this fact, so important to the memory of Malachy, as entirely absolving him from the odious charge of having been false to the cause of his country on this day, is wholly suppressed by the Munster annalists; and Vallancey, without the same excuse for his partisanship, has been guilty of the same unfair omission. It is, indeed, strange that even such writers as Sir James Ware (chap. 34. ad ann. 1014) and Dr Lanigan (chap. 23. § xi.) should have fallen into the general error respecting Malachy's conduct, and taken the same unjust and, in every sense of the word, false view of his public character and career.

† The details of the battle given above are all from the *Annals of Inisfallen*; but the particulars that follow, respecting the death of Brian, are found in the *Niala Saga*, or Norse account of the battle. The following is Johnstone's version of a part of what I have extracted:—"Tum Broder sic exclamare; referat homo homini Brianem a Brodere dejectum. Mox ad eos qui in tergis fugientium hærebant, decurritur, iisque occasus regis nuntiatur, reverai oppido Ulfus Hrada et Kerthialfusus Broderem ac snos coronas circumdant ingesta in eos undique materia, sic Broder vivus capitar."—*Antiquitat. Scando-Celt.* The agreement on several important points between the Scandinavian and the Irish accounts of the battle,—the share taken by Sitric, or Sigtrygg, in the expedition,—the rank of Brudair, as commander of the pirate fleet, and the great event of Brian falling, in the moment of victory, by his hand,—these striking points of agreement between the two narratives are thus noticed by Torfæus:—"Mirus utrobique consensus apparebit, nam Sitricus illis, nobis Sigtryggus, idem quod victoriosus, et qui Broder nobis, Brudairus illis, et classis Danicæ præfectus, his Piratarum antesignanus, utrisque Briani interfector: victoriam versò penes Brianum uterque statuit, eumque ex vulnere mortuum."

retreat that the Danish admiral, Bruadair, having fled with a few followers for refuge to a small wood in the neighbourhood of Brian's tent, perceived from his lurking place that the monarch was surrounded with but few attendants,—most of his body-guards having joined in pursuit of the enemy,—and was kneeling with hands upraised, and his mind intent on prayer.* Taking advantage of the moment, Bruadair rushed into the tent with his followers, and, after a short struggle, put the aged monarch, and a boy who was in attendance upon him, to death. Then, unable to restrain his triumph, he held up the blade, still warm from the royal veteran's heart, and cried out, "Let it be proclaimed, from man to man, that Brian has fallen by the hand of Bruadair." The ill-omened tidings spread more rapidly than he could have desired, and soon reached the ears of the absent body-guard; who, hurrying back to the royal tent, were only consoled for the sad spectacle there presented to them, by their success in seizing the murderer alive, and making him expiate, by a death of lingering torment, the ruthless act of which he had been guilty.

The numbers of the slain in this battle have been variously stated; some computing the loss of the Danes, between killed and drowned, to have been no less than 13,000 or 14,000 men, and that of the Lagenians 3000; while the number killed on the Irish side is, in the same accounts, calculated at no more than 7000. The estimate most likely, however, to be near the truth, is that in the Annals of Inisfallen, which represents the loss of the Danish and Leinster forces combined, to have been about 6012. On the amount of slaughter, however, in the ranks of the national army, our annals are

* Mariannus Scotus, in his short record of the battle, represents Brian as engaged in prayer at the moment of the attack:—"Brianus, rex Hibernie, Parasceve Pasche, sexta feria 9 Calendas Maii, manibus et mente ad Deum intentus necatur;"—all which Torfæus pronounces to be in perfect accordance with the Scandinavian accounts:—"Quo nihil nostrorum traditionibus, si annum exceperis, convenientius dici vel scribi poterat; nam et genus mortis festumque idem nobiscum expressit."—*Rer. Orcad.* c. 10.

silent.* It appears pretty certain that the loss of life, in the battles of those days, was considerably less than in the warfare of modern times. An Italian historian, in describing a battle so late as the fifteenth century, which he describes as the greatest that had then taken place for fifty years, mentions, as a proof of the determined valour with which it was contested, that the number of killed on both sides amounted to more than a thousand men;† and it is apparent from the accounts given by our native chroniclers themselves, that the battles of the Irish, in the times whose history we have been recording, were, however frequent, by no means attended with any greater proportion of loss of life.

Judging from the number, however, of princes and chieftains who fell on both sides at Clontarf, the amount of the general slaughter may well be supposed to have been immense; as, besides Brian himself, his son, Morrough, and the son of the latter, young Turlough, we find a long list enumerated by the annalists, of princes and heads of tribes who died fighting, as it appears, in the ranks confusedly with the other combatants. On the adverse side, the havoc made of the principal chieftains is represented as still more considerable. Among the native princes who fell were the king of Leinster, the prime cause of all the strife, together with his roydamna, or successor, and the king of Hy-Falgia; while, of the many Danish princes and earls whom the fleet of Brudair had wafted to the Irish coast, the greater number found their graves upon the shore of Clontarf. But this immense proportion of loss among the commanders, as compared with that of the rank and file, is to be attributed mainly to the chivalrous practice of

* Vallancey says, "According to the account inserted in the *Inisfallen Annals*, there were 4000 of Brian's forces killed during the engagement, and many wounded;"—but I can find no such statement in either of the series of the *Inisfallen Annals*, edited by Dr. O'Connor.

† Machiavel—"E fu questa giornata combattuta con più virtù che alcun'altra che fosse stata fatta in cinquanta anni in Italia; perché vi morìrà l'una parte e l'altra più che mille uomini."—*Della Istoria*, l. 8.

single combat between the chiefs, which prevailed in the warfare of those days, as in the heroic ages of Greece and Rome.

On the day after the battle all the wounded of the Irish army were conveyed by Teige, the son of Brian, and the Eugenician prince, Cian, to the camp at Kilmainham; and, on the following day, the monks of St. Columba, at Swords, hearing of the death of the monarch, came to bear away his body for the purpose of having it interred in the cathedral of Armagh. From Swords it was conveyed to the monastery of St. Ciaran, at Duleek, and from thence to Louth, where the archbishop of Armagh, Maelmury,* awaited the royal remains, and had them borne, with religious solemnity, to the archiepiscopal city. The bodies of Morrough and two other chieftains of the family were carried thither at the same time, and the remains of Brian deposited at the north side of the cathedral, those of Morrough and his heroic kinsmen at the south. During twelve successive nights the religious of St. Patrick kept watch over the dead, chaunting hymns and offering up prayers for the peace of the departed souls.†

Before we pause to take a review of the life and actions of this monarch, and endeavour to define, through the magnifying mist of antiquity, the true dimensions of his fame and character, there remains an episode, or rather sequel, to the great battle in which he died, too characteristic as well of the contentious as of the heroic spirit of the Irish people, not to be specially noticed.

On the evening of Holy Saturday, which was the day after the battle of Clontarf, Donchad, the son of the late monarch, who had been sent with his Dalcassians on a predatory expedition into Leinster, returned with immense booty to the camp of Kilmainham; and, as a

* Maelmury, i. e. *servant of Mary*. This prelate is mentioned with high praise by the Four Masters (sp. *Colgan*), who style him, "The head of the clergy of Western Europe, the chief of the holy orders of the West, and a most wise doctor."

† Annal. Ult. Annal. Inisfall. ad ann. 1014.

tribute of pious affection, sent several rich offerings to the archbishop of Armagh and his community. The chief of the Eugenian tribe, Cian, who was then also with the army at Kilmainham, and whose ambition to assert his right to the now vacant throne of Munster was too impatient to brook even decent delay, lost no time in acquainting the sons of Brian with his determination to enforce that claim; alleging, as the grounds on which he rested it, not only the right of alternate succession secured to the Eugenians by the will of Olill-Ollum, but also the seniority of their royal house over that of the Dalcassians. He, therefore, demanded that the sons of Brian should deliver hostages to him, in acknowledgment of his claim. This Donchad determinedly refused; saying that, diminished in strength and numbers as was the brave force by his side, he would neither acknowledge Cian's claim, nor yet consent to give him hostages.*

This angry contention between two such rival tribes, both encamped on the same ground, and both flushed with their common victory, seemed to threaten for a time consequences by which the mourning as well as the triumph of that memorable hour would have been sullied, when, fortunately, another Eugenian prince, named Domnal, who commanded, jointly with Cian, the troops of their tribe, interfered to check the unseemly strife; and, calmly expostulating with his brother chieftain, succeeded in withdrawing both him and the whole of their force quietly from the camp.†

Thus relieved from the chances of a conflict to which his reduced and weakened followers were now unequal, Donchad broke up from the camp at Kilmainham, and, with his small army, including the sick and wounded,

* Annal. Inisfall. ad an. 1014. Vallancey, from Munster Annals.

† Vallancey has here misrepresented the meaning of the Inisfallen annalist, making him say that Domnal "withdrew the troops under his command from supporting Cian in his pretensions;" whereas the language of the original is, "Domhnal ag dealugh re Cian is re na muintear: i. e. Domnal secretly departing from thence with Cian and his people."

proceeded slowly on his march into Munster. Further trials, however, awaited them ere they reached their own home; and the sudden change which a short day had made in the fortunes of the son of Brian, showed how even triumph may lead adversity in its train. On arriving in Ossory they found the prince of that country, Mac-Gilla-Patrick, preparing to oppose by force their passage through his territories, unless they consented to acknowledge submission to his authority. "Hostages," said that chief, "or battle!"—"Let it then," replied Donchad, "be battle; for never," he added, "was it yet heard of, within the memory of man, that a prince of the race of Brian had given hostages to a Mac-Gilla-Patrick."†

Having thus declared his purpose, the heroic chief prepared for action; first taking care, as a humane precaution, to appoint some of the bravest men of his troop to guard the sick and wounded. But, instead of allowing themselves to be so protected, these weak and suffering men all eagerly insisted upon taking their share in the combat; preferring death by the side of their comrades, to the ignoble safety proposed to them. "Let there be stakes," cried they, "fixed in the ground; and to each of these let one of us be firmly tied, holding our swords in our hands." This extraordinary suggestion was acted upon; and the troops of Ossory, on advancing to the attack, beheld, intermixed in the foremost ranks with the sound men, these pale and emaciated warriors, as if all were alike determined on death. At the sight of so strange and mournful a spectacle, the advancing army paused; and their chief, whether touched with admiration of such noble self-devotion, or fearing, as the annalist suggests, to contend with men thus pledged against surrender, drew off his force without striking a

* "Braithde no cath."—Inisfall. *loc. citat.*

† Inisfall. *ib.*

blow, and left the brave Dalgais to pursue their march through Ossory uninterrupted. *

In estimating the character of Brian Boru, it will be found that there are three distinct points of view in which he stands forth prominently to the eye, namely, as a great warrior, a successful usurper, and a munificent friend to the church. In the attributes belonging to him, under these three several aspects, are to be found the main as well as subsidiary sources of his fame. The career of Brian as a military leader appears to have been uniformly, with one single exception, successful; and, from the battle of Sulchoid to that of Clontarf, his historians number no less than fifty great battles † in which he bore away the palm of victory from the Northmen and their allies.

In his usurpation of the supreme power he was impelled evidently by motives of selfish ambition; nor could he have entailed any more ruinous evil upon the country, than by thus setting an example of contempt for established rights, and thereby weakening, in the minds of the people, that habitual reverence for ancient laws and usages which was the only security afforded by the national character for the preservation of public order and peace. The fatal consequences of this step, both moral and political, will be found but too strikingly evolved in the course of the subsequent history. Attempts have been made to lend an appearance of popular sanction to his usurpation, by the plausible pretence that it was owing to the solicitation of the states and princes of Connaught; that he was induced to adopt measures for the deposition of Malachy. ‡ In like manner, to give

* Annal. Inisfall. *ut supra*. IV Mag. ad ann. 1001 (*æra com.* 1003).

† Mac Cnrtén (*Brief Discourse, etc.*). He adds, however, after quoting his authorities, "The same authors say that twenty of these battles were but skirmishes, though successful; but thirty were great and destructive to the common enemies." The great English hero, Alfred, is said to have fought, by sea and land, fifty-six set battles.

‡ "Brian then was proclaimed and crowned king of Ireland by the unani-

to this step some semblance of concert and deliberation, we are told of a convention of the princes of the kingdom held at Dundalk,* preliminary to the assumption of the monarchy, and convoked in contemplation of that step.

But the truth is, for none of these supposed preparatives of his usurpation is there the slightest authority in any of our records; and the convention held at Dundalga, or Dundalk, so far from being a preliminary measure, did not take place till after "the first rebellion," as it is styled by our annalists, of the king of Munster against the monarch. This very term, indeed, applied by Tigernach, by the Annals of Inisfallen, and the Four Masters,† to the daring enterprise of Brian, sufficiently proves in what light it was viewed by all the most trustworthy of our historians. That the feelings of a people, whose chief occupation was warfare, would be easily enlisted on the side of the veteran of fifty battles, even in an aggression on the ancient throne of the Hy-Niells, may without difficulty be believed; but that he ever attempted to disguise or smooth away his usurpation by any such show of respect for public opinion as his later apologists have attributed to him, is a supposition founded on modern notions, and wholly unauthorised by the authentic records of his acts; which simply state that he

mons voice of all the princes and clergy of Beath Mogha."—Mac. Carten, *Brief Discourse, etc.*

"To give a good impression of his intentions, he (Brian) proposed a convention of the states, for settling the nation: Malachy agreed. The chiefs of the kingdom met at Dundalk, &c."—O'Connor, *Dissertat.* "They (the nobility of Munster) desired, therefore, that the chiefs of Connaught would join them in a resolution to depose the monarch, and set the king of Munster on the throne. This proposal being agreed to, the chiefs of the two provinces met in council, &c. &c."—Warner.

* Out of this wholly unauthorised notion, which appears to have had its origin in an old life of Brian, attributed to Mac Liag, a long and circumstantial account has been fabricated of the proceedings of this alleged council and of the negotiations that took place in consequence, not only between the monarch and Brian, but between Malachy and some of the other provincial princes; and this being exactly the sort of dull embroidery of fact in which historians like Warner delight to indulge, he has expended on it no less than seven of his diffuse quarto pages.

† "Cead impodh Brian."

twice, at the head of a numerous army, entered hostily the royal precincts of Tara; that, on the second of these occasions, he dispossessed the legitimate monarch of his authority, and placed himself on the supreme throne in his stead.

By some inquirers into his conduct, a far more enlarged and noble motive than the mere desire of self-aggrandisement, has been assigned for this bold step, which they suppose to have been dictated by the patriotic conviction that the whole strength of the country ought then to be directed unitedly against the Danes; and that it was only by the grasp of one vigorous hand consolidating her resources and collecting her scattered energies, that so great and vital an object could be accomplished.

Of the spirit and wisdom of this view of the policy then required, there can exist no rational doubt. It was the same acted upon, as we shall see, by Brian, at an interval of nearly fourteen years after, and with perfect and glorious success. But a work neglected through so long an interval, and then forced upon him by a great and perilous exigency, will hardly be assumed as one of the chief and pressing considerations that now impelled him to usurp the supreme power. On the contrary, so remote and subordinate was the place held by the Danish intruders in his views, that, though they still had possession of all the chief maritime towns of the kingdom, not a single effort did he make, during the ten or twelve years following his accession, to dislodge or molest them. But, intent chiefly on strengthening and guarding his own usurped position, he left to the Danes by far the longest interval of repose they had ever been suffered to enjoy on Irish ground; content with awing, by his name, into peaceful submission as well the foreign as the native princes over whom he ruled. How little even he had transcended the level of his times, or risen to any clear views of a patriot's duty or dignity, may be judged from his employing a squadron of Danes as his vanguard in the first incursion he made into the territory of Tara;

thus sanctioning, by his own example, the treason of alliance with the invader, and resorting to the ranks of his country's enemies for aid in assailing and overturning her ancient monarchy.

Of the beneficial effects attributed to his government, his wise laws and strict system of police, the numerous edifices he either built or repaired, the bridges and roads constructed by his orders throughout the country,—of these, and other such happy results of his reign, there occurs no mention whatever in our annals; nor have we, I fear, any graver authority for them than that of the veracious chronicler, who has described so minutely the corridors, kitchens, and wine-cellar belonging to the monarch's favourite banqueting-house, *Ball-Boruine*.*

At the same time, as peace may be not less the parent than it is, in general, the offspring of prosperity, there can be little doubt that so long and unusual a pause from warfare, as ensued on Brian's accession to the monarchy, must have been highly favourable to all those pursuits which advance the intellects and ameliorate the condition of mankind. Even his acquiescence in the continuance of the Danish settlements, however fatal it might have proved ultimately to the country's independence, was, for the time, favourable to the extension of commerce and its sure result, civilisation. It is true, the disinclination of the Irish to trade,† and their consequent willingness to leave in the hands of these foreigners most of the traffic of the country, had been one of the chief sources of the apathy, or ready submission, with which they had

* See O'Halloran, vol. iii. cap. 7., where, in his usual flourishing style, he describes, on the authority of the *Bruodin Chronicle*, the noble banqueting-house erected by Brian, in the neighbourhood of Kincora. "From the kitchens," he tells us, "were two long galleries, or corridors, parallel to each other, carried across a flat to this banqueting-house. An hundred servants were every day, at dinner and supper, arranged in each of these galleries. The business of one set was to pass from hand to hand, from the kitchens, the different dishes for the entertainment, and of the others with equal celerity to return them," &c. &c.

† Quoniam enim innata ociositas vitio gens Hibernica, ut diximus, nec maria lustrare, nec mercaturæ indulgere aliquatenus voluerat.—*Girald. Topog. Hib. Dist. iii. c. 43.*

seen all their maritime towns, one after another, become the established depositories of Danish commerce. But the example of these enterprising foreigners could hardly have been lost upon the natives : in the course of dealing with adventurous traders, they would most probably learn to be traders themselves ; and it is, therefore, possible, that, during the twelve years of peace which Brian's policy maintained, the spirit of commerce may have so far diffused its civilising influences through the land, as in some degree to justify the flattering picture which tradition has drawn of that period.

On the other hand, in bringing to the test of truth any such high coloured representations respecting princes who flourished in dark and uninstructed times, it is necessary to take into account how far, by their zeal for the worldly interest of the Church, those princes may have rendered themselves popular among ecclesiastics ; as the pen of history being, in those times, guided chiefly by churchmen, would take naturally a strong bias from the partialities and temporal interests of their order. By one of those fanatics in the cause of our history and antiquities, whose deserved martyrdom is ridicule, an attempt has been made to compare Brian with the great English king Alfred,—a parallel injurious, in different senses, to both ; as there is not to be found, perhaps, in the whole range of human record, a prince, warrior, or legislator, to whom, on the supposition that all we are told of him be true,* the epithet Great, in its most extended heroic and moral sense, can be more justly applied than to Alfred. There exists on one important point, however, a coincidence between the two heroes, to which, in sifting the nature of the evidence on which their respective reputations rest, it is not unwise to advert. They were both devout and zealous disciples of the Church, both munificent in their endowments of eccle-

* Je ne sais s'il y a jamais eu sur la terre un homme plus digne des respects de la postérité qu'Alfred le Grand ; supposé que tout ce qu'on raconte de lui soit véritable."—Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs*, &c.

siastical institutions, and both, in addition to their high station in secular history, were, after their deaths, enrolled by the grateful Church in the number of her martyrs and saints.

The exact nature and extent of the privileges accorded by Brian to the clergy of Ireland, none of our annalists have stated. But it would be difficult to conceive any boon to have been more precious and welcome to them, than was the security his reign afforded to their holy labours and pursuits,—the respite from outrage and profanation which, during twelve years of tranquillity, they enjoyed under his sceptre. The course of our annals, which before this period, presents a series, almost uninterrupted, of the most barbarous acts of sacrilege and spoliation on the part of the Northmen, is, during the interval between his accession and the war of 1013, wholly unstained by any such horrors; and the means afforded by this season of calm for repairing the wreck of so long a hurricane, and raising from the dust their ruined and prostrate shrines, had been too long prayed for by a people innately religious not to be employed, with grateful eagerness, when it came.

Advantageous, however, as was this state of calm to the country, and ultimately creditable to the firm policy which prolonged it, yet, had Brian been snatched from the scene by any accident during this interval, far different might have been the character of the results with which his evidently selfish policy would, in that event, have been chargeable. Most fortunately, however, for his glory, the course of events was otherwise decreed. The traitorous Lagenians, by inviting a new invasion of the barbarians, aroused seasonably the veteran's slumbering vigour; and the victory of Clontarf, in putting an end to his mortal career, added also the crowning trophy to his fame.

The preparations made for this battle throughout all the dependencies, as well as the dominions of the Danes, sufficiently attest the importance attached to its issue.

A foreign chronicler of the same age asserts, that the Northmen of the expedition expected to be able "to extinguish the Irish natives, and to inhabit, in their stead, that most opulent land."* The effects of the failure of the enterprise were fully proportionate to the amount of the hope it had raised, and the conflict and carnage accordingly heightened and exaggerated. The foreign chronicler just cited asserts, that the battle was maintained through three successive days, that the Northmen engaged in it were all killed, and that crowds of the women by whom they were accompanied had thrown themselves into the sea. Under the same impression, in a Scandinavian account of the battle, one of the Danish princes is represented as asking, "Where are my troops?" and the answer he receives is, "They are all slain."†

While such was the impression produced in foreign countries by this victory, its effects at home, in disheartening and breaking the strength of the Danes, though not instantaneous in their operation, were not the less substantial and essential. Attempts were made, as we shall see, from time to time, by the numerous Northmen still remaining in Ireland, to make head against the native princes; but the heart of their courage had been plucked out on the memorable field of Clontarf: the blow struck in that battle by Brian was followed up worthily by his able successor, Malachy; and the sword continuing thus constantly to thin away their numbers, without any reinforcement ever arriving to them from abroad, their feeble remains at length mingled with the

* Ut Hibernia extinctis, ipsi pro ipsis inhabitarent opulentissimam terram.—*Ademar*, ap. *Labbe*.

By a writer cited in Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum*, it is asserted, and probably with some truth, that the slaughter of that day was almost as disastrous to the Irish as to the Danes, and that neither people ever after entirely recovered it:—"Quo ingenti prælio in *Cluain Tarbh* juxta Dublinium commisso, mutuas vires ita irreparabiliter debilitarunt, ut neutra gens in hunc usque diem pristinas vires recuperaverint."

† From the *Niala Saga*, rendered, in Johnstone's version, thus: "Tanc Flosias, de meis vero sociis quid refert? Universi acie occubuerunt, ait Hrafn."

general mass of the population,* and they disappeared as a distinct people.

In thus forestalling events, so far in advance of my narrative, I have been led by a wish to impress upon the minds of my readers, that it is not without justice the popular hero of Irish history has been styled the Conqueror of the Danes; as, whatever footing they may have still retained in the country, and however, in the disgraceful feuds of the natives among themselves, the sword of the foreigner may have been appealed to alternately by both parties, they were no longer formidable but as so many septs or tribes, and at length lost even that evanescent distinction,—leaving but some scattered vestiges of their language in the vocabulary of a country, where they had remained in possession of the chief maritime towns for more than 200 years. The whole of their history, therefore, subsequent to the period we now have reached, fully bears out the assertion, that on the field of Clontarf was given the death-blow to the Danish power in Ireland.

In comparing, indeed, the histories of England and Ireland at this period, it is impossible not to be struck by the strong contrast which they exhibit. The very same year which saw Ireland pouring forth her assembled princes and clans to confront the invader on the sea-shore, and there make of his myriads a warning example to all future intruders, beheld England unworthily cowering under a similar visitation, her king a fugitive from the scourge in foreign lands, and her nobles purchasing, by inglorious tribute,† a short respite from aggression; and while, in the English annals for this year, we find little else than piteous lamentations over

* From the intermarriage of Danes with the natives are said to have sprung many of our ancient families,—the Cruises, Coppingers, Dowdals, Everards, Plunkets, Revels, &c.

† Henry of Huntingdon says, that, in his own times, the same tribute continued to be paid to the kings of England, from custom, which had been originally paid to the Danes under the influence of ineffable terror. "*Regibus namque nostris modo persolvimus ex consuetudine quod Dacis persolvebatur ex ineffabili terrore*,"—fol. 206.

the fallen and broken spirit both of rulers and people,* in the records of Ireland, the only sorrows which appear to have mingled with the general triumph are those breathed at the tombs of the veteran monarch, and the numerous chieftains who fell in that struggle by his side.

Whether Brian was himself imbued with any of the learning of the age, or possessed the yet more useful merit in a monarch of encouraging learning in others, we have not any means of ascertaining. That he was a musician has been taken for granted, on no better grounds than the rather suspicious tradition which has connected with his name a curious old Irish harp, long preserved, as we are told, in the Clanrickarde family, and supposed to have originally belonged to the hero of Clontarf. But were even the details respecting the channels through which this harp has reached us† entirely free from suspicion, the fact of the arms of the O'Brien family being found among the ornaments, chased in silver, on the instrument, sufficiently marks it as of too modern a date for the illustrious vocation assigned to it; as the hereditary use of armorial ensigns was un-

* "Nec fuit inventus quispiam (says Matthew of Westminster) qui hostibus obviaret." The same writer thus speaks of the wretched Ethelred:—"Inertia torpens, timidus, suspiciosus . . . exercitum congregare vel contra hostes ducere non audebat, metuens ne nobiles regni quos injuste exheredaverat, in campo eum relinquentes hostibus traderent ad dammandum."—Ad ann. 1013. Ingulfus, too, describing the same miserable times, represents the English as cowering before every assailant:—"Omnes hostes in capite super Anglos semper vincere, et ex omni certamine semper prevalere."

† The sermon of Bishop Lupus, preserved in Hicken's *Thausaurus*, contains some painful instances of the outrage and insult to which the Thanes were, at that gloomy period, exposed.

* In the account of this harp, given in the *Collectan. de Reb. Hibern.* vol. iv., it is said that Donchad, Brian's son, who, in the year 1064, went on a journey of penance to Rome, carried with him the crown, harp, and other regalia of Brian Boru, "which he laid at the feet of the pope. These regalia, it is added, were deposited in the Vatican till the reign of Henry VIII., when the pope sent the harp to that monarch, with the title of Defender of the Faith, but kept the crown, which was of massive gold. Setting no value on the harp, Henry gave it to the first earl of Clanrickard, whose family it remained till the beginning of this century, when it came, by the De Burgh family, into that of Mac Mahon of Glenagh, in Co. of Clare. In the year 1762, it was presented to the right hon. William Conyngham, who deposited it in the Museum of Trinity where it now remains.

known to Europe before the time of the Crusades, and, in England, was not established till the reign of Henry III.

It would seem a reproach to the bards of Brian's day to suppose that an event so proudly national as his victory, so full of appeals as well to the heart as to the imagination, should have been suffered to pass unsung. And yet, though some poems in the native language are still extant, supposed to have been written by an Ollamh, or Doctor, attached to the court of Brian, and describing the solitude of the halls of Kincora after the death of their royal master, there appears to be, in none of these ancient poems, any allusion to the inspiring theme of Clontarf. By the bards of the north, however, that field of death, and the name of its veteran victor, Brian, were not so lightly forgotten. Traditions of the dreams and portentous appearances that preceded the battle, formed one of the mournful themes of Scaldic song; and a Norse ode of this description, which has been made familiar to English readers,* breathes, both in its feeling and imagery, all that gloomy wildness which might be expected from an imagination darkened by the recollections of defeat.

But a more grave, if not also more valuable testimony to the truly brave and patriotic spirit with which, up to this period, the Irish people, however degenerately they afterwards quailed before an invader, resisted every attempt to subject them to a foreign yoke, is to be found in the remarks of an old English historian, William of

* The Fatal Sisters, an Ode from the Norse tongue, by Gray. The original may be found in the *Niala Saga*. In allusion to the fate of Brian, the Scandinavian poet says, "But on the race of Irar (Erin) such a sorrow will fall as can never be forgotten among men." Out of this simple passage Gray has thus called up the spirit of poetry :

Fate demands a nobler head,
Soon a king shall bite the ground.
Long his loss shall Erin weep,
Ne'er again his likeness see,
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
Strains of immortality.

Neubridge, in introducing his account of the submission of Ireland to Henry II. "It is a matter of wonder," says this writer, "that Britain, which is of larger extent, and equally an island of the ocean, should have been so often, by the chances of war, made the prey of foreign nations, and subjected to foreign rule, having been first subdued and possessed by the Romans, then by the Germans, afterwards by the Danes, and, lastly, by the Normans, while her neighbour, Hibernia, inaccessible to the Romans themselves, even when the Orkneys were in their power, has been but rarely, and then imperfectly, subdued; nor ever, in reality, has been brought to submit to foreign domination till the year of our Lord 1171." *

CHAPTER XXII.

State of the Schools of Ireland in the Tenth Century.—Armagh still visited by Strangers.—Eminent native Scholars during this period.—Probus, Lecturer of the School of Slane.—Eochaid O'Floinn, a bardic Historian.—Keneth O'Artegan, a Poet.—School established by the Irish in England, called Glastonbury of St. Patrick.—Monasteries of the Scots or Irish in France and Germany.—Literary Works of an Irish Ecclesiastic, named Duncán.—Numbers of Bishops from Ireland on the Continent.—Efforts by Councils to suppress them.

THE night of ignorance and barbarism, which had been so long gathering around the western world, is supposed, in the century we are now considering, to have reached its utmost gloom. How far this comparative

* Sane hoc quoque de hac insulâ mirabile est, quod cum major Britannia, æque oceani insula, nec spacio longiori sejuncta, tantos bellorum casus experta sit, toties exteris gentibus præda fuerit, toties externam dominationem incurrerit, expugnata et possessa primo a Romanis, deinde a Germanis, consequenter a Danis, postremo a Normannis; Hibernia Romanis etiam Orchadam insularum dominium tenentibus inaccessa, raro et tepide ab ullo unquam expugnata, et subacta est, nunquam externæ subiacuit ditioni, usque ad annum a partu Virginis M. C. septuagesimum primum.—*Rerum Angl.* lib. 2. cap. xxvi.

view is well founded may be a matter of question;* but of the positive prevalence of darkness throughout this age there can exist no doubt. It is not, therefore, wonderful that even Ireland, which had hitherto stood as a beacon of learning in the west, should begin to share in the general obscurity of the time; and, being acted upon by the same causes which had already uncivilised some of the fairest regions of Europe, should feel the fated tide of barbarism gaining fast upon her shores. The exceeding rapidity with which the chief schools and monasteries throughout the country, though so frequently ravaged and burnt by the Northmen, again arose from their ashes, and resounded afresh with the voice of instruction and prayer, seems hardly less than marvellous. Nor was this intrepid and persevering enthusiasm, in the cause of learning and holiness, confined to the natives of the country alone, but inspired also its visitors; as, but a few months after a desperate inroad of the Danish spoilers into Armagh,† we are told of a youth of the royal house of the Albanian Scots, named Cadroe, repairing to the schools of that university for the completion of his education.‡

Among the obituary notices scattered throughout the annals of this age, there occur the names of several divines who are described as learned and eminent, but of whom no further mention is to be found. Towards the middle of the century flourished Probus, or, as his Irish name, of the same import, is said to have been, Coenachair, whose Life of St. Patrick, still extant, is

* Leibnitz, among others, dissents from this opinion, affirming that there was more knowledge and learning in the tenth century than in either the twelfth or thirteenth. See Note on Mosheim, cent. x. part. ii. chap. 1.

† "Nimirum verè dixit scriptor vetus, quod 'in Armacha summum studium literale manet semper.' Nam studia litterarum ita continenter in illa academia floruerunt, ut ne rabies quidem Danorum per sacra et profana cædibus et incendiis furiosissime grassantium cursum eorum interromperit." —*Gratianus Lucius*, c. xxii.

‡ Cadroe has been sometimes claimed as an Irish Scot; but it appears evident that he was a Scot of North Britain. See *Lanigan*, chap. 22. § 2.

praised by a high authority on the subject of our ecclesiastical history, as "a very valuable work."* That Probus was an Irishman, he has himself placed beyond doubt by several expressions which occur in his pages. Thus, when speaking of the Saint embarking from Britain for Ireland, he says, that "he entered upon *our* sea;" and the harbour first reached by the missionary, whom he styles "*our* most holy father," is represented by him as "one much celebrated among *us*." Probus was Chief Lecturer of the school of Slane; and fell a victim there, as already has been related, during an attack upon the church of that place by the Danes.†

In giving an account of those bardic or metrical historians by whom the adventures of our earliest colonists, and the romantic achievements of the sons of Milesius, were first invented, I mentioned, as ranking among the chief contributors to this stock of fiction, a poet of the tenth century, named Eochaidh O'Floinn. In the poems of this writer, of which there are a number still extant,‡ may be found those fables respecting Partholan, the battles of the Fomorians, and the storming of the Tower of Conaing, which have all, by Keating and others, been gravely promulgated as history, and which Vallancey could not otherwise account for, than by supposing all these marvellous transactions to have taken place among the oriental ancestors of the Irish, before their departure from Greece.§

* "The Life of St Patrick by Probus, in two books, is a very valuable work."—Lanigan. *Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. chap. 3. § 2.

† Among the reliques destroyed on this occasion were the pastoral staff of the patron saint of Slane, and "a bell (says the annalist) the best of all bells."—IV. Meg. ad ann. 948. In Archdall's *Monastic. Hibern.* these last words are incorrectly translated "the best clock in Ireland," on the strength of which mistake, combined with the mention of a "clock" in king Cormac's pretended Will, some sapient persons have claimed for the Irish of those times a knowledge of the art of clock-making.

‡ See for an account of these poems, the *Transactions of the Ibero-Celtic Society*, ad ann. 984.

§ It is much to be regretted that, though in many respects so qualified to illustrate and advance the study of Irish antiquities, Vallancey, through false zeal and fantastic speculation, should have ended only in drawing down ridicule on the subject. One of his earliest essays, "The Laws of Tanistry illustrated," to which I have frequently had occasion to refer

In the year 975, according to the annalist Tigernach, took place the death of Keneth O'Artegan, "Chief of the Learned of Leath Kuinn." A poem of this writer is still preserved,* descriptive of the beauty of the celebrated Hill of Tara, and moralising mournfully over its history; nor should those who visit, in our days, that seat of long extinguished royalty feel any wonder on not discovering there some vestige of its grandeur, when told that, even in the time of this poet, not a trace of the original palace still remained; while the hill itself had become a desert, overgrown with grass and weeds.†

As thus, in the midst of the general darkness of the age, there were still preserved in Ireland some relics of the lore of better days, so, in the schools and religious establishments of the Continent, her sons still continued to retain all their former superiority, and, among the dwarf intellects of that time, towered as giants. In England, where, since the death of her great Alfred, both sacred and literary knowledge had sunk to so low an ebb, that at length no priest could be found capable of writing or translating a Latin letter,‡ the Irish were, in this century, the means of restoring some taste for liberal studies. With that devotion to the cause of re-

in these pages, shows how well and usefully he could turn to account the materials contained in our own authentic annals, without calling in the aid of the Sadder of Zerdusht, or of his favourite "Fisheadian Dynasty."—See *Vindication of the Ancient History of Ireland*, Collectan. vol. iv.

* Trans. Ibero-Celt. Society, ad ann. 975.

† If this poem be not antedated by a century or two, the mansion which Malachy and his immediate predecessors in the throne of Tara must have recently occupied, at the time when the poet wrote, could not have been the same, of course, nor built upon the same site with that whose ruin and utter disappearance he bewails.

‡ "Very few churchmen were there," says Alfred, "on this side the Humber, who could understand their daily prayers in English, or translate any letter from the Latin. I think there were not many beyond the Humber; they were so few, that I, indeed, cannot recollect one single instance on the south of the Thames when I took the kingdom."—See Turner, *Hist. Anglo-Sax.* book v. chap. 1. A few years before the Norman conquest (says Mr. Berington, on the authority of William of Malmesbury), "the clergy could hardly stammer through the necessary service of the church, and he who knew the rules of grammar was viewed as a prodigy."

ligion and instruction which had become, in this people (as an author of those times expresses it), a second nature, a number of Irishmen, described as conversant with every department of knowledge, secular as well as sacred, retired, some time before the year 940, to Glastonbury. This monastery had already been long distinguished as a favourite retreat of their countrymen; and, within its walls, so great was the reverence felt for their patron saint,* that, from an early period, the establishment had been called "Glastonbury of St. Patrick." From the Irish who fixed themselves there in this century, the able St. Dunstan chiefly received his education; and while he imbibed, as we are told, under their discipline, the very marrow of scriptural learning,† they also instructed him in the sciences of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, in all of which they were, it is intimated, more deeply skilled than in the refined niceties of classical literature.‡ With a taste, too, highly characteristic of their country, they succeeded in awakening in their pupil so strong a love and talent for music, that it was in after life his frequent practice, when worn with business or study, to fly for refreshment to the soothing sounds of his harp.§

On the continent of Europe, in like manner, the fame of the Island of Saints continued to be upheld by the learning and piety of her sons; and in the course of this century, there flourished in France, as well as in Germany and the Netherlands, a number of eminent Irishmen, whose names belong not so much to the country which gave them birth, as to those which they

* Nec Normannorum solùm sed Anglo-saxonum quoque temporibus sacro-sanctam apud Glastonienses B. Patricii fuisse memoriam, Baldredi, Inæ et Ealdredi ostendunt Chartæ.—Usher, *Eccles. Primord.*

† Horum ergo disciplinatu sacram scripturam medallitus ad extremam satietatem exhausit.—Gulielm. Malmesbur. *Vit. S. Dunstan.*

‡ Arithmeticam porro cum geometria et astronomia ac musica, quæ appendent, gratanter addidit, et diligenter excoluit. Haram scientiarum Hibernienses pro magno pollicentur; cæteram ad formanda Latine verba et ad integre loquendum minus idonei.—*Ibid.*

§ Ipæ citharam, si quando à literis vacaret, sumere.—Gulielm. Malmesbur. *Vit. S. Dunstan.*

benefited by the example and labours of their lives. Among the prelates present at a synod held in the year 947, at Verdun, was an Irish bishop named Israel, whose character and accomplishments must have been of no ordinary stamp, as he had been one of the instructors of the great and learned archbishop Bruno, the brother of the emperor Otho.*

An Irish abbot of considerable celebrity, named Fingen, who had been honoured with the notice and patronage of the dowager empress Adelhard, the zealous relict of Otho the Great, was, through her interest, invested with the government of the abbey of Symphorian, at Metz, on the singular condition that he and his successors should receive no other than Irish monks into their establishment, as long as any such could be found; but, in case of a deficiency of monks from Ireland, should then be allowed to admit those of other nations.†

Another of these "monasteries of the Scots," as they were to a late period called, had been established about this time on an island in the Rhine, near Cologne, having for its first abbot an Irishman named Mimborin; and it is clearly to this establishment at Cologne that such frequent reference is made in the Annals of the Four Masters, and others.‡ Helias, a successor of this abbot, had, previously to his departure from Ireland, belonged to the monastery of Monaghan;—one of many proofs of the close intercourse then maintained between the foreign religious establishments and those of Ireland.

* Lanigan, *Ecclesiast. Hist.* chap. xxiii. § 4.

† A copy of the deed, confirming the rights and possessions of the establishment on this condition, is given by Colgan in the *Acta Sanctorum*; and the stipulation, as expressed in the deed, is as follows:—"Ea videlicet ratione, ut abbas primus nomine Fingenius Hiberniensis natione, quem ipse proelibus episcopus tunc temporis ibi constituit, suique successores Hibernenses monachos habeant, quamdiu sic esse poterit; et si defuerint ibi monachi de Hibernia, de quibuscumque nationibus semper ibi monachi habeantur."

‡ IV. Mag. ad an. 1042 and 1052. An. Ult. 1042. In the Ulster Annals for the year 1027, we find the following record:—"The wisest of the Scots in Cologne died."

Of the attention early paid to the study of Greek in the native schools of the Irish, some notice has already been taken; and a proof of their continued attention to the cultivation of that language is to be found in the interesting fact, that in the diocese of St. Gérard, at Toul, where there had assembled at this time a number of Greek refugees, as well as of Irish, the church service, in which both nations joined, was performed in the language of the Greeks, and according to the Greek rite.*

One of the few of our learned countrymen at this period, who have left behind them any literary remains, was an Irish bishop named Duncan, or Duncant, who taught in the monastery of St. Remigius, at Rheims, and wrote for the use of the students under his care a "Commentary on the Nine Books of Martianus Capella,"—an author whose claims to attention, such as they are, concern the musician rather than the scholar,†—and also, "Observations on the First Book of Pomponius Mela, *De Situ Terræ*;" both of which writings are still extant.

With respect to those Irish bishops we frequently read of, as connected with foreign religious establishments, and passing their whole lives abroad, it is right to explain, that there existed at this time a custom in Ireland of raising pious and exemplary monks to episcopal rank, without giving them any fixed sees. In addition

* "The following is the account given of this circumstance by the Benedictines, in one of those clever sketches prefixed by them to the several volumes of their valuable work:—"Un autre moyen qui servit beaucoup à répandre la connaissance de cette langue parmi nos Français, furent ces Grecs auxquels S. Gérard, Evêque de Toul, donna retraite dans son diocèse. Ils y formèrent des communautés entières avec des Hibernois qui s'étaient mêlés avec eux, et y faisaient séparément l'office divin en leur langue et suivant leur rit particulier. L'établissement de ces communautés de Grecs est tout-à-fait remarquable."—*Hist. Littéraire*.

† A manuscript copy of this work of Duncan, which was formerly in the monastery of St. Remigius, at Rheims, is deposited at present in the British Museum.—*Bibliothec. Reg.* 15. A. xxxiii. The name of the transcriber is Gifardus, and on the margins of some of the pages there are very neatly traced with the pen various geometrical figures. By an odd confusion, Stuart, in his History of Armagh, states that Duncant, an Irish bishop, delivered lectures in St. Remigius's monastery, in Down.—Append No. 5.

to these there was also, as in the primitive times of the Church, an order of Chorepiscopi, or country bishops, to whom the care of the rural districts was entrusted, with power subordinate to those of the regular bishop in whose diocese they were situated. From these two classes of ministers were furnished, doubtless, the great majority of those Episcopi Vagantes, or "vague bishops," as they were called, of whom such numbers, principally Irish, were found on the Continent in the middle ages; and whose assumed power of ordaining came at length to be so much abused, that, at more than one Council, an effort was made to abate the evil, by declaring all such ordinations to be null and void.* Notwithstanding, however, such occasional laxity of discipline, it is admitted by one of the most liberal as well as most learned of theologians, that the bishops of this description from Ireland were of great service, as well to the Gallican as the Germanic church.†

* In consequence of this abuse, it was decreed by the council of Calcuith (A. D. 816) that no Irishman should be permitted to exercise clerical duties:—"Ut Scoti non admittentur sacra ministrare."

† *Mabillon*.—"Plurimum ecclesiarum tum Gallicanarum tum Germanicarum profuissae."—*Annal. Benedictin.* sec. ii. præf.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Restoration of the Monarch Malachy.—His Victories over the Remains of the Northmen.—Battle at the Yellow Ford.—Death of Malachy.—Social State of Ireland at this Period.—Decline of Religion and Morals throughout the Country.—Ecclesiastical Abuses.—Corbes and Erenachs.—Succession of the Monarchy suspended.—Provisional Government established.—Kingdom of Munster ruled jointly by Teige and Donchad, the Sons of Brian.—Murder of Teige through the contrivance of his Brother.—Donchad, titular Monarch of Ireland.—Turlogh, his Nephew, aspires to the Throne.—Is supported by the Princes of Leinster and Connaught.—Donchad, defeated, flies to Rome.—Turlogh, Monarch of Ireland.—Events of his Reign.—Death.—Is succeeded by Murkertach.

WHEN the mortal wound received by Morough, the son of Brian, in the battle of Clontarf, had deprived the army of the presence of its acting leader, the command devolved, as we have seen, on the patriotic and high-minded Malachy, by whom the victory, then all but accomplished, was followed up to its full and perfect success. Almost immediately, too, without, as it appears, any preparatory process or intervening forms, this prince measured the high station from which he had been so wrongfully deposed,* and was acknowledged, by tacit and general assent, supreme monarch of Ireland. Could any doubt exist, as to the view taken in Brian's own times, of the lawless means by which he got possession of the supreme throne, the ready acquiescence, if it did not amount even to loyal satisfaction, with which the same prince, who had been so triumphantly set aside twelve years before, was now seen to resume his due station, would be sufficiently convincing on this point;—showing, at once, how strong was still in the popular mind the regard for hereditary right, and how bold and

* IV Mag. 1014 (æææ com. 1015).

powerful must have been the hand that had dared so successfully to violate it.*

Attempts have been made by some modern historians, as already has been remarked, to invest with an appearance of respect for the popular voice the self-willed act of the usurper. But the general feeling entertained on the subject, in times bordering on those of Brian, may be collected from the manner in which the annalist Tigernach, who wrote in the following century, has recorded the death of Malachy. Not acknowledging those twelve years, during which the usurpation lasted, to have been any interruption of the rule of the legitimate monarch, this chronicler states, as the period of Malachy's reign, the whole of the forty-three years which intervened between his first accession to the throne and his death;—thus denying to the name of Ireland's great hero any place in the list of her legitimate monarchs.† It should be added, too, that in this tacit but significant verdict on the lawless act of Brian, the old chronicler has been faithfully followed by the writers of the *Annals of Ulster*.

The calumnious story referred to in a former chapter, of Malachy's treachery in drawing off his troops during the heat of the action at Clontarf, has already been disposed of as it deserved; but, were any further refutation of the calumny wanting, we should find it, not only in the fact alleged by the Four Masters of his heading the army after the fate of its leader Morough, but also in the prompt and according assent of the whole nation to his immediate resumption of the supreme power, and the instant vigour with which, on his accession, leaving no respite to the remnant of the Danish force, he attacked them in their head-quarters, Dublin, and, setting fire to

* Inisfall, ad an. 1015, 1016. Ware, *Antiquities*, c. xxiv.

† Those who were guided by less strict views of legitimacy in their calculation limit Malachy's reign to the thirty-four years during which he occupied the throne. "Quem codex Cluanensis (says Colgan) tradit 43 annis regnasse, alii vero communiter 23."—*Trias Thaum. Sect. Append. ad Act. S. Patric.*

the citadel and the houses around it, destroyed the greater part of that city.*

In the following year, these daring ravagers, having received some recruitment of their force, again poured forth, under the command of their king Sitric, extending the course of their depredations over all the region then called Hy-Kinsellagh. But the monarch, with the aid of his kindred, the southern Hy-Niells, surprised the spoilers in the midst of their havoc, and put them to the rout with immense slaughter †. About the same time, a signal instance of retribution was exhibited in the fate of the royal family of Leinster, whose reigning prince, the son and successor of that king, who had been the promoter of the late coalition against Ireland, was deprived of his eyes—the usual mode of incapacitating a prince from reigning—by order of the Danish king Sitric. ‡ In consequence of this and similar outrages, the people of Leinster, at length provoked into resistance, gained, at Delgany, a complete victory over the fierce Sitric and his Danes. §

Decisive and prompt as appear to have been the measures of Malachy, it is evident that the strong grasp by which, in his predecessor's time, the swarm of minor kings had been curbed and kept down was now no longer felt; and, accordingly, in the north and west, as well as in the south, his presence was called for to repress pretensions and revolts. In the year 1016—a year distinguished in our annals by the rare record of "Peace in Erin"—the monarch proceeded at the head of an army to Ulster, and compelled the princes of that province to deliver to him hostages. In the course of the following year we find him again wreaking his revenge on the restless Danes, at a place called Odhba; and in 1018, the O'Niell's of the north, being up in arms, assisted by

* IV Mag. ad an. 1014 (1015). † Annot. Inisfall. ad an. 1016.

‡ Inisfall. ad an. 1018. Ware, ad an. 1019.

§ Ware's *Annals*, ad an. 1022. IV Mag. ap. Colgan.

** "Sith in Eriod." Annot. Ult.

the warlike tribe of the Eugenians, he hastened to encounter their joint force, and, having gained an easy victory over them, drove the Eugenians, as it is stated, "beyond the mountain Fuad, towards the north."* About the same time, a portion of his army committed great slaughter upon the Fercallians, a people of the district now called the King's County; and in the year 1020, accompanied by the O'Niells, and by Donchad, the son of Brian, with his Dalcassians, the monarch marched at the head of an army into Connaught, and received hostages from the kings of that province. †

In approaching the close of this eminent prince's ^{A. D.} career, it should not be forgotten, among his other distinguished merits, that, unlike the greater part of those chieftains who flourished in what may be called the Danish period, he never, in any one instance, sullied his name by entering into alliance with the foreign spoilers of his country; and as the opening year of his reign had been rendered memorable by a great victory over the Danes, so, at the distance of nearly half a century, his closing hours were cheered by a triumph over the same restless, but no longer formidable foe. ‡ If the summer of the year 1022, being summoned to the field by some aggression of the Northmen, he encountered their force at the Yellow Ford, a place now called Athboy, and defeated them with great slaughter. Retiring, soon after the battle, to a small island upon the Lake Annin, ^{1022.} in Meath, he there devoted his last hours to penitence and prayer; being attended in his dying moments by the three Comorhans, or successors of St. Patrick, St. Columba and St. Ciaran: one of his latest cares being to endow a foundation for the support of 300 orphan children, to be selected out of the principal cities of the island; an act of beneficence which, as it appears from

* "Tar shlabh Fuait fo thaoidh." This name, Fuad, occurs frequently in the annals, but it does not appear what particular mountain is designated by it.

† IV Mag. Inisfall.

‡ IV Mag. ad an. 1021 (see com. 1022). Tigernach, ad an. 1022, etc.

distichs quoted by Tigernach and the Four Masters,* some poets of that day commemorated.†

In taking a review of the authentic portion of Irish history we have now traversed, and, to avoid controversy, confining that portion within the interval only that has elapsed from about the time of the monarch Niell, (A. D. 406.) called, "Niell of the Nine Hostages,"‡ it will be found that, though wanting, perhaps, in that variety of adventure which enlivens the annals of less secluded nations, there yet belong to our history some sources of interest, which, owing to this very seclusion, are peculiar to itself; rendering it a record and picture of a state of society altogether, perhaps, unexampled, and such as is not unworthy of engaging the attention, as well of the philosopher as of the historian and antiquarian.

The first emergence of this people to the notice of Europe, with so many of the marks of an ancient state of civilisation impressed strongly upon their language, traditional customs, and institutions, while they themselves were but little elevated above the level of savage life; the docile intelligence with which they received and appreciated the doctrines of Christianity, and, soon after, started forth as the apostles and teachers of Western Europe, in every walk of learning, both sacred and secular, leaving the name of their country associated, to the present day, with most of the institutions established, in those times, for the purposes of religion and instruction;—all this honourable celebrity of the Irish abroad, followed by their long and manful struggle against the Danish power at home, and finally, the death-blow dealt, on the field of Clontarf, to the domination of that people in Ireland, at a time when England and other great states of Europe had been forced to bow beneath their yoke, presents altogether a career of such various and entirely

* Cited in *Rev. Hib. Script.* Prol. 2. liv.

† *IV. Mag. ad an. 1022. Rev. Hib. Script.*

‡ See Vol. I. of this work, c. 7. p. 154.

self-derived energy, as few countries, within the same compass of time, have been ever known to exhibit; and which, notwithstanding the fierce and lawless excesses that stain so many of its pages, cannot but entitle the history which records so remarkable a course of affairs to a more than ordinary share of attention and interest.

The reader will recollect that these observations are applied solely to the period commencing at the reign under which St Patrick made his first appearance in Ireland, and ending with the death of Malachy II. From this latter epoch the aspect of affairs began materially to change, and the country sank by degrees into a state of obscurity, both moral and political. The causes of this national declension, the greater number of which had been for some time in operation, shall be pointed out as they more fully developed themselves in this and the following century; but among the most operative, doubtless, was the state of confusion and disorganisation into which the whole framework of the government of the country had been thrown by Brian's forcible infringement of the law which had been so long observed in the course of succession to the monarchy. In a land so parcelled out into sovereignties, and through which there circulated in every direction, so many rival currents of royal blood, it was of the utmost importance to the preservation of the public peace, that their channels should be kept distinct and sacred; and in the instance of the monarchy, so effectual was prescriptive usage for this purpose, that, with only two exceptions (of which one was Brian),* all the monarchs of Ireland, for more than five hundred years, had been elected from among the princes of the Hy-Niell race. By the usurpation of Brian, however,

* The other was Boetan. See ancient Irish MS. quoted by Dr. O'Connor, *Ép. Nunc.* "Vetus scriba, qui seculo XI. Ængusii colidei opera descript, ex Codice Psalter na Rann, cujus extat exemplar annorum 600, in Codice Bodleiano, Laud F 95. fol 75 inquit, 'Nullum regem Hiberniam tenuisse post Patricium nisi ex semine Herimonia, exceptis duobus, Boetan et Brian.' " The MS. adds, that some ancient authorities did not admit Boetan among the monarchs, thus leaving Brian the sole exception to the ancient rule of succession.

this sacred humanity was overstepped: this last struggle-belt against aristocratic pretensions was overthrown, and a new impulse given in the efforts of irregular submission throughout the country, by the crown of Tara being added to the prizes in the arena of political strife.

The long struggle, also, with the Danes, besides accompanying the people in scenes of rapine and blood, was attended with other evils and influences still more perniciously demoralising. The habit of employing, and being employed by, these fresh-roaders, as hired auxiliaries in local and factional feuds, without any regard to the national honour or interests, could not but contribute, in the public mind, the boundaries of right and wrong, and at last lead to that state of moral degradation, which both degrades and fits men to be slaves. Nor did the ecclesiastical part of the community, from whose example and influence might be expected some salutary check to the growing degeneracy of their countrymen, keep the standard of their own morals sufficiently high to atone of their retaking the offences of others with much effect. An ecclesiastical churchman, indeed, of the twelfth century, in referring to the moral darkness into which Ireland had then fallen, notices, particularly among the causes—if they were not rather, perhaps, results—of that declension, the utter relaxation of ecclesiastical discipline, and a general decay of religious feeling among the people.ⁱ

Among the ecclesiastical abuses referred to by him, was one that had begun to prevail some time before this period, having been introduced, almost simultaneously, into different countries of Europe;—and that

ⁱ M. Lombard thus feelingly mourns over this declension of Ireland's glory:—"Sed prohi dolor! Hibernia prope illa gloria perititum ha credidit, ut quæ hâc sanctorum humilificæ prout noster ac magister, nunc eo se dixit, vident quo illa quodam noster, civitas Domina gentium Jerusalem cecidit."—*De regno Hibern. Senator. Parsula Comment. Praefat.*

[†] M. Bernard—"Inde tota illa per universam Hyberniam, de qua multa magnificentia, dissolutio ecclesiasticæ disciplinæ, consuevit exerratio, religionis evanescit," etc., etc.—*Vita Malach.*

was the practice of allowing laymen to hold possession of church lands (even of lands belonging to episcopal sees), and to transmit them to their own descendants, or, at least, to the sept to which they belonged. Of the holders of this sort of property, in Ireland, there were two distinct classes, or ranks, of which one were called Corbes, or Comorbans,* and the other Erenachs; and the only difference that has been yet very clearly made out between them, is that the Erenachs were a class inferior in wealth and dignity, and far more numerous than that of the Comorbans.

In an essay written on this subject, in his youth, by archbishop Usher, it is assumed that the Comorbans, at their first institution, were the same as those Chorepiscopi, or rural bishops, of whom mention has already been made. But that this is a mistake will appear from the fact, that the Chorepiscopi were most of them invested with episcopal powers, while the Comorbans were, in general, laymen, who, holding a position, as it appears, analagous to that of the lay-abbots,† or abbacomites, in France, appropriated to themselves the abbatial lands and other properties, leaving to the clergy only the altars, tithes, and dues.‡ In like manner,

* For opinions and authorities respecting this class of persons, the reader is referred to archbishop Usher's treatise on the subject (*Collectan. de Reb. Hib.* vol. i.) Ware's *Antiquities*, c. xxxv. Sir John Davies's *Letter to the Earl of Salisbury*; Campbell's *Strictures on the Hist. of Ireland*, sect. 10.; and Dr. Lanigan's *Ecclesiast. Hist.* vol. iv. c. 26. note 63. The account given by most of these writers of this class of holders of church property, is far from being satisfactory. Dr. Lanigan alone,—though, as usual, diffuse and careless in the arrangement of his learned materials,—deals with the subject so as to inspire confidence in his opinion.

† Giraldus makes use of this very term in speaking of the lay intruders into church property, who were common in Wales as well as in Ireland.

‡ Notandum autem, quod hæc ecclesia (S. Paterni) sicut et alia per Hiberniam et Walliam plures, abbatem laicum habet.—*Itiner. Cambr.* lib. ii. cap. 4.

§ It would appear, from the letter of sir John Davies just referred to, that this class of proprietors had, in his time, got into their possession almost all the church lands in Ireland. In speaking of Fermanagh, he says, "It did not appear to me that the bishop had any land in demesne, but certain menial duties of the Corbes and Erenachs; neither did we find that the parsons and vicars had any glebe land at all in this country." In another place he adds, "Certain it is that these men possess all the glebe lands which belongeth to such as have the cure of souls."

the Irish Erenachs, whose title originally signifies archdeacon, bore a no less close resemblance to those holders of church property in the time of Charlemagne,* who, though assuming the title of archdeacon, were, in reality, laymen, and, in some instances, farmed the property.† The lands held in this manner, in Ireland, were called *Termon*, or free lands, and the possessors paid out of them a certain yearly rent to the bishop, besides some other contributions towards ecclesiastical purposes. Such, as far as I am able to unravel the perplexed statements on this subject,—which has become but the more entangled the more hands it has passed through,—was the nature of this tenure of church property, which did not in Ireland, probably, come into use till after the age of Charlemagne, but continued to be retained here to as late a period as the reign of James I.

There is yet one difficulty, or rather confusion, as regards the use of the term *Comorban*. Though employed to signify a lay possessor of lands and property which had been usurped, at some time or other, from the Church, it was used also as a distinguishing title of the successive occupants of the great Irish sees; and the *Comorban* of St. Patrick, the *Comorban* of St. Neich, of St. Bridget, &c.,‡ was the mode of designation generally employed in speaking of the successors of those eminent saints in the high dignities they had respectively founded. The use of the title, indeed, extended even to the pope, whom it was not unusual to call the *Comorban* of St. Peter; and the fact appears to be, that this

* In being hereditary, says Spelman, the office of Erenach resembled that of the *Vicedomini Ecclesiarum*, on the Continent:—"Sic enim hereditarium in Hibernia fit munus Erenaci, non minus quam in partibus transmarinis vicedomini."—*Gloss. in voce*.

† "Hinc archidiaconatus, ipsum archidiaconi munus; quos feudi jure possessores à viris secularibus, etiam tempore Caroli magni, patet ex ejus capitulari l. A. C. 806., c. 15., etc. ubi illud vetitum. Archidiaconatus quoque *dati ad firmam*."—*Hoffman, in voce*.

‡ With an ignorance of his subject not rare in this writer, Dr. Campbell says (*Strictures*, sect. 10.),—"Hence we are given to understand why so many *Comorbans* of St. Patrick became *primates*;" the fact being, that it was their becoming *primates* that made them *Comorbans* of St. Patrick.

term, which signifies a successor in any ecclesiastical dignity, came to be applied, not merely to those who had legitimately succeeded to property in the church, but also to those who, being laymen, had become possessors of it only by usurpation; much in the same manner as in Charlemagne's time, when the title of abbot was bestowed alike on the religious heads of monasteries, on lay lords, and even on soldiers;* and when archdeacons, held in fee, stood side by side with those of episcopal appointment.

In consequence of the suspended state of the succession to the monarchy, there ensued now a long and ruinous interregnum, during which the evils arising from the want of a supreme, directing head, were aggravated a hundred fold by the fierce rivalry and discord which such a state of things could not but engender, and keep in perpetual activity. Among those princes, indeed, who, during the remainder of Ireland's existence as a separate nation, assumed the title of monarch, there were scarcely any, we shall find, who had been elected according to the regular ancient form, or were acknowledged generally by the people; and the nature both of their authority and their claims may be sufficiently judged from the designation given to them by our native historians, who call them *Rígh go freasabra*, that is, "Kings with reluctance or opposition."

But though the train for all these evil consequences had been now laid, their fated explosion did not take place till some time after; for it is not the least striking and characteristic of the circumstances which attended the demise, as it may almost be called, of the Irish monarchy, in the person of Malachy II., that, on the death of this prince, not even a pretender to the right of succeeding him appeared to put forth his claims;—as though there existed a feeling, tacitly, throughout the

* See note in the preceding page. In an old document preserved by Catel, in his *Memoirs of Languedoc* (lib. v.), it is said,—“*Ut tunc temporis erat mos milites tenere archidiaconatus.*”

country, that even the vacancy of the ancient seat of the Hy-Niells were preferable to the fierce and sanguinary strife which any attempt to take possession of it would provoke. As a sort of provisional substitute for the authority of the monarch, an arrangement was made, through the interposition, most probably, of the Church, by which the administration of the principality of Meath, and of some of the adjoining districts, was placed in the hands of Cuan O'Lochan, chief poet and antiquarian of Ireland,* and an ecclesiastic named Corcoran, who is styled Primate of the Irish Anchorites. In a year or two after, the name of this Cuan is found among the obituary notices; and it is highly probable that the government he had presided over did not survive himself, as it would appear, from the subsequent history of the princes of Meath, that they thenceforth took the administration of that principality into their own hands.

It might have been expected, that at such a crisis the name of the popular champion, Brian, his vigorous career as supreme ruler, and his brilliant achievement, still so recent, would have established some claim in favour of the sons he had left behind. But even by them not a single movement was now made to lay claim to a throne around which their father had thrown so lasting a lustre. At the time of his death, there survived but two of his sons, Teige and Donchad, and their first joint task on the occurrence of that event was to defend, in opposition to the claims of the Eugenic tribe, their own right of succession to the throne of Munster. But the good understanding between these brothers was of very short continuance. Preferring, like most other Irish septs and families, royal or otherwise, destructive strife among themselves, to co-operation, for common interests against others, they came at length to open warfare, and a desperate battle between them ensued,†

* O'Flaherty, *Ogygia*, c. 94. O'Connor, *Rev. Hib. Script.* tom. ii. p. 178, note. For this provisional government of Cuan I can find no authority in any of our regular annals.

† Vallancey, from *Munster Records, Law of Tanistry*.

in which the prince of Aradia, and other chieftains of distinguished station, lost their lives.* Through the mediation, however, of the clergy of Munster, the two brothers were soon after reconciled,† and continued co-regnants in the throne of Munster till the year 1023, when, on some new cause of contention breaking out, Donchad concerted a plot against his brother's life, and, A. D. 1023. delivering him up into the hands of the people of Eile, had him basely murdered.‡

By this guilty act, Donchad secured to himself the sole undivided sovereignty of Munster; and, as homage was paid, and hostages delivered to him by the princes and states of Connaught, as well as also by the Danes of Dublin and Leinster,§ the range of his dominion is considered by some of our antiquarians ** sufficiently extensive to entitle him to a place in the list of Ireland's kings; while others who require a more widely extended foundation for that title, exclude Donchad's name altogether from their select album of Irish monarchs.

He was soon to encounter, however, a young and formidable rival, in his own nephew, Turlough, the son of the murdered Teige, whom, immediately after the violent death of that prince, he had, with the half policy by which the guilty so frequently undermine their own schemes, sent into exile in the province of Connaught. Received favourably by the chiefs of that kingdom, and adopted with affectionate zeal by his kinsman, Dermot, the king of Leinster, the young prince's own military accomplishments soon justified the reception he had met with, and rendered him a powerful instrument in the hands of these chieftains, against a liege lord whom they so reluctantly served. At the head

* Annal. Ult.

† Ibid.

‡ Tigernach, and IV Mag. ad an. 1023.

§ Tigernach and Inisfall, ad an. 1026. Vallancey, *in loc.*

** "Hinc in regum hujus 2di ordinis enumeratione, scriptores nostri fluctuant inter æmulos reges provinciarum, prout major erat cujusque potentia. Sic Donchadum O'Brian, Brian Borromæi filium, aliqui regem Hiberniæ et Malachiam successorem appellant, alii Diarmidum filium Mael-nambol (Lageniæ regem) eodem titulo decorant."

of a considerable force, furnished in aid of his cause by those provinces, Turlough invaded the dominions of his uncle, and succeeded in compelling him to exonerate Connaught from all claim of tribute. * A similar concession, in favour of the Lagenians, was extorted, a year or two after, from the now humbled Donchad, who, driven to extremity by such repeated reverses, having been, in the year 1058, totally defeated by the combined force of these two provinces, † at length summoned together all his means and resources for one decisive effort. Encountering, at the foot of the Ardagh mountains, the united armies of Connaught and Leinster, under the command of Turlough, he there sustained a complete and irretrievable overthrow; ‡ in consequence of which, despairing of all further chance of success, he, in the following year, surrendered the kingdom of Munster to his victorious nephew, and, in the hope of atoning for his sins by penitence and prayer, set out on a pilgrimage to Rome. There, entering into the monastery of St. Stephen, he died in the year 1064, with the reputation, as it appears, of having been a very sincere penitent. §

A. D.
1063.

According to some writers, this royal pilgrim took away with him to Rome the crown of Ireland and laid it at the feet of the pope; and it is certain that instances were by no means uncommon of princes laying, in those times, their crowns and kingdoms at the feet of the popes, and receiving them back as fiefs of the Holy See. But, besides that in none of our authentic annals is any mention made of such an act of Donchad, it does not appear how the crown of Ireland could have been disposed of by him, having never, in fact, been in his possession; ** and his own crown of Munster he had,

* Inisfall. ad an. 1053, 1054.

† Inisfall. IV Mag. ad an. 1068.

‡ Tibernach. IV Mag. ad an. 1063.

§ Ibid. ad an. 1064.

** Whether the kings of Ireland wore any sort of crown whatever, has been a matter of doubt with antiquarians. In the preface to Keating's history there is an account given of a golden cap, supposed to be a provincial crown, which was found in the year 1692, in the county of Tip-

previously to his departure, transferred to his nephew's brow. The tale was most probably, therefore, invented in after times, either for the purpose of lending a colour to the right assumed by pope Adrian of bestowing the sovereignty of Ireland upon Henry II., or, at a still later period, for the very different purpose of furnishing Irishmen with the not inconvenient argument, that, if former popes possessed the power of bestowing on the English the right of sovereignty over Ireland, there appeared no reason whatever why future popes should not give back the dominion to its first rightful owners.

By his second marriage, Donchad had become connected with the family and, in some degree, fortunes of the great English earl Godwin, having married Driella, the daughter of that statesman, and sister of Harold, afterwards king of England. During the rebellion of Godwin and his sons against Edward the Confessor, Harold, being compelled to take refuge in Ireland, remained in that country, says the Saxon Chronicle "all the winter on the king's security;"* and in the following year, having been furnished by Donchad with a squadron of nine ships, he proceeded on a predatory expedition along the southern coast of England.

Whatever may have been thought of the quality of this king's legislation, the fault of being deficient in quantity could not, assuredly, be objected to it, as we are told that, in the course of his reign, there were more taxes raised, and more ordinances issued, than during the whole interval that had elapsed from the time of the coming of St. Patrick.† A custom encouraged, if not introduced, by Donchad, was that of celebrating games, or athletic sports, on the sabbath day;—the *cæstus*, or

perary. "This cap, or crown," it is said, "weighs about five ounces; the border and the head is raised in chase-work, and it seems to bear some resemblance to the close crown of the eastern empire, which was composed of the helmet together with the diadem, as the learned Selden observes in his *Titles of Honour*."—*Hist. of Ireland*, Preface by the Translator. A representation of this crown is given in Ware's *Antiq.* Plate I. No. 2.

* Ad ann. 1051.

† Inisfall. (Cod. Bodleian) ad an. 1023 (æra: com. 1040).

gloves, used by the pugilists, at these games, being distributed, it is said, in the king's own mansion.*

On the abdication of the crown of Munster, by Donchad, his nephew Turlough became his successor; and this prince is, by most of the authorities on the subject, allowed to take rank among Ireland's nominal monarchs;† though some, who consider his claims as inferior to those of his ally and kinsman, Dermot, king of Leinster, scrupulously withhold from him, during the lifetime of the latter, the full title of monarch.‡ So unfixed and arbitrary, indeed, are the grounds upon which this merely titular honour is awarded, that frequently the preference felt for any particular candidate, by the writer who treats on the subject, suffices for his decision of the question; and accordingly while some perceive in the achievements of Donchad and Dermot sufficient grounds for their enrolment among Ireland's monarchs, others exclude these same princes from that dignity altogether. If a generous sacrifice of his own interests to those of others might be taken into account among Dermot's titles to supremacy, his claims would be of no common order; as the liberal aid he, from the first, proffered to the young Turlough, enabling

* Inisfall. (Cod. Bodleian) ad an. 1023 (ære com. 1040). According to the version of Gracianus Lucius, a very different meaning is here to be attributed to the annalist, whom he represents as asserting that Donchad was a most religious observer of the sabbath, and forbade that any one should carry burdens, or hold hunting-matches or fairs on that day. "Dii Dominicæ religiosissimus cultor vetuit opera diebus Dominicis vehi, aut nundinas venationesve fieri." Instead of asserting, too, that "*more laws*" had been passed in that reign than during the whole interval from the time of St. Patrick, the annalist is made to say, "*better laws*."—"Annales iidem (Inisfallenses) leges ab eo lates fuisse narrant quibus pares à S. Patricii diebus, in Hibernia non ferebantur." On referring to the original the Irish scholar will, I rather think, pronounce the version which I have above adopted to be the most correct. O'Halloran, who, it is clear, had not consulted the original, follows Lynch's interpretation "Several severe laws," he says, "*were* passed by Donchad against robbers, murderers, and profaners of the sabbath."

† "Tordelachum autem Thadai filium, B. Borumbii nepotem, nemo in regum Hiberniæ numero non collocat."—*Gratianus Lucius*.

‡ Thus O'Halloran:—"On his (Dermot's) death, Turlough certainly was the most potent prince in Ireland, and had the fairest claim to the title of nominal monarch."—Vol. iii. c. 3.

him to assert and obtain his birthright, lends a moral dignity to his character, far surpassing any that mere rank could bestow, and justifying, in a great degree, the eulogy bestowed upon him by the Welsh chronicler, Caradoc, who pronounces him to have been "the best and worthiest prince that ever reigned in Ireland."*

On the death of Dermot,† who was killed in the battle of Obdha, in Meath, there remained no competitor to dispute the supremacy with Turlough, who, taking the field at the head of his troops, was acknowledged with homage wherever he directed his march. Proceeding to Dublin, he found the gates of that city thrown open to receive him; and the Danes, together with their king Godfred, placing their hands in his hands,‡ as a pledge that their power was to be thenceforth employed as his own, acknowledged him for their liege lord and sovereign. The same forms of submission were complied with by the kings of Meath and of Ossory, as well as by the princes of the provinces of Connaught; all delivering to him hostages and acknowledging his sovereignty over their respective states. A. D. 1072.

In his incursion into Ulster he appears to have been not equally successful, having returned from thence without hostages or plunder, and with the loss, it is added, of a part of his army. He succeeded soon after, however, in dethroning Godfred, king of the Dublin Danes, and, having banished him beyond seas, appointed his own son, Murkertach, to be king over that people.§ From the frequent intermarriage** that took place between

* "Dermittum Maken-Anel, dignissimum et optimum principem qui unquam in Hibernia regnavit." This chronicler assigns his death to about 1068; but Tigernach, the Annals of Inisfallen, and the Four Masters, place it at 1072.

† Tigernach and IV Mag.

‡ Inisfall. ad an. 1073.

§ Ibid. 1075.

** One of the most distinguished instances of this sort of intermarriage is found in the family of the great Brian Boru, whose third wife had, previously to her marriage with him, been the wife of a Danish prince; and was, by this double union, mother to Sitric, king of Dublin, as well as to the Irish monarch, Donchad. See Tigernach, ad an. 1030, the year in which this princess died.

these foreigners and the natives, the descendants of the original Northmen had become, at this period, a mixed race; and accordingly, early in the present century, we find the inhabitants of Dublin called by Tigernach Gall-Gedel, or Dano-Irish.*

The reduction, indeed, of the Danes of Dublin, the last remaining hold of the Northmen's power, had, to a great extent, been effected some years before the period where we have now arrived, † and, in the person of Murchad, the son of the gallant Dermot, was witnessed the first Irish king of the Danes. In the year 1070, this prince died; ‡ and, after an interval of a few years, during which the Northmen appear to have recovered the dominion of that city, the monarch Turlough, as we have just seen, expelled the prince of their choice, and appointed his own son Murkertach in his place.

To dwell in detail on the remaining events of this prince's reign, would be but to repeat, and with little variation even of phrase, the same meagre accounts of pitched battles, predatory inroads, and exactions of tribute, which form the sole material of history throughout the greater part of these monarchs' reigns. Though unsuccessful, at first, in Ulster, he at length compelled that province also to acknowledge vassalage, as well as every other part of the kingdom, and received from Eochad, king of Ulster, as his tribute, 1000 head of cattle, 40 ounces of gold, and 120 party-coloured mantles.§ It is mentioned, to the honour of our Irish oak, though with what truth there are not any means of ascertaining, that a short time before Turlough's

* Ad. an. 1034.

† This decided advantage over the remaining power of the Dublin Danes may be dated from the year 1029, when Anlaf, son of Sitrio, then king of the Danes, was made prisoner by O'Regan, prince of Bregia, and forced to redeem himself at an enormous sacrifice both of wealth and of power. *Annal. Ult.* ad an. 1029.

‡ *IV Mag.* ad ann. 1070. These annals call him prince of the Galls (or Strangers), and of the Lagenians.

§ *Inisfall.* ad an. 1062.

death, William Rufus, who was then on the throne of England, sent to request that he would furnish him with timber from the Irish forests for the roof of the palace he was then erecting at Westminster.*

After a severe and lingering illness, brought on by a fright, attended with circumstances so marvellous, that it would not be easy to detail them with due historic gravity,† Turlough, whose sway was acknowledged through the greater part of Ireland, died at Kincora, the royal palace of the O'Brians, in the month of July, 1086, in the 77th year of his age, and the 22d of his reign. Of this prince, as well as of most of the other pretenders to the monarchy, our means of knowledge are far too scanty and uncertain to admit of our forming, even conjecturally, any estimate of his character. Those lights and openings by which the historian gains an insight into royal councils, are, of course, not to be looked for in such times; but even of ordinary public events, there occurs, with the exception always of battles and deaths, so rare a sprinkling throughout our annals, that the reign of Turlough, for instance, which extended through a period of two and twenty years, supplies not a fact from which the character of the man himself can be judged, or a single glimpse into the interior of his domestic life obtained.

In this dearth of all native testimony on such points,

* Hammer:—"The fair green, or Commons (says Hammer), now called Ostmontowne Greene, was all wood, and hee that diggeth at this day to any depth, shall finde the ground full of great rootes. From thence, *anno* 1098, King William Rufus, by license of Murchard, had that frame which made up the rooffe of Westminster Hall, where no English spider webbeth or breedeth to this day."—*Chronicle of Ireland*.

† It appears that, some years before (1073), when Connor O'Melachlan, king of Meath, had been murdered, the monarch, Turlough, who had borne this prince a most deadly aversion, carried off forcibly the head of his corpse from the abbey of Clonmacnois on a Good Friday, and had it buried near his own palace of Kinkora. On the following Sunday, however, "through a miracle, as we are told, of God and St. Ciaran," the head was found again in its tomb at Clonmacnois, with two collars of gold around the neck. But the chief cause of the monarch's alarm was, that, on his taking up the skull in his hand to examine it, there jumped a small mouse suddenly out of it into his bosom. Of the fright this incident gave him, he never after, say the Four Masters, recovered.

there is extant a foreign tribute to his character, in no ordinary degree flattering, being a letter addressed to him personally by the learned Lanfranc,* then archbishop of Canterbury, wherein some charges brought by that prelate against the church of Ireland, accusing it of laxity of discipline, and uncanonical practices, are prefaced by expressions of the warmest eulogy upon the monarch Turlough himself. "That God was mercifully disposed towards the people of Ireland," says the archbishop, "when he gave to your excellency royal power over that land, every intelligent observer must perceive. For, so much hath my brother and fellow-bishop Patrick reported to me, concerning your pious humility towards the good, your severe justice on the wicked, and the discreet equity of your dealings with all mankind, that, though it has never been my good fortune to see you, I yet love you as if I had."

This letter of Lanfranc is addressed "To the magnificent king of Hibernia, Tirdelvac;" and though, at home, Turlough's claim to the title of monarch was in some quarters opposed, the fact of its recognition in other countries may be concluded, not only from this letter of the English primate, but also from another addressed to him, a few years after, by Gregory VII.,† in

* *Vet. Epist. Hibernic. Sylloge. Ep. 28.* What Lanfranc complains of in this letter is, 1. That in Turlough's kingdom men quit, without any canonical cause, their rightful wives, and take others, without any regard to the prohibited degrees of consanguinity; marrying sometimes even women that had been in like manner deserted by their husbands. 2. That bishops were consecrated by one bishop. 3. That infants were baptised without consecrated chrism. 4. That holy orders were given by bishops for money. Of these charges, the first and fourth are the only ones of real importance; the two others relating but to points of discipline, and admitting easily of explanation and defence, as the reader will find on referring to Lanigan, *Eccles. Hist. c. xxiv. § 12.*

† *Sylloge, Epist. 29.* Thus headed:—"Gregorius Episcopus, servus servorum Dei; Tirdelvacho inclyto Regi Hiberniæ, Archiepiscopia, episcopis," etc. "This letter is much in the style (says Dr. Lanigan) of several others which Gregory wrote to various kings, princes, etc. for the purpose of claiming not only a spiritual, but likewise a temporal and political superiority over all the kingdoms and principalities of Europe."—Lanigan, *Eccles. Hist. c. xxiv. § 14.* The pope more than insinuates, in this letter, his double claim over Ireland; and concludes by saying,—"Si qua vero negotia penes vos emeruerint, quæ nostros digna videantur auxilio, incum-

which he is styled, "The illustrious king of Ireland." There is yet a further tribute to his rank and fame to be found in the deputation sent to him from the nobles of Man and the other Isles, requesting that he would send them some member of his family to be their ruler until the young heir of the crown of Man should come of age. Turlough complied, it is added, with their request, and sent a prince of the blood-royal of Ireland, to be their regent.* As a slight, but additional proof of his rank in Ireland having been known and recognised in other countries, we find mention of the arrival of five Jews, from some part of the Continent, bearing valuable presents for Turlough, as the reigning king of the country. From some repugnance, however, on the part of the monarch, to a offering of gifts from such hands, these Jews, with their presents, were, by his order, dismissed from the kingdom.†

The hospitality, however, of the nation to strangers was, more than once, experienced in the course of his reign, by some fugitive Welsh princes who sought for refuge on these shores. One of these, Gryffyth ap Conan, was, by the aid of the princes of Ulster, restored to his dominions; and there seems to break upon us, in the midst of all this gloom and barbarism, a refreshing gleam of civilised life, when informed that Gryffyth, on his return to Wales, was accompanied, by a number of Irish bards and harpers, whom he had selected for the purpose of improving the taste of his countrymen in music.‡

tanter ad nos dirigere studete : et quod juste postulaveritis, deo auxiliante, impetrabis."

* *Chron. Mannin*, ad an. 1075. This application is stated by the chronicler to have been addressed to Murkertach, the successor of Turlough: but the date alone proves the event to have occurred during the reign of this latter prince.

† *Inisfall*, ad ann. 1078.

‡ "Even so late as the eleventh century the practice continued among the Welsh bards, receiving instruction in the bardic profession from Ireland. In 1078, Gryffyth ap Conan brought over with him from Ireland many Irish bards for the information and improvement of the Welsh."—*Warton's History of English Poetry*.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Munster divided between the three Sons of Turlough.—Content between Murkertach and Dermot for that Throne.—Dermot assisted by O'Lochlin, Prince of Alichia.—O'Lochlin Competitor with Murkertach for the Sovereignty.—Interposition of the Ecclesiastical Authorities.—Grant of the City of Cashel to the Church.—Invasion of Ulster.—Destruction of the Palace of the Princes of Alichia.—Ireland threatened with Invasion by Godfred Crovan.—Descent of Magnus on her Shores.—Marriage of his Son with Murkertach's Daughter.—Defeat and Death of Magnus.—Arnulf de Montgomery assisted by Murkertach in his Rebellion against Henry I.—Marries a Daughter of Murkertach.—Attack and Defeat of O'Lochlin.—Death of Murkertach.—Affairs of the Church.—Bishops of the Danish Sees in Ireland consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury.—Correspondence of the Irish Kings with the two Prelates, Lanfranc and Anselm.—St. Bernard's gloomy Picture of the State of Ireland.—Synod held at Ffoidh-Angusa.—Synod of Rath-Brennail for the Regulation of the Dioceses.

On the death of Turlough, the kingdom of Munster was divided equally between his three sons, Teige, Murkertach, and Dermot. But, in the course of the same year, the eldest, Teige, having died "in the bed," says the chronicler, "of his father,* at Kincora," Murkertach banished his brother Dermot into Connaught, and took sole possession of the throne.† Between these two brothers some years of fierce and obstinate contention ensued; the younger, Dermot, being aided in the struggle by the kings of the other three provinces, whom Murkertach's pretensions to the supreme sovereignty had provoked thus to coalesce against him. Among these opponents of the new king of Munster, by far the most formidable in strength of title as well as of sword, was Domnal M'Lochlin, prince of Alichia, the acknowledged head of the royal Hy-Niell line and therefore entitled, by a right transmitted through a long

A. D.
1066

* Inisfall. (Cod. Rodleian.) ad an. 1066.

† Ibid.

race of monarchs. In opposition to this plea of prescription, Murkertach stood forward on the grounds of the new constitution or order of things, by which a right so long, and, as he maintained, unjustly withheld, had been thrown open to the provincial princes.

Whatever was the weight in reality attached, by either of these contending parties, to the important principles involved in their respective claims, the field of battle was, as usual, the tribunal to which both resorted eagerly for the decision of them. Under the pretence of assisting Dermot to recover his hereditary rights, M'Lochlin, chief of the Hy-Niells, took the field, in the year 1088, and, joined by the troops of the king of Connaught, whom he had compelled to render him homage, invaded Munster with their united force. The burning of Limerick, the spoliation and waste of the fertile plain of Munster, "as far," it is stated, "as Imleach-Ibar, the castle of Ached and Loch Gar,"* and finally the utter destruction of Kincora,† the palace of the Momonian kings, were among the first and chief results of this invasion. Nor was Murkertach slow in retaliating the aggression: but, sailing with a numerous fleet of boats up the Shannon, he proceeded, in wanton imitation of the heathen warfare of the Danes, to despoil all the churches upon the isles and along the shores of the lakes.‡ Then, carrying his arms also into Leinster, and making himself master of that province and of Dublin, he, for the second time, supplanted Godfred in the government of the city, and, compelling him to fly from the kingdom, took upon himself the joint sovereignty of Leinster and Dublin.

As it soon became manifest that, between two such active

* IV Mag. ad an. 1088.

† The name of this celebrated palace, or fortress, is spelled indifferently Kincora, Cencora, or Cancora, and its site is thus described by Seward, *Topograph. Hibern.* "Cancora, a rath or castle, near Killaloe, in county Clare, province of Munster. The only remains now visible of this ancient royal palace are the ramparts and fosse of the rath."

‡ Mag. ad an. 1089.

competitors, so nearly balanced in territorial power, military talents, and resources, there was but little chance of a speedy termination of the contest, measures were taken for an amicable arrangement of their differences, and a convention was held by them on the banks of Lough Neagh,* near a spot venerable as the site of an ancient Druidic monument, where the two princes, pledging themselves by most solemn oaths "upon the relics of the saints of Erin," and "by the cross of St. Patrick," agreed to divide the kingdom of Ireland between them; —the southern half, or Leath Mogh, to remain under the dominion of Murkertach, and the northern, or Leath Cuinn, to be subject to the power of O'Lochlin. Besides the two contracting parties themselves, there were also present at this meeting Maoleachlan, prince of Meath, and Roderic O'Conner, king of Connaught; and it is stated, as bearing on the question of supremacy, then at issue, that to O'Lochlin all the other princes present, including Murkertach himself, delivered hostages in token of fealty and submission.† Whatever conclusions, however, may have been drawn from this homage, as recognising in the blood of the Tyrone Hy-Niells a paramount claim to the sovereignty, will be found to be neutralised by a similar concession, on the part of O'Lochlin, in the course of the very same year, when the two rivals, notwithstanding their late solemn pledges of peace, having come again into collision, the fiat of fortune was pronounced in favour of Murkertach, and the head of the Hy-Niells was forced, in his turn, to proffer fealty and deliver hostages.‡

Not to pursue any further the details, as monotonous as they are revolting, of the long and fierce struggle be-

℥. 2. Inisfal. (Cod. Bodleian) ad an. 1074 (æras com. 1090).

† IV. Mag. 1090. "En itaque (says Dr. O'Connor) dominium O'Niellorum Septentrionalium, i. e. Tironensium, de tota Hibernia jure hereditario à principibus Hibernis recognitum seculo ximo," etc. In the very next page to this boast of the supremacy of the Hy-Niells is recorded the submission of the Hy-Niells to the blood of Brian in their turn.

tween these ambitious rivals, suffice it to say that the contest was continued by them, with equal fury and the like ebb and flow of success, through the next eight and twenty years; and that while they, in their more exalted regions of power, were thus dealing havoc around them, all the minor dynasts of the land, each in his own little orbit of misrule, was pursuing a similar career of discord and devastation, making the whole course of affairs throughout the country one constant succession of blood and rapine, such as, even in the dry, uncoloured records of the annalist, it is sufficiently heart-sickening to contemplate;—if, indeed, the recital be not rendered more shocking by that tone of cool and official statement, in which such horrors are, as mere matters of course, commemorated and chronicled.

In the midst of this constant storm of warfare, the Church, though herself but too much infected with the same combative spirit, presented also, from time to time, the only check, or breakwater, by which the onset of regal violence could be moderated or turned aside. One of the occasions of this sort of interference occurred in the year 1099, when Murkertach, having A. D. 1099. with a large and threatening force marched into Ulster, was met, near the mountain Fuad, by the Hy-Niell, at the head of his Ultonians, and the two armies, front to front, were waiting for the signal to engage, when the primate of Armagh, interposing between them, succeeded by his remonstrances in preventing an appeal to arms.* In several other instances where these two kings were, in like manner, on the point of commencing a combat, the mediation of the vicar of St. Patrick produced the same calming effects; and the truces concluded on such occasions were in general intended to continue in force for a year.

There can be little doubt that the temporal power attained by the Church, in the middle ages, conducted,

* IV Mag. ad an. 1099.

by the check which it opposed to the encroachments of kings, to advance considerably the cause of civil and political liberty. * But in Ireland, where, owing to the disorder that had so long prevailed as well as to the decline of discipline and dignity in the Church itself, the power of the spiritual arm was far less strong than in most other countries of Europe, this useful barrier against the self-willed violence of kings and dynasts was in a great measure wanting. Frequently, indeed, even those public and solemn oaths by which, under the very eyes of their spiritual directors, these warriors pledged themselves to preserve peace towards each other, were, on the first opportunity of conflict, forgotten and violated.

It will be found that most of the great impulses given to the course of human affairs, whether for good or for evil, have been the direct consequences of reaction ; and the usurpation, in those times, of temporal dominion by ecclesiastics, was but a counter-abuse to that of the numerous lay princes and nobles who had been so long intruding themselves into the possessions and privileges of the Church. To such an extent did this latter abuse prevail in Ireland that the bishopric of Armagh, the great primatial see of the kingdom, was for no less than two hundred years in the possession of one powerful family; during a great part of which period, the succession passed through the hands of lay usurpers, who, retaining regular bishops to act for them, as suffragans, continued to enjoy the church livings themselves. Thus; while the clergy of other countries were ambitiously extending the range of their jurisdiction, and aiming at honours and possessions beyond their due sphere, those of Ireland, on the contrary, lowered from their true station, found themselves despoiled of emoluments and dignities legitimately their own; nor was it till so late as the

* See, for some admirable remarks to this effect, an able article in the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 52. "On the Constitution of Parliament," written, it is generally supposed, by Mr. Allen.

twelfth century that, chiefly, as it appears, through the indignant expostulation of a foreign ecclesiastic,* attention was drawn to this gross abuse, and the succession to the see of St. Patrick was brought back into a pure and legitimate channel.

That notwithstanding all this, there must still have been preserved among the people of this country—a people once so conspicuous throughout Europe for their piety—a strong and pervading religious feeling, however imbued with the general darkness of the times, and allowed to run wild for want of culture and discipline, is sufficiently apparent on the very face of our native annals, even in this dim and agitated period. The number of pious and, according to the standard of their age, learned ecclesiastics who are recorded in the annals of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries as passing their whole lives in works of devotion and charity, among the ruins of once flourishing monasteries, could not but cherish, in the popular mind, a fond remembrance of the early saints of the land, and keep alive, like the small spark beneath the embers, some remains of the faith of better days.

It is also to be considered that, though but too many of the native princes were seen to tread in the steps of their heathen invaders, and, with far worse than heathen rage, to apply the torch to the temples of their own worship, there were among the monarchs a few who, towards the close of their tempestuous careers, sought, in the humble garb of penitents, the sheltering bosom of the Church. Among the warmest promoters of ecclesiastical interests was reckoned the monarch Murtkertach, who, in the year 1001, having convoked a great assembly of the people and clergy, made over by solemn donation to the Church, that seat of the Momonian kings, the city of Cashel, dedicating it to God and St. Patrick.†

Soon after this munificent act of piety,—“such an

* St. Bernard.

† *Inisfal. ad an. 1001.*

offering," say the Four Masters, "as never king made before,"—we find him, with the inconsistency but too often observable in the acts of such pious heroes, taking revenge, in cold blood, upon his great rival, O'Lochlin, for the destruction of Kincora by the latter near twenty years before. Invading Ulster with a large force, and leading his troops into the peninsula of Inisowen, where stood the palace of the royal Hy-Niells, called Aileach, or the Eagle's Nest,* he, in bitter remembrance of the fate of Kincora, razed that structure to the ground, and devastated also the greater number of the churches in its neighbourhood. It is added that he gave orders to his soldiers not to leave in the palace of Aileach a single missile stone, but to carry them all away to Limerick; in reference to which circumstance a distich of those times is cited, saying, "Let not the Congregations of Saints hear what has reached the ears of the Congregations of Warriors,—that all the stones of Alichia were heaped on the packhorses of the angry king."

During the period comprised in the reigns of Murkertach and his predecessor, Turlough, Ireland was more than once threatened with invasion from the shores of Norway and the Isles, and under leaders whose fame for prowess had inspired a general terror of their arms. One of these chiefs, named Godred Crovan, said to have been the son of Harold the Black, of Iceland,†

* This celebrated fortress, of which remains are still existing, was situated in the county of Donegal, on the summit of a small mountain which rises from the southern shore of Lough Swilly. A detailed description of this remarkable historical monument, which still bears the name of the Grianan of Aileach, will be found in the *Ordnance Survey of the County of Londonderry*. The result of the inquiries of the ingenious author of the account referred to is as follows:—"Be this as it may, the notices of Aileach preserved in the authentic annals, and historical poems, as well as the Lives of Saints and genealogical tracts, show that it was the seat of the kings of the northern portion of Ireland, as Tara was of the southern, from a period considerably antecedent to the introduction of Christianity down to the close of the 12th century."

† *Chron. Man.* ad ann. 1047. Langebek proposes to read here "Harold the Black of Ireland," conceiving Godfred to have been an Irish Dane descended from that Anlaf who was defeated by Athelstane, at the battle of Brunanburh.—See his *Schema Agnationis* to this effect. As a further confirmation of this supposition, he finds in the name Crovan a si-

succeeded in possessing himself of Dublin and a great part of Leinster; having also previously reduced so low the naval power of the British Scots, that no shipbuilder among them durst use more than three bolts in the construction of any vessel.* It seems probable, however, that this Northman's possession of his conquests in Ireland was but temporary, and that the notion of his having reigned for sixteen years in Dublin arose from a confusion between him and a Danish ruler of Dublin, named Godfred, who died in the year 1075.

The other assailant, by whom for a time this country's independence seemed to be threatened, was the powerful Norwegian king, Magnus, who was also ruler over the Hebrides and the Isle of Man; and, as may be collected from Scandinavian as well as from Irish authorities, entertained seriously the project of adding Ireland also to the number of his conquests.† The marriage of his son, Sigurd, whom he had then newly appointed king over the Isles, with the daughter of the Irish monarch, Murkertach, formed, as it appears, a part of the policy by which he hoped to effect his object; and this event, according to the northern chroniclers, took place some time in the years 1098 and 1099, while the Nor-

mitude to many of our Irish names. "Ad hæc cognomen Crovan idiotismum Hiberniæ prodere videtur; ibi enim homines cognominatos Conellan, Callean, Brogan, etc. invenimus."

* By Selden, in his *Mare Clausum*, this law, respecting the construction of the vessels, is explained, as merely signifying that Crovan, by his dominion over those seas, had confined within certain limits the naval power of the Scots. A similar explanation of the passage has been given by the learned Murray of Gottingen.—*Nov. Comment. Gotting.*, tom. iii. p. 2.

† "Ann. ab Incarnat. Dom. 1098. Magnus Olavi Noricorum regis filius contra Irenses insurrexit et classem lx navium, supra illos navigaturus, præparavit. . . . Hic filium regis Irlandæ uxorem duxerat. Sed quia rex Irensis pactiones quas fecerat non tenuerat, Magnus rex stomachus filium ejus remisit. Bellum igitur inter eos ortum est."—*Orderic. Vital.* The chronicler here, as Langebek remarks, has mistakenly made Magnus himself the husband of the Irish princess instead of his son Sigurd. The Welsh chronicler, Caradox, is more accurate. "Magnus," he says, "returning to the isle of Man, which he had got by conquest, built there three castles, and then sent to Ireland to have the daughter of Murckart to his son, which being obtained, he created him king of Man."—*Ad ann.* 1100.

wegian king was wintering in the Western Isles. According to our own annals, however, it was not till A.D. 1102, that this prince commenced his operations by a hostile descent upon Dublin, where he was met,* on his landing, by a large army of the natives; but no action thereupon ensuing, a pacific arrangement was forthwith entered into, in consequence of which Murkertach bestowed his daughter's hand on the son of Magnus, presenting him, at the same time, with many rare and costly gifts. In the following year, the Irish monarch having violated, as we are told, his engagements,† Magnus, with a fleet of fifteen ships, invaded this country; but being, with a part of his force, inveigled into an ambuscade by the natives, he was attacked by them in great numbers, his retreat to his ships cut off, and himself killed in the action. This invader was buried, say the chronicler of Man, in the church of St. Patrick, at Down.

The desire manifested by the king of Norway for an alliance by marriage with the family of Murkertach, is not the only proof we possess of the consideration in which this monarch was held by contemporary princes. Not to dwell on the alleged application to him from the nobles of Man, requesting him to send them some member of his family to be their ruler,—an occurrence which in reality, as we have shown, took place in the reign of his predecessor, Turlough,—it is certain that, at the time of the rebellion against Henry I. by Robert de Belesme, earl of Shrewsbury, that nobleman's brother, Arnulf de Montgomery, who was then in Wales collecting forces, despatched an envoy to king Murkertach, to solicit the hand of his daughter in marriage.‡ By such a request was generally understood, in those times, a desire for military as well as matrimonial alliance; and Arnulf himself is said by the

* IV Mag. ad. an. 1102.

† Chron. Man.

‡ "Arnulph, earl of Pembroke, sent Gerald, his steward, to Murckhart, king of Ireland, desiring his daughter in marriage, which was easily granted."—*Caradoc*, ad ann. 1100.

Welsh chroniclers to have passed over to Ireland, for the purpose of receiving both the hand of the lady, and the aids and supplies for the rebellion, furnished by her father. Such aid, afforded by Murkertach to the rebel subjects of Henry I., would seem inconsistent with the feeling of devotedness towards that monarch, with William of Malmesbury attributes to the Irish king.* This historian owns, it is true, that Murkertach assumed, for a short time, a tone of defiance against the English; but adds that, when threatened with restraints upon his commerce and navigation, he returned to his former state of composure: "For what," says the monk of Malmesbury, "could Ireland do, if the merchandise of England were not carried to her shores?"—a proof that the intercourse between the two countries, before the time of the English invasion, was far more frequent and habitual than is in general supposed.

Among the circumstances adduced to prove the friendly terms on which he stood with neighbouring princes is specially recorded the gift of a camel "of wonderful magnitude," which he received from the King of Albany.†

A few years after, in a desperate encounter with his rival, Mac-Lochlin, of the plains of Cobha, in Tyrone, Murkertach sustained a severe defeat, from which he seems never after to have entirely recovered;‡—his own imprudence, in detaching a portion of his army to lay waste and reduce the territory then called Dalaradia, having so far diminished and divided his force as to enable the enemy to reap an easy triumph. The victorious return of the northern Hy-Niells to their royal for-

A. D.
1108.

* "Eam (Murkertach) et successores ejus quos fama non extolit, ita devotos habuit noster Henricus, ut nihil nisi quod eum palparet scriberent, nihil nisi quod juberent, agerent. Quamvis feratur Murchardum, nescio qua de causa, paucis diebus inflatus in Anglos exisse; sed mox pro interdicto navigio et mercimonio navigantium, tumorem pectoris sedasse.—Quantum enim valeret Hibernia, si non adnavigaret merces ex Anglia?—*Gul. Malmesb. Angl.*, lib. v.

† "Amicitiam quoque cum Albanis rege coluit a quo camelum 'miræ magnitudinis' dono recepit."—*Gratian. Lucius*.

‡ 1V Mæg. ad ann. 1103.

tress, carrying away with them the royal pavilion and standards, the stores of pearls and other precious treasures, of which they had despoiled the Momonians, is dwelt on with more than usual detail by the annalists of Ulster, and the Four Masters; while, in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, the accustomed partiality to the cause of Munster is allowed to prevail, and the rich display of spoils by her conquerors is passed over in sullen silence.

For several years after this great victory, no event of any importance is recorded of Murkertach or his rival. From time to time we find the interposition of the spiritual authority called in to prevent them from breaking into actual hostilities;* and, on more than one occasion, the pious and able archbishop Celsus succeeded in averting a conflict between them when brought face to face, at the head of their respective armies, in the field.

In the year 1114, Murkertach was seized with an attack of illness so violent as to incapacitate him, for the time, from managing, in person, the affairs of his kingdom;† and a chance of succession was thus opened to his ambitious brother, Dermot, of which that prince eagerly took advantage, and had himself proclaimed king of Munster. In the following year, however, an amicable understanding appears to have been entered into by the two brothers; and the monarch, finding his malady continue, and being desirous of passing the remainder of his days in seclusion and devotion, resigned the royal authority into Dermot's hands, and took holy orders in the monastery of Lismore. There, after two or three years of humbling penitence, he died A. D. 1119, and was interred in the church of Killaloe, to which he had been always a munificent benefactor. His warlike competitor in the

* Once in 1109 (IV. Mag.), and twice in the course of 1113. Ib.

† "That illness of the king," says the annalist (*Inisfallen*), "was the cause of many and great calamities, of battles and deeds of guilt, of devastations and massacres, of violations of churches and of the sanctuaries of the saints of Erin; and all these evils continued as long as that malady of the king of Erin lasted."

government of the kingdom, Domnal Mac Lochlin, survived him but two years, devoting also his last days to devotion and penitence in the monastery of Derry.

The affairs and transactions of the Church during the long period comprised in this double reign, though as usual mixed up, as they actually occurred, with most of the secular interests and passions of the time, I have thought it convenient, for the sake of clearness, to reserve for separate consideration. It has been seen that though, at this period, the Northmen inhabiting the three cities of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick, looked to Canterbury as their primatial see, and derived from thence the consecration of their bishops, the ancient Church of the kingdom acknowledged no such jurisdiction; and that though, in some few instances, Irishmen were consecrated by the archbishop of Canterbury, they were, in all such cases, natives who had been appointed bishops by the Danes, and whose dioceses were situated in Danish cities.*

That the distinguished pelates, Lanfranc and Anselm, who held in succession the see of Canterbury during this period, took a strong interest in the ecclesiastical affairs of Ireland, appears from their correspondence, still extant, with some bishops of their own ordination in this country, as well as with two of its most able and

* In remarking on an assertion of Campion, that persons appointed to sees in Ireland were always directed to the archbishop of Canterbury to be consecrated by him, Usher shows that such was not the case with the bishops of all Ireland; this practice being peculiar, he says, "to the Ostman strangers that possessed the three cities of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick. For these being a colony (continues Usher) of the Norwegians and Livonians, and so countrymen to the Normans, when they had seen England subdued by the Conqueror, and Normans advanced to the chief archbishopric there, would needs now assume to themselves the name of Normans also, and cause their bishops to receive their consecrations from no other metropolitan but the archbishop of Canterbury; and forasmuch as they were confined within the walls of their own cities, the bishops which they had made had no other diocese to exercise their jurisdiction in, but only the bare circuit of those cities."—*Discourse on the Religion, etc.* etc. What is said here of Normans being advanced to the chief archbishoprics is not altogether true,—both Lanfranc and Anselm having been natives of Italy.

enterprising sovereigns, Turlough and Murkertach.* In a letter from Lanfranc to the former of these princes, of which some notice has already been taken, complaints are made of the prevalence, in Ireland, of certain abuses and uncanonical practices, some of them relating merely to points of discipline, but others more serious in their consequences, as affecting the purity and strictness of the matrimonial tie. For the purpose of correcting these abuses, the primate recommended to Turlough, that an assembly "of bishops and religious men should be convoked, at which the king and his nobles would attend, and assist in exterminating from the country these and all other bad practices which were condemned by the sacred laws of the Church."†

It has been well remarked that the tone of this letter is wholly inconsistent with the notion assumed by some writers, of a jurisdiction vested in the see of Canterbury over the concerns of the Irish church;‡ as here, on points relating not merely to discipline, but affecting Christian morals, and in which, therefore, the primate was more than ordinarily interested, he uses no language that in any degree savours of authority, nor issues any orders to the Irish bishops and clergy (as would have been his duty, had he conceived that he possessed the power) to

* In Murkertach's answer to Anselm (*Sylog.*, epist. 37.) he returns his best thanks to that prelate for remembering in his prayers a sinner like himself, and likewise for the friendly aid and intervention, which (as far as was consistent with his high dignity) he had afforded to Murkertach's son-in-law, Arnulf de Montgomery.—"Quam magnas vobis grates (Domine) referre debeo; quod, sicut mihi relatum est, memoriam mei peccatoris in continuis vestris peragis orationibus; sed et genero meo Arnulfo auxilio et interventione (quantum fuerat dignitati vestre fas) succurristi."

† "Episcopos et religiosos quosque viros in unam convenire jubete, sacro eorum conventui presentiam vestram cum vestris optimatibus exhibete, has pravas consuetudine omnesque alias quæ a sacris legibus improbantur, a regno vestro exterminare studete."—*Vet. Epist. Hitt. Sylogæ*, Epist. 27.

‡ Camden is one of the writers by whom this mistaken notion is sanctioned:—"Before this period," he says (meaning before the year 1143), "the bishops of Ireland were always consecrated by the archbishops of Canterbury, by reason of their primacy in that kingdom." He then enumerates instances of such consecration, which, however, are all confined to the Danish cities.

assemble and act upon an occasion which appeared to him of such great and pressing importance.

In the course of a short time, the two other Danish cities, Waterford and Limerick, became also episcopal sees: and the first bishop of the former city, whose name was Malchus,* was chosen (as appears from the Letter of the electors to Anselm) by the following personages, —the king Murkertach, the bishop of Cashel, bishop Domnald, and the prince Dermot, or “duke,” as he is styled, brother of the king. Notwithstanding that Murkertach, as ruler of the south of Ireland, included Waterford among his subject territories, the wish of the Danish inhabitants of this city to be connected, in spirituals, with the Normans of England, was, as in the case of Dublin, complied with; the king himself, as has just been stated, joining the clergy and inhabitants in the letter addressed on this occasion to Anselm, requesting him to consecrate their new bishop,

To this practice, followed by the Danish towns, of requiring ordination from Canterbury, the city of Limerick presents an exception, in the instance of its first bishop, Gilbert;—this zealous prelate, who appears to have been an Irishman,† having been already a bishop when placed over Limerick. From letters, still extant, which passed between him and Anselm, we learn that they had been acquainted with each other at Rouen;‡ and Gilibert, in writing to the archbishop, says, “I send you as a little token, both of my poverty and affection, twenty-five

* On the return of Malchus from England, after his consecration, he and the Danes of Waterford built the Cathedral of the Blessed Trinity, now called Christ Church.—See Smith's *Hist. of Waterford*, chap. 4.

† Lanigan, chap. 25. § 9. A tract written by Gillibert, called “*De Statu Ecclesiæ*,” and giving an account of a painted image of the Church which he had made, will be found in Usher's *Sylloge*, ep. 30. Among the various utensils for the service of the church, which according to the rules laid down in this treatise, were to be consecrated by the bishop, is mentioned the *Judicial Iron*, an instrument of purgation, or trial, the use of which was common among the Saxons and Danes, and most probably, from this mention of it by Gillibert, prevailed also in Ireland. Ib. ep. 31.

‡ “*Quoniam autem olim nos apud Rothomagum invicem cognovimus.*” —*Syllog.* ep. 32.

small pearls,* the best, though worthless, that I could procure, and I entreat of you not to be unmindful of me in your prayers." The archbishop, in his answer to this letter, without pointing out the particular abuses of which he complains, intimates generally a no less unfavourable opinion of the Irish church than had been expressed by his predecessor, Lanfranc; and presses earnestly on his brother prelate, the duty of correcting, as far as lay in his power, so grievous a state of things, by implanting moral and good doctrines among the people over whom he spiritually presides.

But by far the most gloomy picture drawn of the state of religion and morals in Ireland at this time, is that which remains to us from the pen of the celebrated St. Bernard,—an effusion, which, together with the fervid and impetuous zeal that marked his whole life and writings, betrays also no small portion of the spirit of exaggeration and over-statement which naturally belongs to such a temperament.† The marriage of the clergy, and the intrusion of laymen into ecclesiastical property,—the two great scandals that then drew down the fulminations of popes and councils—were the chief irregularities that provoked the anger of St. Bernard against Ireland; and in the known and flagrant fact of so many married laymen having usurped the rank and prerogatives of the archbishop of Armagh, the saint found, it must be owned, a subject highly deserving of his most stern and denunciatory censure.

Of the fidelity, however, of his general picture of the state of Ireland, there appear good reasons for feel-

* "Munusculum paupertatis meæ et devotionis transmittito, xxv. margaritulas inter optimas et viliores; et rogo ne sitis immemor mei in orationibus vestris."—Of the pearls found in the lake of Killarney, a writer in the *Philosophical Transact.* (vol. xviii.) says:—"I myself saw one pearl bought for 50s. that was valued at 40l. A miller took out a pearl which he sold for 10l. to one who sold it to the late Lady Glengarry for 30l. with whom I saw it in a necklace. She refused 80l. for it from the late Duchess of Ormond."

† As is said by a French author, who truly edited the writings of one of his victims, Abelard, "he spared nobody,"—*nec enim ulli peperoit.*—See Bayle, art. *St. Bernard.*

ing distrustful. Having never himself been in the country, and deriving his sole information from natives, on the spot—a source of intelligence, too apt, in all times, to be embittered by local and factious prejudices—he was led to generalise upon particular cases, not always in themselves authentic, and thus to present, on the whole, a false, or at least exaggerated, representation. Learning, for instance, that in the diocese of Connor—a place to which, from the nature of the task he was employed upon,* his inquiries were chiefly directed—there prevailed a frightful degree of immorality and barbarism, this vehement censor extends the charge at once to the whole kingdom; and, from ignorance of the peculiar forms observed in the marriage of the Irish, imputes to them, among other irregularities, that “they did not enter into lawful wedlock.” This charge, followed up by what Giraldus alleged at a later period, namely that the natives “did not yet contract marriage,” has furnished grounds for accusing the Irish of those times of having lived in a state of almost universal concubinage; whereas, in both instances, the meaning of a charge so ambiguously worded was not that the Irish dispensed with the ceremony of marriage altogether, but that they did not contract it in that particular form which the English and some other nations considered alone to be lawful.†

* He was then writing his Life of St. Malachy. The following is a specimen of his account of the state of Connor:—“Tunc intellexit homo Dei non ad homines se sed ad bestias destinatum. Nusquam adhuc tales expertus fuerat in quantacunque barbarie; nusquam repererat sic protervos ad mores, sic ferales ad ritus, sic ad fidem impios, ad leges barbaros,” etc. After quoting the whole of this description, Camden adds,—“Thus St. Bernard:—and, as I am informed, the present bishop, even at this day, is hardly able to give a better character of his flock.”

† See an explanation by Dr. Lanigan (*Hist. c. xxvi. note 52.*) of the two different sorts of sponsalia, or espousals, distinguished by the old canon law; one called *de presenti*, and the other *de futuro*. The latter form of contract, called in English *betrothment*, is what was chiefly practised by the Irish; and that their marriages were by high authority considered legitimate, appears from the language used on the subject by Lanfranc and Anselm, the former of whom speaks of the lawfully wedded wives of the Irish: “legitime sibi copulatam uxorem;”—“legitime sibi copulatas.”—See their letters, above referred to, in archbishop Usher’s *Synloge*.

There was, doubtless, then; as there has been unfortunately at most periods of our history, quite enough in the real condition of the country to mourn over and condemn, without calling in also the hand of calumny to add new shadows to the picture.

Of the ecclesiastical transactions of the reign of Murkertach, one of the most remarkable—his dedication of the royal city of Cashel to the uses of the Church—has already been mentioned. In the year 1111 a great synod, of which neither the objects or acts are clearly specified, was held at Fiodh-Ængusa, or Ængus's Grove, a place in the neighbourhood of the famed hill of Usneach, where, of old, the Druids held their rites. At this convention, besides Murkertach and the nobles of his kingdom, there attended also Moelmurry, archbishop of Cashel—this see having been lately elevated to archiepiscopal rank—50 other bishops, 300 priests, and 3,000 persons of the clerical order. Shortly after this national meeting, there was held another great synod at Rath-Breasail,* presided over by Gillibert, bishop of Limerick, who was then apostolic legate in Ireland, and the first, it appears, appointed to that high office. By this synod a regular division of the dioceses of Ireland was made, and their respective boundaries fixed;† while by another important regulation, it was declared that the church revenues and lands allotted to the several bishops for their

* Supposed to be the same as Hy-Bressail, now Clanbrassil, in the county of Armagh.

† Exclusive of Dublin, which was left subject to Canterbury, there were to be, according to this division, twenty-four dioceses: twelve in Leath-Cuinn, or the northern portion of Ireland, subject to the archbishop of Armagh, and twelve in the southern portion, or Leath-Mogh, under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Cashel. "On looking over the boundaries," says Dr. Lanigan, "marked for these dioceses, a very great part of which can scarcely be pointed out at present, on account of the changes of names, it is clear that the synod intended, besides reducing the number of sees, to render all the dioceses of Ireland nearly of equal extent; but it did not succeed to any considerable degree in reducing the number: whereas we find at the time of the Council of Kells, in 1152, many more sees than those here laid down; and, on the other hand, some of the said twenty-four sees not even spoken of, as if, notwithstanding the decree of Rath-Breasail, they had either not been established, or had, in a very short time, ceased to exist."—Chap. 25. § 14.

maintenance, were exempted from tribute, chief rents, and other public contributions.

Among the abuses complained of by St. Bernard in Ireland, was the excessive number of bishops,—an evil partly caused, as already has been explained, by the practice adopted, from the example of the primitive church, of appointing chorepiscopi, or rural bishops; and this multiplication of the episcopal jurisdiction it was one of the objects of the synod of Clonbrassil to correct. So far was their purpose, however, from being attained, that at the time of the great council of Kells, about thirty years after, the bishoprics alone, exclusive of the archiepiscopal sees, amounted in number to thirty-four.

CHAPTER XXV.

Learned Irishmen of the Eleventh Century.—Tigernach, the Chronicler, — Great Value of his Annals.—Dates of Eclipses preserved by him — Proof of the Antiquity of Irish Records.—Marianus Scotus.—Account of his Works.—St. Colman, a Patron Saint of Austria.—Helias, of the Monastery of Monaghan, introduced first the Roman Chant at Cologne.—Monastery erected for the Irish at Erford.—Another at Fulda.—Poems by Mac Liag, the Secretary of Brian Boru.—Flann and Gilla-Coeman, Metrical Chronographers.—Learning of Gilla-Coeman—Visit of Solgenna, Bishop of St. David's, to the Schools of Ireland.—English Students at Armagh.

BEFORE we advance any further into the twelfth century, I shall briefly advert to the few distinguished names in literature and science, that lie thinly but shinningly scattered throughout the period we have just traversed; this being a portion of my historic task, which, as offering a change and relief from its ordinary details, I would not willingly omit. Of that class of humble but useful writers, the annalists, who merely narrate, says

Cicero, without adorning the course of public affairs, Ireland produced in this century, two of the most eminent, perhaps, in all Europe, Marianus Scotus and Tigernach. The latter of these writers, whose valuable annals have been of the sept called the Muireadhaigh, or Murrays, in Connaught, and was abbot of Clonmacnois. His Annals, which were brought down by him to the year of his death, 1088, are scarcely more valuable for the materials of history which their own pages furnish, than for the proofs they afford of still earlier records existing when they were written;*—records which, as appear from the dates of eclipses preserved by this chronicler, and which could not otherwise than by written memorials have reached him so accurately,† must have extended, at least, as far back as the period when Christianity became the religion of the country.

Another service conferred on the cause of Irish antiquities by this work, independently of its own intrinsic utility, arises from the number of metrical fragments we find scattered throughout its pages, cited from writings still more ancient, which were then evidently existing, though at present no other vestige of them remains. That Tigernach had access to some library or libraries furnished with books of every description,‡ is

* "We have, accordingly, fragments preserved by Tigernach of Irish writers, who flourished so early as before the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries, whose names, whose periods, whose very words are preserved, and the antiquity of whose idiom confirms, to a certainty, the ancient date which Tigernach himself assigns to them."—Dr. O'Connor, *Ep. Nunc. Rer. Hib. Scrip.* cxvi.

† "Quod ait inquiras unde harum defectionum notitiam hauserit Tigernachus, aut qua ratione eas ad Regum Hibernorum annos potuerit tam accurate accommodare? Id procul dubio effecisse respondeo, non calculis astronomicis, sed veterum ope Scriptorum Hiberniensium, qui ea quæ vel ipsi viderunt, vel quæ in Monasteriorum Bibliothecis reposita erant, ad posterorum memoriam servavere."—Ib. p. cxviii.

‡ "Bibliothecam penes se habuisse patet, omni librorum genere refertam, unde plures adducit auctores, tam externos quam Hibernos, quorum quæ superant opera, ab eo accurate, etiam quoad verba producta, plane indicant eum reliquos jam defunctos, pari fidelitate, etiam quoad verba produxisse."—Ib. p. cxviii.

We find in the obituary of Armagh not many years after Tigernach flourished, a notice of the death of the chief antiquary and librarian of that school.—"Primh Criochara a leabhar Coimhed."

manifest from his numerous references; and the correctness of his citations from foreign authors, with whose works we are acquainted, may be taken as a surety for the genuineness of his extracts from the writings of our own native authors, now lost:—thus affording an answer to those sceptical objectors who, because there are extant no Irish manuscripts* of an earlier date than about the eleventh or tenth century, contend that our pretensions to a vernacular literature, in the two or three centuries preceding that period, must be mere imposture or self-delusion.

Marianus Scotus, the contemporary of Tigernach, and, as some suppose, a monk in the very monastery over which he presided,† stands, as a chronographer, among the highest of his times. He wrote also Notes on the Epistles of St Paul, a copy of which, transcribed by himself, is still extant in the imperial library of Vienna. Leaving Ireland about the year 1056, this learned man joined at first a religious community of his own countrymen, at Cologne, and from thence repaired to Fulda, where he remained a recluse for the space of ten years. Being removed from thence, by order of the ecclesiastical authorities, to Mentz, he was there again, as he himself informs us, shut up, and remained a recluse till the year of his death, 1086. In one of the chief merits of a chronicler, that of skilfully turning to account the labour of his predecessors, Marianus appears to have been pre-eminent; and a learned antiquary, in speaking of the use thus made by him of Asser's interesting Life of King Alfred, says that, "enamoured with the flowers of that work, he transplanted them to shine like stars in his own pages."‡

* For remarks on the cause which led to the loss of the earlier manuscripts, see First Volume of this Work, chap. 14.

† This supposition, for which there appears to be no foundation, arose from the mention which he makes of a certain Tigernach, as being the superior of the establishment he belonged to before he left Ireland.—

"Hoc autem mihi retulit Tigernach, Senior meus."

‡ Leland, *Comment. de Scrip. Britan.* The following is the florid

It appears that, by Marianus, as well as by his countryman, Tigernach, who had never been out of Ireland, the error of the Dionysian Cycle was clearly perceived; and to the former is even attributed the credit of having endeavoured, however unsuccessfully, to correct it.*

Besides Marianus,† there appeared, in this century, several other distinguished Irishmen on the Continent; among the foremost of whom may be mentioned St. Colman, whom Austria placed on the list of her patrons, and whose praise was celebrated in an ode by Stabius, the historiographer of the emperor Maximilian.‡

language of the great antiquary: "Quarum et Marianus Scotus venustate totius captus, flores ex eisdein avidus, veluti stellulas, quibus suam inpolaret historiam selegit" Chap. cxix.

* Sigebert (*Chron.*). According to the editor, however, of Marianus (Baill. 1559, of which edition there is a splendid copy in the British Museum), this chronicler succeeded in correcting the errors of this cycle: "Præstitit mehercule Marianus hic noster quod eorum qui Temporum rationes descriperunt nemo hactenus tentavit. Errores enim in Cykli Decemnovalis ratiocinatione a Dionysio introductos, animadversione studiosa correxit." This enthusiastic editor is perhaps hardly to be trusted, as, besides adorning the recluse of the cell with every possible talent and accomplishment, he tells us that he travelled almost over the whole globe. But Henry de Knyghton also assigns to Marianus the credit of having been the first who corrected the error of the Dionysian period. This chronicler, whose testimony to the merit of Marianus has escaped, as far as I can see, the notice of Dr. O'Connor, thus explains the mode in which our countryman corrected the Cycle. "Itaque ab initio seculi annos singulos recensens xxii annos qui cyclis prædictis deerant superaddidit."

† In the instance of Marianus, as in many others which I have had occasion to notice, an effort has been made to transfer to Scotland a reputation which belongs legitimately to Ireland. On these points, the learned of the Continent show far more accuracy, not to say honesty, than some of our authorities nearer home. Among the many proofs collected by Usher in confirmation of Ireland's right to Marianus, the following may be worth mentioning. In the great controversy arising out of the claim of Edward I. to a feudal superiority over Scotland, Marianus Scotus was one of the authorities brought forward by the English king; and again, when the same claim was revived under Henry IV. this chronicler was appealed to, as a Scottish authority, in favour of his pretensions. But the advocate who argued for the rights of Robert, in allowing full credit to Marianus, contended, and successfully that he was a Scot of Hibernia, not of Scotland.—*Eccles. Primord.* p. 735.

It is curious that Marianus himself was, as far as can be discovered, the first writer by whom the name of Scotia, appropriated previously to Ireland alone, was given to the present Scotland.—See a Letter of Lynch (the author of *Cambrensis Eversus*) appended to O'Flaherty's *Ogygia Vindicta*.

‡ Suetonius, *Vies des Saints*. In the commencement of the historiography—

Having been unjustly seized and executed as a spy, some circumstances of a miraculous nature are said to have occurred at the saint's death, in consequence of which he received the honours of martyrdom; and a Benedictine monastery was established, in memory of his name, at Melck, which still exists, it appears, in great splendour. Another Irish saint, named Helias, or Elias, who had come from the monastery of Monaghan, paid a visit, in the course of his travels to Rome, and is recorded as the first who brought from thence the Roman chant, or church music, to Cologne.*

So great was the resort in those times of Irishmen to Germany, that in 1036 a monastery was erected for them, at Erford, by the bishop Walter de Glysberg. There were likewise a number of Irish monks at Fulda, one of the most celebrated of whom, St. Amnichad, died a recluse in that monastery some years before Marianus entered it; and so strong an impression had he left of the sanctity of his character, that, as we learn on the authority of the chronographer just mentioned,† it was believed that lights were occasionally seen, and psalmody heard, over his tomb; and Marianus, as he himself tells us, celebrated mass over that tomb every day for ten years.

Judging of the internal condition of Ireland at this period, even as represented in the friendly pages of her own annals, without taking into account the unsightly

pher's ode there is an allusion to this Irish saint's royal descent, and his visit to the Holy Land:—

"Austrie sanctus canitur patronus,
Fulgidum sidus radians ab arcto;
Sootiæ gentis Colomannus acer,
Regis Proles.
"Ille dum sanctam Solymorum urbem
Transiit, dulcem patriam reliquens,
Regios fastus, trabem, coronam,
Sceptraque tempit."

* Lanigan, *Hist. Eccles.* c. xxiv. § 2.

† Florence of Worcester, ad ann. 1043. As Asser and Marianus had both copied the Saxon Chronicle, so Florence of Worcester, coming still later, transcribed and interpolated Marianus.—See *Preface* to Ingram's Saxon Chronicle.

picture drawn by a foreign hand, it is not to be wondered at that such of her pious and learned sons as could make their way to shores more favourable to their pursuits should gladly avail themselves of the power. Not that, even in this dark age, the celebrated schools of the country had ceased to be cherished or frequented, nor is there any want of, at least, names of reputed eminence to grace the obituaries of the different monasteries;—scarcely a year elapsing without honourable mention in these records of some persons thought worthy of commemoration, either as poets, theologians, antiquaries, or scribes.*

Early in this century died Mac Liag, to whom several poems, still extant, are attributed. Chief Ollamh, or Doctor, of Ireland, and secretary to Brian Boru, whom he is said to have survived but a year, this poet's muse was principally employed, as far as may be judged from the pieces remaining under his name,† in commemorating the warlike achievements of his royal master, and lamenting over his loss.

Some curious historical poems by Flann and Gilla-Coeman, two metrical chronographers of this century, have furnished a subject for much learned comment to the pen of the reverend editor of the *Irish Chronicles*; who, in proof of the accuracy of Gilla-Coeman's chronological computations, has shown that all the dates assigned by him to the great events of Scripture-history coincide, to a wonderful degree, with those laid down by

* "As to the ancient Scribes of the Irish, I cannot understand them in any other sense than as Readers of Divinity."—Ware. *Antiq.* chap. xxv. § 3. It should rather be said, perhaps, that in the same manner as the scribes of the Hebrews were both writers and doctors of the law, so the scribes of the Irish were at once writers and doctors of divinity.

† *Trans. Ibero-Celt. Society*, xciv. In their record of the decease of this poet, the Four Masters have introduced two distichs, or *ranns*, of his composition, which give by no means a favourable notion of his poetic powers. It would appear, indeed, from the fragments of this nature scattered throughout the *Annals*, that the rhyming of one hemistich to the other, and the adaptation of the rhythm and flow of the words to song, were all that the writers of these *ranns* attended to; as with but few exceptions, their meaning is of the most negative description.

no less authorities than Scaliger, Petavius, and sir Isaac Newton.* It should have been added by the learned doctor, that when coming to apply this chronological skill to the ancient history of his own country, Coeman was found to be by no means so trustworthy, and for a very sufficient reason; having in his former task been guided by an acquaintance with foreign historians; whereas, in calculating the successions of the kings of his own country, he was led away partly by the national vanity on this point, and partly by the grave fictions of the bardic historians who had preceded him. The author of the *Ogygia*, who adopted Coeman as his chief guide, in computing the periods of the early Irish kings, has been thereby led into such wild and absurd flights of chronology,† as even the most sanguine of his brother antiquarians have refused to sanction.

Though somewhat anticipating, in point of time, it may save the trouble, perhaps, of future repetition and reference, to state, while touching on the subject, that the chronological list of the Irish kings, which had by Coeman been brought down to the time of St Patrick, was by another metrical chronographer, Gilla-Moduda, who flourished about the middle of the twelfth century, continued to the death of Malachy II., in a poem consisting of a number of *ranns*, or strophes, much in the manner of the metrical list of the Dalriadic kings, composed in Scotland in the reign of Malcolm III.

Among the native authors of this period, whose works were produced at home, may be included Dubdath, a nominal archbishop of Armagh,—being one of

* "Quam accurate sint Coemani rationes patebit ex subiuncta tabula, in qua cum rationibus Scaligeri, Fergusonii, Usserii, Petavii, et Newtoni, conferuntur."—See the Rev. Doctor's notes on Coeman's poem, *Prolegom.* xxxv.

† By this enthusiastic calculator the date of the arrival of the Milesian colony in Ireland is placed as far back in antiquity as the time when king Solomon reigned in Jerusalem. This was too much even for Mr. O'Connor of Belangare;—at least in his later and more modified views of Irish antiquity. See his very candid retractations on the subject, *Collect. Hibern.* vol. iii.

those laymen whose usurpation of this see was denounced so vehemently by St. Bernard. The saint acknowledged, however, in the midst of his ire, that these intruders were men of literary acquirements;* and Dubdalethe, one of the number, gave proof of his claim to this character by writing some Annals of the affairs of Ireland (to which reference is more than once made in the chronicles that have reached us),† as well as an account of the archbishops of Armagh, down to his own time.

While thus not a few of the natives themselves continued to cultivate, even in those stormy times, most of the studies for which their country was once so famous, neither does it appear that the attractions and advantages by which foreign students were formerly drawn to their schools, had altogether at this dark period‡ ceased. An instance to the contrary, indeed, is afforded in the case of Sulgenus, afterwards bishop of St David's, who "moved by the love," as we are told, "of study, set out, in imitation of his ancestors, to visit the land of the Irish, so wonderfully celebrated for learning." Having been driven back by a storm to his own country, it was not till after a long lapse of time that he again ventured on the voyage, when, reaching

* "Viri uxorati et absque ordinibus, literati tamen.—*Vit. Malack.* chap. vii.

† *Annal. Ult.* ad ann. 952 and 1021; also in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, ad ann. 978, there will be found some verses of this prelate cited. See Ware (*Bishops*), Lanigan, chap. xxiv. § 4, and *Rev. Hib. Scrip. Ep. Numc.* ciii.

‡ According to some authorities, the schools of Ire'and had, in a great degree, revived at this period. "Les écoles," says Geoghegan, "étoient déjà bien rétablies dans l'intervalle de la journée de Clontarf, jusqu'à l'arrivée des Anglois, principalement celles d'Ardmach."—*Tome i. part. 2. chap. 7.* Archbishop Usher, by tracing through the ninth and tenth centuries a succession of professors of divinity at Armagh, has shown that even through the gloom and storms of the Danish persecution some vestiges of that noble school may be discerned:—"Quæ idcirco commemoravimus, ut Ardmachane academix, inter medias Norwagiensis tempestatis procellas, emergentis, aliqua deprehendi possint vestigia."—*Ecoles. Primord.* p. 861. Dr. Campbell (*Strictures*, &c.) has thus misrepresented the import of this passage:—"Which I have enumerated, in order to trace the thriving state of the university of Armagh during the severest tempests of the Norman devastation."

the country of the Scots in safety, he remained there tranquilly for more than ten years, studying constantly the Holy Scriptures, and storing his mind with the spiritual wealth which they contained. Such is the account given, in a poem written by his own son,* of the studious labours of bishop Sulgenus in the schools of Ireland at this period; and Usher cites the poem as a proof that the study of letters had at this time revived in the country, and that Ireland, even in the eleventh century, was still "a storehouse of the most learned and holy men."†

In recording one of the great conflagrations that occurred in this century at Armagh, the Four Masters state that the part of the city called the *Trian Saxon*,‡ that is, the division inhabited by the Saxons, had suffered considerably by the fire. That this region of the city may have been originally so called, from its having been the principal quarters of the English students at Armagh, appears highly probable. But to conclude, merely from its being named on this occasion, that there were at that time any such students in the city, is one

* *Sylloge Præfat.*

"Exemplo patrum commotus amore legendi,
Ivit ad Hibernos Sophiæ, mirabile, claros.
Sed, cum jam cimbâ voluisset adire revector
Famosam gentem scripturis atque magistris,
Appulit ad patriam, ventorum flatibus actus
Nomine quam noto perhibent Albania longè;
Ac remoratus ibi certè tam quinquæ per annos
Iodessus agit votum, &c.
His ita digestis Scotorum visitat arva :
Ac mox scripturas multo meditamine sacras
Legis divinæ scrutatur, sæpe retractans ;
At ibi per denos tricens jam placidus annos
Congregat immensam pretioso pondere massam," &c.

† "Revixisse tamen bonarum literarum studia, et sæculo adhuc undecimo habitam fuisse Hiberniam (ut in Viâ Florentiæ loquitur Franciscus Guillimannus) virorum *sanctissimorum doctissimorumque officinam*." Another conclusion which Usher draws from this poem is, that the name of Scots was still in the eleventh century applied, κατ' ἐξοχην, to the Irish.

‡ *Seth de trian Sax.* IV Mag. ad ann. 1092. "The present 'English Street,'" says Stuart, "seems clearly to have derived its name from the old denomination 'Trian Seasenagh,' or the Saxon portion of the city."—*Hist. Memoirs of the City of Armagh.*

of those gratuitous assumptions which show more the wish to prove a desired point than the power.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Interregnum of Fifteen Years.—Contestation among the Irish Princes for the Monarchy.—Tordelbach O'Connor, the successful Candidate.—Account of the Reigns of the O'Brian Princes.—Decline of Tordelbach's good Fortune.—Is opposed by O'Lochin, King of Tirone.—Interference of the Clergy in the Quarrels of the Princes.—Its salutary Effects.—Death of Tordelbach.—Synod of Kells.—Palliums distributed by the Pope's Legate, Paparo.—Labours and Death of the great Saint Malachy.—First Introduction of Tithes into Ireland.—Misrepresentations respecting the Irish Church corrected.—Murtogh O'Lochin acknowledged King of Ireland.—Is killed in Battle.—Various Synods held during his Reign.—Roderic O'Connor, King of Connaught, succeeds to the Monarchy.—Great Convention at Athboy.—Abduction of the Wife of O'Ruarc by Dermot, King of Leinster.—Supposed, but erroneously, to have been the immediate Cause of the Invasion of Ireland by the English.—Enmity between O'Ruarc and Dermot.—The latter, expelled from his Dominions, embarks for England.—Designs of Henry II. upon Ireland.—Obtains a Grant of that Island from Pope Adrian IV.

AFTER the death of Donald O'Lochin, who, for the two years during which he survived his co-regnant, Murkertach, reigned by right, and without competitor, over the whole kingdom, there ensued an interregnum of fifteen years, throughout the whole of which all the various elements of strife and confusion, that had ever mixed themselves with the course of Irish polity, continued to rage in full ferment and force. The most enterprising among the candidates for the monarchy, and he who, at last, carried off that high prize, was Tordelvac O'Connor, king of Connaught, who had already distinguished himself during the latter years of the reigns of Murkertach and O'Lochin, by frequent and fierce incursions into the other provinces;* and, in one

* IV. Mag. from 1111 to 1116. Annal. U't 1114, 1115.

of these sanguinary incursions, was left for dead upon the field. The chief obstacle in the way of his success was the ever active power of Munster; that province having under four successive princes of the O'Brian race, opposed perseveringly, and with all the confidence which its past history could not but inspire, a formidable barrier in the way of his projects of aggrandisement. More than once had he been driven to extremities in the struggle: but at length policy effected what his arms could not accomplish. By sowing dissensions among the Momonians themselves,—that ever sure mode of distracting the strength of the Irish, and rendering them easy victims whether of the stranger or of each other,—the ruler of Connaught at length succeeded in turning the scale of the contest triumphantly in his own favour. Availing himself of the hereditary jealousy of the Eugeniens, respecting their right of alternate succession to the throne,* he found means to separate this gallant tribe from the Dalcassians, and even introduced for a time dissension among the brave Dalgais themselves.

In Connor O'Brian, however, who had succeeded to the throne of Munster, in the year 1120, the ambitious Tordelvac found an adversary in no ordinary degree formidable. Twice, in the course of two successive years, did this bold prince carry the war into the very heart of Tordelvac's dominions, and defeat him signally on his own ground; and again, a third time, having first routed the combined armies of the king of Leinster and the Danes of Dublin, he marched at the head of his victorious troops into Connaught, determined to bring the great struggle for supremacy to an issue. But the interposition of the Church averted the threatened conflict; and a negotiation having been entered into, under the auspices of the archbishop of Tuam, terms of peace were agreed to by the rival princes.† Whatever may have been the stipulations of this com-

A. D.
1132.
1133.

* Annel. Inisfall (Cod. Bodleian). Vallancey, from *Munster Annals*.

† IV Mag. ad an 1133.

pact, it evidently led to, or at least was followed by, a great preponderance of power on the side of Tordelvac, as the date of his accession, by force of arms and the strength of his faction, to the monarchy, is marked at A. D. 1136, two years after this event.

The remaining years of the reign of O'Brian passed unmarked by any new enterprise or achievement; the decided ascendant acquired by his competitor having thrown his latter days into the shade. He was confessedly, however, a prince of great activity and resources, and exhibited, together with the rude violence which pervaded the policy, warfare, and manners of the Irish chieftains of this period, some marks of a munificent and even (notwithstanding some occasional acts of sacrilege) religious spirit. Thus the same prince who, in his several inroads into Ulster and Meath, laid waste without scruple the free lands of churches, and carried off from cathedrals their plate and treasures, yet liberally founded, and continued through life to supply with funds, the abbey of St. Peter, at Ratisbon; * and, if the records of this abbey may be trusted, sent, through the counts and noble knights who were about to seek the Holy Land, large presents in aid of the cause to Lothaire

* In the Ratisbon Chronicle is given an account of a mission consisting of two persons, natives of Ireland, sent from Ratisbon to solicit the aid of the Irish princes towards a fund for the building of an abbey in that city. The kind reception these missionaries met with from the king of Munster and other princes, and the munificent aid afforded towards the object of their visit, are recorded with all due gratitude:—"Eos humaniter excepit, atque post aliquot dies in Germaniam honorifice remisit onustos ingenti vi auri, argenti et pretiosorum aliorum donorum. Alii principes Hiberniæ amplissima in Germaniam revertentibus munera varii generis contulerunt." To Connor O'Brian, indeed, is attributed by these records the credit of having founded the abbey. "Jam enim vitâ functus fundator consecrati Petri et monasterii S. Jacobi Scotorum rex Conchur O'Brian."—*Ibid.*

The author of Cambrensis Eversus, to whom these extracts from the Ratisbon Chronicle were communicated by Stephanus Vitus (Stephen White), mentions, on the authority of this learned man, that, in the original records, an attempt had been made to erase with a penknife the words "ex Scotiæ seu Hiberniæ insulæ;" for the purpose, says Lynch, of inducing a belief that the Scots mentioned in this record were Scots of North Britain, not of Ireland:—"Nimirum ut hoc facio lectorem ad credendum adduceret de Scotia Britannicæ sermonem in eo monumento, non de Hibernia institui."

the Roman emperor.* Finishing his days like most of the other Irish princes of this time, he died in penitence at Killaloe, and was solemnly interred in the cathedral church, in the grand vault of the O'Brian kings.

Under Turlough O'Brian, the successor of this brave prince, the struggle of Munster against the now paramount power of Tordelvach was obstinately, and for some time with success, maintained. But dissensions again broke out between the two kindred septs; and the desertion of the Eugenians, under two of their princes, to the ranks of the monarch, gave the first signal of the defeat and dismemberment which awaited that restless province. The crisis was hastened, too, by a sudden incursion on the part of the monarch's son Roderic, — a youth of ill-fated celebrity in the melancholy history of his country, — who, entering at the head of a chosen party into Thomond, attacked by surprise the seat of the O'Brians, the celebrated palace of Kinkora, and burned the royal structure to the ground. This act, as encouraging to the spirits of one party as it was insulting and irritating to the other, was instantly followed by a muster, on both sides, of all the forces they could collect, and the great and memorable battle of Moinmor ensued,† in which the army of Munster was totally defeated, and the king of Thomond, together with the flower of the Dalcassian nobility, left dead upon the field.‡ Seven thousand, according to our annals, was the number of Momonians slain on that day; — a great portion of the loss being attributed to the habitual reluctance of the brave Dalgais either to ask for quarter from an enemy, or to withdraw themselves from the field. Having acquired by this signal victory entire dominion over Munster, the monarch divided that province into two principalities,§ and re-

A. D.
1151.

* "Per magnæ nobilitatis ac potentis Comites cruce signatos et Hierosolymam petitorios, ad Lotharium regem Romanorum iugentia munera misit."—*Ibid.*

† 1V Mag. ad an. 1151.

‡ *Ibid.* 1151.

§ *Ibid.* 1153.

warded the treachery of the two Momonian princes who had joined him by appointing them its rulers.*

A. D. 1153. From this period the fortunes of Tordelvach, which had now reached their loftiest point, began gradually to decline;—a new rival in the power and honours of the supremacy having appeared in the person of Murtoigh O'Lochlin (or, as sometimes styled, O'Neill), king of Tyrone, and chief ruler of all Ulster, who, as the representative of the royal Hy-Niells of Tyrone, combined in himself at once the purest claims of legitimacy, together with the growing strength of the sword. Taking up the cause of the kingdom of Munster, O'Lochlin received her exiled sovereign at his court, and, having induced the princes of Ulster to form a league in his behalf, took the field with the troops of Tyrone, Tyrconnel, and other principalities of the north; and, after a victory over Tordelvach, who had opposed his passage through Meath, replaced the king of Munster, Turlough O'Brien, upon his throne.†

The conflict with the monarch, commenced thus daringly by O'Lochlin, continued to be prosecuted with equal vigour on both sides, as well by water as by land. In his anxiety to be able to cope with his active opponent, O'Lochlin had despatched agents to the coasts of Albany, to the Hebrides, and the Isle of Man, to hire and purchase ships,‡ to fit him out an armament; while, on the other side, the monarch Tordelvach, with a fleet accustomed to the Connaught seas, collected from Umalia, Conmaonamara, and Tyrawley, had already attacked and despoiled the peninsula of Inisowen, and laid waste the coasts of Tyrconnel. At

* IV Mag. ad an. 1154.

† Vallancey, from *Munster Annals*. According to the Four Masters, ad an. 1153, it was only half of his kingdom, "*leith riag*," that Turlough regained.

‡ IV Mag. ad an. 1154.—We may smile at these rude naval exploits; but the genius of Homer has given immortality to an armament in no respect, perhaps, superior. "The fleet which assembled at Aulis (says Wood) consisted of open, half-decked boats, a sort of galleys with one mast, fit for rowing or sailing."—*Inquiry, etc.*

length, on the meeting of the two armaments, a desperate action between them ensued; and, as the Four Masters, with evident complacency, report, the transmarine fleet * was with great slaughter defeated and dispersed.

Of the period we are now employed upon, one of the most prominent characteristics is undoubtedly the increased strength and activity of the ecclesiastical power: and however, in general, the interference of churchmen in the merely temporal affairs of life is to be deprecated, the services rendered by them, in a state of society such as now existed in Ireland, was in the highest degree salutary, and far outweighed, in a moral point of view, any mischiefs or inconveniences which their interfering spirit, as an engine of temporal authority, might under other circumstances have a tendency to produce. Subjected to an aristocracy of the very worst kind, for such was the government by a swarm of petty kings, the sole chance of protection for the wretched people, against the self-will of such masters, lay in the power possessed by the church of striking terror into these small tyrants, and compelling them, through fear of what might be their own fate in a future state of existence, to extend some portion of justice and mercy towards these subjected to their absolute will in the present.

There occur in the records of Tordelbach's reign some curious instances of interposition on the part of the clergy, for the purpose of reconciling personal feuds, which, if merely as pictures of the manners of the time, it may not be irrelevant to notice. Before the accession of this prince to the monarchy, there had broken out some quarrels between him and O'Melachlin, king of Meath, which the archbishop Gelasius, and others of the prelates, undertook to settle. Having fixed on the

* "Allmoirach"—It is stated (IV Mag.) that M'Scelling, the commander-in-chief of O'Lochlin's fleet, was punished for his failure by having all his teeth drawn out.—*Ro beneadh a fhiacra a mac Scelling.*

terms of the reconciliation, they brought the two princes together before the altar of St. Kieran, and there pledged them, upon the reliques of the saints,—among which were the Staff of Jesus, the Bell of St. Fechin, and the White Cow of St. Kevin,*—to abide faithfully by the agreement. A short time after, notwithstanding this public and solemn proceeding, Tordelvach O'Connor having, by stratagem, made his way suddenly into Meath, took O'Melachlin prisoner, as though he had been guilty of some violation of the treaty, and confined him in the castle of Dunmore. Surprised at this act of aggression, the prelates, who had mediated between the parties, hastened to inquire into the cause of so violent a step; when it appeared that no charge whatever was alleged by Tordelvach against his prisoner, but that still he refused to restore him to liberty, except on the condition of his giving up his principedom of Meath, to be enjoyed for a time by young Connor O'Connor, king Tordelvach's son. This audacious stipulation, though resisted and reprobated by the prelates, was agreed to on the part of the captive king; while on young Connor's head devolved the retribution for so gross an act of injustice, as he was soon after assassinated by an indignant chieftain of Fertulla, in the west of Meath, who could not brook the shame of submitting to any but his own rightful master.

In the very same year occurred another instance of the mediation of the ecclesiastics, showing at once how strong was their desire to soften the fierce spirit of the age, and how rude and intractable were the materials with which they had to deal. For some offence, which is not specified, Tordelvach had ordered his son Roderic to be confined in chains; and, notwithstanding that the princes and clergy of Connaught interfered earnestly in his behalf, and that the chiefs of the latter body, assembling at the Rath of St. Brendan, held a solemn

* *Bo ban Caoimghin.*—IV Mag. ad an. 1143.

and mournful fast on the occasion the stern father would not relent, and the young prince was left to linger in his chains. In the following year, however, at a synod in which were present the archbishops of Armagh and Cashel, and the monarch Tordelbach himself, the clergy, on a renewal of their solicitations, procured the release of Roderic from his fetters.*

One of the last acts of the life of Tordelbach the Great, as he is flatteringly styled by his historians, was to receive hostages from the king of North Munster, in acknowledgment of his sovereignty; a few months after which act of power he died,† having left all his precious effects, consisting of jewellery and vessels of gold and silver, his horses and flocks, his bow, quiver, every thing, except his sword, shield, and drinking-cup, to be distributed among the different churches, together with sixty-five ounces of gold and sixty marks of silver. It was also ordered, in his will, that his body should be deposited near the altar of St. Kieran, in the great church of Clonmacnoise.

In the year 1152 was held the great Synod, or National Council, of Kells, at which cardinal Paparo, as ^{A.D. 1152.} the legate of pope Eugene III., presided, and distributed the palliums brought by him from Rome to the four several archbishops, according to their order of precedence, of Armagh, Cashel, Dublin, and Tuam. To procure this distinction for the metropolitan heads of the Irish church, had long been a favourite object with that holy and eminent Irishman, St Malachy, who, in

* This record of Roderic's captivity had escaped, it appears, the accurate research of Dr. Lanigan. "I do not well understand (he says) what the *Inisfallen* annals have about Roderic O'Connor's captivity; but Harris (*Bishops, at Tuam, Muredach O'Dubhal*) says, from certain anonymous annals, that he had been taken prisoner by Tiernan O'Rourke." Harris, though right as to the fact of the captivity and the date, is wrong, as we see, in his statement of the circumstances. Mr. Whitty (*Hist. of Ireland*, chap. iii.) has but amplified Harris's error.

† The date of the death of this monarch is stated variously by different writers. "*Le père Bruodine*," says Mac Geoghegan, "place la mort de Tordelbach en 1144, Keating en 1150, Gratianus Lucius et O'Flaherty en 1156, et Wareus en 1157."

his great anxiety to accomplish this object, had, himself, about the year 1139, being then bishop of Down,* repaired to Rome, and obtained from pope Innocent II., by whom he was most distinguishingly received,† a conditional promise to that effect.

It was in the course of this journey that the saint, resting on his way, both in going and returning, at the celebrated abbey of Clairvaux, formed that friendship with the famous St. Bernard, the cordiality of which reflected honour on both, and of which there remains so interesting a monument, in the life of our eminent bishop, written by St. Bernard. Approving of the system followed at Clairvaux, Malachy had left there some of his companions to be instructed in the regulations and practices of the establishment,‡ and it was by these Irishmen, on their return to their own country, accompanied by some monks of Clairvaux, that the Cistercian house of Mellifont, in the now county of Louth, the first of that order known in Ireland, was founded. On the accession of Eugene III. to the holy see, Malachy, who had never lost sight of his favourite object of the palliums, conceiving that the new pope, who had been a monk of Clairvaux, and a disciple of St. Bernard, would be inclined to favour his wishes, set out for France, with the hope of finding him at Clairvaux, to which scene of his humble days the pontiff had

* Ledwich represents him, erroneously, as being still archbishop of Armagh at the time when he applied for the palls.

† "The pope took off his mitre, and put in on the head of Malachy, as a token of the reverence he bore him. He also made him a present of the stole and maniple, which he was wont to use in the celebration of divine offices, and dismissed him with the kiss of peace, and the apostolical benediction."—Harris on Ware's *Bishops*.

‡ From one of the letters of St. Bernard to Malachy, preserved (in Usher's *Synloge*, it appears that the Irish bishop had, in sending over some others of his countrymen to Clairvaux, intreated that two of those whom he had left behind might be allowed to return to Ireland. To this request St. Bernard, in his answer, objects, not thinking it advisable to separate them so soon from their companions. "When sufficiently instructed," he adds, "in the school of the Holy Spirit, they shall return to their father, and sing the canticles of the Lord, no longer in a foreign land but in their own."—"Ut caute canticum Domini, non jam in terrâ alienâ, sed in suâ."

at this time paid a visit. But being delayed in sailing from England, owing to an order of king Stephen, who, in consequence of a dispute with the pope, would not suffer any bishop to pass over, Malachy arrived at Clairvaux too late for his object; and being, soon after, seized with a severe and fatal illness, breathed his last in that abbey, exhibiting a calm and spiritual cheerfulness in his dying moments, of which his friend St. Bernard has left a minute and touching description.*

Besides the distribution of the palliums, the chief affairs that appear to have occupied the attention of the synod of Kells were some enactments against simony and usury, as well as against the prevalence of marriage and concubinage among the clergy.† There was also promulgated, among the acts at this council, an order from the cardinal, in virtue of his apostolic authority, for the payment of tithes,‡—the first introduction, as

* "He was undoubtedly," says Dr. Lanigan, "the greatest, the holiest, and the most disinterested, of the bishops of his times. St. Bernard, a truly competent judge, could scarcely find words to express his admiration of him."—Chap. 27. § 12.

The name of this eminent Irish ecclesiastic, St. Malachy, is indebted, chiefly, for the fame it still maintains on the Continent to a work very generally attributed to him, but of which he was certainly not the author, containing a collection of mystic prophecies respecting the popes. One of the last alleged instances of the accomplishment of any of these prophecies took place on no less recent an occasion than the journey of Pius VI. to Germany, in 1782. The connection of Malachy's name with this book has given rise to a number of writings relating to him; and, among others, there is one by Jean Germano, mixing up the true man with the counterfeit, entitled, *Vita, Gesti e Predizioni del Padre San. Malachia*.

† It was surely unworthy of Dr. Lanigan, besides being short-sighted, as a matter of policy, to suppress all mention, as he has done in his account of this council, of the above enactment against the marriage and concubinage of the clergy. He has himself, in another part of his work (chap. 32. s. 8.), referred to some canons of the Irish church, relating to the marriage of monks and clerks, which, combined with other proofs, leaves not a doubt that on this point of discipline some of the Irish clergy followed the example set them at that time by their reverend brethren on the Continent.

‡ *Annals of Cluain-aidneach*, quoted by Keating. "On this point," says Dr. Lanigan, "he was very badly obeyed; for it is certain that tithes were, if at all, very little exacted in Ireland till after the establishment of the English power." Chap. 27. § xv.

it appears, of that perennial source of discord into this country.*

Among the numerous devices resorted to by a certain religious party in Ireland, one of the most favourite has been to misrepresent the history of the Irish church; and, as if in contrast to the docile submission which the church of England, from the first, paid to Rome, to hold forth the ecclesiastical system established in Ireland, as having been, till within a short period of the English invasion, entirely independent of the see of Rome. The attempt of the learned and, undoubtedly, conscientious Lohr, to prove that the opinions held by the early Irish church, on most of the leading points of religious doctrine and discipline, differed essentially from those maintained at that period by all the other Christian churches of the West,† formed a part, and, from his name and character, by far the most imposing part, of this bold controversial enterprise.

As a school and depository for these supposed anti-Roman doctrines, Dr Ledwich, at a later period, devised his scheme of an establishment of Culdees at Iona; and, in order to get rid of connection with Rome altogether, endeavoured, as far as his meagre grounds would permit him, to inculcate the notion that the Christianity

* Before this time there occurs no mention, I believe, in our annals, of any other sources of ecclesiastical revenue than those *Termon*, or free lands, set apart for the support of the several churches, the tribute paid to the see of Armagh under the name of *Rair Patraicc*, or the Law of St. Patrick, and a similar tribute to Derry called *Rair Coluimh Cille*. The word *Termon* is evidently derived from the Latin *Terminus*, which was likewise used to signify church lands in the middle ages. Thus, in a decree of Lotharius III., A. D. 1132, cited by Ducange, "*Ecclesiam parochialem S. Mervatii solum in Trajectensi urbe habere decimas et terminum*."

It is amusing to observe, that the only result of Ireland's connection with Rome which our reverend antiquary, Ledwich, can bring himself to approve, is the introduction from thence of tithes; "than which," he adds, "human wisdom never yet discovered a more equitable and less burdensome provision for the clergy."—*Antiq. On the State of the Irish Church, &c.*

† See, for remarks on Usher's Treatise, Vol. I. of this Work, chap. xi. p. 240.

of the Irish was of Asiatic origin,—making efforts almost as fantastic to orientalise their church, as Vallancey was, about the same time, employing to make Asiatics of themselves.* A part of the system thus fictitiously supported was to represent the clergy at that time as divided into two distinct parties, the Roman and the Anti-Roman; and so little scrupulous was Ledwich in his mode of furthering this object, that, in speaking of the tract, “*De Statu Ecclesiæ*” written by Gillibert, bishop of Limerick,† he describes it as addressed “to the *dissident* bishops and presbyters of Ireland,” whereas the tract in question is expressly addressed to “the bishops and presbyters of *all* Ireland.”

To those who have examined, with any degree of fairness, our ecclesiastical annals, it is needless to say that for the notions thus hazarded there exist not any valid grounds. As an instance of early reference to Rome, it has been shown, in a former part of this work, that on a question of discipline arising, so far back as about the beginning of the seventh century, which divided the opinions of the Irish church, reference was made, according to a canon so prescribing, to the authority of Rome, as “the Head of Cities,” and a decision, in accordance with that authority, adopted. It is true, from the secluded position of Ireland, and still more from the ruin brought upon all her religious establishments during the long period of the Danish wars, the intercourse with Rome must have been not unfrequently interrupted, and the powers delegated to the prelate of Armagh, as *legatus notus*, or, by virtue of his office, legate of the holy see, may, in such intervals, have served as a substitute for the direct exercise of the papal authority. But that the Irish church has ever, at any period, been independent of the spiritual power of Rome,

* Ledwich was not original in this fancy; as, long before his time, Thomas Rivius is known to have contended that “ante Henrici II. in Hiberniam adventum Romano more in Hibernia non vivebatur sed Græco.”

† See, for this Treatise, *Usher's Sylloge*.

is a supposition which the whole course of our ecclesiastical history contradicts. On the contrary, it has been frequently a theme of high eulogium upon this country, as well among foreign as domestic writers, that hers is the only national church in the world which has kept itself pure from the taint of heresy and schism.*

A. D.
1156.

On the death of the monarch Tordelbach, his son, Roderic O'Connor, succeeded him in the throne of Connaught, while the supreme authority passed, without any contest, into the hands of Murtoch O'Lochlin,† king of Ulster, and was by him wielded with a far more decisive and absolute grasp than by any of the titular monarchs who had preceded him. Though, with the exception of some slight show of rebellion in Ulster, which was without difficulty put down, no resistance was opposed to the monarch's accession, he wisely anticipated any that might arise by displaying the means he possessed of encountering it; and marching his army through the greater part of Ulster, and likewise of Leinster, received the submission of the different chiefs. By Roderic O'Connor pretensions were, for some time, put forth to, at least, a share in the sovereign power; and as a leading step towards this object, he demanded hostages from the kings of Leinster and Munster. But we see here an instance of the constant state of uncertainty in

* Thus Thomas Bosius, "Nulla gens e Borealibus tamdiu mansit in unanimi religionis huius consensu ut Scotia..... agitur itaque annus 1350 ex quo Scoti Christi cultum snnt amplexati et in eo constantes fuere, at hoc nulli alius genti e Borealibus evenit."—*De signis Eccles. c. 1.* Peter Lombard, in like manner, citing (*in Vit. Sanct. Columb.*), says, "De hac gente duo ita reliquit annotata: unum quod 'absque reliquarum gentium ligibus vivat,' alterum quod 'nihilominus in Christiani vigoris dogmate florens, omnium vicinarum gentium fidem præpolleat.'"

† I have followed Lynch (*Cambrensis Ecerus*), in exempting this monarch from the list of kings who reigned with *resistance* or *reluctance*. "Ut saltem ille ex Hiberniæ regibus Malachiam secundum secutis rex Hiberniæ citra renitentiam appellari possit." The Four Masters, however, withhold this distinction from him till the year 1061, calling him, in the interim, King of Erin "eo fressabura." See their annals, ad an. 1157. Neither Keating nor Ware include him in their list of the kings of Ireland; while Colgan not only admits him to that rank, but passes the following high eulogium upon him:—"Rex Hiberniæ et Hibernorum excellentissimus formæ præstantiâ, generis nobilitate, animi indole et in rebus agendis prosperitate."

which all the political relations of the country were kept by such endless changing and parcelling out of the supreme power; for it is stated that the king of South Munster, when called upon for hostages by Roderic, declared that he would only consent to give him these sureties in case O'Lochlin should not prove strong enough to defend him if he refused them.* In the same year, as the annalists tell us, a fleet was collected by the king of Connaught, on the Shannon, "such as, for the number and size of the ships, had never till that day been seen." A. D. 1157.

After some trials, however, of his strength against the monarch, attended with the usual lavish waste of life, Roderic consented to deliver up hostages, and a peace was concluded between them, in the year 1161, when O'Lochlin conceded to his liegeman, in form, the whole of that fifth part of the kingdom, named Connaught; and, at the same time, on a similar act of submission from Dermot, king of Leinster, the possession of this fifth part of the ancient pentarchy was, in like manner, awarded to that prince. Then was it, say the Four Masters, that Murtogh O'Lochlin was king of Erin, without opposition or reluctance.†

In his transactions with the chieftains of his own province, the monarch was far less successful; and a violent contention between him and Eochad, the king of Ulidia, though carried with a high hand by O'Lochlin at the commencement, proved ultimately his ruin. The Uli-dian prince having, in revenge for some alleged injuries overrun and laid waste the royal territory of Dalriada, the monarch, incensed at these proceedings, marched a great army into Ulidia, destroying every thing by fire and sword, except the churches; and having declared Eochad to be dispossessed of his kingdom, carried off the A. D. 1155.

* IV Mag. ad an. 1157.

† IV Mag. ad an. 1161 "Ri Er. dan cen fresabhra Muircert, ua Lachlaim don cur siu.

chief nobles of Ulidia to Armagh.* Through the mediation, shortly after, of the primate and the prince of Orgial, Eochad was pardoned and restored to his kingdom; and the Ulidian nobles, on surrendering their children to O'Lochlin, as hostages, were permitted to return home.

To the terms of reconciliation agreed upon between the two kings they had both solemnly pledged themselves, before the altar of Armagh, "on the holy staff of St. Patrick, and the reliques of all the saints." Notwithstanding which, in the following year, whether from any capricious return of old hostility, or suspected grounds for new, the monarch caused Eochad to be suddenly seized, and had his eyes put out; while, at the same time, he gave orders that three of the leading chiefs of Dalriada, confidential and devoted friends of the king, should be put to death.† Familiarised as was the public mind to acts of outrage and cruelty, the total want of assignable grounds for this burst of barbarism caused its atrocity to be more than usually felt. By the prince of Orgial, in particular, who had been one of the guarantees of the treaty, so savage a violation of its engagements was, with the keenest ire, resented and revenged. Raising an army in his own principality, and being joined by the forces of Hy-bruin and Conmacne, he attacked the monarch, with superior numbers, at Litterluin,‡ a wild tract in the neighbourhood of Lough Neagh, where, after having seen the flower of his nobility fall around him, O'Lochlin was himself slain.

A. D. 1156. In the course of the reign of this active monarch, who stands distinguished as a munificent friend of the Church, there were held some synods at different places, of which the transactions and decisions belong fully as much to temporal as to ecclesiastical history. Thus, at

* IV Mag. ad an. 1165.

† IV Now called the Fewes.

‡ IV Mag. ad an. 1156.

a great synod,* at Mellifont, in the year 1157, convoked for the purpose of consecrating the church of that place, there were present, besides the primate, Gelasius† and a numerous body of the clergy, the monarch himself, and a number of provincial kings. After the consecration of the church, the whole assembly, lay and clerical, proceeded to inquire into some charge brought against Melaghlin, king of Meath; and, on his being found guilty of the alleged offence, he was first excommunicated by the clergy, and then deprived of his principality by the monarch and other princes.

On this occasion, the king gave, as a pious offering for his soul, to God and the monks of Mellifont, 140 oxen or cows, 60 ounces of gold, and a town-land, near Drogheda, called Finn timer of the Daughters. Sixty ounces of gold were also presented by Carrol, prince of Nriell, and as many more by Dervogilla, the celebrated wife of the prince Bressny,—the fair Helen, to whose beauty and frailty romantic history has attributed the invasion of Ireland by the English. This lady presented, likewise, on that occasion, a golden chalice for the altar of the Virgin, together with sacred vestments and ornaments for each of the nine other altars that stood in the church.

In the year 1158 was held another synod, at a place in Meath, called Brigh-Thaig, at which, after various enactments relating to discipline and morals, it was resolved that Derry should be raised to the rank of a regular episcopal see; and, a few years after, the synod of Clane conferred upon Armagh, more fully than it had ever before been enjoyed by that school, the rank and privilege of a university, by ordering that in future no person should be admitted a Professor of Theology in

* IV Mag. ad an. 1157. Said by the Four Masters to have been held at Drogheda, but meaning, as is supposed, in the monastery of Mellifont, which is near that town.—See Ware (*Bishops*) at *Gelasius*.

† The Irish name of this distinguished prelate (for an account of whom see Ware, in *loc. citat.*) was Gilla Mae Lieg.

any church in Ireland, unless he had previously pursued his studies for some time at Armagh.*

On the death of Murtoigh O'Lochlin, the supremacy reverted to the house of O'Connor; and Roderic, the son of the monarch Tordelvach, was in a short time recognised throughout the country as king of all Ireland. One of his first measures on his accession had been to march with a sufficient force to Dublin, and secure the allegiance of the Dano-Irish of that city; over which he then reigned, say the annalists, in more worthy state than ever king of the Irish had reigned there before.† From thence, being joined by a considerable number of the inhabitants, he directed his royal progress northward, and received in turn the submission of all the leading chieftains of Leath-Cuinn.

A.D.
1167.

Being now recognised through all the provinces as monarch, Roderic assembled a great convention of the princes and clergy at Athboy, among the number of whom were the primate Gelasius and the illustrious St. Lawrence O'Toole. This good and great man, who was destined to act, as we shall find, a distinguished part in the coming crisis of his country's fate, possessed qualities, both of mind and heart, which would have rendered him an ornament to any community, however advanced in civilisation and public virtue. Besides these heads of the clergy, there were also at this meeting the kings of Ulidia and Meath, Tiernan O'Ruarc, prince of Breffny, Donchad O'Carrol, prince of Oriel, together with a number of other princes and nobles, attended by their respective forces of horse and foot, to the amount, as stated, of more than 30,000 men.‡

* IV Mag. ad an. 1162. "Communibus suffragiis sanciretur ne ullus in posterum per totam Hiberniam in aliqua ecclesia ad sacræ pagine professionem sive ad Theologiam publicè docendam admittatur, qui non prius Armachanam Scholam sive academiam frequentaverat."—Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturg.*

† IV Mag. ad an. 1166. "Ro righ ann Ruaidhri na Conoob. feb as onor. e ro righ riamh do Gaoindaibh."

‡ See, for the distribution of this force under the different princes present at the convention, the Four Masters ad an. 1167.

By some modern historians this great convention at Athboy is represented as a grand and national revival of the ancient Feis, or Triennial Meeting of the States;* and it has been remarked,—with but too much justice, on such a supposition,—how melancholy was the pride exhibited by this doomed people, in thus calling up around them the forms and recollections of ancient grandeur, at the very moment when even their existence, as an independent nation, was about to be extinguished for ever. But there is no authority in our native records for such a notion; nor, with the exception of the unusually large display of troops on the occasion, does this meeting appear to have, in any way, differed from those other conventions, or synods, which were held, as we have seen, so frequently at this period. In the same manner as at all those other meetings, various laws and regulations, relating to the temporal as well as the ecclesiastical affairs of the country, were enacted or renewed; and, so far from the assembly having any claim to the character of Convention of all the States, it was evidently summoned only for the consideration of the affairs of the northern half of the island; and the only personage from the south, mentioned as having been present at it, was Donebad O'Fealan, prince of the Desies.

As we have now reached the last of Ireland's monarchs, and are about to enter into the details of that brief struggle which, after so many ages of stormy, but still independent, existence, ended in bringing this ancient kingdom under subjection to the English crown, the reader will be enabled to understand more clearly the narrative of the transactions connected with this memorable event, by being made acquainted with the previous lives and characters of a few of the personages who figured most prominently on the scene.

The monarch Roderic, who was, at this time, in his

* Warner, Whitty, etc.

fiftieth year, had not hitherto very much distinguished himself above the rest of his fellow-chieftains, in those qualities common, it must be owned, to them all, of personal courage and activity; while in some of those barbarian features of character, those sallies of fierce, unmitigated cruelty, which were, in like manner, but too common among his brother potentates, he appears to have been rivalled but by few. We have seen that by his father, the monarch Tordelyach, he was kept confined for a whole year in chains; and that he was of a nature requiring some such coercion, would appear from his conduct on taking possession of the throne of Connaught, when, with a barbarity, the only palliation of which is the frequency of the crime in those days, he had the eyes of two of his brothers put out,* in order to incapacitate them from being his rivals in the race of ambition and power. Combining with this ferocity a total want of the chivalrous spirit which alone adds grace to mere valour, it is told of him, that, having got in his power a chieftain of the clan of Suibhne,† he had him loaded with fetters, and, in that helpless state, slew him with his own hand. It is added, as an aggravation of the atrocity, that this chieftain was then under the immediate protection of the vicar of St Cieran.‡

While such was the character of the monarch upon whom now devolved the responsibility of watching manfully over the independence of his country, in this its last struggle and agony, the qualities of the prince whose ambition and treachery were the immediate cause of bringing the invader to these shores, were, if possible, of a still more odious and revolting nature. Dermot Mac-Murchad, king of Leinster, the memorable author of this treason, had long been distinguished for his fierce activity and courage in those scenes of turbulence which the state of the country had then rendered familiar. He had,

* "Regnum aspiciatus a fratrum execratione, malo sagnrio."—*Rer. Hib. Scrip.* tom. 3. DCCLXXXIX.


† Sweeney.

‡ IV Mag. ad ann. 1161.

even so early as the year 1140, excited a general feeling of horror throughout the kingdom, by treacherously seizing, at once, seventeen of the principal nobles of Leinster, and having some of the number put to death, while of the remainder he ordered the eyes to be plucked out. Between this prince and Tiernan O'Ruarc,—the lord of Breffny, a territory in the eastern part of Connaught,—a hostile feeling had early arisen, to which the constant collision of their respective clans and interests gave every day increased bitterness; and, at length, an event, in which Dervorgilla, the fair wife of O'Ruarc, was guiltily involved, raised this animosity to a degree of rancour which was only with their respective lives extinguished.

An attachment previously to her marriage with O'Ruarc, is said to have existed between Dervorgilla and the king of Leinster; a supposition which, if it be founded, acquits the lady, at least, of that perverseness of nature, which would seem to be implied by her choosing as paramour, her husband's deadliest foe. But, however this may have been,—and there exists but little, if any, authority for much of the romance of their amour—the elopement of the heroine from an island in Meath, to which she had been sent during O'Ruarc's absence on one of his military expeditions, was the plan agreed upon by the two lovers, and which, with the discreditable aid of the lady's brother, Melachlin, they were enabled to accomplish. The wronged husband appealed for redress to the monarch Tordelvach, who, taking up his cause with a laudable earnestness, marched an army the following year into Leinster, and having rescued Dervorgilla from the adulterer, together with the dowry and valuable ornaments which she had carried away, replaced her in the care of her relatives in Meath.

This event, the abduction of the wife of O'Ruarc by the king of Leinster, which took place so early as the year 1153, has, by the majority of our historians, been advanced in date, by no less than thirteen years, for the



purpose of connecting it with Dermot's expulsion from his kingdom, A. D. 1166, and his consequent flight, as we shall see, into England, to solicit aid from Henry II. The ready adoption of so gross an anachronism, by not a few even of our own native historians, may be cited as an instance of that strong tendency to prefer showy and agreeable fiction to truth, which has enabled Romance, in almost all countries, to encroach upon, and even sometimes supersede, History.

As long as the monarch Tordelbach lived, O'Ruarc was sure of a powerful friend and champion, and one of the last acts of this sovereign's life was to form a league of peace and amity with the prince of Breffny.* But, as soon as O'Lochlin succeeded to the supremacy, the fortune of Dermot rose into the ascendant,—that prince having espoused warmly his cause; and the very first step of the new monarch, on his accession, was to march an army into Leinster, in order to secure to his unworthy favourite the full possession of that province. During the whole of this reign, the restless, but now crest-fallen, lord of Breffny had to bear every variety of wrong and insult that a triumphant rival could invent or compass to torment him.

But O'Ruarc's turn of triumph and retribution was now at hand. Roderic O'Connor, the son of his late powerful protector, still extended to him the hand of alliance and friendship;† and the accession of this
 A. D. 1166. prince to the throne of Ireland, in the year 1166, gave signal at once for the triumph of O'Ruarc and the downfall of his rival Dermot. Not all the territorial and personal influence which this latter chief had at different periods attained, now availed him aught against the general odium which a long course of crime had heaped upon his head. A munificent founder of religious houses, he had established in Dublin, in the

* IV Mag. ad ann. 1156.

† For proofs of the friendship subsisting between Roderic O'Connor and O'Ruarc, see the Four Masters, at the years 1169 and 1160.

county of Kilkenny, at Ballinglass, and at his own residence, Ferns,* many large and most richly endowed monasteries and abbeys, the greater number of which continued to flourish for many centuries, while of some the names and sites may even to this day be traced.

But his cruelty and insolence were remembered far more freshly than his munificence; and the many whom he had trodden down in his prosperity, now took advantage of the turn of his fortune to be revenged. The forces of Bressny, of Meath, of his own kingdom of Leinster, where he had long rendered himself odious by his cruelties, of the Dano-Irish of Dublin, whom he had kept down by the force of his arms,—all these were now eagerly mustered, under the command of his inveterate enemy, Tiernan O'Ruarc, and proceeded to invade his territory. Being thus assailed from all quarters, and deserted even by his own vassals, Dermot retired at first to Ferns; but, seeing no hope of being able to stand against his pursuers, he adopted the resolution of seeking for foreign aid, and, having first set fire to the town of Ferns, took flight privately and embarked for England; while, in the mean time, his kingdom was declared to have been forfeited, and another prince of his family was nominated to be its ruler.

A. D.
1168.

In having recourse for assistance to England, it does not appear that Dermot was influenced by any previous concert with Henry II., that prince being absent, at this time, in Normandy, and too deeply engaged in his humili-

* The names and sites of the religious establishments attributed to him may be found in the List of the Abbeys and Monasteries of Ireland given in Harris's *Ware*, chap. xxxviii. Among the religious houses founded by him was an abbey, near Dublin, called the Nunnery of St. Mary de Hogges, meaning thereby, it is supposed, St. Mary of the Virgins,—the word *ogh* in Irish signifying a virgin. This establishment was for nuns following the rule of St. Augustin, according to the order of Aroasia.—See Archdall, *Monast. Hibern.* Dermot was also the founder of the priory of All Saints, which stood on Hoggin Green, now called College Green, and on that part of it where Trinity College stands.—*Lanigan*, chap. xxviii. s. 10.

“The Ostmen of Dublin were overrun and spoiled by Dermot Mac-Murrough, king of Leinster, who bore a greater sway over them than any other king had done for a long time.”—Harris's *Annals of Dublin*, ad ann. 1162.

hating and harassing struggle with Becket to afford much thought to any less urgent concerns. It is well known, however, that this ambitious monarch had many years before projected the acquisition of Ireland, and had even provided himself with that sort of sanctified title to it which, in those days, the spiritual lords of the earth were but too ready to furnish to the temporal,—thus lowering religion into the mere handmaid of earthly ambition and power. This plan had been conceived by him so far back as the year 1155; but having neither a legal right to the possession of Ireland, nor any ground of quarrel to justify an invasion of it, he saw that by no other means could he plausibly attain his object than by masking the real motive of his enterprise under a pretended zeal for the interests of morality and religion. With this view he despatched an envoy to Rome, where lately an Englishman, named Breakspeare, had, under the title of Adrian IV., been raised to the pontifical throne. The king had previously conciliated the favour of the new pope by sending to congratulate him on his accession; and the request of which his envoy, John of Salisbury, was now the bearer, was such as could not fail to meet with a gracious reception, as, in applying to the pope for leave to take possession of Ireland, Henry acknowledged in him an extent of temporal power such as no pope had ever before thought of assuming; and the address with which Adrian, in his politic answer to the king, repeated and extended this admission, claiming, on the strength of it, a right and jurisdiction, not only over Ireland, but over all other Christian islands,* crowned most worthily this strange and audacious transaction; which presents, in all respects, a perfect instance of that sort of hypocritical prelude to wrong, that holy league for purposes of ra-

* "*Jam Hiberniam et omnes insulas quibus Sol justitie Christianus illoxit, et que documenta Fidei Christiane receperunt, ad jus beati Petri et sacrosanctae Romanæ Ecclesiæ (quod tua etiam nobilitas recognoscit), non est dubium pertinere.*"

pine, between the papal and regal powers, in which most of the usurpations, frauds, and violences of those dark and demoralised times originated.

The permission accorded to Henry by the pope to invade and subdue the Irish for the purpose of reforming them, was accompanied by a stipulation for the payment to St. Peter of a penny annually from every house in Ireland, this being the price for which the independence of the Irish people was thus coolly bartered away. Together with the Bull,* containing the grant and stipulation, was sent also to Henry a gold ring, adorned with a valuable emerald, as a token of his investiture with the right to rule over Ireland; and this ring, as we are informed by the bearer of it, John of Salisbury, was, by Adrian's orders, deposited in the public archives.

It has been supposed that Henry, in speculating on the conquest of Ireland, intended that kingdom for the youngest of his brothers, prince William, for whom no provision had been made by their late father Geoffry. Whatever might really have been his design, at the time when he sought the papal sanction for his views, other schemes and interests, more pressing, diverted his attention from this object; and among the most urgent was the not very creditable operation of possessing himself forcibly of some territories in Anjou, which his brother Geoffry had inherited under the will of the late king; a will which Henry himself had sworn to see faithfully fulfilled,—though in utter ignorance, as appears, of the dispositions which it contained respecting

* Some zealous champions, as well of the papacy as of Ireland, have endeavoured, but without any success, to demonstrate that both this Bull, and the Bull of Alexander III. confirming it, are, upon the face of them, rank forgeries. See Gratianus Lacinus, *loc. citat.*; and the abbé Geoghegan's *Hist. d'Irlande*, tom. i. c. 7. The chief argument of the latter writer is founded on the improbability, as he conceives, that either of these popes could have thought of selecting as an apostle for the reformation of Ireland so irreligious and profligate a prince as Henry II. "Voilà donc (says the abbé) l'apôtre, voilà le réformateur que le saint Siège auroit choisi pour convertir l'Irlande."

his brother. In addition to these various demands on his attention, the opinion of his mother, the empress Matilda, was decidedly opposed, it is said, to his Irish enterprise; and the Bull was, accordingly, left to repose undisturbed for some years in the archives of Winchester.

Owing to the secrecy, doubtless, with which this singular grant was negotiated, no intimation seems to have reached Ireland of even the existence of such a document, during the whole of the long interval that elapsed between its first grant and the time of its promulgation. Some writers, it is true, have surmised that the Irish clergy were from the first informed of it; and account thereby for the increased activity with which from the date, as they say, of Adrian's Bull, public synods were assembled, and decrees and regulations multiplied,—as if to remove from the Church that stigma of general laxity in morals and discipline which had been made the pretext for so deliberate a design against the independence of the whole country.* But it is by no means easy to believe, that, had any knowledge of this singular document transpired in Ireland, there should have occurred no allusion or reference to it at any of the numerous synods held throughout the country; nor even the slightest notice taken in any of our native records of a transaction so full of moment to the future destiny of the kingdom.

That Dermot's resolution to apply for aid to England was, in any degree, prompted by a knowledge of the papal grant, is by no means necessarily to be implied. Already the proximity of the two islands must not unfrequently have suggested the likelihood of an invasion, at no distant time, from the shores of the larger and

* Gratianus Lucius, on much more convincing grounds, attributes this increased zeal for the reform of ecclesiastical discipline to the example and remonstrances of that great luminary of the ancient Irish church, St. Malachy:—*Etenim post Hibernos ad bonam formam a S. Malachia revocatos, sæpe sæpius indicta sunt conilia multo principum et antistitarum numero frequentata* ^h—*Cambrons. Evers.*

more powerful. Up to this period, the tide of incursion appears to have been entirely from the Irish side of the Channel; and, in all the struggles of Wales against English domination, troops were wasted over to her aid in the corachs of her warlike neighbours. In the rebellion of Godwin and his sons against Edward the Confessor, Ireland furnished, as we have seen, men and ships in their cause; and, after the defeat at Hastings, three sons of the conquered king sought refuge and succour in the same country, and were enabled to fit out from thence a large fleet for the invasion of England. On the other hand it appears pretty certain that both William the Conqueror and the first Henry entertained serious thoughts of adding the realm of Ireland to their dominions; and William Rufus, in one of his expeditions against the Welsh is reported to have said, as he stood on the rocks in the neighbourhood of St. David's, and looked at the Irish hills, that he would "make a bridge with his ships from that spot to Ireland."^{*}

^{*} See Leland, book i. chap. i. Girald. Cambr. *Itinerar. Cambr.* l. ii. cap. i. Instead of citing the words of the original, I shall give the whole anecdote, as rendered by Hammer, in his Chronicle:—"Cambrensis in his Itinerarie of Cambria, reporteth, how that king William, standing upon some high rocke in the farthest part of Wales, beheld Ireland, and said, 'I will have the shippes of my kingdome brought hither, wherewith I will make a bridge to invade this land.' Murchardt, king of Leynater, heard thereof, and after he had paused awhile, asked of the reporter, 'flath the king, in that his great threatening, inserted these words, if it please God?' 'No.' 'Then,' said he, 'seeing this king putteth his trust only in man, and not in God, I feare not his conning.'"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Dermot solicits Aid from King Henry.—Receives Permission to raise Forces in England.—Negociates with the Earl of Pembroke and others.—Returns to Ireland.—Arrival of Fitz Stephen.—Surrender of Wexford.—First British Settlement in Ireland.—Invasion of Ossory.—Arrival of Maurice Fitz-Gerald.—Unworthy Conduct of the Monarch Roderic.—His Negotiations with Dermot and the Foreigners.—Dermot aspires to the Monarchy.—Encouraged in his Design by the English.—Arrival of Raymond le Gros.—Barbarous Execution of Irish Prisoners.—Landing of Stroughbow.—His Marriage with the King of Leinster's Daughter.—March to Dublin.—Roderic's Weakness.—His Cruelty.—Remarkable Synod at Armagh.

It has been already stated that Dermot, the dethroned king of Leinster, finding himself an object of general odium in his own country, and without the means of encountering his enemies in the field, took the resolution of applying for succour to England; and the port of Bristol, then most in use for communication between the two islands, was that to which he sailed.* On his arrival, however, he learned that the English king,

* "Ad nobilis oppidi Bristolli partes se contulit; ubi etiam occasione navium, quæ de Hibernia eo in portu crebris applicationibus suscipi consueverant, etc." *Girald. Cambrens. Hib. Expug.* l. i. c. 2.

Giraldus says nothing of the sixty followers who, according to some writers, accompanied Dermot in his flight; though Leland has carelessly cited him as his authority for the assertion. Considering the circumstances of his departure, it would seem improbable that he should have taken with him such an escort. We find, however, in Sayer's History of Bristol, the following curious notice:—"One of our MS. Calendars says, that 'he (Dermot) came to Bristol in 1168, with sixty friends and attendants, and was here entertained by the ancestors of the lords of Berkely, that is, by Robert Fitzharding or his family.'" Chap. ix.

According to the English chronicler Bromton, Dermot's first step had been to send over his son into England, in consequence of which, says Bromton, he received from thence some trifling aid:—"Cum autem cito post contra eundem regem ferocissimi totius Hiberniæ populi indignari et tumultuari inciperent, eo quod gentem Anglicanam Hibernia immisisset, illi Angli paucitate sua metuentes, accitis ex Anglia viris inopia laborantibus et lucri cupidis, vires paulatim auxerunt." There is, however, I believe, no authority for this mission of Dermot's son in any of our native annals.

to whom it was his intention to apply for assistance, was at that time in Aquitaine, and thither he accordingly hastened to seek him. Though engaged anxiously then in his protracted and mortifying contest with Becket, and also in breaking the refractory spirit of some barons of Bretagne, over whose territories he had acquired authority, Henry yet listened with politic complacency to the fugitive Irish prince, while he told indignantly of the treatment he had met with from his rebellious subjects, and offered, if restored to his kingdom by Henry's aid, to receive it as a fief, and render him homage as his vassal.

Fully aware of the advantage to be derived, towards the furtherance of his views upon Ireland, not more from the personal alliance and co-operation of a powerful native prince, than from the influence such an example would be sure to exercise upon others, Henry saw not, or at least was unmoved by, those better and nobler considerations which would have led a more high-minded man to reject so unworthy an instrument of success. He therefore received, without hesitation, the proffered fealty of his new liegeman, and, as the only mode in which he could, at present, forward his object, gave him letters patent, to be employed throughout his dominions, in the following words:—"Henry, king of England, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and earl of Anjou, to all his liegemen, English, Norman, Welsh, and Scotch, and to all the nations under his dominion, sends greeting. As soon as the present letters shall come to your hands, know that Dermot, prince of Leinster, has been received into the bosom of our grace and benevolence. Wherefore whosoever, within the ample extent of our territories, shall be willing to lend aid toward the restoration of this prince, as our faithful and liege subject, let such person know that we do hereby grant to him, for said purpose, our licence and favour."

Having succeeded thus far in the object of his mis-

A.D. 1168. sion, Dermot hastened back, full of hope, to England, and repairing once more to Bristol, made every effort, by causing the letter of the king to be promulgated, and holding forth liberal offers of lands and other rewards, to induce adventurers to take up arms in his cause. All these exertions, however, proved fruitless, and there appeared, for some time, scarcely a chance of success; when, at length, fortune threw in his way the very description of person most fitly qualified, as well by nature as by extrinsic circumstances, to take a lead in, and lend importance to, such an enterprise. Richard de Clare, earl of Pembroke, surnamed as his father had been before him, Strongbow, was, at this time, at Bristol; and in his brave nature, munificent spirit, and ruined fortunes, combined all that was likely to stimulate as well as adorn a course of warlike adventure. To this nobleman Dermot addressed himself, and, in addition to the temptations opened by the prospect of fame and conquest, offered not only to bestow on him his eldest daughter, Eva, in marriage, but, however inconsistent with the law of the land, to secure to the earl himself the succession to the throne of Leinster, on condition that he would raise for Dermot an efficient body of forces, and, in the course of the ensuing spring, bring them over with him into Ireland.

To these propositions Strongbow assented; and the Irish prince, thus far successful, was also lucky enough, in the town of St. David's, whither he had removed from Bristol, to engage in his service two young men of high rank, Maurice Fitz-Gerald and Robert Fitz-Stephen, both Normans and maternal brothers (being sons of the beautiful Nesta, mistress of Henry I.*); and

* This lady, who was no less celebrated for her gallantries than for her beauty, after separating from her royal lover, married Gerald, governor of Pembroke and lord of Carew, by whom she had two (or three) sons, and the second of them, Maurice Fitz-Gerald, was the brave adventurer who now enlisted in the service of the Irish king. His mother, Nesta, after having been carried off from her husband by a Welsh prince, named Caridoc, became, on Gerald's death, the mistress of the constable, Stephen de Marisco, and by him had a son, Robert Fitz-Stephen, the same who

both fitted, like the earl of Pembroke, by broken fortunes and political difficulties, to embark in any enterprise, however desperate, which held forth a prospect of speedy relief and change. In consequence of impediments thrown in the way, by Rees ap Gryffyth, prince of that country, who, on some grounds of political difference, not requiring to be here enlarged upon, had kept Fitz-Stephen confined in prison for three years, and was now unwilling to let him escape from his grasp, the negotiation lingered for some time, but, at length, was concluded satisfactorily to all parties;—Dermot pledging himself to give in fee to the two brothers, the town of Wexford and two cantreds of land adjoining; while they, in their turn, engaged to transport into Leinster, in the course of the ensuing spring, a body of English and Welsh forces to aid him in recovering the throne of that kingdom.

Thus precarious and limited were the means, and thus obscure the instruments, by which an invasion so truly momentous in all its consequences was to be accomplished;—the prime mover of the whole enterprise being a rude and unprincipled chieftain, of whose existence, probably, the persons he applied to for aid had never even heard till the moment he presented himself before them; and the few adventurers, of any note, whom he contrived to attach to his fortunes, being persons ignorant alike of the country and the nature of the cause with which they connected themselves, but who, broken down, either by misfortune or their own imprudence, at home, found sufficient in the allurements of lucre alone to supply the place of all other more worthy inducements.

Being thus far assured of foreign aid, the traitor Dermot ventured to return into Leinster, and proceeding

engaged, at this time, in the Irish wars, in company with his half-brother Maurice Fitz-Gerald. See for farther notices of this family, *Les Montmorency de France et d'Irlande*, and also Mr. Sheffield Grace's interesting account of the Grace Family.

privately to Ferns, remained concealed there the greater part of the winter; being harboured, as it is said, with grateful fidelity, by the monks of a monastery for Augustin Canons which he himself had founded.* He must, soon, however, have felt sufficient confidence in his own strength,—being emboldened, most probably, by the arrival of some straggling Welsh followers,—to emerge from his concealment, as we find him early in this year taking the field, and regaining possession, with the aid of foreign auxiliaries, of that part of his territories called Hy-Kinsellagh. Surprised, at the suddenness of his reappearance, in arms, and attended by foreigners, of whom rumour, as usual, exaggerated the numbers, the monarch hastily collected some forces, and, being joined by his faithful ally, Tiernan O'Ruarc, marched into the territory of Hy-Kinsellagh. As this outbreak of Dermot was evidently premature,—none of the Anglo-Norman chiefs with whom he had negotiated having yet made their appearance,—he was able to oppose but a feeble resistance to the attack of the monarch, and, after a skirmish or two, retreated into his woods. In one of these encounters, the son of a petty prince of South Wales, who had been among the foreigners lately arrived, was slain; and the annals of the day, with the proneness, too common among the Irish, to look up to and eulogise strangers,† for no other reason but that they are strangers, describe this Welshman, in recording his death, as “the most excellent warrior in all the island of Britain.”‡

* Ware's *Annals*.

† In noticing the partiality of the Irish for strangers, Peter Lombard accounts for the peculiar exception to this tendency, which he thinks their feeling towards their English neighbours evinces, by the sense of injury which the tyranny of that people has left in their minds, and the consciousness that they themselves are looked down upon by them as only fit to be treated with insult and injustice: —“Quod enim putentur non amare Anglicanam nationem, quicquid est de eâ re, procedit totum ex his fontibus, partim quod servitutem putent quas sub iis est subjectio, partim quod pernasum habeant se ab illis despici et injuriis affici.”—*De Hibernia Commentarius*.

‡ IV Mag. ad ann. 1167.

How critical was the state to which Dermot had now reduced himself by his rash and weak movement, may be collected from the terms on which, as a matter of compassion, the monarch and O'Ruarc consented to receive his submission. Renouncing all claim to the government of Leinster, he requested to be allowed to retain only ten cantreds of the province, agreeing to hold this territory in dependence upon Roderic, and giving him seven hostages for his future fealty; while the forbearance of his old enemy O'Ruarc he conciliated by a gift of a hundred ounces of gold. This specious submission was, of course, but a means of gaining time till the arrival of his expected succours, and in so far warding off the peril to which his rash and premature sally had exposed him.

Though it must be clear that the fate of a nation such as the Irish were, at this period, embroiled and distracted among themselves by an almost infinite division of interests and factions, nor as yet recovered from the effects of a long series of barbarous invasions, which, though not powerful enough to reduce them to subjection, were but too efficient for the purpose of enfeebling and demoralising them,—though the doom of a people, thus lamentably circumstanced, was sure to be sealed, and perhaps irreversibly, whenever a more civilised foe found footing on their shores, with skill to avail himself of their dissensions, and a disciplined force to oppose to their rude numbers, yet it must be owned that the almost unresisted facility with which a mere handful of men was allowed to acquire that footing,—the either infatuated or treacherous passiveness with which the first steps of a design so formidable were witnessed,—far outwent even all that might naturally be expected from the weak, degenerate, and disorganised state of the whole kingdom.

That neither the monarch nor any of the other princes were yet aware of the extent of Dermot's designs, or of the powerful patronage he had secured for himself,

appears to be highly probable; though assuredly there were wanting no further facts to awaken vigilance, if not foresight, than the flight of the traitor himself from the country, on avowed purposes of revenge, and his sudden reappearance in the field attended by foreign troops. Even then, had the Irish monarch and his liegeman of Breffny but followed up vigorously their first advantage over the fallen renegade, they might have crushed at once the whole base conspiracy, and at least postponed, if not wholly averted, the fatal extinction of their country's dearly-bought independence.

A. D. 1169. But it was soon apparent, even to the most infatuated, in what manner the faithless Dermot had all along designed to requite their weak and ill-judged mercy towards him. In the month of May, this year, took place the first landing of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland.* The commander of the expedition was Robert Fitz-Stephen, whom Dermot had engaged, as we have already seen, in his service at St. David's, and who brought with him now 30 knights, all of his own kin, or household, 60 men in coats of mail, and 300 of the most skilful archers of South Wales. With this small party which landed at a creek called the Bann, near the city of Wexford, came also Hervey de Montemarisco, or Mount-Maurice, the paternal uncle of the earl of Pembroke,† and described as a person in needy circumstances, who, without either arms or means, had joined the expedi-

* Ware, *Annals of Ireland*, at Henry II. chap. i. Flaherty, *Ogygia*, part. iii. chap. 94. Respecting the date of this event, there is some difference among our historians; but that which I have given appears to me the most correct.

† Girald. Cambrens. Lodge has mistakenly made him the nephew of Strongbow, while the French genealogical authorities, Duchesne and Désormeaux, make him out to be the father-in-law of that nobleman:—"Il épousa (says the latter writer) Elisabeth de Meulent, veuve de Gislebert de Claire, comte de Pembroc en Angleterre. et mère de Richard de Claire, surnommé Strongbow, comte de Pembroc, d'après de l'Irlande, duquel, à raison de cette alliance, un auteur du temps le qualifie parâtre ou beau-père." This whole account, however, is manifestly incorrect. A number of other mistakes respecting Hervey occurs in an account given of the Ormonde family by a Mr. Butler, which we find cited in Carte.

tion, rather as the emissary of his noble nephew than as a soldier. On the day following there arrived also at the same spot, Maurice de Prendergast, a valiant gentleman of Wales, at the head of 10 knights and 60 archers; and, as the excitement naturally caused throughout the vicinity by the landing of a foreign force, rendered their situation somewhat precarious, messengers were despatched with all speed to apprise Dermot of their arrival.

Full of joy at the welcome intelligence, this prince instantly collected together all the forces it was then in his power to muster, consisting of but 500 men; and, aware that in despatch lay his only chance of success, hastened to join the invaders. The engagements already formed between them having been renewed and ratified, it was resolved to march with their united forces to the town of Wexford, which both from its proximity, lying about 12 miles from the place of their landing, and the rank it held as a maritime city, was a post combining all the advantages they could desire. On reaching the suburbs of that place, which was inhabited chiefly by Dano-Irish, they were met by about 2000 of the inhabitants, who, on being apprised of their coming, had boldly sallied forth to meet them. But the advantage of a regular and disciplined force over mere untrained numbers,—a disparity manifest throughout the whole of the sad struggle we are about to contemplate, was no less conspicuous in this its first trial. The crowd that had poured forth to meet the enemy, as soon as they observed the orderly array of the troops, the cavalry drawn up on the flank of the archers, according to the forms of Norman discipline, when they beheld the shining armour and shields of the knights, the novelty of the spectacle caused them to hesitate in their advance, and, after a few moments of deliberation, they set fire to the suburbs, and retired hastily into the town. This slight panic, however, was but of short duration; for when Fitz-Stephen, taking advantage of the circum-

stance, led on his men to scale the walls, so brave and obstinate was the resistance he met with from the townsmen, who hurled down huge stones and beams of wood on the heads of the assailants, that he was compelled to withdraw his troops, and for the present content himself with burning all the ships that were then lying at anchor in the strand before the town.*

The following day, resolving to renew the attack, he caused masses to be solemnly celebrated throughout the camp, and prepared deliberately for another assault. This the inhabitants of the town perceived, and being struck, most probably, with the patient resolution which such perseverance implied, began to consult among themselves as to the prudence of making any further resistance. It is even alleged that, among the motives which now disposed them to surrender, were some feelings of compunction at the rebellious part they had been led to take against their king,—feelings, which the clergy within the walls would not fail, it is supposed, to encourage, being, like most of their clerical brethren throughout the country, disposed to view with indulgent eyes the enormities of Dermot's career, in consideration of the extent and munificence of his contributions to the Church. But, whatever were the real motives that led to the step, it was finally resolved by the citizens to capitulate; and terms were obtained through the mediation of two bishops, by which, on condition of the town being immediately delivered up, and hostages given for their observance of fidelity in future, the inhabitants were to be pardoned their first rebellion,† and again received into the royal service and favour.

* *Hibern. Expugnata*, lib. i. c. 3.

† Thus early was it considered "rebellion" in the Irish to defend their own rightful possessions. A similar view of the historical relations between the two countries, has continued to be entertained ever since. Thus, Thomas Warton, in the preface to his spirited ode, "Stately the feast, and high the cheer," speaks of Henry II. "undertaking an expedition into Ireland to suppress a rebellion raised by Roderic, king of Connaught," and describes him in the ode as—

Prepared to stain the briny flood
Of Shannon's lakes with rebel blood.

Having acquired, thus, possession of Wexford, Dermot hastened to fulfil his engagements to the two Norman brothers, by investing Fitz-Stephen and Maurice Fitz-Gerald (the latter of whom was daily expected) with the lordship of the city and its domain; while, at the same time, he gave in fee to Hervey of Mount-Maurice, in order to attach him to his service, two cantreds lying on the sea-side between Wexford and Waterford. This tract of country is now comprised in the baronies of Forth and Bargie, and it is not a little remarkable that the descendants of its first settlers remained for ages a community distinct, in language and manners, from the natives.* Even to a recent period, a dialect has continued in use among them, peculiar to these baronies, and which, judging from the written specimens that remain of it, bore a close affinity to the Anglo-Saxon.

Had the invaders met with defeat in this their first experiment, such a failure might have changed materially the subsequent fortunes of the war; as the junction of Strongbow and others, not actually pledged to the king, depended mainly, of course, on the success of the first blow. In a like proportion, therefore, advantageous to the invaders was the impression produced

* Vallancey, *Transact. Royal Irish Acad.* for 1788. The reader will find in Vallancey's account, a vocabulary of the language of these Baronies, and also a song in their peculiar dialect, which he supposes to have been "banded down by tradition from the arrival of the colony in Ireland."

In the Four Masters we find those foreigners who joined the army of Dermot from Wales called more than once Flemings, and of this people we know some colonies were allowed to establish themselves in South Wales (about Tenby and Haverfordwest), during the reigns of the first and second Henrys. It was most probably, therefore, of Flemings that the colonies planted in these two Irish Baronies consisted. "Even at the present day," says Mr. Beauford, "the port and countenances of the inhabitants often designate their origin, especially among the females, many of whom, if dressed in the garb of the Netherlands, might be taken for veritable Dutchwomen."—MS. of Mr. Beauford, cited in *Brewer's Beauties*, etc.

"Retaining, at this day (says Speed, in speaking of these baronies), the ancient attire of the English, and the language also itself, though brackish with the mixture of very Irish, which therefore by a distinct name is called Wexford speech, current only in that city and the country about."—*Speed*.

by this first achievement at Wexford; though so little effect had it in rousing the unworthy rulers of Ireland to any sense either of their danger or their duty, that Dermot was enabled, after his triumphant entry into Wexford, to conduct the foreign forces to his own abode at Ferns, and there remain for no less than three weeks, without interruption or molestation, refreshing the commanders and their troops, and laying the plans of his future measures.

The first object to which he now eagerly directed his force, increased by the accession of the garrison of Wexford to about 3000 men, was an expedition into Ossory,* for the purpose of revenging himself upon the prince of that territory, Mac-Gilla-Patrick, who had, some time before, in a paroxysm of jealousy, seized on the son of the king of Leinster, and, according to the savage practice † common at that time both in England and Ireland, ordered his eyes to be rooted out. This chieftain had also been the first to revolt against Dermot, when the tide of his prosperity began to turn. Well knowing what they had to expect from such an enemy, now flushed with recent success, the Ossorians, guarded by their morasses and forests, stood manfully and unshrinkingly his attack; and, as long as they trusted to these natural defences of their territory, the repeated assaults made upon them, by the Lagenians and Anglo-Normans, were all triumphantly repulsed. Misled, however, by a feigned retreat of the enemy, they were induced to follow him into the open and level country; where, being exposed to the onset of the foreigners' cavalry, they were overpowered and borne down; and, the native infantry of the king then rushing upon them,

* *Hibern. Expugnati.* l. i. c. 4.

† Henry II., in his excursion into Wales, in 1164, having received as hostages the children of the noblest families of that country, gave orders that the eyes of all the males should be rooted out, and the ears and noses of the females amputated. See Lingard, *Hist. of England*, c. 13. In the reign of Henry IV. it was made felony "to cut out any person's tongue, or to put out his eyes; crimes which," the act says, "were very frequent."—*Hume*, c. 18.

with those long battle-axes, which they used, cut off their heads. After the battle, 300 of these heads were laid, as a trophy, at the feet of Dermot, who, turning them over, leaped with delight, as he recognised the different faces; and then, holding up his hands, shouted aloud thanksgiving to God. It is likewise added, though hardly to be credited, that perceiving in the midst of this frightful heap, the head of a man whom alive he had mortally hated, the barbarian seized it by both ears, and lifting it to his mouth ferociously bit off the nose and lips.*

Following up promptly this signal advantage over the Ossorians, Dermot and his allies, now meeting with no further resistance, carried fire and sword into the inmost regions of that territory. While they were employed, however, in this work of destruction, some symptoms of activity had begun to be manifested on the part of the monarch, indicating a sense, at least, of the imminent danger which threatened the country, and the urgent necessity of expelling the foreign troops. Foreseeing the likelihood, therefore, of their force being wanted for a much more serious struggle, Dermot and his friends resolved to suspend their present havoc; and, accordingly, a peace, of which reconciliation formed no ingredient, was granted to the harassed people of Ossory.†

The step by which Roderic had thus far alarmed the king of Leinster, and which wore a promise of vigour but ill borne out by the sequel, was the assembling of a large army of "Irish,"—as, for the first time, we find a force distinctly and nationally called,‡—and the convoking of the princes and nobles of the land in general council at Tara. From this site of traditional fame the royal confederates proceeded to Dublin; but there, the

* In the narrative attributed to Regan, Dermot's attendant, this incident is not mentioned, and Harris supposes him to have suppressed it out of consideration for his master. The authenticity, however, claimed for this record. I shall avail myself of some other opportunity of considering.

† *Hibern. Expugnata* l. i. c. 5.

‡ *IV Mag.*

curse of all Irish counsels, division, began to work its accustomed paralysing effects: and even in this crisis of their country's fate, unable to co-operate for her deliverance, the northern princes, among whom were Eochad, king of Ulidia, and O'Carrol, prince of Oriel, drew off the whole of their forces and returned home; leaving to the monarch and his provincial troops, assisted by O'Ruarc, and the Dano-Irish of Dublin, to take the field against the intruders, and punish the traitor who had brought such a scourge upon the land.

How effective, at this critical moment, in crushing at once, the whole treasonous design, would have been a combined and vigorous movement of all the princes of Ireland, may be judged from the panic into which Dermot was now thrown, and the almost cowardly precautions of defence he was driven to adopt. For, though already completely protected, in his fastness near Ferns, by impassable woods, precipices, and morasses, he yet called in the aid of art to strengthen still further his position; and, under the special advice and direction of Fitz-Stephen, caused artificial pits and trenches to be formed, in addition to those with which nature had already provided him. Besides the grounds for alarm exhibited in the menacing posture assumed by Roderic, there was also another warning presented to him in the dispersion of most of his Irish followers; leaving him, at last, but few supporters besides his small band of English, who all, to a man, adhered unflinchingly to his cause.

Such was the relative strength and bearing of the two parties, when Roderic invested with his immense force the position of Dermot at Ferns; and when, had but a portion of the courage and patience which actuated the besieged few been felt by the numerous force which encompassed them, the final result of the experiment could not have been doubtful. But, as it was on the part of the Irish—or, to speak more justly, on the part of their unworthy commander—there was shown a total

want not merely of the high and national feeling which should have predominated in such an emergency, but even of the ordinary, worldly policy which a prudent regard to self-interest and safety would dictate. Preferring a tame and temporising line of conduct to manly decision and vigour, Roderic tried his ground by negotiation, first with Fitz-Stephen, and then with Dermot, hoping, by a plausible appeal to the interest of one or the other, to dissolve their mutual league. But, the consciousness of weakness this conduct betrayed, and the deceit towards both parties which the attempt to tamper with each implied, produced an effect the very reverse of what was intended, and but confirmed the two leaders the more fixedly in their plan of alliance and mutual aid.

The feeble monarch, though thus exposed and baffled, condescended, after a short interval, to renew the negotiation, and preferring any course, however inglorious, to the obvious alternative of the sword, accepted such terms at last from the enemies of his country's independence as gave them but refreshed power and inclination to assail it. By a compact now entered into between the two parties, it was agreed that the full right of sovereignty over the kingdom of Leinster should be enjoyed inalienably by Dermot and his heirs, on the usual condition of his acknowledging the supremacy of the present monarch, and rendering him homage as his liege subject. In pledge for the performance of this service, Dermot delivered up as hostage his favourite son Connor;* the monarch promising on his part that should the compact be faithfully observed towards himself, he would give to this youth his daughter in marriage.

By this mean and disgraceful treaty all those possessions which Dermot had forfeited through his treason, were, under the sanction of the supreme authority,

* IV Mag. ad ann. 1159.

restored to him; and the only effort made towards saving the country from a foreign yoke, was the addition of a secret article to the treaty, by which the king of Leinster pledged himself not to call over any more foreigners into the kingdom, promising, at the same time, that he would dismiss those now in his service, as soon as the affairs of his province should have settled into a more tranquil state. Whether to this article, as well as to the others, the solemn sanction of an oath was appended, does not clearly appear; but it was soon seen that the "Foreigners' Friend," as he was nicknamed, could not be trusted either on his honour or his oath. In the mean time, the treaty of peace having been ratified, Roderic drew off all his forces, leaving this prince and his foreign auxiliaries to pursue their career of spoil and aggression unmolested.

How little sincere were Dermot's promises, with respect to the further employment of foreigners in his service, there was soon an opportunity afforded him of proving, by the arrival, in the port of Wexford, of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, Fitz-Stephen's brother, attended by ten knights, thirty horsemen, and about a hundred archers. So far from scrupling to employ this small, but, to him, most seasonable succour, the king hastened immediately in person to receive them; and, as Fitz-Stephen was just then occupied in erecting a castle, or fort, on the summit of a hill near Wexford, associated the new comer with himself in the command of an army he was about to lead against Dublin. The allegiance exacted by the throne of Leinster from that city had been, at all times, reluctantly and precariously submitted to; and the exceeding rigour of Dermot's sway during his prosperity, had rendered him as odious as he was formidable to the inhabitants. They had, therefore, availed themselves of the change in his fortunes to get rid of a yoke so insulting and oppressive, and had chosen for their governor a prince of their own mixed race, named MacTorcill. To revenge this and some

other still stronger marks of their hate towards him was the object of his present expedition; and being attended by Fitz-Gerald and his force to the confines of Dublin, he there initiated his foreign allies in that process of havoc, spoliation, and burning, of which he himself was so practised a master; till, at length, the wretched and exhausted inhabitants, sinking under the well-known scourge, implored for mercy and peace; and their proffers of allegiance being, in the very satiety of revenge, accepted, the invading army was withdrawn.

Even for the relief thus reluctantly granted, his victims were, in a great measure, indebted to a new impulse in another direction of wrong, which his ever active bad passions had just received. The monarch Roderic, whose military zeal was always most prompt when exerted in conflict with his own countrymen, had, after his ignoble capitulation with Dermot and the Anglo-Normans, carried his forces into North Munster, for the purpose of attacking and punishing Donald, the prince of that country, who, encouraged by the tottering state of the monarchy, had cast off his allegiance to Roderic, and bade open defiance to the power of Connaught. To assist this rebellious prince, and thereby distract and enfeeble still more the authority of the monarch, was the object to which Dermot now found himself able to transfer the whole of his victorious force; in consequence of which Roderic, outnumbered and overpowered, was compelled, after several unsuccessful efforts, to retire into Connaught.

Elated by this flow of prosperity, the king of Leinster no longer limited his ambition to the secure possession of his own hereditary sovereignty, but extended his prospects to the acquisition of the supreme throne itself; nor on consulting his confederates, Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald, did he find them, in any degree, indisposed to his design. On the contrary, these able and zealous partisans, perceiving how efficiently such a scheme might be turned to account for the English interests,

gave every encouragement to his ambitious project; advising most strongly, as the only means of insuring success, that he should immediately renew his application to Strongbow,* and urge him to fulfil his promise of aid without further delay.

This lord, who had been watching the progress of his countrymen in Ireland with all the anxiety which his own contemplated share in their proceedings would naturally excite, had even already observed enough in the state of affairs throughout that country, to convince him that, as a field of speculation, it was well worth the working, nor presenting any difficulties but such as courage and judicious conduct might easily find means to overcome. At the time, however, when he had made up his mind to this conclusion, the definite object for which letters patent had been granted to Dermot, namely, the recovery of his own dominion, had been fully accomplished; and, as the war was to be henceforth continued on new and different grounds, it appeared to the earl that, before himself took any part in it, a further authority should be asked and obtained from the king. For this purpose he repaired to Normandy, where Henry was at that time sojourning; and, having urged his suit with earnestness, received in return an evasive and ambiguous answer, such as, from a prince of Henry's calculating nature, must have been designed, he knew, to admit of a double interpretation. He accordingly accepted it as meaning an assent to his

* Giraldus (*Hib. Espug.* lib. i. c. 13) professes to give the substance of the letter addressed, in pursuance of this advice, to Strongbow. But, like those speeches which he occasionally puts into the mouths of his heroes, this letter is evidently of his own florid manufacture. The following is the sentimental style in which he supposes Dermot and his Norman associates to have addressed the earl:—"Ciconias et hirundines observavimus; venerunt aves æstivæ; venerunt, et, Circo jam sancte, reversæ sunt. Desiderabilem et diu expectatam præsentiam vestram nec Favonius nec Eurus advexit." Thus translated by Hooker:—"We have already seen the storks and swallows, as also the summer birds are come, and with the westerly winds are gone again; we have long looked and wished for your coming, and, albeit the winds have been at east and easterly, yet hitherto you are not come to us."

prayer; and returning to England, proceeded to prepare with all due vigour for his expedition.

As soon as the season admitted of the embarkation of troops, he sent over to Ireland, as his advanced guard, ten knights and seventy archers, under the conduct of Raymond le Gros; * who, landing with his small party at a place not far from Waterford, under a rock then called Dundolf, was soon joined by Hervey of Mount-Maurice, and a few other knights.† Here, with the hopes of being able to maintain themselves till the arrival of Strongbow, they hastily raised a small fort of turf and wood. But the lodgment of foreign troops so near their city being viewed with apprehension by the citizens of Waterford, it was thought advisable to attack the intruders before their numbers should be increased; and a large tumultuary force, amounting, we are told, to 3000 men, which had been collected with the aid of O'Faolan, prince of the Desies, and O'Ryan of Idrone, crossed the Suir which divides Leinster from Desmond, and advanced to attack the English fort.

In the confidence of valour, the young Raymond le Gros had sallied forth with his small garrison to receive this multitude; but, on seeing their immense superiority of numbers, retired again into the fort, being followed so closely by the assailants that many entered along with him. Thus pressed, the gallant Raymond, with the true instinct of courage, faced round on his pursuers, and ran the foremost person of those who were within the gateway through the body, crying out at the same time to his own companions to be of good cheer; and this example having animated his small band, while their assailants, panic-struck by the suddenness and

* This young officer, whose name was Raymond Fitz-William, but who bore the cognomen of Le Gros, as a personal characteristic, was of the same ancient and noble race from whence sprung so many other of the leaders of this Irish expedition, being the second son of William Fitz-Gerald, Lord of Carew, and, accordingly, nephew both to Maurice Fitz-Gerald and Robert Fitz-Stephen.

† *Hibern. Expugnatio* l. i. c. 13.

daring of the action, gave way, the young warrior again sallied forth at the head of his comrades, and the whole multitude fled before him in utter confusion and dismay. Above 500 men, it is stated, were cut down in that rout by the pursuers; and when tired of killing, says the chronicler, they carried a great number of those whom they had made prisoners to the rocks, and cast them headlong into the sea.

Seventy of the principal inhabitants of Waterford having been made prisoners in the pursuit, sums of money to any amount were offered for their ransom by the inhabitants; and even the surrender of the city itself was proffered as the purchase of their liberty. But it had been determined that the fate of these citizens should be decided by a council of war; and seldom, if ever, has an achievement so truly heroic been sullied by a sequel so wholly unworthy of the character of soldiers and brave men. The gallant Raymond, as might have been expected, declared strongly for the humane alternative of accepting ransom for these prisoners, and restoring them all to their families. But the pitiless counsel of Hervey of Mount-Maurice, who urged thus early the policy vainly pursued ever since of "striking terror into the Irish," was unfortunately suffered to prevail;* and the prisoners, borne away to the rocks, were there most cruelly put to death, by first breaking their limbs, and then casting them down headlong into the sea.†

* *Hibern. Expugn.* c. 14, 15. Some of the arguments employed respectively by the two leaders have formed the staple of almost all that has been said or written upon the subject ever since.—"Recollect," said Raymond, "they are not enemies now, but our brother men; not rebels, but conquered foes, —conquered by adverse fortune while standing in defence of their own country. Honourable was the cause for which they stood.—" *Hi non hostes jam, sed homines; non rebelles, sed debellati, sed victi, sed satis argentibus, ob patriæ tutelam superati. Honesta quidem occupatio.*" Hervey, on the other side, could see no safety but in severity.—"Let our victory," he said, "be so used, as that the destruction of these now in our hands should act as a warning to others, and that in future this lawless and rebellious nation may be struck with terror by the example."—" *Nostra siquidem ac victoria consumetur, ut istorum interitus aliorum sit metus. Et ipsorum exemplo populus effrenis ac rebellis nobiscum de cetero congregari reformidet.*"

† An act (says lord Lyttelton) which stains the whole glory of their

While these events were passing in Ireland, the earl of Pembroke, having left Chepstow for that country, proceeded through the coasts of South Wales to St. David's, gathering new followers to his standard all the way. Having collected thus a sufficient force, consisting partly of volunteer adventurers, and partly of his own vassals, he was just on the point of embarking with his army from Milford, when an order reached him from king Henry, forbidding positively that he should leave the kingdom.* A command so decisive from his royal master could not but occasion at least a pause in the earl's purpose; and had the prospects that awaited him at home been somewhat less dark, or the hopes that beckoned him to the opposite shore less inviting, the duty of the subject might possibly have prevailed over the sanguine promptings of the adventurer. As it was, however, his hesitation could be but momentary; the order to sail was boldly issued; and, on the eve of the feast of St. Bartholomew, his fleet landed him near Waterford with an army of about 1200 men, of whom 200 were knights.†

Immediately on their arrival, these troops were joined by Raymond le Gros, with a small body of horsemen; and, as Strongbow was anxious to commence his operations by a successful attack upon Waterford, it was determined that, with the forces then under his command, and without waiting for the promised junction of Dermot, the assault upon the city should be undertaken on the following day.

Though but little display of heroism was to be expected from the people of Waterford, who had tamely suffered

honourable victory, and which the king should have punished, when he came into that country, by some very signal mark of his royal displeasure against the adviser." Even Stanihurst, the warm apologist of the English throughout, thus reprobates this act:—*Ex quo tempore Herveias gravi diuturnaue infamia et invidia flagraret; cum nemo repertus esset, cui non ista civium internecio prorsus displiceret.*"—*De Reb. in Hist. Gest. l. 2.*

* *Gulielm. Neubrig. l. 2. c. 26.*—"Cumque jam solvere pararet, affuerunt qui ex parte Regis transfretationem inhiherent. Ille vero, nullius rei quam in Angla possidere videbatur remoratus affecto, nihilominus transfretavit."

† *Hibern. Expungant. l. 1, c. 16.*

the murderers of their seventy citizens to remain three whole months* unmolested in their neighbourhood, their defence of the city on the present occasion appears to have been spirited and vigorous; and, with the assistance of Foalan, prince of the Desies, they twice repulsed the attempts of the assailants. At length Raymond, perceiving in the east angle of the walls a small house projecting on timber props, ordered some of his knights to hew down the props, which having been done, the house fell, and, with it, part of the wall. A breach being thus opened, the troops all poured into the city, and there took dreadful revenge for the resistance which they had encountered, by a general slaughter of all whom they met in the streets, without distinction or mercy. In a tower, of which Reginald, a Dano-Irish lord, was governor, that chieftain himself, and O'Faolan, prince of the Desies, had taken refuge; but, being dragged forth from thence, were on the point of being put to death, when most unexpectedly they found themselves rescued by the interposition of king Dermot, who had just arrived at this scene of carnage, with his daughter Eva, the destined bride of Strongbow, and accompanied also by his trusty liegemen Maurice Fitz-Gerard and Fitz-Stephen.

The earl received him with all the honours of triumph; though but short was the time allowed for ceremony or welcome, as, in consequence of news from Dublin of the revolt of the governor of that city, it was necessary to march the army thither without delay. The still reeking horrors, therefore, of the sacked and ruined city were made to give place to a scene of nuptial festivity; and the marriage of Strongbow with the princess Eva, according to the promise pledged to that lord at Bristol, was, in haste and confusion, celebrated. Immediately after the ceremony, the banners of the respective forces were displayed, and the whole army, with the exception of a few troops left to garrison Waterford, were in full march for Dublin.

* Ware, *Annals*.

The bold step now taken by Hasculf, the governor of that city, in declaring his defection from Dermot, is supposed to have been adopted chiefly in consequence of this new descent of the foreigners, and also in concert with the monarch, Roderic, who, under a similar alarm at the progress of the English, had assembled an immense army, and, joined by the troops of the princes of Breffny and Oriel, had taken up his post at Clandalkan, a few miles southward of Dublin. In the mean time, the confederate forces of the earl and Dermot were rapidly pursuing their march; but, having learned that the woods and defiles, between them and the city, were occupied by native troops, they wound their course along the tops of the mountains of Glendalough, and so reached, uninterrupted, the walls of Dublin.* The inhabitants, who had relied for the protection of the city on the strength of the Irish force immediately in its vicinity, were now seized with consternation at the sudden appearance of so large an army at their very gates.

In this emergency, their only resource was one not unfrequently resorted to, in Irish warfare, the mediation of the Clergy; and the pious and exemplary archbishop of Dublin, St Laurence O'Tools, who was then within the walls, undertook, at the earnest request of the citizens, to intercede with Dermot in their behalf. But, to men with arms in their hands, and confident in their own superiority, such late and weak attempts at propitiation could hardly be expected to appeal with force or success. Accordingly, while the negotiators, on each side, were conferring together, outside the walls, respecting the demand of thirty hostages, which Dermot had advanced as the condition of his agreeing to terms, the young Milo de Cogan, and his adventurous comrades, were eyeing the ramparts in search of an assailable point; and, as soon as the time allowed to St. Laurence for the purpose of parley had expired, or, according to

* "Per convexa montium de Glandelochan latero, exercitum ad nobis mœnia duxit indecœnem."—*Hibern. Expugnat.* l. 1. c. 17.

some accounts, even before Milo de Cogan and Raymond gave the signal for the assault, and, leading their troops to a part of the walls which they had observed to be ill defended, were, in a few moments, in the streets of the city; where the wretched inhabitants, thus taken off their guard, having been led to expect terms of peace, became almost unresistingly victims of the slaughter and plunder which ensued.

Notwithstanding, however, the suddenness of the assault, the governor, Hasculf, and a number of the leading citizens, succeeded in gaining some small vessels which lay at anchor in the harbour, and, with the aid of a favourable wind, made their escape to some of the Orkney isles.* In the midst of all the confusion and massacre, the good St. Laurence was seen exposing himself to every danger, and even, as his biographer describes him, dragging from the enemies' hands the palpitating bodies of the slain, to have them decently interred.† He also succeeded, at great risk, in prevailing upon the new authorities to retain most of the clergy in their situations, and recovered from the plunderers the books and ornaments which had belonged to the different churches.

On Strongbow's departure from Waterford, he had left, for the defence of that town, a small garrison, chiefly of archers; which Cormac M'Carthy, king of Desmond, by a sudden and vigorous attack, surprised, and defeated.‡

While the invaders were thus employed in possessing themselves of the most important city in the kingdom, the forces of the monarch, instead of opposing them, and endeavouring to embarrass, if not wholly defeat, their operations, had been drawn off for the local and partisan purpose of supporting his liegeman O'Ruarc, in the possession of the territory of East Meath, over which he had lately, by an act of arbitrary favour, placed him. To

* IV Mag. ad ann. 1170. It is stated, in the account given by the Four Masters of this event, that Asgall MacRagnall, the king of the Northmeath of that city, also made his escape.

† Vita S. Laurentii, cap. 18.

‡ IV Mag. ad an. 1170.

back by arms his own and O'Ruarc's claims, in that territory, was the object for which he now marched his forces into Meath; and no sooner had Dublin been taken possession of, than Dermot determined to transfer the scene of his own operations to the same quarter. In addition to the desire of still further humbling Roderic, the indulgence of his old and inveterate grudge to Tier-nan O'Ruarc lent, of course, a peculiar zest to the enterprise. Having, through Strongbow's recommendation, intrusted the government of Dublin to the gallant Milo de Cogan, he sent the earl, with a large force, to invade and lay waste the lands of Meath, and followed himself, soon after, with the remainder of the army.

Besides the usual waste and ruin of which fire and sword were the prompt instruments, a more than ordinary excess of barbarity is said to have marked the course of these confederate chiefs, as well through the parts of Meath now under the government of O'Ruarc, as in that chieftain's own principality of Breffny. The sacrilegious violence once so foreign to the character of the Island of Saints, and which had been engrafted on Irish warfare by the evil example of the Danes, was exhibited, in the course of this expedition, in its most revolting form; and the churches of Cluanrard, Tailten, Cell-Scire, and Disirt-Ciaran are among those mentioned as having been despoiled and burnt down by the ravagers.*

Of all these insulting acts of aggression, the humbled monarch found himself forced to be an unresisting witness, wanting the power, even if possessed of the spirit, to resent such reiterated defiance of his authority and arms. In this dilemma, resorting once more to his old expedient of negotiation, he despatched deputies to the camp of Dermot, who were charged to upbraid him, in the name of their monarch, with these gross and repeated violations of all his most solemn engagements; and to threaten, moreover, that if he did not instantly

* IV Mag. ad an. 1170.

withdraw his troops, and restrain the excursion of his foreigners, the head of his son, who was still in Roderic's hands as a hostage, should be cut off and sent to him. To this message Dermot haughtily replied, that he meant to persevere as he had begun, nor would desist till he had brought Connaught, his ancient inheritance, under his sway; and also recovered for himself, not merely by arms, but in right of his title,* the supreme government of all Ireland. On receiving this insolent answer, the weak and angry Roderic, whose few accesses of vigour were as odious as his general weakness was contemptible, ordered the unoffending son of Dermot to be beheaded,† putting to death, at the same time, a grandson of that prince, the son of Donald Kavenagh, and also a third hostage he had received from him, the son of his Comhalt, or foster-brother, O'Coallag. By these multiplied acts of cruelty, the wretched monarch drew down upon himself universal odium.

Among a people of strong religious feelings, such as the Irish had, even to this period, remained, notwithstanding the ignorance and barbarism to which internal misrule and foreign invasion had reduced them, it was not unnatural that the new scourge which had now fallen upon their land should be viewed with terror as a judgment of God on account of the sins of the people,—an awful renewal, by the hand of Providence, of all that their fathers had endured in days gone by, when first the Black and the White Strangers descended in swarms upon their shores. That some such panic must at this period have taken possession of them appears manifest, not merely from the unmanly alarm with which, on se-

* It appears to have been on his descent from the monarch Murkertach O'Brian, that he founded this claim to the sovereignty.

† Stanihurst, lib. 3.—IV Mag. ad ann. 1170. "In the face of this record—if, indeed, he knew of its existence—Keating tells us that Roderic, "astonished at the insolence of this petty prince (Dermot), resolved in his passion to execute his purpose upon the royal hostage he had in his hands, but, upon mature reflection, he desisted . . . knowing that such a barbarous act would render him odious to his people, whose affections were his only support."

veral occasions, whole multitudes of the natives are said to have fled before small parties of these foreigners, but also from the proceedings of a remarkable synod, convened at Armagh this year, for the purpose of taking into their consideration the perilous state of the country. Concluding that the sins and offences of the people were the great cause of the awful calamities that threatened them, they resolved to seek, in some general and national act of repentance, the salutary means both of propitiation and self-relief.

"The synod declared," says the chronicler, "that this calamity was to be held as an infliction of divine justice, on account of the sins of the Irish people; and more especially because that, in former times, they used to make bond-slaves of the English whom they had purchased as well from merchants as from robbers and pirates;—a crime, for which God now took vengeance upon them by delivering them into like bondage themselves. For the English people," it was added, "while yet their kingdom was in a state of security, were accustomed, through a common vice of the nation, to expose their children for sale;* and, even before they were pressed by want or distress, to sell their own sons and kinsmen to the Irish.† It was therefore natural to suppose that the purchasers, as well as the

* Dr. Warner, in referring to this curious document, observes, very justly,—*"Cambrensis, bishop of St. David's, who gives this account, adds, 'That the English, by a common vice of their country, had a custom to sell their children and kinsfolk into Ireland, although they were neither in want nor extreme poverty.' The English reader, after this, must never charge the Irish of that age with being rude and barbarous; because he will be bid to look at home."*—*H. st. of Ireland*, vol. i. book 2.

† By reference to the original it will be seen how carelessly, if not ignorantly, Dr. Campbell has interpreted the meaning of this passage,—*"It was the common vice,"* he says, *"of all the English, from their first settlement in Britain, to expose their children and relations to sale rather than that they should suffer any want."*—*Strictures*, &c. sect. 12. With the extremities to which want reduces its victims, the Irish were themselves but too well acquainted; and the annalists frequently, in describing the horrors of the famine, say that it was such as "would compel a father to sell his son or daughter for food." Thus in the *Ulster Annals* (*ad ann. 964*):—"Gorta mor diulocta in er, eo renadh an tathair a mac et ingen arbiadh."

sellers, in such a traffic, would well deserve, for their enormous crime, to be doomed themselves to wear the yoke of servitude.* "Acting upon the spirit of these humane and Christian views, the synod unanimously decreed and ordered that all the English throughout the island, who were in a state of slavery, should be restored to their former freedom."

It may be remarked here that slavery had, from a very early period, existed among the Irish, as is proved by the regulations respecting bondmen and bondwomen, which are found in some very ancient canons of our Church.† Wherever the practice, indeed, of piracy, whether in ancient or modern times, has prevailed, there the traffic in human creatures, as an ordinary article of commerce, has also existed; and it was in the course, as we have seen, of a predatory expedition of Nial of the Nine Hostages to the coast of Gaul, ‡ that St. Patrick, then a youth, was carried away and sold as a

* "Tandem communis omnium in hac sententia resedit, propter peccata scilicet populi sui, eoque precipue quod Anglos olim tam a mercatoribus quam a prædonibus atque pyratibus, emere passim et in servitutem redigere consueverant, divine censura vindictæ hoc eis incommodum accidisse, ut et ipsi quoque ab eadem gente in servitutem vice reciproca jam redigantur. *Anglorum namque populus adhuc integro eorum regno, communis gentis vitio, liberos suos venales exponere, et, priusquam inopiam ullam aut inedia sustinerent, filios proprios et cognatos in Hiberniam vendere consueverant. Unde et probabiliter credi potest, sicut venditores olim, ita et emptores tam enormi delicto iuga servitutis jam meruisse.*"—Girald. Cambrens. *Hib. Expug.* lib. i. c. 18. In Ware's *Annals*, as translated into English, there occurs a most gross and, as it appears, wilful misrepresentation of the meaning of the sentences here printed in Italics, which the writer thus shamefully perverts:—"With the consent of the whole clergy it was concluded that God for the sins of the people had afflicted the Irish; and particularly for their selling the English taken by pirates, or otherwise." Of all share in this bare-faced falsification, sir James Ware himself is to be acquitted, being, as Dr. Lanigan justly remarks, "too honest to corrupt his authority." The blame, therefore, of the dishonesty, or the ignorance, whichever it may have been, must lie at the door of his translators. The calumny, however, has been adopted, without examination or scruple, by others, and we find Rapin confusedly assigning, as the pretext for Henry's invasion, "the Irish having taken some Englishmen prisoners, and afterwards sold them for slaves." Speed, also, who takes the same false view of the subject, adds, in the genuine spirit of misrepresentation, "which made the Irish clergy themselves confess that they had deserved no other than that their land should be transferred to that nation whom they had so cruelly handled."

† See, for these canons, Ware *Antiq.* c. 20.

‡ See First Volume of this Work, chap. vii.

bond slave in Ireland. Besides the slaves imported from England, of which traffic Bristol was the great mart,* the Irish had also a class of bondmen called Villeins, which were regardant, as the law expresses it, to the manor, and esteemed a part of the inheritance or farm.

In referring to the remarkable synodic decree, just cited, an Irish writer of the seventeenth century,—one of the many whom, at that time, the persecution of their country's creed at home compelled to carry their talents and industry to other shores,—indulges in a wish as deeply significant, at it is melancholy and hopeless. "If, then, the Irish," he says, "as Giraldus intimates, made themselves accomplices in the guilt of the English by buying their children, when offered willingly by them for sale, it were to be wished that the English nation, which reduced the children of those Irish to slavery, contrary to the will and wish of their parents, would in so far imitate the act of the Irish of that period, as to release their posterity, long suffering in servitude, and restore them to their former independence and freedom. For, if the lighter crime drew down on its perpetrators such punishment, how heavy a judgment must fall upon the greater and more lasting wrong!"†

* "Slaves," says Seyer, "were exported from England in such numbers that it seems to have been a fashion among the people of property in Ireland, and other neighbouring countries, to be attended by English slaves."—*History of Bristol*. He ought to have added, that it was from his own city, Bristol, the slaves were chiefly, and to so late a period as the reign of king John, exported. William of Malmesbury, who describes the numbers of young English slaves, of both sexes, who used to be shipped off from Bristol to Ireland, tied together by ropes, attributes to St Wistan the credit of having suppressed this unchristian traffic.—"Homines enim ex omni Anglia coemptos majoris spe questus in Hiberniam distrahebant; ancillasque prins ludibrio lecti habitas jamque prægnantes venum proponebant. Videres et gemeres concatenat a funibus, miserorum ordines et utriusque sexus adolescentes"—*De Vit. Wistani*

† Colgan.—"Sed si Hiberni, ut ipse innuit, fuerint participes delicti Anglorum emendo filios eorum ab ipsis parentibus sponte divenditos, utinam et Angli postea filios Hibernorum contra parentum vota et voluntates in servitutem redigentes, sint imitatores Hibernorum in filios eorum *servitutis vinculo diu mancipatos in pristinam revocando libertatem, et vercantur ubi delictum levius severe jam punitum est graviori delicto severiorem vindictam aliquando non defecturam.*"—*Trias Thaum.* Sept. Append. ad ann. 1170.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Alarm of Henry at the Progress of Strongbow.—His Proclamation.—Raymond despatched to him with a Letter.—Death of the King of Leinster.—Attack upon Dublin by Hasculf.—His Defeat and Death.—Patriotic Exertions of Archbishop Laurence.—Dublin invested by a large Army of the Irish.—Negotiation between Strongbow and Roderic.—Intrepid Sally of the English.—Retreat of the Irish Forces.—Fitz-Stephen besieged at Carrig.—Strongbow marches to relieve him.—Treacherous Conduct towards Fitz-Stephen.—Strongbow repairs to England.—Makes his Peace with King Henry.—Embarkation of Henry for Ireland.—Receives the Submission of several of the Irish Princes.—Holds his Court in Dublin.—Synod of Cashel.—Its decrees.—Council held by Henry at Lismore.—Laws enacted by him.—Grants of Estates and Dignities to Hugh de Lacy and others.—Henry removes to Waterford.—His Departure for England.

THE open defiance by Strongbow of the mandate of his king, together with the independent course of conquest he was now pursuing, would, even in a prince far less tenacious of his kingly authority than Henry II., have awakened resentment and alarm. It was not to be expected, therefore, that he would any longer brook such encroachments; and the earl, in the midst of his flow of success, found himself checked, at once, by the appearance of an edict of the king, forbidding strictly all traffic and intercourse with Ireland, from any part of his dominions; and commanding all his subjects, now in that country, of every order and degree, to return home before the ensuing feast of Easter, on pain of perpetual banishment and the forfeiture of all their estates. The effects of this measure were soon most embarrassingly felt by Strongbow in the total stoppage of his supplies from England, and the desertion of a number of his soldiers and knights; which state of things being ominous of ruin to his future prospects, he consulted the most judicious of those persons about him, as to the steps advisable

for him to take, and the result was his sending off Raymond Le Gros to the English king, who was then in Normandy, with a letter expressed in the following terms :—

“ My sovereign lord, I came into this land, and (if I remember aright) with your permission, for the purpose of aiding in the restoration of your liegeman Dermot MacMorrrough; and, whatsoever the favour of fortune has bestowed upon me, whether from his patrimony or from any other source, as to your gracious munificence I owe it all, so shall it all return to you, and be placed at the disposal of your absolute will and pleasure.”

Though this acknowledgment comprised in it all that the king could desire, both pride and policy forbade his yielding too ready a pardon to acts of self-will so dangerous in their example. He did not deign, therefore, even to notice the earl's letter, and Raymond waited some time at his court, expecting an answer, but in vain. In the meanwhile the assassination of that remarkable man, Thomas à Becket, had drawn down upon Henry, throughout Europe, such a load of suspicion and odium as required all the resources of mind he so eminently possessed, to enable him to confront and overcome; and, accordingly, for a time his views upon Ireland were merged in objects of more deep and pressing interest.

In the state of embarrassment to which the English adventurers were now reduced; they had to suffer another serious blow in the loss of the great projector and patron of their expedition, Dermot himself, who died about the close of this year * at Ferns, of some unknown and frightful malady, which is said to have rendered

* From this last king of Leinster, Dermot MacMorrrough, descended the family of the O'Cavenaghs, the head of whom, through each successive generation, continued to style himself The MacMorrrough till the reign of Henry VIII., when, on the submission of the Irish chiefs to lord Leonard Grey, Charles O'Cavanagh surrendered his title to Henry, and was constituted governor, for the king, of the castle of Ferns. See, for an account of this circumstance, as well as of the title subsequently conferred upon the family, *Hibernia Dominicana*, c. 2., where the author thus cites his au-

him, in his last moments, an object of horror and disgust. It is added, too, that so dreadful was the state of impenitence in which he departed, that his death combined, at once, all the worst features of moral depravation with the most loathsome form of physical disease. This evidently exaggerated account must be taken as a record, not so much of the real nature of his death, as the deep and bitter hatred with which he was regarded by most of his contemporaries; the instances being numerous in history, where the mode of death attributed to personages who had rendered themselves odious during their lives, have been rather such as, according to popular feeling, they deserved, than as they actually did suffer.

On the demise of the king of Leinster, the earl of Pembroke succeeded, in defiance of the law of the land, to the throne of that province, having been raised most probably to the post of Roydamna, by a forced election, during the life-time of the king.* As he had been indebted, however, for much of his following to the personal influence acquired by Dermot over the lower classes, he now, in addition to his other difficulties, found himself deserted by the greater number of those partisans whom only fidelity to the fortunes of his father-in-law had led to range themselves under his banner. With the view of looking after his possessions and adherents in other parts of the country, the earl now left Dublin, and the commanders intrusted with the charge of that city during his absence were soon afforded an

thority for the facts:—"Huc porro faciunt sequentia verba quæ nudiustertius vidi in Regeato Feziali Regis Armorum in hac Dublinensi civitate, nempe: Antiquissima familia de O'Cavanah originem ducit a Morrough Rege Lagenie," etc.

* The explanation of this anomaly given by Mr. Sheffield Grace (in his *Account of Tullyroan*) is as follows:—"Although, in the eyes of the English nation and sovereign, Strongbow was merely regarded as an English noble, holding of their king, yet, in the estimation of the Irish, he was accepted as the king of Leinster, in right of his wife Eva, heiress of that kingdom." But as, by the old Irish law, women themselves were excluded from inheritance, they were also, of course, incapable of communicating a right of inheritance to their husbands.

opportunity of displaying as well their good fortune as their valour. The late governor of Dublin, Hasculf, who on its capture, as we have seen, by Strongbow and the king of Leinster, succeeded in escaping to the Orkney Islands, had been able to collect there a large army, as well of Norwegians as of other inhabitants of those isles, with which he now sailed up the Liffey; his armament, consisting of no less than sixty ships, while the troops armed, as we are told, in the Danish manner, wearing coats of mail and round red-coloured shields,* were under the special conduct of a chieftain called by his countrymen John the Furious.

Landing with this force, Hasculf attacked the eastern gate of the city, where, being encountered by Milo de Cogan, he was repulsed with the loss of 500 men. But the Anglo-Norman, flushed with this advantage, and leading his knights in pursuit of the fugitives too eagerly, found himself beset at length by superior numbers,—some of his best men falling around him, while others were, it is said, seized with sudden panic, on seeing the thigh of a knight, which was cased all over in iron, cut off by a Danish chief with a single blow of his battle-axe.† Thus hardly pressed, Milo endeavoured, with his small band, to regain the gate for the purpose of retiring within the walls; but, the besiegers still crowding upon him, he was on the very point of falling beneath their numbers, when his brother, Richard de Cogan, whether from knowledge of his perilous situation, or more probably in pursuance of a pre-arranged plan, issued forth with a body of horse from the southern gate of the city, and coming unobserved on the rear of the assailants, raised a loud shout, and suddenly charged

* Hibern. Expugnat. l. i. c. 21.—“Viri bellicosii Danico more, undique ferro vestiti, alii loriceis longis, alii laminis ferreis arte consutis, clypeis quoque rotundis et rubris.”

† Regan. By this metrical chronicler the feat here described is attributed to John, the Norwegian chief himself, who bore the cognomen, according to Giraldus, of *Thawooda*, meaning the Mad, or Furious.

them.* Dismayed by so unexpected an attack, and imagining it to proceed from some newly arrived reinforcement, the besiegers fled in such headlong terror and confusion, that, in the efforts of all to save themselves, but a small number escaped.

After a long and fierce struggle with his assailants, John the Furious was at length felled to the ground; and an English knight named Walter de Riddlesford with the assistance of some others, slew him. Hasculf, himself, in flying to his ships, was taken prisoner upon the sands, and brought back alive to be reserved for ransom. On appearing, however, before the governor and a large assembly in the council house, he haughtily exclaimed, "We came here with only a small force, and this has been but the beginning of our labours. If I live, far other and greater things shall follow." More angry at the insolence of this speech than touched by the brave, though rash, spirit which dictated it, the governor ordered the unfortunate chieftain to be immediately beheaded.

Notwithstanding this turn of success, as signal and brilliant as it was fortuitous, which had come thus seasonably to relieve the sinking fortunes of the English, it was clear that the relief could be but superficial and temporary; the small amount of force they could command being dispersed through different garrisons, while the defection of the natives had become almost universal, and all means of supply or reinforcement from England were interdicted. Under such circumstances, it can hardly be doubted that there wanted but a single combined effort on the part of the Irish, to sweep at once this handful of hardy and desperate adventurers from the face of the land. That there should have arisen, at a crisis so momentous, not even one brave and patriotic Irishman to proclaim aloud to his divided countrymen that in their union alone lay strength and

* Lambeth MSS.

safety, would be a fact which, however disgraceful to the whole nation, might have been in so far consolatory, that it would prove all to have been alike worthy of the ignominious fate that befell them.

But the history of that period is not so utterly unredeemed and desolated, for such a patriot did then exist; and in the pious and high-minded St. Laurence O'Toole Ireland possessed at that time both a counsellor and leader such as, had there been hearts and swords worthy to second him, might have rescued her from the vile bonds into which she was then sinking. Observing the reduced and straitened condition of the enemy, the archbishop saw with delight that the moment was arrived, when by a prompt and general coalition of his countrymen a blow might be struck to the very heart of the yet infant English power,—a blow that would crush at once the swarm of foreign intruders now on their soil, and hold forth a warning of similar vengeance to all who, in future, might dare to follow in their footsteps. To effect this great national purpose a cordial union of the Irish princes was indispensable, and neither labour nor eloquence was spared by St. Laurence in his noble efforts to accomplish so glorious a result.* He flew from province to province, to every chieftain of every district, imploring them to forget all trivial animosities at such a crisis, and to rally round their common sovereign for the salvation of their own and their fathers' land. He likewise, in conjunction with Roderic, despatched emissaries to Godfred, king of the island of Man, as well as to the princes of the neighbouring isles, intreating them, for their own sakes, as having a common interest in the reduction of the English power, to assist with their ships in the general attack which was now meditated upon Dublin.

Informed of these designs, Stongbow threw himself into the city, accompanied by Fitzgerald and Raymond,

* *Laurentio Dubliniensi Antistite, zelo sue gentis, ut ferebatur, hoc procurante.*—*H.B. Expug.* l. 1. c. 22. See Ware, *Annals*, ad ann. 1171.

—the latter but lately returned from his fruitless mission to Henry,—and though considerably straitened for the maintenance of the army, prepared boldly for defence. Nor was it long before his resolution and means were put to the trial; as a force, far more considerable than he could have expected to see assembled, was now brought to invest his position on every side;—the fleet of the Isles, which consisted of thirty ships, being so stationed as to block up the harbour, while the confederate Irish forces were all encamped around the city, and amounted, according to an estimate most probably exaggerated, to no less than 30,000 men. Among the leaders of this great national force was seen St. Laurence himself,—bearing arms, it is said, like the rest, and endeavouring to animate, by his example and eloquence, the numerous chieftains of all septs and factions, whom he had brought thus together under one banner.

But, encouraging as was all this commencement of the enterprise, the results fell miserably short of the cheering promise which it held forth. Whether from some difficulty in coming to an agreement among themselves, as to the peculiar mode of assault, or probably a persuasion among the majority that a patient blockade, preventing entirely the introduction of provisions, would be the most secure mode of compelling the garrison to submission, it appears certain that for nearly two months this great besieging force lay wholly inactive before the city. In the desired object, however of reducing the garrison to the utmost difficulties, the policy adopted was completely successful; and the earl having at length notified a desire to negotiate with the besiegers, the archbishop of Armagh, as the most worthy representative of all that ought, at least, to have been the feelings of his countrymen at such a crisis, was unanimously deputed to receive his overtures.

The proposition of Strongbow was, that, provided Roderic would raise the siege and consent to receive him as his vassal, he would, on his part, agree to receive

the province of Leinster from the monarch, and to acknowledge him as his sovereign. This proposition having been laid before Roderic by the archbishop, an answer was returned, so much more in consonance with the character of the prelate himself than with that of his unworthy master, that it was most probably of his own dictation, in which it was declared that, unless the English would forthwith surrender to Roderic the towns of Dublin, Waterford, and Wexford, together with all the forts and castles then possessed by them, and would agree, on a day assigned, to depart with all their forces from Ireland, the besieging army would without delay attack and storm the city. Taking into account the relative position of the two parties, the garrison being at that moment reduced to extremity, and apparently at the mercy of the besiegers, while the latter were still a fresh unbroken force, there was assuredly nothing in the nature of these terms, however mortifying to the hitherto successful invaders, which the Irish were not justified, as well on grounds of equity and mercy to the conquered, as by a sense of duty towards their own aggrieved and insulted country, to demand.* So utterly hopeless was the state of the garrison, that there appeared every prospect of the earl being driven to accept of these terms, or even to surrender at discretion; when, by one of those inspirations of despair which for the time, invest men with an almost supernatural strength, and enable them to control and conquer fortune itself, the whole complexion of the fortunes of the English were, in a few eventful hours, brightened and changed.

Having eluded, by some means, the vigilance of the enemy, Donald Kavenagh, the son of the late king Dermot, had contrived to enter the city, and acquaint Strongbow with the distressing intelligence, that Fitz-

* See Leland, who views in the same light the terms proposed on this occasion by the Irish. Dr. Campbell, confounding Leland with Lord Lyttelton, quotes the latter as expressing this opinion respecting the terms, though he has said nothing whatsoever about them.

Stephen was now closely besieged in the fort of Carrig, by a large multitude of the people of Wexford and Hy-Kinsellagh,* and that having with him but five knights and a small company of archers, if not relieved within a few days,† not merely himself and his followers, but

* "Ecce Duvenaldus Dermitti filius Kencelme finibus adveniens, Stephanidem inter Karractenas castrum à Guesfordim civibus nec non et Kenceliensibus quasi tribus virorum millibus cum paucis obsesum munivit"—*Hib. Expug.* l. i. c. 22. Lord Lyttelton, whose general accuracy in the portion of his history which relates to Ireland, is deserving of the highest praise, has here fallen into a slight geographical error. "Fitz-Stephen," he says, "was besieged in his fort at Carrick, near Wexford, by the citizens of that town and the Irish of *Kinsale*;"—thus confounding the seaport town of this name in the county of Cork with the great territory called Kinsellagh, or Hy-Kinsellagh, which comprehended the chief portion of the southern part of Leinster.

† It is stated, in Regan's account, that Fitz-Stephen had still further weakened his small garrison by contributing thirty-six of his soldiers to the force collected for the defence of Dublin by Strongbow.

As the historical fragment attributed to Regan, the servant and interpreter, as it is pretended, of Dermot, king of Leinster, will be occasionally referred to in these notes, it is right that the reader should know upon what grounds the pretensions of this tract to an authentic character are founded. Of the alleged author, or rather dictater, of this fragment, Maurice Regan, no mention whatever is made in our annals; and the original manuscript preserved at Lambeth, from which Sir George Carew made his translation, instead of being in Irish, as might have been expected, was written in old French or Norman verse, having been taken down, as we are told, in that form by a contemporary and friend of Regan himself. The following are the introductory lines of the Fragment:—

"Parsoen demande Latinner
L'moi conta de ain Historie
Dunt far jei la Memorie
Morice Regan iret celai
Buche a buche par la alui
Ri cest gest endita
Lestorie de lui mi mostra
Jeil Morice iret Latinner
Al rei se Murcher
Ici lira del Bacheller
Del rei Dermot, vous voil conter."

This metrical narrative, which comprises a period only of three years, differs, on many essential points, from the accounts given of the same transactions by Giraldus and others; and notwithstanding the emphatic declaration of Harris that "whoever writes the history of Ireland during the English period, must make this piece the main basis of his account," the preference given by almost every writer who has hitherto treated of this period, to the authority of Giraldus over that of the supposed Regan, is a sufficient proof of the doubt entertained of the authenticity of this Fragment. "I cannot think," says lord Lyttelton, "that this rhyming chronicle, drawn from a verbal relation, imperfectly recollected, and mixed with other hearsays, picked up, we know not how, or from whom, is of equal credit with the history of Giraldus Cambrensis, whose near kinsmen

also his wife and children, who were shut up with him in the fort, must fall into the hands of the fierce and implacable besiegers. On learning this painful intelligence, the earl summoned without delay a council of war to consult as to the measures that should be pursued; and for some time, all thoughts of their own reduced and desperate condition were forgotten in their anxiety for the fate of Fitz-Stephen and his family. At length, with a courage which could only have arisen out of the very hopelessness of their common lot, Maurice Fitz-Gerald proposed to his comrades, as the only chance now left for their own deliverance, or the relief of his kinsman Fitz-Stephen, that they should at once sally forth with the whole of the garrison, and cut their way through the besieging army.

This bold suggestion the gallant Raymond, with characteristic zeal and eloquence, seconded; and Strongbow, adopting readily the project, selected from the garrison three bodies of horse; the first of which, forming the vanguard, consisted of thirty knights under the conduct of Raymond; while the second, thirty in number, and forming the centre, had for its leader Milo de Cogan, and the third, consisting of about forty knights, under the command of Strongbow himself and Fitz-Gerald, was appointed to bring up the rear. The remainder of the force, which amounted altogether, it is said, to but 600 men, was made up of the esquires of the knights, also on horseback, and of some infantry composed of the citizens of Dublin. With this small band the earl sallied forth, about the ninth hour of the day, to attack an army stated by the English chroniclers to have been no less than 30,000 strong.

In the presumed security of their own numbers and strength, and expecting hourly the surrender of the ex-

were actors, and principal actors, in most of the facts he relates." Vol. v. note, p. 70, 71.

The notion of Mr. Whitty (*Popular Hist. of Ireland*), that this Fragment may have been written by some Norman rhymester, who had accompanied his countrymen into Ireland, seems by no means improbable.

hausted garrison, so sudden and vigorous an outbreak from the city was the very last of all possible events that the besieging multitude could have expected. In the terror and confusion, therefore, into which all were thrown by the first onset, their great numbers were but an impediment to effectual resistance; and the panic spreading also to the armies of Irish that were quartered to the north and south of the city, they, in like manner, with scarcely even an attempt at resistance, precipitately broke up their camps and fled. The monarch himself, who was at the time indulging in the luxury of a bath, received the first intimation of what had occurred, from the sudden flight of his attendants, and succeeded with difficulty in effecting his own escape. Having thus, notwithstanding the fewness and feebleness of their force, dispersed in a few hours the mighty army that had held them in durance for nearly two months, the English returned at the close of the evening into the city loaded with the spoils and baggage of the enemy, and having gained sufficient provisions to victual the city for a year.*

The relief of Fitz-Stephen from his alarming position was now the great object to which Strongbow's attention was devoted; and having committed the government of Dublin to Milo de Cogan, he without delay marched towards Wexford, to effect the delivery, if possible, of the fort of the Carrig.† In his way thither the road lay through a narrow pass, in the territory then called Idrone, where he found himself stopped by O'Regan,

* Hibern. Expugnat. l. 1. c. 23, 23.

† An eloquent Irishman of the present day, in a speech delivered by him some years since, at Wexford, thus alludes to this memorable tower and its history:—"Situate at the gorge of the mountain, and commanding the passage over the stream, whose waters are darkened with its shadow, it is invested with many melancholy associations, and imparts to the solemnity of the scene what I may call a political picturesque. From the fosse of that tower, memory may take a long and dismal retrospect: . . . years have flowed by, like the waters which it overshadows, and yet it is not changed. It stands as if it were the work of yesterday; and, as it was the first product of English domination, so is it its type, &c. &c."—*Speech of Mr. Sheil delivered at Wexford, 22d of July, 1825.*

the prince of that district, who waited to receive him with a considerable force. An action ensued, which was, for some time, maintained with balanced success, when at length an arrow, shot from the bow of a monk named Nicholas, who fought in the English ranks,* brought the prince of Idrone to the ground, and his troops, disheartened by the death of their leader, took to flight, and left the English army masters of the field. Among the knights who most distinguished themselves in this action was the young Meyler Fitz-Henry, another of the descendants of the fair Nesta, and nephew of Maurice Fitz-Gerald. A tale is told, but on no other authority, as it appears, than tradition, of a son of Strongbow, a youth of but seventeen years of age, who, making on this occasion his first appearance in a field of battle, was so terrified by the war-cry of the Irish, on advancing to the attack, that he instantly took to flight, and, returning to Dublin in the utmost terror, announced that his father and all the English forces were slain.

Hurrying on from Idrone impatiently to his object, the earl was met at a short distance from Wexford by messengers sent to convey to him the painful intelligence, that the fort he was on his way to relieve had fallen, by an act of the basest treachery, into the hands of the Irish. After repeated and fruitless attacks upon the castle, the besiegers, despairing at length of success, had resorted to a stratagem which, if at all fairly represented, must for ever draw down the historian's most unmitigated reprobation on all those persons, lay and clerical, who took part in so base and impious a fraud. In order to inveigle Fitz-Stephen into the surrender of

* "We have a sample," says Dr. Lanigan, "of the hopeful kind of ecclesiastics who came over to Ireland with Strongbow and others, in one Nicholas, a monk who fought in their armies. . . . Such were the missionaries who, according to the wish of Adrian IV., were to establish pure religion and sound ecclesiastical discipline in Ireland."—*Eccles. Hist.* chap. xxix. note 106.

his castle, information was conveyed to him that Roderic and his army had made themselves masters of Dublin; and a parley was proposed for the purpose of satisfying him of the truth and accuracy of this intelligence. With utter disregard as well of religious as of all moral obligations, they brought forward, it is said, at this conference, the bishops of Wexford and Kildare, who, coming arrayed in their sacred vestments to the brink of the ditch, there took a most solemn oath, upon some relics of saints which they had brought for the purpose, that the Irish were in possession of Dublin; that the whole of the garrison, including the earl himself, Fitz-Gerald and Raymond, were all cut to pieces; and that the monarch was now on his march to Wexford, to extirpate the remains of the English adventurers in that quarter. It was partly out of friendship, as they pretended, to Fitz-Stephen, on account of his mild government of the territory over which he had been placed, that they now communicated to him this information; and, should he think right, while there was yet time for his rescue, to avail himself of their protection, they solemnly promised to convey both himself and his garrison safely to Wales.

Deceived by this gross stratagem, Fitz-Stephen surrendered himself into the hands of these perjurers; when instantly the mask they had assumed was thrown off, some of his companions were basely murdered by them, and the remainder, after having been beaten almost to death, were, together with himself, chained and thrown into prison.

Scarcely had this infamous fraud been accomplished, when, to the utter dismay of all the accomplices in it, intelligence reached them that earl Strongbow, having forced the Irish to raise the siege of Dublin, was advancing with his army to Wexford. Thrown into consternation by this news, they immediately set fire to the town, and taking with them their effects, and all the

prisoners they had made at the Carrig, retired to an island, lying off the harbour, called Beg-Erin, or Little Erin.*

On Strongbow's arrival in the neighbourhood of the scene of this transaction, he had to endure the double mortification of at once hearing of the melancholy fate of his friends, and finding himself debarred from even the satisfaction of taking revenge; for, on his approach to the town of Wexford, he was met by persons sent from Beg-Eri, to give him warning that, should he attempt to invade or molest that retreat, the heads of all the English prisoners would be cut off and sent to him. As there appeared no means, therefore, of releasing Fitz-Stephen at present, the earl and his companions abandoned their intention of proceeding to Wexford, and "with sorrow in their hearts," says the chronicler, "turned their reins towards Waterford."†

It has been already stated that Raymond le Gros, whom Strongbow had sent with a letter of submission to his royal master, returned to Ireland without any answer from the king. In the intelligence, however, brought by him, there appeared sufficient encouragement to induce the earl to despatch another envoy, and Hervey of Mount-Maurice, his own uncle, was the person selected for this mission. On the earl's arrival now

* Accordingly to Regan's account, Beckerin (as he calls it) was "a castle situated upon the river Slane."—See Ware, *Antiq.* ch. 6. at *Edri*; also ch. 30., where, in speaking of Beg-Eri, he says, "Perhaps this is the island which Pliny calls *Edros*, and Ptolemy, *Edri*." This island was celebrated for a monastery built upon it by St. Ibar; in reference to which there occurs a passage in the life of St. Abban, another Irish saint, which will be found confirmatory of what I have above stated, as to the extent of the territory anciently called hy-Kinsellagh. "In famosissimo quondam et sanctissimo monasterio suo quod Beg-Erin, id est, Parva Hibernia vocatur, et situm est ad Australem partem regionis Huius Kensellach."—Quoted by Usher, *Eccles. Primord. Addend. et Emendand.*

O'Halloran's Irish learning, such as it was, ought to have taught him better than to identify Hy-Kinsellagh in extent with Wexford. "Mac-Murchad," he says (book xiii. ch. 1.), "was to possess the country of Hy-Kinsellagh, or Wexford."

† "Quibus auditis, non sine magna mentium amaritudine versis in dexteram loris, versus Guaterfordiam iter arripiunt."—*Hib. Expugnat.* l. l. c. 28.

at Waterford, he found this gentleman just landed from England, charged with messages and letters from persons whom he had consulted, all advising him to lose not a moment in presenting himself before the king. This advice Strongbow followed without delay, and, repairing to England, waited upon Henry, who was then at Newnham in Gloucestershire, with a large army in a state of preparation to pass over with him into Ireland. To meet the expenses of this expedition he had levied, from the landed proprietors throughout his dominions, that pecuniary composition, in lieu of personal service, called *Escuage*, or *Scutage*; and from the disbursements made for the arms, provision, and shipping of the army, as set forth in the *Pipe Roll* of the year 1171, still preserved, it would appear that the force raised for the expedition was much more numerous than has been represented by historians.*

Still maintaining his tone of displeasure towards Strongbow, the king refused at first to admit him into his presence; but the loyal readiness evinced by the earl to submit unconditionally to his will, soon smoothed the way to peace, and succeeded in satisfying as well the pride as the self-interest of offended majesty. Through the intervention, accordingly, of Hervey, a reconciliation was easily effected;—the terms agreed upon being, that the earl, renewing his homage and oath of fealty, should surrender to the king the city of Dublin

* *Lynch, Feudal Dignities, &c.* Some of the smaller payments, as given by this writer from the *Pipe Roll* (17 Henry II.), preserved in *Somerset House*, are not a little curious. Thus we find 26s. 2d. paid for adorning and gilding the king's swords; 12l. 10s. for 1000 pounds of wax; 118s. 7d. for 569 pounds of almonds sent to the king in Ireland; 15s. 11d. for five carts, bringing the clothes of the king's household from Stafford to Chester, on their way to that country; 10l. 7s. for spices and electuaries for *Josephus Medicus*, his majesty's doctor; 4l. for one ship carrying the armour, &c. of Robert Poer; 29l. 0s. 2d. for wine bought at Waterford; 9s. 8d. for the carriage of the king's treasure from Oxford to Winton; 333l. 6s. 8d. to John the marshal, to carry over to the king in Ireland; and 200l. to the king's chamberlain, to bring to his majesty on returning from that country.

and the adjacent country, together with all the other sea-port towns and forts possessed by him in Ireland; the king, on his part, graciously consenting that all the other Irish possessions of Strongbow should remain in perpetuity to that earl and his heirs, to be held under homage and fealty to the English crown.

At the time of Henry's proclamation against Strongbow, he had also seized on the English estate of that nobleman, as forfeited to the crown by his act of disobedience.* The restoration of this property was one of the fruits of the reconciliation now effected; and the whole having been satisfactorily arranged, the king, attended by Strongbow, proceeded, by the Severn-side and western coast of Wales, to Pembroke, where he took up his abode for the short interval during which the ships, for the transport of his army to Ireland, were collecting in Milford Haven. Even here, however, the jealous wakefulness of Henry's fears, with regard to the danger likely to result from Strongbow's example, very strikingly manifested itself; as, during his stay at this time in Wales, he called severely to account all those barons† who had suffered an expedition, forbidden by himself, to sail unopposed from their coasts; and even punished this proof of disloyalty, as he deemed it, by seizing on the castles of these lords and garrisoning them with his own troops.

The whole armament being now in a state of readiness, the king, having previously performed his devotions in the church of St. David, embarked at Milford, attended by Strongbow, William Fitz-Aldelm, Humphry de Bohem, Hugh de Lacy, Robert Fitz-Barnard, and other lords. His entire force, which was distributed in 400 ships, ‡ consisted of 500 knights, and about 4000 men at arms; and, after a prosperous voyage,

A. D.
1171.

* *Gulielm Neubrig.*

† *Hibern. Expugnata lib. i. cap. 29.*

‡ "Applicuit in Hibernia cum 400 magnis navibus." Lord Lyttelton makes the number of ships 440; but I know not on what authority. Gerwas, Diceto, and Bromton, all agree in the number I have stated.

he landed at Croch,* a place near Waterford, on St. Luke's day, the 18th of October, A. D. 1171.†

During the whole of these momentous and singular transactions, while a foreign prince was thus dealing with Ireland as with his own rightful property, and affecting to consider as rebels to himself all those minor intruders and depredators, who had but anticipated him by a few months, and on a smaller scale, in that work of usurpation he was now come by wholesale to accomplish,—during all these deliberate arrangements for the utter extinction of an ancient nation's independence, the nation itself was awaiting tamely, and with scarcely even a show of alarm or resistance, the result. As if exhausted, or rather satisfied, with the few feeble and scattered efforts already made by them, the people now heard, without even an attempt to arouse the national spirit, of the mighty preparations in progress to invade their shores, and stood unmoved as if under the influence of some baleful fascination, to allow the collar of political slavery to be slipped quietly round their necks.

One short and unsupported effort was, indeed, ventured upon by the veteran O'Ruarc, who, encouraged by the weakened state of the garrison of Dublin, in consequence of the troops drawn from thence by Strongbow on his departure, raised hastily a force in Ulster and East Connaught, and made a furious assault on the walls of the city. But, as usual, the want of pa-

* Bromton, — "Cum magno gaudio in Hibernia applicuit, in loco qui dicitur *Croch* qui a Waterfordia per octo miliaria distat et ibi nocte remansit." This place is supposed to be the Crook, over against Hook Tower.—See Whitelaw's *Hist. of Dublin*. Introduct.

† Doctor Leland has fallen, somewhat strangely, into the error of advancing the date of Henry's arrival to "the October of the year eleven hundred and seventy-two;" a mark of carelessness, unquestionably, but by no means meriting the grave severity with which Dr. O'Connor remarks upon it, as being a false step at the threshold, which inspires distrust in all that follows:—"In ipso itaque limine titubantis, et in rebus precipuis, quid in minutioribus sperandum sit accurate scriptum, quod critico acamine ad trutinam revocatum, vix divinari relinquunt."—*Rev. Hib. Scrip.* tom. 2. cxv. It should be recollected, also, that for the date 1172, Leland has the authority of Giraldus Cambrensis.

tient coolness and discipline rendered even valour itself of little avail. Just as the Irish were rushing forward to the attack, Milo de Cogan sallied forth unexpectedly from the gates, and charging them, at the head of a small but gallant band, put the whole multitude, with immense slaughter, to rout. With the exception of this one headlong effort, not a single movement appears to have been hazarded against the common enemy, during the whole interval which elapsed between the departure of Strongbow from the country and his return in the train of a foreign sovereign. Nor was it that the habitual warfare of the natives was, in other respects, suspended at this crisis, for, on the contrary, there occur few periods in our history during which its annals are found more crowded with records of civil strife; and a fierce war was actually raging in the heart of Ulster* at the very moment when a foreign prince was about to descend upon the shores, and reduce all parties alike to one common level of subjection and vassalage.

Soon after his landing† at Waterford, the king was waited upon by a deputation of those citizens of Wexford who had been concerned in the atrocious capture of Fitz-Stephen; nor could he have been presented with more genuine specimens of that worst species of Irishmen, at once cruel and servile, tyrants as well as slaves, who were destined in future to render themselves useful as tools of the English power. Making a merit in the eyes of Henry, of their flagitious conduct towards Fitz-Stephen, these citizens brought with them their captive in fetters, like a criminal, and presented him to the king, as "one who had made war without his sovereign's permission in Ireland, and had been thereby the occasion of much enmity and

* *Rer Hib. Script. tom. ii. cxiii. note.*

† Hoveden mentions, as a lucky omen, that on Henry's landing a white hare was seen to jump out of a neighbouring hedge. The animal was caught immediately, says the chronicler, and presented to the king "in signum victoriæ."

wrong." Though at once fathoming the mean policy of his new courtiers, Henry was resolved not to be behindhand with them in dissimulation, but, affecting sincere indignation against Fitz-Stephen * for "daring to attempt the conquest of Ireland without his leave," he ordered him to be handcuffed and chained, and committed him, as a prisoner of state, to Reginald's Tower.

The design of the king was clearly to impress on the minds of the people that he came rather to protect them from the aggressions of others than to acquire any advantage or possession for himself; and this skilful policy it was, combined with the total want of a united or national spirit among the people themselves, that rendered his progress now, as far as it extended, much more like the visit of an acknowledged sovereign to his own states and subjects than the first descent of a royal invader upon wholly alien and yet unconquered shores.† After receiving the homage of the King of Desmond, who came forth voluntarily with offers of submission and tribute, Henry advanced, at the head of his army,

* See Stanhurst (lib. iii.), who, in his usual inflated style, has made the most of this incident. The following may be taken as a specimen of the mock-heroic language which he supposes the king to address to Fitz-Stephen:—"Quare oculorum ardore in reum contumeliis opertum atque oppressum intuens: quis tu es, inquit, qui hujus reipub. munia sustinere audeas? Nihil, præter regiam dignitatem ambitiosum tuum animum satiare poterit? Me doctore, condiscas optabilius esse nobis servire, quam alienis imperare."

† It has been stated by Bromton, by the abbot of Peterborough, and by others, that all the archbishops and bishops of Ireland waited upon Henry on his arrival, and not only tendered their own obedience, but gave him letters with their seals attached ("litteras," says Bromton, "cum sigillis suis in modum cartæ pendentibus"), confirming to him and his heirs the sovereignty over Ireland for ever. But there is not the slightest foundation for this story, of which neither Giraldus nor any of our Irish authorities say a single word. A still more glaring mistake respecting the history of this period has been fallen into by Camden, who supposes a meeting of the states of Ireland to have taken place on Henry's arrival, at which Roderic O'Connor and most of the other princes attended, and there made over to him, by charters signed and delivered, their whole power and authority; in consequence of which, as he states, pope Adrian invested Henry with the sovereignty of that kingdom. It need hardly be added, that no such proceeding of the states occurred, and that the grant to Henry, by the pope, of the sovereignty of Ireland, had taken place near sixteen years before.

to Lismore, and from thence, after a sojourn of about two days, proceeded to Cashel, near which, on the banks of the river Suir, he was met by Donald O'Brian, * King of Thomond, who, surrendering to him his city of Limerick, became tributary and swore fealty. Having placed rulers of his own over Cork and Limerick, the king next received the submission of Donchad of Ossory, and O'Faolon of the Desies; and the example of these princes was speedily followed by all the other inferior potentates of Munster, each of whom, after a most courteous reception, was dismissed to his territory laden with royal gifts.

From Cashel Henry returned, through Tipperary, to Waterford, where his prisoner Fitz-Stephen being again brought before him, the sight of so brave a man in chains, after the many gallant services performed by him, touched the king's heart with compassion, and, at the intercession of some of his nobles, he readily consented to set him free. Acting on the same principle, however, as in Strongbow's case, he asserted his own right to the possession of Wexford, and annexed that town and the territory belonging to it to his royal demesne in the island. It is satisfactory, too, to learn that some of those base wretches, who, having possessed themselves of Fitz-Stephen by treachery, gave him up as a tribute of servility to a new master, suffered, themselves, the ignominious death they so richly deserved.

After remaining for a short time at Waterford, the king marched to Dublin,—a city which, from the extent of its commerce, had risen at that time to such importance, as to have become, according to an old

* This brave but unprincipled chieftain was one of the first, according to the *Munster Annals*, cited by Vallancey, who availed himself of the alliance of the new comers in making war against his own countrymen. In the year 1170 he fought several battles against Roderic, assisted by the forces of Fitz-Stephen; in 1171, he paid homage and delivered hostages to the same prince; and, in a few months after, as we see, swore homage and allegiance to Henry II.

English chronicler, the rival of London.* Here he was joyfully, we are told, received by the inhabitants; while all the neighbouring lords and chieftains hastened to proffer their allegiance; and among the rest, O'Ruarc of Breffny, so long the liegeman of Roderic, now joined in the train of the English sovereign,† and became his tributary and vassal. In the midst of this general defection, the monarch Roderic himself,—an object, for the first time in his life, of sympathy and respect,—having collected together his provincial troops, and taken up a position on the banks of the Shannon, appeared disposed for a time to follow the example of the hardy Ultonians, and to make a last stand for the independence of the nation. This show of resistance, however, was not of long duration; as, shortly after, he consented to meet, on the borders of his Connaught-kingdom, Hugh de Lacy and William Fitz-Aldelm, the persons empowered to receive his act of homage, and treat of the tribute he was to pay. These preliminary mat-

* "Diveliunm, urbem maritimam, totius Hiberniæ Metropolim, portuque celeberrimo in commerciis et comestibus nostrarum æmulam Landoniarum."—*Guliel. Neubrig. Rerum Angl.* l. 2. xxvi.

† Adverting to the "vain and ridiculous parade," as he describes it, "of English writers" respecting Henry, O'Halloran says,—“We are told that his army proceeded in slow and solemn marches throughout the country, in order to strike the rude inhabitants with the splendour and magnificence of their procession; and we have been already entertained with the terror which the appearance of Fitz-Stephen and his armed forces impressed on the natives, who had never beheld the like! Assertions of this kind might indeed appear plausible, had this people dwelt on the other side of the Atlantic; but, when a brave and polished people were the subjects, the futility of the assertion diverts our thoughts from choler and contempt. The reader has been already sufficiently acquainted with the distinguished figure which the Irish nation cut in arts and arms; he has heard how remarkably attentive they were to the article of their armour; that their corselets and head-pieces were ornamented with gold; that the handles of their swords were of the same metal; and the shields of the knights and of the nobility were mostly of pure silver! he has been informed that their heavy-armed infantry were cased in armour from head to foot; and he must be convinced that the equestrian orders among the Celts of Europe originated from hence.”—Book xiii. chap. 2.

Could anything add to the feeling of melancholy and shame with which this sad period of our history is contemplated, it would be assuredly the pompous vapour thus thrown around it by such weak and vaunting historians as O'Halloran.

ters having been arranged, peace was declared between the two sovereigns.

The festival of Christmas being now at hand, the English king, who was no less knowingly practised in all the lesser and lighter policy of his station than in the deeper and more important, proposed to celebrate that festive season in the metropolis of his new kingdom, with all the state which the limited resources of his present situation would permit; and, as the city afforded no building sufficiently large to contain his numerous court, a large pavilion was raised temporarily without the walls, constructed of smoothed twigs, or wattles, according to the Irish fashion;* and here the guests, both English and native, were feasted with sumptuous hospitality. The Irish princes and nobles, present on this occasion, appear to have come but as curious spectators of the feast: till, being invited by the king to join in the Christmas cheer, they took their places at the royal board, and were, it is said, struck with admiration both at "the plenty of the English table and the goodly courtesy of the attendants."†

Early in the year 1172 a synod was held, by the order of Henry, at Cashel, concerning the acts of which there has been handed down, from historian to historian, much of ignorant, and, in some instances, wilful misrepresentation. It will be recollected that the principal object which Adrian professed to have at heart in bestowing the sovereignty of Ireland on the English monarch, was the reformation of the alleged abuses of the Church of that realm, for which he looked to

A. D.
1172.

* "Ibi fecit sibi construi palatium regium miro artificio de viris levigatis ad modum patrie illius constructum, in quo ipso cum Regibus et principibus Hibernie festum solemne tenuit die Natali Domini."—*Hoveden*.

† "Dubliniam terre illius principes ad Curiam videndam accessere quam plurimi. Ubi et lautam Anglicanæ mensæ copiam venustissimum quoque verna obsequium plurimum admirantes." It is also mentioned by the chronicler that, at Henry's desire, they were induced to partake of some crane's flesh,—a food which, till then, it seems, they had always held in abhorrence.—"Carne gruina quam hactenus abhorruerant, regia voluntate passim per aulam vesci ceperunt."—*Hibern. Espug.* l. i. c. 32.

the pious efforts of its new sovereign ; and, the synod now held being meant as a redemption of this pledge, it is obvious that as strong a case would be made out against the Irish Church as could decently be hazarded, for the purpose both of justifying the grounds or pretext upon which the pope had acted, and enhancing the merit of his royal vicègerent in performing effectually so urgent and arduous a task. With all these pretences, however, of reformation, it will be seen in the few following decrees,—the most important of all those passed by the synod,—how insignificant, after all, was the amount of reform which it appeared the Irish Church wanted, and to obtain which was the pretended object of Adrian's grant of Ireland to the English king.

It was decreed, "1. That all the faithful throughout Ireland should contract and observe lawful marriages, rejecting those with their relations, either by consanguinity or affinity. 2. That infants should be catechised before the doors of the church, and baptised in the holy font in the baptismal churches. 3. That all the faithful should pay the tithe of animals, corn, and other produce to the church of which they are parishioners. 4. That all ecclesiastical lands, and properly connected with them, be quite exempt from the exactions of all laymen. And especially, that neither the petty kings, nor counts, nor any powerful men in Ireland, nor their sons with their families, should exact, as was usual, victuals and hospitality, or entertainments, in the ecclesiastical districts, or presume to extort them by force ; and that the detestable food or contributions which used to be required four times in the year, by the neighbouring counts, from farms belonging to the churches, should not be claimed any more."

These, and one or two other such regulations,* having

* Among these there is one regulating the testamentary disposal of property, the chief provision of which is as follows:—"That all the faithful lying in sickness do, in the presence of their confessor and neighbours,

no reference whatever to religious dogmas, to matters of faith, or even to points of essential discipline, comprise the whole of the wonderful reforms, for which a kingdom was not thought too costly a price; and, in speaking of which, a court-flatterer of those times says, "It was worthy and just that Ireland should receive a better form of living from England, seeing that to its magnanimous king she entirely owed whatever advantages she enjoyed both as to church and state, and that the manifold abuses which had prevailed in the country, had, since his coming, fallen into disuse."^{*}

As neither in the nature nor the extent of the few abuses which the synod of Cashel professed to rectify, is there found anything to justify this pompous vaunt, succeeding writers have endeavoured to prop the misrepresentation by invention,—alleging that the decree relative to marriage, which regarded really only the degrees of consanguinity within which it was lawful to

make their will with due solemnity, dividing, in case they have wives and children (their own debts and servants' wages being excepted), all their movable goods into three parts, and bequeathing one for the children, another for the lawful wife, and a third for the funeral obsequies."

^{*} *Hibern. Expug* l. i. c. 34.—The whole of this passage, which clearly, on the face of it, is nothing more than a laudatory comment annexed by Giraldus to his report of the proceedings of the synod, is strangely represented, both by lord Lyttelton and Leland, as the language of the synod itself,—a comment of that body on their own acts, and a tribute of flattery to their royal master. This mistake, which, in two such writers, was clearly not wilful, can only be accounted for by their having relied too much upon Hooker's translation, in which the passage is made to assume an appearance of the import they have given to it: and that such was the source of their mistake appears the more probable from their having also followed Hooker in a mistranslation made by him, not without design, of a passage which soon after follows. Giraldus, still speaking in his own person, remarks, that the manifold abuses which had prevailed in the church previously to Henry's coming, had now gone into disuse—"in desuetudinem abiére." But to say that the synod had met but for the purpose of abolishing abuses which had already gone into disuse, would have appeared, of course, ridiculous. In order, therefore, to accommodate the meaning of the passage to the supposition of its having formed a part of the synod's decrees, the words "in desuetudinem abiére" have been rendered by Hooker, "are now abolished;" and in this mistranslation both lord Lyttelton and Leland have, without reference to the original, followed him.

In Wilkins's *Concilia*, as well as in the account of the synod, by Lanigan (chap. xix. note 12.), the Acts of the synod and Giraldus's comment upon them are kept correctly distinct.

marry (and which were extended to an unusually rigorous point in Ireland),* was enacted in consequence of the prevalence of polygamy † among the Irish.

According to the same veracious authorities, the decree relating to baptism had for its object to put down a practice also common, as they allege, among the richer natives, of baptising their new-born infants in milk.‡ For neither of these often repeated assertions does there appear to have been the least foundation in truth.

In addition to the decree of this synod, above-mentioned, exempting lands and other property belonging to the Church from all impositions exacted by the laity, there was also another relieving the clergy from any share in the payment of the *eric*, or blood-fine, which the kindred of a layman, convicted of homicide, were compelled to pay among them to the family of the slain; and the extension of such favours and immunities to the Church, though by no means in accordance with Henry's general policy, appeared to him an expedient necessary to be adopted in Ireland, where the support of a strong party among the natives, was indispensable towards the establishment of his power; and the great influence gained by the clergy, over all ranks, rendered them the most useful and legitimate instruments he

* While the Church, in general, did not extend the prohibition of marriage beyond the fourth degree of consanguinity, the canons of the Irish Church would not, for a long time, allow of marriage within the seventh. Thus, in the treatise *de Statu Ecclesiæ*, preserved by Usher, it is said, "Conjugatorum est, nullam usque in sextam, vel etiam septimam progeniem sanguine sibi conjunctam, aut illi quam habuerit aut quam habuit proximas, vel matrem ducere uxorem."—*Vet. Epist. Hibern. Sylloge. Ep. xxx.*

† The chronicler Bromton even goes so far as, on the strength solely of this decree, to accuse the Irish of marrying their sisters:—"Plerique enim illorum quot uxores volebant tot habebant; et etiam cognatas suas et germanas habere solebant uxores."

‡ After stating that, in the whole course of his inquiries into the religious practices of the Irish, he found no instance of this sort of baptism, Dr. Lanigan adds, that "perhaps the notion of baptising in milk was taken from the Irish having probably retained the ancient practice of giving milk to the newly baptised, which, as those ignorant calumniators did not understand the meaning of it, they changed into actual baptism in milk."—Chap. xxix. § 4.

could employ. From the same motive, doubtless, the payment of tithes, which the Irish had never, during their unreformed state, observed, was now enjoined by Henry's council, with a hope that they would serve as a lasting bribe to the Church. But the people of this country were as little disposed to adopt new observances as to forget or surrender the old; and accordingly, when Cambrensis visited Ireland, several years after the date of this synod, he found marriages within the seven prohibited degrees still practised, and tithes still unpaid.

Besides this synod, which was employed almost wholly upon ecclesiastical affairs, there is stated to have been also held by Henry a council, or Parliament, at Lismore, in which "the laws of England were gratefully accepted by all present, and, under the sanction of a solemn oath, established." * It is by no means improbable that, among the acts of authority exercised by him, while in Ireland, he may have, more than once, held what was called a "Curia Regis," or Council of the Realm, for the purpose of conferring with his prelates and magnates on the important matters in which he was engaged. But to apply to a council of this kind the name of "Parliament," is, if not an anachronism in language, at least a use of the term calculated to mislead;† as that form of legislative council to which we, at present, give the name of Parliament, did not develope itself, however long its rudiments may have been in existence, for more than a hundred years after this period.

With regard to the important act of policy which is said to have arisen out of the deliberations at Lismore,

* "Sed rex pater, antequam ab Hybernia rediret, apud Lissemor Concilium congregavit, ubi leges Angliæ ab omibus sunt grataster receptæ, et juratoria cautione præstita, confirmatæ.—*Matth. Paris.*

In reference to this council, held by Henry at Lismore, Mr Shaw Mason mentions, as rather a curious circumstance, that—"the duke of Rutland, when viceroy, called a privy council at the castle of Lismore, and issued proclamations from it."—*Parochial Survey.*

† The question with respect to the "Modus tenendi Parliamentum," said to have been sent into Ireland by Henry II., I shall have, at a later period, a more fit opportunity of considering.

—that of communicating to Ireland the laws and usages of England,—a very false notion has been entertained by some writers, who, taking for granted that, under the head of “Ireland,” the natives themselves must have been included, conceive the Irish to have been equally sharers in the benefit of this transaction, and to have received thankfully the substitution of the laws of England for their own.* But such was by no means the real nature of this legislative act of the king, the sole object of which was to insure to his English subjects, settling in Ireland, the continued enjoyment of the laws and usages of that country from whence they had sprung, in return for their continued allegiance to him and his heirs in the new territories which they had adopted.

So far was Henry, indeed, from wishing to innovate on the ancient laws of the land, that in the synod held, as we have seen, at Cashel, under his authority, a direct sanction was tacitly given to some of the most inveterate of those old Irish abuses of which so much is heard in the subsequent history of the country. For it is clear, that, in exempting specially the body of the clergy from Coyu,† Coshering, the payment of Eric, and other such exactions, that synod left these old laws and customs still in full force, as regarded the laity.

* Thus lord Lyttelton :—“It is reasonable to infer that a reformation had been made, not only in the spiritual, but civil, state of Ireland, before this time (the time of the synod of Cashel), by giving the Irish a better constitution of government, and a better rule of life and action than their barbarous Brehon law. Accordingly we are told by Matthew Paris, that a council, or parliament,” &c; and again :—“However this may have been, the communicating to Ireland the laws and customs of England was unquestionably a great boon to the people of that country, and a most wise act of policy in the king who did it.”—Book iv.

It is rather singular that a notion, so wholly at variance with all subsequent facts, should have acquired so wide a currency. See Ware, who adopts the same false view. Even Mr O'Connor (*Dissert.* sect. 20) understands the result of the Council at Lismore to have been “a grant of the laws and constitution of England to the Irish,”—a conclusion in which he is followed, almost verbally, by Plowden.—*Hist. Review.*

† Called by the Irish themselves, *Bonaght*. “This extortion (says sir John Davies) was originally Irish; for they used to lay Bonaght upon their people, and never gave their soldiers any other pay.”—*Hist. Discov.*

We shall find, as we proceed, that the attachment to traditional usages and observances which so strongly characterised the native Irish, was by them communicated, together with many other features of the national character, to the descendants of the foreigners who had settled among them; insomuch, that the spirit of English legislation has been forced to accommodate itself to this jealous reverence of the past;* and, throughout the statutes and ordinances extended to Ireland, exceptions in favour of the old usages and customs of the land will be found of very frequent occurrence. Even in the Magna Charta, as extended to this country, a recognition of its old laws and usages is to be traced;—a number of minute differences being discoverable between the English and Irish charters, all referable to the over-ruling force of the customs of ancient Ireland, before which even the legislation of her foreign masters was compelled to bow. So far was this deference, indeed, carried, that, in the few instances which occur in later times, of the grant of dignities to native chieftains, it was thought expedient, in consequence of the ancient Irish law of succession, according to which honours and possessions did not descend hereditarily, but by election, to confer such dignities only during life.†

Among the enactments of the king and his council, at this time, was one known, at a later period, as the statute of Henry Fitz-Empress, by which it was provided, that, in case of the death of any chief governor, the chancellor, treasurer, chief-justices, and certain other officers should be empowered, with the assent of the

* See Lynch's *View of the Legal Institutions, etc.*, in which several of these variances in the two charters are pointed out.

† A remarkable instance of this sort of compliance with the spirit of the ancient law of Ireland is found in the reign of queen Mary, when Kavenagh, a descendant of the kings of Leinster, was created a peer, by the title of baron Balyane, but still, in conformity with the old Irish custom, was, by the same patent, nominated captain of his sept, or nation; and, as such, permitted to have a body-guard of hoblars (horse) and kerns, or infantry.

lords spiritual and temporal, to proceed to the election of a successor to that office.

It is almost superfluous to observe that, in all the laws and ordinances enacted by Henry, during his brief stay in Ireland,* for the foundation and future government of the new settlement, he was guided wholly by the spirit and principles of the feudal polity according to which the great body of the English laws was at that time modelled. Thus the estates and dignities conferred by him upon his officers, who had been already most of them tenants *in capite* from the crown, were granted on consideration of homage and fealty, and of military or honorary services to be rendered to himself and his heirs. Of such importance did he conceive the general acceptance of this system, and of the duties, services, and conditions enforced by it, that, even in the instance of Strongbow, who, as we have seen, acquired, by his marriage with Eva, the principality of Leinster, it was imperatively required, that he should resign the possession of that estate, and accept a new grant of it from the king, subject to the feudal conditions of homage and military service. With the view, too, of balancing the weight of so powerful a vassal, he granted by charter to Hugh de Lacy, whom he had appointed Justiciary of Ireland, the signory of the land of Meath, to be held of him and his heirs by the service of fifty knights.

With respect to Meath, we have already seen that the Irish monarch, Roderic O'Connor, having taken forcible possession of this territory, which belonged, hereditarily, to the princes of the house of Melachlin, had appointed his trusty liegeman, O'Ruarc, to be the temporary ruler of East Meath, retaining the western parts of the province in his own hands. Following but too closely this flagrant

* To Henry is attributed, by Leland and others, the credit of having caused the territories subject to him to be divided into shires, or counties; as well as of appointing therein sheriffs and other officers, according to the English model. But it was clearly in John's reign that these institutions were for the first time introduced into Ireland.

example of usurpation, Henry granted the same territory to one of his own followers; and thus, with a disregard to the national feelings, as impolitic as it was unjust, left to remain as a standing insult in the eyes of succeeding generations, the spectacle of an English lord holding possession of the ancient patrimony of the kings of Tara.*

The territory thus transferred to Hugh de Lacy contained, as it appears, about 800,000 acres; and the baron himself, and his family after him, held their courts therein with an extent of jurisdiction and cognizance of pleas which, as trenching upon the rights of the crown, it was found, at a subsequent period, necessary to repress. It seems to have been also soon after the arrival of Henry that large possessions in the counties of Limerick, Cork, and Kerry were granted to the ancestors of the earl of Desmond.†

There was yet another source of honour and wealth of which the politic king adroitly availed himself, as well for the reward of his most active chiefs, as for the establishment in his new kingdom of a feudal nobility attached hereditarily to the crown by oath of fealty and honorary services; and this was the introduction into Ireland of the various high offices of constable, marshal, seneschal, and other such hereditary dignities, which had been attached to the king's court in England from the time of the Norman conquest. On the favoured Hugh de Lacy the office of lord constable was bestowed,‡ while the dignity of lord marshal is supposed

* "The transferring an ancient kingdom of Ireland from the present Irish possessors, and from every branch of that race which could legally claim the inheritance of it, to an English lord and his heirs, was a measure which the nation would not easily approve, or even forgive."—*Lord Lytton*, book iv.

† "One of the territories thus obtained by them was a district now called the barony of Connal, or Connelloe, in the county of Limerick, containing upwards of 100,000 acres of land; and this tract, which in ancient documents is called "Okonayl" and "Ogonneloe," was ceded, to them by the native family, or sept, of O'Connel, in consideration of lands assigned them in the counties of Kerry and Clare, where branches of that family continue to the present day."—*Lynch*.

‡ In the year 1185 he witnessed, as Constable of Ireland, prince John's

to have been borne by Strongbow; and, either during the king's stay in Ireland, or some time after, the office of high steward, or seneschal, was conferred upon Sir Bertram de Vernon.

Among the ancient honorary offices of the court, both in France and England, none stood higher in rank or estimation than the "*Pincerna Regis*," or king's butler,—an officer who, in the former country, even disputed the precedency of the constable of France.* On Theobald Walter, the ancestor of the earls of Ormonde, this high dignity was conferred by Henry soon after 1170, and from a motive, it is said, which somewhat enhances the interest and memorableness of the event. Desirous of relieving his character from the weight of odium which the fate of Becket had drawn down upon it, the king availed himself at this time of every opportunity of conferring wealth and honours upon the relatives of that prelate;† and it is supposed that to the circumstance of their being descended from the sister of Thomas à Becket, the family of Le Boteler were chiefly indebted for the high dignities they enjoyed.

Early in February, 1172, the king removed from Dublin to Waterford, having left Hugh de Lacy his governor of the former city, with a guard of twenty knights, assisted by Maurice Fitz-Gerald and Robert Fitz-Stephen, with a similar train. During the whole of the winter months so remarkably tempestuous had been the weather, that all communication with the coasts of England was interrupted; and, the continued storms preventing the arrival of intelligence from his

charter to the abbey of "*Valle Salutis*," as well as several other charters executed in that reign.—Lynch, *Feudal Dignities*.

* A still more lofty notion may be formed of the honour attached to this office from the circumstance of Henry himself having attended on his son, as chief butler, at that prince's coronation.

† "He hoped," says Camden, "to redeem his credit in the world by preferring the relations of Thomas Becket to wealth and honours."

According to Carte and Lodge, the butlership was not conferred upon Theobald Walter till the year 1177, a lapse of time which seems to lessen a good deal the probability of the favour having originated in a feeling of the king respecting Becket.

other dominions, the mind of the king was kept in a constant state of suspense. At length, about the middle of Lent, there arrived couriers from the Continent with alarming intelligence, to the effect that the Cardinals Albert and Theodine, who had been sent into Normandy to investigate the circumstances of Becket's death, had summoned Henry to appear before them, threatening, in the event of his not soon presenting himself, to lay all his kingdom under an interdict.*

He had intended, with a view to the subjection of Roderic, to defer his departure to the following summer;† and, though it be now but an idle and melancholy speculation, to consider how far, under other circumstances, the fortunes of Ireland might have been more prosperous, we cannot but regret that he was so soon interrupted in the task of providing for her future settlement and government, as there can hardly be a doubt that, at such a crisis, when so much was to be instituted and originated on which not only the well-being of the new colony itself, but also of its acceptance with the mass of the natives, would depend, the direct and continuous application of a mind like Henry's to the task, would have presented the best, if not perhaps sole, chance of an ultimately prosperous result, which a work, in any hands so delicate and difficult, could have been expected to afford. This chance, unluckily, the necessity of his immediate departure for ever foreclosed. To effect good would have required time, and the immediate superintendence of his own mind and eye, whereas mischief was a work more rapid in its accomplishment, and admitting more easily of being delegated. On the ready instruments he left behind him now devolved the too sure accomplishment of this task;—his pro-

* For the tremendous consequences of a sentence of interdict, see Hume, chap. 11.

† Benedict, abbot of Peterborough, referring to the arrival of the cardinals, says,—“*Nisi eorum adventus eum impedisset, proposuit in proxima sequenti estate ire cum exercitu suo ad subjiendum sibi regem Cognatensem qui ad eum venire volebat.*”

digal grants to his English followers and their creatures having established in the land an oligarchy of enriched upstarts, who could not prove otherwise than a scourge and curse to the doomed people whom he now delivered into their hands.

Though for the administration and security of the countries ceded to the crown he had made every requisite provision, the whole of Ulster still remained independent; and this one great exception to the recognition of his dominion must, he knew, endanger, as long as it lasted, the security of all the rest. How summarily, however, he was disposed to deal with what he considered to be his own property, appears from the charter granted by him, soon after he had taken possession of Dublin, giving that city to the inhabitants of Bristol, "to be held of him and his heirs, fully and honourably, with all the same liberties and free customs which they enjoyed at Bristol and throughout his land." The city of Waterford he gave in charge to Humphrey de Bohun, while Wexford was committed by him to William Fitz-Aldelm; the former officer having under him Robert Fitz-Bernard and Hugh de Gundeville, with a company of twenty knights, and the latter Philip de Hastings and Philip de Breuse, with a similar guard. He likewise left orders that castles should be built, with all possible expedition, in both these towns.

A. D. 1172. The urgent affairs that called him to England not admitting of any further delay, the king ordered his troops to Waterford, where his fleet was then lying, and setting sail, himself, from Wexford, on Easter Monday, which fell on the 17th of April, arrived the same day, at Port-

* "Sciatis me dedisse et concessisse et presenti charta confirmasse hominibus meis de Bristol civitatem meam de Divelin, ad inhabitandum. Quare volo et firmiter præcipio ut ipsi eam inhabitent et teneant illam de me et hæredibus meis bene et in pace," &c. A fac-simile of this curious charter, taken from the original, preserved in the archives of Dublin, may be found in the *History of Bristol*, by Seyer, who, in explanation of the meaning of the grant, quotes a passage from Camden, stating that an English colony had been transplanted by Henry from Bristol to Dublin, which latter city was, it is supposed, drained at that time of inhabitants.

lloſann, in Wales. Here, the lord of ſo many kingdoms aſſumed on landing the ſtaff of the pilgrim, and, with pious humility, proceeded on foot to the church of St. David, where he was met at the White Gate by a proceſſion of the clergy, coming forth to receive him with ſolemn honours.*

The concluſion that already has ſuggeſted itſelf, on merely ſpeculatively conſidering how far the reſults might have proved more proſperous had Henry been able to devote more time to his new kingdom, is borne out practically by the actual effects of his preſence, during the ſix months which he paſſed in the country; for, whether owing to the impoſing influence of his name, or to the hopes that generally wait on a new and untried reign, ſo long and unbroken an interval of peace as Ireland enjoyed during that time is hardly to be found at any other period of her annals.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Conference of De Lacy with O'Ruarc.—Death of O'Ruarc.—Marriage and Death of De Quincy.—Strongbow ſummoned to attend the King in France.—Rivalry between Hervey and Raymond —Strongbow returns to Ireland.—Raymond's Popularity and Success.—Retires in Discontent to Wales.—Strongbow defeated by the Irish.—Raymond is recalled.—His Marriage with Baſilia, the Earl's ſiſter.—Meath overrun and deſpoiled by Roderic.—His Retreat.—Limerick taken.—Ball of Adrian promulgated.—Raymond's Successes.—Treaty between Henry and Roderic.

THE apparent calm produced by Henry ſurvived but a ſhort time his departure. The ſeeds of diſcontent ſo abundantly ſown throughout the country, by the many

A. D.
1172.

* "Accedens itaque Mineviam devoto peregrinantium more pedes baculoque infultus, canonicorum ecclesie processione ipsum debita reverentia et honore auspicantium, apud Albam Portam obviam venit —*Hib. Expug.* c. 37.

unjust usurpations on the property of the natives which the king's grants to his lords and followers had occasioned, were quickly matured into a general feeling of hostility, which every succeeding year but rendered more bitter and deep. The grant of the whole of the principality of Meath to De Lacy was one of those encroachments on the right of the Irish to their own soil, which, though rendered familiar afterwards by repetition, must have been then as astounding from their audacity, as they were irritating, and at last infuriating, from their injustice. O'Ruarc, the party immediately aggrieved by this spoliation,* having, on the departure of the king, appealed to Hugh de Lacy for redress, it was agreed that a conference should be held on the points at issue between them, and a day and place were appointed for that purpose.

Accompanied on each side by a stipulated number of attendants, they met at a place called O'Ruarc's Hill, or, according to other accounts, the Hill of Tara, near Dublin; and, oaths and sureties having been mutually given, the two chiefs, unarmed and apart from all the rest, held their conference together, on the top of the hill, assisted but by one unarmed interpreter. While they were thus occupied, the soldiers who had accompanied O'Ruarc remained in the valley, at a little distance; while a small band of about seven or eight knights who under the command of Griffyth, the nephew of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, formed part of the guard of De Lacy, had ascended the hill, ready mounted and armed with their shields and lances, for the purpose of being near the place of conference,—having reason to appre-

* The abbé Geoghegan, with the view of making out a stronger case against the English—as if the story of their wrongs towards Ireland needed aid from the colouring of fiction—has, in place of O'Ruarc, who was himself a usurper of the dominion of Meath, taken upon him to substitute, without any authority, O'Melachlin, the hereditary chief of that territory, as having been the prince thus robbed of his kingdom to enrich an English lord.—“O'Malaghlin, prince héréditaire de la Midie, pénétré de douleur à la vue des hostilités qu'on venait d'exercer dans son pays natal,” etc.—*Hist. d'Irlande*, troisième part. chap. 1.

hend treachery on the part of O'Ruarc. In order to appear as if solely bent upon pastime, this young troop continued all the time to tilt at each other, as in the tournaments of their own country, occasionally wheeling around the spot where the two chieftains stood.

Their apprehensions, which are ascribed by the chronicler to a warning dream that had appeared to Grif-fyth, on the preceding night, proved not to have been without foundation. Whether by a preconcerted design, or, as appears more probable, in the irritation of the moment, O'Ruarc retiring, under some pretence, to the brow of the hill, made a signal to his soldiers in the valley to join him, and then returned towards De Lacy. But Maurice Fitz-Gerald, who, remembering his nephew's dream, had observed watchfully the movements of the Irish chief, now seeing him advance with pale visage and hurried strides, holding an axe uplifted threateningly in his hand,* instantly drew his own sword, and calling out to De Lacy to save himself, rushed forward in his defence. Before, however, he could reach the spot, O'Ruarc had aimed a blow at the English lord, which the interpreter, rushing in bravely between them, caught on his own arm, and fell mortally wounded. Twice did De Lacy fall in endeavouring to escape;† and was only saved by the valour of Fitz-Gerald, who opposed his sword to the axe of the Irish prince. Meantime Griffyth, with his troop of knights, having been summoned to the spot by the shout of his gallant kinsman, arrived at the same moment with the band of infantry

* No decisive conclusion as to his hostile intentions could fairly be drawn from this circumstance, it being the custom of the Irish, in those times, according to Giraldus, to carry an axe in the hand, wherever they went, as familiarly as a walking-stick:—"Semper in manu quasi pro baculo securim bajulant." He then puns, in his usual style, on this formidable habit:—"A securibus itaque nulla securitas: si securum te reputes securim senties. Te sponte in periculum mittis: si securum admittis, et securitatem amittis." *Topog. Dist. 3., c. 21.*

† "Ob fugæ maturationem Hugo de Lacy bis retro cadens." Stanishurst, in his English zeal, suppresses altogether De Lacy's endeavour to escape; and the English translator of Giraldus thus colours it over:—"In which skirmishing Hugh de Lacie was twice felled to the ground."

which O'Ruarc had called up out of the valley. Seeing these well-appointed horsemen, and fearing that his infantry would be unable to stand their onset, the Irish prince endeavoured to escape by mounting a horse which some of his attendants had brought to him. But, while in the very act of mounting, both himself and his horse were pierced through and through by one violent thrust of Griffyth's lance, and fell dead together. The three attendants also, who, in the face of such dangers, had endeavoured to aid his escape, were cut down on the spot; and the rest of his followers flying dispersed in every direction, were most of them taken and slaughtered.

The corpse of O'Ruarc himself was beheaded, the body buried with the heels upwards, and the head, after hanging some time over one of the gates of Dublin, was sent into England to the king. This insulting treatment of the remains of one of their most popular princes was to the Irish even more galling than the wrong previously inflicted upon him; as it showed that even to remonstrate against injustice was by their new masters accounted an unpardonable and ignominious crime. In the chance conflict which led to his death, —even judging from the account given of it by one of the most prejudiced of chroniclers,—it would surely be difficult to assert that the blame of originating the fray was not fully as much imputable to the English as to the Irish. The great and sole crime, therefore, of O'Ruarc was that he, a native prince, holding from the monarch of his own country a large territory by gift, had dared to question the right of an intrusive foreign king to deprive him of this territory and bestow it upon one of his own subjects.

On the departure of the king for England, Strongbow took up his abode at Ferns, the ancient residence of the Leinster kings, and there celebrated the marriage of his daughter with Robert de Quincy, giving as her dowry the territory of the Duffreys in the county of Wexford,

and soon after appointing her husband to the high office of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster. His son-in-law's tenure, however, of these civil and military honours,* was but of very short duration. In consequence of the refusal of O'Dempsey O'Fally, a lord of Leinster, to attend his court, Strongbow marched a body of troops into that chieftain's territory, and, finding his progress unresisted, spread desolation wherever he went. On his returning, however, laden with booty, towards Kildare, just after the vanguard commanded by himself had passed through a defile which lay in their way, O'Dempsey, who had hovered for some time unperceived around them, fell suddenly upon their rear, and, in the fury of the first assault, Robert de Quincy with a number of his knights was slain, and the standard of Leinster fell into the hands of the assailants.

However much the earl may have mourned for the loss of his son-in-law, the disgrace, for the first time, thus brought upon the English arms, and the probable effect of such an occurrence in giving encouragement to the Irish, could hardly have affected him with much less real concern. But no time was left to repair the disaster; as, shortly after, he received orders from the king, who was then in France, requiring that he should join him instantly with a reinforcement in that country, where all the means he could muster together were now wanting to oppose the formidable league which his own sons had been the chief instruments in arraying against his power. This royal mandate the earl promptly obeyed, though risking, by his departure at so critical a moment, the safety of his yet unsettled possessions; and so satisfied was Henry with this proof of his alacrity and zeal, that he gave him, soon after his arrival, the custody of the castle of Gisors, the most important of all his frontier fortresses.

* "By the banner and ensign of Leinster is meant the military government of it; as the constabship was the civil authority thereof."—*Note of Harris on Regan.*

Taught thus early to see, in the misfortunes of their English rulers, some opening of hope for themselves, the Irish exulted to hear of the storm that was now gathering around the king; and openly disavowing their late submissions, seemed to be bent on availing themselves of Strongbow's absence to break out into general revolt. A spirit of discontent, too, had arisen in the English army, which promised to be favourable to their views. Hervey of Mount-Maurice, the chief in command, had rendered himself unpopular among the soldiers; while Raymond le Gros, who acted under him, and was of a far more conciliatory and attaching nature, had won for himself the favour and affections of all. Hence a jealousy arose in the mind of the former, which disturbed and embittered the whole of their intercourse and prevented their acting together with the concert necessary to success. The serious mischief that might have resulted to the English cause, from this want of concord at head-quarters, was prevented by the return of Strongbow from France. Thinking his presence to be now more wanting in Ireland, Henry had dispensed with his further services abroad, and sent him back with increased power, having invested him with the office of viceroy of the kingdom, and bestowed on him also the city of Waterford, together with a castle near Wicklow.*

Strongbow, on assuming his high office, found it beset with considerable difficulties. The troops had for want of pay and subsistence become mutinous, and attributing much of the hardships they suffered to his uncle, Hervey of Mount-Maurice, they at length presented themselves in a body before the earl, desiring that Raymond le Gros should be appointed to command them; and threatening, if their request should not be granted, either to return to their own country, or else join the forces of the Irish, who were now, in every part of the island, taking up

* Ut viri integerrimi industriam acuere, Gnesfordiam ei et castellum Wickloense in perpetuum assignavit.—*Stanikurst*.

arms.* However fatal to all discipline was the compliance with demands thus urged, Strongbow had now no other alternative, and their favourite officer, Raymond, was again placed at the head of the army.†

A. D.
1173.

Knowing that plunder was their primary object, and that the wretched natives must pay the price of his popularity, Raymond led the troops directly into the heart of Ophally, and there allowed them to ravage and plunder at their pleasure. But, this indulgence having only whetted their zest for further spoil, they made an irruption also into Munster; and, taking for granted that the inhabitants of Lismore were opulent, from their commerce with the neighbouring cities of Waterford and Cork, they entered and sacked that venerable town,‡ and extended their pillage through the whole district belonging to it. Finding some boats just arrived from Waterford, at Lismore, they embarked on board of them the greater part of their plunder, and sent them, under the conduct of an officer named De Rutherford, to Youghal. But while waiting there for a westerly wind to convey them to Waterford, they were attacked, in the mouth of the river, by a fleet of two and thirty barks, which the citizens of Cork had sent out to intercept them. A

* Hibern. Expugnatio. l. 2. c. 1.

† Ibid. l. 2. c. 2.

‡ If any reliance may be placed on the accounts given by continental scholars of the famous Irish saint Cathaldus, the school, or university, for which Lismore was celebrated, might boast as early a date as the seventh century, and was at that time, according to these authorities, frequented by students from various parts of Europe, all flocking to hear the lectures of the young and holy Cathaldus. Thus, in the poetical Life of this saint by Bonaventura Moroni:—

"Jam videas populos quos abluit advena Rhenus,
Quosque sub occiduo collustrat cardine mundi
Phœbus, Lesmoriam venisse; ut jura docentis
Ediscant, titulisque sacrent melioribus aras."

Though this poem may be questioned as historical authority, and was, therefore, not cited by me when treating of the early schools of Ireland, in the First Volume of this Work (See chapters 12, 13, and 14); yet, as affording proof of the celebrity of those schools on the Continent (more especially that of Lismore), and of the traditional fame of the scholars sent forth by them, the poem of Moroni may be regarded as strong and interesting evidence.

sharp action between the two small fleets ensued, in which the Irish, we are told, made the onset with stone-slings and axes, while the weapon of the opposite party was the cross-bow, and their defence the iron corslet.* The result was victory on the side of the English; the commander of the squadron from Cork fell in the action, a number of his ships were taken, and Adam de Rutherford, with his booty and prizes, sailed triumphantly into Waterford.

In the mean time, Raymond, informed of the designs of the citizens of Cork, was hastening, with a select body of cavalry, to the support of his countrymen, when he found himself encountered by Mac Carthy, prince of Desmond, who was hurrying, with equal zeal, to assist his vassals of Cork. After a short action, however, the Irish were compelled to retreat, and Raymond proceeded, without further interruption, along the sea-coast to Waterford, leading along with him a booty of 4000 cows and sheep, taken by his troops in the territory of Lismore.† Inglorious and trivial as were these enterprises, it is clear that to the licence allowed to the soldiery in such expeditions Raymond chiefly owed his popularity, and the exalted station in which it had placed him. But further views began now to open upon him; and his ambition rising with his fortune, he ventured to acknowledge to Strongbow a passion which he had entertained for some time towards that nobleman's sister, Basilia, and asked at once the double favour of being honoured with the hand of this lady in marriage, and of being appointed constable and standard-bearer of Leinster.‡ To this suit of the aspiring soldier the earl's answer was cold and reserved, but at the same time sufficiently explicit

* *Dum iste lapidibus et securibus acriter impetant, illi vero tam sagittis quam laminibus ferreis, quibus abundabant, promptissime resistebant.*—*Hibern. Expugnat. ut supra.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Lambeth MS.*—The office, it appears, could only be enjoyed by him during the minority of an infant daughter, left by De Quincey; or rather, till this daughter should be married to some one, by whom the duty of it could be performed.

to show that with neither of the two requests did he mean to comply;—a repulse which so deeply offended the ambitious Raymond, that he instantly threw up his commission and retired into Wales, taking with him Meyler and others of his followers who had particularly distinguished themselves in these Irish wars.

The command of the forces was now again committed A. D.
1174. by Strongbow to his kinsman, Hervey of Mount-Maurice, who being desirous of regaining the favour of the army, advised an attack, with a strong force, on the territories of Donald O'Brian, who had lately manifested a spirit of revolt. As if to confirm, however, Hervey's fame for ill-luck, this expedition, though commanded jointly by him and Strongbow, was unfortunate in almost all its results. A reinforcement from the garrison of Dublin, which the earl had ordered to join him at Cashel, having rested for a night at Ossory on their march, were surprised, sleeping in their quarters, by a strong party, under Donald O'Brian, and the greater number of them put, almost unresistingly, to the sword. Finding his projects completely foiled by this disaster, Strongbow hastened to shut himself up in Waterford, while, in all parts of the country, the Irish, as if at a signal given, rose up in arms; and, even of the chieftains who had pledged their allegiance to Henry, many, following the example of the descendant of their great Brian, set up the standard of revolt.

Among others who at this crisis cast off their fealty, is said to have been Donald Kavenagh, the son of the late king Dermot,* and hitherto faithful to the race which had patronised his ever to be remembered father. Even the monarch Roderic himself, conceiving the moment to be favourable for an effort to recover Meath, made an irruption, suddenly, with a large confederate force, into that province, from which Hugh de Lacy was then absent, and, destroying all the forts built by that lord,

* Leland, who quotes as his authority, *Annal Ult. MS.*

laid waste the whole country to the very confines of Dublin. Hugh Tirrel, who had been left to act for De Lacy, finding himself unable to defend the castle of Trim, demolished the fortifications and burned it down, as he did also the castle of Duleek, and escaped with his soldiers to Dublin.

Alarmed by the spread of this rebellious spirit among the natives, and fearing the probable revival of mutiny in his own army, Strongbow was left no other resource, however mortifying the necessity, than to ask of Raymond to return and resume his command, assuring him at the same time that the hand of Basilia should immediately be granted to him on his arrival.* Such a triumph, at once to love and pride, was far too tempting to admit of parley or hesitation: With a force hastily collected, consisting of about 30 knights, all of his own kindred, 100 men-at-arms, and 300 archers, Raymond, taking with him also his brave kinsman, Meyler, embarked in a fleet of fifteen transports, and arrived safe in the port of Waterford. So critically was this relief timed, that, at the very moment when the ships appeared in sight, sailing before the wind, with the ensigns of England displayed, the citizens of Waterford, provoked by the tyranny and exactions of the garrison, were about to rise and put all the English in the city to death. Landing his troops without any opposition, Raymond conducted the earl, with the whole of his force, to Wexford, where, a short time after, his nuptials with the noble lady Basilia were, in the midst of pomp and rejoicings, celebrated. How imminent had been the danger from which Raymond's arrival had rescued Strongbow and his small army, was made manifest soon after their departure, when the rage of the citizens, repressed but for the moment, again violently broke forth, and a general

* The substance of the letter addressed by him to Raymond on the occasion, is thus given by Giraldus:—"Inspectis literis istis nobis in manu forti subvenire non differas: et desiderium tuum in Basilia sorore mea tibi legitime copulanda, &c.

massacre of all the English took place,—with the exception only of the garrison left in Reginald's tower, which, though few in number, succeeded ultimately in regaining possession of the town.*

Scarcely had the nuptials of Raymond and Basilia been celebrated, when, intelligence arriving of the advance of Roderic towards Dublin, the bridegroom was forced to buckle on hastily his armour, and take the field against that prince. But, added to the total want, in Roderic himself, of the qualities fitted for so trying a juncture, the very nature of the force under his command completely disqualified it for regular or protracted warfare; an Irish army being, in those times, little better than a rude, tumultuous assemblage, brought together by the impulse of passion, or the prospect of plunder, and, as soon as sated or thwarted in its immediate object, dispersing again as loosely and lawlessly as it had assembled. In this manner did the army of the monarch now retire, having overrun that whole province as far as the borders of Dublin; and there remained for Raymond but the task of restoring the disturbed settlers to their habitations, while to Tyrrel fell the charge of repairing and rebuilding† the numerous forts which had been damaged and demolished by the Irish.

With the hand of Basilia de Clare, Raymond received from the earl, as her dowry, the lands of Idrone, Fethard, and Glascarrig, and was likewise appointed by him to the high office of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster. It is said to have been also on this occasion that he was made possessor of that great district in Kilkenny, called, after him, Grace's Country;—the cognomen of Gros, which he transmitted to his descendants, being changed, in later times, to Gras, and at last, Grace.

Conscious that his fame and influence with the soldiery could only be maintained by ministering constantly

* *Hibern. Expugnat.* l. 2 c. 4.

† At Castle Knock, in the neighbourhood of Dublin, there are still the remains of a castle, said to have been built by Hugh Tyrrel.

to their rapacity, Raymond now turned his eyes to Limerick as affording temptations in the way both of rapine and revenge. The achievement of Brian, the prince of that district, the preceding year, in cutting off Strongbow's expected reinforcement at Ossory, had marked him out as a special object of vengeance; and it was therefore resolved that his dominions should be attacked, and Limerick itself, if possible, taken by storm. This was found, however, to be no easy enterprise, as that town, being built upon an island, was then encompassed round by the river Shannon. On approaching the bank, the troops hesitated, alarmed by the rapidity of the current; when Raymond's cousin, the valiant Meyler, crying out, "Onward, in the name of St. David!" spurred his horse into a part of the current that was fordable; and, followed at first but by four other knights, he succeeded in gaining the opposite bank, amidst a shower of stones and arrows from the walls, which hung over the margin of the river. Taking courage from this bold example, the remainder of the troops then forded the stream with the loss of but one knight and two horsemen of inferior rank; while the citizens, struck with alarm at such daring, deserted not only the bank, but the walls and rampart itself, and fled into the city. The usual excesses of slaughter and plunder ensued; and Raymond, leaving behind him a sufficient force to garrison the place, returned, with the remainder of his army, into Leinster.

A. D. 1175. It was about this time that the Bull of pope Adrian, granting the kingdom of Ireland to Henry II., and obtained by this sovereign from the holy see as far back as the year 1151, was for the first time publicly announced to his Irish subjects.* He had, in the interval, obtained also a brief from Alexander III. confirming

* *Hibern. Expagnat.* l. 1. c. 6. *Ware's Annals*, ad ann. 1775. *Lanigan*, chap. 29. § 7.—By *Leland*, the promulgation of this Bull, and all the transactions, connected with it, are placed, without any grounds or authority that I can discover, so late as 1777.

the grant made by the former pope, and under the same condition of the payment of the Peter-pence. His chief motive for so long delaying the promulgation of Adrian's bull is supposed to have been the fear lest certain aspersions contained in that instrument, as well on the morals as the religious doctrines of the people of Ireland, might cause irritation, among both the clergy and laity, and prevent that quiet submission to his claims which he then expected. The present rebellious temper of the Irish completely falsified this hope ; and the influence of the clergy being now the only medium through which he could act on the minds and affections of the people, and endeavour to incline them to his government, the papal authority was thus late resorted to by him as a means of enlisting the great body of the clergy in his service.

The persons appointed to carry these documents to Ireland were, William Fitz-Aldelm, and Nicholas, the prior of Wallingford ; and a synod of bishops being assembled, on their arrival, the papal grants were there publicly read. After performing their appointed commission, the prior and Fitz-Aldelm repaired to the king, who was then in Normandy, for the purpose of reporting to him the state of his kingdom of Ireland, and explaining the causes from whence its increased disorders had sprung. As from Hervey these royal commissioners had chiefly derived their knowledge and views of the subject, their representations would probably be tinged with the feeling of jealousy which that officer entertained towards his popular rival. They were, however, not perhaps very remote from the truth, when they accused Raymond of having converted the English army into a mere band of freebooters, whose continued depredations had driven into revolt not only the natives themselves, but even the more friendly disposed population of the Dano-Irish towns. To this, on Hervey's authority, they added the serious and startling charge, that Raymond intended, with the aid of the army, to usurp the dominion of the whole island, and

had even bound his soldiers to assist him by secret and treasonable oaths. Giving full credit, as it appears, to this intelligence, Henry resolved to recall so dangerous a subject; and with that view, sent over two lords of his court, in the spring of the year, to Ireland, ordering them to bring him with them into Normandy; while at the same time two other noblemen, who accompanied them, were charged to remain with the earl, and assist him with their counsels.

On receiving the orders of his sovereign, Raymond lost not a moment in preparing to obey them; and there was now wanting only a fair wind for his departure, when intelligence arrived that O'Brian of Thomond, the ever active enemy of the English power, had surrounded Limerick with a large force, and that, all the provisions laid in for the garrison having been exhausted, they were reduced to the last extremity. Strongbow, conscious of the critical position in which this event placed him, ordered his forces to be immediately mustered, and prepared to march, at their head, for the succour of the town. But a new triumph awaited the popular general. The troops refused to march under any other leader; and the earl, after consulting with the king's commissioners and receiving their sanction, in consideration of the emergency of the occasion, requested of Raymond to take the command of the expedition. To this, the general, with well-feigned reluctance, consented; the troops saw in his power the triumph of their own; and he was now again at the head of an army in whose minds good fortune was identified with his name. The force he at present had under his command consisted of four-score heavy-armed cavalry, 200 horse, and 300 archers; and the already too common spectacle of Irishmen fighting in the ranks of foreigners against their own countrymen was exhibited on this occasion;—the detachment being joined, on its march, by some bands of Irish infantry, under the chiefs of Ossory and Kinsale, whom family feuds had rendered inveterate against O'Brian.

Before the arrival of this force at Cashel, they learned that the Irish, on hearing of their approach, had raised the siege of Limerick, and, taking up their position in a defile, near Cashel, through which the English army must pass, had there strongly entrenched themselves. Raymond, on learning this intelligence, pushed forward; and when, upon arriving in sight of the enemy's position, he proceeded coolly and deliberately to prepare for the attack, the prince of Ossory, who, having been accustomed to the impetuous onsets of his own countrymen, mistook this quiet for irresolution or fear, addressed an encouraging speech to the English troops, exhorting them to behave, on that day, in a manner worthy of their former exploits, and adding this extraordinary menace—"If you conquer, our axes shall co-operate with your swords, in sharply pursuing and slaying the fugitive enemy. But should you be vanquished, then shall these same weapons of ours, which never strike but on the conquering side, be as certainly turned against you." The assault, however, proved as successful as the preparation for it had been cool and determined;* Meyler Fitz-Henry, who led the vanguard into the pass, having broken, at a single charge, through all the defences opposed to him.

The results of this victory, which was attended with great slaughter of the Irish, proved also in other respects important; as not only had Limerick been relieved by it, but the brave O'Brian, at length exhausted by his long and fruitless struggle, was now induced to ask for peace; and, with that view, proposed a conference with the English general. At the same time, Roderic also, repentant, as it would seem, of his late inroads into Meath, solicited an interview, with the like object; and the precautions used in arranging the parley, showed how

* "I presume," says lord Lyttelton, "that in this and other assaults of entrenchments, or any fortified places, the English horsemen dismounted, and fought on foot, sword in hand; cavalry not being proper for such operations."

little the parties engaged in it were disposed to place confidence in each other;—the monarch, Roderic, who had come for the purpose with an escort of boats down the Shannon, having taken up his station on the western shore of Lough Dearg, while the prince of Thomond and his train fixed themselves in a wood on the opposite side of the lake; and the place chosen by the English general was near Killaloe, at an equal distance from both. The result of the parley, so cautiously conducted, was, that the two princes renewed their fealty to Henry, and gave hostages for a more faithful observance of their respective engagements in future.

Scarcely had Raymond thus signalled his military administration, by receiving on one day the submission of the king of Connaught and the prince of Thomond, when he found himself called upon to assist M'Arthur, prince of Desmond, whose son had rebelled against him, and nearly succeeded in effecting his expulsion from his dominions. This request being accompanied by offers, as tempting to the general himself as to his followers, of rich gifts, abundant plunder, and liberal pay, the required aid was promptly given, and the prince of Desmond, released from the prison into which his own son had cast him, took ample revenge, by depriving the son of his head. In return for the important service thus conferred upon him, M'Arthur bestowed upon his gallant deliverer a large territorial possession in that part of Desmond called Kerry.* After so full a flow of success, no further thoughts were, of course, entertained of removing Raymond from the country, or depriving him of a post which there appeared no other so eminently qualified to fill.

A. D. 1175. An important event occurred at this period, the conclusion of a treaty between Henry and the Irish

* This property Raymond settled upon his younger son Maurice, who became, in right of it, lord of Lixnaw; and was the ancestor and founder of the Fitz-Maurice family, of which the marquis of Lansdowne, an earl of Kerry, is now the representative.

monarch, which owes its importance, however, far less to any practical consequences that have ever resulted from it, than to its bearing on the question once so warmly and uselessly agitated, as to the nature and extent of the right of dominion which the King of England at that time acquired over Ireland. Even had Roderic been a prince capable of grappling with adverse fortune, the nature of the armies he had to depend upon, and the constant defection of his subordinate princes, must have left him hopeless of ultimate success in a prolonged struggle against the English, however a desperate spirit of patriotism might have urged him still to persevere. But the Irish monarch was of no such heroic mould. To preserve his province from further ravage, and secure, by timely submission, favourable terms from the English king, were now the great and sole objects of his policy. Accordingly, in the course of this year, he sent over to England an embassy, empowered to negotiate, in his name, with Henry, consisting of Catholicus, archbishop of Tuam, Concors, abbot of St. Brendan's, and "Master" Laurence (as the excellent archbishop is styled), chancellor of the Irish king. These plenipotentiaries having, about Michaelmas, waited on Henry at Windsor, a grand council was there held by extraordinary summons, and a solemn convention ratified, of which the terms were as follows:—*

Henry granted to his liegeman, Roderic, that, as long as he continued faithfully to serve him, he should be a king under him, ready to do him service, as his vassal, and that he should hold his hereditary territories as firmly and peaceably as he had held them before the coming of Henry into Ireland. He was likewise to have under his dominion and jurisdiction all the rest of the island, and the inhabitants thereof, kings and princes included, and was bound to oblige them to pay tribute, through his hands, to the king of England, preserving to that monarch his other rights.

* The exceptions will be found specified afterwards.

These kings, princes, etc., were likewise to hold peaceable possession of their principalities * as long as they remained faithful to the king of England, and pay him their tribute, and all other rights through the king of Connaught's hands,—saving in all things the honour and prerogative of both these kings. And, in case that any of them should rebel against the king of England, or against Roderic, and refuse to pay their tribute or other duties, in the manner before prescribed, or should depart from their fealty to the king of England, the king of Connaught was then authorised to judge them, and, if requisite, remove them from their governments or possessions; and, should his own power not be sufficient for that purpose, he was to be assisted by the English king's constable and his household.† The annual tribute demanded of Roderic, and the Irish at large, was a merchantable hide for every tenth head of cattle killed in Ireland.

It will be seen by these articles, that the amount of power and jurisdiction still left in the hands of Roderic was considerable; but, with respect to the territories within which he could exercise these powers, strict limits were laid down; nor in any of those districts immediately under the dominion of the king of England and his barons, was Roderic allowed to interfere, or to claim any authority whatsoever. In this exempted territory, which formed what was afterwards called the Pale, were comprised Dublin and all its appurtenances, the whole of Meath and Leinster, besides Waterford, and the country from thence to Dungarvon included.

* At the time of the invasion of Ireland by the English, that country was subdivided into several independent provinces, of which the seven following were the principal:—*Deamond*, under the MacCarthys; *Thomond*, subject to the O'Briens; *Hy-Kinselagh*, or *Leinster*, under the *Hy-Kinselagh* line of Mahons; the south *Hy-Niall*, or *Meath*, under the *Clan-Colman*; otherwise the O'Malachlins; the north *Hy-Niall*, under the O'Neills and O'Donnalls; and *Hy-Brune*, together with *Hy-Fiachra*, otherwise *Connaught*, under the O'Connors.—*Dissertat.*, Sect. 13.

† Both Leland and Lyttelton mention "soldiers" here; but without any authority from the original.

And if any of the Irish (continued the treaty), who had fled from the territories of the king's barons should desire to return thither, they might do so in peace, paying the tribute above mentioned, as others did, or performing the services they were anciently accustomed to perform for their lands, according as their lords should think best; and if any of the Irish who were subjects of the king of Connaught should refuse to return to him, he might compel them to do so, in order that they might quietly remain in his land.* The said king of Connaught was, moreover, empowered to take hostages from all those whom the king of England had committed to him, at his own and the king of England's choice, and was to give the said hostages to the king of England, or others, at the king's choice; and all those from whom these securities were demanded were to perform certain annual services to the king of England, by presents of Irish dogs and hawks,† and were not to detain any person whatsoever, belonging to any

* "Et si Hybernenses qui aufugerunt redire voluerint ad terram Barorum Regis Angliæ, redeant in pace reddendo tributum prædictum sicut alii reddunt, vel faciendo antiqua servitia quæ facere solebant pro terris suis; et hoc sit in arbitrio et voluntate dominorum suorum. Et si aliqui redire noluerint ad dominum eorum regem Conactæ, ipse cogat eos redire ad terram suam, ut ibi maneant et pacem habeant."—*Benedict. Abbas*. Thus translated by Leland, who has entirely, it will be perceived, mistaken the meaning of the whole passage:—"The Irish who had fled from hence (the English districts) were to return, and either to pay their tribute, or to perform the services required by their tenures, at the option of their immediate lords; and if refractory, Roderic, at the requisition of their lords, was to compel them to return."

† The Irish wolf-dogs were at a very early period famous; there being little doubt that the *Scotici canes* mentioned by Symmachus, as having been exhibited at the Circensian games, were of that peculiar species of wolf-dog for which Ireland was once celebrated, but which, after the extinction of wolves in that country, came to be neglected, and of course degenerated (See *Harris on Ware*, chap. 22). The dogs mentioned, however, among the annual services required of Roderic, were evidently of the greyhound kind; and how great was the value set upon Irish greyhounds and hawks in the time of Henry VIII. may be judged from a grant made by that king to a foreign nobleman, at "the instant suit," as it is said, of the duke of Albuquerque, of "two goshawks and four greyhounds, out of Ireland, yearly."

To Robert Barry is attributed by Carve (*Lyra sive Anacephal.*), the credit of having first introduced the diversion of hawking into Ireland:—"Fuit hic primus qui accipitres circumavit atque venandi seu accipitrandi usui assuefecit."

land or territory of that prince, against his will and commandment.

Such were the articles of this singular treaty, agreed upon and ratified in a council of prelates and barons, the names of eight of whom are affixed to the document : and among these subscribing witnesses is found the pious and patriotic Laurence O'Toole, then archbishop of Dublin. By this compact, it was solemnly determined that the kings of England should, in all future time, be lords paramount of Ireland; that the fee of the soil should be in them, and that all future monarchs of Ireland should hold their dominion but as tenants in *capite*, or vassals of the English crown.

CHAPTER XXX.

False Notions respecting the Conquest of Ireland.—First Appointment of an Irish Bishop, by Henry.—Death of Strongbow.—Raymond summoned to Dublin.—Entrusts the Custody of Limerick to O'Brian.—Dishonourable Act of O'Brian.—Fitz-Aldelm appointed Chief Governor.—Jealousy entertained of the Geraldines.—Death of Maurice Fitz-Gerald.—Illiberal Conduct of Fitz-Aldelm toward his Sons.—Success of the Irish in Meath.—Character of Fitz-Aldelm's Administration.—Expedition of De Courcy into Ulster.—Council convoked by the Pope's Legate.—Dissensions in the Family of Roderic.—Unsuccessful Expedition of the English into Connaught.—Henry Constitutes his Son John Lord of Ireland.—Grants of Lands to Fitz-Stephen and others.—Fitz-Aldelm recalled from the Government.—Cogan succeeded by Hugh de Lacy.

THE reciprocal relations of chief and vassal, which arose naturally out of military service, and furnished one of the two great principles on which the feudal system was founded, had already, with its exactions of homage and fealty, formed a part, as we have seen, of the polity of the Irish. Familiarised, therefore, as had been their princes and chieftains to the custom of holding their territories from superior lords, on conditions of

allegiance and homage, there was to them nothing novel or startling in the mere forms, as they deemed them, of submission by which Roderic now laid the lordship of Ireland at the feet of an English prince. But though thus acquainted (as were, indeed, most of what are called the barbarous nations*) with that part of the policy of the feudal system which regulated the military relations between chief and vassal, they were wholly ignorant of its other more important principle, which made property the foundation of this mutual tie, and bound together lord and tenant by reciprocal obligations of protection and service. It is not improbable, therefore, that the general readiness of the Irish princes to tender their allegiance to Henry† arose from their habit of viewing this ceremony but as a pledge of military service, and their entire ignorance of the important and permanent change which, in the eyes of Henry's lawyers, would be effected in their right and title to their respective territories by that ceremony.

But though, by the treaty between the two kings acknowledging Henry to be lord paramount of Ireland, the sovereignty over that island was transferred to the English crown, yet, in point of real power, the king of England was no further advanced by it than when, a few years before, he had set sail from the Irish shore; and, at that period, as a great law authority, Sir J. Davies, has declared, he left behind him not one more true subject than he had found on his arrival. Within the same limited sphere of dominion, extending to not more than one third of the kingdom, did the power and jurisdiction of the English crown continue to be circumscribed for many centuries after, making no impression whatever on the laws, language, or customs of the great mass of the natives, but remaining an isolated

* Meaning, in general, all such as were beyond the bounds of the Roman empire.

† The English chronicler, William of Nennbridge, attributes, naturally enough, the readiness of their submission to fear:—"Adventu ejus pavefactos, sine sanguine subjugavit."—L. 2. c. 26.

colony, in the midst of a hostile and ever resisting people. And yet to a footing on the soil thus limited and precarious, the first advances of which were, indeed, amicably yielded to, but its every further inroad contested at every step, almost all of the historians of these islands, from Giraldus* down to Hume, have strangely assigned the name and attributes of a regular "conquest." How much, in the reign of James I., this crude and short-sighted notion stood in the way of the sounder views then beginning to gain ground with respect to the relations between the two countries, appears from the arguments employed by the king's attorney-general, at that period, to disabuse the public mind of so vain and misleading a notion.

Had Ireland resisted, from the first, her invaders with a spirit worthy of her ancient name, and had she, yielding only to superior force, been at last effectually brought under, then, indeed, might the history of the two countries have had to record a conquest honourable to both; while both alike would have been spared that long train of demoralising consequences which arose out of the means, as rash and violent as they were inefficient, employed to bring Ireland under subjection. Hence, the confused and discordant relations in which the two races inhabiting her shores necessarily stood towards each other, — the one assuming the rights of conquest, without any power to enforce them; the other pretending to independence, with a foreign intruder in the very heart of the land: while, to add to all this confusion, there prevailed in the country two different codes of laws, between whose constantly conflicting ordinances the wretched people were kept distracted, while their unprincipled rulers had recourse indifferently to

* Giraldus himself, however, though styling his history of these wars "The Conquest of Ireland," is forced to admit, on considering the result of the struggle commemorated by him, that it was a drawn battle between the two nations:—"Ut nec ille ad plenum victor in Palladis hæcæus æreem victoribus ascenderit, nec iste victus omnino plenus servitutis joco colla submisit."—*Hibern. Expugnat.* l. 2. c. 33.

one or the other, according as it suited the temporary purposes of spoliation or revenge.

It is said of the Norman followers of William the Conqueror, that they despised the English for submitting to them so easily; and such was evidently the feeling awakened in their Anglo-Norman descendants by the facility with which the Irish gave way to their first encroachments. But as soon as these intruders began to discover that, however feebly opposed in their acquisition of the spoil, they were left not a moment of peace or security for the enjoyment of it; when they found that the Irish "enemy," as if to atone for the weak submission of their forefathers, never once slumbered in the task of harassing the despoiler, and rendering the throne of their ruler a seat of thorns; then was there added to the haughty contempt they had before felt for the natives a deep and inveterate hatred; and how far both these feelings were allowed to operate, will be seen in the History of the Parliament of the English Pale, whose successive enactments against the "mere Irish" exhibit almost every form of insult and injury that the combined bitterness of hatred and contempt could, in their most venomous conjunction, be expected to engender.

With respect to Henry's alleged "conquest" of this country, how far that able monarch himself was from laying any claim to the rights of a conqueror, appears from the spirit and terms of his treaty with Roderic; according to which, but two of the five kingdoms of which Ireland consisted, and three principal cities, were exempted from the jurisdiction of the native monarch, while, in all the other parts of the country, the ancient authorities and laws remained in full force: the princes appointed their own magistrates and officers, retained the power of pardoning and punishing malefactors, and made war or peace with each other, according to their pleasure.

In the same council which ratified this singular treaty,

Henry exercised his first act of authority over the Irish Church. As in the subjection of England to the Normans, the native clergy were found to be useful instruments, so in those parts of Ireland, beyond the English boundary, the influence of the clergy was Henry's chief support. Desirous of strengthening this interest, he now appointed a native of Ireland, named Augustin, to the bishopric of Waterford, and, recognising the primatial rights of Cashel, sent him to be consecrated by the archbishop of that see.

A. D. 1175. About this time, the venerable St. Laurence, being at Canterbury, in attendance on the king, escaped narrowly a frantic attempt upon his life. Having been requested by the monks to celebrate mass, he was proceeding to the altar, dressed in his pontificals, when a man of deranged mind, who had heard of his fame for holiness, and thought it would be a meritorious act to confer on him the crown of martyrdom, rushed forth upon him from the crowd with a large club, and laid him prostrate before the altar. On recovering from the effects of the outrage, the good archbishop, finding that the king had condemned his assailant to death, begged earnestly for his pardon, and with some difficulty obtained it.

1176. In the year 1176, the English colony was deprived, by death, of one of its most distinguished and successful founders, Richard de Clare, earl of Pembroke, who died in Dublin about the end of May, of a cancerous sore in his leg. His sister Basilia, who was with him in his last moments, despatched secretly a messenger to Raymond, who was then in Desmond, with a letter enigmatically conveying intelligence of the event. Her great tooth, she told him, which had ached so long, was now at last fallen out, and she therefore earnestly besought of him to return to Dublin with all possible speed. Feeling how necessary, at such a juncture, was the immediate departure of himself and his army for Leinster, yet unwilling to abandon Limerick, a conquest redounding so much to his interest and fame,

Raymond saw, at length, that he had no other alternative than to deliver up that city to Donald O'Brian, to affect reliance on his faith as one of the barons of the king, and to exact from him a new oath of fealty, taking his chance for the lord of Thomond's observance of it.

The result was precisely such as, without any great stretch of foresight, might have been anticipated. Force alone having procured the submission of O'Brian, no sooner had the English troops passed over one end of the bridge, than they saw the other broken down by the Irish, and, at the same time, the city, in all its four quarters, was in flames,—having been set fire to by command of O'Brian, in order that Limerick, as he remarked, might never again be made a nest of foreigners.* It is said, that when Henry was told of Raymond's conduct respecting Limerick, he pronounced the following generous and soldierly judgment upon it: — "Great courage was shown in the taking of the town; greater in the recovery of it; but wisdom only in the abandonment of it."†

On the arrival of Raymond in Dublin, the earl's remains were interred with the pomp becoming his station, in the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, now Christ Church, in that city; — the archbishop Laurence presiding over the ceremony.

The political position occupied by Strongbow, in relation to Ireland, renders it difficult to sum up, impartially, any general estimate of his character; the very same qualities and achievements which won for him the

* The Abbé O'Geoghagan, in the fulness of his Irish zeal, thus endeavours to defend this unchivalrous act of O'Brian:—"Cette action d'O'Brien, que les Anglois ont traitée de perfidie insigne, n'est pas aussi noire qu'elle le parait d'abord. Il faut observer que c'était le défaut de tout autre défenseur qui avait engagé les Anglois à confier cette place à O'Brien. Celui-ci ne semblait-il pas dispensé de reconnaissance pour une confiance à laquelle forçait la nécessité? D'ailleurs O'Brien était naturellement le maître de cette contrée; ne semble-t-il pas juste qu'il usât de l'unique moyen qu'il avait pour l'arracher à d'injustes usurpateurs, et qui était de détruire leurs places?"

† "Magnus fuit ansus in aggrédiendo; major in subveniendo; sed sapientia solum in deserendo." *Hibern. Espugnat.* l. 2. c. 15.

eulogies of one party, having drawn down on his memory, from the other, the most bitter censure and hate. What his own countrymen have lauded as vigour and public spirit, those who were the victims of his stern policy have pronounced to be the grossest exaction and tyranny. Full allowance, of course, is to be made for the difficulties and odium of such a position; and where there are great or shining qualities to divert censure from the almost unavoidable wrongs which a military adventurer in a foreign land is, by the very nature of his mission, led to inflict, the historian, in such cases, may fairly suffer his judgment to relax into some degree of leniency in its verdict.

The splendid results, as far as regarded his own personal power and enrichment, which arose out of Strongbow's Irish expedition, threw round his career that sort of spurious lustre, which great success, however attained, is almost always sure to impart; and that this success, as well as the courage by which it was achieved, recommended him to Henry's favour, appears from that prince having called in his aid when pressed by the dangers he was exposed to by the rebellion of his two sons. But here all the grounds on which we can rest any favourable opinion of Strongbow's character are exhausted; nor does he appear to have possessed any one great or elevating quality, by which the views that first prompted his enterprise could be ennobled, or the means which he adopted for their accomplishment can be palliated. Even in warfare—the walk where his talents most shone—it is evident that he was wanting in one of the chief requisites of a general, the power of originating plans of military operations; as we learn, from a most flattering painter of his character, Gerald of Cambria, that all his enterprises were advised and planned for him by others, and that he never of himself ventured upon any movement in the field.

How strong was the traditional impression of the cruelty of his character, appears from the tale told—

whether truly or not appears more than doubtful—of his inhuman conduct towards his son. This youth, as already has been stated, having been alarmed by the war-cry of the Irish,* at the battle of the Pass, in Idrone, fled in a panic to Dublin, and there announced that Strongbow and his army had all been destroyed. When assured, however, of his mistake, he hastened to join the earl in his camp, and was cheerfully congratulating him on his victory, when the inhuman father drew his sword, and, as the tradition runs, cut the ill-fated youth in two.†

The taste for founding and endowing religious establishments, which prevailed at this time among the chiefs of both nations, presented a painful contrast to the scenes of blood and havoc in which they were almost daily engaged; more especially as the wealth employed for such pious uses was, in general, the unholy produce

* See Harris on Ware, *Antiq.* chap. 21. sect. 3. Harris, by the way, has done injustice here to Stanihurst, in numbering him among those who subscribed to the Gadelian, or Milesian, legend; that writer's views on the subject being, as the following passage will show, such as most men of any sense, if they give but fair play to their understanding, must take:—"Habuerint Scoti, sicut et plurimæ quondam nationes, quæ jam nunc celebritate famæ in magno nomine sunt, sua quasi cunabula, aliqua barbarie infuscata. Et hoc prudentius esset confiteri, quàm commentitis hæc rerum gestarum gloria, seipsos apud imperitos venditare."—*De Reb. Hibern.* l. 1.

The misrepresentation which Harris has given of Stanihurst's opinions he took upon trust from Spenser (*View of the State of Ireland*), who has himself hazarded an explanation of the cry "Farrab," which is hardly less absurd than the other. "Here also," he says, "lyeth open another manifest proofe that the Irish bee Scythes, or Scots, for in all their encounters they use one very common word, crying Ferragh, Ferragh, which is a Scottish word, to wit, the name of one of the first kings of Scotland, called Feragus, or Fergus."

† "This tradition," says Leland, "receives some countenance from the ancient monument in the cathedral of Dublin, in which the statue of the son of Strongbow is continued only to the middle, with the bowels open and supported by the hands. But as this monument was erected some centuries after the death of Strongbow, it is of the less authority. The Irish annals," he adds, "repeatedly mention the earl's son as engaged in several actions posterior to this period."

Stanihurst mentions that, by the falling in of a part of the cathedral in the year 1568, this monument was very much injured, but through the care of Sir Henry Sidney was afterwards repaired and restored.—"Coactis fabris marmoreum parentis et nati tymbon singulari opere artificisque interpolandum coravit."

of spoliation and wrong. We have already seen that the traitor, Dermot, was most liberal in his endowment of religious houses; and his son-in-law, Strongbow, following in his footsteps, founded at Kilmainham, near Dublin, a priory for knights of the order of St. John of Jerusalem.* But how little even this lord's munificence to the church could conciliate respect for his memory, appears from the terms in which an English chronicler, of his own times, speaks of his death: "He carried to the grave with him," says William of Newbridge, "no part of those Irish spoils he had coveted so eagerly after in life, putting to risk even his eternal salvation to amass them; but at last, leaving to unthankful heirs all he had acquired through so much toil and danger, he afforded by his fate a salutary lesson to mankind"† Strongbow left by his wife Eva, the daughter of Dermot, king of Leinster, an only child,‡ named Isabel, heiress of all his vast possessions, and afterwards married to William Mareschall, earl of Pembroke.

On Strongbow's death, the two English noblemen who had been sent by Henry to assist him in his government returned to that prince, leaving in Raymond's hands all the authority of the state till the will of the sovereign should be known. As no opportunity,

* "The noble founder," says Archdall, "had enfeoffed the prior in the whole lands of Kilmainham." *Mont. Hibern.* He adds that "king Henry II. having enfeoffed Hugh Tirell the elder in the lands of Kiltachalloch, with the appurtenances, together with the moiety of the river Liffey as far as the water-course near the gallows, Hugh bestowed the said lands on the prior of this hospital."

† Ex Hibernicis manubiis quibus multum inhiaverat et pro quibus tam multum cum periculo adaverat salutis, nihil secum hinc abeans homo ille portavit; sed laboriose periculoseque quæsita ingratis relinquens heredibus; salubrem quoque multis ex suo occasu doctrinam reliquit.—*Rer. Angl.* l. 2. c. 26.

‡ There is some confusion in the accounts given by different historians of the number and sex of the children Strongbow left behind him. The chronicler Diceto states, in opposition to all the known facts, that a boy, by the princess Eva, scarce three years old, was his heir:—"Filius vii pene triennem, ex filia memorati regis sullatum relinquens heredem." According to lord Lyttelton, he left a son and a daughter, both infants. But a male child by Eva would have inherited, of course, the Irish possessions; and any sons the earl might have had by a former wife were no longer infants.

however, had yet been afforded for a refutation of the charges advanced against Raymond, the king's jealousy of the influence of that officer still remained unabated. Accordingly, he sent into Ireland, as his justiciary, or viceroy, William Fitz-Aldelm, attended by a guard of ten knights of his own household, and having under his order, with each a similar train, John de Courcy, Robert Fitz-Stephen, and Milo de Cogan; all of whom had served the king gallantly, both in England and France. On being apprised of their arrival, Raymond hastened to meet them, on the borders of Wexford, with a chosen body of cavalry; and having received them with all due marks of respect, went through the ceremony of delivering up to the deputy all the cities and castles held by the English, as well as the hostages of the princes or chieftains of Ireland committed to his keeping.

A proof of the jealousy already entertained of the Geraldine family, of which Raymond was one of the earliest and noblest ornaments, is mentioned by the chronicler as having occurred during this ceremonial. On seeing him approach at the head of so fine a troop of young men, all of their leader's own kindred, bearing the same coat of arms emblazoned on their shields, and all mounted on beautiful horses, which they coursed playfully over the field, Fitz-Aldelm said, in a low voice, to some of his attendants, "I will shortly check this pride, and disperse these shields;"* and from that hour, adds the chronicler, such was the policy pursued, not only by Fitz-Aldelm himself, but by every deputy who succeeded him. Nor was it long before an opportunity for the display of this feeling was furnished by the death of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, the original stock from whence, by the three sons he left behind, have descended all the noble and illustrious families of this name in Ireland. Scarcely had the breath left his frame, when

* "Ad suos se vertens, demissa voce, superbiam hanc, inquit, in brevi comprimam et clypeos istos dispergam."—*Hibern. Expugnata*. l. 8. c. 15.

Fitz-Aldelm seized on the castle of Wicklow, which Strongbow had granted to Maurice Fitz-Gerald for his services; and, by way of atonement for this injustice, gave to the three sons the small city of Ferns; where, however, from the want of strongholds, they were much exposed to the incursions of the neighbouring inhabitants. They had built, for the security of their territory, a rude fortress; but this, by order of Walter Aleman, Fitz-Aldelm's nephew, in consequence, it is said, of bribes received from the natives, was maliciously razed to the ground.

How unavailing, sometimes, were even such defences against sudden attacks, had been seen on a late occasion, when the castle of Slane, in Meath, which had been granted by De Lacy to Richard le Fleming, having been surprised by the Irish chief to whom that principality legitimately belonged, the whole garrison and inmates of the castle were put to the sword, and Le Fleming himself slain. Such alarm did this event spread throughout Meath, that the garrisons of three other castles, built by the same lord, all quitted them the following day.

The unpopularity which attended Fitz-Aldelm's administration may be sufficiently accounted for from its general character, without laying much stress on the particular charges which have been brought against it by the chroniclers; and the simple fact, that he was actuated in his government more by political than by military considerations, abundantly explains the contemptuous impatience with which he was submitted to by the colonists, who, being for the most part armed and rapacious adventurers, had hitherto prospered, and expected still further to prosper, by the trenchant policy of the sword. Among those most impatient of such inaction was John de Courcy, a baron second in command to Fitz-Aldelm, and gifted with extraordinary prowess and daring. Having looked to Ireland as a field of spoil and adventure, De Courcy was determined not to

he baulked in his anticipations : So, choosing out of the troops under his command a body of two-and-twenty knights, and about three hundred other soldiers, he proposed to lead them into the heart of Ulster,—a region unvisited yet by the English arms, and therefore opening to his fierce ambition a fresh source of aggrandisement and military fame.

At the beginning of the year 1177, in defiance of a peremptory order from the deputy, De Courcy set out from Dublin with this small force, and arrived in four days, by a rapid march, at Downpatrick, the metropolis of Ulidia,* or Down, and the residence of the king of that territory, Roderic MacDunlevy. The alarm caused by this inroad of foreigners into a country where they had hitherto been known but by rumour, and where, trusting to their distance from the scene of conflict, the inhabitants were unprepared with the means of defence, was at first so general and overwhelming, that scarce any resistance was made; and the people of the town, unapprised of the approach of an enemy till they heard, at day-break, the clangor of the English bugles sounding† in their streets, became helpless victims of the rage and rapacity of the soldiery. It happened that the pope's legate, cardinal Vivian, was then at Downpatrick, having arrived there a short time before from Scotland;‡ and struck with horror at this unprovoked aggression, he endeavoured to mediate terms of peace between the two parties; proposing that De Courcy should withdraw his army from Ulidia, on condition of the prince of that country paying tribute to Henry.

This offer De Courcy sternly refused; and Vivian,

* Ulidia or Ullah, comprised at the most the now county of Down, and some parts of Antrim.

† "Adeo inexpectatus penetravit, ut cives, metu vacui, Britannicæ copias in Ultoniam influere minimè somniarint, usque eò dum, in variis partibus urbis disturbatis, buccinarum clangor prima læce intonat." *Stanihurst*, l. 4.

‡ *Hibern. Expugnat.* l. 2. c. 16. *Gulielm. Neubrig.* l. 3. c. 9. Leland mistakenly represents Vivian as having come to Ireland in the train of Fitz-Aldelm, the new justiciary.

provoked by such gross injustice, now strenuously advised the Ulidian Prince, and even besought him, as he valued his blessing, to stand up manfully in defence of his violated territories.* The panic into which the natives had at first been thrown having by this time subsided, a large tumultuary force was collected, consisting of no less, it is said, than ten thousand men; at the head of which the king marched to drive the enemy from his capital. De Courcy, however, advanced from the town to meet them, and a hard-fought battle ensued, in which this lord himself and some of his knights, performed prodigies of valour, and which ended in the total defeat and rout of the Irish.† In the course of the action, Malachy, the bishop of Down, was taken prisoner; but, through the intercession of the cardinal, was again set at liberty, and restored to his see.

With the superstition common to most of the heroes of that period, De Courcy persuaded himself that he had, by this expedition, fulfilled a prophecy of Merlin, which had declared, that a white knight, sitting on a white horse, and bearing birds on his shield, would be the first that with force of arms would enter and invade Ulster. The important battle, also, which he had now gained, was the same predicted, as he fancied, in one of St. Columba's prophecies; where it was foretold, that so great would be the carnage of the Irish, that the enemy would wade up to the knees in their blood. So strongly had the predictions of this saint affected De Courcy's imagination,‡ that he always carried about

* "Qui pugnandum pro patria esse dixit, et pugnaturis cum obsecrationibus benedixit." *Gulielm. Neubrig. ut supra.*

† Adopting the improbable statement of Giraldus respecting this battle, that the number of Irish engaged in it was ten thousand, while their victors, the English, were not quite four hundred, Stanishurst yet falls into the gross absurdity of praising the military valour on both sides as equal. Thus, for the mere pleasure, as it would seem, of turning a turgid sentence, he says, "Nelli parti militaria virtus deest sed victoris largitor. Deus," etc. etc. Again, "Ultonienses, ut est hominum genus naturâ et usu valde bellicosum, nam conducti in armis sevim agunt, visis Britannis, non timide ac diffidenter, sed ordinate et audacter processum efficiunt."

‡ According to Stanishurst, John de Courcy, in his anxiety to adapt these

with him a book,* in the Irish language, wherein they were written, and slept with it under his pillow; regarding these prophecies as a sort of "mirror" of the wondrous achievements he was himself destined to perform. In the month of June following, De Courcy again defeated an army of the Ultonians; and among the English wounded in this second conflict, was Armoric of St. Laurence, ancestor of the barons of Howth.

While John de Courcy was thus overrunning Ulster, where his small force had extended their incursions into Dalriada and Tyrone, the legate, whose mission, notwithstanding his generous effort in favour of the Ultonians, had for its object to forward Henry's designs upon Ireland, proceeded to Dublin, and there convoked a general council of bishops and abbots; in which, setting forth the right of dominion over that country conferred by the pope upon Henry, he impressed on them the necessity of paying obedience to such high authority under pain of excommunication. He also, among other regulations, promulgated at this council, gave leave to the English soldiers to provide themselves with victuals for their expeditions out of the churches, into which, as inviolable sanctuaries, they used to be removed by the natives;—merely ordering, that, for the provisions thus taken, a reasonable price should be paid to the rectors of the churches.

Soon after the dissolution of this council, we find another expedition undertaken by the English, and under circumstances peculiarly disgraceful to most of the parties concerned in it. Some bitter quarrel having

prophecies to himself, took the not unskilful mode of adapting himself to the prophecies; and, with that view, provided for his own equipment, in proceeding to Ulster, a white horse, a shield with bees on it, and all the other foretold appendages of the destined conqueror of Ulidia; so that, as Stanishurst expresses it, "he sallied forth like an actor, dressed to perform a part:—at in Ultoniam, tanquam personatus comædus, advolarit."

* "Ipse vero Joannes librum nunc prohibeticum Habernice scriptum tanquam operum suorum speculom præ manibus dicitur habuisse." *Girald.* "Ad dormiendum proficiscens, eundem sub cubicularis lecti pulvino collocaret."—*Stanishurst.*

for a long time existed between Roderic O'Connor and his eldest son Murtagh, the young prince had in consequence of these differences fled to Dublin, and invited Fitz-Aldelm to make war upon his father, offering himself to conduct into Connaught the army destined to this service. It does not appear that there had been on the part of Roderic any violation of the treaty entered into with Henry, or that, by any offensive step whatsoever, he had given provocation to the English government. The hope of being able, however, to profit by this family feud, to render it the means of dividing and distracting the strength of Connaught, and thereby facilitate the acquisition of that province for Henry, was far too tempting to be easily resisted. Accordingly Fitz-Aldelm, though drained already of a part of his army by the detachment led into Ulster by De Courcy, was yet able to send, under Milo de Cogan, in aid of the unnatural son's treason, a force of horsemen and archers, amounting to more than 500 men.

Crossing the Shannon, these troops advanced as far as Tuam, unresisted, finding neither people nor provisions throughout the whole of the way. The inhabitants had retired, with their families and cattle, to the fastnesses of the hills, or into inaccessible woods, first destroying all such stores of provisions as were not concealed in subterranean granaries; and, when they had not time to remove them from the houses and churches, setting fire to the towns themselves in which these structures stood, and thus consuming all together. So completely did this mode of proceeding distress and baffle their invaders, that at the end of eight days they were compelled to return, and without having gained a single advantage. On approaching the Shannon, they were suddenly attacked by Roderic O'Connor, who had waited their coming, with a large force, in a wood not far from that river; and, after suffering considerable loss, they at length forced their way, and succeeded in reaching Dublin. Roderic's son, the traitor

Murtagh, was taken prisoner in this action; and the men of Connaught,—not one of whom, it appears, had followed his example in joining the foreigners,—delivered him up into the hands of his father, who punished his treason, according to the barbarous fashion of those times, by depriving him of his eyes.

To a mind acute as was that of Henry, it must have become, at this time, sufficiently manifest, that out of such crude and discordant elements as were now conflicting in Ireland, neither peace nor order were likely soon to arise; and that the grasp of one strong and steady hand, acting with immediate, not deputed power, and coercing all parties alike into obedience and observance of justice, presented the sole means or hope that human policy could suggest for the reduction of so crude and complicated a chaos into order. Fated as Ireland was by her position, and even still more by the feuds prevailing among her own people, to become subject to foreign dominion, the presence, for a few years, of a ruler like Henry in the land, with an army large enough to render resistance hopeless, would, by lending to the new institutions introduced by him at once enforcement and superintendence, have secured both their reception by the country, and their adaptation to its peculiar habits and wants; and in this manner, perhaps, the euthanasia of Ireland's independence might, with advantage and honour to both countries, have been effected. At all events, the world would, in that case, have been spared the anomalous spectacle that has been ever since presented by the two nations;—the one subjected, without being subdued; the other rulers, but not masters: the one doomed to all that is tumultuous in independence, without its freedom; the other endued with every attribute of despotism, except its power.

It can hardly be doubted that Henry was sufficiently aware of the value of Ireland, to have taken more pains in laying the foundations of the English power in that kingdom, had the cares attendant on so

vast an extent of dominion, and the anxieties caused by his domestic troubles, allowed him the leisure and thought requisite for such a task. The plan which occurred to him about this time, of investing his youngest son John with the lordship of Ireland, is supposed to have been suggested by the wish to supply, as far as was practicable, the want of the royal presence and sanction, in the administration of that country's affairs.* He might also, in taking this step, have been somewhat influenced by the general rage for subinfeudations which naturally prevailed in an age when land was regarded as a source more of power than of revenue, and which, at this period, had converted France into a vast assemblage of fiefs. As his claim to the kingdom of Ireland had originally been founded on a grant from the see of Rome,† to the same source he now thought it right to apply for approval of the intended enfeoffment.‡ Permission was accordingly granted to him by Alexander III., to bestow that sovereignty either upon John, or any other of his sons he might choose; and, also, to reduce to complete obedience such chiefs of Ireland as might prove refractory.

In prosecution of this object, Henry, about the middle of May in the year 1177, assembled a council of prelates and barons at Oxford, and, in their presence, constituted his son John king of Ireland.§

* "Some method to supply, so far as it could be supplied, the want of his presence, was therefore to be sought; and he judged, very truly, that the Irish nation, accustomed through the course of many ages to be governed by princes of as ancient royal blood as any in Europe would not easily be kept patient under the rule of his servants."—*Lord Lyttelton*, Book 5.

† An anonymous writer thus puts the dilemma in which those kings of England were involved, who set forth the authority of Adrian's Bull as the ground of their claims to the dominion of Ireland:—"Deinde interrogo Anglos an Henricus ille secundus acceperit Hiberniam sibi et successoribus à Romano Pontifice jure feudali necne? Si regant, ad quid pro se citant Bullam illam? Si affirmant, ergo Reges Angliæ sunt feudatarii et vassalli. Summi Pontificis, cujus potestatem ad comprimendum regnum agnoscent, et in cæteris regant." *Disputat. Apologetica de Jure regni Hiberniæ*. Francofurt, 1645.

‡ Perquisiverat enim ab Alexandro summo Pontifice quod liceret ei filium suum quem vellet regem Hiberniæ facere et similiter coronare ac regis potentes ejusdem terræ qui subjectionem ei facere nollent debellare.—*Bromton*.

§ "Oxoniam prefectus est, etc. Johannem filium totius Hiberniæ regulum facit."—*Polydore Virgil*.

Notwithstanding, however, this solemn announcement of his title, the young prince was never afterwards, in any document that has come down to us, styled otherwise than lord of Ireland, and earl of Moreton. In conformity with this change in the tenure by which that realm was held, Henry confirmed his grant of Meath to Hugh de Lacy, by a new charter, wherein it was set down that this lord, for the future, was to hold that province under him and his son; and by the service, not, as before, of fifty only, but of a hundred knights. He also granted, at this time, to Robert Fitz-Stephen and Milo de Cogan, the kingdom of Cork, or, as it was otherwise called, of Desmond; to be held of him and his son John, and their heirs,—with the exception of the city of Cork, and the adjoining cantreds,* which Henry retained in his own hands, but of which Fitz-Stephen and Cogan were to have the custody for him. It appears, however, that notwith-

A. D.
1177.

* According to Giraldus, a cantred was such a portion of land as usually contains a hundred towns; so that, says Ware, "the quantity of a cantred or century, which is the same with the Saxon hundred, is no way ascertained by any fixed measure; and, as the quantity of a cantred is variable and uncertain, so also is the quantity of a carucate, or plow-land, which is greater or less according to the nature or quality of the soil; though it is commonly reported to be such a portion of land as can give employment to one plow through the year." In a registry of the Abbey of Dunisk, Connaught is said to contain only 26 cantreds.

The Welsh had anciently the territorial division of cantref, every cantref containing a hundred towns, or 25,600 acres.—*Leges Wallicæ*, quoted by Turner, book 15. c. 3.

The division of the people into hundreds appears to have been a custom of the ancient Germans (*German. Tacit.*), though Murphy, in his diffuse translation of the words "*centeni ex singulis pagis sunt*," has taken for granted much more than the passage implies. "Each canton," he makes Tacitus say, "sends a hundred;—from that circumstance called hundredors by the army."

The following remarks of Mr Monk Mason, on the subject of the Irish cantreds, are curious:—"There are strong presumptions, arising from the Irish Topography of Girald. Cambrens., written about 1185, and from other incontrovertible evidences, that a rude survey of Ireland was made by Henry II., in imitation of Doomsday-Book. Girald., speaking of the ancient regal divisions of Ireland into five portions, observes, that each part contains 32 cantreds. When we reflect on the technical word he uses, we may be sure that some degree of accuracy was attended to, for every cantred contained 32 townlands, and every townland eight carucates." *Parochial Survey*

standing this grant, they acquired possession of but a small part of that territory; and that, two years after, they were obliged to content themselves with but seven cantreds near the city between them both, while no less than twenty-four cantreds remained still out of their power, as well as of the king's,—not having yet been brought under subjection.

A grant which proved, in the same manner, to be rather nominal than real, was that which Henry made, some time after, of the kingdom of Limerick, or North Munster, to the two brothers of the earl of Cornwall, and Josselin de Pumerai, their nephew. As the granted territory was still in the possession of its rightful ruler, Donald O'Brien, who had shown both the will and the power to defend it to the last, these English lords deemed it most prudent to decline so precarious a gift.* The same principality, however, was again made the subject of a grant by Henry, who bestowed it as a fief, to be held of him and his son, on Philip de Braosa; and this baron, aided by De Cogan, and Fitz-Stephen, marched an army towards the Shannon, with the view of seizing upon Limerick. But the inhabitants had determined to sacrifice the city rather than suffer it to fall into the hands of the English; and when he advanced to the margin of the river, he beheld Limerick all in flames. Struck by the determined resolution which this act of despair implied, De Braosa, though naturally, as we are told, not wanting in courage, hesitated to advance. In vain did his confederates, De Cogan and Fitz-Stephen, who were well accustomed to such scenes, urged him to accompany them across the river, and offered to build for him a fort, on the other side, from whence he could command the city. Between his own fears† and those of his followers—who were

* "Et ideo maxime præfati milites regnum illud de Limeric habere noluerunt, quia non dum erat acquisitum, nec subiectum dominio domini regis." *Benedict. Abbas.*

† "Their opinion might be prudent," says lord Lyttelton, "yet it was

the very refuse, it appears, of the population of South Wales—a general panic sprung up among them; and, exhibiting a rare instance, it must be owned, of want of courage among the English adventurers, they returned, disheartened and in so far disgraced, to rejoin their countrymen at Cork.

Besides the above mentioned grants proceeding immediately from the crown, there were also lands parcelled out, by subinfeudation, from these several territories, by which a number of the other lords engaged in these wars were amply enriched and aggrandised. Thus to Gilbert de Nogent, the founder of the noble family of Westmeath, Hugh de Lacy conveyed, by charter, the land, or, as afterwards called, barony of Delvin, containing about 20,000 acres; while, at the same time, Robert Fitz-Stephen, out of the lands which had been granted to him in Cork, conveyed to his nephew, Philip de Barry, three cantreds, called Olethan, besides two other cantreds elsewhere; in right of which baronies, the family of De Barry always ranked as parliamentary peers, and in the reign of Charles I. was elevated to an earldom.

Being found deficient in the military talents which the office of deputy required, William Fitz-Aldelm was, in the years 1178, removed from the post, and Hugh de Lacy appointed his successor. Besides the causes already assigned for the unpopularity of his administration, there are grounds for suspecting that his having adopted a somewhat more just and conciliatory policy towards the Irish, was not among the least of those offences by which he forfeited the good will of the colonists; and that, even thus early, any show of consideration for the rights and comforts of the natives was beginning to be regarded with fear and jealousy, as a species of treason towards their masters. "He was

not in the spirit of the English chivalry, which had enabled a few adventurers of that nation, with infinite odds against them, to make and keep such great conquests, in different parts of Ireland."

the flatterer," says Giraldus, "of rebels, and full of courtesy towards the foe."* "He was a friend," says another, "to the enemies of the state, and a foe to its friends."† The charge advanced against him of having been in the habit of receiving bribes from the Irish, may have had its origin probably in some acts of kindness which he is said to have performed towards the natives, and which his less liberal countrymen endeavoured to tarnish by assigning such unworthy motives for them.

It is necessary to remind the reader that, in the peculiar view here taken of Fitz-Aldelm's policy, I have been led solely by my own conjectures, and by the deductions which, as it appears to me, may fairly be drawn from the very nature and terms of the charges brought against him. That he had not forfeited much of the royal favour by his administration, appears from his appointment, at this time, to the custody of Leinster; that province having, on the decease of Earl Strongbow, fallen to the king, as supreme lord of the fief, during the infancy of the heir. In like manner, Wexford, which had originally been given to Fitz-Aldelm, and then afterwards transferred to Strongbow, was now restored to the former lord; while at the same time Waterford, with its dependencies, was entrusted by the king to Robert Poer.

The event, during Fitz-Aldelm's administration, to which the natives attached most importance, was the removal, by his orders, of the celebrated Staff of Jesus from Armagh to Dublin. This staff or crosier, which was said to have belonged to St. Patrick,‡ and which

* "Rebellium blanditor hosti suavissimus." *Hib. Espug.* l. 2. c. 16.

† "Reipublice inimicis amicus, reipublice amicis inimicus.—*Stam-Aurst, de Reb. Hib.* l. 4.

‡ One of the usurpers of the see of Armagh, Nigel M'Aid, carried off with him, on being removed, both this Staff, as we are told by St. Bernard, and the text of the Gospels which had belonged to St. Patrick; and such was the reverence in which these two reliques were regarded by the people, that whoever had them in his possession was regarded as the rightful claimant to the see.

St. Bernard describes as being, in his time, covered over with gold and set with precious gems, had been for many ages an object of veneration with the people; and its removal now, from the cathedral of Armagh to that of Dublin, was but a part of the policy pursued afterwards by the English, of concentrating, as much as was possible, the power and wealth of the Church in Dublin, and diverting it, in proportion, from the see of Armagh. Fitz-Aldelm was also the founder, by order of King Henry, of the famous abbey of St. Thomas the martyr (i. e. Becket), near Dublin, on the site now called Thomas Court.

CHAPTER XXXI.

John de Courcy defeated in Ulster.—De Lacy again entrusted with the Government.—Death of St. Laurence.—Succeeded in the See of Dublin by John Caming.—Murder of Milo de Cogan and Fitz-Stephen's Son.—Arrival of Philip Barry and his Brother Gerald.—Hervey of Mount-Maurice retires into a Monastery.—Dissensions in the Family of Roderic O'Connor.—Philip of Worcester appointed Deputy.—Prince John sent to Ireland with a large Army.—Insolence of his Followers to the Irish Chiefs.—A Spirit of Insurrection raised throughout Ireland.—Forts built by the English.—Successfully attacked by the Irish, and several Barons slain.—John loses almost the whole of his Army.—Is recalled by Henry.

JOHN DE COURCY, who still continued his warfare in Ulster, met, in the course of this year, with a severe check. He had taken, in a predatory incursion into Louth, a vast number of cattle, and was driving them from thence to his own quarters, when he found himself attacked by the two princes of Oriel and of Ulla; and after a sharp conflict, in which the greater number of his troops were cut off, he was obliged to fly, attended by only eleven horsemen, and continued his retreat for two days and two nights, without either food or rest, till he reached his own castle near Downpatrick. He was likewise un-

successful in another incursion which he made the same year into Dalaradia.

How individious and difficult was the task of administering the country's affairs, may be judged from the short period during which each of the deputies was allowed to remain in office. The odium excited, as we have seen, by Fitz-Aldelm's measures, had induced the king to recall him; and now the popularity of his successor, awakening in a like degree the royal jealousy, led to a similar result. Hugh de Lacy was, this year, removed from the government, and the office of deputy committed to the joint care of John, constable of Cheshire, and Richard, bishop of Coventry.

Among those acts of De Lacy which had aroused in the king suspicions of his harbouring high and ambitious views, was the marriage he had lately contracted, and without asking the royal permission, with the daughter of Roderic, king of Connaught. But the exclusion of this lord from the favour of his sovereign, was, for the present, but of short duration. The ready submission with which he had yielded to his unjust dismissal from office, and the clear explanations he was able to give of the whole of his conduct, completely dissipated the king's suspicions, and after but three months' deprivation of office, he was reinstated in the government;—Robert of Shrewsbury being sent with him, on the part of the king, to act as his counsellor and assistant, and be the witness, or, in plain language, spy, of his proceedings.*

During the remainder of his administration, De Lacy was chiefly employed in building castles for the protection of Leinster, having already sufficiently fortified

* "Qui Regis ex parte coadjutor ei et consiliarius, operumque suorum testis existeret." *Hibern. Expugnatio*. l. 2, c. 22. Leland adds, that it was at Lacy's own request this "inspector" was sent with him, in order "that the king might be thus authentically informed of all his conduct," etc. etc. Leland, who abounds in this sort of secret information, refers, in the present instance, to Staniburst as his authority; but Staniburst says nothing whatever of any such request having been made.

his own territory of Meath; and more than a dozen names of places, where he now erected castles, will be found enumerated by the chronicler. To this baron's government, at the different periods of his office, has been attributed the singular good fortune of having been popular alike with the English settlers and the natives; and his kind and liberal treatment of the latter is assigned by Giraldus as one of the reasons of the suspicion entertained of his barbouring ambitious designs upon the country:—so difficult was it to depart with impunity from that general system of force and rapine upon which the settlement was, from the first, founded, and by which alone, it was thought, its safety and interests could be upheld. Even De Lacy himself, who was, perhaps, praiseworthy only as compared with his associates, is allowed by the same favourable painter of his character to have been guilty, occasionally, of injustice and tyranny, as well as the rest. "By oppressing others with a strong hand," says Giraldus,* "he amply enriched his own followers."

In this year, the saint and patriot, Laurence O'Toole, died at the monastery of Augum, now Eu, on the borders of Normandy. He had been, in the preceding year, one of the six Irish prelates who attended the general council of Lateran,† and had then received from the pope, Alexander III., who had treated him with the distinction and kindness due to his high character, a bull confirming the rights and jurisdiction of the church of Dublin, over the sees of Glendalough, Kildare, Ferns,

* "Tam ampla manu alios opprimendo suos ubique dictavit." Hooker entirely omits, in his translation, this single dark shade thrown into De Lacy's character by the chronicler.

† "The other five were, Catholcus, of Toam; Constantine O'Brian, of Killaloe; Felix, of Lismore; Augustus, of Waterford; and Brictius, of Limerick. The bull granted on this occasion, which is curious, as showing how richly endowed the see of Dublin was at that period, may be found in Usher's *Sylloge*, No. XLVIII. Fleury mentions (*Hist. Ecclesiast.*, l. 73. § 24.), that one of the Irish bishops present at this council had for his sole means of subsistence the milk of three cows. It appears, from Hoveden, that there were present at the council several other Irish bishops, besides the six just mentioned; and it is supposed to be of one of those that the above improbable tale is related. See Lanigan, chap. 29. § 14. note 96.

Leighlin and Ossory. Some peculiar privileges which, in his zeal for Ireland, he had succeeded in obtaining from that council, were resented, it seems, by Henry, as derogatory to his royal dignity; but there do not appear to be any grounds for the statement, advanced by some writers, that, in consequence of this offence, he was forbidden by the king to return to Ireland; as we find him, after that period, employed actively in the care of his diocese and province, and dispensing those charities and hospitalities around him, which appear to have been as princely in their extent as they were evidently pure and unostentatious in their motive. In the course of the year he had accompanied to England a son of Roderic O'Connor, who had been sent as a hostage to Henry for the payment of the tribute stipulated between his father and that prince.* Passing afterwards into France, he was seized with a fever, when arrived on the frontiers of Normandy, and expired the 14th of November, 1180.

This pious and eminent prelate, who was styled, as St. Bernard tells us, "the Father of his country,"† was of the illustrious house of the O'Tuathals, being the youngest son of Murchertach O'Tuathal, prince of Imaile;‡ or, as

* "Item, eodem, anno 1180, Laurencius Davelinensis Archiep. qui ad Dominum regem in Normanniam transfretaverat, adducens secum filium Roderici Reg. Connact. quem idem Rex miserat Domin. suo Reg. Anglie, remansurum sibi in obsidem super pactis inter eos contractis de tributo Hibernie solvendo." *Benedict. Abbas.*

† "Pater patrie dictus."

‡ In the very scarce work of Thomas Carve, of Tipperary, entitled *Lyra, sive Anacephaleosis Hibernica*, I find, in allusion to St. Laurence's royal descent, the following lines:

Regius hoc anget patrum Laurentius agmen,
Eternum sedis Dublinensis honos.

Also in a pastoral letter of Pope Benedict XIV., addressed to the archbishops and bishops of Ireland, in the year 1741, the fame of St. Laurence is thus commemorated:—"Sed et sinceriora percurrite S. Laurentii Arch. Dublin. quem regis sanguine ortum legatum apostol. in Hiberniam Alexand. III. predecessor noster, in concilio Lateranensi III. selegit, etc. Atque inde facile intelligatis quæ quantaque pro Grege suo vir apostolicus fecerit atque pertulerit." It is not true, however, as stated here, that St. Laurence was ever appointed legate to Ireland. A hymn on St. Laurence, given in Thomas De Burgh's *Officia Propria Sanctorum Hibernie*, and

usually called, the glen of Imaile, in the now county of Wicklow. While, yet a boy, he was, by his own desire, dedicated to the ecclesiastical state; and, under the care of the bishop of Glendalough, made considerable progress in learning and piety. When twenty-five years of age, he was selected abbot of the monastery of that place, which was distinct from the episcopal see, and became, within a few years, successively bishop of Glendalough and archbishop of Dublin. The holy seclusion of the Valley of the Lakes, where so large a portion of his earlier days had been passed, still continued to retain a charm for him through life; and it was his delight when engaged in the cares of his archbishopric, to retire occasionally to Glendalough, and there, in a cave which had been used as an oratory by St. Kevin, to pass whole weeks in lonely prayer and contemplation.*

The Share taken by him in all the most important transactions connected with Ireland which occurred during his public life, has already, from time to time, been noticed in the preceding pages; and it redounds scarcely less to the credit of the English authorities, than to the honour of his own high character, that, notwithstanding his proclaimed zeal for the independence of his native land, and the efforts made by him to awaken in his countrymen a spirit of resistance to the foreigner, he should yet have been selected for so

more worthy of notice for its truth than its poetry, contains the following deserved tribute to the public character of this eminent man :—

Nec favor regum, neque te tumultus
Flebis insanæ, tua sed tot annis
Nota, Laurenti, Pietas ad altos
Vexit honores.

It has been my object, in this note, to collect together a few of the proofs of this eminent Irishman's celebrity, which have escaped the notice of Dr Lanigan and others. To the forthcoming, "Memoirs of the Archbishops of Dublin," by Mr D'Alton, we may look with the confidence which that gentleman's knowledge of our history and antiquities inspires, for a fuller and more interesting account of the affairs of the Irish Church than has yet appeared.

* Vit. Laurent ap Messingham.

many important and delicate missions to the English court; and, though naturally regarded with jealous suspicion by the king, should have remained to the last in undisturbed possession both of his popularity and his honours. Even by the slanderer of all other persons and things belonging to Ireland, Laurence is pronounced to have been a "just and a good man." * An ardent lover of his ill-fated country, he felt but the more poignantly those wretched feuds and unnatural treacheries of her own sons, which were now co-operating so fatally with the enemy, in reducing her to complete degradation and ruin; and, a short time before his death, he is said to have exclaimed, in the Irish language, "Ah, foolish and senseless people; what is now to become of you? Who will now cure your misfortunes? Who will heal you?" When reminded on his death-bed of the propriety of making his will, he answered, "God knows, I have not at this moment so much as a penny under the sun." † His remains were deposited in the middle of the church of Augum, where they lay till the year of his canonization, by Honorius III., A. D. 1226, when, with great solemnity, they were placed over the high altar, and preserved in a silver shrine; some of his reliques ‡ having been sent to Christ Church, in Dublin, and some to different places in France.

Immediately on receiving the intelligence of Lau-

* "Laurentius Dublinensis Episcopus; vir bonus and justus."—Girald. Cambrens. *Hibern. Expugnata*. l. 2. c. 23.

The author of his life, published in Messingham's *Florilegium*, speaks of his munificence in entertaining the rich, as well as of his charity in feeding and succouring the poor. Every day he took care to see fed in his own presence from thirty to sixty poor persons; and, during a famine which lasted for three years, he gave daily alms to 500 people, besides supplying 300 more throughout his diocese with clothes, provisions, and other necessities. It is added, that, during this severe time, 200 children were left at the door of his residence, all of whom were protected and provided for by his care.

† Vit. S. Laurent.

‡ In the Office quoted by Harris, containing a description of these reliques, it is said that "the head is kept in a silver case, with a crystal over it, through which may be seen the mark of the wound given him by the madman at Canterbury."—Ware's *Bishops*.

rence's death, Henry, in exercise of the rights which he held over Ireland, as a realm annexed to the English crown, took the vacant archbishopric into his own custody, and despatched Jeffery de la Hay, his chaplain, to Dublin, for the purpose of seizing on the revenues of the see and collecting them into the Exchequer. He likewise called together at Evesham, in Worcester, an assembly of the clergy of Dublin, by whom, on his recommendation, a learned Englishman, John Cuming, who had served him in a clerical capacity, was elected archbishop of Dublin. Still more to strengthen the English influence in that country, a bull was procured in the following year from pope Lucius III., exempting the diocese of Dublin from a great part of the jurisdiction hitherto exercised over it by the see of Armagh. This memorable bull, the immediate purpose of which was to curtail the privileges of the archbishop of Armagh, but which had also, probably, in view the object of transferring, at some future time, the primacy to the seat of the English power, Dublin, became, in after ages, a subject of fierce and voluminous controversy between the two sees.

One of the earliest, and not least chivalrous, of the English adventurers, Milo de Cogan, who had remained, jointly with his brother in arms, Robert Fitz-Stephen, in quiet possession of the territory granted to them in Desmond, fell a victim at this time to an act of the most foul and revolting treachery. Accompanied by a young and valiant son of Fitz-Stephen, who had lately married his daughter, De Cogan was on his way to a conference with some citizens of Waterford, which was to be held on a plain near Lismore, when he was suddenly attacked by a band of Irish, armed with axes, under a chieftain of the district, named MacTyre, by whom he had been invited to pass that night under his roof. Whether from some sudden cause of anger, or,

as would seem by the sequel, from a preconcerted design, this chief came unawares upon De Cogan, as he was sitting carelessly with the young Fitz-Stephen and four other knights upon the grass, and barbarously murdered the whole party.

A. D.
1182.

Scarcely had the news of this event reached Robert Fitz-Stephen, who was then in Cork, when, as if the murder had been meant as a signal for general revolt, almost all the chieftains of Munster rose up in arms, and a vast multitude of the people of Desmond, under their king, Dermot Marcarthy, laid siege to the town of Cork. In this emergency, Raymond le Gros, apprised of the danger of his kinsman, embarked from Wexford with a band of twenty select knights, and about a hundred other soldiers, partly horsemen, partly archers, and sailing along the coast to Cork, the Irish having no fleet to guard their shores, arrived but just in time to succour Fitz-Stephen, to enable him to repel his assailants, and force them to raise the siege.

As soon as intelligence of these events reached Henry, he sent over Richard de Cogan, the brother of the deceased Milo, to take his place as the associate of Fitz-Stephen in the government, and with this officer was sent a chosen body of troops for the reinforcement of the garrison. Shortly after, a still further addition was made to the military strength of the province, by the landing of Philip Barry, a nephew of Fitz-Stephen, with a considerable force, from Wales. Besides the object of assisting his relative, Barry had also in view the securing to himself some lands which Fitz-Stephen had granted to him in Olethan, a tract lying between Cork and Youghal. He was accompanied on this occasion by his brother Gerald Barry, a personage better known to fame as Giraldus Cambrensis, having connected his name inseparably with this period of our history, notwithstanding the strange heap of garrulous fiction and slander which he has mixed up with his other-

wise useful, and in general trustworthy, records of the first transactions and adventures of the English settlers in this country.*

While of the earliest of these adventurers one or two, as we have seen, had been carried off by death, and most of the others still passed their lives in perpetual warfare, Hervey of Mount Maurice, who had once been as stirring on the scene as any, now withdrew from the turmoils of war to a life of religious seclusion; and, after having in the year 1182 founded and endowed the abbey of Dunbrody, one of the finest ecclesiastical edifices in the country, he about this time assumed the monk's habit, and entered into the monastery of Christ Church, in Canterbury.† The zeal for founding religious houses had begun to prevail at this time extensively among the great English lords; who, while with one hand they oppressed and plundered the miserable clergy, and despoiled the cathedrals of their possessions, made, with the other, as they thought, full atonement for their sacrilegious spoliations, by calling into existence endowments and structures on which their own names were to be imprinted, and in which vanity had, at least, as much share as any real religious

* Ware, *Annals*, at the year 1183.—Some writers, and among others Prynne, erroneously suppose Giraldus to have accompanied Henry into Ireland. In speaking of the synod of Cashel, Prynne says, "to which (deirus) they all promised conformity, and to observe them for time to come, as Giraldus Cambrensis there present and other historians relate."—*On the Institutes*, c. 76.

† Ware, *Antiq.* chap. 36.—Archdall, *Monast. Hüb.*, at *Dunbrody*. On giving up his commission in the army, says Mr. Shaw Mason, Hervey parcelled out the portion of land allotted to him from the water of Wexford to Kempul (Campile) Pill along the sea-coast, for a certain short space in the country, amongst his followers, retaining to himself that portion of it now called the Union of St. James's; and on this he founded the abbey, dedicated it to St. Peter and St. Paul, and established there the order of Cistercian or Bernardine monks." Mr. Mason adds, that Hervey became himself the first abbot of Dunbrody; but I do not find this fact stated by either Ware, Archdall, or Lanigan. For a description of the present remains of this noble abbey, see Brewer's *Beauties of Ireland*.

"Les domaines du connétable Hervé de Montmorency en Irlande, si l'on en excepte ses donations à l'abbaye de Dunbrody, ont tous passé à son neveu et hoir Geoffroy, seigneur de Mariscia, vice roi d'Irlande, en 1215."—*Les Montmorency de France et d'Irlande*;

feeling. About the same time with Dunbrody abbey, were erected in Meath, by Hugh De Lacy, two monasteries for Augustin canons; one at Duleek, and the other at Colp, called anciently Invercolpa, at the mouth of the Boyne.*

Among the devout soldiers who thus employed themselves in alternately plundering and founding religious houses, John de Courcy was one of the most conspicuous; having founded the Benedictine priory of the island of Neddrum, somewhere off the coast of Down; and also the priory of St. John the Baptist in that county, for a branch of the Augustin canons, called Cruciferi. This lord also turned the secular canons out of the cathedral of Down, and introduced in their place Benedictine monks, from St. Werburgh's, in Chester; while at the same time, he got the dedication title of the cathedral changed from that of the Holy Trinity to that of St. Patrick,—a step superstitiously believed to be the cause of all the misfortunes that afterwards happened to De Courcy.

The disgraceful feuds which had so long distracted the domestic relations of Roderic O'Connor still continued to rage as violently as ever; but, in order to understand clearly their origin, some brief explanation is necessary. According to the ancient constitution of Ireland, whenever a provincial king was elected to the supreme throne, he resigned the crown of the province to one of his sons, or else to some other of his kin who was entitled as well as qualified to govern. So tottering, however, was the state of the monarchy at the time when Roderic succeeded to the supreme power, that fearing he should be left,—as would have been actually, indeed, his fate,—without either territory or throne, he con-

* "The walls of the church here," says Seward, "in ruins, are still to be seen, the arches of which are both in the Saxon and Gothic style; and the east window, which appears older than the rest, is supposed to have made a part of the abbey. On the north side is a small chapel, and to the south two other chapels, one of which is at present the burial-place of the family of Bellew."—*Topograph. Hibern.*, 1796.

ceived it most prudent still to retain his own hereditary dominions. Hence the continual efforts of his two sons, Connor and Murchard, to force him to surrender to them the sovereignty of Connaught. One of these sons he had already punished, by inhumanly putting out his eyes; and now the other was in open insurrection against his authority. About the year 1182, such indignation did the unnatural rebellion of these princes excite, that Flaherty O'Moldory, chief of Tyrconnel, marched an army into Connaught to put down their revolt, and gained a complete victory over them and their allies. The slaughter, in this battle, is said to have been immense, and no less than sixteen of the royal race of Connaught were among the slain on that day. At length, in the year at which we are now arrived, the wretched Roderic, wearied out with the unnatural conflict, agreed, as the only means of bringing it to an end, to surrender the kingdom to his eldest son, Connor Manmoy, and retire into a monastery.

However the transfer by king Henry to his son of a dominion which he himself but partially possessed, might, as a mere matter of form, be considered harmless, the measure adopted by him of actually sending this youth, who was now not more than twelve years of age, to rule over a kingdom requiring, at this crisis, the maturest counsels for its direction, was an act savouring, it must be owned, far more of the whim and wantonness of uncontrolled power, than of that deep and deliberate policy by which all the actions of this great king, even his least temperate, were in general regulated. His suspicious nature, it is true, had been kept in continual alarm by the increasing popularity of Hugh de Lacy; and being, for the third time, about to remove that lord from the government, he looked forward, doubtless, with hope to the effects of the presence of a prince of his blood in that country, as being likely to counteract the dangerous influence now exercised, and help to

rally around its legitimate centre the throne, that popular favour which had been hitherto intercepted by a bold and ambitious subject.

A. D. But, whatever may have been his immediate motives
1184. for this step, it is clear, from the precautionary measures with which he guarded and fenced it round, that he was by no means unconscious of the dangers contingent on such an experiment. In order to prepare the way for the reception of the young prince, he sent over to Dublin, in the month of August, the new English archbishop of that see, John Cuming; and, in the following month, Philip of Worcester proceeded thither, attended by a guard of forty knights, to take possession of his government, having orders from Henry to send De Lacy over into England, and to await himself in Ireland the coming of prince John. The royal youth was to be accompanied by Ranulph de Glanville, the great justiciary of England, and highly distinguished both as a lawyer and a soldier; while the historian, Gerald of Cambria, who had been sojourning for some time in Ireland, was appointed to attend John, as his secretary and tutor. If the notions impressed by the learned Welshman upon his pupil were at all similar to those he has recorded in his own writings, it is little to be wondered at that the prince and his companions should have been so much prepossessed against the country they were about to visit, and prepared to treat the unfortunate natives with indecent mockery and disdain.

1185. On the last day of March, John, earl of Moreton and lord of Ireland, having been previously knighted by his father at Windsor,* embarked with his attendants at

* *Radulf. de Diceto*.—According to the Annals of Margam, it was at Gloucester John was knighted:—"Prius tamen a patre apud Gloucestriam miles effectus."

Diceto, in remarking on the fortunes and situations of the different children of Henry, says, that, "John, being secured by the promise and provision of his father, will reduce different parts of Ireland into a monarchy, if it shall hereafter be granted to him;"—that is, adds Sayer, he shall have a kingdom, if he can win it.—*Hist. of Bristol*, chap. x.

Milford Haven, where a fleet of sixty ships had been prepared to transport a large body of cavalry, of which 400 were knights, together with a considerable force of infantry, chiefly, as it appears, archers; and on the following day, about noon, the royal fleet arrived in the harbour of Waterford.

With such an army, added to the forces already in Ireland, a skillful leader, mixing conciliation with firmness, might have established the English power over the whole island. But the conduct of the new deputy, Philip of Worcester, had not been such as to inspire any confidence in the order of things of which he was the precursor. One of the first acts of his government—an act which, whatever might be its strict justice, was far from being calculated to render him popular—was to resume all the lands of the royal demesne, which De Lacy had parcelled out among his own friends and followers, and to appropriate them to the use of the king's household. The next measure of the lord deputy was to march an army into Ulster, a region of adventure hitherto occupied by John De Courcy alone, and where, ever since a victory gained by him, in the year 1182, over Donald O'Lochlin, the spirit of the Irish had been considerably broken. The leader of the present enterprise had evidently no object but plunder and extortion; and from the clergy, more especially, so grinding were his exactions, that even Giraldus, so lenient in general to all misdeeds against the Irish, brands the spoiler with his reprobation. "Even in the holy time of Lent," says this chronicler, "he extorted from the sacred order his execrable tribute of gold."* From Armagh, where, chiefly, these enormities were committed, Philip proceeded to Downpatrick; and a violent fit or pang which seized him in the course of his journey, is regarded by

* "A sacro clero auri tributum execrabile tam exigens quam extorqueus."—*Hibern. Expugnata*. l. 2. c. 24. Thus gently rendered by the English translator:—"Being well laden with gold, silver, and money, which he had exacted in every place where he came, for other good he did none."

the writers of the time as a judgment upon him for the wrongs he had just been committing.

From this expedition he was returned but a few days before the arrival of prince John at Waterford, whither the archbishop of Dublin and other English lords had gone to receive the illustrious visitor on his landing. There came likewise, soon after to wait upon him, many of those Irish chiefs of Leinster who had ever since the time of their first submission been living quietly under the English government, and now hastened to welcome the young prince, and acknowledge him loyally as their lord. But the kind of reception these chieftains experienced showed at the outset how weak and infatuated was the policy of sending a stripling, a mere boy, attended by a train of idle and insolent courtiers, upon a mission involving interests of so grave and momentous a description. Unaccustomed to the peculiar manners and dress of the Irish, their long bushy beards, their hair hanging in glibbes, or locks, down their backs,* the young Norman nobles, who formed the court of John, and who were themselves, to an unmanly degree, attentive to their dress,† broke out in open derision of their visitors; and when the chiefs advancing towards the prince were about to give him, according to the manner of their country, the Kiss of Peace,‡ they found themselves rudely and mockingly repulsed by his attendants, some of whom even proceeded to such insolence as to pluck these proud chiefs by their beards.

* "The Irish," says Ware, "wore their hair (by the moderns called glibes) hanging down their backs." "Proud they are (says Campion) of long crisped glibbes, and do nourish the same with all their cunning: to crop the front thereof they take it for a notable piece of villany."

† In Camden's Remains we find them described as "all gallant, with coats to the mid-knee, head shorn, beard shaved, arms laden with bracelets, and faces painted." Liugard, in the same manner, represents the Normans as "ostentatiously fond of dress," but describes their hair as worn long and curled.

‡ This ceremony of the Kiss of Peace was observed also in Richard II.'s reign, when that monarch received, by his commissioner, the earl marshal, the homage and fealty of the Leinster chieftains.

To a race and class such as were these princes at this period,—the fading remains of the ancient royalty of the land, and become but the more watchful and exacting in their claims to personal respect, in proportion as the foundation of those claims had grown more unreal and nominal,—to men thus circumstanced, thus proudly alive to the least passing shade of disrespect, it may easily be imagined how far transcending all ordinary modes of provocation was the kind of insult this contemptuous treatment conveyed. Resolved on deadly revenge, they returned immediately to their own homes, withdrew their families and septs from the English territory, and repairing, some to Donald O'Brian, the still untamed foe of the foreigners, others to the chiefs of Desmond and of Connaught, represented the indignities which, in their persons, had been offered to all Ireland; asking, "when such was the manner in which even loyal submission was received, what further hope remained for the country but in general and determined resistance?"

Some of the chieftains, thus addressed, had been on their way to offer their homage at Waterford; but this news checked at once their purpose. Instead of loyalty, they now breathed only revenge; and, the flame rapidly catching from one to another, a spirit of hostility to the sway of the English sprung up, such as had never been before witnessed since the time of their coming into the country. Agreeing to merge in the common cause all local and personal differences, the chiefs pledged themselves by the most sacred oaths to each other, to stake their lives upon the issue, and "stand to the defence of their country and liberty." While such was the feeling of resistance awakened by the insolent bearing of the young prince's courtiers, the policy in other respects pursued by his government was calculated to aggravate, far more than to soften, this first impression. Nor were the Welsh settlers treated with much less harshness than the native Irish themselves, as they removed

these people from the garrison towns in which they had been hitherto stationed, and forced them to serve in the marches. With a severity, too, even more impolitic than it was unjust, they drove from their settlements within the English territory some Irish septs that had long held peaceably those possessions, and divided their lands among some of the newly arrived foreigners. The consequence was, that the septs thus unwisely ejected, joined the ranks of their now arming fellow-countrymen, and took with them not only a strong accession of revengeful feeling, but also a knowledge of the plans and policy of the enemy, an acquaintance with his strong and weak points of defence, and every requisite, in short, that could render them useful, as informers and guides, in the momentous struggle about to be hazarded.

While thus threatening was the aspect of the public mind, the advisers of the prince pursued unchecked their heedless career. Whether trusting to the people's divisions among themselves, as likely to avert the danger threatened by the league of their chiefs, or unable to awaken in John and his dissolute Normans any thought but of their own reckless indulgence,*—whatsoever was the cause, the attention of the government appears to have been but little directed to the gathering storm;† and the erection of three forts or castles at Tipperary, Ard-sinnan, and Lismore, was the only measure for the security of their power, which the incapable advisers of the prince had yet adopted. Even these castles, how-

* "All that authority," says lord Lyttelton, "over the minds of the Irish, which the courtesy, gravity, and prudence of Henry, during his abode in their island, had happily gained, was lost in a few days by the petulant levity of John and his courtiers; the goodwill of that people, on which Henry had desired to establish his dominion, being instantly turned into a national hatred.

† The abbot of Peterborough attributes a great part of the failure of John's enterprise to the desertions of the soldiers of his army to the ranks of the Irish, in consequence of their pay having been withheld from them and embezzled:—"Sed ipse Johannes parum ibi profecit, quia pro defectu indigenarum qui cum eo tenere debebant et pro eo quod stipendia militibus et solidariis suis dare noluit."

ever, were not left long unassailed. That of Ardfinnan, built upon a rock overlooking the Suir, was attacked by Donald O'Brian, prince of Limerick, and its small garrison put to the sword. In Ossory, Roger de Poer, a young officer of brilliant promise, was cut off: while, in an assault upon Lismore, the brave Robert Barry, one of those who had accompanied Fitz-Stephen into Ireland, was taken and slain. In various other quarters, the incursions of the natives were attended with equal success; and two other English leaders, Raymond Fitz-Hugh, who fell at Olechan, and Raymond Canton, slain at Odrone, were added to the victims, which the outraged feelings of the people now offered up in bitter revenge for their wrongs.*

On the other hand, an attack upon Cork, by MacCarthy of Desmond, was so vigorously resisted by Theobald Walter, the chief butler who had accompanied John into Ireland, that the Irish prince and the whole of his party were slain in the encounter. A like success awaited the arms of the English in Meath, into which district, defying the measures for its defence adopted by Hugh de Lacy, the septs on its western borders made now a desperate inroad; but were repulsed with immense slaughter by William Petit, a feudatory of De Lacy, who sent 100 heads of the slain, as a trophy of his victory, to Dublin. Notwithstanding these occasional successes on the part of the invaders, the general fortune of the war was decidedly in favour of the natives; and, according to the chronicles of the English themselves, John lost, in the different conflicts with the Irish, almost his whole army.† At length, informed of the imminent danger with which the very existence of his power in that realm was threatened, Henry sent over orders instantly, recalling the prince and his headlong advisers to England, and placing the whole power of

* *Hibern. Expugnat.* l. 2. c. 34.

† "Fere amisit totum exercitum suum in pluribus conflictibus quo auferant contra Hybernenses."—*Benedict. Abbas.*

the government, both civil and military, in the hands of De Courcy.

Though a liegeman of De Lacy had, in the late warfare, acted so openly, complaints of that lord himself were forwarded to England by John and his ministers, representing him as actuated by feelings of jealousy towards their government for having superseded his own, and as exerting the whole of his great talent and influence for the purpose of thwarting and bringing disgrace on their measures. It was believed, also, that this baron had, among his own vassals and partisans, assumed the title of king of Meath, receiving tribute in that character from Connaught; and had even proceeded so far in this assumption as to order a regal crown to be made for his own head.* But, whatever grounds there may have been for these charges, De Lacy did not live to be called upon to answer to them,—having met his death this year from a hand so obscure, that not even a name remains associated with the deed. —

A. D.
1196

He had been engaged for some time in erecting a castle at a place called Darmaigh, in the southern part of ancient Meath, upon a spot hallowed in the eyes of the natives, as being the site of a monastery founded by their great saint, Columba. Being in the habit of attending personally to the building, De Lacy had gone forth to inspect the outworks, attended but by three English soldiers and an Irish labourer; and just as he was in the act, we are told, of stooping down to mark out the line of some wall or trench, the Irish workman drew forth a battle-axe which he had brought, concealed beneath his mantle for the purpose, and at one blow

* "Videbatuque sibi jam magis quam regi Anglorum regnum Hybernicum somnari, in tantum ut diadema sibi regium parum discretar."—*Guilielm. Neubrig.* l. 3. c. 9.

† *Guilielm. Neubrig. ut supra.* Several names have been assigned to the perpetrator of this act, but all differing so much from each other, as to show that the real name was unknown. Geoffrey Keating, with that love of dull invention which distinguished him, describes the assassin as a young gentleman in disguise.

smote off the baron's head. The assassin escaped into a neighbouring wood, and being doubtless favoured in his flight by the country people, contrived to elude all pursuit.*

On hearing of this event, at which he is said to have openly rejoiced, the first step of the king was to order John to return into Ireland, for the purpose of taking possession of De Lacy's castles and lands, during the nunnage of that baron's eldest son Walter. But the death of Geoffry, duke of Bretagne, the third son of the king, who was carried off at this time by a fever, prevented an experiment which would have most probably ended but in a repetition of the former failure and disgrace.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Review of the Steps taken by Henry for the Transfer of Ireland to John.—Translation of the Reliques of the three great Irish Saints.—Exploits of De Courcy in Ulster.—Death of Henry the Second.—Remarks on the Arguments of Molyneux and others respecting the Transfer of the Dominion of Ireland to John.—De Courcy resents the Appointment of De Lacy as Deputy.—Cathal of the bloody Hand gains the Kingdom of Connaught.—Is joined by the Princes of Thomond and Desmond.—Accession of Richard I.—Hugh de Lacy, son of the first Lord of Meath, appointed Deputy.—Affairs of Connaught.—Defeat of the English by Donald O'Brian.—Perfidy of O'Brian.—His Death.—Rapid Change of Deputies.—Insurrection of the Irish.—Successes of MacCarty of Desmond.—Death of Roderic O'Connor.—Low State of Irish Literature at this Period.—Remarks on Giraldus.

ON the subject of Henry's grant of the realm of Ireland to his son John and the supposed effects of that measure, as regarded the political relations between the two countries, a question has been more than once raised, among constitutional lawyers, upon which it may

* Guliel. Newbrig *ut supra*. Ware's Annals, ad ann. 1168.

expected that I should here offer some remarks. But a more direct opportunity will occur for considering this controversy when we come to notice the events of the subsequent reign. Meanwhile, a brief review of the steps taken, at different times, by Henry, towards the transfer of his Irish dominion, may put the subject more clearly in possession of the bearings of the controversy, as since arisen out of that measure; and may also show that Henry himself was not without motives of the safety and policy of the step. His relinquishment, indeed, of the design originally entertained of bestowing upon John the title of king, arose, not, as is usually supposed, from the apprehension that the establishment of a separate sovereignty over that country would, in the future, be assumed as a ground for extending the dependence of Ireland on the English crown. In the latter supposition is it easy to account for the extraordinary assiduity of purpose exhibited by him to attain his end. Thus, though, in the year 1177, he actually assumed to take his boy king of Ireland, and had before that the pope's permission, to be so declared, yet, in the subsequent year at Oxford, it is yet clear, from the records, that John took no other title than that of Lord of Ireland. Notwithstanding this, he continued to proceed to that country, in 1185, and in the same year he sailed to pope Lucius III., to request his sanction, how the young prince to be crowned, in the year, of that reign is not known. In the year 1186, in the accession, however, of pope Urban III., the request appears, was renewed: and in the year 1187, the pope's sanction, granted previously to Henry, and his sons whom he had named, was renewed. At the same time, Henry was crowned with gold. In the year 1188, Henry came to the pope, and requested that a king should be appointed. On

the arrival, however, of the cardinal Octavian for that purpose, the king, who in the mean time had given up his project of sending John again into Ireland, abandoned likewise all intention of crowning him.

The year 1186 was rendered memorable in our ecclesiastical annals, by the translation of the remains of the three great national saints, Patrick, Columba, and Brigid, which had been discovered in Down in the preceding year. The pious bishop of that see, Malachy, used frequently, we are told, to implore of God, in his devotions, that he would vouchsafe to point out to him the particular place or places in which the bodies of these saints lay concealed. While thus employed one night in the cathedral of Down, he saw a light, like a sunbeam, traversing the church, and at length resting at a spot where, upon digging, the bones of the three bodies were found.* This discovery having been reported to John de Courcy, then lord of Down, it was determined that messengers should be despatched to pope Urban III., for the purpose of procuring his permission to remove or translate these reliques to some part of the church more worthy to receive them. The pope accordingly sent over as his legate on the occasion cardinal Vivian, who was already well acquainted with Down and its clergy; and, on the 9th of June, the reliques of the three saints, having been put into distinct boxes, or coffins, were removed, with the usual solemnities, to a more distinguished part of the church, and there deposited in one monument.†

John de Courcy, now left to encounter the whole brunt of the Irish struggle almost alone, owed the success which in general attended his arms far less to his own and his small army's prowess, than to the wretched feuds and divisions which distracted the multitudes op-

* *Officium Translationis, etc.*, of which a portion is given by Usher *Primord. Eccles.* 389.—"Et cum nocte quadam instantissime in Ecclesia Dunensi sic oraret, vidit quasi radium solis per ecclesiam, et usque ad locum sepulture dictorum sanctorum corporum perinstrantem."

† Lanigan, ch. xxx. § 8.

be expected that I should here offer some remarks. But a more direct opportunity will occur for considering this controversy when we come to notice the events of the subsequent reign. Meanwhile, a brief review of the steps taken, at different times, by Henry, towards such a transfer of his Irish dominion, may put the reader more clearly in possession of the bearings of the question that has since arisen out of that measure; and will also show that Henry himself was not without doubts as to the safety and policy of the step. His relinquishment, indeed, of the design originally entertained by him of bestowing upon John the title of king, arose, most probably, from the apprehension that the establishment of a separate sovereignty over that country might, at some future time, be assumed as a ground for questioning the dependence of Ireland on the English crown. On no other supposition is it easy to account for the great uncertainty of purpose exhibited by him on this point. Thus, though, in the year 1177, he actually intended to make this boy king of Ireland, and caused him, with the pope's permission, to be so declared by a council or parliament at Oxford, it is yet clear, from numerous records, that John took no other title than that of lord of Hibernia. Notwithstanding this, when he was about to proceed to that country, in 1185, application was made by his father to pope Lucius III., requesting that he would allow the young prince to be crowned; but the pope, for what reason is not known, refused his consent. On the accession, however, of Urban III., the same request, it appears, was renewed; for that pontiff, shortly after his election, granted permission to Henry to crown any one of his sons whom he should choose king of Ireland, and, at the same time, sent him, as a mark of his peculiar favour, a crown made of peacocks' feathers interwoven with gold. In reply to this gracious communication, Henry named to the pope his youngest son John, and requested that a legate should be sent to assist at his coronation. On

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A. D.
1186.

* *Officium Translationis, etc.*, of which a portion is given by Usher *Primord. Eccles.* 889.—“Et cum nocte quadam instantissime in Ecclesia Dunensi sic oraret, vidit quasi radium solis per ecclesiam, et usque ad locum sepulture dictorum sanctorum corporum perlustrantem.”

† Langan, ch. xix. § 8.

posed to him; who, instead of following the rare example set by the chieftains of the south, and reserving, by a truce among themselves, their combined hostility for the oppressor, still continued their mutual broils and feuds, and, in the very face of the common enemy, thought only of flying upon each other. In the year 1187, O'Loughlin, prince of Tirone, was, after a sanguinary struggle, deposed from his throne; but the prince who succeeded him, Roderic O'Lachertair, had but a brief tenure of his ill-got power, as, in a few months after his accession, when in the act of ravaging and despoiling the county of Tirconnel, this usurper was put to death, and the rightful ruler restored. Nor was it long before O'Loughlin himself fell on the field, but in a cause far more worthy of an ancient national chief. Having been attacked at Cavan-ne-cran, by the English garrison of the castle of Mogoava, he gained, after a desperately fought action, a complete victory over them, but was himself killed by an English arrow in the moment of triumph. About the same time O'Cavenan, king of Tirconnel, attacked by surprise when on a journey, by Flobertach O'Medory, another of these petty princes, was, together with his brother and a number of servants, treacherously murdered.*

A. D.
1187.

Those who thus recklessly made war upon their own countrymen would not scruple, of course, to aid the enemy in the same cause; and we find, in the same year, a native chieftain, Cornelius O'Dermot, leagued with De Courcy in an invasion of Connaught, whither that lord had been invited by a faction within the province, for the purpose of deposing from the sovereignty Connor Manmoy, to whom his father, the feeble Roderic, had, some few years before, surrendered the reins of power. The province of Connaught had been active in the revolt against John, and this treacherous invitation now opened to De Courcy a means of reducing it to obedience. The

* Ware's Annals, ad ann. 1188.

son of Roderic, however, had secured the aid of the brave and indefatigable Donald O'Brian, and their united armies engaging De Courcy, who had not counted on so formidable a resistance, forced him to retreat precipitately from Connaught.* Then, putting down the rebellious faction he had come to assist, they re-established the authority of Connor on apparently secure grounds.

The very next year, however, some of the nearest friends of this prince, having joined in a conspiracy against him with the late vanquished party, he was, between both factions, basely murdered. Nor even then did the curse of discord cease to hang around that ill-fated house; as, for many a year after, Connaught continued to be torn and convulsed by the remains of this unnatural strife; while the fallen monarch, Roderic O'Connor, still lived to witness, from his melancholy retreat at Cong, the merited judgments which a long course of crime and dissension was now bringing down on his ill-starred realm and race.

Whatever hope might still have been cherished, by those who looked to Ireland with other views than of mere plunder, that Henry might yet find leisure to apply himself to the peaceful settlement of a country, which, according to the policy now pursued towards it, was to become either the prop and ornament, or the disgrace and burden, of England, such slight opening of hope was now closed for ever by the death of this powerful king, which took place in the month of July 1189, at the castle of Chinon, in Normandy;—the event being embittered, if not accelerated, by his discovery of the base treachery, and ingratitude towards him, of his favourite son, John. He died, say the historians, cursing his children.

The period of Anglo-Irish history—for of this mixed character has my task now become—upon the borders

* Ware's Annals, *ut supra*. Vallancey's *Laws of Tanistry*

of which we are arrived, may safely be hurried over both by the historian and his readers, through more than one century of its course, without losing much that either the pen or the memory can find any inducement to linger upon or record. However wanting in distinctness and interest may have been the details of Ireland's struggle with the Danes, and however confused, occasionally, from factious alliances, may have been the relations between the two parties, it is certain that each is, in general, found in its own natural sphere of action, and pursuing the course that might be expected from it, whether of aggression or resistance; while the ultimate result was such as reason, humanity, justice, must all approve—namely, the triumph of the people of the land, in defence of their own soil, and the utter rout and expulsion of their insolent invaders.

In the course of affairs, however, which we are now about to contemplate, all is reversed, preposterous, and unnatural,—wholly at variance, not only with right, but even with the ordinary course of injustice and wrong. The people of Ireland, the legitimate masters of the soil, disappear almost entirely from the foreground of their country's history, while a small colony of rapacious foreigners stand forth usurpingly in their place. Expelled, on the one hand, as enemies and rebels, from their rightful possessions, by the English, and repulsed, on the other, as intruders, by the native septs, into whose lands they were driven,* a large proportion of the wretched people, thus rendered homeless and desperate, were forced to fight for a spot to exist upon, even in their own land. Compared with the fate, indeed, of the miserable multitudes whom we shall find from time to time dispossessed by the English, extermination would have been mercy.

* "The septs that were thus expelled from their habitations in vain sought an asylum in the more inaccessible parts of the country, since hostile septs, to which they were an invaders, opposed their inroads."—Brodie, *History of the British Empire*. Introduction.

To second the sword in this mode of governing, the weapon of the legislator was also resorted to, and proved a still more inhuman, because more lingering, visitation. Giving a name to its own work, the Law called "enemies" those whom its injustice had made so; and, for the first time in the annals of legislation, a state of mutual hostility was recognised as the established relationship between the governing and the governed. While such was the sad history of the people themselves, through many a dark age of suffering and strife, the acts of the rulers by whom so rampant a system of tyranny was administered will be found no less odious to remember, no less painful to record; though in so far pregnant with lessons of warning, as showing what penalties wait upon wanton misrule, and how sure a retribution tyranny provides for itself in the rebound of its own wrong.

The kindly feelings of Richard I. towards his unworthy brother, John, were shown not more in the favours and dignities so prodigally lavished upon him both in Normandy and England, than in the easy and generous confidence with which he still left him in unrestricted possession of the grant of the lordship over Ireland, which had been bestowed on him by the late king. With the slight exception, indeed, of the mention of Ireland among those parts of the British dominions for which he requested a legate to be appointed by pope Clement III., Richard appears not to have at all interfered with that country during his short, chivalrous reign. It is to be observed, however, that, in the pope's rescript complying with this request, the range of the legate's authority in Ireland is limited strictly to those parts of the country "in which John, earl of Mortagne, the brother of the king, has power or dominion." We find the same terms employed in a charter of franchises granted at this period by John himself. While, in other instruments conferring immunities and privileges, he acknowledges, in like manner, the subordination of his

own power, by annexing exceptions and reservations of all that belonged or related to the English crown.

Allusion has been made, in the preceding chapter, to a question raised in later times, respecting the consequences of Henry's grant of the kingdom of Ireland to his son John,—a question which, at more than one crisis of our history, has been agitated with a warmth and earnestness which could be infused into it only by the political spirit and ferment of the moment.* By one of the parties in this controversy it has been contended that the act of Henry, in making his son king of Ireland, produced a great and fundamental change in the relations between the two kingdoms; that, by this transfer, he had superseded or voided whatever claim he could pretend to, from conquest, over Ireland, leaving it to all intents a separate and independent kingdom;†

* The first instance, I believe, of any decided difference of opinion on this point, occurs in the decision of the judges of England, on the precedent of the Staple Act (2 Hen. VI.), when to the question, "Whether the Staple Act binds Ireland?" two directly opposite opinions were given, on the two several occasions when the case was brought under their consideration. The opinion pronounced, however, by the chief justice Hussey, on the last of these two occasions, and to which all the other judges assented, was, that "the statutes made in England did bind those of Ireland;"—a view of the case confirmed, in later times, by the high authority of chief justice Coke, and likewise of sir John Davies.

The first public controversy to which the question gave rise, was that which took place on the passing of the Act of Adventurers, 17 Car. I., between sir Richard Bolton (or, rather, Patrick Darcy, assuming that name) and serjeant Maynard, whose respective pamphlets on the subject may be found in Harris's *Hibernica*. At the close of the same century, the question was again called into life by Molyneux, in behalf of the Irish woollen manufacture, and received new grace and popularity from his manner of treating it. About fifty years later, the Irish demagogue, Lucas, revived the topic, in his own coarse but popular strain. Nor has the subject, even in our own times, been permitted to slumber; as a learned argument in favour of Darcy's and Molyneux's view of the question has appeared, not long since, from the pen of Mr. Monck Mason.

† "We shall observe that by this donation of the kingdom of Ireland to king John, Ireland was most eminently set apart again as a separate and distinct kingdom by itself from the kingdom of England."—*Molyneux*.

It is not a little curious that chief justice Coke should have been of the very same opinion with Molyneux, as to Ireland being "a distinct dominion separate from the kingdom of England," though drawing so perfectly different a conclusion from it;—adding, "Yet the title thereof being by conquest, the same by judgment of law might, by express words, be bound by the parliaments of England." Sir John Davies, with far more consistency, in asserting the power of the English parliament to bind this country,

while, by the introduction among that people, as well in his own reign as in that of his son John, of the laws and institutions of England, they were provided with the means of internal government, and thereby exempted from all dependence on the English legislature.

This view of the question, though leading to conclusions which cannot but be welcome to all advocates of Ireland's independence, is, unluckily, destitute of foundation in historical fact. The title of king of Ireland, bestowed on the young prince, was, as we have seen, withdrawn almost as soon as announced; and though Henry afterwards again contemplated the same step, and had even a legate sent over from Rome to assist at his son's coronation, the same misgivings again came over him, and he abandoned the project;* apprehending, perhaps, from the actual possession of the title by John, those very pretensions which afterwards arose from the mere presumption of his having been invested with that title.†

It may be said that, though John was styled only "Lord of Hibernia," none of the succeeding kings of England took any higher title, and yet were not the less invested with regal authority over that country. But, to put his son independently in possession of that power, Henry must have surrendered all hold of it himself; and that he did not do so, is abundantly proved by all

so far from considering Ireland as a distinct, separate kingdom, pronounces her to be but "a member appendant and belonging, or mynetyd and annexed to the imperial crowne of England." See his speech, in 1613, as speaker of the Irish house of commons, first published by Leland, in the Appendix to his second volume.

* In the face of this historical fact, Molyneux persists, for the sake of his argument, in giving to John the title of king throughout.—See preceding note. In a similar manner, he says elsewhere, "During which space of twenty-two years, both whilst his father Henry II., and his brother Richard I., were living and reigning, king John made divers grants and charters to his subjects," etc. etc.

† On John's own seal, of which Speed has given an engraving, no higher title is assumed than that of Lord of Hibernia; "Sigillum Johannis filii Regis, Domini Hibernie." It is strange that Prynne, with all these facts before his eyes, should have committed the mistake of asserting that John, created king of Ireland by his father at Oxford, "enjoyed that title till his death."—*On the Institutes*, c. 76.

the subsequent acts and instruments of his reign, by his appointment of all the ministers and officers of the government in Ireland, by his recalling from that country the young Lord of Hibernia himself, and committing the charge and command of the kingdom to John de Courcy in his stead. He also made numerous grants of lands in that realm, some to be held of himself alone and his heirs, others by tenure of him and John, and their heirs; still reserving, in all these grants, certain services to himself, and thus clearly establishing that in him the right and title of the property lay.

While thus weak are the grounds derived from the supposed kingship of John, for regarding Ireland at this time as a distinct and independent kingdom, the inferences drawn from the alleged introduction into that realm, of the laws and institutions of England,—thereby enabling, as it is said, the Irish people to legislate for themselves,—are no less fallacious and unsubstantial.

In order to give dignity to this supposed dawn of English legislation in Ireland, the Curia Regis, or Common Council, held by Henry at Lismore, is styled, prematurely, a Parliament,—that term not occurring even in English records till towards the middle of the 13th century; while, in order to instruct his new subjects in the art of law making, a sort of Formulary, still extant, containing rules and directions for the holding of parliaments, is pretended to have been transmitted by him to Ireland for that purpose.*

The claims of this document to so high an antiquity, though sustained by no less an authority than sir Edward Coke, were shown satisfactorily by Prynne, Selden,† and others, to be wholly without grounds. Notwithstanding which, it was again, at a later period, appealed

* "*Modus tenendi Parliamentum*," etc. This record is given, at length, in Harris's *Wars*, chap. 13.

† Selden pronounces it to be "a late imposture of a bold fancy, not exceeding the reign of Edward III." (*Titles of Honour*.) See Prynne (on the *Fourth Part of the Institutes*) for the numerous proofs he brings against the antiquity and authority of this document.

to by Molyneux in proof of the antiquity of Irish parliaments; and again, with equal ease and success, was set aside by his various opponents in the controversy. The original roll of this record, which was in the possession of Molyneux himself, and which he had before him, as he states, while writing his "Case of Ireland," is now lost; and how far even the exemplification of this roll, said to have been made in the 6th year of Henry V., may be received as authentic, is yet a further question. But enough of incongruities and anachronisms have been pointed out in the substance of the "Modus" itself, to disqualify it totally as authentic evidence respecting the times to which its pretended date refers.

The great and leading mistake, however, of those now obsolete champions of Ireland's independence, who appealed in its behalf to the Anglo-Norman code, was their overlooking the fact, that, from all this boasted system of law and polity introduced by the invaders into the country, the natives themselves were entirely excluded; that neither at the period where we are now arrived, nor for many centuries after, were the people of Ireland, properly speaking, the native inhabitants of the land, admitted to any share whatever in the enjoyment of those foreign institutions and privileges which yet have been claimed, in their most unrestricted form, for the Ireland of modern days, on the sole presumption of their having been at that period her own. It will be found, as we proceed, that within the narrow circle of the Pale alone were confined, for many centuries, all the advantages resulting from English laws;* and the few instances that occur, from time to time, of the admission, at their own request, of some natives of Ireland

* With reference to a writ sent by Henry III., in the thirtieth year of his reign, to the archbishops and others in Ireland, for the strict observance of the laws of England in that country, Prynn says, "Yet, notwithstanding, this privilege of using the laws of England in Ireland was never intended by king John nor king Henry to extend to all the native Irish in general, but only to the English inhabitants transplanted thither, or there born, and to such native Irishmen as faithfully adhered to these kings, and the English in Ireland, against the Irish rebels."

to this privilege, only show, by the fewness and formality of the exceptions, how very general and strict was the exclusion.*

At what period parliaments, properly so called, began to be held by the English in Ireland, there appear no means of ascertaining; but it is the opinion of sir J. Davies, † that for 140 years after the time of Henry II. there was but one parliament for both kingdoms, and that the councils held occasionally, by the Lords of the Pale, during that interval, were, as he expresses it, rather Parlies than Parliaments. Neither were the interests of the English settlement left wholly unrepresented during that period, as we learn from the records of the reigns of the three first Edwards that Ireland sent representatives to the English parliament under all those kings.‡

It has been naturally an object with those who have adopted the views of Molyneux on this subject, to prove that parliaments were among the very earliest of the institutions bestowed on Ireland by her new masters; because, in a separate and self-willed legislature, they found a mark of that disjunction and separateness of the

* Among the records in the Roll's Office, Dublin, are many of these licenses granted to particular Irish to use the English laws; some of them being Irish women, whose husbands were English. Thus, for instance, "Quia Rado Burgeu (Anglico qui Hib' continue moratr) maritata est qd ipsa et hedes sui otantr legib' Anglic'?"—See *Inquisit. in Offic. Rotul. Ancellar. Hibern.*, etc. Several of such records of licenses to use the English laws are given by Prynne, chap. 76.

† This assertion may, doubtless, admit of dispute; and Mr Mason has produced some instances of councils held in Ireland in the reigns of Edward I. and Edward II., to which the name of Parliament may fairly be allowed. "In the third of Edward II.," he says, "previous to the period fixed upon by sir J. Davies for the commencement of Irish legislation, there was a parliament in Ireland, the enactments of which were printed by sir Richard Bolton (the chief baron that was contemporary with sir John Davies), in his edition of Irish Statutes, A. D. 1621."

‡ It is clear that Molyneux, though, in one sense, so warm a champion of Ireland's independence, would have hailed a Union, such as now exists between the two countries, with welcome. In noticing the fact above stated, he says:—"if from these last mentioned records it be concluded that the parliament of England may bind Ireland, it must also be allowed that the people of Ireland ought to have their representatives in the parliament of England. And this, I believe, we should be willing enough to embrace:—but this is a happiness we can hardly hope for."

two realms which forms a vital part of their theory; and because, during whatever interval the new kingdom may have been left unprovided with a parliament of its own, it must, for that period, be held to have been subject to the Statute Laws of England, and the theory of its independence and self-government must, in so far, be relinquished.*

There are yet a few other points connected with Molyneux's view of the history and attributes of the Irish parliament, which shall be noticed as cases arise which require recurrence to the subject. But it may be adverted to here, as at least curious, that writers, whose object it is to prove that the parliament of England was entitled neither by right or precedent to bind by its acts the people of Ireland,† should yet have taken as the

* To this obvious objection Molyneux necessarily laid himself open, by acknowledging that till the time of Henry III. no regular legislature had yet been established in Ireland. He likewise not merely admits, but demonstrates, that from the ninth of Edward I. to the fiftieth of Edward III., a period occupying about a century, the representatives of Ireland came over to sit in the parliament of England;—a fact which, concurring with the absence of all evidence as to any councils having been held previously in Ireland, except that memorable one convoked by Henry II. at Lismore, seems strongly to corroborate the opinion advanced by sir John Davies respecting the time when a regular legislature was first established in this country.

† Among the countless dilemmas and embarrassments which would arise practically out of such a state of relationship between the two countries as Molyneux's theory would establish, that which must arise on the accession of a new monarch to the throne of England is thus keenly put by the ablest and acutest of his opponents, Carey, a merchant of Bristol. Molyneux having allowed that a king declared by the parliament of England, though he was not king before such declaration, becomes thereby, ipso facto, king of Ireland, the Bristol merchant thus entangles him in his own argument:—"Is it any better than contradiction to hold that a king of England, as created or declared in a parliament of England, is thereby, or at the same instant, king of Ireland, and yet that Ireland is a kingdom so complete in itself, that he is no king till the act of parliament, creating or declaring him king, is confirmed by a parliament in Ireland? Or, take it the other way,—no act of parliament in England is of any force till confirmed in Ireland; and yet a king declared by a parliament of England, though he was not king before such declaration, is thereby, or ipso facto, king of Ireland;—that is, an act of parliament of England is not of force in Ireland till confirmed *there*, and yet is of force, ipso facto, by being enacted *here*. Does it not, therefore, follow that such an annexation of Ireland to the crown of England as makes the king of England, ipso facto, king of Ireland, destroys the supposition that their parliaments have authority to confirm or reject laws made by the legislature of England? or otherwise, that the supposition

main foundation of their argument the act of a parliament at Oxford, which, without any reference whatever to the consent of the people affected by its legislation, constituted a youth of only twelve years of age king of Ireland.

The solemn enactment, in our own times, of a legislative union between the two countries, would seem to have reduced the question, here noticed, to a mere theme of curious historical speculation; and certainly, on no slight grounds should the claims of Ireland to legislative independence be again put forth as a practical question. But should the course of political events ever bring back into public discussion a subject now quietly left to repose in the page of the historian and the antiquary, the right of Ireland to legislate for herself must assuredly be asserted on some more tenable grounds than the obsolete grant of her realm to a stripling king, or the occasional pretensions of the English parliament of the Pale.

The deputy appointed by John to the government of this country, on the accession of his brother Richard, was Hugh de Lacy, son of the first lord of Meath; in consequence of which, John de Courcy, finding himself, unfairly as he thought, supplanted, retired dissatisfied to his own possessions in Ulster, and there assumed, in the midst of his followers, a tone and attitude of independence which threatened danger to the English interest in that quarter. In the mean while the native princes, encouraged by the diversion to the shores of the East, under Richard's banner, of the energies and resources of England, began to form plans among themselves of combined warfare against the foreigners, and even to suspend their intestine quarrels for the general object of crushing the common foe. In Connaught, where still some lingering pretensions to the sovereignty were kept alive, two of the ill-fated race of O'Connor

of such an authority in the parliament of Ireland destroys that annexation which Mr Molyneux himself yields?"

were at this time contending for the barren prize; and a battle fought between the two factions, in which each could boast of English auxiliaries in its ranks, terminated in favour of Cathal O'Connor, called, from the number of battles fought by him, O'Connor of the Bloody Hand. With the strange notions of piety prevalent in those times, when the God of peace was made a party in every sanguinary feud, this devout warrior founded an abbey on the spot where the battle was won, and called it, in remembrance of that fortunate event, the Abbey of the Hill of Victory. A. D. 1190.

Among the chiefs who agreed at this crisis to postpone their mutual feuds, and act in concert against the enemy, were O'Brian of Thomond, and MacCarthy of Desmond, hereditary rulers of north and south Munster, and chiefs respectively of the two rival tribes, the Dalcassians and the Eugeniens. By a truce now formed between these princes, O'Brian was left free to direct his arms against the English; and, having attacked their forces at Thurles, in O'Fogarty's Country, gave them a complete overthrow, putting to the sword, add the Munster Annals, a great number of their knights. We have seen already how deeply the course and character of this warlike chief were marked with the taint of those habits of treachery which a long life of faction is sure to engender. Notwithstanding the truce he had now entered into with MacCarthy, we find him, at no long interval after, encouraging secretly the views of the English on that prince's possessions, and even allowing them to erect a fort, the castle of Breginnis, within his own territories, to protect and facilitate their hostile incursions into the territory of his rival.*

While some of the natives were thus bringing disgrace on the Irish name, the English colonists had be-

* It is to be regretted that Dr. Lanigan should have suffered his nationality to prevail so far over his sense of right and wrong, as to lead him, in recording the death of O'Brian, to call him "that good and brave prince."—Chap. xxi. § 10.

gun, even thus early, to exhibit symptoms of that state of degeneracy and insubordination into which at a later period we shall find them so shamefully sunk. The independent position assumed by De Courcy on his usurped territory, setting at defiance the delegate of royalty,—the spectacle of English soldiers opposed to each other in the ranks of contending Irish chieftains,—these and a few other such anomalies, which began to present themselves, at this period, were but the foretaste of evils inevitably yet to come; the first stirring of embryo mischiefs which time and circumstances brought, at a later period, to baneful maturity.

A. D.
1194. In the year 1194 died Donald O'Brian, king of Thomond and Ormond,—a prince, whose mixture of warlike and religious propensities rendered him popular alike among the laity and the clergy of the country. The wrong done by him to the cause of Ireland's independence, by being among the first of the native princes who proffered submission to Henry II., was in some degree atoned for, though never to be repaired, by the vigour and obstinacy of his resistance afterwards to the English, on finding that their object was to make of himself and his brother princes not merely tributaries but slaves. One of the last acts of his long and stormy life was, as we have seen, to add to the redeeming portion of his long career, by a brilliant victory over the invaders. He was succeeded in the principality by his eldest son, Mortogh Dall, a chief who had, in like manner, tarnished his name by defection from the national cause, having been the first that introduced the English into Munster (1177), and for the old, factious purpose of employing them as auxiliaries against his own kinsmen and neighbours, the Eugenians of Desmond.

Of the numerous religious houses established by Donald O'Brian, a due and grateful remembrance is cherished in our ecclesiastical annals. Besides several monastic foundations, he established a nunnery for Augustin canonesses at Kiloen, in the Barony of Islands;

and formed also an establishment, under the name of St. Peter, in the city of Limerick, for black nuns of the order of St. Augustin.* To him also Limerick and Cashel were indebted for their respective cathedrals;—his own palace having been bestowed upon the Church for the foundation of the former structure,† while the great cathedral of Cashel‡ was erected by him, adjoining king Cormac's chapel, which beautiful building was made from thenceforth to serve as a vestry or chapter house.

After a struggle, not without bloodshed, among the remaining sons of Donald,—the aid of the English being called in by one of the contending factions,—Carbrach, the youngest brother, was raised to the sovereignty, though clearly with but nominal power, as it appears that the capital of his kingdom, Limerick, was in the year 1195 under the rule of English authorities.

In the mean time, the quick change of deputies, in the administration of the colony, showed how uneasy and difficult was the task. After a short, but apparently unsuccessful experiment of office, Hugh de Lacy was succeeded by William Petit, for whom, shortly after, we find substituted William Marshall, or Mareschall, second earl of Pembroke. This powerful nobleman, who, in right of his new dignity, bore the golden staff§ and cross at the coronation of Richard I., had, together with his earldom, received from that monarch

* Lanigan, chap. xxxi. § 10.

† Ferrar's History of Limerick, at St. Mary's Church.

‡ The Cistercian Abbey of Holy Cross. "A famous abbey, heretofore," says Camden, "which makes the country about it to be commonly called the country of the Holy Cross of Tipperary. This church enjoys certain privileges granted in honour of a piece of Christ's Cross preserved there." See Lanigan, ch. xxx. § 2.; also Dr. Milner's *Inquiry*, &c. Letter 14.: and Mr. Crofton Croker's *Researches in the South of Ireland*, chap. xiv.

§ According to Prynne, this ceremony was not introduced till a later period:—"This is to be observed," he says, "that, though there were divers lords marshals of England before the reign of Richard II., yet Richard II. created Tho. Mowbray, first earl marshal of England, per nomen Comitibus Mareschalli Angliæ. He and his successor earl marshal being enabled by this charter to carry a golden staff before the king, and in all other places, with the king's arms at the top of it, and his own at the lower end, when all the

the hand of Isabel, daughter and heir of the late earl, and became thus invested with her princely Irish possessions. But, whatever advantage this connexion with the country may have given him, the results of his government were by no means prosperous. Presuming on the tameness with which the Irish had yielded to aggression, their haughty invaders now began to add insult to wrong; but not with equal impunity. Far more alive to contempt than to injury, those who had witnessed unmoved the destruction of their ancient monarchy, now flew to arms with instant alacrity, under the sure goad of English insolence and scorn; and the two most active and popular of the native princes, Cathal of Connaught and MacCarthy of Desmond, held forth their ever ready banner to all whose war cry was vengeance against the English. So great was the success, accordingly, of the national cause, during the short government of the earl Marshal, that, in spite of the perfidy which, as usual, found its way into the Irish councils, MacCarthy, aided by the forces of Cathal and those of O'Lochlin, succeeded in reducing several of the garrisons in Munster, and, after a siege of some duration, compelled Cork itself to surrender to his arms.

Discouraged and mortified by these reverses, the earl
 197. Marshal willingly resigned the reins of authority to Hamo de Valois, who, finding, on his arrival, the government embarrassed, for want of means, made no scruple of commencing his career by a forcible invasion of the property of the Church. Notwithstanding the angry remonstrances of Cuming, archbishop of Dublin, Hamo persisted in his design,—seizing several lands belonging to the see of Dublin, and taking possession also of the temporalities of the church of Leighlin, together with the property of the canons. The indignant archbishop, after having, in vain, tried entreaty, remonstrance, and excommunication, in utter despair, at

marshals before his creation carried only a wooden staff."—*On the Institutes*, chap. 1.

length, of redress from the Irish authorities, laid the sentence of interdict on his diocese, and departed for England to invoke the interference of the throne. But neither earl John nor king Richard appear to have afforded him any remedy. Among the letters of pope Innocent III. written at this time, and containing some curious particulars respecting the Irish Church,* there is one addressed to earl John, complaining angrily of the outrageous conduct of his deputy, and desiring him to compel that officer to restore to the church and canons of Leighlin the temporalities of which he had despoiled them. In the mean while Hamo, who had enriched himself amply by these exactions, was recalled from the government of the country, and Meyler Fitz Henry, one of the earliest of the adventurers in the Irish wars, was appointed his successor in the office.

In the following year died, at the advanced age of 82, Roderic O'Connor, the last of the monarchs of Ireland, who during ten years of his life reigned over Connaught alone; for the eighteen following wielded the sceptre of all Ireland, and finally devoted the thirteen remaining years of his existence to monastic seclusion and repentance. A mistaken zeal for the national honour has induced some writers on Irish history to endeavour to invest the life and character of this unfortunate prince with some semblance of heroic dignity and interest. In their morbid sympathy with his own personal ruin and fall, they seem to forget that, by his

A. D.
1198.

* One of these letters refers to an attempt made by an ecclesiastic named Daniel, to impose upon the Pope by means of forged letters, professing to have been written by certain Irish bishops, recommending Daniel as a person qualified to fill the vacant see of Ross. Dr Lanigan, in referring to this letter of Pope Innocent, mentions that one of the candidates for the bishopric is designated therein by the initial letter of his name. But it will be seen, from the following extract, that all the candidates are so designated: "Propter quod idem predecessor noster causam eorum vobis fratres Camelen et Laomen (al. Laarensis) Episcopi sub ea forma commisit, ut de forma et processu electionis memorati D. sollicitè quæreretur, et si cum electum canonicè fuisse constaret, ipsum faceritis pacifica possessione gaudere; alioquin inter prædictos F. et E. audiretis causam et ejus electionem canonicam et magis rationaliter factam inveniretis, &c. &c."—*Letters of Pope Innocent III.*, published by Baluzius, tom. i. l. 1. ep. 364.

recreant spirit, he brought down a kingdom along with him, and entailed subjection and its bitter consequences upon his country through all time. But it is in truth idle to waste words on the personal character of such a man; the only feeling his name awakens being that of pity for the doomed country, which, at such a crisis of its fortunes, when honour, safety, independence, national existence, were all at stake, was cursed, for the crowning of its evil destiny, with a ruler and leader so utterly unworthy of his high calling.

How much the fate of an entire nation may depend on the domestic relations of its ruling family, is strikingly exemplified in the instances both of Roderic and of Henry, whose struggles and contentions with their own children gave a direction to their public measures, of which the consequent history of both countries has deeply felt the influence. Had not Henry been called away, by a dark conspiracy within his own family, from applying his powerful mind to the conquest and settlement of Ireland, far different might have been the destiny of that ill-starred land. Had the house of Roderic, on the other hand, united in defence of their rights, and thus set an example of zealous co-operation to others, a more healthful confidence in themselves and their rulers might have been awakened in the people of Ireland, a brave resistance would have won from the conqueror respect and forbearance towards the vanquished, and, at least, the disgrace of unnatural treachery would not have been added to that of insignificance and weakness.

One of the few circumstances of Roderic's life that deserve to be mentioned with any honour, was the effort made by him to recal to life the now almost extinct learning of the country, by his patronage of the schools of Armagh, and by the annual endowment, first established under his auspices, for the head-master of that institution. It is worthy of remark, too, as affording an instance of those strange contrasts which Irish society,

as we have seen, so frequently presents, that this annual pension for the encouragement of a school, to which the lovers of learning resorted from all parts of Europe, was, according to the custom of rude, uncivilised times, paid in oxen.

Thrown back as the country had been by the harassing events of the century just now closed, into a state of confusion and disorganization, differing but little, in its general aspect, from barbarism, it could not be expected that her native literature would escape the prevailing eclipse, or leave any names behind which even the antiquary would consider worthy of preservation. There is still extant, however, a Metrical Catalogue of the Kings of Ireland, composed, in this age, by a learned antiquary named Giolla Moduda, abbot of Ardbracken, in Meath. This chronological poem, which is frequently referred to, as of high authority, by Irish scholars, was written during the reign of the great Turlogh O'Connor; and it is a proof alike of the courage and the professional trustworthiness of the antiquary, that he ventured to deny to that powerful monarch, then in the full flow of success, any place in the series of Ireland's legitimate kings.

To Celsus, or Cellach, the eminent archbishop of Armagh, who died A. D. 1129, Bale has attributed a Book of Constitutions and other writings; but apparently on no better grounds than he has for bestowing upon him a wife and children, and sending him to be educated at Oxford. With as little foundation, probably, has a Life of St. Malachy been attributed to Congan, one of those Irish correspondents of St. Bernard, whose entreaties, as he tells us, induced him to undertake a Life of St. Malachy himself.*

For whatever insight we may have gained, pre-

* In St. Bernard's Preface to this work, which is addressed to Congan, he says, "Tu id mihi Abba Congane, iungis . . . ac tecum pariter (ut ex Hibernia scribis) vestra illa omnis ecclesia sanctorum, libens obedio."

viciously to the epoch of the English invasion, into the social condition and habits of the Irish, we are indebted solely to the testimony of the Irish themselves; for it is a singular fact that, so long had this people remained secluded from all the rest of the world, that the account given of them by the Welsh ecclesiastic Giraldus, who went, thither, as we have seen, in the train of prince John, was the first and only one known to have been written by a foreign visitor of that country, from the days of Himmico and the Greek geographers down to the time of Henry II. With the aid, therefore, of this light, but following cautiously its guidance, I shall proceed to offer some brief remarks respecting the social and moral condition of the Irish people, at the gloomy period we have now reached; and if not to throw around it any very favourable colouring, at least to show that it has been represented too darkly by others.

To those pre-occupied by the picture drawn in the pages of Giraldus of the low state of civilisation among the Irish at this time, it would be difficult, I fear, to suggest any consideration that would weaken the hold his authority has taken of their minds. There are indeed few enormities, whether in morals or manners, that are not attributed by him to the natives. In estimating the value, however, of his testimony, the character of the man himself ought to be taken into account; and, finding him so ready a believer and reporter of all sorts of physical marvels and monsters, we should consider whether a taste for the morally monstrous may not also have inspired his pen, and induced him, in a similar manner, to impose as well upon himself, perhaps, as his readers. He who gravely tells of a certain race of people in Ossory,* who were, every seven years, transformed into wolves, would hardly

* He makes one of these Ossorian wolves tell his own story:—"De quodam hominum genere sumus Ossyriensium, unde quolibet septennio per imprecationem sancti cujusdam Natalis scilicet Abbatis . . . formam enim humanam prorsus exuentes, induunt loppinam."

hesitate at the easier effort of giving them also wolfish habits and dispositions.

There is yet another feature of his character as a censor, which must be attended to in appreciating the value of his censure, and that is, the disproportion always found to exist between his general charge and the facts which he cites to support it. The Irish people he pronounces to be faithless, cruel, inhospitable, and barbarous; and as long as he deals thus only in generalities, the imagination is left at large to divine the extent to which all these vices may have been carried. But whenever, as in the following instance, he subjoins proofs of the alleged charge, the mind is relieved by knowing definitely the amount of the transgression. "This people," he says, "are a most filthy race; a race of all others the most uninformed in the very rudiments of faith,—they do not as yet pay tithes or first-offering."* He then adds the charge before noticed, respecting what he calls their "incestuous" marriages, meaning thereby marriages within that degree of consanguinity which the canons of the church had proscribed.

Another consideration which I have more than once endeavoured to press upon the reader's mind is, that at all periods of Ireland's course with which we are acquainted, so wide has been the interval, in civilisation and social comforts, between her highest and lowest classes, that no conclusion founded solely on acquaintance with one part of her population can furnish any analogies by which to judge of the real condition of the other. Giraldus himself appears to have been aware of this peculiarity in the structure of Irish society, or at least to have been puzzled by the contrasts resulting from it; and hence his summary of the character of the

* "Gens enim hæc, gens sparcissima, gens vitij involutissima, gens omnium gentium in fidei rudimentis incultissima:—Nondum enim decimas vel primitias solvunt."—*Topog. Dist.* 3. c. 19.

people is, that "where they are good you will find none better,—where they are bad, none worse."*

In his account of the clergy of the country, there are but few dark shades interspersed. He speaks of them as commendable for their attention to all religious duties, and possessing, among various other virtues which he allows to them, the "prerogative of chastity" in an eminent degree.† He lauds also their exceeding abstinence and sparingness of food; though in wine, he says, they were accustomed, after the fast and toils of the day, to indulge more freely than was becoming.‡ He repeats, however, his commendation of the blameless purity of their lives, which notwithstanding this indulgence, they most strictly, he admits, preserved.§ Altogether, his tribute to the character of the Irish clergy (though of the bishops he complains as slothful and inattentive to their duty) is such as, at any period, it would be honourable to a clerical body to receive.

One of his charges against the Irish prelates was, that, from the time of St. Patrick's mission, not a single Irish bishop had suffered martyrdom for the faith; and, on his advancing, one day, this opinion, in the presence of Maurice, archbishop of Cashel, whom he describes as a learned and discreet man, that prelate thus significantly replied to him:—"It is true our nation may seem to be barbarous, uncultivated, and cruel; yet have they always shown reverence and honour to men of the church, nor ever would raise their hands in violence

* "Est enim gens hæc cunctis fere in actibus immoderata et in omnes affectus vehementissima. Unde et sic mali, deterrimi sunt et nusquam peiores: ita et bonis meliores non reperies." The learned Petavius (Petau) attributes, almost in the same words, the same character to the ancient Athenians.—*Orat.* 8.

† Inter varias quibus pollet virtutes, castitatis prærogativa præminet atque præcellet." c. 27.

‡ "Inter tot millia vix unum invenies, qui post jugem tam jejuniorum quam orationum instantiam, vino variisque potionibus diurnos labores enormius quam deceret, noctu non redimat."—*Ibid.*

§ Unde et hoc pro miraculo dari potest, quod ubi vina dominantur, Venus non regnat."

against the saints of God. But there is now come among us a people, who not only know how, but have been accustomed to make martyrs. From henceforth, therefore, Ireland will, like other nations, have her martyrs." *

In his account of the state of manufactures and the useful arts among the Irish, Giraldus falls into no less inconsistencies than on the subject of their morals and manners. For while, on the one hand, he tells us that they had no sort of merchandise, nor practised any mechanical art whatsoever, he informs us, on the other, of articles common among them, such as cloth dresses, fringes, linen shirts, military weapons well steeled, musical instruments, and other works of art, all implying a certain advancement in different trades and handicrafts.† He mentions a book, also, which he had seen at Kildare, containing a concordance of the Four Gospels, according to the correction of St. Jerome; and which is described by him as so beautifully painted and embellished with innumerable emblems and miniatures, that you might be sure, he adds, it was the workmanship not of human, but of angelic hands.‡

* "Verum est, inquit; quia licet gens nostra Barbaram, nimis inculta et crudelis esse videtur, veris tamen Ecclesiasticis honorem magnum, et reverentiam semper exhibere solebant, et in sanctos Dei nulla occasione manum extendere. Sed nunc in regnum gens advenit quæ martyres et facere novit et consuevit. A modo Hibernia, sicut aliæ regiones martyres habebit."—*Dist.* iii. c. 32.

† "Item non lino vel lanificio, non aliquo mercimoniorum genere, nec ullâ mechanicharum artium specie vitam producant."—*Dist.* iii. c. 10. See Gratianus Lucius, c. 12., where he clearly proves, from Giraldus, own showing, that the Irish must have had, "carminatores, tinctorum, metrices, textores, fullones, panni tonsores, et sartores."

‡ "Ut vere hæc omnia angelica potius quam humana intelligentia jam asseveraveris esse composita."—*Dist.* ii. c. 38.



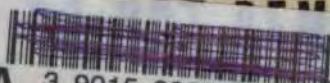




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