

**THE IRISH
MYTHOLOGICAL
CYCLE AND CELTIC
MYTHOLOGY**

Henry Arbois de Jubainville





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THE IRISH MYTHOLOGICAL CYCLE

AND

CELTIC MYTHOLOGY.

WORKS BY
M. D'ARBOIS DE JUBAINVILLE,
IN THE COURS DE LITTÉRATURE
CELTIQUE.

Introduction à la Littérature Celtique.

Le Cycle Mythologique Irlandais et la Mythologie Celtique.

L'Épopée Celtique en Irlande, vol. i.

La Civilisation des Celtes et celle de l'Épopée Homérique.

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BY J. LOTH,

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La Métrique Galloise, 3 vols. Tome i. Du xv^e Siècle à nos Jours.
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du xv^e Siècle.

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THE IRISH MYTHOLOGICAL CYCLE

CORRIGENDA.

- Pages 2 and 3, *for Cuchullain read Cuchulainn.*
p. 19, note (2), line 6, *for neutre, read neuter.*
p. 32, line 33, *for a read at.*
p. 45, note (1), line 7, *for Leinster, read Lismore.*
p. 55, note (10), line 2, *for Hecate, read Hecatæus.*
p. 60, line 18, *for Cresent, read Crescent.*
p. 128, note (5), line 1, *for 900, read 100.*
p. 130, note (3), line 3, *for vi., read iv.*
pp. 148 and 197, *for Timagenus, read Timagenes.*
p. 153, line 13, *for Crauchan, read Cruachan.*
p. 159, line 10, *for Cuchualainn, read Cuchulainn.*
pp. 161, 162, *for Ethal Anubal, read Ethal Anbual.*
p. 163, note (4), line 1, *for at, read ad.*
p. 164, lines 16, 24, *for Æneus, read Æneas.*
p. 167, note (1), line 5, *for Conculanin, read Conculaind.*
p. 171, line 30, *for Leyds, read Leyden.*
p. 173, line 18, *for Naudu, read Nuadu.*
p. 179, note, line 5, *read (b) by the following portion of the tale, etc.*
p. 196, line 32, *for "Galates," read "Galatians."*
p. 208, line 14, *for Græco-Latin, read Græco-Latin.*
p. 212, line 17, *for Cothru, read Clothru.*
p. 217 notes, *for Zmerto-mara, read Smerto-mara.*



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BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES,

BY

RICHARD IRVINE BEST.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Le Cycle Mythologique Irlandais et la Mythologie Celtique, which is now offered to the reader in an English translation, is the second of an important series of volumes on Celtic subjects brought out in France by Professor H. d'Arbois de Jubainville and Monsieur J. Loth. I was led to make this translation, which appeared in the *United Irishman*, and kindly authorised by Professor d'Arbois and his publisher, Monsieur Albert Fontemoing, because I saw that on all sides there was an eagerness and growing desire to know something about the ancient Gods of Ireland, and the mythic races who are said to have peopled the island and fought and perished on it long ago; and this book of Monsieur d'Arbois seemed to me the fullest and best yet written on the subject.

The ancient traditions of the Celtic peoples, which on the Continent have been almost completely obliterated by successive invaders, have in Ireland survived and been handed down as the particular inheritance of the nation. But the old vellum manuscripts recording these early traditions of the people, their thoughts about the world, and their own relation to it, have been suffered to lie in neglect, and a veil of obscurity hangs over them. Irishmen must, therefore, be grateful to Monsieur d'Arbois for having brought them to a knowledge of these great traditions of their race, which was already old when many of the proud nations of to-day were young.

I have endeavoured to make the translation as faithful as possible to the original, and have in all cases retained the older spelling of proper names, which appear quite meaningless in their modern anglicised form.

I have added a few pages of additional notes, and references to recent publications on the subject.

R. I. BEST.

DUBLIN, 9th November, 1902.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY. PAGE

<u>1. The Catalogues of Irish Epic Literature.—2. The Irish Epic Cycles.—3. The Part Played by Epic Literature in Ireland during the Early Centuries of the Middle Age.—4. The Irish Mythological Cycle; the Primitive Races of the Earth in Irish and in Greek Mythology.—5. The Irish Mythological Cycle (continued); Inundations in Irish and in Greek Mythology.—6. The Irish Mythological Cycle (continued); Battles of the Gods in Irish, Greek, Indian, and Iranian Mythology.—7. The King of the Dead and the Abode of the Dead in Irish and in Greek Mythology and in the Vedas.—8. The Sources of Irish Mythology.</u>	1
--	---

CHAPTER II.

THE EMIGRATION OF PARTHOLON.

<u>1. The Race of Partholon in Ireland; the Silver Race in the Mythology of Hesiod.—2. The Celtic Doctrine of the Origin of Man.—3. The Creation of the World in Celtic Mythology, according to the Legend of Partholon.—4. The Struggle between Partholon's Race and the Fomorians.—5. The Legend of Partholon (continued); The First Jealousy; the First Duel.—6. End of Partholon's Race.—7. Chronology and the Legend of Partholon.</u>	13
---	----

CHAPTER III.

EMIGRATION OF PARTHOLON (CONTINUED). LEGEND OF TUAN MAC CAIRILL.

<u>1. Why was the Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill Invented?—2. Saint Finnen and Tuan Mac Cairill.—3. Primitive History of Ireland, according to Tuan Mac Cairill.—4. The Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill and Chronology; Modifications due to Christian Influence.—5. The Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill in its Primitive Form is of Pagan Origin.</u>	25
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

CESSAIR, THE COUNTERPART OF PARTHOLON. FINTAN, THE
COUNTERPART OF TUAN MAC CAIRILL.

PAGE

1. Comparison of the Legend of Partholon and Tuan with that of Cessair and Fintan.—2. Date of Invention of the Legend of Cessair and Fintan.—3. Giraldus Cambrensis and the Irish Scholars of the Seventeenth Century on Cessair ; Opinion of Thomas Moore.—4. Why and how Cessair came into Ireland.—5. History of Cessair and her Companions after their arrival in Ireland.—6. The Poems of Fintan. 7. Fintan : (a) at the time of the First Mythological Battle of Mag-Tured ; (b) in the Reign of Diarmait Mac Cerbaill, Sixth Century, A.D.—8. The three Counterparts of Fintan ; St. Cailin his Pupil : Conclusion.

36

CHAPTER V.

EMIGRATION OF NEMED AND THE SLAUGHTER OF
CONANN'S TOWER.

1. Origin of Nemed ; his Arrival in Ireland.—2. Reign of Nemed in Ireland ; his Early Relations with the Fomorians.—3. The Fomorians ; Divers Texts concerning Them.—4. The Counterpart of the Fomorians in Greek and in Vedic Mythology.—5. Battles between Nemed and the Fomorians.—6. Tyrannical Rule of the Fomorians over the Race of Nemed. The Tribute of Children. Comparison with the Minotaur.—7. The Idol Cromm Cruach or Cenn Cruach and the Sacrifice of Children in Ireland. Human Sacrifice in Gaul. 8. Tigernmas, God of the Dead, the Counterpart of Cromm Cruach. 9. The Disaster of Conann's Tower as related in Irish Texts.—10. The Disaster of Conann's Tower according to Nennius. Comparison with Greek Mythology.

47

CHAPTER VI.

THE EMIGRATION OF THE FIR-BOLG.

1. The Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in Irish Mythology.—2. The Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in the Irish Heroic Period.—3. Association of the Fomorians or Gods of Domna, *Dei Domnan* with the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin.—4. Establishment of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in Ireland.—5. Origin of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin. Primitive Doctrine, the Mediæval Doctrine.—6. Introduc-

tion of Chronology into this Legend.—7. Taltiu, Queen of the Fir-Bolg, Foster-Mother of Lug, one of the Chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann. The Annual Fair of Taltiu on the Feast-Day of Lug or Lughus.

69

CHAPTER VII.

EMIGRATION OF THE TUATHA DE DANANN. THE FIRST BATTLE OF MAG-TURED (MOYTURA).

1. The Tuatha De Danann are gods; their place in the Theological System of the Celts.—2. Origin of the name Tuatha De Danann. The Goddess Brigit and her Sons, the Irish god Brian, and the Gaulish Chief Brennos.—3. The Battle of Mag-Tured; one Battle only in Earliest Accounts; later on, two Battles of Mag-Tured distinguished.—4. The god Nuadu Argatlam.—5. Time at which the Account of the First Battle of Mag-Tured was Written.—6. Cause of the Battle of Mag-Tured. 7. Account of the First Battle of Mag-Tured. Result of the Battle.

79

CHAPTER VIII.

EMIGRATION OF THE TUATHA DE DANANN (CONTINUED). SECOND BATTLE OF MAG-TURED.

1. Reign of Bress.—2. Avarice of this Prince.—3. The File Corpre. End of Bress' Reign.—4. War Between the Fomorians and the Tuatha De Danann. The Fomorian Warriors Balor and Indech.—5. Arrival of Lug among the Tuatha De Danann at Tara.—6. Review of the Artificers by Lug.—7. Second Battle of Mag-Tured. The Fabrication of Javelins.—8. The Spy Ruadan.—9. Second Battle of Mag-Tured (continued). The Wounding of Ogma and Nuada.—10. Second Battle of Mag-Tured (conclusion). Death of Balor. Defeat of the Fomorians. The Sword of Tethra falls into the Hands of Ogma.—11. The Harp of the Dagda.—12. The Fomorians and Tethra in the Isle of the Dead.—13. The Raven and the Wife of Tethra.

94

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF MAG-TURED AND GREEK MYTHOLOGY.

1. The Greek Kronos and his three Irish equivalents, Tethra, Bress, Balor.—2. The Irish Form of the Greek idea of the Golden Race. Tighernmas, the Counterpart of Balor, Bress, and Tethra.—3. Balor

and the Myth of Argos or Argus. Lug and Hermes.—4. Io and Buar-ainech. Balor and Poseidon.—5. Lug, the Slayer of Balor, and the Greek Hero Bellerophon.—6. Lug and the Greek Hero Perseus.—7. The Popular Balor of Ireland. Balor and Acrisios. Ethnea, Daughter of Balor, and Danæ, Daughter of Acrisios. The Three Brothers and the Triple Geryon. Their Cow and the Herd of Geryon or of Cacus. The Son of Gavida and Persens.—8. The Three Artificers of the Tuatha De Danann, and the Three Cyclops of Zens in Hesiod.

111

CHAPTER X.

THE RACE OF MILE.

1. The Chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann transformed into Men and Kings in the Eleventh Century. Chronology of Gilla Coemain and the Four Masters.—2. Mile and Bile, Ancestors of the Celtic Race.—3. The Idea that the Irish came from Spain; their Scythian and Egyptian Origin.—4. Ith and the Tower of Bregon.—5. Spain and Britain confounded with the Land of the Dead.—6. Expedition of Ith to Ireland.—7. Irish and Greek Mythology. Ith and Prometheus.

123

CHAPTER XI.

CONQUEST OF IRELAND BY THE SONS OF MILE.

1. Arrival of the Sons of Mile in Ireland.—2. First Poem of Amairgen. Its Pantheistic Doctrine. Comparison of same with a Welsh Poem ascribed to Taliesin, and with the Philosophical System of Joannes Scotus, surnamed Erigena.—3. The two other Poems of Amairgen. Their Naturalistic Doctrine.—4. First Invasion of the Sons of Mile.—5. The Judgment of Amairgen.—6. Retreat of the Sons of Mile.—7. Second Invasion of the Sons of Mile. Their Conquest of Ireland.—8. Irish and Welsh Traditions Compared.—9. The Fir-Domnann, the British, and the Picts in Ireland.

135

CHAPTER XII.

THE TUATHA DE DANANN AFTER THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND BY THE SONS OF MILE. PART THE FIRST: THE SUPREME GOD, DAGDA.

1. The Tuatha De Danann after their defeat by the Sons of Mile. The piece entitled, "Conquest of the Sid."—2. The god Dagda. His power after the Conquest of Ireland by the Sons of Mile.—3. The

Underground Palace of the Dagda at Brug na Boinne, or Sid Maic ind Oc. Oengus, Son of the Dagda. Pagan redaction of the Legend of Oengus and this Palace.—4. Christian redaction of this Legend.—5. The Love of Oengus, Son of the Dagda.—6. Euhemerism in Ireland and Rome. The Dagda or “Good God” in Ireland; Bona dea, “the Good Goddess,” the Companion of Faunus, in Rome.

150

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TUATHA DE DANANN AFTER THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND BY THE SONS OF MILE. PART THE SECOND: THE GODS LUG, OGMIA, DIANCECHT, AND GOIBNIU.

1. The part of Lug in the Legend of Cuchulainn same as that of Zeus in the Legend of Heracles.—2. The Chase of the Mysterious Birds.—3. The Enchanted Palace. Birth of Cuchulainn.—4. The mortal Sualtam and the god Lug, each the Father of Cuchulainn.—5. Lug and Conn Cetchathach, High King of Ireland in the Second Century of our Era.—6. Lug a god, notwithstanding later assertions of the Irish Christians.—7. The Champion Ogma or Ogmios.—8. Diancecht the Physician.—9. Goibniu the Smith and his Feast.

165

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TUATHA DE DANANN AFTER THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND BY THE SONS OF MILE. PART THE THIRD: THE GODS MIDER AND MANANNAN MAC LIR.

1. The god Mider. Etain, his Wife, carried off by Oengus, is born a second time as the Daughter of Etair.—2. Etain becomes the wife of the High King of Ireland. Mider pays court to her.—3. The Game of Chess.—4. Mider renews his court to Etain. His song to her.—5. Mider carries off Etain.—6. Manannan Mac Lir and Bran, Son of Febal.—7. Manannan Mac Lir and the hero Cuchulainn.—8. Manannan Mac Lir and Cormac Mac Airt. First Part. Cormac gives his Wife, his Son and Daughter in exchange for a Branch of Silver.—9. Manannan Mac Lir and King Cormac Mac Airt. Second Part. Cormac recovers his Wife and Family.—10. Manannan Mac Lir, the Father of Mongan, King of Ulster, at the beginning of the Second Century, A.D.—11. Mongan, Son of a god, a wonderful being.

176

I.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BELIEF IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL IN
IRELAND AND IN GAUL.

	PAGE
1. The Immortality of the Soul in the Legend of Mongan.—2. Did the Celts hold the Pythagorean Doctrine of Metempsychosis? Opinion of the Ancients.—3. The Pythagorean and the Celtic Doctrines compared.—4. The Land of the Dead. Death a Voyage. Text of the Fourth Century, B.C.—5. Certain Heroes go forth to War in the Land of the Dead and of the Gods : such as Cuchulainn, Loegaire Liban, and Crimthann Nia Nair. The Legend of Cuchulainn. 6. The Legend of Loegaire Liban.—7. Dismounting from Horseback in the Legend of Loegaire Liban and in the Modern Legend of Ossian.—8. The Legend of Crimthann Nia Nair.—9. Difference between Cuchulainn on the one side and Loegaire Liban and Crimthann on the other.	195

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

1. An Important Difference between Celtic and Greek Mythology.—2. The Mythological Triad in the Vedas and in Greece.—3. The Triad in Ireland.—4. The Triad in Gaul as recorded in Lucan : Teutates, Esus, and Taranis or Taranus.—5. The Gaulish god called by the Romans Mercury.—6. The Horned god and the Mythic Serpent in Gaul.—7. Celtic and Iranian Dualism.—8. Celtic Naturalism.	208
---	-----

ADDITIONAL NOTES	..	..	..	..	225
INDEX	..	..	..	..	229

INTRODUCTORY.

One of the documents most often quoted upon the Celtic religion is a passage in Cæsar's "De Bello Gallico," where the conqueror of Gaul describes what he conceives to be the principal gods of the vanquished people:—"The God they worship most of all is Mercury, and his statues are numerous. The Gauls regard him as the inventor of the arts, and the guide who directs the wayfarer and the voyager; they also attribute to him great influence in the acquiring of riches and in commerce. After him come Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva. These they regard pretty much the same as do other nations. Apollo drives away sickness, Minerva instructs the novice in the arts and handicrafts, Jupiter has the lordship of the heavens, Mars that of war, and before going into battle they consecrate to him whatever spoil they hope to obtain" (1).

If we take this passage literally, it would seem that the Gauls had five gods almost identical with the great deities of the Romans—Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva, any difference they might have being in name only. This doctrine seems to be corroborated by Roman inscriptions, where the Gaulish names are found alongside those of the Roman gods, as epithets or surnames. Numerous examples might be given. For instance, Mercury is invoked as *Mercurio Atusmerio* (2), *Genio Mercurii Alauni* (3), *Mercurio Touren[o]* (4), *Visucio Mercuri[o]* (5), *Mercurio Mocco* (6); for Apollo

(1) "De Bello Gallico," book vi., chap. xvii.

(2) "Bulletin des Antiquaires de France," 1882, p. 310.

(3) Brambach, "Corpus Inscriptionum Rhenarum," 1717.

(4) *Ibid.*, 1830.

(5) *Ibid.*, No. 1696.

(6) Inscription at Langres, in De Wal's "Mythologiæ Septentrionalis Monumenta Latina," vol. i., 167. *Moccus* seems to mean pig or wild boar; in old Irish *mucc*, genitive *mucce*, feminine theme in *a*; in Welsh, *moch*, and in Breton, *moc'h*.

we find *Apollini Granno* (1), [*A*] *pollini Mapon[o]* (2), *Apollini Beleno* (3); for Mars, *Marti Toutati* (4), *Marti Belatucadro* (5), *Marti Camulo* (6), *Marti Caturigi* (7); for Jupiter, *Jovi Taranuco* (8), *Jovi Tarano* (9); and for Minerva, *Deæ Suli Minervæ* (10), *Minervæ Belisamæ* (11). These are the five gods mentioned by Cæsar.

Before drawing any conclusion from the above passage, or the inscriptions just mentioned, or analogous documents, we must first endeavour to ascertain what exactly it means. Cæsar begins with the word "god"—*Deum Maxime Mercurium Colunt*. What signification has the word "god" in the language used by Cæsar when he dictated his "Commentaries?" Cicero, in his treatise "*De Inventione Rhetorica*," distinguishes between what is necessary or certain and what is merely probable. As an example of a probable proposition, he gives the following:—"Those that concern themselves with philosophy do not believe in the existence of gods" (12). For Lucretius, the gods are a creation of the human mind, developed by hallucinations and dreams (13). While to the Roman aristocracy, for the most part, contemporary with Cæsar, the word "god" designated a conception without any objective value (14).

(1) Brambach, Nos. 566, 1614, 1915; "*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*," vol. iii., Nos. 5588, 5861, 5870, 5871, 5873, 5874, 5876, 5881; vol. vii., No. 1082.

(2) "*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*," vol. vii., No. 218.

(3) *Ibid.*, vol. v., Nos. 737, 741, 748, 749, 753.

(4) *Ibid.*, vol. iii., No. 5320; vol. vii., No. 84.

(5) *Ibid.*, vol. vii., Nos. 746, 957.

(6) *Ibid.*, vol. vii., No. 1103; Brambach, No. 164; Mommsen, "*Inscriptiones Confederationes Helveticæ*," No. 70.

(7) Brambach, No. 1588.

(8) "*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*," vol. iii., No. 2804.

(9) *Ibid.*, vol. vii., No. 168.

(10) "*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*," vol. vii., Nos. 42, 43.

(11) De Wal, "*Mythologiæ Septentrionalis Monumenta Latina*," vol. i. No. 52.

(12) "*De Inventione*," book i., 29, sec. 46.

(13) Quippe etenim jam tum divum mortalia sæcla
Egregias animo facies vigilante videbant,
Et magis in somnis mirando corporis auctu.

Book v., 1168.

(14) Cf. Boissier, "*La Religion Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*," vol. i., pp. 5-6.

All the same we have reason to think that the language of Cæsar in his "Commentaries" is that of a believer; it matters little to us what he may have really thought on the matter. Cæsar is a statesman, whose object when he speaks is to prepare his auditors to do his bidding when he commands. He is one of those who have best put into practice the famous lines of Virgil—

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane memento;
Hæ tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos (1).

Confronted with native populations who believe in their gods, the Roman aristocracy, sceptical or not, officially admits their existence, and uses them as a means of government. To understand Cæsar, it must be admitted that in the language he uses, the word "god" designates beings whose real existence is considered as indisputable, and whom one cannot, without manifest error, regard as simple conceptions of the human mind, fictions more or less fanciful, more or less logical. Cæsar's language was, after him, that of the Roman inscriptions in Gaul.

Our method of dealing with mythological doctrines differs widely from that adopted by the Roman statesmen, and the believers who dictated the Roman inscriptions in Gaul. We are not, like the former, called upon to govern a populace whose daily life is regulated by the worship paid to its gods; nor, like the latter, Pagans. The gods of the Gallic people, like those of the Romans, are, in our eyes, a creation of the human mind, the inspiration of an ignorant people, whom necessity impels to explain the universe. It is difficult, therefore, to satisfy us by attempting to show that two divinities, one Roman, born from the union of Roman and of Greek mythology, the other Gallic, sprung from the genius peculiar to the Celtic race, are identical with each other. It is not enough that the two divine figures exhibit certain points of coincidence; they must have, if not complete concordance, agreement at least upon all the principal points.

When it is necessary to identify a real personage we are not so exacting. I once knew a certain professor; at his lectures I could not help admiring his immense learning, his rare and penetrative criticism, his elegant style, his winning

(1) "Æneid," vi., 851-853.

manner and animated countenance. In his study he charmed me by the kindness of his reception and the wonderful simplicity of his conversation, which betrayed remarkable erudition, without any trace of pedantry. Then I meet him in the street. I pass him by. His eyes, a few minutes before lit up with the fire of enthusiasm, are now dull and vacant. There is nothing about him that would reveal the brilliant scholar or the charming host. Now he seems to be thinking of nothing in particular; or the thought that occupies his mind is, perhaps, trivial and commonplace. Suddenly, however, I seem to recognise a certain resemblance in his features. I exclaim: "It is he!" and I am not deceived.

The Romans proceeded in a like manner with respect to their gods. Their Jupiter, for instance, holds the thunderbolt in his right hand, as his characteristic insignia; the Gauls had also a god who controlled the thunder. Upon this simple indication the Romans concluded that the Gaulish god was identical with their own Jupiter. Because, in fact, the two gods, one national, the other foreign, were endowed with a common attribute, they were one and the same; and this they concluded without considering the differences which, on other more important points, these two mythical figures might present.

Besides, they thought it could not be otherwise when it was a question of the great gods who held universal power in the world. It was inadmissible that the thunderbolt obeyed two masters, one in Gaul, the other in Italy. If the explanation given of the thunderbolt south of the Alps was a good one, it must be good north-west of the Alps also.

The Roman Mars decided the issue of battles. Either the Gaulish god of war was identical with the Roman Mars, in which case his worship might be maintained in conquered Gaul; or he was inferior to him, in which case he was a vanquished god, whose worship was no longer necessary.

The result of the conquest must necessarily have been either the suppression of the great Gaulish gods, or the confusion of them with the great Roman gods; and the second alternative was much more practical, as it inflicted no humiliation on the vanquished people. It had the great advantage, too, of preventing all religious feuds between the conquered and the conquerors, who wished to assimilate them; and it hastened the time of this assimilation. The confusion of the two cults was, therefore, the solution that would naturally suggest itself to a statesman.

Cæsar has, then, affirmed the identity of five great Roman gods with the great gods of the Gauls, and this identity has been admitted after Cæsar. It has been so the more easily, in that the Romans, firmly believing in the existence of their gods, were satisfied with but secondary attributes in the recognition of them. They did not then, before pronouncing upon the identity of two divinities, enter into the minute examination of details which the modern enquirer does, applying to the study of mythology the methods of modern scholarship.

Our conclusion will then be somewhat as follows :

We cannot accept without verification the assertions of Cæsar, from which one would seem justified in concluding that the religion of the Gauls was identical almost with that of the Romans. We must consult other texts than the one quoted above, and the inscriptions which seem to corroborate it. That is the reason we have undertaken the work contained in the present volume. We do not pretend to solve the innumerable questions raised by the study of Celtic mythology, but we offer a solution of some of the principal difficulties connected with a subject so worthy the attention of an historian.

It is not a hand-book of Celtic mythology that we offer to the public, but an essay on the fundamental principles of that mythology. We have based our study on the old Irish book known as the *Leabhar Gabhala*, or Book of Conquests or Invasions. Our work is a commentary on that document, as contained in the "Book of Leinster," a twelfth-century MS., published in fac-simile by the Royal Irish Academy. The numerous other texts quoted have no object save that of elucidating it.

Our work will present all the inconveniences of the exegetic method; the principal will be that of repetition; legends analogous to others already explained will often occasion a repetition of these explanations. But we hope it will be considered in our favour that we have respected the ancient order in which Ireland has long since classified the fabulous tales that constitute the traditional form of her mythology. In substituting for this arrangement, consecrated by the ages, a newer and more methodical classification, we should have broken to pieces in our hands the very picture we wished to hold up to view (1).

(1) The exception we have made in the legend of Cessair is only apparent, as this legend is a Christian addition to the Irish Mythological Cycle.

The Irish Mythological Cycle

AND

CELTIC MYTHOLOGY.



CHAPTER I.—Introductory.

- I. The Catalogues of Irish Epic Literature.—2. The Irish Epic Cycles.—3. The Part Played by Epic Literature in Ireland During the Early Centuries of the Middle Age.—4. The Irish Mythological Cycle; the Primitive Races of the Earth in Irish and in Greek Mythology.—5. The Irish Mythological Cycle (continued); Inundations in Irish and in Greek Mythology.—6. The Irish Mythological Cycle (continued); Battles of the Gods in Irish, Greek, Indian, and Iranian Mythology.—7. The King of the Dead and the Abode of the Dead in Irish and in Greek Mythology and in the Vedas.—8. The Sources of Irish Mythology.

I.

The Catalogues of Irish Epic Literature.

In our Introduction to the "Study of Celtic Literature," the first of the series to which the present volume belongs, we mentioned the existence of several catalogues of Irish epic literature. The first of these appears to have been drawn up about the year 700 of our era, with the exception of one or two additions which date from the first half of the tenth century. The second belongs to the latter part of the same century, while the third has come down to us in a MS. of the sixteenth century.

The first of these catalogues is contained in two manuscripts, one written about the year 1150—the Book of Leinster, pp. 189-190, published by O'Curry in his "Manuscript Materials," pp. 584-593; the other dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, viz., MS., H. 3-17, col., 797-800, preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and published by Professor O'Looney in the "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy," Second Series, Vol. I., "Polite Literature and Antiquities," pp. 215-240. This catalogue is anonymous; in the first manuscript mentioned it contains 187 titles.

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The second catalogue is contained, to my knowledge, in three manuscripts, viz., Rawlinson B. 512, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 109-110, fourteenth century; Harleian 5,280, fol. 47 r. v., British Museum, fifteenth century; and 23 N. 10, formerly Betham 145, Royal Irish Academy, pp. 29-32, sixteenth century. As contained in the first of the three manuscripts, it comprises 159 titles; it is attributed to Urard Mac Coisi, a *file* of the latter half of the tenth century (1).

There are only twenty titles in the third catalogue: this one, more recent than the other two, and anonymous, is preserved in a sixteenth-century manuscript in the British Museum, Harleian, No. 432, and published in the "Ancient Laws of Ireland," Vol. 1, p. 46.

There are titles in the second and third catalogues which are not contained in the first; but even in adding these to the first, as a supplement, we should not have a complete list of the pieces that formed the vast collection of Irish epic literature. According to the gloss in the introduction to the "Senchus Mor," the *ollamh*, or chief of the *file*, was bound to know 350 tales. There are many tales preserved in the Irish manuscripts whose titles are not contained in the catalogues just mentioned. On the other hand, the manuscripts contain only a fraction of the tales mentioned in the catalogues. There are thus many gaps in our knowledge of Irish epic literature, which in all probability will never be filled up.

II.

The Irish Epic Cycles.

The monuments of Irish epic literature seem to fall naturally into four sections:

1. The Mythological Cycle, which deals with the origin of the world and the most ancient history of the gods and of men.
2. The Cycle of Conchobar and Cuchullainn, comprising the tales that relate to these two personages, or to other heroes who lived in or about their time. According to the Irish annalists, Conchobar and Cuchullainn were contemporaries of

(1) For contents of this catalogue, v. "Essai d'un Catalogue de la Litterature Epique de l'Irlande," pp. 260-264 (Jubainville).

Christ, Cuchullainn dying, according to Tigernach, in the year 2 of our era, and Conchobar in the year 22 (1).

3. The Ossianic Cycle, the principal personages of which are Find, son of Cumall, and Ossin or Ossian, son of Find. It appears to be based upon historic events that took place in the second or third century of our era; Tigernach records Find's death in the year 274 (2).

4. A certain number of pieces, which, if strung together in the chronological order of the events, real or imaginary, to which they refer, would form, in some measure, the poetic annals of Ireland from the third to the seventh century of our era. The pieces relative to events later than the seventh century are few in number.

III.

The Part Played by Epic Literature in Ireland During the Early Centuries of the Middle Age.

During the long winter evenings the epic pieces or tales comprised in these four sections were recited by the *file* before the kings as they sat in the great halls of their *duns* or palaces, surrounded by their vassals (3). They also recited them to the crowds gathered together at the great periodical assemblies of *Bellené* on the 1st of May, *Lugnasad* on the 1st of August, and *Samain* on the 1st of November, the most popular being that held at Usnech on the 1st of May, or the day of *Bellené*.

Usnech was regarded as the central point of Ireland: a natural rock, serving as a bourn, indicated the starting-point of the five great lines (*coicid*, or "fifths") which separated the provinces of Ireland. Here it was, on the 1st of May, that marriages were broken off and new ties formed. Judgments were given, the laws amended, the kings recruited soldiers for their armies, merchants came with their wares and trafficked with the people, who were usually scattered over an immense territory, where commerce could not reach them; so that the

(1) O'Connor, "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," ii. pt. 1, pp. 14-16. Some Irish writers of the twelfth century held that these personages were much more ancient. One of the legendary tales preserved in the Book of Leinster makes Conchobar reign three hundred years before Christ (Windisch, "Irische Texte," 99, lines 16-17).

(2) O'Connor, "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," ii. pt. 1, p. 49.

(3) "Sceal as-am-berar com-bad-e Find Mac Cumail, Mongan," in the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, 133, col. 1, lines 29-31.

file found a goodly audience for their bardic recitals (1). Without making any claim to the same success, we shall take up the thread of these old tales, beginning with the Mythological Cycle.

IV.

The Irish Mythological Cycle. The primitive races of the Earth in Irish and in Greek Mythology.

The pieces which belong to the Mythological Cycle are scattered over the various chapters comprised in the above-mentioned catalogues (2). What we may regard, however, as the fundamental pieces belong to the tract entitled "Tochomlada," or Emigrations. Of the thirteen pieces contained in this tract seven are mythological :

1. "Tochomlod Partholoin dochum n-Ereenn," the emigration of Partholon to Ireland.
2. "Tochomlod Nemid co h-Erind," the emigration of Nemed to Ireland.
3. "Tochomlod Fer m-Bolg," the emigration of the Fir-Bolgs.
4. "Tochomlod Tuathe De Danann," the emigration of the race of the god of Dana, or the "Tuatha De Danann."
5. "Tochomlod Miled, maic Bile, co h-Espain," the emigration of Mile, son of Bile, to Spain.
6. "Tochomlod mac Miled a Espain in Erin," the emigration of the sons of Mile from Spain into Ireland.
7. "Tochomlod Cruithnech a Tracia co h-Erinn ocus a Tochomlod a Erin co Albain," the emigration of the Picts from Thracia into Ireland, and from Ireland into Britain.

These titles are sufficient to show that one of the most important divisions of Irish mythology relates how divers races, human and divine, came and established themselves at

(1) On the bardic tales of the *file* at the public assemblies see the piece entitled, "Aenach Carmain" in O'Curry's *Manners and Customs*, iii., 526-547. Quatrains 58-65 deal with these tales. The Irish bard has interpolated six words in his poem, which in the catalogues are the titles of as many sections : *togla*, or destruction of cities ; *tana*, or "cow-spoils ;" *tochmorca*, or "courtships ;" *fessa*, or "feasts ;" *aitti*, or "violent deaths ;" *airggni*, or "massacres." He cites also several well-known pieces such as the "Fianruth Fíand, Tecusca Cormaic, Timna Chathair (cf. *Book of Leinster*, 216, col. 1, 19-34).

(2) See Jubainville, "Introduction a la Litterature Celtique," 350-351. Also O'Curry, *Manuscript Materials*, 580-593 (Tr.)

successive intervals in Ireland. Irish literature thus begins the origin of things with a series of mythic events which present a striking analogy with one of the best known conceptions of Greek mythology. Hesiod, in his poem, "Works and Days," says :

"The golden race of men, gifted with speech, was the first created by the immortal dwellers in the mansions of Olympus ; and they lived under Kronos, when he reigned in heaven. As gods they were wont to live a life free from care, apart from labour and trouble ; they suffered none of the ills of old age, their feet and hands were ever lusty ; they passed their life in feasting, secure from adversity, and when they died it was as if overcome by sleep. For them all things prospered ; the fruitful field yielded them rich harvest without stint. And when they reaped they shared gladly with their numerous and kindly brethren. But, when this race was buried in the bowels of the earth, it was transformed by the will of almighty Zeus into a race of beneficent demons, who inhabit the earth and are the guardians of mortal men, whose actions, both good and bad, they observe. And they go to and fro over the earth, invisible in the air, which serves them for a vesture, distributing riches ; for this is the kingly function they have attained.

"Then the dwellers in the mansions of Olympus created a second race, far inferior—the race of silver, like unto the golden race neither in body nor in mind. For a hundred years the child was reared by its watchful mother, growing up in foolishness in the house ; but when it had attained the period of youth and had come to man's estate, it lived but a little time and was in sorrow, because of its foolishness, for these men could not abstain from injustice, one towards the other. They refused worship to the Immortals and sacrifices to the Almighty at the holy altars, as it is meet and right for men to do. Then Zeus, son of Kronos, was incensed against them because they would not render honour to the blessed gods, dwellers on Olympus, and he deprived them of life. But, when the earth had covered them over, they were known as the powerful dwellers of the under world, and they hold the second rank, but honour is paid to them also.

"Then created Zeus a third race of men, gifted with speech, the race of bronze, in no way like unto the silver. Sprung from the ash, they were strong and mighty, and their concern was the mournful and unjust works of Ares, the god of war. They ate no wheaten food, and had stout, unflinching hearts of

steel. Great was their strength, and hands invincible hung from the arms of their powerful bodies. Of bronze were their arms, of bronze their dwellings, and in bronze they worked, for black iron was not yet. With their own hands they took away life, and entered the corrupt abode of chilling Hades. For, however terrible they were, black death overtook them at last, and they quitted the bright sunlight.

"But, when the earth had covered this race also, Zeus, son of Kronos, created a fourth race on the fruitful earth—a better and more upright one, who are the divine heroes of the former generation, known over the immense earth as demigods. These fatal war and rude strife deprived of life; some of them near Thebes of the Seven Gates, in the Cadmean land, doing battle for the flocks of Ædipus; others sailed over the great sea in their ships to Troy, for the fair-haired Helen's sake, and there death enshrouded them.

"Zeus, son of Kronos, withdrawing them from men, gave them nourishment and a dwelling at the ends of the earth, far from the immortals. Kronos reigns over them, and they live, free from care, in the isles of the blest, beside the deep-eddying ocean, blessed heroes, for whom, thrice in the year, a fertile soil yields fruit as sweet as honey" (1).

The Greeks thus believed that, long before the days of their ancestors who wrought the epic wars of Thebes and of Troy, three races, from whom they had no descent, had flourished on the ancestral soil. In Ireland we find an almost identical conception, though the names of the mythic races are not the same in Ireland as in Greece. Hesiod calls them the golden race, the silver race, the bronze race; the Irish speak of the family of Partholon, that of Nemed, and the Tuatha De Danann. The Tuatha De Danann are identical with the golden race of the Greeks. In the family of Partholon we have the silver race of the Greeks, and in that of Nemed their bronze race. Thus, it will be seen, the order in which they come is not the

(1) Hesiod, "Works and Days," 109-173 (cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* i., 89-127). We have eliminated verse 120, considered by several editors as an interpolation, and which is in any case beside the purpose. Verse 169, however, is retained—"Telou ap'athanaton toisin Kronos embasileuei." The belief it expresses is undoubtedly very ancient in Greece, since we find it in the second Olympic of Pindar, which goes back to the year 726, B.C. In this poem Pindar has sought to reconcile the doctrine enunciated in verse 169 of the "Works and Days" with that found in the "Odyssey," iv., 561-569, identical at bottom, though differing in details. Upon this subject see also Plato, "Gorgias," c. 79.

same in both countries. The golden race of the Greeks, first in order with them, comes last with the Irish, who give it the name of Tuatha De Danann. But the family of Partholon, or silver race, precedes the family of Nemed, or bronze race, in Ireland as in Greece.

The Greek demigods, or fourth race, who fought at Thebes and Troy, and who are the ancestors of the actual race, correspond with the Firbolgs, the sons of Mile, and the Cruithnech, or Picts, in Irish mythology. In the seven pieces, therefore, whose titles we have just given, viz., the emigration of Partholon to Ireland, emigration of the Firbolgs, emigration of the Tuatha De Danann, emigration of Mile, son of Bile, to Spain, emigration of the sons of Mile from Spain to Ireland, emigration of the Picts, or Cruithnech, from Thrace to Ireland and from Ireland to Britain, we have the Irish form of a doctrine whose fundamental elements are already found in Greece, in Hesiod's "Works and Days."

Between the Irish account and the Greek there are numerous differences, they consist, for the most part, in the developments Irish legend has received since the introduction of Christianity. But, alongside of these divergences, there are some striking affinities. For instance, the Tuatha De Danann, the latest of the three primitive races, from whom the actual Irish are not descended, submits finally to the same fate as the golden race of mythology, the first of the three primitive races, from which the Greeks are not sprung.

"The golden race," says Hesiod, "is transformed by the will of almighty Zeus into a race of beneficent demons, who inhabit the earth and are the guardians of mortal men, whose actions, both good and bad, they observe. And they go to and fro over the earth, invisible in the air, which serves them for a vesture, distributing riches; for this is the kingly function they have attained."

The Tuatha De Danann, also, after having been, with visible body, sole masters of the earth, assume in a later age invisibility, and share with men folk the dominion of the world, sometimes coming to their aid, sometimes disputing with them the pleasures and joys of life.

V.

The Irish Mythological Cycle (continued). Inundations in Irish and in Greek Mythology.

After the seven emigrations, *tochomlada*, placed at the head of the Mythological Cycle, may be mentioned the *tomadma*, or floods, partial deluges, two of which are mentioned in the catalogues—(a) "Tomaidm Locha Ehdach," or the bursting out of Lough Neagh in Ulster, and (b) "Tomaidm Locha Eirne," or the bursting out of Loch Erne. Two deluges are also recorded in Greek mythology, that of Ogyges and that of Deucalion: the first in Attica (1), the second in that part of Greece situated near Dodona and the Achelous (2). Irish literature, however, affords many parallel instances of these deluges.

VI.

The Irish Mythological Cycle (continued). Battles of the Gods in Irish, Greek, Indian, and Iranian Mythology.

War holds an important place in Irish mythology. To the Mythological Cycle, for instance, belong the Battle of Mag Tured (Moytura), "Cath Maige Tured;" the battle of Mag Itha, "Cath Maige Itha;" the war of Nemed with the Fomorians, "Catha Neimid re Fomorcaib;" the massacre of Connan's Tower, "Orgain Tuir Chonaind;" the massacre of Ailech, where Neit, son of De or God, fell, "Argain Ailich for Neit mac in Dui," &c. In the divine world of Ireland we find two groups knit together by the closest ties of relationship, and yet at war one with the other. The battles and massacres just mentioned are either real episodes or later imitations of divers episodes in this struggle, which is itself a Celtic version of the war waged by the Hellenic Zeus against his father Kronos and the Titans; that of Aburamazda, or Ormazd, the God of Righteousness, with Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman, the personification of Evil in Iranian literature; and the battles between the Deva or gods of Day and Light, and the Asura, or gods of Darkness, of Storm, and of Night, in Indian literature. In Ireland, the Tuatha De

(1) Acusilas, fragment 14 (Didot-Muller, "Fragmenta Historicum Graecorum," i., 102); Castor frag. 15, Didot-Muller, "Ctesiae . . . fragmenta," p. 176. In both cases they deal with a text of Eusebius, "Præparatio Evangelica," x. 10.

(2) Aristotle, "Meteorology," i., cap. 14, 21 & 22.

Danann, together with Partholon and Nemed, who on some points are the counterparts of the Tuatha De Danann, have as their rivals the Fomorians. Dagda (*Dago-devo-s*, "Good God"), king of the Tuatha De Danann, is the Zeus, or Ormazd, of Irish mythology; the Tuatha De Danann, or "folk of the god (*devi*), (son) of Dana," are none other than the Deva of India, the gods of Day, of Light, and of Life. The Fomore, or Fomorians, who are the adversaries of the Tuatha De Danann, represent in Ireland a mythical group corresponding to the Indian Asura, and the Greek Titans; their chief Bress, Balar, or Tethra, is sprung from a mythical conception, originally identical with that which produced the Greek Kronos, the Iranian Ahriman, the Vedic Yama, King of the Dead, Father of the Gods; Tvashtri, God the Father in the Vedas, and the Vedic Varuna, old Supreme God supplanted by Indra.

VII.

The King of the Dead and the abode of the Dead in Irish and in Greek mythology and in the Vedas.

Tethra, chief of the Fomorians, overcome in the battle of Mag Tured (Moytura), becomes King of the Dead in the mysterious region they inhabit across the water (1). So also the Greek Kronos, overcome in the battle between Zeus and the Titans, reigns in the distant Isles of the All-Mighty or the Isles of the Blest, over the dead heroes who fought at Thebes and Troy.

The conception of Kronos reigning over the heroic dead is met with for the first time in Hesiod's Works and Days, verse 169 (2); certain critics, however, have suppressed this verse, on the ground that it conflicts with a passage in the Theogony, which locates the abode of this same Kronos in Tartarus (3). . . . Tartarus is an obscure region in the underworld; and the gloomy account of it given in the Theogony (4) has no resemblance to the enchanted isles which, in the Works and Days, become the realm of the vanquished Kronos. But between the dates of these two compositions,

(1) "Echtra Condla Chaim," in Windisch's "Kurzgefasste Irische Grammatik," p. 120, lines 1-4.

(2) Hesiod, "Works and Days," 168, 169.

(3) Hesiod, "Theogony," 851.

(4) *Ibid.*, 721, seq.

both attributed to Hesiod, Greek mythology underwent a process of evolution in which the conception of man's destiny after death was sensibly altered.

The Iliad and the oldest portions of the Odyssey know of no other sojourn for the dead than the dark, underground Hades, whose other name is Erebus (1-2). The Iliad distinguishes between Hades, the domain of the god Hades, and Tartarus, which is also situated in the depths of the earth, but much lower down. Hades is as far removed from Tartarus as the earth is from Hades (3). It is in Tartarus that the Titans have their abode (4), and Kronos, like them, also deprived of the sunlight (5).

We find the same idea in the Theogony, only that there Hades and Tartarus seem to be confused with each other, whereas in the Iliad they are quite distinct. Tartarus is no longer only the abode of the Titans and of Kronos, overcome by Zeus (6), but also that of the god who personifies the Homeric Hades (7), who reigns over the dead, in the bowels of the earth (8). The entrance to this dismal abode of the vanquished gods and the dead was supposed to have lain to the North-west, beyond the river Ocean (9).

Towards the end of the seventh century before our era, the Ocean, which for the Greeks was merely a mythic conception, became for them a geographical conception. We all know how chance led a Samian ship to discover the coasts lying to the South-west of Spain, washed by the Atlantic, and which up to then the Phœnicians alone of the Mediterranean populations

(1) "Dear child, how didst thou come beneath the murky darkness, that art a living man." ("Odyssey," xi. 155.) "Hades the ruler of the folk in the under world . . . he drew the murky darkness" ("Iliad," xv. 188-191.)

(2) "Iliad," xx. 57-65. Poseidon, the God of the Sea, shakes him by a tempest which makes the earth tremble, and Hades, the God of the Dead, fears lest the earth be rent above him. "Iliad," viii. 13-16.

(3) "Even those below Tartarus, that are called Titans." "Iliad," xiv. 279.

(4) "Where Jupiter and Kronos sit, having no joy in the beams of Hyperion, the Sun God, nor in any breeze, but deep Tartarus encompasseth them round about." ("Iliad," viii. 479-481; cf. "Hymn to Apollo," 335-336.)

(5) "Theogony," 717, 733, 851.

(6) *Ibid.*, 736-769.

(7) *Ibid.*, 850.

(8) "Odyssey," xi. 13-22, 639; cf. xii. 1-2

(9) Herodotus, iv. 152, 2-3.

had been in touch with (1). This was one of those great events, as much historical as legendary, that led up to the foundation of Cyrene, from the year 633 to 626 before the present era (2).

Thenceforth the Greeks no longer conceived of the Ocean as a stream surrounding the world, but as an immense sea, of unknown extent, situated principally to the west of Europe and Africa. This gave rise to a new conception of the abode of the dead and Kronos. Thence, in the latest portion of the *Odyssey*, in that relating to Telemachus, the idea of a plain known as Elysium, the realm of the fair Rhadamanthus, where the Ocean blows his North-west wind, and where Menelaus is to find immortality. Thence the belief in the Isles of the All Mighty or of the Blest, the kingdom of Kronos in the *Works and Days* (3).

In the second Olympic of Pindar, which celebrates a victory won at the Olympic games in 476, the Elysian Plain and the Isles of the Blest are confounded with each other, and form only one isle, in which is the palace of Kronos, who has Rhadamanthus for associate (4). This new doctrine is identical with the Celtic one, and in the history of the European races represents an historic period quite different from that which held the doctrine of Tartarus and Hades, such as we find it in the *Iliad* and the earliest portions of the *Odyssey*.

We need not stop to consider the more recent conception which makes Plato represent Tartarus as the place where the wicked are punished, and the Isles of the Blest as the place where the just receive their final reward (5). It is a philosophical system posterior to the old popular mythology. The Homeric Hades contains all the dead without distinction, good and evil, just and unjust.

What is important is to find in Irish mythology, whose fundamental doctrines may be more generally described as Celtic mythology, conceptions which have held a considerable place in Greek mythology. The Celts had a God who was identical with the Greek Kronos. In Ireland he is called Tethra. Vanquished and put to flight, like Kronos, by another more powerful and more fortunate god, like Kronos he reigns

(1) Max Duncker, "Geschichte des Alterthums," vi. 1882, p. 266.

(2) "*Odyssey*," iv. 563-569.

(3) "*Works and Days*," 166-171.

(4) "*Pindari Carmina*," ed. Schneidewin, i. 17-18, ver. 70 seq.

(5) "*Gorgias*," 79, "*Platonis Opera*," ed. Didot-Hirschig, i. 384.

over the dead, across the ocean, in that new enchanted country which Celtic mythology assigns to them, in accord with the beliefs of the second age of Greek mythology.

Vedic mythology affords us an analogous conception. Yama or Varuna, the god of the Dead and of Night, is overcome by Indra his son, the god of Day; Yama and Varuna are, save in certain details, really a mythic conception differing in no way from the Irish Tethra. But the Celts place the abode of the dead in quite a different place from the Vedic poets, who give them the sky, and even the sun, for a dwelling (1). They had not the Celtic idea of that immense ocean where the day-star every evening loses his light and life, and finds a grave until the morrow.

VIII.

The Sources of Irish Mythology.

In our account of the mythological traditions of Ireland, we shall adopt the old time-honoured plan presented in the list of migrations preserved in the catalogues. Unfortunately none of the seven pieces there enumerated is now extant. They exist, however, in an abridged form in the eleventh-century compilation known as the "Leabhar Gabhala," or Book of Invasions.

We shall use this work as a base, supplementing and comparing its statements with the help of other texts both Irish and foreign. The latter consist, first of all, of the compilation attributed to Nennius, who probably wrote in the tenth century (2), and who gives a highly interesting, though unfortunately all too short, account of the mythological beliefs admitted in Ireland at that time. Then the works of Giraldus Cambrensis, who wrote his "Topographia Hibernica" at the end of the twelfth century. The Irish texts are those of the chroniclers and the bards.

(1) Abel Bergaigne, "La Religion Védique," i. 74, 81, 85, 88; iii. 111-120.

(2) Since the above lines were written I have received from M. de La Borderie a copy of his learned work, "Etudes Historiques Bretonnes," the history of the Britons attributed to Nennius. He shows therein that a part of the work said to be written by Nennius, was already in existence in the ninth century, and has been since interpolated. The question is, does the part relating to Irish mythology belong to the primitive redaction, or is it one of the additions? The answer appears to me uncertain.

Keating is one of the most interesting of the chroniclers, and very valuable, despite the recent date of his book, which belongs to the first half of the seventeenth century. But Keating had material at his disposal which perished in the disastrous wars that ravaged the country during the same century. The most important of the poets is Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 984, and is therefore posterior by a few years to Nennius. His works would be much more interesting if they were not so short, and written in an over-condensed style which very often tends to obscurity.

To give one a fuller idea of the apprehension the Irish pagans had of their gods, we shall conclude with an excursion into the heroic cycles, sketching briefly according to the legend the relations that existed between the heroes and their gods, and we shall see these mythical relations continuing down to a time subsequent to St. Patrick, that is, to beyond the middle of the fifth century, when Christianity is supposed to have been introduced into Ireland.

CHAPTER II.—The Emigration of Partholon.

1. The Race of Partholon in Ireland ; the Silver Race in the Mythology of Hesiod.—2. The Celtic Doctrine of the Origin of Man.—3. The Creation of the World in Celtic Mythology, according to the Legend of Partholon.—4. The Struggle between Partholon's Race and the Fomorians.—5. The Legend of Partholon (continued); the First Jealousy; the First Duel.—6. End of Partholon's Race.—7. Chronology and the Legend of Partholon.

I.

The Race of Partholon in Ireland. The Silver Race in the Mythology of Hesiod.

Of the three races which, according to Greek mythology, inhabited the world before the heroes of Troy and Thebes, the second in point of time is the silver race, whose leading characteristic was lack of wisdom. The education of the children lasted for a hundred years, and, despite the watchful care of its mother, the child when grown to man's estate continued to live in foolishness, so that the few years that remained to him were full of sorrow (1).

(1) Hesiod, "Works and Days," 130-134.

The silver race is identical with that which the oldest Irish texts place at the beginning of their mythic history. They call it the "family of Partholon" (1). Like the silver race of the Greeks, it is distinguished for its foolishness (2).

The first list of Irish bardic tales is the earliest document in which we meet with the name of Partholon. The redaction of this list appears to date from about the year 700 A.D. The oldest text after that on Partholon is a passage in the History of the Britons by Nennius, which seems to have been written not later than the tenth century. There we read: "Last of all the Scots out of Spain arrived in Ireland. The first of them was Partholon, bringing with him a thousand companions, both men and women. Their number increased until there were four thousand of them; then a plague fell upon them, and in one week they all perished, so that not one of them was left" (3).

This brief statement is not quite accurate, however. As we shall see later on, one of Partholon's companions, according to the Irish myth, escaped the final disaster, and his evidence preserved the memory of the mythic events that form the history of this primitive and legendary colonisation of Ireland.

II.

The Celtic Doctrine of the Origin of Man.

A curious fact, which arose from the text of Nennius, is that from the tenth century onward Irish euhemerism altered

(1) "Muintir Parthaloin Chronicum Scotorum," ed. Hennessy, p. 8. By a strange coincidence this Irish name, whose initial P differs only graphically from B, has the same sound as that of the apostle Bartholomew in Irish. There is no connection, however, between the legend of the saint and that of Partholon. Partholon, also written "Bartholan," seems to be a compound whose first syllable *bar* means sea (Whitley Stokes, "Sanas Chormaic," p. 28). The second syllable, *tolon*, following another form, *tolan*, appears to be derived from *tola*, meaning waves, billows. Partholon would thus designate "one having relation to the waves of the sea." This is just what we learn from his genealogy, according to which he is sprung from *Baath* (Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 1, col. 1, line 24), whose name also means the sea. See the word *Bath* in O'Clery's Glossary, and Cormac's Glossary.

(2) See Tuan Mac Cairill's account of it in next chapter, iii.

(3) Novissime autem Scoti venerunt de partibus Hispaniæ ad Hiberniam. Primus autem venit Partholonus cum mille hominibus, viris scilicet et mulieribus, et creverunt usque ad quatuor millia hominum, venitque mortalitas super eos, et in una septimana perierunt, ita ut ne unus quidem remaneret ex illis." Appendix ad Opera, ed. ab Angelo Maio Rome, 1871, p. 98.

the character of Celtic mythology. The Celtic doctrine is that the first ancestor of the human race is the god of the Dead (1), and that this god inhabits a distant region beyond the ocean, his dwelling being those "far-off isles" whence, according to Druidical teaching, a part of the inhabitants of Gaul had come direct (2). The idea of this mythic region where the ancestor of mankind reigns over the dead, belongs alike both to Greek and to Celtic mythology. In Hesiod, the heroes that perished in the wars of Thebes and Troy found a second existence "at the ends of the earth, far from immortals. Kronos reigns over them, and they live free from care in the Isles of the All-Mighty and of the Blest, near the deep-eddying ocean" (3).

Kronos, under whose sceptre the departed warriors experience the joys of a better world, is the primitive ancestor to whom these illustrious heroes and the entire Greek race trace their origin. Kronos is the father of Zeus, and Zeus, surnamed the father, "Zeus, master of all the gods, amorously united to Pandora, has engendered the warlike Graikos," from whom the Greek race is descended (4). There is a great analogy, therefore, between Greek mythology and Celtic mythology on this point.

In the Celtic beliefs the dead inhabit a region across the ocean, situated to the south-west, where the sun sinks to rest during the greater part of the year—a wonderful realm whose delights far surpass those of this world. It is from this mysterious country that men originally came. In Ireland it is known as *Tire Beo*, or the Land of the Living; *Tir n-Aill*, or the Other World; *Mag Mar*, or the Great Plain (5); and *Mag Meld*, or the

(1) "Galli se omnes ab Dite patre prognatos prædicant, idque a druidibus proditum dicunt." Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, vi., ch. xviii., 1.

(2) "Alios quoque ab insulis extimis confuxisse." Timagenes in Ammianus Marcellinus, xv., ch. ix., 4; ed. Teubner-Gardthausen, i. 68.

(3) Hesiod, "Works and Days," 161-171.

(4) Hesiod, *Catalogues*, frag. 20, ed. Didot, p. 49. Alongside of this doctrine there is another which makes the Greeks the descendants of Iapetos. But if in this other mythic conception Iapetos is distinguished from Kronos as being the first ancestor of the gods, while Kronos is the first ancestor of men, Iapetos is presented to us as a sort of counterpart of Kronos, having the same father and mother (*Theogony*, 134-137). Along with the other Titans he is the companion of his defeat, and he goes into exile with him; and, like them also, he dwells with him in Tartarus. *Iliad*, viii., 479; xiv. 279. Hymn to Apollo, 335-339. *Theogony*, 630-735.

(5) We find the two first names in the piece entitled, "Echtra Condla," Windisch, *Kurzgefasste Irische Grammatik*, p. 119, 120. *Mag mor*, in "Tochmarc Etaine," Windisch, *Irische Texte*, p. 132.

Pleasant Plain (1). For this Pagan name, which has no parallel in Christian beliefs, the euhemerism of the Irish Christian annalists substituted the Latin name of the Iberian peninsula, *Hispania*. From the tenth century onwards, the time at which Nennius wrote, this name, which was unknown to the geographical language of ancient Ireland, passed into the legend of Partholon, and then it was from Spain, and not from the land of the Dead, that this mythic chief and his companions were made to arrive (2).

III.

The Creation of the World in Celtic Mythology, according to the Legend of Partholon.

The legend of Partholon is much more developed in the Irish texts than in Nennius.

The Celtic doctrine of the origin of the world, as it has come down to us in the Irish tales, contains no teaching with regard to the origin of matter (3); but it represents the earth as assuming its actual form slowly and gradually under the eyes of the different human races that flourished on it. Thus, when Partholon arrives there are only three lakes in Ireland, only nine rivers, and only one plain. To the three lakes, whose names we find in a poem by Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 984, seven others are added during the lifetime of Partholon; Eochaid gives their names also (4). There is a legend relating the origin of one of these lakes. Partholon had three sons, one of whom was called Rudraige. Rudraige died. On digging his grave a spring gushed forth, whose waters were so abundant

(1) Co-t-gairim do Maig Mell, in the above-mentioned "Echtra Condla," p. 119; cf. "Serglige Conculainn," Windisch, *Irische Texte*, 209, line 30; and 214, note 24.

(2) "Novissime autem Scoti venerunt a partibus Hispaniæ in Hiberniam. Primus autem venit Partholanus." *Historia Britonum*, attributed to Nennius, ed. Angelo Maio, Rome, 1871, p. 98. The legend is still more mutilated in Keating, according to whom Partholon sets out from Migdonia in Greece, sailing up the Mediterranean, and leaving Spain behind on the right, until he landed in the western part of Munster. A fragment of the primitive legend is preserved in his genealogy, which makes Partholon son of Baath, that is, of the sea. V. *supra*, note 2. "Son of the Sea" is a poetical phrase designating a sea-islander.

(3) The term used by the Irish Christians to designate created matter was *duil*, genitive *dulo*.

(4) Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 2, lines 29-33, 37, 38.

that they spread out into a lake, the name of which was called Loch Rudraige (1).

In Partholon's time the number of plains increased to four. The sole plain that existed in Ireland was called *Sen Mag*, the Old Plain. When Partholon and his companions arrived in Ireland there was "neither root nor branch on this plain" (2). The children of Partholon made three other plains by clearing away the ground, as the legend says, in the euhemeristic form in which it has reached us (3); but the ancient text certainly described the formation of these plains as a spontaneous or miraculous phenomenon (4).

IV.

Struggle of Partholon's Race with the Fomorians.

The race of Partholon could not dispense with war, both civil and foreign. It carried on a foreign war with the Fomorians, against whom the Battle of Mag Itha was fought. We have no reason to suppose that this war is an addition to the ancient legend. Yet there is no mention of the Battle of Mag Itha in the earliest Irish epic catalogues. The first reference to it is in the second list, which was compiled in the latter part of the tenth century.

The Battle of Mag Itha was fought between Partholon and a warrior named Cichol Gri-cen-chos (5). *Cen-chos* means footless. Cichol was, therefore, like Vritra, the god of Evil, in the

(1) *Ibid*, p. 5, col. 1, lines 15, 16. *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, p. 6.

(2) "Ni frith frem na flesc feda." Poem by Eochaid Ua Flainn, *Book of Leinster*, p. 5, col. 2, line 48.

(3) Same poem, lines 26-28. Four new plains are mentioned in the *Leabhar Gabhala*, *Book of Leinster*, p. 5, col. 1, 34-36; and in *Giraldus Cambrensis*, *Topographia Hibernica*, iii., 2, ed. Dimock, p. 141, line 13.

(4) The expression used is *ro-slechta*, that is, "were built." Hardly the term to express the idea of a clearing, whatever Eochaid Ua Flainn might say:

Ro slechta maige a mor-chail
Leis ar-gaire di-a-grad-chlaind.

"Were built plains beyond the great woods
With him in a little time by his pleasant progeny."

Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 2, 26, 27.

(5) Syntax would have *cen-chuis* or *cen-chossa*, but the compound *Gri-cen-chos* is unsyntactic, as *Tigernmas* for *Tigern-bais*. If they were syntactic, these words would be indeclinable.

Vedic mythology, who had neither feet nor hands (1). Among Partholon's adversaries in this battle were men who had only one hand and one leg. They remind one of Aja Ekapad (2), or the Un-Born with one foot; and Vyamsa, or the shoulderless demon, in Vedic mythology (3); Cichol, the chief of Partholon's enemies, was of the Fomorian race (4); in other words, one of the gods of Death, of Evil, and of Night, vanquished later on by the Tuatha De Danann, or the gods of Day, of Righteousness, and of Life. The Fomorians were of gigantic stature (5); they were demons, says a twelfth-century writer (6). According to Keating, they came into Ireland two hundred years before Partholon, in six vessels, each containing fifty men and fifty women (7). They lived by fishing and fowling. Partholon won a victory over them, and delivered Ireland from the foreign enemy.

V.

The Legend of Partholon (continued). The First Jealousy. The First Duel.

A modern legend relates one of the sorrows of this successful warrior. One day he surprised his wife in criminal conversation with a young man. And when he reproached her for her ill-deed, she replied that the blame lay on himself, and said these words :

Honey with a woman, milk with a child,
Food with a hero, flesh with a cat,
A workman with tools in a house,
A man and a woman alone together, it is great danger.

When Partholon heard this great anger came upon him, and snatching up his wife's favourite lap-dog he dashed it to the ground with such violence that he killed it. This was the first act of jealousy that took place in Ireland (8). Partholon died

(1) Bergaigne, *Mythologie Védique*, ii., 202-221.

(2) *Ibid.*, iii., 20-25.

(3) *Ibid.*, ii., 221.

(4) *Leabhar Gabhala* (Book of Leinster), p. 5, col. 1, lines 19-23.

(5) *Giraldus Cambrensis, Topographia Hibernica*, iii., 2, ed. Dimock, p. 141, line 27; p. 142, line 7.

(6) *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, p. 6, line 7.

(7) Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, p. 166.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 164-166.

some time afterwards, and then Ireland was, for the first time, the scene of a duel.

There was a disagreement between two of the sons of Partholon, by name Fer and Fergnia. They had two sisters, Iain and Ain. Fer married Ain, and Fergnia took Iain for wife. Marriage was a commercial commodity at this time in Ireland; women were put up for sale, and the price they fetched at their first marriage went to their father, if he were living; if he were dead, one half to the relative that inherited the paternal authority, and the other half to the woman herself. A dissension arose between the two brothers, Fer and Fergnia, as to which of them was the head of the family and entitled to half of the sum given for their sisters. Not being able to come to terms, they had recourse to arms. So we read in the gloss to the lawbook known as the "Senchus Mor." According to this treatise, when anyone wishes to take possession of female property, there must be an interval of two days between the time of notification and the act of seizure. The delay is the same, says the legal text, when the objects to be seized are weapons with which it is proposed to decide the result of a lawsuit; and the identity of the delay results from the fact that the first legal duel that took place in Ireland was in connection with the rights of women (1).

The gloss cites the following verses in illustration:—

The two sons of Partholon without doubt
Were they who made the battle,
Fer and Fergnia of great valour
Were the names of the two brothers. (2).

(1) "Athgabail aile . . . im dingbail m-bantellaig . . . im tincur roe, im tairc n-airm, ar is im fir ban ciato imargaet roe." Ancient Laws of Ireland, i., p. 146, 150, 154. Distress of two days . . . to seize female property . . . to procure the instruments necessary for battle, as a weapon, for it was about the rights of women that the field of battle was first entered.

(2) Da mac Partholain cen acht
Is iat dorigni in comurc;
Fer is Fergnia co meit n-gal
Anmanda in da brathar.

(Ancient Laws of Ireland, i., 154).

This quatrain cannot be ancient, for the nominative neutre *anmanda*, which has three syllables, would have been disyllabic in old Irish—*anmann*. If this form were restored the line would be false. The legend of Fer and Fergnia appears to be posterior to the redaction of the Leabhar Gabhala, which gives the names of Partholon's sons (Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 1, 12-14), but does not mention either Fer or Fergnia. Their Legend may have been invented in order to explain the passage in the Senchus Mor, in the gloss to which we find it.

Also this quatrain :—

Fer and Fergnia were the men,
As the ancients do relate ;
Ain and Iain, who caused the host to be destroyed,
Were the two chief daughters of Partholon. (1).

VI.

End of the Race of Partholon.

The history of Partholon's race is brought to a close by an awful catastrophe: in the space of one week his descendants, then numbering five thousand souls—one thousand men and four thousand women—died of a plague which fell upon them on a Monday and lasted until the following Sunday, and of all the host only one man survived. And the place where they found death was the plain of Senmag, the only one that was in Ireland on their coming into it (2). According to the "Glossary" of Cormac, they had the wisdom to gather together in this plain, in order that the dead might be the more speedily buried by the survivors (3). The awful destruction of the race of Partholon, they say, was caused by Divine vengeance. When Partholon left his country to come into Ireland, it was not of his own accord (4); he had been condemned to exile for having killed his father and his mother—a double parricide for which banishment was not deemed a sufficient punishment. It needed nothing less than the total destruction of his race to appease the Divine vengeance (5). Likewise in the Homeric legend,

-
- (1) Fer ocus Fergnia na fir
Is-ed innisit na sin ;
Ain ocus Iain, do-certas sloig,
Da prim-ingin Parthaloim.—*Ibid.*

(2) This is the version of the Leabhar Gabhala (Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 1, lines 39-44). According to Eochaid Ua Flainn the disaster took place on the plain of Breg (Book of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, 5). See also Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hibernica*, iii., 2, p. 42; and the passage in Nennius cited *supra*, section 1.

(3) "Fobith an-adnacail i-sna-muigib-sin o-nafib nad beired in-duineba," because of their burial in these plains by those who were not carried off by the plague. (Cormac's Glossary, in Whitley Stokes' *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. 45).

(4) "Doluid for longais [Partholon]," *Scel Tuain Maic Cairill*, in the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 15, col. 2, line 22.

(5) The *Leabhar Breathnach*, in the Book of Lecan, a fifteenth-century MS., after relating the destruction of Partholon's race, adds these words: "a n-digail na fingail do roindi for a hathair agus for a mathair" (Todd, the Irish version of the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius, p. 42).

the children of Niobe perish utterly by the shafts of Apollo and Artemis, incensed because of an insult she had offered to Latona (1). In Hesiod, the silver race, identical with that of Partholon, is destroyed through the anger of Zeus (2).

VII.

Chronology and the Legend of Partholon.

This legend was completed by the introduction of chronological elements foreign to the early redaction, and by giving Partholon ancestors connected with biblical genealogies. The oldest recension contains no reference to the year; the days only are indicated. Partholon came into Ireland on the first of May, which is the Feast of Beltene, or the god of the Dead, the first ancestor of the human race (3). In the earliest tradition, Partholon is the son of Beltene. And he comes into this world on the day specially dedicated to his father.

The chronological reference here agrees with the principal geographical one contained in his legend. On his coming into Ireland, it was at Inber Scene that he landed (4). Inber Scene is to-day the river Kenmare, in the County Kerry, which is the south-west point of Ireland, that is, just facing the mysterious country, across the ocean, where the departed Celt found a new life, and where his first ancestors reigned.

The race of Partholon landed in Ireland on the feast-day of the god of the Dead, and on the anniversary of the same, was stricken with the fatal pestilence which destroyed the whole race within a period of seven days; this fatal week began on the first of May, on a Monday (5), and ended on the following Sunday, when of the five thousand persons that then inhabited Ireland, only one remained alive.

(1) *Iliad*, xxiv., 602-612.

(2) "Works and Days," 136-139.

(3) *Cet-somain*, "Chronicum Scotorum," ed. Hennessy, p. 4. The *Leabhar Gabhala* adds: the fourteenth day of the moon, "for XIII esca" (*Book of Leinster*, p. 5, col. 1, line 8). Only one of these words survives in the "Chronicum Scotorum"—the figure XIII. Both the *Leabhar Gabhala* and the "Chronicum Scotorum" add that it was on a Tuesday. But we are in ignorance as to the date.

(4) "In Inbiur Scene" (*Leabhar Gabhala*, *Book of Leinster*, p. 5, col. 1, line 8; cf. Keating, ed. 1811, p. 164).

(5) The earliest text in which we find this date is a poem by Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 984, and which has been inserted in the *Leabhar Gabhala*, *Book of Leinster*, p. 6, col. 1, line 4.

But when the Irish were converted to Christianity, this brief and simple genealogy of Partholon was no longer admitted; such a chronology was not considered sufficient; they must needs find ancestors in the Bible for this mythic personage, and give him a place in the chronological system which the works of Eusebius and the great name of St. Jerome had caused to be adopted by Christian scholars. The Bible tells us that Japhet, the son of Noah, was the father of Gomer and of Magog (1). The Irish imagined that one of these two sons of Japhet, Gomer according to some, Magog according to others, was the father or grandfather of Bath, and that Bath engendered Fenius surnamed *Farsaid*, or the Elder (2): Fenius Farsaid, one of the most celebrated of the mythic ancestors of the Irish race, whose legal name was Fene, appears to have been one of the seventy chiefs that built the Tower of Babel. He had a son called Nel, who married Scota the daughter of Pharaoh, whence the name Scots, one of those that designate the Irish race. Of Scota and Nel was born Goidel Glas, from which Goidel is derived, another name by which the Irish race is known (3). Goidel Glas was the father of Esru, who lived in the time of Moses and the exodus from Egypt. That makes from the time of the deluge to the exodus from Egypt seven generations, within a period of eight hundred and thirty-seven years, according to the calculations of Bede, the great Irish chronological authority of the Middle Age (4); in this way each generation is equivalent to a period of one hundred and nineteen years. Esru had several sons, one of whom, Sera, was the father of Partholon; and

(1) Genesis, x., 1, 2.

(2) "Da mac Magog maic Iafeth, maic Noi, idon Baath ocus Ibath. Baath, mac doside Fenius Farsaid, athar na Scithecca, idon Fenius, mac Baath, maic Magog, maic Iafeth, maic Noi et reliqua" (Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 1, col. 1). In the Book of Leinster, p. 2, col. 1, line 8, Gomer takes the place of Magog, and Baath is descended from Gomer by Ibath, who becomes the father of Baath, whereas he is his brother in the Leabhar na hUidhre.

(3) Feni o Fenius asbertar,
Brig cen docta;
Gaedil o Gaediul Glas garta,
Scuit o Scota.

(Book of Leinster, p. 2, col. 1, lines 36-37.)

(4) Bede, De Temporum Ratione, in Migne's Patrologia Latina, xc., col. 524-528. The deluge would seem to have taken place in the year of the world 1658, and the exodus from Egypt in 2492.

another of whom is the ancestor of the races that peopled Ireland at a later period (1).

We must not expect too much logic on the part of the old Irish chroniclers. If we take the Leabhar Gabhala, Partholon, the grandson of a contemporary of Moses, came into Ireland when Abraham was in his sixtieth year (2), that is to say, three hundred years before Moses (3). The same authority places the arrival of Partholon three hundred years after the Deluge (4). This date, "three hundred years after the Deluge," we find in the poem of Eochaid Ua Flainn, already referred to, and which was written in the second half of the tenth century (5). According to the Irish, it corresponds with the sixtieth year of Abraham in the chronology of Bede; but there is a difference of four hundred and thirty-seven years between the two events (6): the Irish chronologists are therefore no more to be relied upon than the Welsh.

It was not sufficient to fix the date of Partholon's arrival; they must also determine the exact duration of his race. In Eochaid Ua Flainn's poem we read that there was an interval of three hundred years between the first of May on which the race of Partholon took harbour at Inber Scene, to the extreme south-west of Ireland, and the first of May on which they were stricken by the pestilence that carried them all off. This period of three hundred years was inspired by the desire of putting Irish chronology in harmony with biblical chronology, as we have seen in the case of Abraham and of the Deluge. These vagaries were unknown to Nennius.

In Nennius, the Picts arrive in the Orkney Islands, and thence in the north of Great Britain, eight hundred years after the time Eli was judge of Israel and Postumus reigned over the

(1) See the preface to the Leabhar Gabhala, Book of Leinster, p. 2; and the Leabhar Gabhala itself, Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 1, lines 6, 7, 10.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 5, col. 1, line 11; *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, p. 4. According to Bede, the sixtieth year of Abraham is the year of the world 2083.

(3) I follow Bede's Chronology. Abraham's sixtieth year, being A.M. 2083, Moses would have been born in A.M. 2413.

(4) Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 1, line 5. The legend of Tuan gives 312 years. See *infra.*, chap. iii, 3.

(5) Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 2, lines 19-20.

(6) From the year of the world 1856, the date of the deluge, to the year 2083, that of Abraham's sixtieth year, according to Bede's chronology. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, xc., col. 524-527.

Latins. If we turn to the chronology of St. Jerome, Eli and Postumus lived in the twelfth century before our era (1); consequently, according to Nennius, the arrival of the Picts in the Orkneys and in Great Britain took place in the fourth century before our era; now, adds Nennius, the arrival of the Scots in Ireland is posterior to that of the Picts in Great Britain, and the first of the Scots that came into Ireland was Partholon (2). If we are to believe Nennius, then the legend of Partholon is an historic fact which does not go back further than the fourth century B.C.

It is a far cry, therefore, from Nennius to the fantastic chronologies imagined later on. Besides, Nennius has not laid down any rigorous theories with regard to dates, and he seems to care very little whether his own chronological system is in harmony with itself; for, farther on, speaking of an event in the mythic history of Ireland which is considerably posterior to the arrival of Partholon—the conquest of the sons of Mile, he tells us that it took place a thousand years after the passage of the Red Sea; now, according to his own chronology, the passage of the Red Sea took place fifteen hundred and twenty-eight years before the present era (3); consequently, the sons of Mile landed in Ireland in the year 516 B.C., while Partholon on the other hand, though far anterior to the sons of Mile, did not take possession of Ireland before the fourth century B.C., making his appearance there more than a century after the sons of Mile, who are yet posterior to him.

It is quite easy to understand the cause of this inconsistency. The chronology of the sons of Mile is based upon traditions having a certain historic value: lists of kings for instance; whereas the legend of Partholon, in its most ancient form, affords only one element of comparative chronology,

(1) *Ibid.*, xxvii., col. 277-285.

(2) "Quando vero regnabat Bruto in Britannia, Heli sacerdos iudicabat in Israel, et tunc arca testamenti ab alienigenis possidebatur, Postumus autem frater ejus apud Latinos regnabat. Post intervallum vero multorum annorum Picti venerunt et occupaverunt insulas quæ vocantur Orcades et postea ex insulis vastaverunt regiones multas et occupaverunt eas in sinistrali parte Britannia tenentes usque ad hodiernum diem. Novissime autem Scotti venerunt a partibus Hispania ad Hiberniam. Primus autem venit Partholonus." (Appendix ad Opera edita ab Angelo Maio, Rome, 1871, p. 98.)

(3) According to St. Jerome, Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xxvii., col. 179-180, the passage of the Red Sea took place 1512 years before the present era.

namely, the story of Tuan MacCairill, at first a man, then, successively, a stag, a boar, a vulture, and a salmon; under these five forms he lived in all three hundred and twenty years. In the first four he lived for three hundred years, and witnessed all the invasions that constitute the earliest history, the mythic history of Ireland; then, during the occupation of the present race, changed at first into a salmon, he became a man again, and related all that he had seen. This fantastic old legend does not afford a very solid base for the works of the chronologists. Nennius, therefore, did not know what date to assign to the arrival of Partholon. His successors were less timid. But it must be observed that the legend of Tuan is irreconcilable with the doctrines of the Christian annalists posterior to Nennius, according to whom the race of Partholon alone lasted for three hundred years, and that from its arrival to that of the sons of Mile or the actual race, there is an interval of nine hundred and eighty years (1), instead of three hundred, as we read in the legend of Tuan.

CHAPTER III.—Emigration of Partholon (Continued). Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill.

- x. Why was the Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill Invented?—2. Saint Finnen and Tuan Mac Cairill.—3. Primitive History of Ireland, according to Tuan Mac Cairill.—4. The Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill and Chronology; Modifications due to Christian Influence.—5. The Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill in its Primitive Form is of Pagan Origin.

I.

Why was the Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill Invented?

When Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, relates briefly the history of the three first races that inhabited the earth—the golden, the silver, and the bronze, each of which had perished before the creation of the other, leaving no posterity behind, he does not stop to enquire how the memory of these races and their history could have come down to him. In the poetical domain of mythology a Greek was untrammelled by any such consideration. The Irish, however, took a more serious view of the matter.

(1) From the year of the world 2520 to 3500 (*Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. O'Donovan, 1851, i., p. 4, 24).

The races of Partholon, Nemed, and the Tuatha De Danann succeeded one another in Ireland like the golden race, the silver, and the bronze races in Greece. The first had disappeared on the arrival of the second, and the second had died out when the third came. The third race, the Tuatha De Danann, was subjugated by the ancestors of the modern Irish, and took shelter behind the veil of invisibility, which it no longer raises now, save under exceptional circumstances. The question naturally arises as to how any knowledge of this remote past could have come down to us, seeing that it is concerned with races from whom the actual inhabitants of the country can claim no descent, and to whom, therefore, neither their family nor their national traditions can be traced back.

The marvellous legend of Tuan Mac Cairill, Tuan, son of Cairill, provides a solution of this difficulty for the Irish, and, perhaps, for the whole Celtic race as well. There is a Christian redaction of the legend, compiled by a writer who, no doubt, wished to have this most ancient tradition of his country accepted by the clergy as a holy legend. We shall now give the tradition as it has come down to us. It is contained to our knowledge in three MSS., viz., the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, written about the year 1100; the MS. classed *Laud 610*, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, a fifteenth-century MS., and the MS. marked *H. 3, 18*, in Trinity College, Dublin, a sixteenth-century MS. (1).

II.

Saint Finnen and Tuan Mac Cairill.

Let the reader transport himself back to the middle of the sixth century. St. Finnen has just arrived in Ireland, with his celebrated Gospel, which is afterwards to be the subject of contention between him and St. Columba. We have already spoken of the copy Columba had made of this Gospel, of Finnen's anger, and the complaint he brought before King Diarmait, son of Cerball, who judged Finnen to be the rightful owner of the copy (2).

(1) *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 15, 16, incomplete; *Laud 610*, f. 102, 103; *Trin. Coll. Dub.*, H. 3., 18, p. 38, 39.

(2) Diarmait, son of Cerball, reigned from 544 to 565, according to the *Annals of Tigernach* (O'Connor, *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ii., pt. I, 139-149; Jubainville, *Introduction a l'Etude de la Litterature Celtique*, p. 161).

Finnen founded a monastery at Mag-bile, now Merville, in Donegal. One day he went with his disciples to visit a rich warrior who dwelt in the vicinity. But the warrior refused him admission to his stronghold. Then Finnen had recourse to fasting, a method which Irish law placed at the disposal of the feeble when they wished to force the strong to yield to their unarmed plaint (1).

He fasted for a whole Sunday in front of the stronghold of the mighty, ill-natured warrior, who at last yielded and opened his door to Finnen. His faith was not good, says the old writer, that is to say, he was not a Christian (2). There were still pagans in Ireland in the sixth century.

Finnen, then, having visited the warrior, returned to his monastery, bringing tidings of his new acquaintance.

"He is an excellent man," said he to his disciples; "he will come to you and comfort you, and tell you the old stories of Ireland."

On the morrow, betimes, the noble warrior comes into the priest's dwelling and greets Finnen and his disciples.

"Come with me into my solitude," said he; "you will be better there than here."

They went with him into his stronghold, and celebrated the Office for Sunday, with psalmody and preaching and the Mass.

"Who are you?" asked Finnen of his host.

"I am a man of Ulster," said he. "My name is Tuan, son of Carell; my father was son of Muredach Munderc (3). And it was he that gave me this wilderness for a heritage. But once I was called Tuan, son of Starn, son of Sera, and my father Starn was the brother of Partholon."

"Tell us the history of Ireland," said Finnen, "and all that was done in this island from the time of Partholon, son of

(1) Senchus Mor, in the Ancient Laws of Ireland, i., 112, 114, 116, 118; ii., 40, 352.

(2) "Ni-r-bu maith a-chretem ind laich" (Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 15, col. 1, 39, 40).

(3) The Annals of the Four Masters, ed. O'Donovan, i., 174, assign the year 526 to the death of Cairrell, King of Ulster, son of Muireadhach Muindercc. The year 526 of the Four Masters corresponds to the year 533 of Tigernach, and to the year 530 of the *Chronicum Scotorum*, which makes no mention of Cairrell. The Four Masters, no doubt, borrowed this personage from the legend of Tuan. Muireadhach Muinderg, King of Ulster, who died in 479 (*Ibid.*, ii., p. 1190), is no more authentic than Cairrell or Carell.

Sera (1). We will not eat with you until you tell us all the old tales we want to hear."

"It is hard," answered Tuan, "it is hard for me to speak before I have had time to meditate on the Word of God which you bring to me."

"Do not be uneasy about that," replied Finnen, but tell us, we pray you, your own adventures and the other things that were done in Ireland."

Then Tuan began as follows:—

III.

*The Primitive History of Ireland, according to Tuan
Mac Cairill.*

"There have been five invasions of Ireland up to the present. Before the Deluge no one came hither, nor after the Deluge, until three hundred and twelve years had gone by."

Another text makes Tuan say a thousand and two years (2). It is quite clear that this legend, in its most ancient form, made no mention of the Deluge, and that the two dates added as an after stroke are the expression of two different chronological systems, each foreign to Celtic mythology. To return to Tuan's story, however.

"Then Partholon, son of Sera, took Ireland. He was an exile; twenty-four men came with him, each with his wife, and his companions were no wiser one than the other (3). They settled in Ireland until there were five thousand of their race. Between two Sundays a mortality came upon them, and they all perished, save one man alone. For there never is a slaughter that one man does not come out of to tell the tale of it. I am that man. Then I was alone, and I went from stronghold to stronghold, from rock to rock, seeking a shelter from the wolves. For

(1) Sera appears to have had two sons: Partholon, and Starn the father of Tuan.

(2) "Coic gabala em, ol se, ro-gabad Eriu [co-sind-amsir-si, ocus ni-r-gabad rian-]dilind, ocus ni-s-ragbad, iar n-[d]ilind co-ro-chatea di bliadain dec ar tri cetaib." This is the text of the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 115, col. 2, lines 19-21, except the words in brackets, which are taken from the MSS. Laud 610 and H. 3, 18. The reading "a thousand and two years," *da bliadain ar mile*, is that of the MS. H. 3, 18.

(3) This foolishness is in Hesiod the distinctive characteristic of the silver race ("Works and Days," 130-134).

twenty-two years there was no other inhabitant in Ireland save me alone. I fell into decrepitude, and reached extreme old age. I dwelt among the rocks and in waste places; but I could not move about any longer, and the caves were a place of refuge for me.

"Then Nemed, son of Agnoman, took possession of Ireland. He was my father's brother (1). I saw him from the cliffs and kept avoiding him (2). I was long-haired, clawed, decrepit, grey, naked, wretched, miserable. Then one evening I fell asleep, and when I awoke again on the morrow I was changed into a stag. I was young again and glad of heart. Then I sang of the coming of Nemed and of his race, and of my own transformation."

He says towards the end of his poem:

"They are coming towards me, O gentle Lord, the tribe of Nemed, Agnoman's son. Mighty warriors they are, and they will give me cruel wounds in battle. But two horns, with three score points, are arranged upon my head; I have put on a new form, a skin rough and gray. Victory and joy are easy to me: a little while ago and I was weak and defenceless" (3).

"When I had taken the shape of this animal I was the leader of the herds of Ireland, and whithersoever I went great herds of stags gathered around me. And thus was my life in the days of Nemed and his descendants.

"When Nemed came with his companions into Ireland, this was the manner of it. They came in a fleet of thirty-four barques, and in each barque thirty persons. They went astray on the sea for a year and a-half, and then their ships foundered, and they perished almost all of them of hunger and thirst (4).

(1) In the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 15, col. 2, line 37, and in the MS. *Laud 610*, fol. 102, v., col. 1, Nemed is the brother of Tuan's father. I think this is a mistake of the transcriber, who wrote *brathair*, the nominative, instead of *brathar*, the genitive.

(2) The *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 15, col. 2, line 38, uses the first person singular of the present indicative, *atachim*, also written *ataciim* in the MS. H. 3, 18, p. 38, col. 1, line 1. This is a faulty transcription of a more ancient *at-a-chinn*, the secondary present of the verb *alchin*. *Attacin*, with a single *n*, is found in the MS. *Laud 610*, fol. 102, v., col. 1.

(3) In the text of the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 16, col. 1, the words "is-and-sin ro-radius-[s]a na-briathra-sa, sis" are followed by a poem in six quatrains. We give the translation of the last two.

(4) According to the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 16, col. 1, line 21, and the MS. H. 3, 18, p. 38, col. 1, this catastrophe took place in the Caspian Sea; but this relatively recent addition is not found in the MS. *Laud 610*.

Nine only escaped: Nemed, together with four men and four women. These were the nine persons that landed in Ireland. They had many children, and their number increased until there were four thousand and thirty men of them, and four thousand and thirty women. Then they all died.

"But I fell again into decrepitude and reached extreme old age. Once I was standing at the mouth of my cave—I still remember it—and I know that my body changed into another form—I was a wild boar. And I sang this song about it:

"To-day I am a boar . . . a king . . . a mighty one, great victories are before me. Time was when I sat in the assembly that gave the judgment of Partholon. It was sung, and all praised the melody. How pleasant was the strain of my brilliant judgment! how pleasant to the comely young women! My chariot went along in majesty and in beauty. My voice was grave and sweet. . . . My step swift and firm in battle. . . . My face was full of charm. . . . To-day, lo! I am changed into a black boar.'

"That is what I said. Yes, of a surety, I was a wild boar. Then I became young again, and was glad. I was king of the boar-herds of Ireland, and, faithful to my custom, I went the round of my abode when I returned into the land of Ulster, at the time old age and wretchedness came upon me. For it was always there that my transformation took place, and that is why I went back thither to await the renewal of my body.

"Then Semion, son of Stariat, settled in this island. From him are descended the Fir Domnan, and the Fir Bolg, and the Galiuin (1). And they possessed Ireland for a time.

"Then decrepitude came upon me again and extreme old age, and I was sad and no longer able to do what I did before. I took up my abode in dark caves and among hidden rocks, and I was all alone. Then I went into my house, as I had always done before. I remembered all the shapes I had taken. I fasted for three days, as my wont was before each transformation: this I had forgotten to tell you.

fol. 102, v., col. 2, where the corresponding passage begins at the first line. We know that in the geography of Strabo the Caspian Sea flows into the ocean (Strabo, ii., chap. v., 18, ed. Didot-Muller and Deubner, p. 100, Bk. xi., chap 7; same edition, p. 434.

(1) Here we follow the text of the Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 16, col. 2, lines 5-7. The name of the Galiuin has been suppressed in the MSS. H. 3, 18, p. 38, col. 2, and Laud 610, fol. 102, v., col. 2. These MSS. assign the origin of the Galiuin to a later period.

"At the end of these three days my strength had all gone out of me. Then I was changed into a great vulture, or, to say it better, into a great eagle of the sea. My mind was glad again. I was able for all things. I was eager and lusty. I flew all over Ireland, and everything that took place there I knew. Thereupon I sang this song :

"A vulture to-day, a boar yesterday. . . . God who loves me has shapen me thus. . . . At first I lived among herds of wild boars. Behold me to-day amidst birds. . . . By a wonderful decree of the Divine mercy upon me and the race of Nemed, that race is now given over to the power of demons, but I, I am in God's company."

Here we shall interrupt Tuan Mac Cairill for an instant, to draw attention to the pious forms in which the mediæval author clothed the legend, in order to ensure its acceptance by the Christian clergy. Tuan, changed into a vulture, believes in the true God, whereas the men of Ireland are given over to the power of the devil, and live in paganism. The mediæval mind in Ireland must have been ill-formed to reject such an edifying tale as this in the name of Christianity. But let us return to our hero and hear the end of the tale he relates to St. Finnen and his holy companions.

"Beothach, son of Iarbonel the prophet, seized this island, having overcome the races that dwelt on it. From Beothach and Iarbonel are descended the Tuatha De [Danann], gods and false gods, from whom everyone knows the Irish men of learning are sprung. It is likely they came into Ireland from heaven, hence their knowledge and the excellence of their teaching. As for me, I remained for a long time in the shape of a vulture, and I was still living in that form when the last of all the races that took Ireland came. They were the sons of Mil that took this island by force from the Tuatha De Danann. But I kept the vulture's shape until I once found myself in the hollow of a tree by a river. I fasted there for nine days; then sleep fell upon me, and I was changed into a salmon. Then God put me into a river to live there. I was well there; I was vigorous and content. My swimming was good, and for a long time I escaped from perils, from the nets of the fishermen, from the vulture's claws, from the spears which the huntsmen cast at me to wound me.

"One day, however, God, my protector, thought it meet to put an end to my happiness. The beasts were pursuing me: there was no pool where there was not a fisherman with his net.

One of them caught me, and took me to the wife of Carell, King of the country. I remember it well. The man put me on a grill. The woman desired me, and ate me by herself, whole, so that I passed into her womb. I remember the time I was in the womb of the wife of Carell. I have kept the memory of all that was said in the house and all that was done in Ireland at that time.

"I have not forgotten either, how [being a little child] speech came to me, as it comes to all men. I knew all that took place in Ireland. I was a prophet, and they gave me a name—the name of Tuan son of Carell. It was then that Patrick came into Ireland, bringing the Faith with him. A great number were converted. They baptised me, and I believed in the great and only King of all things, the Creator of the world."

Tuan ended. The auditors thanked him. Finnen and his companions passed with him into the feast room. They remained there a whole week talking with him. All the ancient history of Ireland, all the old genealogies come from Tuan, son of Carell. Before Finnen and his companions, Patrick had already talked with Tuan son of Carell, who told him the same tales. After St. Patrick, Columba conversed with Tuan, who told him the same things also. And when Tuan told these tales to Finnen there was a crowd of witnesses. All of them were Irish. We cannot, therefore, dispute their veracity, nor the accuracy of the story we reproduce after them

IV.

The Legend of Tuan and Chronology. Modifications due to Christian Influence.

How long did Tuan live under these different forms? Until he assumed human shape for the second time, we find that he had lived in all three hundred and twenty years. The calculation is arrived at as follows:—

Tuan was a man the first time for	...	100 years
He lived as a stag ... ..	...	80 "
He lived as a boar ... ..	...	20 "
He lived as a vulture or eagle ...	...	100 "
He lived as a fish ... ..	...	20 "
		<hr/>
Total	...	320 years.

The text that furnishes us with these figures leaves off when Tuan is eaten by the queen, and ceases to be a fish. Tuan, it adds, lived in human shape until the time of Finnen, son of Ua Fiatach (1). No figure is given. To ascertain the total number of Tuan's years, one must then find the duration of his last period, when, assuming a human form for the second time, he ceased to be the son of Starn, and became the son of Carell.

The answer to this question has not always been quite the same. It was a Christian idea to make Tuan live down to the time of St. Finnen, that is to the sixth century of the present era. The Irish Christians thought it advisable to authenticate their mythological traditions by placing them under the patronage of St. Finnen, St. Patrick, and St. Columba. In pagan times there was no necessity to bring Tuan's life down to such a late period.

The creation of this Tuan had but one object, namely, to explain how it was that the history of three races that had formerly colonised Ireland, and disappeared from it, leaving no descendants behind, could have come down to the actual inhabitants. These races were those of Partholon, Nemed, and the Tuatha De Danann. During his first human existence Tuan was the contemporary of the "family" of Partholon, and he saw the coming of Nemed. As a stag he witnessed the destruction of Nemed's race, and as an eagle or vulture he saw the Tuatha De Danann obtain the sovereignty of Ireland.

By means of his various transformations, Tuan was enabled to witness the arrival and disappearance of the three races that had preceded the Milesians, or the historic inhabitants, in Ireland, and this without violating any of the ordinary laws of life, or any supernatural phenomena other than his own metamorphoses. He survived these races. And restored to human form again in the time of the Milesians, the ancestors of the actual race, he told them the story of these primitive colonisations, giving them details even as to the origin of the Fir Bolg, Fir Domnan, and Fir Galioin, their adversaries in the heroic period, he being a stag when they arrived on the island.

(1) "Tuan fuit in forma viri centum annis in Heri[nn] iar Fintan ; fiche bliadna in forma porci, lxxx. anni[s] in forma cervi, centum anni[s] in forma aquilæ, xx. bliadan fo-lind in forma pi[s]cis, iterum in forma hominis co-sentaith co haimsir Finnio mic hui Fhiatach" (MS. Laud 610, fol. 103 r, col. 2, Bodleian, Oxford). We shall see later on the explanation of the words *iar Fintan*, after Fintan, which refer to the legend of Cessair.

These old tales, once in the possession of the Milesian race, were transmitted from father to son, and from *file* to *file*, with the whole body of the national traditions. In the oldest redaction of the legend, Tuan's second existence in human form, lasted about an ordinary lifetime; to prolong it beyond the natural limits would have been needless and at variance with the fundamental elements of the tale, which does not admit prodigies of this nature.

But when it was thought advisable to place this wonderful pagan legend under the protection of the greatest and most venerated saints of Irish Christendom, in order to secure its acceptance by the clergy, the primitive character of the tale had to be altered, and a new element introduced which it did not contain before. Thenceforth it was admitted that Tuan, when he assumed human form for the second time, lived in that state for many hundreds of years.

"We read in the Irish tales," writes Giraldus Cambrensis, "that Tuan far surpassed all the patriarchs of the Bible in years. However incredible or questionable it might seem, he reached the age of fifteen hundred years" (1). This miracle of longevity was only imagined in Ireland after a knowledge of the book of Genesis had been acquired. Methusaleh, the oldest of the patriarchs, died at the age of nine hundred and sixty-nine; Tuan lived for four hundred and thirty-one years more. Here the Irish show a superiority over the rest of the world. Now, this detail in the legend of Tuan could have been imagined only by someone who had read the Bible. But the transformations which Tuan is said to have undergone have quite a different literary origin.

V.

The Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill in its Primitive Form is of Pagan Origin.

The belief in metamorphosis, which tends to explain the wonderful knowledge possessed by certain individuals, is a Celtic conception we also find in Wales. There Taliesin relates that he was an eagle (2). The idea that the soul could in this

(1) Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hibernica*, iii., 2, Dimock's ed. v., p. 142. Instead of Tuanus, the name given is Ruanus, a faithful reproduction of an error already found in the MSS. of Giraldus Cambrensis.

(2) "Bum eryr," *Kad Godeu*, v. 13, in Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, ii., p. 137.

world successively clothe itself in various physical forms was the natural outcome of a Celtic doctrine well known to the ancients. It was held that the dead, after their lifeless body had been laid in the tomb, found a new living body in the mysterious country they went to inhabit, under the rule of the puissant King of the Dead (1).

It was belief in this universal transmigration of souls that inspired faith in the strange transformations of Tuan and Taliesin. The legend of Tuan has thus its roots in one of the fundamental principles of Celtic pagan theology. Moreover, he was not the only person in Ireland whose soul twice entered into the body of man and was twice born. Mongan, King of Ulster at the beginning of the sixth century, was identical with the celebrated Find, who died two hundred years before the birth of Mongan: the soul of the illustrious warrior having returned from the Land of the Dead to enter into a new body (2).

It was the Celtic belief, therefore, that the soul survived the body, and might afterwards return to this world and assume a new body; and this belief explains the wonderful transmigrations or metamorphoses which are one of the most interesting features in the legend of Tuan Mac Cairill (3).

(1) "Imprimis hoc volunt persuadere [druides], non interire animas, sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios" (Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, vi., cap. 14, 5.

. . . Vobis auctoribus umbræ
Non tacitas Erebi sedes Ditisque profundi
Pallida regna petunt : regit idem spiritus artus
Orbe alio.

(Lucan, *Pharsalia*, Bk. i., ch. 5, 454-457).

(2) The legend of Mongan is given at end of chapter xiv.

(3) It was Mr. W. M. Hennessy who first drew my attention to this document, and I am indebted to him for the rendering of some of the more difficult passages.

CHAPTER IV.—Cessair, the Counterpart of Partholon. Fintan, the Counterpart of Tuan Mac Cairill.

1. Comparison of the Legend of Partholon and Tuan with that of Cessair and Fintan.—2. Date of Invention of the Legend of Cessair and Fintan.—3. Giraldus Cambrensis and the Irish Scholars of the Seventeenth Century on Cessair; Opinion of Thomas Moore.—4. Why and how Cessair came into Ireland.—5. History of Cessair and her Companions after their arrival in Ireland.—6. The Poems of Fintan.—7. Fintan: (a) at the time of the First Mythological Battle of Mag Tured; (b) in the Reign of Diarmait Mac Cerbaill, Sixth Century, A.D.—8. The three Counterparts of Fintan; St. Cailen his Pupil; Conclusion.

I.

Comparison of the Legend of Partholon and Tuan with that of Cessair and Fintan.

Among the Irish bardic remains, as they have come down to us, we find a number of comparatively modern pieces, the stories of which have been taken from older legends; by changing the names and altering some of the accessories the writer has succeeded in communicating all the charm of novelty to antique compositions which had already begun to weary his auditors. Almost all literatures, particularly epic literatures, afford us numerous examples of this process.

The Legend of Cessair, with which the Irish chronologists begin the history of Ireland, placing it before that of Partholon, is the work of a Christian writer, composed in all probability in the latter part of the tenth century, under the joint inspiration of the Book of Genesis and the legend of Partholon. Cessair is a granddaughter of Noah; she landed in Ireland forty days before the Deluge, and perished there in the waters, along with her companions. One of them, however, escaped. This was Fintan, who, by an unparalleled miracle, lived for several thousand years, and is said to have been a witness in a lawsuit that took place in the sixth century of the present era.

Fintan is a counterpart of Tuan; he copies him, but is in every way his superior. He has undergone no dishonourable metamorphoses; his soul has not taken up its abode in the bodies of animals, and whereas Tuan lived for fifteen hundred years only, the life of Fintan is prolonged for five thousand

years. Ireland, which is proud of Tuan, may well boast of having been inhabited by such a marvellous being as Fintan.

As for Cessair, she has the same advantage over Partholon that women always have over the sterner sex, whose lives they are wont to adorn. At the time of her literary conception she had that irresistible advantage of novelty over Partholon which is identical with the charm of youth; and, at the same time, by a singular contradiction, she adds three hundred years to the history of Ireland, thus contributing a fresh laurel to the Irish national pride.

Cessair is said to have come into Ireland three hundred years before Partholon, and forty days before the Deluge. Few other countries can trace their history back to so remote a period.

II.

Date of Invention of the Legend of Cessair and Fintan.

At the commencement of the tenth century Cessair had not yet been invented. Nennius, who wrote about the middle of this century, had never heard of Cessair. The first to arrive in Ireland, he says, was Partholon (1). This is also what we find in the legend of Tuan Mac Cairill, who says, "There were five invasions of Ireland up to the present. No one inhabited Ireland before the Deluge" (2).

By some oversight, the author of the *Leabhar Gabhala*, which begins the history of Ireland with the legend of Cessair, opens the second section of his book, devoted to Partholon, with the words it was customary to prefix to the legend of that mythic hero in Christian times, from the sixth to the tenth century, before the adventures of Cessair were imagined, namely, "No one of the race of Adam inhabited Ireland before

(1) "Primus autem venit Partholon us" (Appendix ad Opera, ed. Angelo Maio, Rome, 1871, p. 98. The Irish translator of Nennius interprets this passage like ourselves: "Ceid fear do gab Eirind i Parrtalon"—"The first man that inhabited Ireland, that is Partholon" (Todd, the Irish version of the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius, p. 42).

(2) The words, *ni-r-gabad rian dilind*, "it was not inhabited before the Deluge," have been passed over by the scribe to whom we owe the text of this legend preserved in the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 15, col. 2; but we find them in the MS. of the Bodleian at Oxford, Laud 610, fol. 102, v., col. 1 and in the MS. in Trinity College, Dublin, H. 3, 18, p. 38, col. 1.

the Deluge" (1). Yet, a little higher up the same author has written, "Cessair, daughter of Bith, son of Noah, took possession of Ireland forty days before the Deluge" (2). The contradiction evidently escaped his notice.

The earliest writer that makes mention of Cessair is Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 984 (3). There is a copy of his poem in the *Leabhar Gabhala*, the prose account of which contains several details not found in the poem.

The legend of Cessair, as Eochaid gives it in the *Leabhar Gabhala*, presents a striking resemblance to that of Banba in the "Cin Droma Snechta," an eleventh-century MS., which is now lost (4). Banba, according to this tale, was the name of a woman who came into Ireland before the Deluge. Now, *Banba* is one of the names of Ireland, usually called *Eriu* in the old texts, genitive *Ereinn* or *Erend*.

This explains why it was that the unknown writer who compiled the Irish annals called the "Chronicum Scotorum," about the middle of the twelfth century, wrote on the first page of his work, that in the year of the world 1599, there came into Hibernia a daughter of the Greeks called Eriu, Banba, or Cesar (5). But, he adds, the ancient historians of Ireland do not make mention of her (6). It is clear that he had before him the same authorities as Nennius: writers anterior to Eochaid Ua Flainn, who began the history of Ireland with Partholon.

(1) "Ni ro gab nech tra do sil Adaim Erind rian dilind" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 5, col. 1, line 4).

(2) "Ro-s-gab iarum Cessair, ingen Betha maic Noe, ut *prædiximus*, cethorcha laa rian dilind" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 2, lines 27, 28). The phrase ut *prædiximus*, refers to the same page, col. 1, line 50: "Rogab em Cessair ingen Betha maic Noe cethorcha la rian dilind." The last phrase belongs to the preface of the *Leabhar Gabhala*, whereas the first quotation is from the text itself.

(3) Book of Leinster, p. 5, col. 2, line 6, seq.

(4) Book of Ballymote, fol. 12, A, cited by O'Curry, *Manuscript Materials*, p. 13; Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, p. 148. *Cin dromma snechta* means the "vellum book with the back of snow," that is, covered with a white skin.

(5) Hennessy, *Chronicum Scotorum*, p. 2. This edition gives *Berba* for *Banba*, following the reading of the MS. it is based upon; but this reading is inaccurate.

(6) "Hoc non narrant antiquarii Scotorum" (*Ibid.*).

III.

Giraldus Cambrensis and the Irish Scholars of the Seventeenth Century on Cessair. Opinion of Thomas Moore.

At the end of the twelfth century the critical scepticism displayed by the author of the *Chronicum Scotorum* had gone out of fashion. Giraldus Cambrensis was then writing his *Topographia Hibernica*, and his point of view is just the opposite of that taken by the author of the *Chronicum Scotorum*. "According to the most ancient histories of Ireland," writes Giraldus, "Cæsara, the granddaughter of Noah, hearing that the Deluge was about to take place, resolved to put out to sea and seek refuge in the most distant isles of the West, which no one as yet inhabited; for she hoped that in some place where sin had not yet been committed, God would not punish sin by the Deluge" (1). All the same, Giraldus Cambrensis had some doubts about this antediluvian colonisation. "The Deluge," he says, "destroyed almost everything. How, then, could the memory of Cæsara and the things that befel her have been preserved? It would seem there is room for doubt here. But this is the concern of those that first wrote the tale. What I have undertaken is to relate the history, and not to demolish it. Perhaps an inscription upon stone, or on a brick, or some other material, preserved the memory of these antique events. Thus," he adds, "music, invented before the Deluge by Jubal, was preserved by two inscriptions written by Jubal himself, one on marble, the other on brick" (2). Giraldus Cambrensis does not know, or affects not to know, that Fintan, one of Cessair's companions, escaped from the Deluge, and, thanks to a long life of five thousand years, could in the fifth and sixth centuries of the present era testify to the authenticity of tales referring to the most remote periods of Irish history. The Four Masters accordingly, who bring their annals down to the year 1636, have no hesitation in beginning the history of Ireland with the arrival of *Cessair*, forty days before the Deluge, which took place,

(1) Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hibernica*, Dist. iii., chap. i, ed. Dimock, v., p. 139.

(2) *Ibid*, chap. i, 13, ed. Dimock, v., pp. 140-159.

according to them, following the chronology of St. Jerome, in the year of the world 2242, or 3451 B.C. (1).

Keating is less confident. After relating the legend of Cessair, he says that he only puts it down because he found it written in old books; but he does not understand how it could have been transmitted to the people who came into Ireland after the Deluge. He gives two possible explanations of it, however. First, that either the she-demons, ærial beings called fairies, who were their loves in pagan times, gave them the accounts (2); or it may be that the history was graven on flags of stone, and read after the Deluge by the new inhabitants. As for Fintan, who lived after the Deluge, he adds, we cannot admit that he is the same that was alive before it. We have the authority of Scripture that the whole human race perished in the Flood, save eight persons alone, and it is evident that Fintan was not one of these (3). Keating has founded a school, and the poet Moore, the best known of modern writers on Irish history, declares that "Cesara is allowed on all hands to have been a purely fabulous personage" (4).

The interesting feature in this legend is that the date of it has been fixed with almost rigorous exactness. It was conceived in the second half of the eleventh century; and in reading it we see the method adopted in Ireland to develop and revive the old Celtic legend, by substituting Christian and biblical traditions for what in the old tale was too deeply impressed with the doctrines of Celtic paganism.

IV.

Why and How Cessair came into Ireland.

Cessair is the daughter of Bith, and Bith is one of the sons of Noah. Moses, in the book of Genesis, has forgotten to mention the names of Bith and Cessair. When Noah was building the Ark, Bith sent a messenger to him asking that a

(1) O'Donovan, *Annals of the Four Masters*, 1851, i., p. 2.

(2) "Acht munab iad na deamhuin aerda, do bhiodh i n-a leann-anuibh sithe aca, thug dhoibh iad re linn a bheith i n-a bpaganaighibh dhoibh"—"Unless they were the air demons, who used to be with them as fairy lovers during the time they were pagans, that gave the accounts to them" (Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, p. 154).

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) Thomas Moore, *History of Ireland*, 1835, vol. i., p. 75.

chamber might be set apart in it for him and his daughter Cessair. Noah refused (1). And he said to Cessair: "Go forth unto the most western borders of the world, for the Flood will assuredly not come there" (2).

If a modern account is true, Cessair had abandoned the worship of the true God, the God of Noah, for the worship of an idol; and it was this idol that counselled her to put to sea and seek some place where she would be out of reach of the Flood (3). Cessair set out with three ships, and after wandering over the sea for seven years and a quarter, they took harbour in Ireland, at Dun nam-Barc, in the district of Corco Duibne, now Corca Guiny (4). Two of the ships foundered and all on board perished. Only those that were on board the third ship came to land, safe and sound. These were Cessair, Bith, her father, two other men, by name Ladru and Fintan, and fifty maidens.

V.

History of Cessair and her Companions after their Arrival in Ireland.

The first thing the three men did was to divide the women among them. Fintan related it all in a poem of sixteen verses, in which he gives the names of the women in each of the three lots. His own contained eighteen women, in addition to Cessair. Bith and Ladru had to be contented each with sixteen women (5).

After they had been forty days in Ireland the Deluge came. And they all perished in the waters: Ladru, on the mountain which is called after his name, Ard Ladran; Bith, on the mountain of Sliab Betha, to which he gave his name, and Cessair in the place which was named Cuil Cesra, because of

(1) Keating, ed. 1811, p. 150.

(2) Leabhar Gabhala, Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 2, lines 30, 31.

(3) Keating, History of Ireland, ed. 1811, p. 150.

(4) Leabhar Gabhala, Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 2, lines 31-33. According to O'Donovan, Four Masters, i., p. 3, note c, Dun na m-barc is the same place as Dunamarc in Corca Luighe, County Cork, and not Kerry. It is in Keating's account that we find the length of the voyage, seven years and a quarter, ed. 1811, p. 152.

(5) This poem is contained in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 2, and p. 5, col. 1.

her (1). Cessair was the last to die, along with the fifty maidens that had gathered round her (2). Fintan alone escaped the disaster which had deprived his two companions of life, and the fifty and one women of his company. He lived, they say, until the seventh year of King Diarmait Mac Cerbaill (3), that is, if we admit the chronology of the *Chronicum Scotorum*, down to the year 551 of the present era.

VI.

The Poems of Fintan.

During this long period of time he witnessed many events that took place on the island. Poems recording the most ancient periods of Irish history are ascribed to him. The following is a translation of one of the principal :

“ If you enquire of me concerning Ireland, I know and can relate gladly all the invasions which took place there from the beginning of the delightful world. Out of the East came Cessair, a woman, daughter of Bith, with her fifty maidens, with her three men. The Flood came upon Bith on his mountain without mystery; Ladru at Ard Ladran; Cessair at Cuil Cesra. As for me, for the space of a year, beneath the rapid Flood, on the height of the mighty wave, I enjoyed sleep which was exceeding good. Then, in Ireland here, I found my way above the waters until Partholon came out of the East, from the land of the Greeks. Then, in Ireland here, I enjoyed rest; Ireland was void until the son of Agnoman came, Nemed, with the

(1) O'Donovan's great knowledge enabled him to discover the places where these first inhabitants of Ireland perished. Ard Ladran was situated on the sea coast in the western part of County Wexford, in Leinster; Sliab Betha, now Slieve Beagh, is a mountain situated on the border of the Counties Fermanagh and Monaghan. The cairn under which Bith was buried is still to be seen there. Cuil Cesra, the grave of Cessair, was on the banks of the Boyne (Annals of the Four Masters, 1851, i., p. 3, notes d, f, g, and p. 4, h).

(2) In a poem ascribed to Fintan, Bith, Ladru, and Cessair perish in the waters of the Flood (Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 2, lines 8, 9). A more recent account, preserved by Keating (ed. 1811, p. 154), makes them all die before the Deluge.

(3) Leabhar Gabhala, Bk. of Leinster, p. 12, col. 1, lines 37-39. According to this text Fintan was born only seven years before the Deluge, so that he had already nineteen wives at that tender age. Perhaps we should read seventeen years.

delightful manners (1). The Fir Bolg and the Fir Galian came a long time after, and the Fir Domnan also; they landed at Eris (2), in the West. Then came the Tuatha De Danann in their hood of mist. I lived with them for a long time, though their age is far removed. After that came the sons of Mile out of Spain and the South. I lived with them; mighty were their battles. I had come to a great age, I do not conceal it, when the pure faith was sent to me by the king of the Cloudy Heaven. I am the fair Fintan, son of Bochra; I proclaim it aloud. Since the Flood came here I am a great personage in Ireland" (3).

Poems are also attributed to Fintan on the division of Ireland into five great provinces (4); on the smaller divisions or cantreds, called *Triocha-ced* (5); on the question as to who were the first to introduce certain kinds of animals, &c., into Ireland (6). One of the most curious of these relates the conversation that took place one day between Fintan and an old eagle on Achill Island on the ancient history of Ireland (7).

VII.

Fintan : (a) at the Time of the First Mythological Battle of Mag Tured; (b) in the Reign of Diarmait Mac Cerbaill, Sixth Century A.D.

The legend of Fintan had already arisen when the first of the two Battles of Mag Tured (Moytura) was conceived, the

(1) *Niamda a gnas*, instead of *nimtha gnas*, according to the Bk. of Leinster.

(2) Eris, in the County Mayo.

(3) Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 2, lines 4-25; Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 12, r., col. 2; Bk. of Lecan, fol. 271, v., col. 1; Bk. of Fermoy, fol. 4, r., col. 2, after Todd, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Irish Manuscripts Series, pt. 1, 1870, p. 6. A version of this document, accompanied by an English translation, was published in the Transactions of the Ossianic Society, v., pp. 244-249. Unfortunately, the author did not make use of the best MS.

(4) Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 2, line 33.

(5) Trinity College, Dublin, MS. H. 3, 18, p. 45, line 14, seq.; Stowe MSS., Nos. 16-31, in O'Conor's *Bibliotheca Manuscripta Stowensis*, p. 91, 146; O'Curry, *Cath Mhuighe Leana*, 106-109; British Museum, Egerton MS., No. 118, p. 110.

(6) Egerton MS., British Museum, No. 138, p. 99.

(7) *Ibid.*, No. 1782, fol. 47, r., Bk. of Fermoy, fol. 99, v., col. 1, cited by Todd, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Irish Manuscripts Series, pt. 1, p. 43; Royal Irish Academy MS., No. 23, D. 5, formerly 46, 4, p. 235.

second in date of composition, and in which the Fir Bolg were overthrown by the Tuatha De Danann. Before the first Battle of Mag Tured, the Fir Bolg took counsel of Fintan, upon whose great experience they set much store. Some of Fintan's sons took part in the battle and lost their lives in it (1).

Finally, about the middle of the sixth century of the present era, Fintan was summoned as a witness in a lawsuit between King Diarmait, son of Cerbaill, and the descendants of King Niall of the Nine Hostages, then established in the little province of Mide, which now forms the Counties of Meath and Westmeath. The latter complained of the excessive inroads which the royal domain of Tara, situated in the County Meath, was making upon their territories. King Diarmait asked them if they could bring forward any witnesses who could prove that the royal domain was at any time less extensive than at present. They sought out nine of the oldest and wisest men in the land, among them being Cennfaelad, then Archbishop of Armagh, and Tuan Mac Cairill, the famous companion of Partholon, and the only survivor of his race. Five of them appeared before the King, but they declined to give their opinion on the matter until their senior had been consulted, and he was Fintan, son of Bochra, the companion of the antediluvian Cessair, far superior to them all, both in years and in wisdom. They sent for Fintan, who was then living at Dun Tulcha in the County Kerry. Fintan agreed to come. He arrived before the palace with a numerous escort. Nine bodies of men went before him and as many behind him, and these were his descendants. The king and his people received him with great kindness, and after he had rested a little, he told them his marvellous history, and that of Tara from its foundation. His auditors asked him to give them some proof of his memory. "Right willingly," said Fintan. "I passed one day through a wood in West Munster; I brought home with me a red berry of the yew tree, which I planted in the vegetable garden of my mansion, and it grew there until it was as tall as a man. I then took it out of the garden and I planted it in the green lawn of my mansion, and it grew in the centre of that lawn until a hundred champions could fit under its foliage, and find shelter there from wind, and rain, and cold, and heat. I remained so and my yew remained so, spending our time alike, until at last all its leaves fell off from

(1) MS. H. 3, 17, Trinity College, Dublin, cited in O'Curry's *Manners and Customs*, i., p. cccclviii., note iii. pp. 59, 60.

decay. When afterwards I thought of turning it to some profit, I went to it and cut it from its stem, and I made from it seven vats, seven keeves, and seven stans, and seven churns, and seven pitchers, and seven milans (*i.e.*, an *urna*), and seven medars, with hoops for all. I remained still with my yew vessels until their hoops all fell off from decay and old age. After this I re-made them, but could only get a keeve out of the vat, and a stan out of the keeve, and a mug out of the stan, and a cilorn (pitcher) out of the mug, and a milan out of the cilorn, and a medar out of the milan, and I leave it to Almighty God that I do not know where their dust is now, after their dissolution with me from decay."

There is no MS. of this legend anterior to the fourteenth century (1). But, as far as the chief points are concerned, it existed at least three centuries before that, for reference is made to it in the *Leabhar Gabhala* or Book of Invasions, which appears to date back to the eleventh century (2).

VIII.

The Three Counterparts of Fintan. St. Caillin his Pupil. Conclusion.

Theologians found it difficult to accept the account of this extraordinary being who escaped the Deluge, and yet had not entered into the Ark. But there were others bold enough to assert that Fintan was not the only one who had had this good fortune.

(1) The principal MS. appears to be the one classed H. 2, 16, in Trinity College, Dublin. The piece in question is to be found in cols. 740-749. It begins with the words, *Incipit do sui[diu]gadh tellaich Temra*. O'Curry has analysed some portions of it and translated others in his *Manners and Customs*, iii., 59-62; and he has given an extract of the original text in the same volume, p. 242. See also the MS. Laud 610, fol. 57, v., in the Bodleian at Oxford, and the copy of the Bk. of Leinster made by Joseph O'Longan in the Royal Irish Academy, 3, q., formerly 39, 6, fol. 132-134. Finally, these texts should be compared with the fragment of the *Diin-senchus* relating to Tara, contained in Petrie's *History and Antiquities of Tara Hill*, pp. 129-132. . . . I have adopted O'Curry's rendering of the above passage (Tr.).

(2) Bk. of Leinster, p. 12, col. 1, lines 36-40. The author of the *Leabhar Gabhala* relies upon the authority of Fintan for establishing the authenticity of the account giving the names of the thirty and six chiefs who commanded the Goidels on their arrival in Ireland, and he states that Fintan lived until the seventh year of the reign of Diarmait. This is the time that Fintan gave his evidence before the assembly of Tara.

There are four cardinal points they affirm: the East and the West, the North and the South. Now, each of these has had its man. There were four men appointed to record all the wonderful events that had taken place in the world. Two of them were born before the Deluge and escaped from the waters, namely, Fintan, son of Bochra, son of Lamech, whose duty was to preserve the histories of Spain and Ireland, or the Western world, and who lived for five thousand five hundred and fifty years, fifty before the Deluge, and five thousand five hundred after; and Fors, son of Electra, son of Seth, son of Adam. It fell to his lot to record the events that happened in the East; he lived five thousand years, and died at Jerusalem in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, the year in which Christ was born. The other two are a grandson of Japhet, and a great-grandson of Shem. The first, whose mission was to do the Northern world, died on the banks of the Araxus in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, when he had lived four thousand years. The other, who was entrusted with the South, died in Corsica, when Cormac, son of Art, was High King of Ireland, that is, in the second century of the present era. This audacious legend was transcribed into the *Leabhar na hUidhre* about the year 1100 (1).

Later on, a more cautious writer, without removing Fintan's name from the list of celebrated Irishmen, or expunging the legend of Cessair from the annals of Ireland, has made Fintan the master of St. Caillin, who received instruction from him for the space of a hundred years. On Fintan's advice he went to Rome to complete his studies, and stayed there for two hundred years. He returned into Ireland in the time of St. Patrick, and then an angel, sent by Christ, revealed to him the history of Ireland from the coming of Cessair. Caillin lived until the time of Diarmait, when he foretold the names of the kings that would reign in Ireland from the death of Diarmait to the end of the world and the Judgment Day.

This curious work was written towards the end of the thirteenth century (2). In it we have the last development of

(1) *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 120, col. 2.

(2) The Bk. of Fenagh in Irish and English, originally compiled by St. Caillin, Archbishop, Abbot, and Founder of Fenagh, *alias* Dunbally of Moy Reim, tempore sancti Patricii, with the Contractions resolved and, as far as possible, the Original Text restored, indexed, and copiously annotated by W. M. Hennessy, M.R.I.A., and done into English by D. H. Kelly, M.R.I.A., Dublin, 1875

the legend of Fintan. This legend, like that of Cessair, of which it is an accessory, does not belong to the Mythological Cycle; they are the inventions of Christian Ireland. But their interest lies in the fact of their being inspired by the legends of Partholon and Tuan Mac Cairill, in which a stratum of Celtic mythology is clearly apparent, notwithstanding the accessory ornaments and learned additions by which the Irish imagination altered and developed it in Christian times. We have established that, in all probability, the adventures of Cessair and Fintan were conceived about the end of the tenth century. The date of this new composition, approaching as it does the time when the Irish were beginning to get the upper hand of their Scandinavian conquerors, is as worthy of attention as the processes by which the story, whose starting point is Celtic, first took shape and developed.

CHAPTER V.—Emigration of Nemed and the Slaughter of Conann's Tower.

- i. Origin of Nemed; his Arrival in Ireland.—2. Reign of Nemed in Ireland; his Early Relations with the Fomorians.—3. The Fomorians; Divers Texts Concerning Them.—4. The Counterpart of the Fomorians in Greek and in Vedic Mythology.—5. Battles between Nemed and the Fomorians.—6. Tyrannical Rule of the Fomorians over the Race of Nemed. The Tribute of Children. Comparison with the Minotaur.—7. The Idol Cromm Cruach or Cenn Cruach and the Sacrifice of Children in Ireland. Human Sacrifice in Gaul. 8. Tigernmas, God of the Dead, the Counterpart of Cromm Cruach. 9. The Disaster of Conann's Tower as Related in Irish Texts.—10. The Disaster of Conann's Tower According to Nennius. Comparison with Greek Mythology.

I.

Origin of Nemed. His Arrival in Ireland.

Nennius, who had never heard either of Cessair or of Fintan, begins the history of Ireland with the legend of Partholon, setting out with these words: "The Scots came into Ireland from Spain." Partholon, according to him, was the first of these Scots to come into Ireland out of Spain; and after giving some details, already mentioned, upon Partholon, Nennius continues as follows: "The second to come into Ireland was

Nimeth, son of a certain Agnoman, who, they say, voyaged over the sea for a year and a half, and then, having suffered shipwreck, took harbour in Ireland. He remained there many years, then, putting to sea again, returned into Spain with his fellows."

The word Spain in this text is a learned translation of the Irish words *mag mor*, "great plain" (1); *trag mar*, "great strand;" *mag meld*, "pleasant plain," by which the Irish pagans designated the Land of the Dead, the place whence the living originally came, and their final abode. For these mythological expressions, which testify to the beliefs held in the most primitive ages, Christian euhemerism substituted the name of Spain. The legend of Tuan Mac Cairill leaves no room for doubt on this point: "The number of Nemed's company increased until there were four thousand and thirty men of them and four thousand and thirty women. Then they all died" (2). They all died: that is what an ancient redaction, now lost, rendered as: "They set sail for the Great Plain, for the Great Strand, or the Pleasant Plain," a formula in which Nennius sees indications of a return into Spain.

In most of the Irish texts the legend of Nemed is more fully developed than in Nennius or in the brief summary attributed to Tuan. This is partly due to the fact that one of the old tales which form the basis of Irish mythology has been usually classified in a way other than that adopted by Nennius, who assigns it to a period no other writer does. We refer to the piece known as the "Slaughter of Conann's Tower" (3). This is one of the most ancient in Irish bardic literature, for it is contained in the first of our catalogues, which appears to have been drawn up about 700 A.D. Now Nennius makes it an episode in the history of the sons of Mile, which is probably an error on his part, for all the Irish texts are agreed in assigning this legendary event to the history of Nemed's race.

(1) *Iar gnais Maige Mair*, "according to the custom of the Great Plain," in Windisch, *Irische Texte*, p. 132, pt. ii., line 6; *ingen Mag-moir*, in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 2, line 26; p. 9, col. 1, line 34; p. 200, col. 2, line 16; *Mag-Mell*, in: *Echtra Conda*, Windisch, *Kurzgefasste Irische Grammatik*, p. 119, line 10; *Seirglige Conculainn*, in Windisch, *Irische Texte*, p. 214, note; *Trag-Mar*, in *Echtra Conda*, p. 120, line 9.

(2) "Roforbair a-sil-sium iar-sin ocus rochlannaigistar cor-ra-batar cethri mili ar trichat lanamna and; atbathatar-side dana uli" (*Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 16, col. 1, lines 23-25).

(3) *Orgain tuir Conaind*.

In most of the texts the tale is given with numerous details added at various dates, all comparatively recent. For instance, it is neither from Spain nor from the Land of the Dead that Nemed comes. He comes from a region of Scythia inhabited by the Greeks. Setting out with forty-four ships, he lost forty-three of them on the way, and wandered for a year and a half in the Caspian Sea; and it was with one ship only that he reached the Irish coast. So we read in the Book of Invasions, compiled at the end of the eleventh century (1). In the tenth century it was known—Nennius informs us of it—that Nemed was a year and a half on sea before reaching Ireland; in the eleventh century an additional fact had been added to the current store of knowledge, and they were in a position to give the name of the sea on which this lengthy voyage took place. They discovered that it was the Caspian (2). In the seventeenth century this voyage over the ocean from the Caspian Sea to Ireland, seemed inadmissible to Irish scholars: accordingly, for the Caspian they substituted the Euxine Sea. "When Nemhed left Scythia to come into Ireland," says Keating, "he embarked on a narrow sea which draws its waters from the ocean, and the name of this narrow sea is *Mare Euxinum*." A modern translator informs us that the Pontus Euxinus is now the Black Sea, adding that this is evidently a mistake of Keating's, as it was on the Baltic Sea that Nemed embarked. But Keating distinctly says the Pontus Euxinus. "It is the boundary between the North-West side of Asia and the North-East side of Europe;" he adds also, to show that he has made a study of geography, "and on the North-West point of Asia are the mountains of Riffe. According to Pomponius Mela, they come between the narrow sea we have just spoken of and the Northern Ocean. Nemed gave his right hand to the Riffean mountains until he came into the Northern Ocean, and his left hand he gave to Europe until he came into Ireland." O'Mahony points out in his translation that by the Riffean mountains are meant the Ural (3).

Who was this Agnomen, or Agnoman, the father of Nemed? Nennius makes no mention of him. According to the Leabhar Gabhala, he is a Scythian Greek (4), and is descended from the

(1) Leabhar Gabhala, Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, lines 11 and 12.

(2) Strabo makes the Caspian Sea communicate with the Ocean.

(3) Keating, History of Ireland, ed. 1811, p. 176; ed. O'Mahony, New York, 1866, p. 122.

(4) Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, line 13.

race of Fenius Farsaid. This Fenius, a great grandson of Japhet by Gomer, others say by Magog (1), was the father of Nel, who married Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt; and of this union was born Goidel Glas, the progenitor of the Gaels, or the Irish race. From Goidel Glas, according to the preface of the *Leabhar Gabhala*, there sprung a family which, at a much later period, furnished Scythia with a royal dynasty (2)—the descendants of Scota, the Scots were evidently identical with the Scythians—and Agnomán, who was condemned to exile, and died on an isle in the Caspian Sea, belonged to this dynasty (3). Agnomán is of the same family as Partholon. Partholon is, like Agnomán, a descendant of Fenius Farsaid and Goidel Glas; and the various races that have successively inhabited Ireland trace themselves back to common ancestors descended from Magog or Gomer, son of Japhet; so that the Irish genealogical traditions are in perfect harmony with those of the Bible (4). Of course the authenticity of the Irish genealogical traditions fabricated in the eleventh century has yet to be established.

One Irish text fixes twenty-two years, the majority give thirty years, as the interval which elapsed between the destruction of Partholon's race and the landing of Nemed in Ireland (5).

II.

The Reign of Nemed in Ireland. His Early Relations with the Fomorians.

In Nemed's time the land continued to undergo the same process of change that it did in Partholon's. Four lakes were

(1) *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 1, col. 1, lines 2 seq.

(2) *Bk. of Leinster*, p. 2, end of col. 2.

(3) *Ibid.*, col. 2, lines 40 seq.; and p. 3, col. 2, lines 36 seq.

(4) Partholon is the son of Sera, son of Sru; Sru is the son of Esru, the son of Goidel Glas (*Bk. of Leinster*, p. 2, line 23; p. 5, col. 1, lines 6 and 7; cf. Keating, ed. 1811, 162, 174).

(5) The Legend of Tuan Mac Cairill gives twenty-two years, v. supra, c. III., 3. The *Leabhar Gabhala* gives thirty years (*Bk. of Leinster*, p. 6, col. 1, line 11). The *Leabhar Gabhala* renders as "during thirty years," *fri re XXX. m-bliadan*, the "six times five," *se choic m-bliadna*, of the poem commencing "*Heriu oll ordnuit Gaedil*" (*Bk. of Leinster*, p. 6, col. 2, line 46).

added (1), and twelve plains (2). One of the lakes had an origin similar to that of Loch Rudraige in Partholon's time. Annenn, one of the sons of Nemed, died, and when his grave was being dug a spring gushed forth so abundant that it spread out into a lake, the name of which was called *Loch Anninn*, after him. To Nemed we owe the building of the first two royal palaces, or *raths*, in Ireland (3). The moats of one of them were dug in one day by four marvellous builders, who were brothers. On the morning of the next day Nemed put them to death (4), alarmed at their mastery, and fearful lest they might afterwards become his enemies. They were Fomorians, it is said, and Nemed was afraid they might capture too easily the fort they had built. They were buried on the spot (5). He had good reason to dread this formidable race; indeed, like Partholon before him, and his own sons and the Tuatha De Danann after him, he had to carry on a frightful war against the Fomorians.

III.

The Fomorians. Divers Texts Concerning Them.

We have already described the Fomorians as the gods of Death and of Night. Irish euhemerism, however, has converted them into sea pirates who used to ravage the coasts of Ireland (6). We have given some details upon their wars with Partholon (c. ii, 4), and referred to them generally in our first chapter. We shall now enter into the matter more minutely. The Irish scholars who had made a study of the Bible make them out to be the descendants of Shem. This

(1) With reference to these lakes, see above poem, Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, lines 5-7; the prose text of the *Leabhar Gabhala* (Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, lines 19-24) and Giraldu Cambrensis, div. III., c. 3, ed. Dimock, p. 143.

(2) On the plains, v. same poem (Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, lines 10-15), and the prose text of the *Leabhar Gabhala* (Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, lines 33-38).

(3) Same poem, Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, lines 8-9.

(4) Prose text of *Leabhar Gabhala*, Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, lines 26-32.

(5) Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed 1811, p. 178.

(6) Giraldu Cambrensis, *Topographia Hibernica*, div. iii., cap. 3, ed. Dimock, p. 143.

comparatively modern genealogy we already find in the earliest Irish literary MSS.

The author of a treatise on the origin of the human race (1), preserved in the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, and transcribed about the year 1100, has a chapter entitled, "History of Monsters, or of the Fomorians and Dwarfs." He begins with an account, taken from Genesis, of the circumstances which led to Noah's cursing his son Shem. "Behold," he adds, "how it came about that Shem was the first man to be cursed after the Deluge. It is he that has begotten dwarfs, the Fomorians, men with goats' heads, and all deformed beings that are found among men. That is the reason the descendants of Shem were exterminated, and their country given over to the Children of Israel, because of the curse their father had put upon him. Shem is the ancestor of monsters. They are not descended from Cain, as the Goidels say; indeed no one of the race of Cain survived the Deluge, for the Deluge was sent to destroy the race of Cain" (2). The oldest texts know nothing of these Biblical origins ascribed to the Fomorians by the Irish Christian scholars (3). The *Book of Invasions* simply says that the Fomorians came into Ireland oversea (4). The document we have just cited is moreover of great importance. The title announces that it deals with the history of dwarfs and Fomorians. From this one would conclude that the Fomorians are giants; and indeed Giraldus Cambrensis, in his *Topographia Hibernica*, renders *Fomorchaib*, the dative plural of the name Fomorians in the corresponding passage in the *Book of Invasions*, by the word *gigantibus* (5).

(1) This document seems to be analogous to that which serves as an introduction to the *Leabhar Gabhala*, in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 1-4.

(2) *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 2, col. 1 and 2; Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, i., 257. Cf. Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, p. 178.

(3) See on the Fomorians: (a) the poem *Heriu oll ordnit Gaedil* (Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, line 16); (b) the poem *Togail tuir Chonaind con gail* (*Book of Leinster*, p. 7, col. 2, line 16).

(4) Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, lines 39, 40, 46, 47; "Fomore idon loinsig na fairgge. . . . Is inti boi mor-longas na Fomore."

(5) *Topographia Hibernica*, Div. III., cap. 2, ed. Dimock, p. 141. Cf. Bk. of Leinster, p. 5, col. 1, lines 20-22. In Giraldus Cambrensis we read: "Tandem vero in bello magno quod cum gigantibus gessit potitum [Bartholanum] victoria." In the Bk. of Leinster: "Cef-chath Herend robriiss Partholon i-slemnaib maige Itha for Cichol n-Grienchos d-Fhomorchaib." Fomorians, which is sometimes a theme in *fo-*—sometimes in *ec*, appears to be composed of the particle *fo-*, "under," and of a theme

The opinion of the Irish scholars who regarded the Fomorians either as the descendants of Cain or those of Shem, is inspired by certain passages in the Bible upon the antediluvian giants (1), and upon those of Palestine, which was originally peopled by the descendants of Canaan, son of Shem. The Jewish spies, when they returned from Palestine, said to the people of God, then wandering in the wilderness: "We saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (2).

We know what an important place giants and dwarfs hold in the mythological literature of the Germanic race (3) and in modern Breton tales. Dwarfs, called in Irish *luchrupan*, are rarely mentioned in the Irish texts. Dr. Whitley Stokes, however, cites a legendary tale in which we see them teaching an Irish king how to dive and to go under the water with them. This tale has found its way into the gloss of a lawbook, which has preserved it (4). But this reference to dwarfs may be considered as an exception. On the other hand, we find constant reference to the Fomorians in Irish bardic literature. They are giants, Giraldus Cambrensis tells us. But not only that: they are demons, veritable demons in human form, so a twelfth-century Irish chronicler relates (5). And among them are monsters with only one hand and one foot, adds the author of the Book of Invasions (6). Finally, the piece we have just

morio or *morec*, derived from *mor*, "great." The particle *fo-*, *fu-* has not a diminutive force, like the word "under." Thus, *fo-lomm* means "bare," like *lomm*, and *fu-domuin*, "deep," like *domuin*.

(1) Genesis, vi., 4.

(2) Numbers, xiii., 33.

(3) Jacob Grimm, in his *Deutsche Mythologie*, devotes chap. 17 to dwarfs, and chap. 18 to giants (3rd ed., p. 408, seq). See also Simrock, *Handbuch der Deutschen Mythologie*, 5th ed., sec. 118 seq., 124 seq., pp. 403-423.

(4) *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i., pp. 70-72. Dwarfs are here called *luchorpan*, *luchorp*, and *abac*.

(5) "Cath robriis Parrthalon for Fomorchaib, idon demna iar fir an-dealbhaibh daoinaibh. (*Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, p. 6).

(6) Referring to the Battle of Mag Itha, in which Partholon defeated the Fomorians, the Book of Invasions says: "Fir con-oen-lamaib ocus con-oen-chossaib rothersat fris-sin-cath" (*Bk. of Leinster*, p. 5, col. 1, lines 22, 23). Cf. *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, p. 6, lines 8, 9. See *Supra*, ch. 2, sec. 4.

translated couples the Fomorians with the goat-headed men, *gobor-chind*, who seem to be a subdivision or counterpart of the Fomorians, since they are not mentioned in the title, which speaks only of dwarfs and Fomorians (1).

IV.

The Counterpart of the Fomorians in Greek and in Vedic Mythology.

The most important feature in the legend of the Fomorians is their war against the gods of the Solar Light and of Life, in other words, the Tuatha De Danann. Monstrous both in size and in shape, some of them having goat's heads, and others only one hand and one foot, they are the Celtic expression of conceptions identical with those which, in Greek mythology, have given birth to the monsters that war against the solar deities. In Greek mythology we find Zeus battling with the giants, whom he overthrows and binds in chains (2). The Lestrygones, on whose shores the solar hero Ulysses lands, after seven days upon the sea, and who slay and devour some of his companions, are also giants (3), and, at the same time, the ancestors of the ogre who is such a terror to children in our own fairy tales.

But giants are not the most formidable monsters the sun gods have to do battle with in Greek mythology. The Chimera, which already makes its appearance in the Iliad (4), and which

(1) If we accept as a serious authority the article *Gabur* in Cormac's Glossary (Whitley Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. 22), *gobor-chind* should be rendered as "horse-headed folk." *Gobur* or *gobor* would mean a "horse," and *gabur* or *gabor* a "goat." The two words were distinguished by the vowel of the first syllable, *a* when a goat was meant, and *o* when a horse. But Windisch rightly points out that we have only one word here, with two orthographical forms, which have etymologically no importance (Windisch, *Irische Texte*, 385). Comparing it with the Breton dialects, in which it designates a "goat" only, we are justified in regarding *gobor-chenn* as a "man or god with a goat's head," which is preferable to a "man or god with a horse's head." The primitive meaning of *gobur*, or *gabur*, also written *gobor*, is "goat," and it was as a metaphor that the poets used it to designate a horse.

(2) *Batrachomyomachie*, verse 285; cf. v. 7, and *Odyssey*, vii., 58-60. In the bas-relief on the altar of Pergamus (Rayet's *Monuments de l'Art Antique*, pt. 4), some of the giants have wings, and others the body of a serpent.

(3) *Odyssey*, x., 110-129.

(4) *Iliad*, vi., 179-183; xvi., 328, 329.

was known to Hesiod (1), had the head of a lion, the tail of a dragon, and the body of a goat (2). It was also depicted with three heads, the first that of a lion, the second a goat's, and the third a serpent's (3). On the monuments it is represented with the body of a serpent, terminating in a head, and having two other heads as well, one a lion's, in the usual place, the other a goat's, rising out of the centre of the body (4). No one could overcome the Chimera, and it caused the death of many men by the fire it exhaled (5), until at last Bellerophon slew it (6).

We must regard Typhaon, born of the jealous Hera, without a father, as a counterpart of the Chimera (7). Typhaon, the scourge of the human race, is also called Typhœus. From his shoulders rose a hundred serpents' heads, which all cried with one voice: sometimes it was the bellowing of a bull, sometimes the roar of a lion, at other times the yelping of a dog. Zeus hurled one of his thunderbolts at him, and sent him headlong into Tartarus (8).

To the same family belong Python, the pupil of Typhaon, a dragon which wrought great havoc among men, until Apollo slew him with his arrows (9); the hydra of Lerna, with an enormous body and nine heads, who destroyed cattle, and whom Heracles slew with the help of Iolaus (10).

Finally, among the monsters overthrown by the sun gods of Greek mythology, we must include the Minotaur, a man with

(1) Theogony, 319-325.

(2) Iliad, iv., 181.

(3) Theogony, 321, 322.

(4) Daremberg and Saglio, Dictionnaire des Antiquites Grecques et Romaines, p. 685, fig. 811, 813; p. 1103, fig. 1364, 1365, 1366.

(5) Iliad, vi., 182; xvi., 329.

(6) Iliad, vi., 183. I do not think that this legend has the Semitic origin generally attributed to it. See Maury, Histoire des Religions de la Grece Antique, iii., 188.

(7) Hymn to Apollo, 305-309; 351, 352.

(8) Theogony, 820-868. In Hesiod Typhœus is the son of the Earth and of Tartarus, whereas in Homer Typhaon is the son of Hera. It does not follow, however, that he is not the same mythological person. Cf. Maury, Religions de la Grece Antique, i., 374, 375.

(9) Homer, Hymn to Apollo, 355 seq.; Decharme, Mythologie de la Grece Antique, 99-102.

(10) Apollodorus, bk. ii., ch. 5, sec. 2, in Didot-Muller's Frag. Historicorum Græcorum, i., 136. Cf. Hecate, frag. 347, *ibid.*, p. 27. Cf. Maury, Religions de la Grece Antique, i., 136, 137.

the head of a bull, who devoured every year fourteen young Athenians, seven youths and seven maidens, and who was at last slain by Theseus. We shall have occasion to return to this monster later on (1).

In all these formidable beings, with strange shapes, who slay men, but are powerless before gods or demi-gods such as Ulysses, Bellerophon, Zeus, Apollo, Heracles, and Theseus, we have the Greek form of the Indo-European conception which produced the monsters Vritra and Ahi in India (2), and the Fomorians in Ireland. The Fomorians have, like them, corporeal forms which are contrary to the ordinary laws of nature. They are above the human stature; certain of them have goat's horns upon their head, and they have every appearance of the horned gods which were honoured on the Continent by the Gauls (3); others of them have only one arm and one foot. They are the oppressors of mankind, and the divers races that colonised Ireland have had to make war upon them. We have already mentioned the battle Partholon fought against them.

V.

Battles Between Nemed and the Fomorians.

Nemed was also at war with the Fomorians; he fought four battles with them, in each of which he came off victorious. In the first battle, which appears to be a comparatively modern invention, Nemed overcame and slew two Fomorian Kings named Gend and Sengand (4). The three other battles fought between Nemed and the Fomorians are only mentioned in one of the poems that constitute the earliest Irish records of the ancient literature. The first was fought in Ulster, the second in Connaught, the third in Leinster. These are the Battles of

(1) See section 6 of the present chapter.

(2) Breal, *Mélanges de Mythologie et de Linguistique*, p. 84 seq. The dragon Vritra or Ahi is regarded as an image of the sky when darkened by storm-clouds or by night (Kuhn, "Ueber Entwicklungsstufen der Mythenbildung," in "Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin," 1873, p. 142). See also, on Vritra or Ahi, Bergaigne's *Mythologie Védique*, ii., 196-208.

(3) Al. Bertrand, *L'Autel de Saintes et les Triades Gauloises*, *Rev. Archeologique*, June, July, August, 1880. M. Mowat has made the horned gods of Gaul the subject of an interesting communication to the French Society of Antiquaries (1884).

(4) *Leabhar Gabhala*, Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, 25-27.

Murbolg, Baddbagna, and Cnamros (1). At one time there existed a detailed account of this war. The battles between Nemed and the Fomorians were the subject of one of the tales recited by the *file*, the title of which is contained in the all too brief catalogue preserved to us in one of the Glosses of the Senchus Mor (2); the text itself is lost.

Nemed came victoriously out of these three formidable conflicts; but died a short time after of a plague, which carried off two thousand others with him (3). This is the period the Irish texts assign to the destruction of Conann's Tower.

VI.

Tyranny of the Fomorians over the Race of Nemed. The Tribute of Children. Comparison with the Minotaur.

The descendants of Nemed, once deprived of their chief, fell under the power of the Fomorians, and became the victims of a frightful tyranny. The Fomorians had two kings reigning over them: Morc, son of Dele, and Conann, son of Febar. The stronghold of Conann, according to an euhemeristic belief already accepted in Ireland in the eleventh century, was situated in Tory Island, off the coast of Donegal. Popular tradition has localised other legends of the Fomorians in this island, which we shall refer to later on. It was here that the Fomorians are said to have established their headquarters.

From this place they commanded the whole of Ireland, and imposed a heavy tribute annually upon the people, namely, two-thirds of the children they had brought into the world within the year and two-thirds of the corn and milk the year had produced. The tax was levied on the night of November the First, on the feast of *Samhain*, when summer ends and winter begins—the symbol of Death. Payment was made in the place called *Mag Cetne* (4): *Mag Cetne* means the "same plain;"

(1) The poem beginning "Heriu oll ordnit Gaedil" in Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, lines 16, 17. These battles are placed in a different order in the Book of Invasions, Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, lines 40, 41.

(2) Ancient Laws of Ireland, i., 46.

(3) Keating, History of Ireland, ed. 1811, 178. The Book of Invasions simply says that Nemed died of a plague (Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 1, line 42). Compare the poem "Heriu oll ordnit Gaedil" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, 18, 19).

(4) Poem of Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 985 (Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, lines 23-25); cf. Book of Invasions, *ibid.*, p. 6, col. 1, 47, 48.

that plain, always the same, whither everything that has life goes, and where the gods of Death hold sway—it is the mysterious land men pass unto after death. Keating thinks it is one of the plains of Ireland, and tells us where it is situated. Not being able to conceive how the Irish could carry two-thirds of the year's milk once every year to their oppressors, he imagined that, instead of this, the Fomorians levied annually upon each household in the land three measures of cream, of fine wheat, and of butter, and that it was gathered by a woman who went all over Ireland for this purpose (1).

Of the tribute exacted by the Fomorians, the most oppressive, and at the same time the most characteristic, was that which was paid in children. Here we have a legend analogous to the Attic myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. The Minotaur, like some of the Fomorians, is a horned being; in place of a goat's head, however, he has a bull's head, upon a human body (2). Like the Fomorians, too, he inhabits an island, which is Torinis in the Irish tale, and Crete in the Athenian legend. Seven youths and seven maidens are the annual tribute exacted by the Minotaur; the Greek genius in this horrible tale exhibits the restraint and wisdom which, as a rule, give to all its conceptions their æsthetic superiority; whereas, in the Irish legend, the Fomorians demand annually two-thirds of all the children born within the year. And yet, as we shall see presently, it is not inadmissible that, at certain periods, the new-born children in Ireland paid this tribute to Death; some carried off by a natural death from the love of their parents, others immolated as a sacrifice to the gods of Death, in obedience to the dictates of a cruel religion.

The Fomorians are the gods of Death, of Night, and of Storm, the elder of the two divine groups that share the veneration of the Celtic race. The Tuatha De Danann, gods of Life, of Day, and of Sunshine, were the younger of the two, if we accept the dogma of the Celts, according to which night precedes the day.

In this conception of the Fomorians, we find the idea of death associated with that of night. Cæsar observed a similar association among the Gauls. "The Gauls," he says, "claim that they are all descended from *Dis pater*, that is, from the god

(1) Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, 180.

(2) See the two antique representations of the Minotaur in Decharme's: *Mythologie de la Grece Antique*, 519-621.

of Death. This, they say, they learned from the druids. And on this account they reckon time, not by days, but by nights, and when they calculate birthdays and the beginning of months and of years, they always take care to make the night precede the day" (1). Thus, in the druidical doctrine, death precedes life, and engenders life, and as death is identical with night, and life with day, so night precedes and engenders day. Likewise, in the divine world of Ireland, the Fomorians, the gods of Death and of Night, are in point of time anterior to the Tuatha De Danann, gods of Day and of Life, whom we shall return to later on (2).

The queen of Night is the Moon, distinguished among the stars by her crescent form, the one she usually presents to our gaze. The god of Night is therefore distinguished from the other gods by a crescent placed upon his brow, and this crescent is transformed into the horns of a cow, or those of a bull, or a goat. Hence, in the Prometheus of Æschylus, Io, the horned virgin (3), transformed later on into a heifer (4), hence, also, in the Athenian myth, the conception of the Minotaur, with the head of a bull; and, in the Irish legend, the conception of the Fomorians, people with goats' heads, and, on the Continent of Gaul, the numerous horned gods, effigies of whom one can see in the Museum of St. Germain. To render to these gods of Death the worship they exacted, human lives must needs be offered up in sacrifice.

VII.

The Idol Cromm Cruach or Cenn Cruach and the Sacrifice of Children in Ireland. Human Sacrifices in Gaul.

The Fomorians were not the only gods who received a tribute of children in Ireland; at a remote period an identical tribute was exacted by a god whose monumental image seems to have passed into history.

(1) "Galli se omnes ab Dite patre prognatos prædicant idque ab druidibus proditum dicunt. Ob eam causam spatia omnis temporis non numero dierum, sed noctium finiunt; dies natales et mensium et annorum initia sic observant *ut noctem dies subsequatur*" (Cæsar, De Bello Gallico, Bk. vi., chap. 18, 1, 2.

(2) See infra, chap. vii.

(3) *Tas boukero parthenou*, Æschylus, Prometheus, 588.

(4) Æschylus, the Supplices, 17, 18, 275.

In the lives of St. Patrick we read of a god whose stone statue was adorned with gold and silver, and surrounded by twelve other statues with bronze ornaments—this was *Cenn Cruach*, the Bloody Head. The place where this divine group stood in the open air, and received the veneration of the faithful, was called *Mag Slechta*, "Plain of Adoration" (1). Patrick went to the Plain of Adoration and raised his staff to strike the idol, which was the king of all the idols in Ireland. Then, says the legend, the idol turned away his head to avoid the blow, and he looked no more towards the South, as he used to do before; and the mark of the staff lives in his left side still, although the staff did not leave Patrick's hand, who merely threatened him from afar. The other statues, at the same time, sank up to their necks in the earth, and, says the hagiographical account, it is in that condition they are to this day (2).

The idol of the Plain of Adoration, the "Bloody Head," *Cenn Cruach*, as the legend of St. Patrick describes it, or the "Bloody Curb," the "Bloody Crescent," *Cromm Cruach*, as it is called in other texts, was at a distant epoch the object of a terrible cult. Human victims were immolated in its honour. The tribute was the same as that formerly exacted by the Fomorians, according to the legend. No mention is made of these awful sacrifices in the lives of St. Patrick. They had been abolished when the famous missionary came with the Gospel, but they had not been forgotten. A passage in the *Dinn-senchus*, on the Plain of Adoration, shows that they were held in memory when that topographical treatise was compiled—the earliest MS. dates from the twelfth century, and the primitive redaction goes back to the sixth.

(1) *Mag Slechta* was situated in the Barony of Tullyhawn, near the village of Ballymagauran, in the County Cavan (O'Donovan, *Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. 1851, i., p. 43, note).

(2) Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, fragment from the British Museum MS. Egerton 93, in O'Curry's *Manuscript Materials*, p. 538, and from the Oxford MS. Rawlinson B. 505, by Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, i., 259. Cf. Joscelyn's Life of St. Patrick, VI., 50, in the *Bollandistes*, March, ii., p. 552, and in Colgan's *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 77, col. 2. This legend is also found in the fourth Life of St. Patrick, said to have been written by Eleranus, who died in 664. See sec. 53 of this life in Colgan's *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 42, col. 1. The third life, attributed to St. Benignus, and anterior to 527, according to Colgan, mentions the idol of *Mag Slechta*, but under another name, and relates the miracle in a different manner, without referring to the twelve smaller idols: "Et orante Patricio imago illa quem populi adorabant comminuta, et in pulverem redacta" (sec. XLVI., *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 25, col. 1).

"Here," says the old treatise, "was a great idol . . . called the "Bloody Curb" or the "Bloody Crescent," *Cromm Cruach*; it gave power and peace in every province. Pitiful evil! the brave Gaels used to worship it; they asked fair weather of it, for a portion of the world. . . . For it, without glory, they slew their first born (1), with much crying and much wailing for their dead, in the assembly around *Cromm Cruach*. It was milk and corn they asked of it in exchange for their children. How great was their horror and their moaning! It was before this idol that the free Gaels prostrated themselves; it was from the worship of it, celebrated by so many deaths, that the place was given the name of *Mag Slecht*[a], or "Plain of Adoration . . ." (2).

This text agrees with the lives of St. Patrick in distinguishing two categories of idols in the monument of *Mag Slecht*. The principal, *Cromm* or *Cenn Cruach*, adorned with silver and with gold in the lives of St. Patrick (3), is of gold in the *Dinn-senchus*; the others, adorned with bronze in the lives of St. Patrick (4), are of stone in the *Dinn-senchus*. There are twelve of the latter in the lives of St. Patrick. The *Dinn-senchus* speak only of "three, ranged in order, three idols of stone upon four; then, to deceive bitterly the multitudes, came the gold image of *Cromm*" (5).

The sacrifice of children to the idol of *Cromm Cruach*, and the tribute of children paid to the Fomorians, call to mind the celebrated lines in which Lucan, addressing the druids, sings of the cruel worship they rendered to the three Gaulish divinities, at the time when Cæsar had just completed the conquest of Gaul,

(1) The text of the Bk. of Leinster (p. 213, col. 2, line 45), gives *toirsech*, "sad;" the correct reading should be *toissich*, "first." This correction is required by the prose preface which is wanting in the Bk. of Leinster, but which is contained in O'Connor's *Bibliotheca Manuscripta Stowensis*, pp. 40, 41, after the Stowe MS. I. In this preface two equivalents are given for the adjective just mentioned, viz., *cedgein* and *primhgein*, meaning "first-born."

(2) Bk. of Leinster, p. 213, col. 2, lines 39 seq.

(3) Third Life, sec. XLVI.; fourth life, sec. LIII.; sixth life, sec. LVI.; seventh life, Bk. II., sec. 31; Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 25, col. 1; p. 42, col. 1; p. 77, col. 2; p. 133, col. 2.

(4) There is no mention of the twelve smaller statues in the third life, which gives a much briefer account of St. Patrick's miracle than the other lives, and says that the idol was turned into dust by the great apostle of Ireland. The later account is much more dramatic.

(5) The Bk. of Leinster, p. 213, col. 2, lines 61, 62.

and civil war was about to break out between him and his rival, Pompey :

Et quibus immitis placatur sanguine diro
Teutates, horrensque feris altaribus Æsus,
Et Taranus (1) scythicæ non mitior ara Dianæ.

“ You, too, who by cruel blood outpoured, think to appease the pitiless Teutates, the horrid Æsus with his barbarous altars, whose worship is no gentler than that of the Scythian Diana.”

The Scythian Diana had formerly exacted from Agamemnon his daughter's life. It needed the sacrifice of Iphigenia to appease her wrath, and this legend was so popular with the Athenians that it provided one of their greatest poets, about the end of the fifth century B.C., with the subject for a tragedy, which still excites our admiration (2). Taranus had the same exigencies as the Scythian Diana. This is the meaning of the passage in Lucan, who completes the information upon the rites and ceremonies of the Celts collected in Cæsar's Commentaries. After describing those immense wicker cages in which the Gaulish druids of his day burned men alive, Cæsar adds that, according to the same druids, thieves, bandits, and other criminals were the victims most pleasing to the gods, but, that failing them, they burned innocent men alive (3). Certain lines in Lucan would go to show that the innocent victims were children. This doctrine agrees with the principle of Celtic law, stated by Cæsar, which gives to the father the right of life and death over his children (4). Later on we find it part of the law of Wales, where, in the sixth century, St. Teliavus saves the lives of seven children whom their father, too poor to nourish, had thrown, one after another, into a river (5).

The Gaulish god Taranus, compared in Lucan's *Pharsalia* to the Scythian Diana, to whom Agamemnon offers up his daughter, is a god of the Lightning; he is represented in the Fomorian group, gods of Death and of Night, by *Cromm Cruach* or *Cenn Cruach*, the Bloody Crescent, the Bloody Curb, or the Bloody Head of Ireland.

(1) M. Mowat appears to have proved that the correct reading is *Taranus*, genitive singular, and not *Taranis*.

(2) The Iphigenia in Aulis of Euripides, brought out after the poet's death in 406 B.C. On human sacrifices in Greece, principally that of children, at the earliest periods, see Maury, *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce Antique*, i., 184-187.

(3) *De Bello Gallico*, vi., 16, sec. 4, 5.

(4) *Ibid.*, c. 19, sec. 3.

(5) *Liber Landavensis*, 120.

VIII.

Tigernmas, the Counterpart of Cromm Cruach, the God of Death.

Cromm Cruach, the great idol of Ireland, to whom children were offered up in sacrifice, as to the Fomorians in the legend of Nemed, appears to have been essentially a god of Death. This is the conclusion we draw from the legend of Tigernmas, whose name, *Tigernmas*, for *Tigern Bais*, means "Lord of Death." In the chronological list of their legends, drawn up by the Irish scholars in Christian times, Tigernmas becomes a king of the race of Eremon, son of Mile, established in the North of Ireland—a part of the actual race. The Four Masters even know the exact period at which he reigned: from the year of the world 3580 to 3656 (1). But elsewhere Tigernmas is identical with Balar, god of the Lightning and of Death, who commanded the Fomorians, and fell at their head, fighting against the Tuatha De Danann, at the second Battle of Mag-Tured (2). Tigernmas, in less than a year, fought twenty-seven battles with the descendants of Eber, son of Mile, who occupied Southern Ireland. A great number of his enemies fell in these battles, and Tigernmas would soon have destroyed the whole race of Eber. At length, after sixty years' reign, he died on the "Plain of Adoration," at Mag Slechta, with three-fourths of the people of Ireland, who had come thither with him to worship the great idol of Cromm Cruach. It happened on the night of November the First, or the eve of *Samhain*; the same day on which, according to another legend, the descendants of Nemed had to pay to the Fomorians the heavy tribute of two-thirds of their children and two-thirds of the corn and milk which the year had produced. The Irish subjects of Tigernmas had come to Mag Slechta for the purpose of paying honour to their god, Cromm Cruach, by prostrating themselves before him; but they went through the ceremony with such zeal and devotion that they

(1) O'Donovan's Annals of the Four Masters, 1851, i., 38-41.

(2) "Lug mac Edlend mic Tigernmais," in the piece entitled *Baile an Scail*, British Museum, Harleian 5280, fol. 60, contained in O'Curry's MS. Materials, p. 619, "Lug, Eithne ingen Balair Bailc-beimnig a-mathair-side" in the *Leabhar Gabhala*, Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 1, lines 44, 45. In these two texts the god Lug is the son of Ethne, genitive Ethnend, corrupted into Edlend, who is a daughter of Balar, formerly called Tigernmas; it is by an error that Ethne changes her sex in the "*Baile in Scail*" and becomes a son of Tigernmas.

crushed in their foreheads and their noses, their knees and their elbows, so that three-fourths of them perished (1)

IX.

The Disaster of Conann's Tower as related in Irish Texts.

The myth of Tigernmas, Lord of Death, and his disastrous reign over the descendants of Mile, is but a variant or a different form of the tale describing the tyranny exercised over the sons of Nemed by the Fomorians and their dread king, Conann, son of Febar, established in his tower, Conann's Tower, *Tur Conaind* or *Conainn*, which, according to the Irish euhemerists, was situated on Tory Island, off the coast of Donegal. Conann's tyranny became so oppressive that the people at last rose in revolt. Led by three chiefs, Erglann, Semul, and Fergus Leth-derg, the descendants of Nemed, to the number of sixty thousand, marched against the Fomorians. A battle was fought. The sons of Nemed gained the victory at first; they captured the tower, and Conann, their oppressor, fell by the hand of Fergus Leth-derg, the last of their three chiefs. But Morc, son of Dele, the friend of Conann, and chief of the Fomorians, come too late to save the tyrant's life, turned the tide of battle against the sons of Nemed and put them to flight, and so great was the slaughter that only thirty out of the sixty thousand escaped death. The poet Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 985, sang of this war in a lay which has come down to us in a MS. of the twelfth century :

The demolition of Conann's Tower in battle
Against Conann the Great, son of Febar ;
The men of Erin went there,
Three illustrious chiefs with them.

Here he gives the names of the three warriors, and then continues as follows :

Three score thousand, of brilliant exploits,
On land and on sea ;
It is the number went from the shore,
The race of Nemed to the demolition.

(1) See (a) the prose preface to the chapter on Mag Slechta in the *Dinnsenchus* ; it is contained in O'Conor's *Bibliotheca Manuscripta Stowensis*, pp. 40, 41, Stowe MS. I ; (b) the verse part of the same chapter of the *Dinnsenchus*, in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 213, col. 2, lines 51 seq. ; (c) the *Leabhar Gabhala*, *ibid*, p. 16, col. 2, lines 19-21 ; p. 17, col. 1, lines 20, 21.

The demolition of Conann's Tower in battle
 Against Conann the Great, son of Febar.
 The men of Erin went there,
 Three illustrious chiefs with them.

Torinis, isle of the Tower,
 Fortress of Conann, son of Febar ;
 By Fergus even, hero of twenty deeds
 Was slain Conann, son of Febar.

Morc, son of Dele, came ;
 He brought help to Conann ;
 Conann fell dead before him ;
 Morc wrought great woe.

Three score ships across the sea,
 The number that Morc brought, son of Dele ;
 They surrounded them before they came to shore,
 The race of Nemed, mighty their force !

The men of Erin were all at the battle
 After the Fomorians came ;
 All of them the sea engulfed,
 Save only three times ten.

Here follow the names of the thirty warriors of the race of Nemed that escaped the disaster. They settled down again in Ireland, which their three chiefs divided amongst them. Shortly after they left Ireland, flying from the heavy tribute and from the plague, which carried off two of their number :

Three times ten in fair voyage
 Went then into Erin ;
 Three made division of the West
 After the demolition of Conann's Tower.

The demolition of Conann's Tower in battle
 Against Conann the Great, son of Febar ;
 The men of Erin went there,
 Three illustrious chiefs with them.

For Bethach of glorious renown, a third,
 From Torinis to the Boyne ;
 It is he that died in the isle of Erin,
 Two years after Britan.

For Semion, son of Erglan the Illustrious, a third :
 From the Boyne to Belach Conglas ;
 For Britan, relates Ua Flainn, a third :
 From Belach to the Tower of Conann.

E

The demolition of Conann's Tower in battle
 Against Conann the Great, son of Febar ;
 The men of Erin went there,
 Three illustrious chiefs with them . . . (1).

The latter part of this lay was written under the influence of modern ideas, which, rejecting the primitive Celtic myth, regard the race of Nemed as the ancestors of the ancient British. According to the Book of Invasions, the Nemedian warriors who escaped from the disaster of Conann's Tower took refuge at first in Ireland, which they subsequently left, emigrating to the East. There were three families of them, one of which, that of Britan, settled down later on in Great Britain and gave its name to the British; the other two returned into Ireland, the first known as the Fir-Bolg, the second as the Tuatha De Danann.

But the ancient belief was that the race of Nemed perished utterly, leaving no descendants. Nemed and his companions, says Tuan Mac Cairill, when they came into Ireland had many children, and their number increased until there were four thousand and thirty men of them and four thousand and thirty women; then they all died (2).

If we accept the account of Nennius, the race of Nemed came originally into Ireland from Spain, and after many years returned thither again. Nennius' account of the end of Nemed's race agrees with that of Tuan Mac Cairill; for, in the Irish mythological texts of the Middle Ages, Spain takes the place of the land of the Dead. But, in the primitive text which Nennius had before him, the race of Nemed came into Ireland, not from Spain, but from the Land of the Dead.

X.

The Disaster of Conann's Tower according to Nennius. Comparison with Greek Mythology.

After the above observations on the last quatrains of the Irish poem relating the demolition of Conann's Tower, we shall compare it with the markedly different redaction left by Nennius. As we have already pointed out, Nennius refers this

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 2; Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 16, r, col. 1. Bk. of Lecan, fol. 176, v., col. 2. This poem is by Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 985; cf. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, ii., p. 109.

(2) See *supra*, c. 3, sec. 3.

legend to the history of the Milesians, and not to the race of Nemed. His reason for doing so is easy to understand. As we have seen, in the Christian redaction of the demolition of Conann's Tower, the remnant of the Irish host went back to the mainland, and afterwards emigrated to the East; they returned later on, and from them are descended the inhabitants of the British Isles in historic times. Thence it was concluded that the warriors who took part in the demolition of Conann's Tower could not have belonged to the race of Nemed, since, according to the oldest redactions of the legend, all the members of that race perished utterly, or had gone back to Spain. The following is Nennius' account of it:

"Then came three sons of Mile from Spain (1), with thirty ships, each ship containing thirty men and as many women. They remained in Ireland for the space of a year, then they perceived in the midst of the sea a tower of glass, and on the tower they saw what were like to be men, *quasi homines*. They called out to them, but never got any answer. For a year they were preparing to attack the tower, then they set out with all their ships and all their women folk, saving one ship that foundered, and the thirty men and thirty women that were on board her. But when they landed on the shore that surrounded the tower, the sea rose up over them, and they perished in the waves. From the thirty men and thirty women of the ship that was wrecked are descended the present inhabitants of Ireland."

In transferring the legend of Conann's Tower to the Milesian race, Nennius departed from the primitive data of Celtic mythology; but on many points, however, the original signification of the myth is more clearly apparent in him than in the Irish texts that have preserved it. The tower is of glass, like the barque in which the messenger of Death, in the legend of Connla, comes to seek the son of the High King of Ireland, and bear him away to her place. It is not men they see on the tower, but "something like unto men," *quasi homines*. They are the "shades" of Roman mythology, the *eidola* of Greek mythology, who have the semblance of a human body, but not the reality, which they laid aside with life. These shapes of men do not speak, or if they do, their language does not reach the ears of the Irish warriors. For these seeming

(1) *Militis Hispania*. This might be read "of a soldier from Spain;" but *Milcs. Militis*, is here a proper name, in Irish *Mile*, genitive *Miled*.

men are the same as the "silent people," *silentes*, of Latin poetry. The "silentes" are the dead, in Virgil and Ovid, Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, and Claudian. The tower of glass which Nennius speaks of, Conann's Tower in Irish literature, is, therefore, the fortress of the Dead. Now, by an inexorable law, no men, save a few favoured of the gods, can without quitting life, pass to that mysterious isle of the far West, where the Celts and the second age of Greek mythology have placed the abode of the Dead. Already in the *Odyssey*, the barque of Ulysses cannot land on the shores of Ogygia. It suffers shipwreck, and all those on board are engulfed in the sea and perish; only the demi-god Ulysses can attain the distant isle, the abode of the veiled goddess Calypso, daughter of Atlas, the pillar of the heavens (1).

But in the *Odyssey* there is no idea of combat associated with this distant isle where Ulysses, saved from death by an exceptional privilege, abides for seven years, far from the gaze of men, and tended by the goddess who loves him. The character of the myth is changed, however, when a male god becomes the governor of the mysterious isle, which the poetic fancy of the Indo-Europeans of the West places beyond the sunset, at the end of the world, in regions where the hardiest navigator dare not venture. Kronos reigns over this isle; and Greek poetry represents him as dwelling in a "tower" (*tursin*): "in the Isles of the Blest, where the ocean breezes blow, where flowers gleam with gold, some upon fair trees which the earth bears, others upon the water which brings them forth; and with these the inhabitants weave garlands with which they deck their head and their hands;" these inhabitants are Peleus, Cadmus, Achilles, and all the heroes of ancient Greece (2).

Pindar does not say whether the mythic "tower" of the Dead was ever assailed. But the most ancient monument of Greek literature tells of combats that were waged in the abode of the Dead when Heracles went down into Hades of the unyielding gates, to snatch the dog of its terrible lord. He would have been engulfed in the waters of the Styx, and have suffered the same death as the descendants of Nemed at Conann's Tower, had not Zeus sent aid to him out of heaven by the goddess Athena (3). Scattered over Greek mythology, we find many of the elements that have contributed to form the

(1) *Odyssey*, vii., 244-255.

(2) Pindar, *Olympics*, ii., 70.

(3) *Iliad*, viii., 367-369.

Irish myth of Conann's Tower, that fortress of the mysterious isle of the Dead, which is demolished by the Irish warriors, but at the cost of so many lives. Ireland, however, when creating the myth of Conann's Tower, borrowed nothing from Greece. The characteristics common to Irish and to Greek mythology come from an old foundation of Græco-Celtic legends anterior to the separation of the two races, at that unknown period when the Hellenes or Greeks, abandoning to the Celts the cold valley of the Danube and the mist-laden regions of western Europe, settled down on the warm plains and the splendid coasts of the Peninsula lying to the south of the Balkans.

CHAPTER VI.—The Emigration of the Fir-Bolg.

- I. The Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in Irish Mythology.—
2. The Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in the Irish Heroic Period.—
3. Association of the Fomorians or Gods of Domna, *Dei Domnann*, with the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin.—
4. Establishment of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in Ireland.—
5. Origin of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin. Primitive Doctrine, the Mediæval Doctrine.—
6. Introduction of Chronology into this Legend.—
7. Taltiu, Queen of the Fir-Bolg, Foster-Mother of Lug, one of the Chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann. The Annual Fair of Taltiu on the Feast-Day of Lug or Lugus.

I.

The Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in Irish Mythology.

Up to the present we have dealt with the first two, according to the chronological order adopted by Irish writers, of the three mythic races of Ireland, corresponding to the Golden, the Silver, and the Bronze races of Greek mythology. First, the family of Partholon, identical with the Silver race of the Greeks, and distinguished, like it, for its foolishness (1). This race, as we have seen, was carried off by a pestilence, which had been

(1) Cf. Hesiod, Works and Days, 129-134, and the passage dealing with Partholon's race in the legend of Tuan Mac Cairill (*Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 15, col. 2, lines 23, 24).

sent down upon it in punishment for a crime. So also was the Silver race destroyed by the just anger of Zeus. Then the family of Nemed, in which we recognise the Bronze race of Greek mythology—both of them warlike races, which finally perished by the sword: the Nemedians in battle with the Fomorians, at the demolition of Conann's Tower; and the men of the Silver race, warring upon each other (1). The first two races of Irish mythology are thus identical with the last two of Greek mythology. This might seem the proper place in which to describe the third of the mythic races of Ireland, corresponding to the first race of Greek mythology. This race, known as the Tuatha De Danann, "men of the god son of the goddess Dana," is identical with the Golden race, which in Hesiod and in Ovid is the first to arrive upon the earth. In Irish mythology it is in point of time the last of the three races from which the actual inhabitants are not descended.

The Irish epic catalogues and summaries, however, in which these mythic legends are presented to us with all the appearance of being historic events, introduce, between the legend of Nemed or the second mythic race, and the tales relating to the arrival of the third, or the Tuatha De Danann, a fabulous history describing the settlement in Ireland of one of the races that formerly occupied the country in the heroic period, that is, at a time subsequent to the purely mythological period, recorded by legendary tales having a certain historic basis.

This race is generally described by the compound *Fer-Bolg*, plural *Fir-Bolg*, or the "men of Bolg." But to be more correct, it was composed of three distinct peoples: the Fir-Bolg, or men of Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, or men of Domna, and the Galioin. This is the traditional order in which they are arranged. Perhaps also it is their alphabetical order; for although the letters do not come in the same order in the Ogam as they do in the Latin alphabet, in both *b* comes before, and *g* after, *d*. The Galioin, therefore, are alphabetically the last, and the men of Bolg precede the men of Domna.

The most important of these appears to have been the second, the Fir-Domnann or men of Domna. According to the tradition handed down to us in an eleventh-century poem, they occupied three of the five great provinces into which Ireland was divided in the heroic period. South Munster, North Munster, and Connaught belonged to them, while the Galioin

(1) Hesiod, Works and Days, 152, 153.

possessed Leinster, and the Fir-Bolg, Ulster (1). Accordingly, the legend of Tuan Mac Cairill, more consistent than the other texts, puts the Fir-Domnann before the Fir-Bolg and the Galioin (2).

II.

The Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in the Irish Heroic Period.

These three peoples appear to have been those the Goidels or Scots—*i.e.*, the Irish—found settled in the island on their coming into it, at a time which has not been clearly determined up to the present. In the heroic period the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin had not been assimilated by the dominant race, and they hold an important place among the adversaries of those Ulster heroes for whom the bardic literature shows so marked a predilection.

In the great epic, for instance, which describes the Cattle Spoil of Cualgne, one of the principal episodes is the fight between the celebrated Cuchulainn, the foremost warrior of Ulster, and Ferdiad, the most distinguished champion in the army of Ailill and Medb, king and queen of Connaught. Ferdiad, who unites in his own person all the most eminent qualities, and who belongs in some measure to the ranks of the demi-gods, is a Fer-Domnann, a man of Domna, and the most accomplished warrior of that hostile race (3).

There were three thousand of the Galioin fighting in the army of Medb. And Medb having one day driven over the camp in her chariot, to inspect the host, observed that of all those that were come to the war, the Galioin displayed the most activity. When the other warriors arrived upon the camping ground, the Galioin had already pitched their tents. And when the others had pitched their tents, the Galioin had prepared

(1) Gilla Coemain's poem in the Book of Leinster, p. 127, col. 1. Lines 28-33 refer to the division of Ireland among the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin. For other texts upon this partition see *infra*.

(2) "Gabais Semion, Mac Stariath in-innsi-sea iar-sin ; is-dib-side Fir-Domnann, Fir-Bolg, ocus Galioin" (*Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 16, col. 2, lines 6, 7).

(3) "Ferdiaid Mac Damain, Mac Dare, in milid mor-chalma d'Fheraib Domnand." *Comrac Firdead*, Bk. of Leinster, p. 81, col. 1, 24, 25 ; p. 82, col. 1, lines 7, 8. Cf. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, iii., 414, lines 5, 6 ; p. 420, lines 2, 3.

their meal. When the others had begun to eat, the Galioin had finished; and when the others had made an end of eating, the Galioin had not only lain down, but were fast asleep (1).

Another text relates how the Fir-Bolg, in the time of Cuchulainn, broke a treaty they had made with the High King of Ireland, and became the vassals of Ailill and Medb, taking sides, like the Galioin and the Fir-Domnann, with the enemies of Ulster and the heroic pleiad of warriors who were the glory of that kingdom. This breach of faith resulted in four remarkable combats, in one of which Cuchullain slew the son of the chief of the Fir-Bolg (2).

III.

Association of the Fomorians or Gods of Domna, De Domnann, with the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin.

We find, therefore, a sort of dualism running through the bardic literature of Ireland. On the one hand, Conchobar, Cuchulainn, and the Ulster warriors, the favourite heroes of the *file*; and, on the other, a hostile element, consisting chiefly of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin, in particular the Fir-Domnann, who formerly possessed three of the five provinces of Ireland. The Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin have all manner of vices and defects: they are busybodies, treacherous, avaricious, unmusical, quarrelsome, whereas bravery and generosity are the distinctive characteristics of their opponents (3). In mythology we discover an analogous dualism. On the one hand, the good gods, those of Day, of Light, and of Life, known as the Tuatha De Danann, among whom is Ogma the sun-faced, *Grian-ainech* (4), and whose chief is in *Dag-de*, literally "the Good God;" on the other hand, the gods of Death and Night, the wicked gods,

(1) *Tain Bo Cualnge*, in O'Curry's *Manners and Customs*, ii., 259-261.

(2) Poem by Mac Liag, who flourished at the beginning of the eleventh century, Bk. of Leinster, p. 152; O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, ii., 121-123.

(3) Duaid Mac Firbis, a seventeenth century writer, has resumed the Irish tradition on this point in some verses quoted in O'Curry's *MS. Materials*, p. 580; cf. p. 223, 224. Contrary to the older theory, Duaid Mac Firbis regarded the Fir-Bolg as more important than the Fir-Domnann.

(4) This is the opposite of Buar-ainech. See chap. IX., 4

generally known as the Fomorians. But these are sometimes given the name of the principal of the three hostile races that warred upon the heroes of Ulster: the chief of the Fomorians being often called the "god of Domna" (1). The god of Domna, *dia*, or *dé Domnand*, is the hostile god, just as the men of Domna, the Fir-Domnann, are the hostile people.

According to the Celtic doctrine, night precedes day, and death precedes life, just as the father precedes the son (2); so, also, the wicked gods have preceded the good, and bad men came into the world before good men, that is, before the Goidels or Scots, or, in other words, the Irish, whose legendary tales we are now examining. This connection between wicked men and evil deities, both of which are finally brought to subjection, is also found in the Sanscrit literature of India, where the same word, *Dasyu*, designates at once both demons and the hostile races that preceded the Aryans in India, and from whom the Aryans wrested the vast plains lying to the south of the Himalayas (3). While the eastern branch of the Indo-European family founded for itself a new territorial domain by force of arms, the western division of the same family obtained a like success by similar means; and this military achievement, so far-reaching in political consequences, had a similar effect in the world of literature as it had in India, namely, an almost complete blending of history with mythology.

(1) Elloth, one of the Tuatha De Danann, is slain by the god of Domna, *de Domnand*, of the Fomorians:

Dorochair Elloth con ag
 Athair morgarg Manannain
 Ocus Donand chomlan cain
 La Dé n-Domnand d'Fhomorchaib.

Poem of Flann Manistrech, or Flann of Monasterboice, who died in 1056 (Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. 1, lines 25, 26). At the time of the second Battle of Mag-Tured, one of the chiefs of the Fomorians is Indech, son of the god of Domna, "Mac de Domnann" (British Museum MS. Harleian, 5,280; O'Curry MS. Materials, 249). The Bk. of Invasions, referring to the same battle in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 9, 10, adds that Indech, son of the god of Domna, is king: "Indech Mac De Domnand in ri," and it says a little higher up that, in the second Battle of Mag-Tured, Ogma, son of Elada, was slain by Indech, son of a god, king of the Fomorians (Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, 122-124; cf. p. 11, col. 2, line 33). The same mythic personage is thus at the same time son of the god of Domna and of the king of the Fomorians.

(2) Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, vi., 18, 1, 2, 3.

(3) Bergaigne, *La Religion Vedique*, ii., p. 208-219.

IV.

Establishment of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in Ireland.

The Fomorians, gods of Night, of Death, and of Evil, came into Ireland before the Tuatha De Danann, or gods of Holiness, Light, and Life. Indeed, we have not yet touched upon the Tuatha De Danann, but we shall see later on the manner of their arrival in Ireland. We have treated of the Fomorians, however, on two occasions, and have seen them warring with Partholon and Nemed (1). The Fomorians are, therefore, the contemporaries of the two mythic races that first inhabited Ireland, but there is no account in early Irish literature of their arrival in the country. It was at a much later period that they were conceived as a tribe of pirates coming oversea like the Scandinavians and Danes of the ninth and tenth centuries (2); there is not, and there never appears to have been, any tale called the "Emigration of the Fomorians or the gods of Domna to Ireland." These gods seem to be as old as the world itself. But there did exist a tale describing the arrival of the men of Domna in Ireland.

The title of this tale is contained in the two earliest catalogues of Irish epic literature, the first of which, as we have already mentioned, goes back to about the year 700. The title in question, "Emigration of the Fir-Bolg," *Tochomlod Fer-m-Bolg*, mentions only the first of the three peoples of whom the Fir-Domnann were chief. But although the piece itself is lost, we can see by the fragments preserved to us in various other texts what an important place the men of Domna occupied. "Five kings," says a poem attributed to Gilla Coemain, an eleventh-century writer, "five kings came over the blue sea in three fleets. It was no small matter; and with them were the Galioin, the Fir-Bolg, and the Fir-Domnann." One of these was Rudraige, king of the Fir-Bolg, who ruled over Ulster. The Fir-Domnann alone had three kings, each of whom founded a kingdom: the kingdoms of Connaught, North Munster, and South Munster. Then, the Galioin, with one

(1) See *supra*, chap. 2, sec. 4 and chap. 5, sec. 3.

(2) In certain modern compositions, more political than literary in form, the writer, when speaking of the Fomorians, seems to have had the Anglo-Norman invaders in his mind.

king over them, like the Fir-Bolg, and who founded the kingdom of Leinster. The five kings were brothers, and they confided the supreme authority to one of their number, to Slane (Slaigne), King of the Galioin (1).

V.

Origin of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin.

Primitive Doctrine. The Mediæval Doctrine.

What country did this new population originally come from? If we accept Nennius, it was from Spain, for, according to him, all the various races that inhabited Ireland came originally from Spain; and Spain, with him, is an euhemeristic rendering of the Celtic words designating the mysterious Land of the Dead. But the idea which prevailed in Ireland in the eleventh century was that the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin had set out from Greece. After the disaster of Conann's Tower, those of Nemed's descendants, thirty in number, that escaped, remained for some time in Ireland, but were at length driven out by pestilence, and the heavy tribute imposed by the Fomorians. Then they split up into three groups.

One settled down in the northern regions of Europe, returning to Ireland under the name of the Tuatha De Danann. We shall see further on that the primitive Celtic doctrine ascribed quite another origin to the Tuatha De Danann, supposing them to come direct out of heaven. Another group settled down in Great Britain, and from it, according to the comparatively modern legend, the British are descended.

Finally, some of the descendants of Nemed took refuge in Greece, but the inhabitants of that inhospitable land reduced them to slavery, and oppressed them with tasks of the severest kind. They set them to transform the rocky surface into fruitful fields, forcing them to dig clay in the valleys, and

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. 1, lines 26-35. See also on this subject a poem attributed to Colum Cille (Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 2, line 3, et seq.; Giraldus Cambrensis, Top. Hib. div., iii., chaps. 4, 5, ed. Dimock, v., 144, 145; Keating, History of Ireland, ed. 1811, 122. Tuan Mac Cairill does not mention these five kings. He speaks of Semion, son of Stariat, from whom are descended the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin (Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 16, col. 2, lines 5-7). Semion, according to him, came himself into Ireland, whereas in Gilla Coemain, the Bk. of Invasions, and the later texts, his descendants alone came.

carry it in leathern bags (in Irish, *bolg*), to the summit of the rocks. Worn out by this rude toil—which was in reality only invented to furnish an etymology for the name Fir-Bolg—they rose to the number of five thousand, and converted their leathern bags into ships, and it was in these ships that they came into Ireland. There were three fleets of them, and they all arrived in Ireland within the same week: the first on a Saturday, the second on a Tuesday, and the third on the following Friday (1). They came to land in their alphabetical order: first the Fir-Bolg, then the Fir-Domnann, and lastly the Galioin.

VI.

Introduction of Chronology into this Legend. List of Kings.

When it was found expedient in the eleventh century to have an Irish chronology analogous to that of the Bible, as drawn up by the Græco-Roman scholars of the fourth century, it was related that between the disaster of Conann's Tower and the arrival of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin in Ireland, two hundred or two hundred and thirty years had elapsed (2). Before then the mythological traditions contained no reference whatever to chronology.

From the tenth century, also, dates a list of the kings of Ireland during the domination of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin. There were nine of these kings, and they reigned in all thirty-seven years. The last and most remarkable of them, and the only one, probably, who belongs to the primitive legend, was Eochaid Mac Eirc, elsewhere called Eochaid the "Proud," in Irish, *garb*, also Eochaid Mac Duach. He reigned ten years; during his time there was no rain or tempestuous weather in Ireland: the land being watered by dew. In his reign law first made its appearance. No year passed without judgment being given; all war ceased, and spears being no longer of any use, disappeared from the land (3).

(1) Bk. of Invasions, in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 2, lines 14-30, and p. 7, col. 2, line 35; the poem beginning "hEriu oll ordnit Gaedil" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 7, col. 1, line 36, seq.; Keating, History of Ireland, ed. 1811, 126-129; O'Curry, Manners and Customs, ii., 110-115).

(2) Poem, *Eriu ard, inis nar-rig* (Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. 1, lines 22, 23; Bk. of Invasions, *ibid*, p. 6, col. 2, line 22).

(3) Bk. of Invasions, *ibid*, p. 8, col. 1, lines 11-14. See also chap. vii., 6, as to how this idea arose.

VII.

Taltiu, Queen of the Fir-Bolg, foster-mother of Lug, one of the chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann. The Annual Fair of Taltiu on the Feast-Day of Lug or Lugus.

Eochaid had taken in marriage Taltiu, daughter of Magmor, which in Irish means "Great Plain," that is to say, the Land of the Dead (1). Later on, Magmor becomes a king of Spain, and Taltiu, a Spanish princess, brought into Ireland from Spain by Eochaid (2). At this remote period the same customs prevailed in Ireland as at the heroic period, and in subsequent times. Children were always brought up in a family other than the one they were born into. Taltiu, wife of the king of the Fir-Bolg, was thus the foster-mother of Lug, one of the Tuatha De Danann, and a chief of these gods of Light and Life, whose adversaries were the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, the Galioin, and their gods, the Fomorians.

These hostile groups were connected by still closer ties, for this same Lug, who one day slew Balar, king of the Fomorians, was the grandson of his victim.

The conquest of Ireland by the Tuatha De Danann put an end to the domination of the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin; Eochaid Mac Eirc lost the throne with his life, but Lug did not forget the maternal care which Taltiu had bestowed upon his childhood. And when she died, he celebrated her funeral games. Taltiu died on the first day of August, in the place which is named after her, now Teltown, originally an immense forest which she had cleared, and where she had set up her dwelling. A great annual fair was afterwards held upon this spot, and was celebrated for its games and horse races, its traffic, and the marriages that took place at it. It began fifteen days before the first of August, the day of Taltiu's death, and lasted until the fifteenth day after. The tombs of Taltiu and her husband were shown there, and even in mediæval times the

(1) Poem attributed to Colum Cille (Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 2, line 26; poem of Cuan hUa Lothchain, *ibid.*, p. 200, col. 2, line 25). Cuan died in 1024, before the changes were introduced at the latter part of the same century, which gave to the mythic history of Ireland the form it now has in the Bk. of Invasions. Taltiu is also written Taitiu.

(2) Bk. of Invasions, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 1, lines 34-41.

people had not forgotten the sad event whose memory these games were designed to perpetuate.

The name of Lug was associated with that of his foster-mother, Taltiu. The first day of August, the principal day of the Fair of Taltiu, was known as the *Feast of Lug* throughout all the lands of the Gael, in Ireland, in Scotland, in the Isle of Man (1); and in Irish tradition Lug is the originator of the old pagan assemblies held on fixed days, of which some of our fairs are the last vestiges. It was he, they say, who introduced into Ireland the games which were the chief attraction at these periodical assemblies, the horse or chariot races, and consequently the whip which was used to animate the horses, and chess, or the analogous game called *fidchell* (2).

Lug has given his name to the *Lugu-dunum* of Gaul, whose name means fortress of Lugus or Lug (3). The present Lyons, which was the principal of them, was the site of an annual assembly held by the Romans in honour of Augustus, on the first day of August, but which was in all probability but a new form of a more ancient custom. Before assembling here in honour of Augustus every first of August, the Gauls had no doubt gathered together annually on the same date, in honour of Lugus or Lug, as the Irish did at Taltiu (4).

(1) In Irish *lugnasad* (Cormac's Glossary, in Whitley Stokes' Three Irish Glossaries, p. 26); *lunasdal*, *lunasdaunn*, and *lunasd* in Scotch Gaelic (Dict. of Gaelic Language, published by the Highland Society, i., 602); *launistyn* in Manx (Kelly, *Fockleyr manninagh as baarlagh*, p. 125).

(2) Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. 2, lines 10-15. On the Fair of Taltiu, see the poem by Cuan hUa Lothchain, inserted in Bk. of Leinster, p. 200, col. 2. According to the Bk. of Invasions (*ibid.*, p. 9, col. 1, lines 38-42), Taltiu had two husbands: one belonging to the Fir-Bolg race, called Eochaid Mac Eirc; the other to the Tuatha De Danann, called Eochaid Garb, Mac Duach Daill. This distinction does not appear in the older texts, where they are both regarded as the same personage.

(3) *Lug*, genitive *Loga*, is in Irish a theme in *u*.

(4) On the Feast of Augustus at Lyons, see our Introduction a l'Etude de la Literature Celtique, pp. 215-218.

CHAPTER VII.—Emigration of the Tuatha De Danann. The First Battle of Mag-Tured (Moytura).

1. The Tuatha De Danann are Gods ; their place in the Theological System of the Celts.—2. Origin of the name Tuatha De Danann. The Goddess Brigit and her Sons, the Irish God Brian, and the Gaulish Chief Brennos.—3. The Battle of Mag-Tured ; one Battle only in Earliest Accounts ; later on, two Battles of Mag-Tured distinguished.—4. The God Nuadu Argatlam.—5. Time at which the Account of the First Battle of Mag-Tured was Written.—6. Cause of the Battle of Mag-Tured.—7. Account of the First Battle of Mag-Tured. Result of the Battle.

I.

The Tuatha De Danann are Gods ; their place in the Theological System of the Celts.

The Tuatha De Danann are the most exalted representatives of one of the two principles that divide the world. The more ancient of these is negative—death, night, ignorance, evil ; the second, which proceeds from the first, is positive—namely, day, life, knowledge (1), goodness. In the Tuatha De Danann we find the most brilliant expression of the latter principle ; and from them emanate the lore of the druids and the science of the *file*.

The Irish texts relating to the Tuatha De Danann may be divided into two separate groups. Some of them have come under the influence of the late eleventh-century school, which sought to create a history of Ireland based upon the genealogies of the Bible. In this systematically-conceived doctrine, all the mythic and historical races of Ireland are descended from the same stock, which can be traced back from Japhet to Adam, the father of mankind. The Tuatha De Danann include Nemed among the number of their ancestors. One of his sons, by name Iarbonel, was possessed with the gift of prophecy. Iarbonel's posterity escaped from the massacre of Conann's Tower, and departing out of Ireland, passed into the northern regions of the world, to learn druidical lore, the art of obtaining visions and foretelling the future, and the practice of incantations. When they had acquired these magical arts, the

(1) Tuan Mac Cairill calls the Tuatha De Danann "race of knowledge," *acs n-colais* (Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 16, col. 2, lines 29, 30).

descendants of Iarbonel came back to Ireland, and they alighted in the midst of dark clouds, so that the sun was hidden for the space of three days, and for three nights also, says the Book of Invasions (1).

But this is not the primitive tradition. The ancient pagan belief was that the Tuatha De Danann came down from heaven. Tuan Mac Cairill, after his conversion by Finnen, still held this belief. He relates that he was the contemporary of the *Tuatha Dee ocus ande*, that is to say, the folk of the god and of the false god, from whom, he adds, the men of learning are descended, as everyone knows; and it is likely, he continues, that in their journey hither they came down from heaven (2). A poem ascribed to Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 985, and which, if not actually by him, is at anyrate anterior to the Book of Invasions, recalls, though somewhat timidly, the same belief, without attempting to vouch for it: "They had no vessels. . . . No one really knows whether it was over the heavens, or out of the heavens, or out of the earth that they came. Were they lemons of the devil . . . were they men?" (3).

After adopting the eleventh-century idea that the Tuatha De Danann are the descendants of Japhet, by Iarbonel and Nemed, the Book of Invasions further on adopts the older tradition, and describes them as demons, the name by which the Christians used to designate the pagan gods (4). Contradictions of this kind are not uncommon in the Book of Invasions. The word demon was borrowed by the Irish from the Latin theologians, but they had an expression of their own to designate the wonderful human-like bodies by means of which they believed the gods sometimes made themselves visible to men—this was *siabra*, which might fittingly be rendered by "phantom." The poem of Eochaid Ua Flainn, just mentioned, relating the coming of the Tuatha De Danann to attack the Fir-Bolg, says that the new conquerors of Ireland were bodies of *siabra* (5). This

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 6, col. 2, line 1; p. 8, col. 2, lines 50, 51; p. 9, col. 1, line 1, seq.

(2) Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 16, col. 2, lines 28-31.

(3) Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. 2, lines 10-15. It is O'Clery who ascribes this poem to Eochaid Ua Flainn. See O'Curry's *Manners and Customs*, ii, p. 111; Atkinson, in *Contents of Bk. of Leinster*, p. 18, col. 2.

(4) "Ro brisset meic Miled cath Slebi Mis for demno idon for Tuaithe De Danand" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 13, col. 1, lines 1, 2).

(5) Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. 2, lines 6-8.

supernatural character of the Tuatha De Danann, prevented Giraldus Cambrensis from admitting them to be historic; consequently he makes no mention of them in his *Topographia Hibernica*, when investigating the legendary tales of the primitive inhabitants of Ireland, then recently conquered by the Anglo-Normans.

After the Tuatha De Danann had overcome the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, the Galioin, and their gods, the Fomorians, they were for a time sole masters of the country. Finally, however, the race of Mile, the Goidels, or modern Irish, arrived, and dispossessed them of the sovereignty. The vanquished Tuatha De Danann took refuge in the caves and depths of the mountains; and when they wander abroad now for diversion's sake, they are protected by a charm, which renders them invisible to the descendants of the blessed mortals who overthrew them. But, notwithstanding their downfall, they still have great power, which they exercise upon men-folk, sometimes doing them good turns, sometimes injury. The Greeks had a like conception of the men or demi-gods of the antique golden race.

"But when the earth had covered this race, they were transformed by almighty Zeus into beneficent demons, whose dwelling is the earth; and they are the guardians of mortal men, whose actions, both good and bad, they observe. And they go to and fro over the earth, invisible in the air, which serves them for a vesture, distributing riches; for this is the kingly function to which they have attained" (1).

II.

Origin of the name Tuatha De Danann. The Goddess Brigit and her Sons; the Irish God Brian, and the Gaulish Chief Brennos.

The name Tuatha De Danann (2) means "folk of the god whose mother is called Dana," genitive *Danann* or *Donand*. Dana, nominative *Donand* in Middle-Irish, is elsewhere called *Brigit*; she is the mother of the three gods who are known sometimes as Brian, Iuchar, and Uar, at other times as Brian,

(1) Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 120-126.

(2) *Tuatha* is a nominative plural. The singular *tuath* is also found, which may be rendered as "people."

Iucharba, and Iuchair. These three mythical beings are the gods of art and literature—*dei dana*, or the gods, sons of the goddess Dana, *dee Donand*. Dana or Donand, also called Brigit, their mother, was the wife of Bress, King of the Fomorians; but she belonged by birth to the other divine race, her father being Dagda, or the "good god," King of the Tuatha De Danann; (she was regarded as the goddess of literature) (1). Her three sons had in common an only son called *Ecne*, that is to say, "knowledge or poetry" (2). Brigit, the goddess of the pagan Irish, was supplanted in Christian times by St. Brigit; and the mediæval Irish in some measure transferred to her the cult their pagan ancestors had rendered to the goddess Brigit.

The cult of Brigit was not unknown in Great Britain. Four votive inscriptions dating back to the Roman occupation have been found there, dedicated to a goddess whose name is identical with hers, saving a slight dialectal variation (3). The date of one of these corresponds to the year 205 of the present era (4). The name *Brigit*, genitive *Brigte*, as written in the Irish of the twelfth century, presupposes a primitive form *Brigentis*, and the divine name contained in these four inscriptions of Roman Britain is *Brigantia* (5). The Gaulish form of the name appears to have been *Brigindo*; a dedication to a Gaulish divinity of this name is contained in the inscription found at Volnay, and now preserved in the Museum of Beaune (6).

The Celtic race thus worshipped at one time a female divinity whose name in Great Britain at the time of the Roman domination was *Brigantia*, her Gaulish name being probably *Brigindo*, while in mediæval Ireland she was called *Brigit*, for *Brigentis*.

(*) See on this point the texts quoted in vol. I of this series, p. 57, notes 3, 4, and p. 283, note 2. Compare the following passage in the Bk. of Invasions: "Donand ingen don Delbaith chetna, idon mathair in triir dedenaig idon Briain ocus Iuchorba ocus Iuchaire. Ba-siat-side na tri dee dana." Donand, daughter of the same Delbaeth, that is to say, the mother of the three last, to wit: Brian, Iucharba, and Iuchair. These were the three gods of literature and art, in Irish *dan*, genitive *dana*. (Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. 1, lines 30, 31).

(2) "Ecna mac na-tri n-dea n-dana" (Dialogue of the Two Sages, Bk. of Leinster, p. 187, col. 3. See Introduction a l'Etude de la Litt. Celtique, p. 283, note 2).

(3) *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vii., Nos. 200, 203, 875, 1062.

(4) *Ibid.*, 200.

(5) This is Whitley Stokes' theory, *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. 33, 34.

(6) *Dict. Archeol. de la Gaule*, Celtic inscrip. No. 4.

This name seems to be derived from the present participle of the root *bargh*, in Sanscrit *brih*, "to increase, to strengthen, to raise up," the present participle of which, "*brihant*," for *brighant*, means "huge, great, elevated." The Irish feminine substantive *brig*, "superiority, power, authority," is connected with this root; also the Welsh *bri*, "dignity, honour," which has lost the final *g*. The Irish adjective *briŋ*, "strong, powerful," comes from the same root (1).

In mediæval Ireland Brigit had a second name, *Dana*, or *Dona*, genitive *Danann*, *Donand*. She is the daughter of the supreme head of the gods of Day, Light, and Life, and is herself the mother of three gods belonging to the same divine group, who are called, after their mother, the gods of Dana. But in this triad we have in reality but three aspects of one god, Brian, who is the first of the three, and of whom the other two are in some sort merely counterparts (2). Thence the name by which the whole group of the gods of Day, Light, and Life is determined, namely, "the folk of the god of Dana," *Tuatha De Danann*.

This myth seems to have been known to the Gauls who sacked Rome at the beginning of the fourth century B.C., and to those also who, after conquering the northern region of the Balkan peninsula, a little more than a century later, carried their victorious arms as far as Delphi even, the innermost sanctuary of Greece. According to the Greek and Roman historians, the chief of the army that took Rome, and the chief of the army that pillaged Delphi had both the same name, *Brennos*. This coincidence has led French historians to assert that *Brennos* was in Gaulish a general title signifying "king." They explain it by the Welsh *brenin*, which has the same meaning. But this theory is no longer admissible. The modern Welsh *brenin*, in the twelfth century *breennhin*, has lost two medial consonants, and would have had the form *bregentinos* at the time of the Roman domination (3). We must, therefore, seek some other explanation of the word *Brennos*.

It was through the Gauls that the Romans, in the year 390 B.C., and the Greeks in 279, learned the name of the general

(1) *Grammatica Celtica*, 2nd ed., p. 141, the Welsh *bri* is found in Vannetais with the sense of "regard, consideration." See on this point M. Emile Ernault; *Rev. Celtique*, v., 268.

(2) See chap. xvi., sec. 3, 4, on the divine triad among the Celts.

(3) *Grammatica Celtica*, 2nd ed., p. 141.

who had led these barbarians to victory. Now, who was the supreme chief who at this primitive period, among races so profoundly impressed with the religious sentiment, led the armies into battle and rendered them invincible? It was a god. To the question: "Who is your king?" the Gaulish victor replied by giving the name of the god to whom he attributed the success of his arms, and whom he figured to himself as seated, invisible, in a chariot, a javelin in his hand, while he guided the victorious host over the bodies of its enemies. Now the name of this god, the same in Italy and in Greece, after a lapse of an hundred and twenty years, was that of the triad formed by the sons of Brigantia or Brigit, otherwise called Dana. Brian, the mediæval name of the first of the three sons of Brigit, is a comparatively modern form of a primitive *Brenos*. *Brenos* was the pre-mediæval pronunciation of *Bri-gentis*, later on pronounced *Brigit*; *Brennos* with double *n* being merely an orthographical variant of *Brenos*.

When the Gaulish conquerors of Rome and Delphi related that they fought under the command of *Brennos*, they uttered the name of the mythic chief whose supernatural power, they believed, had given them the victory over their enemies; and this mythic chief was the first of the three divine beings whom the mediæval Irish designated the gods of Dana. He held the first rank in the triad, from which the gods of Day, Life, and Light in Ireland took their general name. *Brennos* or *Brenos*, later on Brian, is the first of the gods of Dana, in old Irish *Dei Danann*. It is he who is pre-eminently the god of Dana; and the old Irish name for the gods of Day, of Light, and Life, is Tuatha De Danann, "folk of the god of Dana."

III.

The Battle of Mag-Tured. One Battle only in Earliest Accounts. Later on two Battles Distinguished.

Before being reduced to the state of invisible beings, the Tuatha De Danann, says the legend, were the visible masters of Ireland. They obtained the sovereignty at the Battle of Mag-Tured (Moytura). The most ancient tradition, that which we find established in the two earliest catalogues of Irish epic literature, and also in various tracts of the tenth century,

knows of only one Battle of Mag-Tured (1). In this battle the Tuatha De Danann overthrew the triple race of men who were at that time masters of Ireland, namely, the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin (2). In the same battle they also overcame the gods who were associated with this antique race, and who were known as the Fomorians or the Dei Domnann (3).

In the eleventh century it was held that there were two Battles of Mag-Tured. In the first the Tuatha De Danann defeated the Fir-Bolg, Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin; and in the second, the Fomorians or Dei Domnann. Flann Manistrech, an Irish monk who died in 1056, and who recast the old legends of Ireland according to the ideas which prevailed in his time, is the earliest writer in which we find mention of two Battles of Mag-Tured. In his poem relating the circumstances under which the divers personages known as the Tuatha De Danann, regarded as immortals in the earlier literature, came by their deaths, Flann begins with a first Battle of Mag-Tured (4). The much later text which has preserved the account of this battle, says that it took place in midsummer, on the 5th or 9th of June (5). This date was in all probability accepted in the eleventh century. Indeed, Flann Manistrech, after mentioning the first Battle of Mag-Tured, refers to the second, which was fought after November the First, the feast of *Samhain*, between Balor, the chief of the Fomorians, and the Tuatha De

(1) The earliest texts in which we find mention of the Battle of Mag-Tured are : (a) the Glossary of Cormac, who died at the beginning of the tenth century (Whitley Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. 32 ; *Sanas Chormaic*, p. 123, at the word Nescoit) ; (b) a poem by Cinaed Ua Artacan, who died in 975. This poem refers to the burials that took place in the ancient cemetery on the banks of the Boyne, and the author speaks of the couple who slept there before the Battle of Mag-Tured (*Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 51, col. 2, line 23).

(2) Poem ascribed to Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 985 (Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. 2, lines 15-22). The name Mag-Tured is contained in line 19, and the Fir-Bolg are mentioned in line 20, as the Tuath-Bolg, or people of the *bolg* or bags.

(3) The fragment of the tale of the Battle of Mag-Tured which Cormac inserted in his Glossary, about the year 900, belongs to the tale of the defeat of the Fomorians, as one can see by comparing the corresponding passage in O'Curry's analysis of this tale, taken from the MS. Harleian 5280, Brit. Mus. (*Manners and Customs*, ii., 249).

(4) "Cet chath Maige Tured" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. 1, line 24).

(5) O'Curry, MS. Materials, p. 246 ; *Manners and Customs*, ii., 237.

Danann (1). Now, the fifteenth-century MS., which was copied from a much earlier MS. now lost, and which has preserved for us a detailed account of the second Battle of Mag-Tured, makes it begin on the day of Samhain, November the First (2). Flann Manistrech's theory that there were two Battles of Mag-Tured is adopted by the Book of Invasions, which mentions them both (3). According to the Book of Invasions, the number slain at the first Battle of Mag-Tured was one hundred thousand (4). The same figure is given in a poem attributed to Eochaid Ua Flainn, who died in 985, and who had only heard of one battle, which was afterwards regarded as the second (5); and it was at this unique battle that the hundred thousand warriors were slain, whom the Book of Invasions, written in the following century, puts down to the first battle.

In the Book of Invasions, the number of those that fell at the second Battle of Mag-Tured is related to Lug, one of the Tuatha De Danann, by Indech, one of the gods of the Fomorians.

IV.

The God Nuadu Argat-Lam.

In the Book of Invasions there is an interval of twenty-seven years between the two Battles of Mag-Tured. This is due to the chronological inventions of the eleventh-century Irish scholars. They sought by every available means to establish a concordance between the beginnings of Irish history and the historic systems based upon the Bible. To this end they must needs space out the tales relating to the earliest history, or the mythological period, in such a way as to cover

(1) I maig Tured, ba-thri-ag
doceir Nuadu Argat-lam,
ocus Macha, iar-samain-sain
do-laim Balair Balcbemnig
(Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. I, lines 31, 32).

(2) O'Curry's MS. Materials, p. 250.

(3) Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. I, lines 9, 24, 25, 36; p. 9, col. I, line 51; col. 2, lines 1-16.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 9, col. I, lines 9, 10.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 10, col. 2, lines 21, 22. This poem is not ascribed to Eochaid in the text of the Bk. of Leinster; but in O'Clery's edition of the Bk. of Invasions (O'Curry, Manners and Customs, ii., p. 111).

the great interval which elapsed, according to Bede and St. Jerome, between the Deluge and the time of St. Patrick. So what they did was to take the names handed down by the old traditions, and others undoubtedly imagined at a more recent date, and with them create a list of kings, each of whom reigned for an arbitrarily fixed period.

Two of these kings reigned in the interval between the Battles of Mag-Tured, if we accept the account of the Book of Invasions. One of them was Bress Mac Eladan, who reigned for seven years (1). The other was Nuadu Argatlam, or the Silver Hand, who held the sovereignty for twenty years (2). Nuadu Argatlam lost his hand at the first Battle of Mag-Tured, where he commanded the Tuatha De Danann, as their king. His hand was replaced by a silver one which took seven years to fabricate. In the meantime he had to descend from the throne, and Bress was appointed regent. So soon as he had recovered the use of his arm, however, Bress had to abdicate the sovereignty, which Nuadu resumed, and held until the second Battle of Mag-Tured, at which he lost his life. This is the belief that was held in the eleventh century, and which is contained in the Book of Invasions. Nuadu, however, was not invented by the writer of the Book of Invasions; he already existed in the mythological conceptions of the Irish, long before it was thought there had been two Battles of Mag-Tured. Not only is his name found in a poem written about the beginning of the eleventh century, before his legend had given rise to the conception of a second Battle of Mag-Tured (3); but we also find that Nuadu, *Argatlam*, of the Silver Hand, was a god who had his cult in Ireland before the Middle Ages. This cult, too, had passed into Great Britain at the time of the Roman domination. A temple was dedicated to him in the County of Gloucester, not far from the mouth of the Severn, in that district around the British Channel which appears at the time of the Roman occupation to have been colonised by the same race as the Irish (4). Here, in the neighbourhood of

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 1, lines 29, 30.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 9, col. 1, line 31.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 8, col. 2, line 13. This poem is ascribed to St. Columba, Colum Cille; though it is doubtful whether he is the author of it. In any case it does not follow that it is by the writer of the Bk. of Invasions, who inserted it in his account. The line referring to the Battle of Mag-Tured is 15 in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 2.

(4) Rhys, *Early Britain, Celtic Britain*, 214 et seq.

Lidney, there was a temple consecrated to this divinity. His name in the Irish of the twelfth century was written *Nuadu* in the nominative, *Nuadat* in the genitive, and *Nuadait* in the dative. The dative appears in three different forms in three inscriptions which have come down to us from this Roman British temple, namely, *Nodonti*, *Nudenti*, *Nodenti* (1). *Nuadu* is then a god to whom worship was paid long before the Romans abandoned Great Britain, so far back as the commencement of the fifth century. The Irish euhemerists of the eleventh century converted him into a king who occupied the throne on two different occasions: first for an undetermined period, when the Tuatha De Danann came into Ireland (2); and then for a period of twenty years, from the time that his wound, received at the first Battle of Mag-Tured, was healed, to his death at the second battle (3); for, according to the comparatively new literature of the eleventh century, he suffered death; which, indeed, he had to, having ceased to be the god he was in pagan times, to become a mortal, through the triumph of Christianity.

According to the Irish writers of the eleventh century, there was an interval of seven years between his two reigns, during which time Bress held the sovereignty. Add to this the twenty years of his second reign, and we have twenty-seven years, the time which elapsed between the two Battles of Mag-Tured, in the first of which Nuada was wounded, and in the second of which he lost his life. But this chronology is of recent invention, as there is only one battle mentioned in the texts anterior to the eleventh century.

V.

Period in which the Account of the First Battle of Mag-Tured was Written.

We shall now describe the two Battles of Mag-Tured, confining ourselves to the comparatively recent redaction in which they have come down to us. The only MS., to our knowledge,

(1) *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vii., p. 42, Nos. 138, 139, 140. It was M. Gaidoz who first connected the Irish *Nuadu*, *Nuadat*, *Nuadait*, with the divine name contained in these three inscriptions.

(2) Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 1, lines 23-25; p. 10, col. 2, line 51; p. 11, col. 1, line 1.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 9, col. 1, lines 31-51; p. 127, col. 1, lines 48, 49; p. 11, col. 1, line 6.

containing the account of the first battle, dates no further back than the fifteenth or sixteenth century (1). There is only one MS. of the second Battle of Mag-Tured also, and it dates from the fifteenth century (2). The primitive redaction of both pieces, however, is far anterior to the date of their transcription in these MSS. And the second seems, on examination, to be much more ancient than the first.

The first of them dates from a time when the primitive character of Celtic tradition had been sensibly altered in Ireland by the rise of new epical ideas. As we have already pointed out, for instance, the Fir-Bolg, at the first Battle of Mag-Tured, took counsel with the fabulous Fintan, the Christian double of the Celtic Tuan Mac Cairill, and the sons of Fintan were slain in the battle. Now, Fintan was only conceived in the second half of the tenth century, so that his presence in the tale of the first Battle of Mag-Tured gives it an air of being comparatively modern.

The piece containing the account of the second Battle of Mag-Tured is much more ancient in character than that referring to the first, which is the double of the second. Besides, we find a fragment of the account of this second battle in Cormac's Glossary, which dates from the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century. However, we must take the events in their natural order, and commence with the legend of the first Battle of Mag-Tured.

VI.

The Cause of the First Battle of Mag-Tured.

When Partholon, the chief of the earliest mythic inhabitants of Ireland, came over from Spain, he landed on the south-west coast, whereas the Tuatha De Danann landed on the north-east, at the opposite extremity of the island. This was on Monday, May the First, the Feast of *Beltene* (3). On the First of May, too, the Irish, or the sons of Mile, were to arrive. Partholon came into Ireland on the fourteenth of the same month (4). The Tuatha De Danann alighted in the midst of a

(1) MS. H. 2, 17, pp. 90-99, Trin. Coll., Dub.

(2) MS. Harleian 5280, fols. 52-59, Brit. Mus.

(3) Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, p. 204.

(4) *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, pp. 4-14; cf. *Bk. of Leinster*, p. 5, col. 1, line 8.

magical cloud which rendered them invisible; and when the cloud had disappeared, and the Fir-Bolg had become aware of their presence, the Tuatha De Danann had already pushed on to the north-west of Connaught, and had raised the fortifications round their camp at Mag-Rein.

Where did they come from? They affirmed, says one writer, that they came into Ireland on the wings of the wind. The truth is, adds this euhemerist, that they came over the sea in ships, which they destroyed immediately after landing. But the most ancient tradition, as we have already stated, makes them come without ships, out of heaven (1).

The Fir-Bolg, before taking any action, resolved to ascertain who the new arrivals were. So they sent forward the tallest, the most powerful, and the bravest warrior among them to the camp of Mag-Rein, to see who they were that had built it. This warrior, whose name was Sreng, went forward on his mission; but, before he reached the camp, the sentinels of the Tuatha De Danann had perceived him, and they sent one of their warriors named Breas to meet him. Sreng and Breas approached with great caution. When they were within speaking distance they stopped short, and covering each other with their shields, stood looking at one another for a long time with an uneasy air. At length Breas broke the silence. He spoke in his mother tongue, which was Irish, since all the primitive races of Ireland, according to the Christian idea, were descended from the same father, who was a descendant of Magog or Gomer, the sons of Japhet. Sreng, the Fir-Bolg warrior, was delighted to hear the stranger addressing him in Irish. Then they drew nearer to one another, and told their genealogies, and examined each other's weapons. Sreng had two heavy pointless spears, while Breas had two very light sharp-pointed spears. This detail is in keeping with the data of the ancient literature. As we have already pointed out, javelins had at this time fallen into disuse in Ireland (2). Sreng adopted the new fashion; Breas, the more ancient one, afterwards revived. One of the old poems inserted in the Book of Invasions relates that in the days of Eochaid Mac Eirc, the last king of the Fir-Bolg, the weapons were all pointless in Ireland, adding that the Tuatha De Danann then came with lances, and slew the king (3).

(1) See *supra*, sec. I.

(2) See chap. vi., sec. 6.

(3) Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 1, lines 33-38. O'Curry, in his *Manners and Customs*, ii., 237, ascribes this poem to Tanaidhe O'Maelchonaire,

Breas, the messenger of the Tuatha De Danann, had never seen such heavy pointless lances as those of the Fir-Bolg Sreng ; nor had Sreng ever beheld spears so light and sharp-pointed as those of Breas. Then they exchanged weapons, and brought them back to their respective hosts for examination.

Before departing, Breas proposed to Sreng, on the part of the Tuatha De Danann, that the Fir-Bolg should give them one half of the island, if so, the two races might live on friendly terms with each other, and together defend the country against all future invaders. Then the two warriors returned to their own people : Sreng to Tara, which was already the capital of Ireland, under the domination of the Fir-Bolg, and Breas to the camp of the Tuatha De Danann. The Fir-Bolg decided not to accept the proposal of the Tuatha De Danann ; they thought that if they gave up the half of their kingdom to these newcomers, they would soon take advantage of their weakness, and take possession of the whole island. So they gathered an army together and set out to attack the invaders.

Meantime the Tuatha De Danann had examined the two pointless spears which Breas had brought them as specimens of the weapons used by the Fir-Bolg warriors. Their first feelings were those of astonishment ; their next those of dismay. The heavy pointless spears of the Fir-Bolg seemed to them more formidable than their own sharp-pointed spears. So they abandoned their camp, and beat a retreat to the south-west. Here the Fir-Bolg came up on them, on the plain of Mag-Tured (Moytura).

In the primitive Irish legend there was only one plain of Mag-Tured, that where the Tuatha De Danann, in one battle, overthrew both the Fir-Bolg and the Fomorians. And when two battles were distinguished in the eleventh century, one against the Fir-Bolg, the other against the Fomorians, it was on this same plain that they were fought, after an interval of twenty-seven years. Later on, however, two battle-fields were discriminated : one to the south, in the County of Mayo, the other to the north, in the County of Sligo ; the first was called Mag-Tured Conga, where the Fir-Bolg were defeated ; the second, Mag-Tured na bFomorach, where the Fomorians were over-

who died in 1136. O'Curry's reading is not that of the Bk. of Leinster, but was probably taken from the Bk. of Ballymote or the Bk. of Lecan, which contain the same piece (Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 16, v., col. 2, lines 49, seq ; Bk. of Lecan, fol. 278, r, col. 1).

thrown. It is in the seventeenth-century texts that the primitive legend, already complicated by the conception of a second battle, twenty-seven years after the first, is further complicated by the conception of a second battle-field, some fifty miles further distant (1).

The two armies were drawn up on the plain of Mag-Tured. The Fir-Bolg were commanded by their king, Eochaid Mac Eirc, and the Tuatha De Danann by the celebrated Nuadu Argatlam, or the Silver-handed, who at this time, however, possessed both his hands entire, and had not received his surname. Nuadu, wishing to avoid hostilities, renewed his proposal to the Fir-Bolg, and demanded the surrender of one half of the island. Eochaid Mac Eirc refused. "When will you begin the battle?" said the messengers of Nuadu. And the Fir-Bolg replied, "We must have time to make ready our spears, and burnish our helmets (2), and sharpen our swords; then, we should require spears like yours, and you, also, spears like those we have." And it was resolved, by common accord, that one hundred and five days should be set apart to prepare for the battle.

VII.

The First Battle of Mag-Tured. Result of the Battle.

The battle opened on the first day of the sixth week in summer, that is, on the fifth of June. It was agreed by the chiefs of both armies that there should be no general engagement, but that an equal number of warriors should go out and fight every day. Several combats took place in this fashion, in all of which the Tuatha De Danann had the advantage. This lasted four days. In the end the Tuatha De Danann were victorious. The Fir-Bolg even lost their king, who had left the battle-field in search of water to assuage his thirst, when he was pursued by a party of the Tuatha De Danann, led by the three sons of Nemed. A hundred guards who were with him could not save his life. They sang of his death in the twelfth

(1) Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, pp. 204-206; *Annals Four Masters*, ed. O'Donovan, 1851, i., pp. 16-18. See on this point the learned remarks of Mr. W. H. Hennessy in his preface to the *Annals of Loch-Ce*, i., pp. 36-39.

(2) There is no mention of helmets in the earliest Irish texts.

century (1), and in the eleventh (2), perhaps much earlier even, and the lays are preserved in the bardic poems that have come down to us (3). As the spears of the Fir-Bolg had no points down to this time, he was the first king in Ireland, it is said, who lost his life at the spear's point (4). Eochaid was buried where he fell, and the victors raised a great heap of stones, or cairn, over him, which is pointed out even to this day.

After the battle had continued for four days, and the Fir-Bolg were being worsted, they proposed to the Tuatha De Danann to make an end of it by a small engagement, consisting of three hundred men on each side, the issue of which would decide the fate of the two peoples. But the Tuatha De Danann offered them terms of peace and the province of Connaught. The Fir-Bolg accepted these terms, and abandoned their capital, Tara, and the rest of Ireland, save the province of Connaught, to the Tuatha De Danann. So late as the seventeenth century, the annalist Duaid Mac Firbis discovered that many of the inhabitants of this province claimed to be the descendants of these same Fir-Bolg (5).

We need not here discuss the value of these genealogical claims. But the truth seems to be that there did exist a people called the Fir-Bolg. In the modern tales, Fir-Bolg is used to designate the three races of the Fir-Bolg, Fir-Domnann, and Galioin, the most important of which was the second. After they had disputed the soil of Ireland with the modern Irish race, that is, the extreme western branch of the Celtic race whom they had preceded in the country, they were associated by the mythological legend with the wicked gods, the gods of Night and Death—the Fomorians, who were the adversaries of the

(1) Poem by Tanaidhe O'Maelchonaire, who died in 1136 (Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. I, lines 33-40). Cf. O'Curry's *Manners and Customs*, ii., p. 237.

(2) Poem by Gilla Coemain, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. I, lines 46, 47.

(3) Poem attributed to Colum Cille (Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. I, lines 33-40, lines 47, seq.).

(4)

Is-se sin cet-ri de-rind
rogaet in-inis find Fail.

(Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. I, lines 47, 48).

E-sin cet-ri do rind
rogaet ar-tus in-hErind.

(*Ibid.*, p. 127, col. I, line 47).

(5) On the First Battle of Mag-Tured, see O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, ii., pp. 235-239; MS. Materials, pp. 244-246.

good gods, the gods of Life and Light, known as the Tuatha De Danann. The latter obtained the victory at the Battle of Mag-Tured, later on conceived of as two battles. We shall now pass to the account of the second.

CHAPTER VIII.—Emigration of the Tuatha De Danann (Continued). Second Battle of Mag-Tured.

1. Reign of Bress.—2. Avarice of this Prince.—3. The File Corpre. End of Bress' Reign.—4. War Between the Fomorians and the Tuatha De Danann. The Fomorian Warriors Balor and Indech.—5. Arrival of Lug among the Tuatha De Danann at Tara.—6. Review of the Artificers by Lug.—7. Second Battle of Mag-Tured. The Fabrication of Javelins.—8. The Spy Ruadan.—9. Second Battle of Mag-Tured (Continued). The Wounding of Ogma and Nuada.—10. Second Battle of Mag-Tured (Conclusion). Death of Balor. Defeat of the Fomorians. The Sword of Tethra falls into the Hands of Ogma.—11. The Harp of the Dagda.—12. The Fomorians and Tethra in the Isle of the Dead.—13. The Raven and the Wife of Tethra.

I.

The Reign of Bress.

In the primitive legend the Tuatha De Danann do not give battle immediately on their arrival. They make an agreement with the Fomorians or gods of Domna, the then inhabitants of the country, to recognise the supremacy of the prince who was at that time invested with the kingly functions. This was Bress, son of the Fomorian Elatha (1), and a tyrant like all his race (2). Bress is said to have reigned for seven

(1) In some relatively modern genealogies the father of Elatha is Neit the god of War: "Neit idon dia catha la-gentib Gaedel" (Cormac's Glossary, in the *Leabhar Breac*, p. 269, col. 2, line 35). The correct form is *Neit* without the *th*, as rightly corrected by Whitley Stokes, *Sanas Chormaic*, p. 122; and, better still, *Neit*, with an accent on the *e*, *ibid.* p. 39. In the Bk. of Invasions (Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. 1, lines 2-11), Neit is ranked among the Tuatha De Danann. This idea is borrowed from Flann Manistrech, who died in 1056 (Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. 2, lines 18, 19).

(2) Bress must not be confounded with Breas the envoy sent by the Tuatha De Danann to confer with Sreng before the first Battle of Mag-Tured. Breas was slain in this battle (O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, ii., 239).

years (1); but it is quite evident that this figure is one of the chronological inventions of the eleventh-century Irish scholars (2).

It was affirmed in the eleventh century that the Tuatha De Danann merely accepted the sovereignty of Bress because their own King, Nuadu, having lost his hand at the first Battle of Mag-Tured, was no longer eligible to remain upon the throne; for it was a rule in Ireland that no one could take the sovereignty whose body had any blemish or defect. It took seven years for Diancecht, the physician of the Tuatha De Danann, and Creidne, their brazier, to supply Nuadu with a new hand of silver, which would enable him to resume the sovereignty again. When this was accomplished, Bress abdicated the throne, and Nuadu held it for twenty years, until he was slain at the second Battle of Mag-Tured. But all these figures are foreign to the primitive legend, in which there is no mention whatever of dates. In the mythological tradition there is no reference to the first battle, consequently Nuadu is said to have lost his hand in what was afterwards regarded as the second Battle of Mag-Tured; nor is there any interval between the end of Bress' reign and the second battle, which was brought about as an act of vengeance by the dethroned Bress.

II.

The Reign of Bress. His Avarice.

The avarice of Bress was unbounded. He exacted oppressive tributes from the people and gave nothing in return. It is related, for instance, that he arrogated to himself the milk of all the hairless dun cows in the land. At first sight one would think that cattle of this description must have been few in number, and the tax in consequence but a light one. Not so, however, for Bress caused a great fire of ferns to be made, and all the cows in Munster to pass through it, so that they might fulfil the necessary conditions, and their milk become the royal property (3).

But what occasioned most discontent was his inhospitality.

(1) Bk. of Invasions, Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 1, lines 29, 30.

(2) The earliest mention of this date, to our knowledge, is found in the chronological poem of Gilla Coemáin, who died in 1072 (Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. 1, lines 50, 51).

(3) Dinnsenchus, Bk. of Leinster, p. 169, col. 1; p. 214, col. 2.

The ancient Irish were much given to feasting and merry-making. When the chiefs prepared a banquet they invited their vassals to partake of it ; and they, in turn, honoured the houses of the latter with their presence. As for the subjects of Bress, says the tale, their knives were not greased at his table, and however often they visited him their breath did not smell of ale. Nor was there any entertainment whatever to compensate them for the meanness of the feast. At the assemblies of Bress no one ever heard the voice of bard or *file*. No satirist ever came to cheer the household ; the sound of the harp or the pipes or the horn was not heard ; and never a juggler or buffoon was called in to enliven the sad inmates. If Bress had wanted bards and musicians and jugglers and buffoons he would have had to pay for their services, which in his niggardliness he wished at all hazard to avoid. In fact, Bress was a Fomorian, and, as such, the enemy of art and letters. For these are the creation of the Tuatha De Danann, the gods of Day and Life. The Fomorians are the gods of Ignorance, as of Death and Night.

III.

The File Corpre. End of Bress' Reign.

One evening, however, there came to the court a certain *file* named Corpre, whose mother Etan (1) was herself a poetess (2). He was of the race of the Tuatha De Danann. The king sent him to a small, dark chamber, without fire or furniture, where, after a long delay, he was served with three dry cakes on a small, mean table. Corpre, in revenge, pronounced a bitter satire of four verses on his host :

Without food quickly on a dish :
 Without a cow's milk whereon a calf grows :
 Without a man's abode under the gloomy night :
 Without paying a company of story-tellers : let that be Bress' condition (3).

(1) Cormac's Glossary, under *Cernine* and *Riss* (Whitley Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, pp. 11, 39, cf. 43, 44 ; *Sanas Chormaic*, pp. 37, 144, cf. 159). Poem ascribed to Eochaid Ua Flainn, in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. 2, line 33.

(2) *Etan*, in Middle Irish *Edan*, is at once the name of a goddess and the title of a poem. "Edan, ingen Dian-Cecht, bannlicerd, de cujus nomine dicitur edan idon aircedul" (Cormac's Glossary, in the *Leabhar Breac*, p. 267, col. 1, lines 5, 6). Whitley Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. 19 ; *Sanas Chormaic*, p. 67, has rightly corrected *Etan*.

(3) See *Introd. Litt. Celtique*, p. 260.

This is said to have been the first satire ever made in Ireland (1). We know what a magical power the satires of the *file* had upon the minds of the people. This one put an end to the reign of Bress. The oppressed Tuatha De Danann rose, and Bress, without any attempt at resistance, took to flight, abandoning the throne to Nuadu, along with Tara, which was then, as at the heroic period, the capital of Ireland. It was thus the science of the *file* achieved its first victory.

IV.

The War Between the Fomorians and Tuatha De Danann. The Fomorian Warriors, Balor and Indech.

Bress retired to the court of his father, Elatha, who received him coldly, seeming to think that he merited his disgrace. However, he provided him with an army with which to reconquer the throne, and recommended him to two powerful chiefs of the Fomorians. The first was Balor, of the Mighty Blows, *balc-beimnech*. A remarkable thing about him was that one of his eyes, which he generally kept covered, brought instant death to everyone on whom its gaze fell. The second chief of the Fomorians was Indech, whom the Book of Invasions, in one place, describes as a son of the god of Domna (2), who was worshipped by the Fir-Domnann, the principal of the three historic races that preceded the dominant race, known as the Goidels, the Scots, or the *Fene*.

It may be remembered that the three pre-Celtic races later subjugated by the Goidels, the Scots, or the Fene, that is, by the Western Celts, were the Fir-Bolg, the Fir-Domnann, and the Galioin, usually designated as the Fir-Bolg, or the Fir-Domnann, "men of Domna." In the Book of Invasions Indech is called son of the god of this people, Mac De Domnann, "son of the god of Domna." In the same tract, a few lines higher up, we read that Indech is son of the god, king of the Fomorians (3). We shall see later on that the king of the

(1) Is-i-sein cet-aer doronad in-Erinn (Commentary of *Amra Choluim Chillí*, in the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 8, col. 1, lines 27, 28). Cf. O'Beirne Crowe, *The Amra Choluim Chillí*, p. 26, and the *Yellow Bk. of Lecan*, MS. H. 2, 16, col. 805, Trin. Coll. Dublin.

(2) Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 9, 10.

(3) "La-hIndech mac de rig na-Fomorach" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 3, 4).

Fomorians is called Tethra. But the point to which we wish to direct attention is that, according to the Irish conception, the Fomorians, or wicked gods, the mythic adversaries of the good gods, are connected with the historic populations who preceded the Irish or the Celtic race in Ireland, and are, consequently, the hereditary enemies of that race. The same thing, as we have already pointed out, is observed in India, where the *Dasyu* are the mythic demons that war upon the gods, and at the same time the human enemies, the historic, dark-skinned adversaries of the white people who chanted the Vedic hymns (1).

V.

Arrival of Lug among the Tuatha De Danann at Tara.

The Fomorians made preparations to reconquer Ireland. But the Tuatha De Danann were in a position to offer a vigorous resistance. One of their principal warriors was Lug, son of Ethniu. Ethniu was the daughter of Balor, the most formidable of the Fomorian chiefs (2); but Lug belonged to the Tuatha De Danann, on his father's side, who was called Cian by some, and the Dagda by others (3). He received his education, however, among the Fomorians. For his father, following the

(1) Max Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii., pp. 8, 9.

(2) Lug is called *Mac Eithne* in a poem ascribed to Eochaid Ua Flainn, contained in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 10, col. line 31; he is surnamed *Mac Eithlend* in a poem written probably about the same time, and said to be the composition of Colum Cille (Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 2, line 14), and in an anonymous quatrain (*ibid.*, p. 10, col. 1, line 10). The first of these texts pre-supposes a nominative *Etan*, genitive *Ethne*, not *Ethnend*; in the two other texts, and in those of a more recent date, it is written *Ethlend*. It is in the Bk. of Invasions we learn that Ethniu was the daughter of Balor (Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 1, lines 44, 45).

(3) Cian, the father of Lug, was the son of Dian-Cecht, according to the Bk. of Invasions (Bk. Leinster, p. 9, col. 1, lines 43, 44; p. 10, col. 1, lines 2, 3). This is almost the same theory as that of Gilla Coemain, an eleventh-century writer, in his chronological poem (Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. 2, lines 1, 2), in which Lug figures as the grandson of Diancecht. According to one of the quatrains of this poem, Lug reigned for forty years, and Mac Cuill slew the grandson of Diancecht; now this grandson of Diancecht was indeed Lug, for we read in another eleventh-century poem, by Flann Manistrech, that Lug was slain by Mac Cuill (Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. 2, line 7). But Urard Mac Coisi, a tenth-century writer, makes Lug the son of the Dagda. *Cian*, used as an adjective, means "distant," and *Dagda* means "good god."

custom then in vogue, had put him out to nurse, his foster-mother being Taltiu, daughter of Magmor, and wife of Eochaid Mac Eirc, the last of the Fir-Bolg kings, also known as Mac Duach (1), who was slain by the Tuatha De Danann. But Lug remembered his father, and he resolved to fight in the ranks of the Tuatha De Danann. Accordingly, he set out for Tara, the capital of Ireland, where Nuadu, king of the Tuatha De Danann, reigned in the place of Bress, and was making preparations to resist the attack of Balor of the Mighty Blows, and Indech, son of the god of Domna, or the god-king of the Fomorians.

When Lug came to the gate of Tara, the doorkeeper stopped him and asked him who he was. "I am a carpenter," said Lug. The doorkeeper answered that they were not in want of a carpenter, as they had a very good one whose name was Luchta, the son of Luchad. The young artist then said that he was an excellent smith. "We don't want such an artist," said the doorkeeper, "as we have a good one already, namely, Dolum Cuaillemeach, professor of the three new designs" (*greisa*). Lug then said that he was a champion. "We don't want a champion," said the doorkeeper, "since we have a champion, namely, Ogma (2), the son of Ethlenn." "Well, then," said Lug, "I am a harper." "We are not in want of a harper," said the doorkeeper, "since we have a most excellent one, namely, Abcan, the son of Becelmas." "Well, then," said Lug, "I am a poet and an antiquary." "We don't want a man of these professions," said the doorkeeper, "because we have already an accomplished professor of these sciences, namely, En, the son of Ethoman." "Well, then," said Lug, "I am a necromancer." "We are not in want of such a man," said the doorkeeper, "because our professors of the occult sciences and our druids are very numerous." "Well, then, I am a physician," said Lug. "We are not in want of a professor of that art," said the doorkeeper, "as we have an excellent one already, namely, Diancecht." "Well, then, I am a good cup-bearer," said Lug. "We don't want such an officer," said the doorkeeper, "because we are already well

(1) Poem attributed to Colum Cille (Bk. of Leinster, p. 8, col. 2, lines 26, 27; Bk. of Invasions, p. 9, col. 2, line 34, seq). We have already explained (chap. 6, sec. 7) that Magmor, her father, who has been converted into a king of Spain, is the land of the Dead.

(2) Ogmé; in Middle Irish, *Ogma*.

supplied with cup-bearers. . . ." "Well, then," said Lug, "I am an excellent artificer" (*cerd*). "We are not in want of an artificer," said the doorkeeper, "as we have already a famous one, namely, Creidne the artificer." "Well, then," said he, "go to the king and ask him if he has in his court any one man who embodies all these arts and professions; and if he has, I shall not remain longer, nor seek to enter Tara." The doorkeeper took the message to the king, who commanded that Lug should be brought in, upon which he was proclaimed *ollamh*, or chief doctor of the sciences (1), receiving the surname of *Sabá il-danach*, "prince of the manifold sciences" (2). Lug is none other than the Gaulish god whom Cæsar describes as the inventor of all the arts: *omnium inventorem artium*. Cæsar calls him Mercury, conformably to the system which gave Latin names to all the Gaulish divinities (3). But the Celtic name of this god is found in two Roman inscriptions of the Imperial period, one in Switzerland, the other in Spain (4); and in Gaul it is borne by several cities, the principal of them being Lyons, *Lugu-dunum*, contracted into *Lug-dunum*.

VI.

The Review of the Artificers by Lug.

The Tuatha De Danann now made preparations for battle. Lug and the Dagda were directed to summon together the men of all the various arts and appoint them the parts they would have to play in the battle. Accordingly, they called into their presence the smiths, the braziers, the carpenters, the physicians, the sorcerers, the cup-bearers, the druids, and the *file*, and they

(1) This tale is in the legend of the Second Battle of Mag-Tured (Brit. Mus. MS. Harleian, 5280, fol. 52, seq). We have adopted O'Curry's version of it (Manners and Customs, iii., 42, 43). . . . Since the publication of the present work, a full translation of this legend by Whitley Stokes has appeared in the *Revue Celtique*, vol. xii. (Tr).

(2) This surname of Lug is not only found in the text cited in the preceding note, but also in Urard Mac Coisi's *Orgain Maelmilcothaig* (Bodleian MS., Rawlinson B. 512, fol. 110, r, col. 1), where the word Lug is developed into *Lugaid*, genitive *Lugdach*. For the meaning of the word *sabá*, or *sab*, see *Grammatica Celtica*, 2nd. ed., 255, 258.

(3) De Bello Gallico, vi., 3, chap. 17, sec. 1.

(4) Mommsen, *Inscriptiones Cœnfoederationis Helveticæ*, No. 161; *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ii., 2818.

inquired of each class what would be its service in the battle with the Fomorians (1).

The first artificer to come before them was Goibniu the Smith. "What aid will you give us in the battle?" said Lug. And Goibniu made answer: "Though the men of Erin should continue the battle for seven years, for every spear that falls off its handle, and for every sword that breaks, I will give a new weapon in place of it, and no erring or missing cast shall be thrown with any spear that is made by my hands, and no flesh into which it shall enter shall ever taste the sweets of life after; and this," said he, "is more than Dub the Fomorian smith can do."

After Goibniu the Smith came Creidne the Brazier. "And you, Creidne," said Lug, "what aid will you give us in the battle?" "This," said Creidne, "Rivets for Spears, and Hilts for Swords, and Bosses and Rims for Shields, shall be supplied by me to all our men."

After Creidne, Lug passed to Luchtine the Carpenter. "And you, Luchtine," said Lug to the carpenter, "what aid will you give us in the battle?" "This," said Luchtine, "a full sufficiency of Shields and of Spear-handles shall be supplied by me to them" (2).

Then the other artificers came before them; to each was put the same question, and Lug assigned them their posts in the battle.

VII.

The Second Battle of Mag-Tured. The Fabrication of Spears.

The battle began on November the First, which is the Feast of Samhain, the first day of the Celtic winter (3). It may be remembered that the Tuatha De Danann arrived on the first of May, the Feast of Beltene, the first day of summer.

The Tuatha De Danann were led by their king, Nuadu; while the Fomorian king, Tethra, played but a secondary part in this celebrated battle. It lasted for several days. To the great astonishment of the Fomorians, the weapons of the

(1) MS. Harleian, 5280, Brit. Mus., analysed by O'Curry, MS. Materials, p. 249.

(2) *Ibid.*

(3) *Iar Samain Sain*, poem by Flann Manistrech, who died in 1056 (Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. 1, line 32). Cf. O'Curry, MS. Materials, p. 250.

Tuatha De Danann were always in perfect condition, whereas theirs, for the most part, were unfit for use after the first day. The reason of this was that Goibniu the Smith, Creidne the Brazier, and Luchtine the Carpenter were continually manufacturing fresh weapons for the Tuatha De Danann. With three strokes of his hammer Goibniu fashioned a spear, and at the third stroke it was perfect. With three chippings Luchtine made the spear-handle, and at the third chipping it was perfect. And from the hands of Creidne the Brazier, the rivets were turned out with the same rapidity and perfect finish. When Goibniu had completed a spear-head, he seized it in his pinchers and cast it at the lintel of the door, so that it remained fast in it, the socket protruding. Then Luchtine the Carpenter took a spear-handle and hurled it at the socket, and his cast was so powerful and unerring that the handle never failed to enter it. Then Creidne the Brazier, who was standing by with the rivets in his hand, flung them at the spear-head, and his cast was so sure that they never missed the holes, but passed into the wood; thus, in one instant, the weapon was finished and ready for immediate use (1).

Owing to the marvellous skill of Goibniu, Luchtine, and Creidne, the Tuatha De Danann soon had an immense advantage over the Fomorians, who were at a loss to discover the cause of it. At length they had recourse to spying.

VIII.

The Spy Ruadan.

Bress, the dethroned king of Ireland, had a son named Ruadan, who might by his parentage have fought in the ranks of either army, his mother Brig[it] being the daughter of the Dagda, one of the chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann, and the mortal enemy of the Fomorian Bress (2).

(1) Cormac's Glossary, under *Nescoil*. Whitley Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. 32; *Sanas Chormaic*, p. 123. The same details are given in the account of the second Battle of Mag-Tured, contained in the Harleian MS., 5280, Brit. Museum, analysed by O'Curry (*Manners and Customs*, ii., 249). This is one of our reasons for ascribing the account of the second Battle of Mag-Tured to an earlier period than that of the Harleian MS., which dates from the fifteenth century only.

(2) O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*. ii. n. 250

There is nothing surprising in this relationship. The Fomorian Bress is the son-in-law of the Dagda, one of the Tuatha De Danann chiefs. And we have already seen that Lug, another of the Tuatha De Danann, is, on his mother's side, a grandson of Balor, one of the Fomorian chiefs; so also Brian, Iuchar, and Iucharba, whom the texts describe as the gods of Genius or of Dana, *tri dei Dana, tri dee Donand* (1), in other words, the three principal chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann, are sons of the Fomorian Bress, and it is only by their mother Brigit, daughter of the Dagda, that they belong to the Tuatha De Danann (2). Greek mythology affords us a parallel instance in the battle of the gods with the Titans, where the gods are commanded by Zeus, while his father Kronos is at the head of the Titans, and is overcome by his son in the battle.

Ruadan, the Fomorian warrior, was the brother-german of Brian, Iuchar, and Iucharba. On his mother's side he was the grandson of the Dagda, whom we have seen with Lug, organising the army of the Tuatha De Danann. Ruadan was sent to the camp of the latter by the Fomorians. There he was well received, and he profited by the occasion to visit the forge where the weapons were being fabricated with such marvellous cunning by Goibniu the Smith, Luchtine the Carpenter, and Creidne the Brazier. He saw the process by which these three artists fashioned the arms that had been playing such havoc with the Fomorians. Then he went out of the camp of the Tuatha De Danann, and returned to the Fomorians, to whom he related all that he had seen. The Fomorians sent him back to the Tuatha De Danann, with orders to slay Goibniu the Smith, in the hope that the Tuatha De Danann would be unable to replace their weapons at the next battle. Ruadan was again made welcome by the Tuatha De Danann, and he went to the forge and asked the three artificers for a spear, which they gave him, Goibniu fashioning the head, Creidne the rivets, and Luchtine the shaft. A woman whose business was to sharpen the weapons as they were finished, sharpened his spear and handed it to him. Then Ruadan returned to the forge and smote the smith with it. Though wounded, the latter had sufficient strength to turn it against Ruadan, and he passed it through his body, so that he died.

(1) See *Introd. Litt. Celtique*, p. 283, note 2.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 57, note 4.

IX.

The Second Battle of Mag-Tured (Continued) The Wounding of Ogma and Nuadu.

The battle was renewed. Several warriors of the Tuatha De Danann received wounds which the eleventh-century texts describe as mortal. Particular mention is made of the exploits of the two Fomorian warriors already referred to. One of these, Indech, son of the god of Domna, or of the king of the Fomorians, smote Ogma (1), the Gaulish Ogmios of Lucian. The other, and more formidable of the two, Balor of the Mighty Blows, *Balbeimnech*, smote Nuadu Argat-lam, of the Silver Hand, king of the Tuatha De Danann, who, if we accept the modern form of the legend, had lost his hand twenty-seven years before, at the first Battle of Mag-Tured, fighting against the Fir-Bolg. In the primitive legend there is only one Battle of Mag-Tured. Nuadu, no doubt, lost his hand at the commencement of this battle, and after having it replaced, returned into the thick of the fight, where he received a fresh wound which proved mortal, his death, however, not taking place until Christian times (2), when the rationalist redactors of the legend lowered to the rank of human beings the wonder-working immortals worshipped by the pagans.

It was not from a spear or a sword that Nuadu received his second wound. Balor had an evil eye which he generally kept closed, but whose glance, whenever he opened it, brought death to whomsoever it lighted on. This glance is the thunderbolt (3). The Fomorian Balor, then, shot a glance of his evil eye at Nuadu, the king of the Tuatha De Danann, who was stricken to the ground before it, and disabled; he even died, it is said, so far as a god can die, though this did not prevent him from being a living god in historic times, when worship was paid to him by his pagan followers in a temple by the Severn, when the Romans held sway in Britain (4).

(1) Leabhar Gabhala, or Bk. of Invasions, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 3, 4, 9, 10.

(2) Poem of Flann Manistrech (Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. 1, lines 31, 32).

(3) We find the same doctrine in M. J. Darmester's *Ormazd and Ahriman*, pp. 122, 123. The sun is the "good eye."

(4) See *supra*, chap. vii., 4.

The Homeric gods, though immortal, are not invulnerable. Not with impunity do Ares and Aphrodite mingle with the Trojan warriors under the walls of Ilium, and brave the formidable spear of Diomedes the tamer of horses. Though a daughter of the supreme god Zeus, Aphrodite is wounded in the hand, and her blood flows; she utters a great cry, and in her violent pain flees to Olympus, the sojourn of the gods (1). The place of this goddess was not amid the tumult of battle; that was the lot of Ares, the god of War. Yet the spear of Diomedes attains him also, at his girdle, and the wounded god cries aloud in his pain, with the cry of ten thousand men, and then, following the example of the goddess of love, takes flight to Olympus, where Zeus, the just and good, chides him, and then binds up his wounds and heals him (2).

Here, then, as elsewhere, we find a striking resemblance between Irish and Greek mythology. But to return to the field of Mag-Tured, where the Tuatha De Danann and the Fomorian hosts are drawn up in presence, and where Nuadu, king of the Tuatha De Danann, has just been stricken down by Balor, the god of the Thunderbolt, one of the chiefs of the Fomorians, in other words, of the gods of Death and Night (3).

X.

The Second Battle of Mag-Tured (Conclusion). Death of Balor. Defeat of the Fomorians. The Sword of Tethra Falls into the Hands of Ogmá.

Lug determined to avenge Nuadu, and with this intent came up to Balor, whose evil eye was covered. When Balor beheld his new adversary coming towards him, he began to lift up the lid of his eye, but Lug was too quick for him, and, casting a sling-stone at him, he drove his evil eye right through his head, so that Balor fell to the ground dead, in the midst of his terror-stricken warriors. Balor, as we have seen, was the maternal-grandfather of his destroyer Lug (4).

(1) *Iliad*, v., 334, seq.

(2) *Ibid*, v., 855, seq.

(3) The Celtic god of the Thunderbolt is not pre-eminently the god of Light, as in Greek mythology, where the thunderbolt is the characteristic attribute of Zeus. Here there is a fundamental difference between Greek and Celtic mythology.

(4) *Leabhar Gabhala*, in *Bk. of Leinster*, p. 9, col. 2, lines 7, 8. See also on this point O'Curry (*Manners and Customs*, ii., 251, 288).

The Fomorians were completely routed. The sword of Tethra, their king, fell into the hands of the Tuatha De Danann champion Ogma, or better Ogmé. Ogma unsheathed the sword and cleaned it (1). Thereupon the sword related all the deeds that had been done by it; for it was the custom of swords in those days to speak, says the unknown author of the tale; and that is why they have retained a certain magical power down to this day. They spoke, or, rather, they seemed to speak, for the voices that were heard, says the Christian story-teller, were those of demons that were hidden in the weapons. Demons used to take up their abode in them, because men, in those days, worshipped weapons, and the weapons, he adds, were regarded as supernatural protectors (2).

The cult of the sword was also known among the Germans: it was the symbol of the god who, in old Scandinavian, is called Tyr, and, in old German, Zio; his name has the same root as that of the Greek Zeus and the Roman Jupiter; but the attributes with which he was endowed by the Germans have caused him to be regarded as identical with the Roman Mars. He was represented by a sword, as Mars was represented in early Rome by a spear, no statue as yet having been set up to him (3).

The sword of the Fomorian Tethra, the god of Death (4), has a strong resemblance to that of the German war-god Zio, or Tyr, and to the spear of Mars. Now Ogma, as we have mentioned, took possession of the sword of Tethra. In Ireland,

(1) "Tofoslaic." O'Curry, in the Manners and Customs, ii., p. 254, translates this word by *opened*. In the glosses of Milan and Saint-Gall, the Irish verb *tuaslaicú* is glossed by two Latin verbs, *solvere* and *resolvere*. In the law books this verb is used to express the breaking of a bond; it signifies the acquittal of a debtor.

(2) The text, of which the above is rather a commentary than a literal translation, is contained in O'Curry's Manners and Customs, ii., p. 254. The same belief is, in part, found in a passage of the *Serglige Conculainn*, Windisch, *Irische Texte*, p. 206. This has been published and translated without comment by O'Curry (*Atalantis*, i., p. 371); it has also been contributed to the *Revue Celtique*, i., 260, 261, by Whitley Stokes, who was the first to direct attention to its importance from a mythological point of view.

(3) The texts of Ammianus Marcellinus, xvii., 12, xxxi., 2, and Arnobus, vii., 12, dealing with this subject, have been investigated by Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, 3rd ed., i., 185. Cf. Simrock, *Handbuch der Deutschen Mythologie*, 5th ed., p. 272. On Zio considered as a god of War, see Grimm, *D.M.*, p. 178.

(4) See the legend of Connla in Windisch, *Kurzgefasste Irische Grammatik*, p. 120.

Ogma is the divine champion, the most distinguished type of the professional warrior. We know, through Lucian, that he was honoured in Gaul, and was called Ogmios by the Celts. In the second century, when Lucian wrote, statues had been erected to him, in which he is given the insignia of the Greek Heracles—the lion's skin, the club, the quiver and bow. But these statues are distinguished from those of the Greek demigod in two ways; they represent the Gaulish god as an old man, attributing to him the gift of eloquence, symbolised by chains which hang from his tongue, drawing along the enchanted auditors (1).

These statues were the work of Greek sculptors, who, if they had been less imbued with the traditions of their own race and the national mythology of the Hellenes, would have put into the hands of Ogmios, instead of the bow and the club, the *gæsum*, or Celtic spear, and the sword of Tethra (2).

XI.

The Harp of the Dagda.

The Fomorians compensated themselves for the loss of this sword by carrying off the harp of the Dagda. Lug, the Dagda, and Ogma went in pursuit. When the chiefs of the Fomorians thought they had left the battle-field far behind, and were out of danger, they made a halt for the purpose of refreshing themselves. They were gathered together in the banqueting hall, and had hung the harp of the Dagda on the wall, when in rushed Lug, and the Dagda, and Ogma. Before they had time to get to their feet, the Dagda called out to his harp to come to him. The harp knew its master's voice, and leaped straightway from the wall to meet him, killing nine men on its way; and it placed itself in the god's hands, who made wonderful music upon it. At that time there were three strains, the execution of which was the distinguishing mark of a great artist. The first produced sleep, the second laughter, and the third tears and lamentation. First of all the Dagda played the third strain, and

(1) Lucian, Heracles, ed. Didot, pp. 598, 599.

(2) The bow does not appear to have been a Celtic weapon. No Celtic god had to carry the bow before the Greek sculptors came. And it is very unlikely that a Celtic god was given a lion's skin as attribute. The lion is not indigenous to Celtic countries. The boar is, however, and he is the king of wild animals in the eyes of a Celt.

there was great weeping and wailing among the Fomorian women. Then he played the second, and the women and young men burst into laughter. Then he played the first strain, and the women and children and the warriors fell into a deep sleep. Thereupon Lug, the Dagda, and Ogma, seizing the opportunity, went out from the hall and returned safe and sound to their own people, without receiving wound or blow from the Fomorians, who sought their lives (1).

XII.

The Fomorians and Tethra in the Isle of the Dead.

The Fomorians were finally subjugated. They left Ireland and returned to their own country, that mysterious land across the Ocean, where the souls of the dead find a new body and a second dwelling-place. It is the dominion of their god Tethra, whose sword fell into the hands of the victorious Tuatha De Danann at the second Battle of Mag-Tured. One of the oldest pieces belonging to the second cycle of the Irish heroic period, brings before us the lovely maiden who is the Celtic messenger of Death, and who bears away to the mysterious abode of the Dead, the souls of young men fascinated by her beauty. She comes to Connla, son of Conn the High King of Ireland. "The immortals invite thee," she exclaims. "Thou wilt be a champion of the people of Tethra. They will behold thee daily in the assemblies of thy fathers, in the midst of those that know thee and love thee." And soon Conn, weeping, sees his son leap into the ship of glass in which the dread enchantress voyages. Then the vessel sails away over the sea, and the father watches it from the shore until it fades out of sight. His son returned not again, and whither he had gone no one knew (2), or, rather, they knew only too well; he had gone to the place whence there is no return: to the dominion of Tethra,

(1) Brit. Museum MS. Harleian, 5280, fol. 59, r. This passage is published, with translation, by O'Curry in his *Manners and Customs*, iii., 214, note 296. . . . For full translation of the Second Battle of Moytura, see Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, xii. (Tr).

(2) *Echtra Connla*, from the text of the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, a late eleventh-century MS., in Windisch's *Kurzgefasste Irische Grammatik*, p. 120. . . . Also translated by M. de Jubainville in his *Epopée Celtique en Irlande*, 384-390; by Zimmer, *Keltische Beiträge*, ii., p. 262, and by MacSwiney, *Gaelic Journal*, ii., 307 (Tr).

king of the Fomorians, who reigns in that distant land continually, though he had left his sword in the hands of the victorious Ogma at the Battle of Mag-Tured.

In another piece, belonging to the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn, we read of a literary joust that took place between Nede, son of Adna, and Fercertne. The latter had just been appointed *ollamh*, that is, chief of the *file* of Ulster. The young Nede, who had been completing his education in Alba, under the guidance of Eochaid Ech-bel, or the "horse-mouthed," has just returned to dispute with Fercertne the high office which has been conferred upon him. Arriving unexpectedly, he assumes the robe of the *ollamh*, and sits down in the chair set apart for that exalted personage. Fercertne enters the hall in a rage, and, before the assembled audience, begins to question him and put his learning to the proof, so that he might convict him of ignorance and reduce him to silence. Nede emerges from the ordeal with great success. One of the questions put to him was the following: "What, O youthful sage, is that thou passest over with haste?" "The answer is an easy one," replied Nede. "It is the field of age, the mountain of youth, the chase of the ages after the king in the house of earth and stones [that is, in this earthly world], between the candle and its end, between combat and the hatred of combat [that is, to the light, and during the struggle for life until the end of life and the peace of death, that peace which one attains to], in the midst of the brave warriors of Tethra." And Tethra, says a gloss to this ancient text, is the name of the king of the Fomorians (1). This gloss appears to have been in existence at the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century, for we find it in the oldest recension of Cormac's Glossary (2). Tethra is one of the earliest names by which the Irish designated the god of Death.

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 187, col. 2, line 26. I have suppressed the greater part of the gloss which accompanies this old text; the author or authors, while knowing the meaning of each word, did not understand the meaning of the whole.

(2) Cormac's Glossary, under *Tethra* (Whitley Stokes, Three Irish Glossaries, p. 42).

XIII.

The Raven and the Wife of Tethra.

Celtic mythology was wont to represent death as having an aspect more alluring than that of life. But it never succeeded in suppressing one of the liveliest sentiments in nature. So the messenger of death has not always, in Irish literature, the attractive features in which she appears in the legend of Connla.

When the gods appear unto men, the form they assume is often that of birds. The divine birds of the Tuatha De Danann, or the gods of Life and Light, have a lovely plumage (1), and they go about in couples, their feathered heads linked by a chain or yoke of silver (2). When Lug, the hero of Mag-Tured, wishes to give birth to the famous champion Cuchulainn, his coming is announced by the apparition of a flock of these birds. There are nine times twenty of them, in nine groups of twenty each, going about in couples, some with yokes of silver, others with chains of the same metal.

But these are not the birds that announce the presence of the Fomorians, the gods of Death and Night; they are crows or ravens. The wife of Tethra is the female of the crow or raven; she is the sombre-plumaged bird that flies over battle-fields and, when the fight is over, tears with bloody beak the white breasts of the headless dead. A late eleventh-century MS. has preserved for us a quatrain written by a poet of the ninth century:

The wife of Tethra's longing is for the fire of combat;
The warriors' sides slashed open,
Blood, bodies heaped upon bodies;
Eyes without life, sundered heads, these are pleasing words to
her.

And an old Irish grammarian about the end of the eleventh century, writing glosses on the obscure words of this quatrain, explains "wife of Tethra" by an Irish substantive meaning "crow" or "raven" (3).

(1) *Serglige Conculainn* (Windisch, *Irische Texte*, 206, lines 10, et seq).

(2) *Compert Conculainn*, *ibid.*, p. 137, 138.

(3) This quatrain is ascribed to Mac Lonan by the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 50. It has been printed by Whitley Stokes in the *Beitrag* of Kuhn, viii., p. 328, also in the *Revue Celtique*, ii., 491.

CHAPTER IX.—The Second Battle of Mag-Tured and Greek Mythology.

- x. The Greek Kronos and his three Irish equivalents, Tethra, Bress, Balor.—2. The Irish Form of the Greek idea of the Golden Race. Tigrernmas, the Counterpart of Balor, Bress, and Tethra.—3. Balor and the Myth of Argos or Argus. Lug and Hermes.—4. Io and Buar-ainech. Balor and Poseidon.—5. Lug, the Slayer of Balor, and the Greek Hero Bellerophon.—6. Lug and the Greek Hero Perseus.—7. The Popular Balor of Ireland. Balor and Acrisios. Ethnea, Daughter of Balor and Danae, Daughter of Acrisios. The Three Brothers and the Triple Geryon. Their Cow and the Herd of Geryon or of Cacus. The Son of Gavida and Perseus.—8. The Three Artificers of the Tuatha De Danann, and the Three Cyclops of Zeus in Hesiod.

I.

The Greek Kronos and his three Irish equivalents, Tethra, Bress, Balor.

The Fomorian king, Tethra, who was vanquished by the Tuatha De Danann at Mag-Tured, afterwards became the king of the Dead, and is identical with the Kronos of Hesiod and Pindar. The latter, when dethroned by Zeus, was given a new kingdom in that mysterious country where the dead heroes find a second life, and experience all the joys of their earthly home (1).

In the Greek fable, Kronos was before his defeat king of heaven, the sole master of the world when the Golden Race was living upon the earth. The Golden Race of the Greeks is, as we know, none other than the Tuatha De Danann of Irish mythology. Thus the myth of Kronos partly reappears in Ireland in the legend of the Fomorian king Bress, who reigned over the Tuatha De Danann, and who was deposed by his subjects, incited by the *file* Corpre, the sovereignty passing out of the hands of the Fomorians at Mag-Tured. Bress is identical with Kronos, though a somewhat incomplete Kronos. He is the king of the world in the Golden Age; but he is not the king of the dead, and we do not see him fighting at Mag-Tured, like Kronos in the battle between the gods and the Titans.

(1) Works and Days, 169; Pindar, Olympics, ii., 70, 76, ed. Teubner, i., 17

In Balor, the chief of the defeated Fomorians, we discover another portion or fragment, as it were, of the mythic being who figures in certain Greek tales as Kronos. Balor, for instance, is the grandfather of Lug, by whom he is slain at the battle of Mag-Tured; likewise Kronos is the father of Zeus, by whom he is overthrown in the battle between Zeus and the Titans. And the battle of Mag-Tured between the Tuatha De Danann and the Fomorians is identical with that other, where, according to the Hesiodic account, Zeus and the gods defeat Kronos and the Titans.

II.

The Irish Form of the Greek idea of the Golden Race. Tigernmas, the Counterpart of Balor, Bress, and Tethra.

The association of gold with the reign of Kronos is a characteristic doctrine of Greek mythology. "The golden race of men gifted with speech," says Hesiod, "was created by the immortal dwellers in the mansions of Olympus; and they lived under Kronos when he reigned in heaven. As gods they were wont to live. . . ." (1). These words, with which Hesiod begins his description of the Golden Age, carry us back in Irish mythology to the time when the Tuatha De Danann inhabited Ireland, under the sway of the Fomorians. Now, one of the names of the chief of the Fomorians is Tigernmas, who, it may be remembered, is a counterpart of Balor. Like Balor, also, he is the grandfather of Lug, the Celtic Hermes, by Ethne or Ethniu; and he is also a counterpart of Bress and Tethra. Tigernmas, in the Irish legend, is one of the names of Kronos.

Tigernmas is said to have been king of Ireland, and according to an eleventh-century poet, he was the first to practise the art of smelting gold there (2). The working of gold mines is the form the Greek idea of the Golden Race assumes in Ireland. In the curious chronological compilations of the eleventh-century scholars in Ireland, the reign of Tigernmas is assigned

(1) Works and Days, 109-112.

(2) Leis roberbad, is blad bind,
Mein oir ar-tus in hErind.
"By him was worked, it is a sweet renown,
The first gold mine in Erin."

Poem by Gilla Coemain in the Bk. of Leinster, p. 16, col. 2, lines 50, 51.
Cf. Bk. of Invasions, *ibid*, line 23.

to the latest period of the mythological cycle, which we are now investigating. He is represented as quite distinct from Balor, being made to flourish a long time after him. But it is not our purpose to enter upon an examination of this false science which has transformed Irish mythology into a series of annals, and so long served to bring the old Celtic legends into ridicule (1).

III.

Balor and the Myth of Argos or Argus. Lug and Hermes.

The war which Zeus and the gods wage against Kronos and the Titans, is not the only Greek myth in which we find this dualistic idea of the beneficent deities of Day, Sunshine, and Life warring against the malevolent powers of Death, Storm, and Night. One of the most familiar of the Greek myths embodying this doctrine is that of Argos the hundred-eyed. These eyes are stars, and Argos is a personification of the starry night. Hermes slays him with a stone (2). This myth was already known to the Greeks at the time Homer composed the Iliad, about eight hundred years before the present era. There, Hermes bears the surname of *Argeiphontes*, slayer of Argos; or the title *Argeiphontes* is used as a synonym of Hermes (3). Hermes is the Dawn, and the stone with which he slays Argos or Night is the sun, which some invisible hand throws up into the heavens every morning out of the East (4). Lug is the Celtic Hermes: like the Greek Hermes, he personifies the dawn, and, like him also, slays his adversary with a stone. He casts the stone from a sling, mortally wounding the eye of

(1) On the reign of Tigernmas in the time of the Milesians, see, in addition to the Bk. of Invasions, the great chronological poem of Gilla Coemain (Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. 2, lines 25, 26; also chap. 5, sec. 8, of the present volume.

(2) Apollodorus, *Bib.*, ii., chap. 1, sec. 3, 4. Didot-Muller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, i., 126.

(3) Iliad, ii., 103, 104; xxiv., 24, etc. See also Odyssey, i., 84; Hymn to Hestia, 7; Hesiod, Works and Days, 77. Apollodorus, to whom we are indebted for the fable explaining the compound *Argeiphontes*, flourished in the middle of the second century B.C. *Argeiphantes* for *Argeiphontes* is a comparatively modern reading, and is, in our own opinion, untenable, notwithstanding the great authorities by whom it has been accepted. For the figured representations of him, see the article on *Argus* in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq. Grecques et Romaines*.

(4) A. Kuhn, Ueber Entwick. des Mythenbildung, in the *Abhandlungen* of the Academy of Sciences, Berlin, 1873, p. 142.

Balor, who is the Celtic Argos, that is to say, a personification of the powers of evil, foremost among which is the Night, and also, according to the Celtic idea, the thunderbolt and Death.

IV.

Io and Buar-ainech, Balor and Poseidon.

In Æschylus, Argos or Argus is the guardian of Io the Horned Virgin (1), whom he also represents as a cow (2), and in whom the Greek grammarians recognised a personification of the moon. Night, personified in Argos, is the watchful guardian to whose care the wandering cow—the moon, is confided. In the Celtic, as in the Greek legend, the moon is a horned being, a man, or, rather, a god having the visage of a cow or bull—*Buar-ainech*. The Celtic god is identical with Io the Horned Virgin of Greek tragedy; *Buar-ainech*, like Io, is the moon deified, but he is not, like her, handed over to the care of the god that personifies the night, namely Balor, who, in Ireland, is identified with the Greek Argos. Instead of being the guardian of the horned divinity, Balor is his son. Of the lunar god *Buar-ainech* is born Balor, the god of Night, who is slain by a blow of the solar stone, given him by Lug, the god of Dawn, in Celtic mythology, like Hermes in Greek mythology. *Buar-ainech*, the Fomorian god with the bull's head, belongs to the same group as the goat-headed gods, *gobor-chind*, whom a text already cited co-relates with the Fomorians.

The text that furnishes us with the name *Buar-ainech*, the father of Balor, informs us that it was Balor who built the raths of Bress. The Fomorian Bress, it may be remembered, was the king and tyrant of the Tuatha De Danann, or the solar gods, by whom he was dethroned, Balor, their other enemy, losing his life in the attempt to regain him the sovereignty (3). Balor built the strongholds of Bress. And in the Greek legend, Poseidon, the god of the Sea, whose implacable vengeance pursues the solar-god Odysseus, built the walls of Troy, the hostile city (4).

(1) Æschylus, Prometheus Vincetus, 588.

(2) Æschylus, Supplices, 18, 275.

(3) "Balar mac Buar-Ainic, rathoir Bressi" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 50, col. 1, lines 42, 43).

(4) Iliad, xxi., 446, 447. In the Iliad, vii., 452, 453, Poseidon has Phoibos for associate; but in Book xxi., Phoibos was the herdsman of the King of Troy, while Poseidon was a mason in the service of the same prince.

V.

Lug, the Slayer of Balor, and the Greek Hero Bellerophon.

The meteoric phenomenon of the sunrise, which partly inspired the Celtic legend of the conflict between Lug and Balor, in other words, the dawn struggling with night, is also what the Greek imagination sought to represent by Hermes slaying Argos. Hermes and Lug represent the dawn, and Balor and Argos the night. An analogous phenomenon, however, which mythology often confounds with the dawn and the sunrise, is the triumph of the sun when he bursts through the clouds after a storm, and appears all radiant in the heavens. In the legend of Bellerophon and the Chimæra we have one of the mythic forms in which this phenomenon was represented in Greek art and literature.

The Chimæra, who is composed of a lion, a snake, and a goat, is one of those monsters that personify storm, the darkness of storm, evil. She is of divine origin, and with the help of the gods a hero slays her. On this account he bears the surname of *Bellero-phontes*, slayer of Belleros, which was another name for the Chimæra. *Belleros* is the same name as *Balor*, the god of the Fomorians, slain by Lug at the Battle of Mag-Tured. *Belleros* in Greek comes from the same root as the verb *ballo*, "I hurl," and the substantive *belos*, "a dart, or javelin."

What was it that the monster *Belleros* or the Chimæra hurled? It was an awful stream of live fire (1). It was the thunderbolt. In the Irish myth, Balor has an eye which he generally keeps covered, and the glance he casts from it upon his enemies is mortal; this, too, is the thunderbolt. The thunderbolt is an eye usually covered, which opens during the storm, bringing death and night to men (2), whereas the sun is an eye which is open throughout the day, giving life to all animate things. It is thus that Balor, in the Irish legend, is the god of the Thunderbolt as well as the god of Night. These two myths, one Celtic, the other Greek, spring from a common source; and, as fortune strangely has it, the Irish name *Balor* has preserved its identity with *Belleros*, whom the poems of

(1) *Iliad*, vi., 182.

(2) See James Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 122.

Homer (1) and Hesiod (2) and many other Greek writers (3) have handed down to us in the compound *Bellerophon*, "slayer of Belleros."

VI.

Lug and the Greek Hero Perseus.

The Greek fable of Perseus and Medusa was constructed upon the same subject. Perseus is a counterpart of Bellerophon. He slays Medusa, just as Bellerophon slays the Chimæra; as Lug slays Balor. Medusa is herself a counterpart of the Chimæra. The latter is a monster compounded of a lion, a snake, and a goat, who exhales a death-dealing fire. Medusa is a winged woman whose hair is formed of serpents; she abhors men, and all who look upon her are turned to stone (4).

The Prometheus Bound of Æschylus, which gives this awful detail of the Medusa's power, was first brought out in Athens about the middle of the fifth century B.C. The belief at that time in Greece was that no one could look upon Medusa and live. In the primitive doctrine, on the other hand, it was the glance cast by Medusa that was mortal, like the glance of Balor in Irish mythology, which is a poetical image of the thunderbolt.

Perseus was well known to Homer and Hesiod (5); but for a complete account of his legend we must consult the later mythographers. Perseus, who was one day to slay his own grandfather, like the Celtic Lug, was the son of Danae, the daughter of Acrisios, king of Argos. Acrisios learned from an oracle that he was to be slain by a grandson. To make sure that no grandson would be born to him, Acrisios hid his daughter Danae in a brazen chamber underground, and had a close watch set upon her.

His efforts were all in vain, however. Danae became pregnant, some say by the mortal Proitos, but the more ancient

(1) On Bellerophon and the Chimæra, see *Iliad*, vi., 155-183.

(2) Hesiod, *Theogony*, 325.

(3) See Bellerophon and the Chimæra in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiquités*.

(4) Æschylus, *Prometheus*, 798-800, ed. Didot. Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 274-280.

(5) *Iliad*, xiv., 319, 320. Shield of Heracles. 227 seq.

texts by the great Zeus himself (1). She brought forth a son, who was afterwards the hero Perseus. Acrisios had them both confined in a chest and cast into the sea. They were carried by the waves to the Island of Seriphos, where they came to land safely. Perseus grew up in the island, and wrought many great deeds, one of which was the slaying of Medusa; subsequently, by a misadventure, he killed his grandfather Acrisios, as it had been foretold (2).

VII.

The Popular Balor of Ireland. Balor and Acrisios; Ethnea, Daughter of Balor, and Danae, Daughter of Acrisios. The Three Irish Brothers and the Triple Geryon; their Cow and the Herd of Geryon or Cacus; the Son of Gavida and Perseus.

The fundamental characteristics of the legend of Perseus are found in an Irish tale taken down from oral tradition in the nineteenth century, wherein the Fomorian god Balor is slain by his grandson, like the Greek Acrisios.

The name of this personage, says O'Donovan, is still vividly remembered by tradition throughout Ireland; and in certain parts of the country his name, formerly written *Balar Balbeimnech*, "Balor of the Mighty Blows," now *Balar Beimeann*, "Balor of the Blows," is used to frighten children with. He was a warrior who inhabited Tory Island, in olden times *Torinis*. It is an island lying in the Atlantic, to the northwest, not far from the mainland. Here it was that the Irish euhemerists placed the abode of the Fomorian enemies of Nemed's race, and Conann's Tower, at the demolition of which that race was annihilated. Thus, like the redoubtable Conann of the bardic tales, the popular Balor lived on Tory Island.

(1) *Iliad*, xiv., 313-320. Herodotus, vii., 61. See also the passage of Sophocles already cited.

(2) Apollodorus, ii., chap. 4. This writer flourished in the second century B.C. But on certain points in the legend we have evidence much more ancient; for instance, the verses in which Simonides depicts the pitiful voyage of Danae over the waves in her chest. Bergk. *Anthologia Lyrica*, ed. alt. p. 444. Also the passage in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, where he describes the prison of Danae, and the golden rain in the form of which Zeus made his way to her. Simonides died in the year 468 B.C., and Sophocles in 406 B.C.

He had one eye in the middle of his forehead, and another directly opposite at the back of his skull. The look of this latter eye struck people dead. Balor kept it constantly covered, except when he wished to get the better of his enemies. Hence the Irish to this day call an evil eye *suil Baloir*. This is the same eye by whose glance Nuadu, the king of the Tuatha De Danann, was stricken dead at the second Battle of Mag-Tured.

A Druid had revealed to Balor that he would be killed by his grandson. Here the Druid plays the same part as the oracle in the Greek legend of Acrisios and Perseus. Balor, like Acrisios, had an only daughter whose name was Ethnea, *Ethniu* in the ancient form (genitive *Ethnenn*). This is the name borne by the daughter of the Fomorian Balor in the eleventh-century Book of Invasions; and we see that it continued to live in popular tradition. In Greece, Ethnea was known as Danae.

Balor determined to thwart the prediction of the Druid, that he would be killed by his own grandson, so he shut his daughter up in an impregnable tower, built on the summit of an almost inaccessible rock, which reared its head up into the blue sky, and broke the waves at the eastern extremity of Tory Island. The rock, which is still to be seen, is called *Tor-mor*, the Great Tower. It was here that Balor imprisoned the fair Ethnea. He placed a company of twelve matrons to keep watch over her, giving them strict injunctions to let no man come near her, or ever to give her an idea of the nature or existence even of that sex.

Here Ethnea remained for a long time imprisoned. She grew up into a woman of surpassing loveliness; and, faithful to their charge, her attendants never mentioned in her presence the name of man. Still, she would often question them concerning the nature of the beings she saw passing to and fro over the sea in currachs, for their shape was not that of the women who waited upon her. But the trusty matrons never offered any explanation of the mystery.

Up to the present, the popular tale accords with the Greek legend of Acrisios and Perseus, and with the eleventh-century version contained in the Book of Invasions. The tower in which Ethnea was confined by her father is identical with the brazen chamber (1) in which the king of Argos imprisoned his daughter Danae. But, at this point, we find included in the Irish legend another which is quite foreign to the original tale;

1) Sophocles, *Antigone*, 945.

that, in fact, which has given to Greek mythology the contest between Heracles and the triple-bodied Geryon.

We know that Geryon was a being with three heads (1), and three bodies even (2), who was the owner of a herd of cows. He lived with his herd on an isle beyond the Ocean, and he kept his cows in a dark stable. Heracles overcame him and carried off his herd (3). Heracles is a personification of the Sun, and the cows are the rays, kept in darkness by the god of Night, and afterwards liberated by the solar god in the morning, when the day star, until then deprived of light, is about to rise in all his radiance above the horizon (4). The myth of Heracles and Geryon belongs to Latin as well as to Greek mythology, and in the latter form Geryon is called Cacus. But to return to the Irish legend.

In the Irish folk-tale, Balor has been up to this point in accord with the ancient tradition, a god of Night; but by one of those changes so common in modern popular tales, he is confounded, for a time, with the god of Day, and plays the role of the Greek god Heracles.

On the mainland, opposite Tory Island, lived three brothers, by name Gavida, MacSamhthainn, and MacKineely. Gavida was a smith, and MacKineely possessed a cow known as *Glas Gaiülen* (5), the "green cow of the smith." Her milk was so abundant that all the neighbours coveted her; and so many attempts had been made to steal her, that MacKineely found it necessary to watch her continually.

It is easy to recognise in the three brothers the triple Geryon, whose cows are here reduced to one, which in compensation produces an enormous quantity of milk. Balor longed to get possession of this cow. Up to then he had achieved many a deed of fame, captured many vessels, subdued and cast in chains many a band of sea-rovers, and made many a descent upon the mainland, bringing back with him to his isle captives and store of goods. But one thing was lacking to him, and that was *Glas Gaiülen*, the smith's green cow.

(1) Hesiod, *Theogony*, 287.

(2) Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, 870. According to Apollodorus, *Bib. ii.*, chap. 5, sec. 10, these bodies were joined at the middle, and had only one belly between them. *Frag. Hist. Græcorum*, i., 140.

(3) Hesiod, *Theogony*, 287-294.

(4) Bréal, *Mélanges de Mythologie et de Linguistique*, 65 et seq.

(5) Better *Glas Goibhenn*.

To obtain possession of her he had recourse to stratagem. One day he went to the forge when the cow happened to be in charge of one of the brothers. The latter was foolish enough to confide in Balor, and left the halter of the precious cow in his hands for a moment. Balor immediately carried off the Glas with the rapidity of lightning to Tory Island, and the place where he dragged her in by the tail is called to this day *Port na Glaise*, or the Harbour of Glas, "Green Cow." This tale has one characteristic in common with the Roman legend of Cacus, the counterpart of Geryon, who also dragged the cows of Heracles by their tails (1).

MacKineely, the owner of the cow, determined to avenge himself on Balor. So he took counsel of a Druid and a fairy who dwelt in the neighbourhood. Guided by them, he disguised himself as a woman, and the fairy wafted him on the wings of the storm across the Sound, to the airy top of the Tower, where the fair Ethnea, daughter of Balor, was imprisoned. She knocked at the door of the Tower, and demanded admittance for a noble lady whom she had just rescued from the cruel hands of a tyrant, who had carried her off from her people. The matrons, fearing to incur the fairy's anger, admitted both into the Tower. Shortly after, the Banshee cast the twelve matrons into a magic sleep. When they awoke, the fairy and her companion had disappeared, MacKinley having been carried back to the mainland by the same ærial route as he had come. The twelve matrons accordingly found Ethnea alone, but, like Danae in the Greek legend, she was pregnant.

They told Ethnea, however, that the appearance of the fairy and her companion was only a dream, and charged her not to mention the matter to her father Balor. At the end of the ninth month, however, Ethnea brought forth three sons at one birth. As soon as the news came to Balor's ears, he secured the children and rolled them up in a sheet, which was fastened by a pin, and sent them to be cast into a whirlpool. As they were being carried across a small harbour on the way to it the pin fell out of the sheet, and one of the children dropped into the water. When he came to the whirlpool the messenger drowned the other two children, and then returned to Balor, who thought that his cruel order had been faithfully executed.

(1) "Cauda in speluncam tractos, versisque viarum
Indiciis raptos, saxo occultabat opaco."

(Æncid, viii., 210, 211).

But what became of the child that had fallen into the harbour, which to this day has been called Port-na-Deilg, or the Harbour of the Pin? For when the pin fell out, and the child had apparently sunk to the bottom, the fairy who had brought about its birth was present, and invisibly wafted it across the sound to the house of its father, MacKineely. The latter sent him to be fostered by his brother Gavida, the smith, who brought him up to his own trade.

Balor now thought that he had completely baffled the fates, yet he did not forget the wrong that had been done to his daughter, which in a way reflected upon himself. He learned through his Druid who the man was, and resolved upon vengeance. One day he crossed the sound with a band of warriors, and seized upon MacKineely. He laid him down upon a large white stone, and holding him by his long hair, while the others held him by the hands and legs, cut off his head with one blow of his ponderous sword. The blood gushed forth in streams, and soaked into the stone, leaving red veins in it, which are still to be seen. In 1794 a local antiquary had it raised upon a pillar sixteen feet in height. It is called the *Clogh-an-Neely*, or stone of Neely, an abbreviation for stone of MacKineely.

After the beheading of MacKineely, Balor believed himself secure in his existence; he had forgotten the incident of his daughter Ethnea, his happiness was complete, and his hopes unclouded. Gavida, the brother of MacKineely, was become his smith. But Balor did not know that one of the three children had escaped the whirlpool, and was even then Gavida's assistant. The prophecy of the Druid must be accomplished, and at the hands of this youth. MacKineely's son was fully acquainted with his own history and his father's fate. He was often seen to visit the spot where the murder had been committed, and to gaze at the blood-stained stone, after which he would return to the house with sullen brow, muttering vengeance.

One day Balor came to the forge when Gavida was from home. The young man was there alone. Balor began to talk with him, and boasted of his own great deeds, and of the murder of MacKineely. The young smith felt his father's blood boiling in his veins. He was standing by the forge, where the irons were glowing in the fire, awaiting the hammer. He seized hold of one and thrust it through Balor's evil eye, and out through his head. Balor fell to the ground dead. Thus, as in Greece Perseus had slain his own grandfather Acrisios, the young Irish

smith had slain his; the prophecy of the Druid had come to pass in Ireland, as the oracle had in Greece; moreover, in Ireland justice had been accomplished, and the murder of MacKineely avenged (1).

The tradition which has handed this tale down to us, has preserved two of the names that we find in the eleventh-century MSS., namely, those of Balor and Ethniu, now known as Ethnea. But it seems that the modern story-tellers have forgotten the name of Balor's destroyer. We have seen that he is Lug, the Greek Hermes, the Græco-Roman Mercury, one of the Tuatha De Danann.

VIII.

The Three Artificers of the Tuatha De Danann and the Three Cyclops of Zeus in Ireland.

Gavida the smith and his two brothers form a triad, the origin of which is found in a detail of the second battle of Mag-Tured, that of the three artificers who wrought the arms of the Tuatha De Danann, and whose skill contributed largely to the defeat of the Fomorians. The first of these was Goibniu the smith; his name is derived from the old Irish *goba* (genitive *gobann*), a "smith," which is now pronounced *gava*; hence the modern derivative Gavida, as we find it in the popular legend. These three workmen, associated with the victory of the Tuatha De Danann, or gods of Day and Life, over the Fomorians, or gods of Night and Death, are identical with the three Cyclops, Brontes, Steropes, and Arges, of mighty courage, who gave the thunder to Zeus, and fabricated the thunderbolt (2): in other words, the shafts by means of which the sun-god Zeus triumphed over the gods of Death and Night, whom the Greeks call Titans (3). The reader will not have forgotten the marvellous skill with which Goibniu and his two companions fashioned the spears that played such havoc

(1) This popular story was taken down by O'Donovan, and has been inserted by him, as a note, in his edition of the Annals of the Four Masters, i., pp. 18-21.

(2) Hesiod, Theogony, 139-141. Cf. verses, 504, 505.

(3) The thunder and its bolt are called the darts (*kela*) of Zeus in lines 707 and 708 of the Theogony, describing the battle between Zeus and the Titans.

with the Fomorians in their battle with the Tuatha De Danann (1).

In the popular legend, the smith Gavida and his two brothers are opposed to the Fomorian warrior Balor, who is slain with a red-hot iron in Gavida's smithy. Here we have a foundation of common traditions, and a dual theory on the whole more highly developed in Ireland than in Greece. Sometimes, however, the contrary is the case; for instance, we do not find in Ireland the Greek counterpart of the Cyclops: Kottos, Obriareos, and Gyes, the three hundred-armed warriors, who in Hesiod help to bring about the victory of Zeus over the Titans (2).

CHAPTER X.—The Race of Mile.

1. The Chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann transformed into Men and Kings in the Eleventh Century. Chronology of Gilla Coemain and the Four Masters.—2. Mile and Bile, Ancestors of the Celtic Race.—3. The Idea that the Irish came from Spain; their Scythian and Egyptian Origin.—4. Ith and the Tower of Bregon.—5. Spain and Britain confounded with the Land of the Dead.—6. Expedition of Ith to Ireland.—7. Irish and Greek Mythology. Ith and Prometheus.

I.

The Chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann transformed into Men and Kings in the Eleventh Century. The Chronology of Gilla Coemain and the Four Masters.

According to the chronological poem of Gilla Coemain, written about the middle of the eleventh century, the Tuatha De Danann held the sovereignty of Ireland for the space of one hundred and sixty-nine years after the second Battle of Mag-Tured. After the calculations of the Four Masters this period dated from the year 1869 to the year 1700 B.C. Lug was their first king, and he reigned forty years; then the Dagda occupied

(1) See *supra*, chap. viii., 7.

(2) Hesiod, Theogony, 147-159, 618-628, 644-663, 669-675, 713-718, 734, 735, 815, 819. On Obriareos, also called Briareos, see the Iliad, i., 401-407.

the throne for eighty years, and after him Delbaeth for ten years, and Fiachach Findgil, his son, for another ten years. Finally, the three grandsons of the Dagda, namely, MacCuill, MacCecht, and MacGrene, having divided Ireland amongst them, held the sovereignty for twenty-nine years, until the coming of the sons of Mile, who slew them, and took possession of the country (1).

In all probability Gilla Coemain is the author of this chronology. In any case, it appears to have been invented about his time, and it is the one contained in the Book of Invasions (2). It originated from the doctrines pronounced a few years before by Flann Manistrech. Flann, who died in 1056, wrote a didactic poem in Irish, in which the Tuatha De Danann, who were previously regarded as immortals, died like ordinary human beings.

He gives the name of the person by whom Lug was slain (3). According to him also, the Dagda died of wounds inflicted upon him with a spear by a woman named Cetnenn, at the Battle of Mag-Tured (4). There was no mention of Cetnenn before Flann wrote his poem; but only of Lug, son of Ethniu, in Old Irish *Lug MaccEthnenn*; *mac*, a son, being written with two *c*'s in Old Irish. *MaccEthnenn* is the genitive of Ethniu, a woman's name: and as the syntactic compound *MaccEthnenn* was written as one word in Old Irish, the proper name Cetnenn results from a wrong division of the word. Instead of *MaccEthnenn*, they read *Mac-Cethnenn*. Hence the origin of Cetnenn, who mortally wounded the Dagda, according to the account of Flann Manistrech.

Flann Manistrech has also recounted the death of Delbaeth and his son (5). All these divine beings he changed into mortal men. The earliest writer who appears to have invested them each with the sovereignty for a time is Gilla Coemain, who died sixteen years after Flann Manistrech. It is Gilla Coemain, then, who has laid the foundation of the chronological system

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. 2, lines 1-8.

(2) *Ibid*, p. 9, col. 2.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 11, col. 2, line 7.

(4) *Ibid*, p. 11, col. 2, lines 26, 27.

(5) *Ibid*, p. 11, col. 2, lines 28-31. Here the son of Delbaeth is called Fiachna, as in the Book of Invasions (Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 44-45), and not Fiachach, as in Gilla Coemain's poem (Bk. of Leinster, p. 127, col. 2, line 6).

which has ended in transforming Irish mythology into an historic narrative, in accordance with the monastic methods of the Middle Age. Still, at the close of the eleventh century, when these doctrines were first enunciated, they were not universally admitted by the learned monks of that time; and a saner criticism even then gave utterance to a protest, the echo of which has come down to us at the present day.

The dates accumulated by the annalist Tigernach, the founder of the pre-historic chronology, who died in 1088, sixteen years after Gilla Coemain, were then quite valueless; and no date in Irish history could be fixed with any certainty before the year 305 B.C., when Cimbaed, son of Fintan, became king of Emain (1). This is a far cry from the year 1700 B.C., when the Tuatha De Danann race is said to have come to an end. The dates with which Irish mythological literature abounds, were not derived from tradition. Gilla Coemain was in all likelihood the first to imagine a list of Tuatha De Danann kings. His theory on this point is quite at variance with the conception the Irish pagans had of their gods, whom they regarded as immortal. Lug and the Dagda, according to the calculations made by the Four Masters on the figures of Gilla Coemain, died, one 1830 years, and the other, 1750 years B.C.; and in the epic literature they are represented as supernatural beings, still living in the time of Conchobar and Cuchulainn. Now, according to the calculations of Tigernach, both of the latter were contemporaries of Christ, and Tigernach's figures appear to be not without foundation.

II.

Mile and Bile, the Ancestors of the Celtic Race.

The Tuatha De Danann are said to have remained sole-masters of Ireland until the coming of the sons of Mile. *Mile*

(1) The following is the text of Tigernach, after Sir John Gilbert's facsimile, pt. I, pl. xliii.: "In anno XVIII., Ptolomei fuit initiatus regnare in Emain Cimbaed filius Fintain qui regnavit xxviii. annis. Tunc Echu Buadach, pater Ugaine, in Temoria regnare ab aliis fertur, liquet prescripsimus olim Ugaine imperasse. Omnia monumenta Scottorum usque Cimbaeth incerta erant." The eighteenth year of Ptolemy Lagus referred to above, who reigned forty years, according to Tigernach (323-283), is the year 305 B.C. The MS. reproduced here is preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and classed as Rawlinson B 502. Sir John Gilbert was the first to quote this passage correctly.

(genitive *Miled*), the mythic ancestor of the Irish race, formerly known as the Goidels or Scots, was not unknown to the Continental Celts. In that part of Hungary comprised under the Roman Empire in Lower Pannonia, an ancient dependency of the Gallic Empire, there have been found numerous inscriptions on funeral monuments belonging to men of Gallic origin. One of them was written in memory of Quartio, son of Miletumarus, by Derva his widow (1). Derva is a Gaulish name meaning "oak;" *Miletu-marus* consists of two terms: *marus*, in Gaulish, *maros*, means "great;" while in *miletu* we have the form which the Gaulish consonantal theme *milet* assumed when it was the first term of a compound; and the nominative of which must have been *miles* for *miletis*, in Irish *Mile* (2); and genitive *miletos*, in Irish *Miled*. *Miletumarus* means "great as Mile." The mythic being who is the ancestor of the Celtic race in Ireland was thus known on the banks of the Danube as well as on the distant coasts of Ireland.

Mile was the son of Bile; and Bile, like Balor, is one of the names of the god of Death. The root BEL, "to die," often changes its radical *e* into *a* when the ending contains an *a*: *atbatat* for **ate-belant* (3), "they die." In *Balar* for *Belar* we have a like example. When, on the other hand, the ending contains an *i*, the radical *e* of the root BEL is changed to *i*: *epil*, "he dies," for **ate-beli* (4). In *Bile* for **Belios*, the same change has taken place.

Mile, the son of Bile, is then the son of the god of Death, the Celtic god whom Cæsar calls *Dis pater*. The Gauls, he says, affirm that they are all descended from *Dis pater* (the god of Death), *ab Dite patre* (5). *Dis* appears to be a contracted form of *Dives*, and *Dite* of *divite* (6). This divine name was Celtic as well as Roman: *dith* is one of the Old Irish names for death.

(1) Corpus Inscript. Latinarum, iii., pt. I, p. 438, Nos. 3404, 3405.

(2) Sometimes the nominative is written *Milid*, which is really the accusative. The nominative can only be *Mile* or *Mili*.

(3) Gloss to verse forty of Colman's Hymn: Whitley Stokes, Goidelica, 2nd. ed., p. 124; Windisch, Irische Texte, pp. 9, 377.

(4) Priscien de Saint-Gall, fol. 30 a; and Saint-Paul de Wurzburg, fol. 30 d; Grammatica Celtica, 2nd. ed., p. 60.

(5) De Bello Gallico, vi., 18, sec. 1.

(6) Cicero, De Natura Deorum, ii., 26, sec. 66; cf. Corssen, Ueber Aussprache, Vokalismus und Betonung der Lateinischen Sprache, 2nd. ed., i., 316.

It is also written *diith*, with two *i*'s (1); it appears to have lost a primitive *v* between its two vowels, like the Latin *dite* for *divite*; *diith* is written for *divit*, and the Gaulish name Divitiacus, borne by a well-known Druid of the Aedui in Cæsar's time (2), and at an earlier period by a king of the Suessiones (3), appears to be derived from this word.

III.

The Idea that the Irish came from Spain. Their Scythian and Egyptian Origin.

Since the compilation of our first catalogue of Irish epic literature, the euhemerists made it appear that the sons of Mile came out of Spain, and not from the land of the Dead; and Christian scholars, pre-occupied with etymological questions, held that the ancestors of the Irish, when they left the Asiatic cradle of the human race, wandered about the world for many years, sojourning for a time in divers places, such as Egypt, and particularly Scythia. It seemed evident that Scots and Scythians were all one.

Nennius, in the tenth, or ninth century even, was acquainted with this erudite and relatively modern legend. He said he had it from the Irish scholars (4). The following is his account of it:

"When the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea, they were followed by the Egyptians, who were drowned in the waters, as it is written in the Law. Among the Egyptians was a noble man of Scythia, with a numerous family. He had been driven out of his kingdom, and was in the land of Egypt when the Egyptians were drowned; but he had not gone in pursuit of the people of God. They who survived, however, took counsel among themselves to expel him, lest he should seize

(1) Saint-Paul de Wurzburg, fol. 8 d; Grammatica Celtica, 2nd. ed., p. 21; Zimmer, Glossæ Hibernicæ, p. 50; cf. Windisch, Irische Texte, p. 484. Compare the Breton *divez*, "end," in Welsh *diwedd*, and the Irish *dead*, meaning the same thing.

(2) Cicero, De Divinatione, i., 41, sec. 90; Cæsar, De Bell. Gall., i., chaps. 16, 18, 19, 20, 31, 32, 41; ii., chaps. 10, 13; vi., chap. 12.

(3) De Bello Gallico, ii., chap. 4, sec. 7.

(4) "Sic mihi periti Scottorum nuntiaverunt." Appendix ad opera ed Angelo Maio, Rome, 1871, p. 99.

hold of their kingdom and possess it, their brethren having been drowned in the Red Sea. Accordingly, he left Egypt and wandered through Africa for the space of forty-two years, until he came with his family to the Altars of the Philistines; he traversed a salt lake and passed between Rusicada and the mountains of Syria, then he crossed the river Malva, and traversed Mauritania, until he came to the Columns of Hercules, whence he voyaged over the Tyrian Sea to Spain, where his race dwelt for many years and multiplied exceedingly."

This short account is abridged from the piece entitled "Emigration or Voyage of Mile, son of Bile, to Spain" (1), in the oldest list of Irish epics. There are modern versions of the legend preserved in the *Chronicum Scotorum*, a series of Irish annals compiled in the twelfth century (2); in the introduction to the *Book of Invasions*, transcribed in the twelfth century; in the *Book of Leinster* (3), and in a gloss to the *Senchus Mor* (4).

The Irish scholars of the Middle Age claimed to be descended in the female line from the Egyptians. The three names of the Irish race, *Fene*, *Scot*, *Goidel*, they converted into three ancestors — Fenius, king of Scythia; Scota, daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and daughter-in-law of Fenius; and Goidel, son of Scota. It is probable that Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh, was already invented at the close of the eighth century, and that Clement, the Irish grammarian at the court of Charlemagne, had made mention of this Egyptian, the fantastic mother of the Irish people. When the Anglo-Saxon Alcuin had gone into retirement in his old age, he complains to Charlemagne of the daily increasing influence of the Irish at the school of the Palace, and refers to them as Egyptians. "When I went away from you," said he, "it was Latins I left behind me. I know not who has replaced them by Egyptians" (5).

(1) Tochomlod Miled, maic Bile, co Espain (Bk. of Leinster, p. 190, col. 1, 60).

(2) *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, pp. 10-13.

(3) Bk. of Leinster, pp. 2-4.

(4) *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i., pp. 20, 22. See also Keating, i., pt. 2, chaps. 1-5; Halliday's edition, p. 214 seq.

(5) Alcuin, letter eighty-two, in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 900, col. 266-267. Cf. Haureau, *Singularités Historiques et Littéraires*, p. 26.

IV.

Ith and the Tower of Bregon.

We need not dwell any longer upon these comparatively modern legends, which in no way originated from the people, but are the offspring of a false erudition. We shall pass on to the antique tale which describes how the Celtic race came out of the Land of the Dead, and settled down in the country it now occupies (1).

The oldest redaction we have of this legend dates from the eleventh century. It is preserved in the Book of Invasions. There we read that a certain Bregon, father, or rather grandfather, of Mile (2), built a tower in Spain, in other words, in the Land of the Dead. It was called the Tower of Bregon, and is a replica, as it were, of Conann's Tower, which Eochaid Ua Flainn sang of in the tenth century. The descendants of the mythic Nemed, it may be remembered, laid siege to the god of the Dead in this tower, and though victorious at the outset were finally destroyed to the number of sixty thousand. It is the Tower of Kronos, the god of the Dead, in the Isle of the Blest, which Pindar sang of in the fifth century before Christ (3). Bregon had a son named Ith; and one fine evening in winter, as Ith was looking out over the horizon from the top of his father's tower, he saw the coast of Ireland in the distance (4). Irish scholars since the eleventh century

(1) "Tochomlod mac Miled a hEspain in hErinn" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 199, col. 1, lines 60, 61).

(2) Iar-sain rogenair Bregoin,
Athair Bili in balc-dremoin.
(Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 1, lines 34, 36).

Bregoin, mac Bratha blaith bil;
Is do ro-bo mac Miled.

Ibid., p. 4, col. 2, lines 39, 40. The above verses are from a poem by Gilla Coemain, and might be translated as follows:

Then was born Bregoin,
Father of Bile of great fury. . . .
Bregoin, son of Brath of fair fame;
It is to him that Mile was son.

Instead of son, read grandson; we know that Mile was the son of Bile.

(3) See *supra*, chap. vi., sec. 1.

(4) "Ith mac Bregoin atchonairc hErinn ar-tus fescor gaimrid a-mulluch tuir Bregoin" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 11, col. 2, lines 50, 51; cf. Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 20, v., col. 1, line 18).

regarded Bregon as a town in Spain, the antique Brigantia, now Braganca (1). It required pretty good sight to see Ireland from this distance; but, as we have said, it was a fine winter's evening, and, observes an old Irish writer, "it is on a winter's evening, when the air is pure, that one's sight carries furthest" (2).

V.

Spain and Britain confounded with the Land of the Dead.

But it is really not Spain at all that we are dealing with here. The word Spain was introduced into the texts by the euhemerising process of the Irish Christians. In more ancient times the name Britain passed in a like manner into the legend of the Land of the Dead, as it was related in Gaul during the early years of the Roman occupation. According to an unknown writer, cited by Plutarch, who died about the year one hundred and twenty of the present era, and also by Procopius, who wrote in the sixth century, the Land of the Dead is the western extremity of Great Britain, separated from the eastern by an impassable wall. On the northern coasts of Gaul, says the legend, is a populace of mariners, whose business is to conduct the dead across from the Continent to their last abode in the island of Britain. The mariners, awakened in the night by the whisperings of some mysterious voice, arise and go down to the shore, where they find ships awaiting them which are not their own, and in them invisible beings under whose weight the vessels sink almost to the gunwales. They go on board, and with a single stroke of the oar, says one text, in one hour, says another, they arrive at their destination, though with their own vessels, aided by sails, it would have taken them at least a day and a night to reach the coast of Britain. When they come to the other shore, the invisible passengers land, and at the same time the unloaded ships are seen to rise above the waves, and a voice is heard announcing the names of the new arrivals who have just been added to the inhabitants of the Land of the Dead (3).

(1) Poem by Gilla Coemain, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 4, col. 1, line 39.

(2) "Is-ferr radarc duine glan-fhescor gaimrid" (*Ibid.*, p. 12, col. 1, line 1).

(3) Fragment of Plutarch's commentary on Hesiod, preserved by Tzetzes, in Didot-Dubner's ed. of Plutarch, v., pp. 20, 21. Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, vi., chap. 20; ed. Dindorf, 1833, ii., pp. 565-569. The text of Procopius is much fuller than that of Tzetzes.

One stroke of the oar, one hour's voyage at most, suffices for this midnight journey, which transfers the dead from the Gaulish Continent to their final abode. Some mysterious law, indeed, brings together in the night the great spaces which divide the domain of the living from that of the dead in the daytime. It was this same law that enabled Ith, one fine winter evening, to perceive from the Tower of Bregon, in the Land of the Dead, the shores of Ireland, or the Land of the Living. This phenomenon took place in winter; for winter is a sort of night; winter, like night, lowers the barriers between the regions of Death and those of Life; like night, winter gives to life the semblance of death, and suppresses as it were the dread abyss that lies between the two. Thus it was that Ith saw the outline of the Irish coasts from the Tower of Bregon, in the Isle of the Dead.

VI.

Expedition of Ith into Ireland.

He embarked with three times thirty warriors, and set sail for the unknown country that had been revealed to him. He reached it in due course, and took harbour at the promontory of Corco Duibne, the south-western point of Ireland. The island was then, it is said, ruled over by three kings, grandsons of the great god Dagda, namely, MacCuill, MacCecht, and MacGrene; and they had divided Ireland amongst them (1). MacCuill's wife was called Banba; MacCecht's, Fotla; and MacGrene's, Eriu (2). Banba, Fotla, and Eriu are three names of Ireland. The first two fell into disuse, and only the third survives to this day. These three queens are then so many personifications of one being, whom the Celtic predilection for the triad has tripled. The three gods, the three spouses of Ireland, also proceed from unity by a like process, and the origin of this divine triple Unity is found in the third name, *MacGrene*, "son of the sun." When Ith landed in Ireland, a son of the sun had just wedded the island, and was reigning over it. This is a new form of the so oft expressed idea that Ireland then belonged to the Tuatha De Danann, the gods of Day, Life, and Science. The name MacGrene, "son of the sun," may be compared with the

(1) Leabhar Gabhala, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 47-51.

(2) *Ibid, ibid*, p. 10, col. 1, lines 37-39.

surname, *Grian-Ainech*, the "sun-faced," borne by Ogma, or Ogmios, the divine champion, another of the Tuatha De Danann, or the sun gods.

But Ith found no one upon the shore. He traversed the island in the direction of the north, without meeting a single person. Neit, the god of War, had just been slain in a battle with the Fomorians. The three kings of the Tuatha De Danann, namely, MacCuill, MacCecht, and MacGrene, were met to divide his inheritance among them, and it was to the stronghold of Ailech, founded and raised by the dead, that the three princes had repaired, in the company of their warriors. The site of Ailech may still be seen; it is situated in the County Donegal, in the barony of West Innishowen, near Londonderry. Ith, in his journey across Ireland, from south to north, came at length to Ailech.

The three kings made him welcome, and besought him to act as judge in settling the succession of Neit. Ith gave his judgment, and ended the dispute: "Act," said he, in concluding, "act according to the laws of justice, for the country you dwell in is a good one: it is rich in fruits and honey, in wheat and in fish; and in heat and cold it is temperate." On hearing these words, the three kings perceived that it was Ith's intention to take possession of Ireland. They commanded him to leave the country, and resolved upon his death. They carried out their project some way off, in a place which, says the Irish legend, has been given the name of *Mag Itha*, or Plain of Ith, in memory of the event. But the companions of Ith did not perish with him. They got back to their ships, carrying the body of their unfortunate chief with them, and returned to the land whence they had come. The sons of Mile regarded the murder of Ith as a declaration of war, so they invaded Ireland and overthrew the Tuatha De Danann, that is to say, the gods (1).

VII.

Irish and Greek Mythology. Ith and Prometheus.

The war of the first men with the gods, and the victory of man over the gods—one of the fundamental elements of Celtic mythology—may seem strange, and yet this legend accords with a mythological doctrine of the Greeks.

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 12, col. 1.

In the war waged by Zeus against the Titans we have the Greek form of the Irish battle of Mag-Tured, between the Tuatha De Danann and the Fomorians: the Fomorians are the Irish Titans, and the Tuatha De Danann represent Zeus and his auxiliaries. The victors in this battle are Zeus and the Tuatha De Danann; the Titans and the Fomorians are overcome.

But from whom is it that men are descended according to one of the mythological systems of the Greeks? It is from the Titans (1). The first ancestor of the Hellenic race is Iapetos, sprung from the union of the Earth with the Sky, her son, who was born of the Earth from the beginning of the world (2). Iapetos was the father of Prometheus (3), who was the father (4) or grandfather of Hellen, the mythic ancestress of the Greek race (5). Now, Iapetos, this first father of the Greek race, Hesiod informs us, is a Titan: the sons born of the Sky and the Earth are Titans (6). Iapetos is one of these sons, and therefore a Titan, and an enemy of the sun-gods and of Zeus, who one day hurls him into Tartarus, along with Kronos their king. Iapetos, we read in the Iliad, dwells in Tartarus, along with Kronos: "Nor," exclaims Zeus to Hera, his vindictive spouse, "nor shall I heed thine anger, even if thou goest to the uttermost ends of the earth and sea, where Kronos and Iapetos are seated, having no pleasure in the beams of the sun or in the winds, but deep Tartarus is round about them" (7). Further on, the poet again recurs to this idea, adding that the gods of the underworld who surround Kronos are called Titans (8).

In the Iliad, which probably dates from the eighth century, Tartarus is the sojourn of Iapetos. But a later mythology

(1) Another quite different system of the Greeks on the origin of man has been set forth earlier in the book (chap. ii., sec. 2).

(2) Hesiod, *Theogony*, 126, 127, 134.

(3) *Ibid.*, verses 507-510, 528, 543, 565, 614. *Works and Days*, 50, 54. Apollodorus, i., chap. 2, secs. 2, 3. Didot-Muller, *Frag. Hist. Græcorum*, i., p. 105.

(4) Hesiod, *Catalogues*, frag. xxi., ed. Didot, p. 49.

(5) Apollodorus, i., chap. 7, sec. 2; Didot-Muller, *Frag. Hist. Græcorum*, i., pp. 110-111. Thucydides, i., chap. 3. Herodotus, i., chap. 56, sec. 4.

(6) *Theogony*, 204-210.

(7) *Iliad*, viii., 478-481.

(8) *Ibid.*, xiv., 273, 274, 278, 279.

assigns to Kronos and his associates, and therefore to Iapetos, the Isles of the Blest, lying beyond the Ocean, to the extreme west. This is the belief held in the *Works and Days* of Hesiod (1). In the fifth century before the present era it is sung of by Pindar (2). This isle is the new abode of the heroic dead, and therefore of Iapetos, the primitive ancestor of the Greek races. It is identical with the Land of the Dead, whence the sons of Mile came to conquer Ireland.

Nor does the resemblance between the Greek and the Celtic fable end here. In Greek mythology, the Titan Iapetos has a son called Prometheus. Prometheus is the adversary of Zeus, who wars with this son of a Titan, as he did with the Titans themselves at an earlier date. The second struggle is a continuation of the first, just as in Ireland the war between the Tuatha De Danann and the sons of Mile is in some sort a continuation of the one they had to wage with the Fomorians; for Bile is the personification of Death; in other words, it is one of the Fomorians who is the ancestor of the sons of Mile.

Some details in the legend of Prometheus have a curious resemblance to that of Ith. The following is particularly striking: Prometheus is at first the friend of Zeus (3); the rupture between them is caused by the intervention of Prometheus in a partition (4). Likewise Ith, at first well received by the Tuatha De Danann, becomes an object of suspicion to them after his judgment upon the partition of the country. In the Greek legend, as in the Irish, it is through a partition that friendship is changed into hatred, and the victim of this hatred is the judge who settled the partition.

Prometheus roused the anger of Zeus in lending an unlooked-for aid to men. Zeus deprived them of fire; Prometheus stole from Zeus "the unconquerable fire whose splendour shines from afar" (5), and gave it to men; they are therefore indebted to him for light and for day; and they owe him also science and the arts (6). It was the wonderful sight of Ith that discovered Ireland from the top of the Tower of Bregon. He is the first of the race of Mile who landed on the shores of

(1) Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 165 et seq.

(2) Pindar, *Olympics*, ii., 70 et seq.

(3) Æschylus, *Prometheus Vincetus*, 199 et seq.

(4) Hesiod, *Theogony*, 535-560.

(5) *Id.*, *Ibid.*, 561-569. *Works and Days*, 47-58.

(6) Æschylus, *Prometheus Vincetus*, 447 et seq.

Ireland, and pointed out the way to the Milesian race now settled in the island. The Irish owe him as much almost as the Greeks did Prometheus.

Despite the immense services he rendered to men, Prometheus is stricken by the iniquity of Zeus, and is condemned to frightful torment; he is chained to one of the columns that support the heavens in the extreme west, and an eagle with sombre plumage tears out his bowels and devours his liver, which grows again continually (1). Likewise the innocent Ith is put to death by the Tuatha De Danann.

The pain of Prometheus will not be eternal. Heracles will one day enter the murky abode of Death and Night, and free this benefactor of humanity, stricken with unmerited pain by the pitiless anger of Zeus (2). Ith, too, will be avenged: his death was a crime which nothing could justify. The Tuatha De Danann, who were responsible for it, will lose the sovereignty of Ireland, and at the hands of the sons of Mile.

CHAPTER XI.—Conquest of Ireland by the Sons of Mile.

- I. Arrival of the Sons of Mile in Ireland.—2. First Poem of Amairgen. Its Pantheistic Doctrine. Comparison of same with a Welsh Poem ascribed to Taliesin, and with the Philosophical System of Joannes Scotus, surnamed Erigena.—3. The two other Poems of Amairgen. Their Naturalistic Doctrine.—4. First Invasion of the Sons of Mile.—5. The Judgment of Amairgen.—6. Retreat of the Sons of Mile.—7. Second Invasion of the Sons of Mile. Their Conquest of Ireland.—8. Irish and Welsh Traditions Compared.—9. The Fir-Domnann, the British, and the Picts in Ireland.

I.

Arrival of the Sons of Mile in Ireland.

The companions of Ith returned to the Land of the Dead, or, as the Christian redaction puts it, to Spain, bringing the body of their chief with them. The race of Mile regarded the murder of Ith as a declaration of war. To avenge him they

(1) Hesiod, *Theogony*, 520-525. Prom. Vincetus, 1021-1025.

(2) Æschylus, *Prometheus Vincetus*, 871-873, 1026-1029. Cf. *Iliad*, viii., 360-369.

resolved to set out in a body for Ireland and take possession of the island. Thirty-six chiefs, whose names are recorded, commanded the race of Mile.

Each of them had his ship, with his family and all his men on board. But they did not all arrive at their journey's end. One of the sons of Mile having climbed to the masthead to get a distant view of Ireland, fell into the sea and perished. Amairgen, surnamed *Glungel*, "the white-kneed," son of Mile, was the scholar, the *file*, of the fleet; and his wife died on the way. They reached the coast of Ireland, and came to shore at the south-western point, where Ith had landed before them. And they called the name of the place, *Inber Scene* (1), after Amairgen's wife, whom they buried there.

It was on a Thursday, the first of May, and the seventeenth day of the moon (2), that the sons of Mile arrived in Ireland. Partholon also landed in Ireland on the First of May, but on a different day of the week and of the moon—on a Tuesday, the fourteenth day of the moon; and it was on the first of May, too, that the pestilence came, which in the space of one week destroyed utterly his race. The first of May was sacred to Beltene (3), one of the names of the god of Death, the god who gives life to men, and takes it away from them again. Thus, it was on the feast day of this god that the sons of Mile began their conquest of Ireland.

II.

The First Poem of Amairgen. Its Pantheistic Doctrine. Comparison of same with a Welsh Poem ascribed to Taliesin and with the Philosophical System of Joannes Scotus, surnamed Erigena.

As he set his right foot upon the soil of Ireland, the *file* Amairgen chanted a poem in honour of the science which

(1) This appears to be the ancient name of the river Kenmare in the County Kerry (Hennessy, *Chronicum Scotorum*, p. 389). It was there also that Nemed was said to come to land.

(2) *Flathiusa hErend*, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 14, col. 2, lines 50-51; Chron. Scot. ed Hennessy, p. 14. According to the document known as the *Flathiusa hErend*, the sons of Mile arrived in Ireland in the time of King David, that is, in the eleventh century before the present era. The Four Masters assign the same event to the year 1700 B.C.

(3) *Beltene* or *Beltine* is derived from the infinitive **beltu* genitive **bellen*, dative **bellin*, preserved in the old Irish compound *epelltu*, "dead" = **ate-belatu* (*Grammatica Celtica*, 2nd. ed., p. 264).

rendered him superior to the gods in power, though it came originally from them; he sang the praise of that marvellous science which was to give the sons of Mile victory over the Tuatha De Danann. This divine science, indeed, penetrating the secrets of nature, discovering her laws, and mastering her hidden forces, was, according to the tenets of Celtic philosophy, a being identical with these forces themselves, with the visible and the material world; and to possess this science was to possess nature in her entirety.

"I am," said Amairgen, "the wind which blows over the sea;

I am the wave of the Ocean;
 I am the murmur of the billows;
 I am the ox of the seven combats;
 I am the vulture upon the rock;
 I am a tear of the sun;
 I am the fairest of plants;
 I am a wild boar in valour;
 I am a salmon in the water;
 I am a lake in the plain.

I am a word of science;
 I am the spear-point that gives battle;
 I am the god who creates or forms in the head [of man]
 the fire [of thought];

Who is it that enlightens the assembly upon the mountain?
 [And here a gloss adds: Who will enlighten each question, if not I?]

Who telleth the ages of the moon? [And a gloss adds:
 Who telleth you the ages of the moon, if not I?]

Who showeth the place where the sun goes to rest? [If not the *file*, adds another gloss]" (1). . . .

(1) Bk. of Leinster, p. 12, col. 2, lines 39 seq. Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 21 recto, col. 2, lines 21 seq. Bk. of Lecan, 284 recto col. 2. See also in the Royal Irish Academy the MSS. 23, K32, p. 75, and 23, K45, p. 188; also Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the year 1857, vol. 5, 1860, pp. 234-236. In editing this text one should not confine oneself to the reading of the Bk. of Leinster. For instance, the words *ar-domni*, which have glided into the text of the Bk. of Leinster, line 39, are a gloss, as will be seen on referring to the Books of Ballymote and Lecan.

There is a lack of order in this composition; the ideas, fundamental and subordinate, are jumbled together without method; but there is no doubt as to the meaning: the *file* is the word of science, he is the god who gives to man the fire of thought; and as science is not distinct from its object, as God and nature are but one, the being of the *file* is mingled with the winds and the waves, with wild animals, and the warrior's arms.

In a Welsh MS. of the fourteenth century we find an analogous composition. It is ascribed to the bard Taliesin. Amairgen, the Irish *file*, has said: "I am a tear of the sun." And the Welsh poem puts a similar utterance in the mouth of Taliesin, who says: "I have been a tear in the air" (1). The following are further utterances:

Amairgen: "I am the vulture upon the rock."

Taliesin: "I have been an eagle" (2).

Amairgen: "I am the fairest of plants."

Taliesin: "I have been wood in the covert" (3).

Amairgen: "I am the spear-point that gives battle."

Taliesin: "I have been a sword in the grasp of the hand; I have been a shield in battle" (4).

Amairgen: "I am a word of science."

Taliesin: "I have been a word among letters" (5).

The Welsh poem alters the primitive meaning of the formula in putting the verb in the past tense. It substitutes the idea of successive metamorphoses for the vigorous Pantheism which is the glory, as it is the error, of Irish philosophy. The *file* is the personification of science, and science is identical with its object. Science is Being itself, of whom the forces of nature and all sensible beings are but manifestations. Thus it is that the *file*, who is the visible embodiment of science in human form, is not only man, but also eagle or vulture, tree or plant, word, sword, or spear; thus it is that he is the wind that blows over the sea, the wave of the ocean, the murmuring of the billows, the lake in the plain. He is all of these because he is the universal being, or, as Amairgen puts it, "the god who creates

(1) *Kat Godeu*, verse 5, in Skene's Four Ancient Books of Wales, ii., 137 seq. Cf. i., 276 seq.

(2) *Kat Godeu*, verse 13.

(3) *Ibid.*, verse 23.

(4) *Ibid.*, verses 17 and 18.

(5) *Ibid.*, verse 7

in the head" of man "the fire" of thought. He is all of these because it is he who has the custody of the treasure of science. "I am," he says, "the word of science," and there are many proofs of his possessing this treasure. Amaigen is careful to recall them. For instance, when the people who are gathered together on the mountain are perplexed by some difficult question, it is the *file* who gives the answer. Nor is this all: he knows how to calculate the moons, upon which the calendar is based; and, consequently, it is he who fixes the periods of the great popular assemblies, which are the common foundation of the social and religious life of the people. Astronomy has no secrets for him; he even knows the place, hidden from the rest of men, where the sun sinks to rest at evening, wearied with his journey over the heavens; science, therefore, belongs to him; he is himself science; now science is the one only being of whom the whole world, and all the subordinate beings it contains, is but the changing and manifold expression.

This is the doctrine that the Irish philosopher, Joannes Scotus, taught in the ninth century in France, at the court of Charles the Bald, clothing it in the forms of Greek philosophy. M. Hauréau has summarised the fundamental doctrine of the Irish philosopher in the following extracts from his great work *De Divisione Naturæ*:

"We are informed by all the means of knowledge that, beneath the apparent diversity of beings, subsists the one being who is their common foundation" (1).

"When we are told that God makes all things," says Joannes Scotus, "we are to understand that God is in all things, that He is the substantial essence of all things. For He alone possesses in Himself the veritable conditions of being; and He alone is in Himself all that which is among the things that are truly said to exist. For nothing which is, is really of itself, but God alone, who alone truly is in Himself, spreading Himself over all things, and communicating to them all that which in them responds to the true notion of being" (2).

And again: "Do not you see how the Creator of the universality of things holds the first rank in the divisions of nature? Not without reason, indeed, since He is the principle of all things; and is inseparable from all the diversity He has created;

(1) *Histoire de la Philosophie Scholastique*, pt. 1, p. 171.

(2) Hauréau, *Ibid.*, p. 159. Cf. Joannes Scotus, *De Divisione Naturæ*, i., chap. 72; Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, cxxii., col. 518, A.

without which He could not exist as Creator. In him, indeed, immutably and essentially, are all things; He is Himself division and collection, the genus and the species, the whole and the part of the created universe" (1).

Finally, "What is a pure idea?" According to Joannes Scotus, "it is, in proper terms, a theophany, that is to say, a manifestation of God in the human soul." Such is the doctrine taught by Scotus Erigena in France, in the ninth century (2). It is the doctrine the Irish mythological *épopée* puts into the mouth of Amairgen, when it makes him say: "I am the god who puts in the head of man the fire of thought, I am the billow of the Ocean, I am the murmur of the waves," &c. The *file*, the being in whom science, that is to say, the divine idea, is manifested, and who thus becomes the personification of that idea, can, without boasting, proclaim himself identical with the one universal being of whom all other beings are but appearances or manifestations. His own existence is confounded with that of these beings.

This is the explanation of the old poem which the Irish legend puts in the mouth of the *file* Amairgen, at the moment this primitive representative of Celtic science, coming from the mysterious regions of death, set his right foot for the first time on the soil of Ireland.

III.

The two other Poems of Amairgen. Their Naturalistic Doctrine.

The Book of Invasions accredits Amairgen with two other poems, the philosophy of which is, however, of a less elevated character than the foregoing, being almost identical with that by which Hesiod explains the origin of the world, in his Theogony. Matter preceded the gods. That which existed at the beginning was Chaos, the father of Darkness and Night; then came the Earth, who produced the mountains and the sea and the sky; and after being united to the sky, gave birth, first of all to the Ocean, and then to the Titans, the fathers of gods and men. Matter, therefore, existed from the beginning of things,

(1) De Div. Naturæ, iii., chap. 1; Hauréau, *ibid.*, p. 160; Migne, Patrologia Latina, cxxii., col. 621, B.C.

(2) Hauréau, *ibid.*, pt. 1, pp. 156-157. Cf. Scotus, De Div. Nat. i., chap 7.; Migne, Pat. Lat. cxxii., col. 446, D.

and has the same supremacy over the gods as a father has over his son. Material nature is above the gods. Thus Amairgen, who is at war with the gods, invokes the forces of nature, by whose aid he hopes to overcome them. Hence the last two poems of Amairgen are invocations to the forces of nature. The second runs as follows ; as in the Theogony, the Earth takes the first place :

I invoke the land of Ireland !
 Shining, shining sea (? !
 Fertile, fertile mountain !
 Gladed, gladed wood !
 Abundant river, abundant in water !
 Fish-abounding lake ! (1).

It is thus the land of Ireland, the sea that surrounds it, its mountains and rivers and lakes, that Amairgen calls to his aid against the gods that dwell there. Here we have a form of prayer taken from the Celtic ritual. It must have been consecrated by long usage, and was not written for the literary work in which we find it. It is a pagan invocation to Ireland deified, and one that could be employed in any circumstance that might call for the intervention of the tutelary divinity.

This text calls others to mind in which we see material nature regarded as the greatest of the gods. We have referred in another place to the oath which Loegaire, High King of Ireland, was constrained to take before being set at liberty by the people of Leinster, by whom he had been defeated and taken prisoner. He called to witness the sun and moon, water and air, day and night, sea and land ; and these were the only gods he spoke of ; and when he had broken his oath, these powers of nature whom he had given as his sureties, punished him by taking away his life (2).

The Book of Invasions ascribes a second poem to Amairgen, the meaning of which is clear when read after the third. It is

-
- (1) Aliu iath n-hErend,
 Hermach [hermach] muir,
 Mothach mothach sliab,
 Srathach srathach cail,
 Cithach cithach aub,
 Essach essach loch.

Aliu is glossed by *alim*, and *aub* by *aband* (Bk. of Leinster, p. 13, col. 2, lines 6 seq. ; cf. Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 21, v., col. 2, lines 20 seq. Bk. of Lecan, fol. 285 recto, col. 1 ; Trans. Ossianic Society, v., 232.

- (2) Introd. Litt. Celtique, pp. 181-182.

an invocation to the sea ; the earth is also named, but here holds the second place only, whereas in the preceding it occupied the first :

Fish-abounding sea !
 Fruitful Earth !
 Irruption of fish !
 Fishing there !
 Bird under wave !
 Great fish !
 Crab hole !
 Irruption of fish !
 Fish-abounding sea !

(1).

Thus Amairgen, about to do battle with the gods, calls both matter and the forces of nature to his aid, offering up two prayers to them. His prayers are answered, and the gods overthrown (2).

IV.

First Invasion of Ireland by the Sons of Mile.

We shall now return to the account of the conquest of Ireland by the sons of Mile. The *file* Amairgen, when he came to land with his brethren and his men, says the old text, chanted the two invocations given above, namely, the first and the third. The second we shall return to later. Then after three days and three nights had elapsed, the sons of Mile fought their first battle. Their adversaries, according to the Book of Invasions, were "demons, that is to say, the Tuatha De Danann." The battle took place a short distance from the shore, in the place called Sliab Mis, now written Slieve Mish, in the County Cork.

(1) Iascach muir,
 Mothach tir,
 Tomaidm n-eisc,
 Iasca and,
 Fo thuind en,
 Lethach mil,
 Partach lag,
 Tomaidm n-eisc,
 Iascach muir.

(Bk. of Leinster, p. 12, col. 2, lines 49 seq. ; cf. Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 21, r, col. 3, line 21 ; Bk. of Lecan, fol. 284, v., col. 1 ; Trans. Ossianic Society, v., 237.

(2) On Naturalism in Gaul and Ireland, see *infra*, chap. xvi., sec. 8.

The Book of Invasions makes this the scene of one of those curious legends which the mania for etymology has given rise to in Ireland. Near Slieve Mish was a lake which was called Loch Lugaid, after Lugaid, the son of Ith, who bathed there. His wife, who was called Fial, or "modesty," bathed in a river which flowed out of the lake. One day Lugaid, following the stream, came to the place where his wife was in the act of bathing, and the latter was so overcome with shame at being thus discovered by her husband, that she expired forthwith, and her name was given to the stream in memory of the event.

The sons of Mile now marched in the direction of the north-east. They were still in the vicinity of Slieve Mish when they were met by Queen Banba, who said to them: "If it is to make the conquest of Ireland that you are come, the aim of your expedition is not just." And the *file* Amairgen replied: "It is for that, indeed, we are come." Then said Banba: "Grant me at least one favour—that the island be called by my name." "It shall be so," said Amairgen.

A little further on the sons of Mile met the second queen, who was called Fotla. She also begged that the island be named after her. And Amairgen answered: "So be it; the island shall be called Fotla."

At Usnech, the central point of Ireland, the sons of Mile were met by the third queen, whose name was Eriu. "Welcome, O warriors," said she. "You come from afar. This island will belong to you for all time, and from here to the furthest east there is none better. No race will be so perfect as yours." "These are good words," said Amairgen, "and a good prophecy." "It is not to you that we owe any thanks," cried Eber Dond, the eldest of the sons of Mile; "but to our gods and our own prowess." "What I announce has no concern for you," replied Eriu; "you shall not enjoy this island; it will not belong to any descendants of yours." So, indeed, it befel, for Eber Dond was fated to perish before the race of Mile had completed the conquest of Ireland. Then the queen Eriu, like the other two queens, begged that the island should be called by her name. "That will be its chief name," said Amairgen.

V.

The Judgment of Amairgen.

The sons of Mile came at length to Tara, the capital of Ireland, then known as *Druim Cain*, Fair Hill. There they found the three kings, MacCuill, MacCecht, and MacGrene, who were then reigning over Ireland and the Tuatha De Danann, upon whom they were come to make war. The sons of Mile called upon them to surrender the island.

The three kings demanded an armistice, in order to have time to consider whether they should give battle or deliver up hostages and make terms. They thought to take advantage of the delay by making themselves invincible, for at that moment their druids were preparing enchantments which would drive the invaders out of the country. And MacCuill, the first of the three Tuatha De Danann kings, said: "We will accept the judgment of your *file* Amairgen; but if he render a false judgment we shall put him to death." "Pronounce thy judgment, Amairgen," cried Eber Dond, the eldest of the sons of Mile. "This is my judgment," replied Amairgen. "You will temporarily abandon the island to the Tuatha De Danann." "To what distance shall we go?" asked Eber. "You will put between you and them the distance of nine waves," answered Amairgen. This was the first judgment given in Ireland.

Such is the account of the Book of Invasions. It may be asked what is the meaning of the expression "nine waves?" what the exact distance it indicated? All we can say is, that it was a magical formula to which a certain superstitious potency was still attributed in Ireland in the early days of Christianity. In the seventh century there was an ecclesiastical school at Cork, presided over for some time by Colman, son of Hua-Cluasaig, the *fer Leigind*, or professor of written literature, that is to say, of Latin and theology. At the time Colman was giving instruction in this school, Ireland was stricken by a famine, accompanied by great loss of life. Two-thirds of the people perished, among them being the two kings of Ireland, Diarmait and Blathmac, both sons of Aed Slane. This was in 665 (1). To escape the scourge himself, and to safeguard the

(1) Annals of Tigernach, in O'Connor's *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ii., p. 205. According to the *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, pp. 98-99, this plague took place in the year 661, and in 664, according to

lives of his scholars, Colman had recourse to two means: first he wrote a hymn in Irish verse, which has come down to us in two MSS. of the late eleventh century (1); then he withdrew along with his scholars to an isle lying off the coast of Ireland, at a distance of nine waves. "For," remarks the Irish text recording the incident, "this is a distance at which the men of learning say maladies cannot attain one" (2). Thus, in the seventh century of our era, the Irish Christians attributed to the distance of nine waves a certain magic power, in whose protecting influence they had not ceased to believe, and we find this pagan doctrine in the legendary history of the conquest of Ireland by the sons of Mile.

VI.

Retreat of the Sons of Mile.

The sons of Mile submitted to the judgment of Amairgen. They returned by the way they had come, and going on board their ships, withdrew from the shore to the mysterious distance of nine waves, in accordance with the judgment of Amairgen. As soon as the Tuatha De Danann found them launched upon the sea, their druids and *file* began to chant magic poems, which caused a furious tempest to arise, so that the fleet of the sons of Mile was driven far out to sea and dispersed. Thereupon a great sorrow fell upon the sons of Mile. "This must be a magic wind," said Eber Dond, who, as the eldest of them, appears to have been in command of the expedition. "See if the wind is blowing above the masthead," said he. They sent a man up to the topmast, who reported that there was no wind blowing there. "Let us wait until Amairgen comes," cried the pilot of Eber Dond, who was a pupil of the celebrated *file*. When all the ships were gathered together again, Eber Dond called out to Amairgen that this tempest put their men of learning to shame. "It is not true," replied Amairgen. And it was then that he chanted his invocation to the land of Ireland,

the Four Masters, ed. O'Donovan, i., pp. 274-276. The year 664 is also given by Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iii., 27; and in Migne's *Pat. Latina*, xc., col. 165.

(1) MS. E 4, 2, fol. 5, Trin. Coll., Dublin; MS. classed by Gilbert, I., p. 28, in Franciscan Monastery, Dublin; Whitley Stokes, *Goidelica*, 1st ed., p. 78; 2nd ed., p. 121; Windisch, *Irische Texte*, p. 6.

(2) *Goidelica*, 2nd ed., p. 121, line 34.

calling upon the benevolence of that natural power to aid him against the enmity of the gods :

I invoke the land of Ireland !
 Shining, shining sea !
 Fertile, fertile mountain ! etc. (1).

When he had ended, the wind changed and became favourable to them. Eber Dond thought immediate success was secured. Said he : " I am going to put all the inhabitants of Ireland to the sword." But he had hardly uttered the words when the wind turned against them again. A violent tempest arose and the ships were scattered ; several of them foundered and all on board perished, Eber Dond being among the number. Those who escaped landed at a great distance from the place where they had re-embarked, after the judgment of Amairgen.

VII.

Second Invasion of Ireland by the Sons of Mile. Their Conquest of the Island.

It was at the mouth of the Boyne, on the eastern coast of Ireland, facing Great Britain, that the sons of Mile landed for the second time in Ireland ; and, as Eriu had foretold, Eber Dond, the eldest, was no longer among them. He was dead, and it was his brothers and not he, as the goddess Eriu had prophesied, who made the conquest of Ireland (2).

The fate of the island was decided by a battle fought at Tailtiu, celebrated for its great annual fair, said to have been instituted by Lug. The three kings and three queens of the Tuatha De Danann were slain (3). Thenceforth the Tuatha De Danann took refuge in the caves and depths of the mountains, where they dwell in marvellous palaces. They go to and fro over the land, invisible, rendering in secret good or ill services to men, as the occasion arises. Sometimes they assume visible form, and no mystery enshrouds the operations of their divine power. The end of their history belongs to the heroic period of Ireland. Their life is mingled with the lives of

(1) *Supra*, sec. 3.

(2) *Leabhar Gabhala*, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 13, col. 4, lines 34-40.

(3) *Flathiusa hErend*, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 14, col. 2, line 51 ; p. 15, col. 1, lines 1-4.

heroes, like that of the Greek gods in the Iliad and the Odyssey (1). We shall return to them in the succeeding chapters.

The sons of Mile took possession of Ireland. The eldest, Eber Dond, being dead, his two brothers disputed with each other for the royalty. Eremon, the second son of Mile, had become the eldest on his brother's death; but the third son, Eber Find, refused to recognise his claim. The matter being put before Amairgen, he decided that Eremon should possess the sovereignty during his life, and that on his death it should pass to Eber Find. This was the second judgment of Amairgen. But it was less favourably received than the first. On the word of Amairgen the sons of Mile had consented to beat a retreat and temporarily abandon Ireland, which they had almost taken possession of. But this time Eber Find declined to submit to the judgment of Amairgen. He demanded an immediate division of Ireland, and he obtained it (2). This arrangement, however, was not permanent. At the end of a year the two brothers were at war with each other. Eber Find was slain, and Eremon became sole king of Ireland (3).

VIII.

Comparison of Irish and Gaulish Traditions.

The leading characteristics of this tale are evidently derived from traditions which are not exclusively Irish, but the common property of the Celtic race. The Gauls, like the Irish, believed themselves to be descended from the god of the Dead; and they also believed that the dominion of this god was a territorial one, a real country lying beyond the Ocean. It was the mysterious region whither the Gaulish mariners, with one stroke of the oar, or in one hour's voyage, conducted the invisible dead at night, in ships of unknown origin (4). The pre-Celtic population of Gaul did not come from thence.

The druids of the first century B.C. affirmed that there was once a native population in Gaul; it was the population anterior

(1) See Odyssey, xvii., 485-488. The gods, in the guise of strangers, says the poet, are everywhere to be seen, going about the cities, observing men and their evil doings. Cf. *supra*, chap. 8, sec. 9.

(2) Leabhar Gabhala, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 14, col. 1, lines 47-51.

(3) *Flathiusa hErend*, Bk. of Leinster, p. 15, col. 1, lines 8-14.

(4) See *supra*, x., sec. 5.

to the Celtic Conquest, that which was known in Ireland as the Fir-Bolg, Fir-Domnann, and Galioin. A second group, added the druids, came thither from the most distant isles, in other words, from the land of the Dead, the Isles of the Blest, or the all-powerful, of Greek mythology. This was the population that first crossed the Rhine and settled down on its western borders in pre-historic times, anterior to the fifth century B.C., and to the time of Hecateus of Miletus (1). When Timagenus obtained this information from the druids, about the first century before Christ, the Celts of this first immigration had lost all recollection of their arrival in Gaul, and had no other belief than the druidical doctrine of the mythic origin of the Celt. However, a third group had been formed by the Celts of the second immigration, originally settled on the right bank of the Rhine, and whom the Germanic invasions, from the third to the first century B.C., had gradually driven thence, forcing them over to the left bank, or more to the West rather, into various parts of Gaul (2). On this side of the Rhine they remembered the circumstances of their early immigration.

Of the three articles containing the teaching of the druids on Gaulish ethnology, the second is mythological, that, namely, which makes the oldest established Celtic population in Gaul come from the most distant islands beyond the Ocean. The third article, which assigns a trans-Rhenish origin to the later arrivals, is historical. As for the first article, in which the earliest inhabitants of Gaul, that is, the pre-Celtic populations, are described as native, this is the belief generally admitted in ancient times, when races were considered as native all memory of whose migration was forgotten, and it has been proved by experience that the recollection of early migrations gradually fades away from the minds of peoples who possess no written annals.

IX.

The Fir-Domnann, the Britons, and the Picts in Ireland.

But to return to Ireland and the legendary tales upon which the traditional theories of her origin have been founded.

(1) Frag. Hist. Græcorum, i., p. 2.

(2) Timagenus, cited by Ammianus Marcellinus, xv., chap. 9, in Didot-Muller, Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum, iii., p. 323. Timagenus flourished in the time of the Emperor Augustus.

Eremon, having become sole master of Ireland, divided the north, the west, and the south-west portions of the island among the conquerors, that is, he assigned to them the provinces of Ulster, Connaught, and Munster. He left Leinster to the primitive inhabitants of the country, and gave the sovereignty of it to Crimthan Sciathbel, who was a Fir-Domnann. Before long, Crimthan was at war with a British tribe known as the *Fir-Fidga* or *Tuath-Fidga*, the "men of Fidga." They had invaded the kingdom of Crimthan, and were superior to his soldiers, their envenomed arrows causing mortal wounds.

It was at this moment that the Picts, in Irish, *Cruithnich*, arrived in Ireland. They landed on the southern coast of Leinster, at the mouth of the river Slaney, which flows into the sea near Wexford. Crimthan joined forces with them, and learned from a druid of the Picts how to heal the wounds inflicted upon his soldiers by the poisoned arrows of the *Fir-Fidga*. The receipt was to take a bath near the field of battle, in a hole filled with the milk of a hundred and twenty white hornless cows. The treatment proved efficacious, and Crimthan's soldiers obtained a victory over the *Fir-Fidga* at *Ard-Lemnacht*. The Picts, who brought about the victory, held for a time considerable power in Ireland. Then Eremon drove them out, and they settled down in Great Britain.

But he consented to give them for wives the widows of the Milesian warriors who had perished at sea before the conquest of Ireland. He attached one condition to this gift, namely, that among the Picts all inheritances should go down in the female line, and not in the male. The chiefs of the Picts agreed to this, and they swore by the sun and the moon for ever to observe the same (1). Thenceforth the Goidels or Scots, otherwise called the sons of Mile, were the sole possessors of Ireland. It would be hard to say at what exact point in this tale, fable ends and history begins.

(1) *Flathiusa hErend*, Bk. of Leinster, p. 15, col. 1, line 15, seq.; cf. Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 23 r; and Bk. of Lecan, fol. 287 r. Two different redactions, one in verse, the other in prose, are contained in the "Irish version of the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius," pp. 122-127; 134-149. See also the article in the *Dinnsenchus* commencing with the words "*Senchuss Ardda-Lemnacht*" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 196, col. 2, line 12). The war between Crimthan Sciathbel and the *Fir-Fidga* was the subject of the piece entitled *Forbais Fer Fidga*. It is contained in the oldest catalogue of Irish epic literature.

CHAPTER XII.—The Tuatha De Danann after the Conquest of Ireland by the Sons of Mile. Part the First: The Supreme God, Dagda.

- I.** The Tuatha De Danann after their defeat by the sons of Mile. The piece entitled "Conquest of the Sid."—2. The god Dagda. His power after the conquest of Ireland by the sons of Mile.—3. The Underground Palace of the Dagda at Brug na Boinne, or Sid Maic ind Oc. Oengus, son of the Dagda. Pagan redaction of the legend of Oengus and this palace.—4. Christian redaction of this Legend.—5. The Love of Oengus, son of the Dagda.—6. Euhemerism in Ireland and Rome. The Dagda or "good god" in Ireland; Bona dea, "the good goddess," the companion of Faunus, in Rome.

I.

The Tuatha De Danann after their defeat by the sons of Mile. The piece entitled "Conquest of the Sid."

The Tuatha De Danann, vanquished, but still immortal gods, withdrew into palaces underground; and according to the Celtic belief, as we conclude from the oldest epic literature of Ireland, they dwell there still; but from time to time come forth into the outer world they once ruled over, and wherein they still exercise considerable power, sometimes beneficial, sometimes baneful, to men. Often, they put on invisibility, one of the characteristic privileges of divinity, and he who receives a token of their good-will or is stricken by their vengeance, sees not the dispensing hand. Sometimes they appear to mortals in the form of men or animals, chiefly that of birds, and they hold a considerable place in the bardic tales recounting the exploits of the Milesian heroes.

One of the pieces serving as an introduction to the great epic known as the *Tain bo Cuailgne*, or Cattle Spoil of Cuailgne, recounts the most ancient history of the Tuatha De Danann after the conquest of the sons of Mile. Two redactions of this tale have come down to us. One of them, entitled the "Conquest of the Sid," that is, of the magic palace of the gods, dates from a time anterior to the Irish scholars of the eleventh century, notably Flann Manistrech and Gilla Coemain, who disfigured the ancient mythological traditions by setting a limit to the lives of the Tuatha De Danann chiefs, and fixing the

precise date at which these divine personages died, whom the Celtic imagination had created and regarded as immortal (1). There is also another redaction of this piece, which is Christian, however. Its author has accepted the doctrines of Flann Manistrech and Gilla Coemain. The names of the Tuatha De Danann chiefs who are said by the Book of Invasions to have died before the establishment of the sons of Mile in Ireland, do not appear in this redaction. They are replaced by other names, and by further developments are connected with the legends that grew up round the infancy of Christianity in Ireland (2).

We shall now give a short summary of the first of these redactions, adding whatever explanations are necessary to a right understanding of the text.

II.

The god Dagda. His power after the Conquest of the sons of Mile.

The Tuatha De Danann had a celebrated king called *Dagan*. *Dagan* is in two passages of this tale a variant of *Dagda* (3), which is here used to designate the same god; we have already seen the important part this divine personage played in the second battle of Mag-Tured. *Dagan* or *Dagda* is the supreme god: his ordinary name *Dagda* means "good god"; *Dagan* is "good little."

In the first volume of the present series, we have cited an Irish text preserved in a MS. of the sixteenth century, in which the *Dagda* is described as a principal god, or the principal god of the pagans (4). In the document we are now examining, which is preserved in a twelfth-century MS., it is said that the power of the *Dagda* or *Dagan* was even great over the sons of Mile after their conquest of Ireland. For the Tuatha De

(1) It is entitled *De Gabail int-shida* (Bk. of Leins., p. 245, col. 2, lines 41, 42).

(2) This redaction has no title. It is contained in folios III-III of the Book of Fermoy, MS. in the Royal Irish Academy. A partial analysis of it was contributed by O'Curry to *Atlantis*, iii. (1862), pp. 384-389. A fuller analysis has been published by Dr. Todd in the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Acad., Irish MSS. Series, i. pt. 1, 1870, pp. 45-49.

(3) *Dagan* is found in the Bk. of Leins., p. 245, col. 2, lines 42-43. and p. 246, col. 1, line 11. *Dagda*, Middle Irish for *Dagde*, is met with in the same tale, p. 246, col. 1, lines 2, 5.

(4) Introd. Litt. Celtique, p. 202, note 2.

Danann, his subjects, destroyed the corn and milk of the sons of Mile, so that the latter were constrained to make a treaty of peace with the Dagda. And it was only through his good offices that the sons of Mile were able to gather in the corn from their fields, and to drink the milk of their cows.

As king of the gods, the Dagda exercised great authority. It was he who divided amongst the Tuatha De Danann, that is to say, the gods, whom the more fortunate race of Mile had overthrown, the *sid* or wonderful palaces, which were usually inaccessible to men, being hidden away in the bowels of the earth, under the hollow of the hills, or beneath rising ground. The Dagda, for instance, gave a *sid* to Lug, son of Ethne, and another to Ogma; two others he retained for himself. The principal was known by two names: the first, *Brug na Boinne*, "Castle of the Boyne," because it was situated on the left bank of that river, not far from the spot where James the Second was defeated in 1690. The second name of this mysterious palace was *Sid* or *Brug Maic ind Oc*, "enchanted palace or castle of Mac ind Oc," or "of the son of the Young." We shall see the reason of this later on.

III.

The Underground Palace of the Dagda at Brug na Boinne, or Sid Maic ind Oc. Oengus, son of the Dagda. Pagan redaction of the legend of Oengus and this Palace.

The site of the underground palace of the Dagda, as determined by the earliest tradition, is, from an archaeological point of view, one of the most interesting in Ireland. Of the three great tumuli there, two have been opened, and they each present the appearance of a vast mortuary chamber, now empty. Frequent mention is made in Irish literature of the underground palace of the Dagda here, at Brug na Boinne. A poem ascribed to Cinaed hua Artacain, who died in 975, affirms that before the battle of Mag-Tured two lovers slept there in the same bed. These were Boann, or the river Boyne deified, wife of the Dagda, and the god Dagda himself (1).

(1)

"Lanamain contuiled sund
ria cath Maigi Tured tall;
inber mor in Dagda dond,
ni duachnid an-adba and."

(Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 51, col. 2, lines 23 and 24).

When the Tuatha De Danann were transformed into mortal men in Christian times, it was related that the place called Brug na Boinne, held by pagan tradition to be the site of the Dagda's underground palace, was the cemetery in which this primitive race used to bury its chieftains. The "History of Burial-places," *Senchas na Relec*, which was probably written about the end of the eleventh century, affirms that the Dagda, Lug, Ogma, and other great personages of the Tuatha De Danann race received burial here. There seems to be no doubt that this spot was used as a royal burying-ground in historic times. The majority of the high kings of Ireland were buried there during the first four centuries of the present era. Their predecessors were interred at Crauchan in Connaught. Crimthann Nia Nair, who reigned about the beginning of the present era, is said to have been the first high king of Ireland, of the Milesian race, to be buried at Brug na Boinne; and he was led to choose this as a burying place, it is stated, because his wife was a fairy, belonging to the Tuatha De Danann (1).

It would be interesting to know whether the three great mounds on the Boyne, those of Knowth, Newgrange, and Dowth, could be attributed to the Irish kings of the first four centuries of the present era, or whether they must be referred to prehistoric populations anterior to the Celtic race known as the Goidels or Scots. The second appears to be the more likely supposition. The Greeks attributed their prehistoric monuments to the Cyclops, who were originally mythological beings. The Irish also seem to have confounded their imaginary gods with a pre-Celtic race which actually existed and buried its chiefs in the mound by the Boyne, during their domination of the island, before the arrival of the Goidels or Scots, by whom they were brought into subjection. This much is certain, however, that these funeral monuments belong to a very antique time. The principal of them, Newgrange, is an artificial eminence covering an area of about two acres, and containing one of the largest funeral chambers in western Europe. In all probability the tombs of the kings who reigned in Ireland during the first four centuries A.D. should be sought, not in these justly celebrated monuments, but in the surrounding neighbourhood.

It is under the soil of this burying-ground that the most

(1) *Senchas na Relec*, in the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 51, col. 1, lines 7-9, 23-27; col. 2, lines 4-7.

ancient Irish tradition placed the subterranean palace of the supreme god Dagda. This palace was specially built for him by his subjects (1). And yet it was not known as the Dagda's Palace, but as the "Palace of Mac ind Oc," *Brug Maic ind Oc* (2), that is, probably, "Palace of the Son of the Young." Mac ind Oc was the name of Oengus, son of the Dagda, and of Boann; his father and mother, both immortals, enjoyed perpetual youth, and never felt the approach of age (3). How does it come, then, that the Dagda's palace bears his son's name?

There is an Irish legend explaining this. When the Dagda, after the defeat of the Tuatha De Danann by the sons of Mile, came to divide the *sid* or underground palaces among his chieftains, one of the latter was absent. This was Oengus, son of the Dagda. The Dagda had entrusted the education of his son to two other gods, one of whom was Mider of Bregleith, celebrated in Irish epic for his love for Etain, wife of Eochaid Airem, high king of Ireland. Oengus was forgotten when the distribution was being made. Shortly afterwards he came before the Dagda and complained of the injustice. The Dagda, however, refused to hear him. Oengus then asked permission to pass the night in his father's mysterious palace at Brug na Boinne. The Dagda consented, and to the night graciously added the day, meaning, of course, the next day. But Oengus once in possession refused to leave, on the plea that time being composed of nights and days, the palace had been ceded to him in perpetuity. The Dagda admitted his claim, and henceforth the Brug belonged to Oengus.

A marvellous palace it was. According to the Irish legend, three trees grew there which were always laden with fruit (4);

(7) *Dinnsenchus* of Brug na Boinne, in *Bk. of Leins.*, p. 164, col. 2, lines 31 and 32. Cf. *Leabhar Gabhala*, *ibid.*, p. 9, col. 2, lines 18 and 19. The *Dinnsenchus* designates this palace by the words *dun* and *din*; the *Leabhar Gabhala* uses the word *sid*.

(8) In a poem, already cited, by Cinaed hua Artacain, who died in 975, we find a similar expression: *tech Maic ind Oc*, "house of Mac ind Oc" (*Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 51, col. 2, line 17).

(9) "Oengus, mac Oc, ocus Aed Caem, ocus Cermait Milbel, tri maic in Dagdai" (*Leabhar Gabhala*, in the *Book of Leins.*, p. 10, col. 1, lines 20, 21). Instead of "Mac Oc," we find "Mac ind Oc," in the poem of Cinaed hua Artacain, already referred to: "maig Maic ind Oc" (*Leab. na hUidhre*, p. 51, col. 2, line 13); "tech Maic ind Oc" (*ibid.*, line 17). Here *ind Oc* appears to be a genitive dual.

(4) These trees suggest comparison with that which grew in the mysterious isle of Fand in the legend of Cuchulainn. The marvellous

and there were two swine there, one living, the other ready roasted for eating; alongside that a jar of excellent ale; and no one there ever tastes death (1). In this picture, preserved in a MS. of the middle of the twelfth century, though belonging to a much earlier period, the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the gods is found complete and without restriction. It was a long time after this tale was composed that the Tuatha De Danann were said to have suffered death and been buried at Brug na Boinne. It was just at the time Christianity had triumphed over paganism that this new doctrine was disseminated, and the attempt made to bring the old pagan legends into harmony with the teaching of the Christian monks. It was in the eleventh century that the *Senchas na Relec* or History of Burial-Places, and the *Leabhar Gabhala* or Book of Invasions were compiled.

IV.

Christian Redaction of this Legend.

The mingling of Christian ideas with the Gaelic traditions in Ireland gave rise to a new version of this mythic legend. The author of it admits that the principal chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann, the Dagda, Lug, and Ogma, died, as related in the eleventh-century *Leabhar Gabhala* or Book of Invasions, before the arrival of the sons of Mile. Ogma was slain at the second battle of Mag-Tured (2); and the Dagda and Lug met their deaths some years later (3). The sons of Mile took possession of the country after several battles were fought, in which the

branches which were brought out of the land of the gods to Bran mac Febail and to Cormac mac Airt, come from a similar tree. The Greeks, like the Celts, placed trees in the sojourn of the gods. In the garden of the Hesperides, beyond the ocean, are golden apples and fruit-bearing trees, Hesiod informs us; and it is the trees of the old garden of *Phoibos* that Sophocles reveals to us over the sea, at the ends of the earth, where the home of night is, and the vault of heaven begins; and there are trees in the gardens of the gods where the couch of Zeus is (*Theogony*, 210-216; Sophocles, frag. 326, Ed. Didot, p. 311; Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 163). At Brug na Boinne the Irish legend places the couch of the Dagda, king of the gods, like Zeus, and three fruit trees.

(1) "*De gabail int-shida*," in the Bk. of Leins., p. 246, col. 1, lines 1-15. See also next section of present chapter.

(2) *Leabhar Gabhala*, in the Bk. of Leins., p. 9, col. 2, lines 13, 14. Poem of Flann Manistrech, *ibid.*, p. 11, col. 1, line 33.

(3) *Supra*, x. sec. 1.

Tuatha De Danann lost a number of their warriors. The survivors met and chose out two chieftains, namely Bodb Dearg and Manannan mac Lir. It was Bodb Dearg, and not the Dagda, as stated in the primitive legend, who made the division of the *sid* of Ireland (1). It was Manannan who obtained for the Tuatha De Danann the privileges they enjoyed in the Irish heroic period. By the enchantment known as the *feth fiada* he rendered them invisible (2). By the feast of Goibniu the Smith, he assured immortality to them. Their chief nourishment consisted of swine. And these were Manannan's swine, which killed and eaten one day, came to life again the next (3). Thus, according to this new doctrine, the principal chiefs of the Tuatha De Danann, whom the pagan Celts of Ireland worshipped as gods, are reduced to the rank of ordinary mortals, who are said to have reigned over Ireland at a time anterior to the invasion of the sons of Mile, that is to say, the Celts, and who ceased to live thereafter. The fairies of heroic legend are the remnant and descendants of this primitive race, endowed by magical rites with some of the attributes of divinity.

The underground palace of Brug na Boinne was given, not to the Dagda, long dead, but to Elcmar, the foster-father of Oengus; Oengus, with the aid of Manannan mac Lir, drove out Elcmar, and he dwells there ever since, they say, invisible, for he has on the magic *feth fiada*; immortal, because he drinks the ale of Goibniu the Smith, and eats the swine of Manannan, which come to life again the moment they are eaten.

This redaction, which is relatively modern, is preserved in the Book of Fermoy, a fifteenth-century MS., now in the Royal Irish Academy, whereas the primitive redaction, which we cited first, is contained in the twelfth-century Book of Leinster, one of the most precious MSS. in Trinity College, Dublin. The Christian editor of the version contained in the Book of Fermoy has added a sequel to the old tale, of which the following is a summary.

When Elcmar was driven from the underground palace of Brug na Boinne by his pupil Oengus, aided by Manannan mac Lir, one of the principal members of Elcmar's court was absent. This was his steward. On returning to Brug na Boinne, the

(1) *Supra*, sec. 3.

(2) Literally, "poetic composition or incantation of presence." See the texts collected by O'Curry in *Atlantis*, iii. (1862), pp. 386-388, note 15.

(3) See *Atlantis* iii., pp. 387-388.

steward, finding his old master gone, entered into the service of Oengus. Soon afterwards a daughter was born to him, and she was named Eithne. On the same night a daughter was born to Manannan mac Lir, the protector of Oengus, and she was named Curcog. According to the old-established custom, Oengus was appointed by Manannan foster-father of his daughter. Curcog, the daughter of the god Manannan, was brought up at Brug na Boinne, and the young Eithne, the steward's daughter, was one of her handmaidens.

One day it was discovered that Eithne took no nourishment of any kind, and though she continued in good health and plumpness, her condition became a source of uneasiness to her friends. This was a great mystery, but at length Manannan mac Lir discovered the cause of it. Some time before, it appeared, she had been deeply insulted by a neighbouring Tuatha De Danann chieftain, who had been on a visit to Oengus. The pure soul of the girl had so resented the insult that her guardian demon fled away from her, and was replaced by a guardian angel sent by the true god. From that moment Eithne ceased to eat the flesh of the magic swine and to drink the enchanted ale of the Tuatha De Danann. Her life was miraculously sustained by the true God.

After a while, however, this miracle was rendered unnecessary. Oengus and Manannan, who had been on a voyage to India, brought back with them two cows giving an inexhaustible supply of milk. As India was a land of righteousness, this milk had in it nothing of the demoniac character which tainted the usual food of the Tuatha De Danann. The cows were handed over to Eithne, who milked them herself, and it was on their milk she lived for long numbers of years.

The events we have just been relating took place in the reign of the mythic Eremon, the first Irish king of the race of Mile; and Eithne was still living in the palace of Brug na Boinne with her mistress, Curcog, daughter of Manannan mac Lir, under the guardianship of Oengus, when Saint Patrick came to preach the gospel in Ireland, in the fifth century of the present era. If we accept the statement of the Book of Invasions, the mythic king Eremon was a contemporary of David, king of Israel, in the eleventh century before our era. Eithne was then about fifteen hundred years of age when St. Patrick came with the Christian faith to Ireland.

Now, it happened one day when the heat was more than usually great, Curcog and her maidens, Eithne among them,

went to bathe in the Boyne. On returning to Brug na Boinne it was discovered that Eithne was missing. In taking off her garments by the riverside, Eithne had cast off at the same time the charm which rendered her invisible to mortals. This, as we have said, was the *feth fiada*, or veil of invisibility.

The soul of Eithne was ready to receive the new faith brought by Patrick; and though she had not heard the preaching of the Christians, the mysterious action this faith had wrought upon her was become more potent than the enchantments of the pagans. Eithne was become an ordinary woman, and her eyes could no longer penetrate the magic veil which hid the Tuatha De Danann from mortal eyes. She could not see her companions, therefore, when they were returning to their underground palace at Brug na Boinne. Nor could she any longer see the enchanted road that led to the palace. She wandered for some time by the riverside, not knowing her whereabouts, and seeking in vain the paths for long centuries familiar to her, and henceforth invisible. At length she came to a walled garden, in which was a house. In the doorway sat a man who was clothed in a robe such as she had never beheld before. He was a monk, and the house a church. Eithne spoke to him and told him her story. The monk received her kindly, and brought her to St. Patrick, who instructed her and baptised her.

Some time after, she was sitting in the monk's church, not far from the banks of the Boyne, when she heard cries and a great clamour outside. She could distinguish a great number of voices, but saw no one. This was Oengus and the men of his house in search of Eithne. As they were become invisible to her, she was likewise invisible to them. Their crying was mingled with sobs and moaning, for they were lamenting Eithne, who was now lost to them for ever.

Eithne understood the cause of their grief, and was so overcome thereby that she fell into a swoon, and was at the point of death. Howbeit she recovered her sense, and from that moment a sickness fell upon her which was incurable. At length she died, her head upon the breast of Saint Patrick, who had come to administer the last office of religion to her. They buried her in the church of the monk who had first received her. And the church was thenceforth called *Cill Eithne*, or Eithne's Church (1).

(1) Book of Fermoy, fols. III-IIIb. This piece has been analysed by

This is the conclusion of the second redaction of the piece, of which the primitive one is known as the *Conquest of the Sid*.

V.

The Love of Oengus, son of the Dagda.

We have just seen the form that has been given to one of the old legends of pagan Ireland by the infusion into it of Christian ideas. Here is another tale, pagan, like the first, but which has not been subjected to Christian re-handling. It, too, belongs to the heroic period, and to the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn. It deals with an episode in the life of Oengus, and refers to an adventure which befel that divine personage before he had despoiled his father the Dagda, of the underground palace of Brug na Boinne. Oengus was still a youth at the time. One night as he lay in sleep he saw a young woman standing by his bedside, and she was fairer than all the other women of Ireland. After a time she disappeared, and when Oengus awoke on the morrow he was taken with such love for her that he could not taste food all that day. The following night she appeared to him again. This time she had a harp in her hand, and she sang to the accompaniment of the harp, and never was there heard music so sweet. Then she went away again. When Oengus rose on the morrow his love was greater than before.

He fell sick. All the physicians of Ireland gathered together and sought in vain to discover the cause of his malady. At length one of them, named Fergne, found it out.

"You are taken with love," said he. And Oengus confessed that it was so. They sent for Boann, the mother of Oengus, and he told her how the matter was. And Boann caused search to be made for a whole year throughout Ireland for the young woman her son had seen in his dream. But all to no purpose. They found no one. Boann then took counsel of the cunning physician who had discovered the cause of her son's sickness. And he counselled her to go to the father of Oengus, to the Dagda, king of the *side* of Ireland, that is, says the anonymous writer, the king of the fairies.

Side of Ireland is the name by which the Tuatha De Danann

are known in Irish literature after their defeat at Tailtiu, when they became the contemporaries of the sons of Mile, that is to say, of men. The *side* are in general gods, and the expression includes at once both the gods of Day, Life, and Science, or the Tuatha De Danann, who came from heaven, and the gods of Night and Darkness, or the Fomorians, whose original country was the mysterious land of the Dead. When Saint Patrick came over to convert the Irish, they worshipped the *side*, some the Tuatha De Danann, others the Fomorians, and the first they called the *side* of Ireland (1).

The Dagda was at that time king of the *side* of Ireland; and it was to him that the physician advised them to go for a cure for Oengus' love-sickness. They sent for the Dagda, who came without delay. "Why have you sent for me?" said he. Thereupon Boann told him of her son's malady, and what caused it. "What can I do for the lad?" replied the Dagda. "I know no more about it than you do." Then the physician spake. "As high-king of Ireland," said he, "you have as vassal, Bodb, king of the Munster *side*, who is celebrated throughout Ireland for his science. Send unto him and enquire where the maiden is who has sent this love sickness upon your son."

The Dagda took his advice, and sent ambassadors to Bodb, king of the Munster *side*. They told Bodb how Oengus, son of the Dagda, had fallen sick, and how the Dagda had commanded that he should make search throughout Ireland for the maiden his son loved. "It shall be done," said Bodb; "but I must have a year to make search in, and I will find what you desire."

When a year had gone by the ambassadors returned to him. Said Bodb: "I have found the maiden. She is at the lake of the Dragon's Mouth, by the *Crott* or Harp of Cliach. The ambassadors returned to the Dagda with the good tidings. They set Oengus in a chariot and brought him to the palace of Bodb, king of the Munster *side*. It was an enchanted palace known as the "*Sid* of the men of Femen." Oengus was received with great joy. Three days and three nights they passed in feasting,

(1) "For tuaith hErenn bai temel,
tuatha adortais side."

"Over the people of Erin reigned darkness, the people worshipped the *side*" (Hymn of Fiacc to St. Patrick, in Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., p. 14, line 41).

and at the end of that time they related the object of their mission. Said Bodb to Oengus: "I will now lead you to where the maiden whom you love is. We shall see if you recognise her."

Then Bodb brought Oengus down near the sea, to a place where there were one hundred and fifty maidens walking about in couples, and every couple linked by a chain of gold. In the midst of them was one taller than the rest, and they did not reach up to her shoulders. "That is she," cried Oengus. "Tell me by what name she is known." And Bodb answered: "She is *Caer*, grand-daughter of *Ormaith*. *Ethal Anubal*, her father, lives in the *sid* of *Uaman*, in the kingdom of *Connaught*." "I have not sufficient strength," exclaimed Oengus sorrowfully, "to carry her away from her companions." And he bade them bring him to his home, which, at that time, it appears, was the palace of one of his masters; for the *Dagda* still dwelt with *Boann*, his wife, in the underground palace of *Brug na Boinne*, which was later on to receive the name of *Mac Oc*, in other words, of Oengus, son of the *Dagda*.

Some time after this Bodb repaired to the palace on a visit to the *Dagda* and *Boann*, and told them the result of his quest. "I have discovered," said he, "the maiden whom your son loves. Her father lives in *Connaught*, that is, in the kingdom of *Ailill* and *Medb*. You would do well to go and ask aid of them. They may help your son to obtain the hand of the maiden he desires."

The names of *Ailill* and *Medb* carry us back to the middle of the first cycle of the Irish heroic period, which is founded upon historic events contemporary with the birth of Christ. We have no reason to doubt that the personages who played the chief part in this cycle really existed. In this great period there is a base of historic truth, though the greater part of the history is the work of an imagination at play with the laws of nature.

Man at this time was not content with peopling the world with gods, to whom he ascribed acts the most strange; he believed that by magic, man could raise himself to the level of divinity, and war upon it as its equal, nay, overcome it at times. The great god *Dagda* then goes for help to *Ailill* and *Medb*, who are both simple mortals, king and queen of *Connaught*. He relies upon them to aid him in forcing one of the subordinate gods of *Connaught*, *Ethal Anubal*, father of the fair *Caer*, to yield her up to his son, Oengus, who loves her.

He set out for Connaught with a goodly company. His chariots were sixty in number, besides the one he rode in himself. He came to the palace of Ailill and Medb, who received him with joy. A whole week passed in feasting. Then the Dagda related the object of his visit. "In your kingdom," said he, "is the enchanted palace of Ethal Anubal, father of the beautiful Caer. My son loves this maiden, and desires her for a wife, and is sick because of her." Then Ailill and Medb answered: "But we have no authority over him. We cannot, therefore, yield her up to you."

The Dagda then besought them to send for her father. Ailill and Medb did what he asked; but Ethal Anubal refused to listen to the messenger. "I will not go," said he. "I know what is required of me, and I will not give my daughter to the Dagda." Then the combined hosts of the Dagda and Ailill laid siege to the enchanted palace of Ethal Anubal. They took sixty prisoners, Ethal as well, and led their captives to Cruachan, the abode of Ailill and Medb. Ethal was brought into the presence of Ethal.

"Yield up thy daughter to Oengus, son of the Dagda," said Ailill. "I cannot," answered Ethal. "She is more powerful than I." Whereupon he explained that his daughter lived alternately one year in human form, and one year in the form of a bird. "On the first of November next," said he, "she will be a swan at the lake of the Dragon's Mouth. You will see marvellous birds there; and my daughter will be in the midst of a hundred and fifty other swans." Then Ailill and the Dagda made their peace with Ethal, and set him at liberty.

The Dagda then related all he had heard to his son. On the first of November following, Oengus repaired to the lake of the Dragon's Mouth. There he saw the fair Caer in the form of a swan, in the company of a hundred and fifty other swans, going about in couples, linked together with chains of silver. "O come and speak to me," cried Oengus. "Who calls me?" said Caer. Then Oengus told her his name, and how he wanted to bathe in the lake with her. Thereupon he was changed into a swan, and dived three times into the lake with his love. After which, still in the form of a swan, he returned with her to his father's palace at Brug na Boinne. And they sang a song of such exceeding sweetness that the listeners all fell asleep, and their sleep lasted for three days and three nights. Never was there heard in Ireland

such marvellous music. Caer thenceforth became the wife of Oengus (1).

VI.

Euhemerism in Ireland and at Rome. The Dagda or "Good God," in Ireland; Bona Dea, "Good Goddess," the companion of Faunus, at Rome.

It was probably after his marriage to Caer that Oengus obtained from the Dagda the palace of Brug na Boinne. Certain it is that in this tale, Irish pagan tradition makes gods and heroes contemporary with each other. It brings the Dagda, king of the gods, into the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn, who are said to have lived about the beginning of the present era, whereas the Christian annalists, such as Gilla Coemain and the author of the *Leabhar Gabhala*, in the eleventh century, and Keating and the Four Masters in the seventeenth century, assign the death of this same Dagda to a period about a thousand or even seventeen hundred and fifty years earlier.

The Dagda is king of the gods, like Zeus in Greek mythology. It is not in Greek, but in Latin mythology, however, that we find a myth almost identical with that of the Dagda. Dagda means "good god." The Romans had a divinity called the Good Goddess, *Bona Dea*. She was regarded as identical with the earth (2); the Dagda was also the god of the earth (3). *Bona Dea*, they say, was called *bona*, because she gave to men all the good things that sustain life (4); and the Dagda has the same attribute. We have already seen that the sons of Mile or the Irish, who were at war with the Tuatha De Danann, had no longer either corn or milk; and that on making a treaty of peace with the Dagda their corn and milk were henceforth assured to them (5).

(1) The text of this piece, entitled *Aislinge Oengusso*, "Vision of Oengus," has been published in the *Revue Celtique*, iii., pp. 334 et seq., with an English translation, by Edward Muller.

(2) "Auctor est Cornelius Labeo huic Maiaæ, id est Terræ, ædem kalendis Maiis dedicatam sub nomine Bonæ deæ, et eandem esse Bonam deam et Terram ex ipso ritu occultiore sacrorum doceri posse confirmat" (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i., 12).

(3) "Dia talman." See *Introd. Litt. Celtique*, p. 282, note 2.

(4) "Bonam quod omnium nobis at victum bonorum causa est" (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i. 12).

(5) "Collset Tuatha Dea ith ocus blicht im-maccu Miled, con-dingsat chairddes in-Dagdai. Doessart-saide iarum ith ocus blicht doib" (Bk. of Leins., p. 245, col. 2, lines 44-47).

Bona Dea, called also *Fauna*, was the mate or associate of *Faunus*, that is to say, his daughter (1), his wife (2), or his sister (3). This *Faunus* was regarded as a god; he had his cult at Rome, and a temple erected to him on an island in the Tiber (4). At some very remote time he must have held the rank of supreme god, for *Bona Dea*, his mate, was considered by some to be the equal of *Juno*; and for this reason she is represented with a sceptre in her left hand (5). *Faunus* was subsequently supplanted as supreme god by *Jupiter*, the god of the Roman aristocracy and of the city of Rome.

The influence of Greek science brought about a period of euhemerism in Roman mythology, similar in many respects to that induced by Christian research in Ireland. The god *Faunus* then became a king of the *Aborigines*, in other words, the population that inhabited Italy on the arrival of *Evander* and *Æneus* (6). One of the texts having reference to the supposed king *Faunus*, mentions his wife and daughter, who are none other than the "Good Goddess," *Bona Dea* (7), now transformed into an ordinary mortal, but raised to the rank of a queen or princess. Likewise in Ireland, the *Dagda* or "good god," the supreme deity of the pagans, was by the Christians transformed into a king, who governed Ireland before the coming of the sons of *Mile*. It will be observed that in the Roman account, *Evander* and *Æneus* are introduced under circumstances similar to that of the sons of *Mile* in the Irish tale. Like the sons of *Mile*, they are strangers coming from overseas, and founding a new kingdom by force of arms.

(1) Servius, ad libr. viii. *Æneid*, 314, Ed. Thilo, ii., 244.

(2) Arnobus, i., 36. Migne, Pat. Latina, v., col. 759.

(3) Lactantius, i., 22. Migne, Pat. Latina, vi., cols. 244-245.

(4) Livy, xxxiii., 42; xxxiv., 53; Vitruvius, iii., chap. 2, sec. 3; Ovid, *Fasti*, ii., 193.

(5) "Sunt qui dicunt hanc deam potentiam habere Junonis, ideoque regale sceptrum in sinistra manu ei additum" (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i., 12).

(6) St. Aurelius Victor, *Origo Gentis Romanæ*, secs. 4-9. Dionysus of *Halicarnassus*, i., 31.

(7) Justinus, xliiii., chap. i.

CHAPTER XIII.—The Tuatha De Danann after the Conquest of Ireland by the sons of Mile.—Part the Second. The Gods Lug, Ogma, Diancecht, and Goibniu.

- (1) The part of Lug in the legend of Cuchulainn same as that of Zeus in the legend of Heracles.—(2) The chase of the mysterious Birds.—(3) The enchanted Palace. Birth of Cuchulainn. (4) The mortal Sualtam and the god Lug, each the father of Cuchulainn.—(5) Lug and Conn Cetchathach, high king of Ireland in the second century of our era.—(6) Lug a god, notwithstanding later assertions of the Irish Christians.—(7) The champion Ogma or Ogmios.—(8) Diancecht the physician.—(9) Goibniu the smith and his Feast.

I.

The Part of Lug in the Legend of Cuchulainn the same as that of Zeus in the Legend of Heracles.

The Dagda is theoretically the supreme god; but Lug, the god in whose name the great fair of August the First was instituted, and who slew with a stone from his sling the god of Death, Balor; Lug, the great master of many arts, appears to hold a more important place in Celtic mythology than the Dagda. Heracles, the typical hero of Greek mythology, is the son of Alcmena, wife of Amphitryon. Amphitryon is his apparent father, but it is really Zeus who is the father of this mighty hero, to whom Greek poetry attributes so many wondrous exploits (1). We find the same myth in Ireland. In the Irish redaction, however, Heracles is named Cuchulainn; Alcmena becomes Dechtere, and Amphitryon, Sualtam; but Lug, that is, Hermes, who in Græco-Latin mythology is called Mercury, here takes the place of Zeus. It is he, and not the Dagda, who is the father of Cuchulainn. Celtic mythology is not copied from Greek mythology. It is based upon conceptions originally identical with those from which Greek mythology is derived, but has developed the fundamental elements of the myth in a manner of her own, which is as independent as it is original.

(1) Hesiod, The Shield of Heracles, 27 et seq.

II.

The Chase of the Mysterious Birds.

This legend runs somewhat as follows (1). One day as the chieftains of Ulster were sitting at the feast with Conchobar their king, in Emain Macha, the capital of that kingdom, a great flock of birds alighted on the neighbouring plain of Emain, and began to eat up all before them, until not even a blade of grass was left. The Ultonians were filled with vexation on beholding the devastation wrought by the birds. And the king caused nine chariots to be yoked, so that he might follow the birds: for the hunting of birds was a favourite occupation of the king and the great chieftains of Ulster. The bow was as yet unknown; so they cast spears at the birds, or stones from a sling, as they drove along in their chariots.

At the head of the nine chariots was that of Conchobar, with the king in it. Dechtere, his sister, a maiden of lofty stature, was seated upon his right. She was her brother's charioteer. The other eight chariots were those of the chief Ultonian warriors. Conall Cernach, Fergus mac Roig, Celtchar, son of Uithechar, Bricriu, the Quarreller, and four others whose names are forgotten. They followed the birds all that day, and they went straight before them without meeting any obstacles.

At this time in Ireland there were neither ditches, fences, nor walls. According to tradition, the most ancient partition of Ireland was made in the time of Diarmait and Blathmac, son of Aed Slane, who, according to Tigernach, were high kings of Ireland from 654 to 665 (2). The land of Ireland, they say, was then divided into as many portions as there were men. These portions were all equal: every man was given nine furrows of bog, nine furrows of land, and nine furrows of forest. But this does not appear to have been a successful mode of distribution, substituting a multitude of petty ownerships for the common proprietorship in use up to then. A famine came

(1) Published by Windisch, *Irische Texte*, pp. 136 seq. The learned scholar draws upon two MSS., the more ancient of which dates from the end of the eleventh century.

(2) O'Connor, *Recum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ii., pt. I, pp. 200-205. The *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, pp. 98 and 99, assigns their death to the year 661. Cf. *supra*, xi., sec. 5.

which reduced the rich to a state of starvation, and this was followed by a pestilence which carried off three-fourths of the population (1). This plague is called by Irish historians *Buide Conaill* (2).

But to return to Conchobar and his companions. They followed the birds for a great way over the country. Most beautiful birds they were, and they kept singing in their flight. There were nine flocks of them, and twenty birds in each flock. They were linked together two and two by a chain of silver, and the two birds that flew at the head of each flock were united by a yoke of silver.

Night came on, and they had not taken a single one of the birds. A thick snow was falling. Conchobar commanded his followers to unyoke their chariots and to seek some habitation where they might spend the night.

III.

The Enchanted Palace. Birth of Cuchulainn.

Conall Cernach and Bricriu the Quarreller went forward in quest of a shelter. They saw a house before them which seemed to be newly built there, and it looked small and mean. Only a man and a woman were within. They bade them welcome. Then Conall and Bricriu went back to their companions. "We have found a dwelling," said they; "but it is not worthy of you. We shall be ill-lodged and have nothing to eat."

Nevertheless the king and his warriors resolved to take shelter in the house. But, wonderful to relate, when they entered it, the mean little house seemed to grow bigger and bigger. Within was place not only for them, but for their

(1) Preface to Colman's Hymn, in Whitley Stokes' *Goidelica*, 2nd ed., p. 121. The first apportioning of the fields around Rome, according to Dionysus of Halicarnassus, ii., 74, dates back to a law of the legendary king Numa Pompilius. It would be interesting to compare this text with the passage in the *Compert Conculainn* here referred to (Windisch, *Irische Texte*, p. 36, lines 11-14).

(2) *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, p. 99. Cf. O'Connor, *Rerum Hib. Scrip.*, p. 205. This pestilence must not be confounded with that known as the *Crom Conaill*, which broke out about a century previous, in 550, according to Tigernach, O'Connor, *Rerum Hib. Scrip.*, ii., p. 139; in 551, according to the *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, pp. 50 and 51. Cf. O'Donovan, *Four Masters*, i., pp. 186-189; pp. 274-277, ed. 1851.

arms and horses, their chariots and charioteers also. Meats of every kind, most plentiful and most pleasant to taste, were set before them. Some they knew, and some, the most strange, they had never seen before.

The house was one of those magic palaces which the gods in Celtic tales create sometimes upon the earth when they wish to manifest their power visibly to men. Frequent mention is made of them in Welsh, Breton, and French tales.

Some time after, Dechtere became a mother, and Lug appeared to her in a dream, and told her that it was he who was the father of the child. It was Lug who had sent the mysterious birds before them, and set up the mean little house in which Conchobar the king, Dechtere his sister, and their companions had been received with such lavish and so unexpected hospitality.

IV.

The Mortal Sualtam and the god Lug, each the Father of Cuchulainn.

But Lug was not the husband of Dechtere. For Dechtere was already married when she brought forth the child. Her husband was one of the chief personages in the court of Conchobar her brother. He was named Sualtam, and he looked upon Cuchulainn as his own son. We have seen how by the violence of his parental regard, the strange accident was brought about which cost him his life (1). But Sualtam was not alone in his paternal affection for Cuchulainn. The god Lug also watched with equal tenderness over the days of this hero who for long centuries has been the favourite theme of bardic song.

Cuchulainn, covered with wounds, is alone with his charioteer Loeg, fronting the army of Ailill and Medb, which has entered the kingdom of Ulster. In this army are collected the warriors of four of the great provinces of Ireland, leagued against the fifth, Ulster; only one is up in arms, sustaining the weight of the war, and that is Cuchulainn. He has challenged all the leading warriors of the enemy to single combat; duel upon duel has followed, and he has always proved the victor, but he is sore stricken with wounds, and overcome with weariness.

(1) *Introd. Litt. Celtique*, pp. 191-194.

Suddenly Loeg, his charioteer, sees a warrior coming towards them. A crown of fair curling hair is upon his head. He wears a green mantle fastened at his breast with a brooch of white silver; reaching to his knees is a shirt embroidered with red gold. In his hand is a black shield with a rim of white bronze. Wonderful to relate! the warrior passed through the whole camp without speaking a word to any man, nor did any one seem to heed him; even as though none in that great camp had seen him.

Cuchulainn knew that he was one of the *side*, a friendly god who was aware of his distress, and had come to succour him. "Thou art a brave warrior, Cuchulainn," said the stranger. "I have done naught that is wonderful," answered Cuchulainn. "I am come to help thee," replied the warrior. "Who art thou, then?" asked Cuchulainn. "I am one of the *side*, thy father," answered the stranger. "I am Lug, son of Ethne." The god then sent a sleep of enchantment upon Cuchulainn which lasted for three days and three nights; after which his wounds were healed and he recovered (1).

V.

*Lug and Conn Cetchathach, High King of Ireland in the
Second Century A.D.*

The god Lug who in the mythological cycle is the destroyer of Balor, the god of Death, thus re-appears in full life and power in the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn. We find him again in the Ossianic cycle. The piece we cite below has been re-handled by some Christian writer; but it is easy to determine the additions that have been made to the primitive elements of the legend.

One morning Conn Cetchathach, high king of Ireland in the latter part of the second century (2), went up at the rising of the sun upon the royal rath of Tara. By some accident he put his foot upon a magic stone which had been brought originally into Ireland by the Tuatha De Danann on their coming into it,

(1) *Leabhar na hUidhre*, pp. 77-78. This passage is cited by Sullivan, in his introductory volume to O'Curry's *Manners and Customs*, p. ccccxvi.

(2) Tigernach assigns his death to the year 190: O'Conor, *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ii., pt. I., p. 34; the *Four Masters*, to 157; O'Donovan, *Annals Four Masters*, 1851, i., pp. 104-105.

before the arrival of the sons of Mile. As soon as Conn's foot touched the stone, it screamed under him, so that it was heard not only by Conn and those that were with him, but all over Tara and beyond Tara even, as far as Breg.

Then Conn asked of the three druids that happened to be of the company, what the stone screamed for, what was its name, and where it came from, where it would go to, and who brought it to Tara? The druids replied that at the end of fifty days and three they would answer these questions, save one only. Now the question the druids left unanswered was the most important of all, namely, what the stone screamed for? The druids could give but little information thereon. "The stone has prophesied," said one of them, "the number of its screams, I have counted them, and they are the number of the kings that shall come of thy seed for ever. But it is not I that shall name them for thee," said the druid.

As they were there, after this, they saw a great mist all round, so that they knew not where they went from the greatness of the darkness; and they heard the noise of a horseman approaching. The horseman let fly three throws of a spear at them. The druid cried out, and the mysterious horseman desisted. Then he bade welcome to Conn and invited them to come with him to his house.

They went forward until they entered a beautiful plain. Then they perceived a kingly rath and a golden tree at its door; and a splendid house was in it, thirty feet its length. Within the house was a young woman with a diadem of gold upon her head, a silver kieve with hoops of gold was by her, and it full of red ale. The stranger sat him down in the king's seat that was there. And never had Conn beheld a man of his great size or of his comeliness.

Then he spoke to the high king. "I am Lug, son of Ethne, grandson of Tigernmas," said he. Whereupon he told him the number of years he would reign, and the battles he would enter upon. He revealed to him the names of his successors, the duration of their reigns, and all the things that would be done in them (1).

(1) This piece has been published by O'Curry in his *Manuscript Materials*, p. 618, from a MS. in the Brit. Museum, Harleian 5280, dating from the fifteenth century.

VI.

Lug a god, notwithstanding Later Assertions of the Irish Christians.

The Christian author to whom we are indebted for this piece, makes Lug say, "I am not a *scal*" (that is one of those demoniac beings who possess immortality). "I am of the race of Adam, and am come after death." This last is a comparatively modern addition, the object of which was to procure the sanction of the clergy for this curious tale. Lug, who revealed to Conn Cetchathach his own sovereignty and that of those who were to come after him, is the god who slew Balor at the battle of Mag-Tured with a sling-stone, and who later on brought into the world the famous Cuchulainn. The magic palace in which he entertained Conn is the same as that where two centuries before he had sheltered for the night Conchobar, king of Ulster, Dechtere his sister, eight other warriors, and their horses, and chariots, and charioteers, setting a feast before them the like of which had never been seen in the palaces of the kings of Ulster.

As we have already seen, the first day of August was consecrated to Lug. The religious ceremonies on that day attracted a great multitude of people, and gave rise to the public fairs, at which games were celebrated, judgments given, and traffick of all kinds conducted. It is he whom Cæsar considers as the first of the Gaulish gods. He regards him as identical with Mercury. Already, in Cæsar's time, a great number of statues had been erected to him in Gaul (1).

The name of *Lugudunum*, or "fortress of Lugus," in Irish, Lug, was borne by four important towns in Gaul, now Lyons, Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, Leyds, and Laon (2).

Under the Roman empire *Lugudunum* lost its second *u*, and was written *Lugdunum*; this name is in all probability identical with *Lugidunum*, which the geographer Ptolemy describes as in Germania, and which, founded by the Gauls, was in Ptolemy's

(1) "Deum maxime Mercurium colunt; hujus sunt plurima simulacra; hunc omnium inventorem artium ferunt, hunc viarum atque itinerum ducem, hunc ad questus pecuniæ mercaturasque habere vim maximam arbitrantur" (De Bello Gallico, vi., cap. 17, sec. 1.)

(2) "Lugdunum Clavatum." This name only appears at the Merovingian period.

time, that is, about the beginning of the second century A.D., in the hands of the German conquerors (1).

The name of the god Lugus or Lug may also be recognised in the first part of a geographical compound of Great Britain, *Luguvallum*, the name of a town, the exact site of which is not definitely known, but which was situated near Adrian's wall (2). *Lug-mag*, or "field or *Lug*," was borne by a certain abbey in Ireland, of which mention is made in the seventeenth century (3).

The Irish pagans affirmed that Lug dwelt in their isle. And they even related where the site of the underground palace was which the Dagda had given him for an habitation after the conquest of the sons of Mile (4).

VII.

The Champion Ogma or Ogmios.

Of the gods who play a distinct part in the mythological cycle, there are three about whom we can cite nothing in the heroic period, and who yet continued to be held in memory by the Christians. These were Ogma, Diancecht, and Goibniu. Ogma, the Ogmios of Lucian, is the hero into whose hands the sword of the Fomorian king Tethra fell at the battle of Mag-Tured (5). He is surnamed *Grian-aineach*, "Sun-faced." The invention of ogham writing has been attributed to him (6). It was in ogham that the funeral inscriptions of the pagan period were written, and neither the monks of the ninth century nor the scribes of a later day had lost the tradition of it. He has been called son of Elada, that is "poetical composition," or "science." He was thought to be a brother of the Dagda (7). They even

(1) Ptolemy, ed. Nobbe, ii., chap. 2, sec. 28.

(2) This place is several times mentioned in Antoninus' Journey.

(3) *Annals Four Masters*, ed. O'Donovan, 1851, i., pp. 297, 356, 357; *Chronicum Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, pp. 140-141. This place is now known as Louth.

(4) "Lug, macc Ethnend, is-sid Rodruban" (Bk. of Leins., p. 245, col. 2, lines 49, 50).

(5) See *supra*, viii., sec. 10.

(6) Treatise on ogham writing, preserved in the Book of Ballymote, a fourteenth-century MS.: O'Donovan's *Grammar of the Irish Language*, p. xxviii.

(7) Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 13, 14 : v. 10. col. 2, lines, 23, 24.

professed to know the exact site of the underground palace or *sid* which the Dagda had given over to Ogma after the conquest of Ireland by the sons of Mile (1). Such is the ancient belief concerning Ogma. After the eleventh century, Ogma ceased to be regarded as a god, and was numbered among the warriors who were slain at the second battle of Mag-Tured. It was also related that he was buried at Brug na Boinne, which was situated a long distance from Mag-Tured. These are both conflicting legends, and of different origin, though both of them comparatively modern (2).

VIII.

Diancecht the Physician.

Diancecht, or the god "swift in power," is a son of the Dagda (3). Corpre the *file*, another mythological personage, who, by a satire, brought about the downfall of the Fomorian Bress, was by his mother Etan a grandson of Diancecht (4). With the aid of Creidne, Diancecht healed the wound which the god Naudu had received in his hand when fighting at the head of the Tuatha De Danann against the Fir-Bolg (5). He is the physician of the Tuatha De Danann, and was for a long time the god of medicine in Ireland (6).

In a MS. numbered 1395 in the Library of Saint-Gall, is a parchment leaf, on one side of which is a representation of St. John the Evangelist; on the other, some Irish scribes of the eighth or ninth century, have written down a number of incantations, partly Christian, partly pagan. In one of them we read: "I admire the healing that Diancecht left in his family,

(1) "Ogma is-sid Airceltraí" (Bk. of Leinster, p. 245, col. 2, line 50).

(2) See *supra*, xii., 3.

(3) "Corand, cruittire sede do Diancecht, mac in Dagdai" (*Dinnsenchus*, prose passage in Bk. of Leinster, p. 165, col. i, lines 35 and 36). No great importance can be attached to the genealogies brought together in the opening lines of this first column of the Bk. of Leinster, p. 10. Diancecht is there described as the son of Erarc, lines 3-4.

(4) Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 21-26.

(5) *Supra*, chap. vii. and viii.

(6) On Diancecht as a god of medicine, see Cormac's Glossary, under Diancecht: Whitley Stokes, Three Irish Glossaries, p. 16, and Sanas Chormaic, p. 56. See also chap. viii., sec. 5 of present volume.

in order to bring health to those he succoured" (1). The Irish Christians of the eighth or ninth century thus continued to attribute a supernatural power to Diancecht, and made invocations to him in their sicknesses.

IX.

Goibniu the Smith and his Feast.

We have seen Goibniu fashioning the spears of the Tuatha De Danann at the mythic battle of Mag-Tured (2). The above-mentioned MS. of Saint-Gall contains on the same leaf another incantation which was a sure recipe for preserving butter; and in it, the name of Goibniu is pronounced three times: "Science of Goibniu! of the great Goibniu! of the most great Goibniu!" (3). Why this triple invocation upon the subject of butter?

Goibniu was regarded by the Irish of the eighth or ninth century as a sort of kitchen god; and, in effect, it was the feast of Goibniu which assured immortality to the Tuatha De Danann (4). Ale was the chief fare at this feast, and it presents in Ireland a striking analogy to the ambrosia or nectar of the Greeks (5). How did it come that Goibniu the divine Smith, whose name was derived from *goba*, *gobann*, a "smith," was charged with the preparation of this marvellous beverage which gave immortality to the gods, in Ireland? We cannot with certainty say; but the myth is a very ancient one, for it appears to belong to the Hellenic as well as to the Celtic race;

(1) "Admuinur in-slanicid foracab Diancecht li-a-muntir, corop-slan ani for-sa-te" (Zimmer, *Glossæ Hibernicæ*, p. 271). Cf. *Verzeichniss der Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek von St. Gallen*, 1875, pp. 462 and 463.

(2) See *supra*, viii., 7.

(3) "Fiss Goibnen, aird Goibnenn, reaird Goibnenn" (Zimmer, *Glossæ Hibernicæ*, p. 270).

(4) See *supra*, xii., 4. O'Curry, in a note in *Atlantis*, iii., p. 389, has brought together two texts having reference to this belief. The phrase there used is *fled Goibnenn*, "feast of Goibniu," but the chief occupation at this feast was drinking, *ic olc*; what the guests consumed was "drink," *deoch*; it was a drink that conferred immortality on one. This was ale, *lind* or *cuirn*, referred to in other texts. Cf. xii., sec. 3, and xiv., sec. 4.

(5) *Odyssey*, v. 93, 199; ix., 359.

in the first book of the *Iliad*, Hephaistos, who is a smith, like Goibniu, serves the gods with drink (1).

The Irish clergy seem to have had less confidence in the science of the smith Goibniu than the unknown scribe who wrote down this charm for preserving butter. The prayer which the *Liber Hymnorum* ascribes to St. Patrick, asks help from God "against the sorcery of women and smiths, and druids, against all science that loseth the soul of man" (2); and, in this accursed science, is included the "science" of Goibniu the smith, invoked in the incantation of Saint-Gall in the eighth or ninth century—the science of the divine smith who preserved the butter of men, his worshippers, and at whose feast the gods obtained immortality. It is a science of the devil, and the holy apostle of Ireland looked upon it as an enemy.

(1) *Iliad*. i., 597-600.

(2) "Fri bríghta ban ocus goband ocus druad,
Fri cech físs arachuiliu anmain duini."

(Hymn of St. Patrick, v. 48 and 49, in Windisch, *Irische Texte*, p. 56). Cf. "Físs Goibnenn," in the incantation cited above.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Tuatha De Danann after the Conquest of Ireland by the Sons of Mile. Part the Third: the Gods Mider and Manannan Mac Lir.

1. The god Mider. Etain, his wife, carried off by Oengus, is born a second time as the daughter of Etair.—2. Etain becomes the wife of the High King of Ireland. Mider pays court to her.—3. The Game of Chess.—4. Mider renews his court to Etain. His song to her.—5. Mider carries off Etain.—6. Manannan mac Lir and Bran son of Febal.—7. Manannan mac Lir and the hero Cuchulainn.—8. Manannan mac Lir and Cormac mac Art. First Part. Cormac gives his wife, his son and daughter in exchange for a branch of silver.—9. Manannan mac Lir and King Cormac mac Art. Second Part. Cormac recovers his wife and family.—10. Manannan mac Lir the father of Mongan, King of Ulster, at the beginning of the second century A.D.—11. Mongan, son of a god, a wonderful being.

I.

The god Mider. Etain, his wife, carried off by Oengus; born a second time as the daughter of Etair.

We shall now speak of two divine personages who play no part in the events related in the Book of Invasions, and who only receive a passing reference there—Mider and Manannan. Mider, who owned the *sid* or underground palace of Bregleith, was, as we have seen, one of the two foster-fathers of Oengus, son of the Dagda. He had two wives, one called Etain (1), the other Fuamnach (2), both goddesses or *side*. The first of them, to his immense sorrow, he lost, and his abiding affection for her brought about a series of adventures, which began strangely enough and came to a tragic end.

An old tale belonging to the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn brings us back to a time when Mider's pupil Oengus, who had married Caer, the daughter of Ethal Anubal, carried off Etain, the wife of his master and foster-father Mider.

Etain, after her separation from Mider, became the wife of Oengus, who held her in great affection, placing her in a chamber

(1) *Tochmarc Etaine*, in Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., p., 127, lines 8, 24.

(2) Book of Leinster, p. 11, col. 2, line, 20. The same passage informs us that she was a sister of Siugmall. Cf. Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., p. 132, line 20, and Bk. of Leins., p. 23, col. 1, lines 37-38.

filled with sweet-smelling flowers, and never leaving her company. Mider, however, did not forget Etain, but mourned greatly for her, and longed to possess her again. Fuamnach, his second wife, was filled with jealousy because of this. One day having arranged a meeting between Mider and Oengus, she took advantage of the latter's absence from his palace, and sent a wind to blow upon the chamber which Oengus in his love had set apart for Etain (1). The wind caught Etain up and carried her on to the roof of a mansion where the great nobles of Ulster were feasting, in the company of their wives. Etain fell through the hole which served as a chimney, into the golden cup which one of the women was drinking out of. The woman swallowed Etain, who in due time was born again.

She who thus became the mother of Etain had a husband called Etair, and he passed for the girl's father. Girl may seem somewhat out of place here, for Etain was just twelve hundred years old when the wife of Etair brought her into the world; but the gods grow not old; and, moreover, Etain began a new life (2).

II.

Etain, the Wife of the High King of Ireland. Mider pays court to her.

When Etain grew up she was the comeliest of the maidens of Ireland, and she became the wife of Eochaid Airem, the high king, whose capital was at Tara. The reign of Eochaid, according to Tigernach (3), was contemporaneous with that of the great Cæsar, who, as we know, died in the year 44 B.C.

One of the texts describing the marriage of Eochaid, is careful to record the carrying out of one of the principal formalities connected with the marriage rite in Irish law: Eochaid, before the marriage, gave to Etain a dowry of seven *cumal*, that is to say, of seven female slaves or their equivalent. And it was after this had been fulfilled that they became man and wife.

(1) In the *Odyssey*, vi. 20, the goddess Athena, approaching the bed on which Nausicaa, daughter of the king of the Phæacians lies sleeping, is compared to the breath of the wind.

(2) *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 129, fragment published by Windisch, *Irische Texte* i., pp. 130-131.

(3) O'Conor, *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ii., pt. 1, p. 8.

But Mider had not ceased to love Etain. One day during the absence of the king he went to her and reminded her of the time, long gone, when he was her husband in the world of the gods. He invited her to go back with him to his mysterious palace of Bregleith. But Etain, unwilling to break the new ties she had formed, refused. "I would not exchange," said she, "the high king of Ireland for a husband like you, who have no genealogy, and whose ancestors are unknown" (1). Mider, however, did not give in.

III.

The Game of Chess.

One fine summer's day, Eochaid Airem, the high king of Ireland, was looking out over the walls of his fortress at Tara, admiring the beauty of the landscape, when suddenly he saw an unknown warrior riding towards him. The stranger was clothed in a purple tunic; his hair was yellow as gold, and his blue eyes shone like candles. He carried a five-pointed lance with him, and a shield ornamented with golden beads.

Eochaid bade him welcome, and at the same time expressed a wish to know who he was. "I know well who thou art, and for a long time," replied the warrior. "What is thy name?" asked Eochaid. "Nothing illustrious about it," answered the stranger. "I am Mider of Bregleith." "What has brought thee hither?" asked Eochaid. "I am come," said the unknown, "to play at chess with thee." "I have great skill at chess," said Eochaid, who was the best chess player in Ireland. "We shall see about that," said Mider. "But the queen is sleeping in her chamber now," said Eochaid, "and it is there my chess-board is" (2). "Little matter," replied Mider, "I have here a board as good as thine."

And that was the truth. His chess-board was of silver, glittering with precious stones at each corner of it. From a

(1) Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., p. 127, lines 30-31. This passage is taken from the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, an eleventh-century MS. Nothing establishes more categorically the recent date of the complicated genealogies attributed by divers texts to the Tuatha De Danann. See the ancestors given to Mider, in the *Bk. of Leins.*, p. 11, col. 1, line 51, and p. 10, col. 1, lines 2 et seq. Compare also the genealogical table published by O'Curry in *Atlantis*, iii., opposite p. 382.

(2) It is not certain whether this is the game of chess as played to-day, which is of Persian origin. Cf. O'Donovan, *Book of Rights*, p. lxi.

satchel wrought of shining metal he drew his men, which were of pure gold. Then he arranged them on the board.

"Play," said he to the king. "I will not play without a stake," replied Eochaid. "What will the stake be?" said Mider. "All one to me," replied Eochaid. "If I win," said Mider, "I will give thee fifty broad-chested horses, with slim swift feet." "And I," replied the king, assured of victory, "I will give thee whatsoever thou demand" (1).

But, contrary to his expectation, Eochaid was beaten by Mider. And when he asked his opponent what it was he demanded, the latter replied, "It is thy wife Etain that I demand." Then the king, according to the rules of the game, claimed his revenge, that is, a second game which would finally decide the matter. And he proposed to play this at the end of a year. Mider accepted the delay with ill grace enough, and then disappeared, leaving the king and his court confounded.

IV.

Mider renews his Court to Etain. His Song to her.

Eochaid did not see Mider again until a year had gone by. But during that time, Etain received many visits from the amorous god. The unknown writer, whose tale we are now examining, puts a song in the mouth of Mider which appears somewhat out of place here. It is the song which the messenger of Death sings to the women he is bearing away to the mysterious sojourn of immortality.

"O fair one, wilt thou come with me to a wonderful land that is mine, a land of sweet music; there primrose blossoms on the hair, and snow-white the bodies from head to toe; there no one is sorrowful or silent; white the teeth there, black the eyebrows . . . the hue of the foxglove is on every cheek. . . . Though fair are the plains of Innisfail, few there are so fair as the Great Plain whither I call thee. The ale of Innisfail is heady, but headier far the ale of the Great Land. What a

(1) Here there is a lacuna in the manuscript which we are using as a base, namely, the *Leahbar na hUidhre*. There is at least one leaf missing. We complete it however with the help (a) of an analysis by O'Curry (*Manners and Customs*, ii., pp. 192-194; iii., 162-163, 190-192), who had other MSS. before him; (b) by a portion of the following tale preserved in the *Leahbar na hUidhre*

wonder of a land that is! No youth grows there to old age. Warm streams flow through the land, the choicest mead and wine. Men there are comely, without blemish, and love is not forbidden. O fair one, wilt thou come with me to my puissant land, and thou shalt wear a crown of gold upon thy head. I will give thee swine's flesh to eat, and wine and milk to drink, O fair one! (1) Wilt thou not come with me, fair woman?" (2)

These doctrines on the other life were known also in Greece. In the fifth century before our era, Plato had heard of them, and attributed them to Musaeus. "According to this writer," says the great Athenian philosopher, "in Hades or the sojourn of the dead, the just are admitted to the banquet of the saints, and crowned with flowers, they spend their time in a state of eternal intoxication" (3).

This piece is therefore out of place here. Mider wished to bring Etain back to a country in which she had already lived for several centuries, and which was quite familiar to her; it was not to the "Great Land," where men meet after death, but to his own palace at Bregleith that he wanted to bring her; and the love he offered her was his own, and not that of the comely men, without blemish, who dwell in the mysterious kingdom of the dead.

His efforts, however, were unavailing. Etain remained faithful to the king her husband. In vain did Mider offer her jewels and treasures the most rare: "I cannot," said she, "leave my husband without his consent." During this time Eochaid counted in anguish the days that remained until Mider would make his appearance again. His name, which seems to have been *Airem*, genitive *Airemon*, comes, they say, from *Aram*, "number," and means he who counts.

(1) On the swine and ale of the gods, see *supra*, xii., 3.

(2) *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 131; Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., pp. 132 and 133. I have omitted several verses which seem to require corrections it would be imprudent to risk without having examined other MSS. The quatrain forming lines 11 and 12 in Windisch's edition, expresses a Christian idea interpolated in order to let pass what follows, so I have suppressed it.

(3) Republic ii. *Platonis Opera*, ed. Didot Schneider, ii., p. 26, lines 15-20.

V

Mider carries off Etain.

At the end of a year, Eochaid was at Tara, surrounded by the great lords of Ireland, when Mider appeared before him, in an angry mood. "Now, to our second game," said he. "What will the stake be?" asked Eochaid. "Whatever the winner demands," replied Mider, "and this will be the last game." "What is it thou demand?" enquired Eochaid. "To put my two hands about the waist of Etain, and kiss her," said Mider. Eochaid remained silent; then, lifting up his voice, he said, "Come back in a month's time, and we shall give thee what thou askest." Mider agreed, and went away.

When the fatal day arrived, Eochaid was in the midst of the great hall of his palace, and his wife with him. Gathered around him in great number were the most valiant of the warriors of Ireland, whom the king had called to his aid, and who thronged not only the palace but the court of the fortress as well. The doors were all locked. Eochaid was determined to resist by force the attempt of his rival to carry off his wife. The day wore out, and the terrible god had not made his appearance. Night came. Suddenly Mider was in the midst of them. No one had seen him enter. The fair Mider, says the Irish story-teller, was fairer than ever that night.

Eochaid greeted him. "Here I am," said Mider: "give me now what thou hast promised. It is a debt to pay, and I demand settlement." "I have not given it a thought until now," said Eochaid, beside himself with rage. "Thou hast promised to give me Etain," answered Mider.

As he said these words, the blood rushed to Etain's face. "Do not blush," said Mider to her, "thou hast naught to be ashamed of. For a year and more I have not ceased to ask thy love, making thee offer of jewels and treasures. Thou art the fairest of the women of Ireland, and thou wouldst not hear me until thy husband had given his permission." "I have already told thee," said Etain, "that I will not go with thee until my husband yield me up to thee. If Eochaid gives me, I am willing." "I will not give thee," cried Eochaid. "I give him leave to put his two hands about thy waist, here in this hall, as it has been agreed upon between us." "It shall be done," said Mider.

Then he passed his spear into his left hand, and clasping Etain round the waist with his right arm, he rose into the air with her, and disappeared through the hole in the roof which served as a chimney. The warriors rose up ashamed of their impotence, and going out they saw two swans flying around Tara, their long white necks united by a yoke of silver.

Later on the Irish often saw wonderful couples like these. But this was the first time they had seen them. Eochaid and his warriors recognised in the swans, Mider and Etain; but by this time they were far out of reach (1). Afterwards, however, a druid informed Eochaid of the whereabouts of the underground palace of Mider. Eochaid, aided by the enchantments of the druids, forced an entry into the mysterious palace, and recovered his lovely wife from the vanquished god. But one day Mider had his vengeance: for the tragic death of the high king Conaire, the grandson of Eochaid Airem and Etain, by his mother, was brought about by the implacable hatred of this god and his people, that is, the *side* of Bregleith, for the posterity of Eochaid and his wife (2).

VI.

Manannan mac Lir and Bran, son of Febal.

Manannan mac Lir, as his name indicates, is the son of Ler, that is to say, of the Sea. Between him and the other gods of the Tuatha De Danann, whom we have dealt with up to the present, there is this important difference: the mysterious palace he inhabits is not situated in Ireland, but in an isle of the sea, out of reach of ordinary navigators. In this sense, Manannan and some of the other Tuatha De Danann gods present a certain analogy with the Fomorians. Their residence lies oversea, like the great land where the dead, under the sway of the Fomorians, experience the joys of a new life, and immortality.

(1) Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 132.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 99, col. 1, lines 12 seq. There are various other texts referring to Mider which we have not drawn upon here. For instance, his intervention in the legend of Eochaid mac Maireda, Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 39, col. 2, line 1. Mider, king of the men of Ferfalga, father-in-law of the hero Curoi, is probably identical with this god (O'Curry, *Manners and Customs*, iii., 80).

Bran, son of Febal, is one of a number of voyagers who sailed away in a ship to the isles of the Tuatha De Danann. He returned thence, and related the story of his wanderings.

One day being alone in the neighbourhood of his stronghold, he heard music behind him of such exceeding sweetness that he fell asleep. On awakening he found a branch of silver by his side, covered with white blossoms (1). He took it and brought it home with him. But it did not remain long in his possession. One day when there was a goodly company assembled in his royal house, many chiefs and their wives being there, suddenly they saw a woman in strange raiment in the midst of them, who invited them to come away with her to the mysterious land of the *Síde*. Then she disappeared, and with her the branch of silver.

Bran embarked on the morrow, and thirty others with him. At the end of two days they met Manannan mac Lir, lord of the unknown country whither they were voyaging. Manannan was driving along in a chariot, singing of the blessedness of his kingdom. Bran went on his way, and came to an isle which was peopled only by women. And the queen of the place was she who had appeared to him in his palace. He abode there for a long time, and then returned into Ireland again (2).

VII.

Manannan mac Lir and the hero Cuchulainn.

The name of Manannan mac Lir is connected with the epic events forming the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn, and the Ossianic cycle. We find it in fact in one of the pieces which carry the epic history of Ireland down to the seventh century.

The wife of Manannan was Fand, daughter of Aed Abrat, and a goddess. One day he abandoned her, and she, in a spirit of revenge, offered herself in marriage to Cuchulainn (3), who had already a wife, Emer (4), and a concubine, Ethne Ingubai

(1) A similar branch comes into the legend of Cormac, *infra*, sec. 8.

(2) There are several MSS. of this piece. The oldest is in the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 121, but it contains a very small fragment only. The next in order of date is the MS. H. 2, 16 in Trin. Coll., Dublin, cols. 395-399.

(3) *Serglige Conculaind*, or "Cuchulainn's Sick-bed," in Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., p. 209, lines 20 seq.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 208, lines 12 seq. ; p. 214, lines 19 seq.

(1). She dwelt in an island to which she allured the hero. This was the "Shining Land," *Tír Sorcha* (2).

Cuchulainn sent on his charioteer, Loeg, before him, to see what manner of country it was, and the latter returned filled with admiration for what he had seen. He saw a wonderful tree there (3), and comely men, and beautiful women, clothed in fine raiment, listening to delightful music, feasting and making merry. But most wonderful of all was the beauty of Fand. No king or queen in Ireland was her equal. "Ethne Ingubai, the concubine of Cuchulainn, is exceeding fair," said he; "but a woman like Fand makes men mad" (4).

Cuchulainn then went away with Loeg, and married Fand, whom he brought back with him to Ireland. Up to this Emer had patiently borne the momentary infidelities of the impressionable hero, and even permitted him a concubine of inferior rank. But now she became jealous for the first time. She could not suffer a rival equal or superior to herself, like Fand, who might come to hold the first place in the affections of the greatest of Irish warriors. She wanted to kill Fand. Cuchulainn interposed; but the vehemence of Emer's passion had awakened the old love within him; and on beholding her grief he said that she was as pleasing to him as ever, and that he had not ceased to love her. When Fand heard this she was profoundly moved, and she left Cuchulainn.

At the same moment, however, Manannan, hearing of the great distress of his wife, whom he had wrongfully abandoned, came in search of her. He came up to them, and no one saw him, save Fand only. Then, after she had bade him welcome, he revealed himself to Cuchulainn and his charioteer Loeg. After which he departed, bringing Fand with him, who was now for ever lost to Cuchulainn; but the druids gave him a drink of forgetfulness, so that she troubled his mind no more (5).

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 206, lines 17, 18; p. 207, lines 9 seq.; p. 208, line 19.

(2) Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., p. 219, line 18.

(3) It was from this tree probably that the silver branch of Bran mac Febail, already referred to, came, also the branch with the golden apples in the legend of Cormac, which we shall refer to shortly. One might also compare the trees of the underground palace of Brug na Boinne, *supra*, xii., 3. The Isle of Avalon, that is, of the Apple Tree, in the Arthurian cycle, no doubt takes its name from a similar tree.

(4) Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i., p. 219, line 25; p. 220, lines 5 and 6.

(5) *Ibid.*, pp. 222-227.

VIII.

Manannan mac Lir and Cormac, son of Art.—First Part: Cormac exchanges his Wife, his Son, and Daughter for a Branch of Silver.

We find Manannan again in the Ossianic cycle. One of the principal personages in this cycle is Cormac mac Airt, or Cormac son of Art, also called Cormac hua Cuinn, or grandson of Conn. In the annals of Tigernach, who died, as we know, in 1088, we come upon the following entry, under a date which seems to correspond with the year 248 of our era: "Disappearance of Cormac, grandson of Conn, for seven months" (1). The disappearance of Cormac mac Airt is a wondrous event, the account of which is contained in the second list of bardic tales; and this list appears to date back to the tenth century. The legend is there described as the "Adventures," or "Expedition of Cormac mac Airt." This title is found in two MSS. of the fourteenth century, but with an addition showing that the land to which Cormac had gone, was the "Land of Promise" (2). More recent MSS. describe this piece as "The Finding of the Branch by Cormac mac Airt." We shall see the reason of this.

One day Cormac mac Airt, high king of Ireland, was in his stronghold at Tara. He saw in the adjacent plain a young man who had a wonderful branch in his hand, with nine golden apples hanging from it (3). And when he shook the branch, the apples beating against each other made strange sweet music. And whoever heard it forgot forthwith sorrow and care; and men, women, and children would be lulled to sleep by it.

"Does this branch belong to thee?" asked Cormac of the young man. "Yes, verily," he answered. "Wilt thou sell it?" said Cormac. "I will," said the young man. "I never have anything that I would not sell." "What is thy price?"

(1) "Teasbhaidh Cormaic hua Cuinn fri-re secht miss." O'Conor, *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ii., pt. I, p. 44. The same expression is used to designate the carrying off of Étain by Míder. *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 99, col. I, line 13.

(2) *Tír Tairngiri*, Bk. of Ballymote, fol. 142, v. MS. H. 2, 16, col. 889, in Trin. Coll., Dublin. Cf. *infra*, sec. 9.

(3) Compare the branch of silver in the legend of Bran mac Febail, *supra*, sec. 6.

asked Cormac. "I will tell thee afterwards," answered the youth. "I will give thee whatever thou thinkest right," said Cormac. "Tell me now, what is thy price?" And the young man answered, "Thy wife, thy son, and thy daughter." "I will give them to thee," said the king.

The young man gave him the branch, and they went together into the palace. Within were Cormac's wife, and his son and daughter. "Thou hast there a jewel of great beauty," said his wife. "It is not wonderful," replied Cormac; "I pay a great price for it." And he told them of his bargain. "Never shall we believe," cried his wife, "that there is a treasure in this world thou wouldst prefer to us three." "It is truly hard," said the daughter of Cormac, "that my father should have bartered us for a branch!" And they three were in desolation because of it. But Cormac shook the branch, and straightway they forgot their sorrow, and went out joyfully before the young man, and departed with him.

Soon the news of this strange event was spread abroad in Tara, and finally throughout all Ireland. The queen and her two children were held in great affection, and a great cry of grief went up from the people. But Cormac shook the branch, and immediately all plaining ceased, and the sorrow of his people was changed to joy.

IX.

Manannan mac Lir and King Cormac. Second Part: Cormac recovers his Wife and Children.

A year went by. Cormac felt a longing to see his wife and children again. He went out from his palace, in the direction they had gone. A magic cloud enveloped him, and soon he found himself on a marvellous plain. In the midst of it was a house, and an immense crowd of horsemen were gathered round it, and they were thatching it with the feathers of strange birds. When they had covered about one-half of the house the feathers ran short, and they departed in quest of more to finish it. But always when they were away, the feathers they had laid on disappeared, being carried away by the wind or in some other manner. It seemed impossible that their work could ever be finished. Cormac gazed at them for a long time, and then his patience left him. "I see well," said he, "that

you have been doing this from the beginning of the world, and that you will go on doing it until the end of the world."

Then he went on his way, and after seeing many other strange things, he came to a house, into which he entered.

Within were a man and a woman of lofty stature, clothed in garments of many colours. He greeted them; they, as it was late, offered him shelter for the night, which Cormac accepted.

Then the host brought in a whole pig, which was to serve for their meal, and an enormous log to cook it with. Cormac made the fire and put a quarter of the pig upon it. "Tell us a tale," said the host to Cormac, "and if it is a true one, the quarter will be cooked when it is told." "Do thou begin," replied Cormac, "and then thy wife, and after that it will be my turn." "Thou sayest well," said the host. "This then is my tale. I have seven of these swine, and with their flesh I can feed the whole world. When one of them is killed and eaten, I have but to put its bones in the manger, and on the morrow it is whole and alive again" (1). The tale was a true one, for immediately the quarter was found done.

Cormac then put a second quarter on the fire, and the woman began. "I have seven white cows," said she; "and every day I fill seven pails with their milk. If all the people in the world were gathered together in this plain, I would have milk enough for them." A true tale, for immediately the second quarter was cooked. Then said Cormac, "I see that you are Manannan and his wife. For these are Manannan's swine, and it is out of the Land of Promise that he brought his wife and the seven cows" (2).

"It is now thy turn," said the master of the house. "If thy tale is a true one, the third quarter will be found cooked." Then Cormac related how he had acquired the marvellous branch with its nine golden apples and enchanting music, and how he had at the same time lost his wife, his son, and daughter. When he had ended the third quarter was cooked. "Thou art king Cormac," said the host. "I know thee by thy wisdom; the feast is ready, eat." "Never," said Cormac, "have I sat down to meat in a company of two only." Manannan then opened a door, and Cormac's wife, and his son and daughter

(1) See *supra*, xii., 3, a parallel legend in a more ancient text.

(2) On the swine of Manannan, see *supra*, xii., 4, Manannan brought back two cows from India.

came in. There was great joy on the king to see them once more, and on them also. "It was I who took them away from thee," said Manannan, "and who gave thee also the branch of silver. My desire was to bring thee hither."

Cormac was unwilling to eat until his host had explained to him the marvels he had seen on the way. Then Manannan told him that the horsemen he had seen thatching the house with feathers, and returning again and again to their work, without ever seeing it finished, were the men of art who are seekers after fortune, which they attain never; for every time they return home with money they find all spent that they had left in the house on their departure.

Then Cormac, his wife, and his son and daughter sat down to table, and food and drink were dealt out to them. Manannan took up a golden cup. "This cup," said he, "has a marvellous property. Let a lie be spoken before it and it will immediately break, but if a truth be spoken it will immediately become whole again." "Prove it," cried Cormac. "That will be easy," said Manannan. "Thy wife that I carried away from thee, has since had a new husband." Immediately the cup was broken into four pieces. "My husband has lied," said Manannan's wife. She spoke the truth, and straightway the cup became whole again.

After they had eaten, Cormac and his wife and children lay down to sleep. When they awoke on the morrow, they found themselves in their palace at Tara, and by Cormac's side were the marvellous branch, the magic cup, and even the cloth which covered the table in the palace of the god Manannan. According to the annalist Tigernach, he was absent for seven months, and these wonderful events took place in the year 248 of the present era (1).

(1) This piece has been published by Standish Hayes O'Grady, with an English translation, but from a recent MS., in the *Trans. Ossianic Society*, iii., p. 213. Certain details appear modern. I can hardly recognise as ancient the passage referring to the fidelity of Cormac's wife. Celtic paganism is not so chaste.

X.

Manannan mac Lir is the father of Mongan, king of Ulster, at the beginning of the Second Century A.D.

Cormac mac Airt flourished in the third century of the present era. And we find Manannan's name again in the epic history of Ireland about the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century. At this time Fiachna Lurgan was reigning in Ulster. He was the friend of Aidan mac Gabrain, who died, according to the annals of Cambria, in 607 (1). Tigernach also mentions the death of Aidan mac Gabrain, but assigns it to the preceding year (2).

Aidan mac Gabrain was king of the Scots or Irish established in Great Britain. He is known more particularly for his unfortunate war against the Anglo-Saxons. Aedilfrid, king of the Northumbrians, overcame him, according to Bede, in the bloody battle of *Degsa-Stan*, where the victorious Anglo-Saxons lost a whole army, together with the brother of their king. This battle was fought in the year 603 (3).

Fighting under Aidan mac Gabrain, either at this battle or elsewhere, were numbers of auxiliaries, brought out of Ireland by Aidan's friend, Fiachna mac Lurgan, king of Ulster. Fiachna left his wife behind him in his palace at Rath-Mor Maige Linni, and during his absence a strange adventure befel her.

One day as she was alone an unknown person came and spoke words of love to her. The queen refused to listen to him. "There are not in the world," said she, "treasures or jewels for which I would dishonour my husband." "But," said the stranger, "if it were in thy power to save his life, what wouldst thou do?" "Ah," said she, "if I saw him in danger nothing would be too hard for me; I would do my utmost to aid him who could save his life." And the stranger answered, "The moment then is come to do what thou sayest, for thy husband is in great peril. Before him is a terrible warrior; he has not strength enough to stand against him; he will be slain by him. Give thy love to me, and thou shalt bear a son who

(1) *Annales Cambriæ*, ed. John Williams Ab Ithel, Rolls Series, 1860, p. 6.

(2) O'Connor, *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptorum*, ii., pt. 1, 179.

(3) Bede, *Hist. Ecclesiastica*, i., chap. 34, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, xcvi., col. 76.

will work wonders. He shall be called Mongan. But I shall go forth to the battle, and before noon to-morrow shall stand in the midst of the warriors of Ireland, with the host of Great Britain before me. I shall tell thy husband what we have done, and that it is thou who has sent me." The queen yielded. On the morrow, betimes, the stranger departed, singing this song as he went :

I am going to my comrades hard by,
White and serene is the sky to-day,
I am Manannan son of Ler,
That is the warrior who has come.

Manannan sang this song in Ireland as he was leaving the palace of the king of Ulster, at Rath-Mor Maige Linni, one morning about the year 603 of our era. At the same moment, near *Degsa-Stan* in Great Britain, two armies were advancing to the attack: one, the Saxons, commanded by Aedilfrid, king of the Northumbrians, and the other, or the Irish, led by Aidan mac Gabrain and the king of Ulster, Fiachna Lurgan. Suddenly an unknown warrior is seen at the head of the Irish host, all eyes are turned towards him because of his noble bearing and his rich apparel. He goes up to Fiachna in particular, and tells him how he had seen his wife on the eve before. "I promised the queen," said he, "that I would aid thee in the battle." Then he took his place in the front rank of the army, and according to the Irish tale, which gives Ireland the honour of the day, he brought victory to the two allies, Aidan mac Gabrain and Fiachna Lurgan.

Then Fiachna crossed over the sea and returned to his palace, where he found his wife with child. She told him what had happened, and Fiachna approved of her action. In due time Mongan was born. He passed for Fiachna's son; "but every one knows," says the Irish story-teller, "that his real father was Manannan mac Lir" (1). Like the Gauls, whom St. Augustine writes of at the beginning of the fifth century, the Irish of the seventh century believed that there were amorous gods who ravished women (2).

(1) The principal MS. is the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 133. The beginning is wanting, but we find it in other MSS., not so good, as T.C.D., H. 2, 16, col. 911, and Betham No. 145 in the Royal Acad., Dublin. It is in this MS., fol. 63, that I found written in a clear hand the name of the enemies against whom Fiachna and Aidan fought, *fria Saxanu*.

(2) *De Civitate Dei*, xv., chap. 23. This passage has been reproduced by Isidorus of Seville in his *Origines*, viii., chap. 11, sec. 103.

XI.

Mongan, son of a god, a marvellous being.

Mongan, son of Fiachna, is an historic personage. The Irish chronicles record the date of his death, and they all assign it to about the same period. According to Tigernach's, the most ancient of the Irish annals that have come down to us, Mongan son of Fiachna was slain with a stone in 625, by Arthur son of Bicur, a Briton (1). Mongan, therefore, lived at another period as well as in the *épopée*. Now, according to the Irish legend, he was not only the son of a god, but by another miraculous occurrence, consequent upon the first, he was a re-birth of Find mac Cumail, the hero of the Ossianic cycle, the Fingal of Macpherson; and Find died three hundred years before the birth of Mongan (2).

We have already referred to the legend which describes how Mongan's identity with Find was established (3) Mongan quarrelled with his *file*, Forgoll, as to the death-place of Fothad Airgtech, king of Ireland, slain by Cailte, one of Find's companions, in a battle which the Four Masters, intrepid chronologists, assign to the year 285 (4).

Mongan having contradicted Forgoll, the latter in a rage threatened to pronounce awful incantations upon him, which spread terror into the heart of the king and over all his household. It was decided that Mongan be given three days to prove what he had said, namely, that Fothad was slain, not at Dubtar

(1) O'Conor, *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ii., pt. 1, pp. 187-188. O'Conor's text is very corrupt; there is a better reading in Hennessy's *Chronicum Scotorum*, p. 78. Attention should be directed to another text which disagrees with these chronological dates, namely the piece known as the *Tucait Baile Mongain*, "Cause of Mongan's Ecstasy." *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 134, col. 2. There we find Mongan living with his wife in the year Ciaran mac int Shair and Tuathal Mael-Garb died, that is to say, in 544. *Chron. Scotorum*, ed. Hennessy, pp. 48-49. Irish chronology at these distant periods is merely approximative.

(2) Tigernach assigns the death of Find to the year 274. O'Conor, *Rerum Hib. Script.*, ii., pt. 1, p. 49.

(3) *Introd. Litt. Celtique*, pp. 265-266.

(4) O'Donovan, *Annals Four Masters*, 1851, i., pp. 120-121. By a singular contradiction, the Four Masters (*Ibid.*, pp. 118-119) make Find die in 283, or two years earlier, while Cailte is fighting under him in the battle that took place in 285.

in Leinster (1), as Forgoll asserted, but on the banks of the Larne, formerly Ollarbe, in Ulster, near Mongan's palace. In the event of Mongan not being able to prove his statement before that time, all his possessions and his person even were to become the property of the *file*.

Mongan agreed to this, confident that he would win; and he let two days go by, and the greater part of the third, without betraying the slightest uneasiness, though nothing appeared to justify his equanimity. His wife was in great distress. From the moment Mongan had made the fatal wager, her tears had not ceased to flow. "Make an end of weeping," said Mongan to her; "help will certainly come to us."

The third day came. Forgoll appeared, and wished to enforce his bond. He claimed his right to take immediate possession of all Mongan's goods, and even of his person. "Wait until the evening," said Mongan. He was in his upper chamber with his wife. The latter was weeping and making moan, for she felt the fatal moment swiftly approaching when they would lose their all, and the deliverer was not in sight. But Mongan said: "Be not sorrowful, woman, he who is coming to our help is not far off, I hear his feet in the Labrinne."

This is the river Caragh, which flows through the county Kerry into Dingle Bay, in the south-west of Ireland. Mongan was at that hour a hundred leagues distant, in the parish of Donegore, lying to the north-east of Antrim. Cailte, Mongan's pupil, and his companion in battle when he was called Find, was now coming from the land of the Dead to bear witness to the word of his old chieftain, and confound the presumption of the *file* Forgoll. He was following the usual route taken by those coming from the mysterious land of the dead to the north-eastern extremity of Ireland.

The king's words reassured the queen somewhat, and there was a moment's silence. Then she began to weep again and lament. "Weep not, woman!" said Mongan, "he who is even now coming to our help, I hear his feet in the Maine." This is another river in the County Kerry, between the Caragh and the north-east, on the way Cailte must have taken to reach the palace of Mongan. On hearing these words, the queen's grief

(1) Duffry, near Wexford. It was the late Mr. W. H. Hennessy who supplied me with this geographical identification, also the others contained in the legend of Mongan.

was stilled for a little while; but then, seeing no one come, her tears broke forth afresh.

And this happened again and again. Every time Cailte crossed a river, Mongan heard him and told his wife of it. He heard him crossing the Liffey, and then the Boyne, a little further to the north, and then the Dee, and after that Carlingford Lough, which brought him nearer and nearer to Antrim, where Mongan was.

At length Cailte was close at hand. He crossed the Ollarbe, or the Larne Water, a little to the south of Mongan's palace. But no one had yet seen him, and Mongan alone had heard him. Night had fallen. Mongan was seated on his throne in his palace, and his wife at his right hand, weeping. Forgoll was standing before them reminding him of his bond, and demanding payment. Suddenly a warrior, unknown to all save Mongan, is seen approaching the rath from the south. He has a headless spear-shaft in his hand, with the help of which he leaps across the three ramparts into the middle of the stronghold. In the twinkling of an eye he is in the hall of the palace, and takes his stand between Mongan and the wall. Forgoll is at the other end, facing the king.

The stranger asks what the matter is. "I and the *file* yonder," said Mongan, "have made a wager about the death of Fothad Airgtech. The *file* said he died at Dubtar in Leinster. I said that it was false." "The *file* then has lied," said the unknown warrior. "Thou wilt repent of that," replied the *file*. "It is not a good speech," answered the warrior. "I will prove what I say. We were with thee," said he to the king; "we were with Find," said he to the assembly. "Hush!" said Mongan, "it is wrong of thee to reveal a secret." "We were with Find, then," said the warrior. "We came from Alba. We met with Fothad Airgtech near here, on the banks of the Ollarbe. We fought a battle with him. I cast my spear at him, so that it went through his body, and the iron head quitting the shaft, went into the earth beyond him, and remained there. This here is the shaft of that spear. The bare rock from which I hurled it will be found, and the iron head will be found in the earth, a little to the east of it; and the tomb of Fothad Airgtech will be found a little to the east of that again. A stone chest is round his body; in the chest are his two bracelets of silver, and his two arm-rings, and his collar of silver (1). Over his

(1) *Airgtech*, the king's surname, signifies, probably, he who has

tomb is a stone pillar, and on the end of the pillar that is in the earth is Ogham writing, and it says : ' Here is Fothad Airgtech. He was fighting against Find when Cailte slew him.' "

They went then to the place the warrior had pointed out ; and they found everything as he had said : the rock, the iron head, the pillar stone, the Ogham writing, the chest, the body, and the ornaments. Mongan had won his wager (1). The unknown warrior was Cailte, Find's pupil and companion in battle, come back from the land of the dead to defend his old chieftain, who was unjustly attacked.

We have seen how Cailte openly proclaimed Mongan's identity with the great Find, revealing the secret which Mongan had kept up till then. This strange identity was brought about by the marvellous birth of Mongan, who was not the son of Fiachna, but of one belonging to a superior race—the god Manannan mac Lir, one of those supernatural beings who, according to the Gaulish belief, recorded by St. Augustine, are amorous of the wives of men.

money or ornaments of silver. I am indebted to M. Ernault for this hypothesis.

(1) It was Mr. W. H. Hennessy who drew my attention to this piece. He gave me also the benefit of his advice in the translation of the more difficult passages. The best MS. is the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, p. 133, col. 1.

CHAPTER XV.—The Belief in the Immortality of the Soul in Ireland and in Gaul.

- x. The Immortality of the Soul in the Legend of Mongan.—2. Did the Celts hold the Pythagorean Doctrine of Metempsychosis? Opinion of the Ancients.—3. The Pythagorean and the Celtic Doctrines compared.—4. The Land of the Dead. Death a Voyage. Text of the Fourth Century B.C.—5. Certain Heroes go forth to war in the Land of the Dead and of the Gods: such as Cuchulainn, Loegaire Liban, and Crimthann Nia Nair. The Legend of Cuchulainn.—6. The Legend of Loegaire Liban.—7. Dismounting from Horseback in the Legend of Loegaire Liban and in the Modern Legend of Ossian.—8. The Legend of Crimthann Nia Nair.—9. Difference between Cuchulainn on the one side and Loegaire Liban and Crimthann on the other.

I.

The Immortality of the Soul in the Legend of Mongan.

The marvellous birth of Mongan and the part played in his legend by the god Manannan mac Lir, are not the only points in this mythic tale which bring before us the fundamental beliefs of the Celtic religion. There are two other points in this legend worthy of investigation. One is that Find, slain at the end of the third century, had not ceased to live, but retained his personality, and returned again to this world more than two centuries after his death, having by a second birth assumed a new body.

The second point is the apparition of Cailte. He, however, is not born a second time. And it is difficult at first sight to understand how having left his body behind him in the grave in Ireland, he can return from the land of the Dead with a physical form identical in every respect with that of the living. Certain it is, however, that in the Irish legend he returns visible to all eyes, and speaking a language understood by all. But this legend is not based upon beliefs peculiar to the Irish only, since the fear of *revenants* persists among the people even to this day in France. The belief in *revenants* or departed spirits is therefore a Celtic doctrine, and we shall glance into it a little further on.

II.

Did the Celts hold the Pythagorean Doctrine of Metempsychosis? Opinion of the Ancients.

The second birth of Find is a most extraordinary event. We have already seen that Etain was twice born; but Etain is a goddess, one of the *side*, a banshee or fairy, to use the popular expression. Her two lives, the first in the world of the gods, the second in the world of men, into which she is born in a manner contrary to the laws of nature, have from beginning to end a marvellous character; thus the wonderful events in the second life of Etain are explained by her first life, which is divine.

But Find is not a god: the Irish do not conceive of him as such. He is twice born, and during his second life, in which he is called Mongan, he remembers his first, when he was called Find. We find the same thing in the story of Tuan mac Cairill. Tuan, after having led the life of a man, passes into the bodies of several animals, and then, by a new birth, becomes a man for the second time, and remembers all the events he had witnessed in his former lives, notably during his first, when he was called Tuan mac Stairn (1). We have a parallel instance in Mongan, who remembers all that had happened to him when he was Find.

In the Irish legend Tuan and Find are exceptions to the ordinary laws which govern the epic tale. It is not usual for the dead to be born a second time. But the thing has happened; it is possible: such is the Celtic doctrine. Hence the affinities which certain ancient writers thought they perceived between the Gaulish beliefs and the teaching of Pythagoras. They even went so far as to assert that they were identical.

Alexander Polyhistor, who wrote in the early part of the first century B.C., affirms that Pythagoras had the "Galates" for disciples (2). About the middle of the same century, shortly after the year 44, Diodorus Siculus, expresses the same opinion in terms more formal. Among the Celts, says he, prevailed the Pythagorean doctrine that the souls of men are

(1) See *supra*, chap. iii.

(2) Alexander Polyhistor, frag. 138, Didot-Muller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, iii., 239.

immortal, and that after a fixed number of years they begin a new life by putting on a new body (1). According to Timagenus, who wrote at a later date, in the second half of the same century, the authority of Pythagoras attests the superiority of the Druids, who proclaimed the immortality of the soul (2). In the following century, between the years 31 and 39 of the present era, Valerius Maximus, writing of the Gauls and their doctrine of the immortality of the soul, says that he "would treat them as fools if these wearers of breeches did not hold the same beliefs in the immortality of the soul as Pythagoras professed in his philosopher's mantle (3).

III.

The Pythagorean and the Celtic Doctrines Compared.

If the Celtic theories on the survival of the personality after death resemble somewhat those of Pythagoras, they are not, however, identical. In the system of the Greek philosopher, to be born again and to lead one or more new lives in this world, in the bodies of animals or of men, is the punishment and the common lot of the wicked: it is thus that they expiate their faults. The souls of the just are not encumbered with a body: pure spirits, they live in the atmosphere around, free, happy, immortal (4).

Quite other is the Celtic doctrine. To be born again in this world and to put on a new body has been the privilege of two heroes, Tuan mac Cairill, called at first Tuan mac Stairn, and Mongan, known in his first existence as Find mac Cumail. For them it was a privilege and not a punishment. The common law, according to the Celtic doctrine, is, that after the death men find in another world the new life and new body which their religion holds out to them (5).

(1) Diodorus, lib. v., cap. 28, 6, ed. Didot-Muller, i., 271.

(2) Ammianus Marcellinus, xv., cap. 9.

(3) Valerius Maximus, ii., cap. 6, sec 10, ed. Teubner, p. 81.

(4) Didot-Mullach, Frag. Philosophorum Græcorum, ii., pp. ix.-xii.

(5) . . . Regit idem spiritus artus
Orbe alio : longæ (canitis si cognita) vitæ
Mors media est.

(Lucan, Pharsalia, i., 456-458).

Cæsar's celebrated passage (De Bell. Gall., vi., c. 14, sec. 5), "non interire animas, sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios," does not

This new life is a continuation of that led in this world, with all its ups and downs, all the social relations that are incident to it. The dead chief's favourite slaves and dependents are burned with him on his tomb, along with his chariot horses; they follow their master into the other world to continue the services they rendered him in this (1). The debtor who dies without having acquitted his debt will find himself in the other world in exactly the same position towards his creditor. His obligations will follow him into the land of the dead, and he will have to fulfil all the engagements he contracted in the land of the living (2).

The Celt then did not conceive of the other life as a compensation for the ills which one suffers here, or as a place of punishment for those who have abused the pleasures of this world. The life of the dead in the mysterious region beyond the Ocean is for each a continuation of that led here.

Thus the lofty idea of justice which dominates the doctrine of Pythagoras is absent from the Celtic conceptions. From the moral standpoint this difference is even more important than that relating to the actual place which is assigned to the dead in the two systems. This place is heaven for the just, the present world for the wicked, according to Pythagoras; in the Celtic doctrine it is for both alike a region lying beyond the Ocean, to the extreme west. But how insignificant is this compared to the moral divergence! Pythagoras, who is already a modern, sees in the other life a sanction for the laws of justice respected or violated in this. But a more ancient doctrine than that of Pythagoras makes no distinction between justice and success, considering as just all that happens in this world, and seeing in the second life of the dead but a continuation of the joys and sorrows experienced in the first. This is the Celtic doctrine.

This conception of immortality differs widely from ours,

conflict with this passage of Lucan. The other body, into which the soul of the dead Celt passed, according to Cæsar, was, as a general rule, in the other world, and rarely in this.

(1) "Omnia quæ vivis cordi fuisse arbitrantur in ignem inferunt, etiam animalia, ac paulo supra hanc memoriam servi et clientes, quos ab iis dilectos esse constabat, justis funeribus confectis una cremabantur (Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, vi., c. 19, sec. 4).

(2) "Vetus ille mos Gallorum occurrit, quos memoria proditum est pecunias mutuas, quæ his apud inferos redderentur, dare solitos (Valerius Maximus, ii., c. 6, sec 10, ed Teubner-Halm, p. 81).

whose philosophic nature, making a distinction between justice and the success of this world, includes the hope of a reparation beyond the grave. The Celtic race has not this hope. Yet it has a profound belief in the immortality of the soul: it believes in a mysterious land, in more than one, indeed, beyond the sea, where the dead have their abode and the gods hold sway. All the dead go there. They can even return thence, as Cailte did, for instance. And some heroes, by a special privilege, almost superhuman, have gone thither before death, and returned again, like Ulysses and Orpheus in Greek legend.

IV.

The Land of the Dead. Death a Voyage. Texts of the Fourth Century B.C.

The Celts of the Continent, like those of Ireland, believed in the existence of this mysterious land of the dead, the other world, *orbis alius*, which the druids sang of in Cæsar's time, as Lucan attests, and which Plutarch and Procopius confounded with the western region of Great Britain (1). The Gaulish warrior hoped to continue there the life of combat which had been his honour and glory in this world. With a living body, identical in shape and form with that which he had laid behind him in the grave, he hoped to find in the other world, replicas, as it were, of everything that had been buried along with him: slaves, dependents, horses, chariots, arms—arms especially. No Gaulish warrior was ever buried without his arms. Without them what could he do in the other world; how could he carry on his life of warfare!

Two of the oldest original texts we possess on Gaulish customs belong to the fourth century before the present era. The author is Aristotle, and the texts in question are interpreted by more modern arrangements of a passage of Ephorus, no longer extant, who also wrote in the fourth century.

Holland was then one of the divisions of the Celtic empire, and had not as yet been invaded by the Germanic race. At this remote period it was exposed, just as it is now, to those dreadful incursions of the sea, against which modern science defends

(1) See *supra*, c. x., 5.

it so successfully. The middle age and the sixteenth century were, however, less fortunate. The story of the terrible inundations which produced the Zuyderzee in 1283, and later on the sea of Harlem, is well known.

Several such catastrophes appear to have taken place in the early part of the fourth century B.C., and to have carried off whole populations, whose awful fate was echoed abroad all over Europe. The news of it penetrated even to Greece. Ephorus, in his history, completed in 341, speaks of the houses of the Celts carried away by the sea, and their occupants swallowed up in the waves. "The number of victims," says he, "is so great that the warlike Celts lose more men by the invasions of the ocean than by war" (1).

One can fancy the awful scene of desolation and terror presented in a fertile and populous country, when the waters suddenly rise and carry death and destruction before them. There are traits in the picture common to all times and places—the despair of the women, the cries of the children.

But what is characteristic of the time and the race is the action of the Gaulish warrior of the fourth century. He sees death approaching, and all his efforts to save his family useless. So he arrays himself in his armour, his sword in his right hand, his spear in the left, his shield over his arm, and awaits death unmoved, surrounded by his wife and weeping children. He has faith in the teaching of his fathers and his priests. When the sea has gone over him and his arms and all those who are dear to him, he will presently find himself in the other world with his loved ones: after the swift trial of death they will come to life again, full of joy and health; and with arms like those the sea had engulfed, he will continue his warrior's life, which in the fourth century B.C. was the honour and glory of the Celts, giving them the supremacy over all the surrounding nations (2).

(1) Ephorus, in Strabo, lib. vii., cap. 2, sec 1, ed. Didot-Muller et Dubner, p. 243. Cf. Didot-Muller, Frag. Hist. Græcorum, frag. 44, i., 245.

(2) Aristotle, Ethicorum Eudemiorum, lib. iii., c. 1, sec. 25; ed. Didot, ii., p. 210. Cf. Ethicorum Nicomacheorum, lib. iii., c. 10, sec. 7; ed. Didot, ii. p. 32. The commentary on these two passages is supplied not only by Strabo, quoted above, but also by Nicolaus of Damas, frag. 104, in Didot-Muller's Frag. Hist. Græcorum, iii., 457; and by Elien, Variarum Historiarum, xii., c. 23. These texts have been compared with great learning by Karl Mullenhoff (*Deutsche Alterthumskunde*, i., p. 231, Berlin, 1870).

V.

Certain Heroes go forth to War in the Land of the Dead and of the Gods: such are, Cuchulainn, Loegaire Liban, Crimthann Nia Nair.—The Legend of Cuchulainn.

In the Celtic belief, war appears to be one of the chief occupations of the gods in the distant countries they inhabit along with the warrior dead. There, in the heroic period, in the time of Conchobar and Cuchulainn, for instance, we see the continuation of the battles which took place in the mythological period, when the Fomorians were at war with the mythic populations of Ireland—the race of Partholon, the race of Nemed, and the Tuatha De Danann.

One day Cuchulainn is called into the land of the gods, an isle to which one sails in a ship from Ireland. Fand, a goddess of wondrous beauty, offers him her hand, on condition that he will aid her people in a battle against the other gods (1). Cuchulainn agrees, and having overcome them, weds the goddess, and returns with her into Ireland.

Cuchulainn is not the only hero who, according to the Irish legend, went into the other world and fought with the gods. Here is another tale preserved in a MS. of the middle twelfth century.

VI.

The Legend of Loegaire Liban.

The people of Connaught were at one time assembled near En-loch or the "lake of the birds," in the plain of Ai. They spent the night in that place, and when they rose betimes on the morrow, they saw a man coming towards them through the mist.

He wore a purple mantle, and in his hand he carried a five-pointed spear, a gold-rimmed shield was slung over his left arm, at his belt was a gold-hilted sword, and golden-yellow hair streamed on to his shoulders. "A welcome to the warrior

(1) *Serglige Conculainn*, or "Cuchulainn's Sick-Bed," in Windisch *Irische Texte*, pp. 209, 220. Eogan Inbir, whom Cuchulainn makes war against in this legend, is, in the Book of Invasions, one of the adversaries of the Tuatha De Danann (Bk. of Leins., p. 9, col. 2, lines 45-47; p. 11, col. 2, lines 30-31; p. 127, col. 2, line 6).

whom we do not know," said Loegaire, son of the king of Connaught. "I thank you all," exclaimed the stranger. "What brings thee here?" asked Loegaire. "I am come to seek the aid of an army." "Whence art thou then?" enquired Loegaire. "From the land of the gods," answered the stranger. "Fiachna son of Reta is my name; my wife has been carried away from me. I slew the ravisher in battle; but his nephew assailed me, Goll mac Duilb, son of the king of Dun Maige Mell," that is, of the stronghold of the Pleasant Plain (one of the names of the land of the Dead). "Seven battles have I fought with him, and in all I have been overcome. This very day we enter upon a fresh battle, and it is to seek help that I am come hither." So far he spoke in prose, then he broke into verse.

I.

The fairest of plains is the plain of the Two Mists,
Round about it flow rivers of blood:
Battle of divine warriors, full of courage,
Not far hence, hard by.

We have waded through the generous red blood
Of stately bodies of noble race;
Their destruction spreads sorrow
Among women, who shed swift abundant tears.

First slaughter that of the city of the Two Cranes;
Near it a side was pierced:
There, in the battle, his head struck off,
Fell Eochaid son of Sall Sreta.

Vigorously fought Aed son of Find,
Crying his battle cry;
Goll mac Duilb, Dond mac Nera,
Waged battle, too, warriors with beautiful heads.

The good comely sons of my wife
And mine, we shall not be alone:
A share of silver and gold I give
To whomsoever desires it.

The fairest of plains is the Plain of the Two Mists,
Round about it flow rivers of blood:
Battle of divine warriors, full of courage,
Not far hence, hard by.

II.

In their hands are white shields
Adorned with emblems of white silver,
With shining blue swords,
With red metal-mounted horns.

In well-ordered battle array,
Ahead of their prince of gracious countenance,
They march amid blue spears,
White bands of curly-headed warriors.

They scatter the hostile battalions,
They slaughter all whom they attack.
How fair they are in battle,
These swift, illustrious, avenging warriors !

Their strength, though great, can never diminish :
Sons of kings and queens they are.
All their heads are crowned
With golden-yellow hair.

Stately and comely their bodies,
With far-seeing blue-orbed eyes,
With shining teeth like crystal,
With thin red lips.

They are good at warrior-slaying ;
In the ale hall their melodious voices are heard.
They sing songs of learning ;
They win the final game at chess.

In their hands are white shields,
Adorned with emblems of white silver,
With shining blue swords,
With red metal-mounted horns.

When the unknown warrior had ended, he went back into the lake. Then Loegaire Liban, son of the King of Connaught, cried out to the young men round about him: "It were a shameful thing not to come to this man's aid." Fifty warriors immediately stepped forth and took their stand behind Loegaire. Then Loegaire dived down into the lake, and the fifty warriors followed him. After a time they met the stranger who had appeared before them, namely Fiachna, son of Reta. They fought a deadly battle, from which they issued safe and sound, with victory. After that they laid siege to the stronghold of Mag Mell, or the Pleasant Plain, the Land of the Dead that is, where Fiachna's wife was imprisoned. The besieged could not withstand the attack, and yielded up their prisoner in exchange for their lives. The victors brought the woman away with them, and as she went she sang what is known as the *Osnad ingene Ehdach amlabair*, the "Lament of the daughter of Eochaid the Dumb."

Fiachna having recovered his wife, gave his daughter, Der Grene, "Sun-tear," in marriage to Loegaire Liban. And the fifty warriors that were with him received each one a wife.

Loegaire and his companions abode a year in the place, but at the end of that time they were filled with a home-longing. "Let us go and get tidings of Ireland," said Loegaire Liban. "If ye would return again," said Fiachna, "take horses with you, but by no means dismount from them."

Loegaire and his companions followed his advice, and set out. They arrived before the assembly of the people of Connaught, who had spent the whole year in mourning for them. Great was their joy then to see Loegaire and his fifty warriors suddenly in their midst. They sprang up to meet them, and bid them welcome. "Come not nigh us," said Loegaire; "we are but come to bid you farewell." Then Crimthann Cass, his father, cried out: "Do not leave us. You shall have the kingdom of the three Connaughts, their gold and their silver, their horses with their bridles; their comely young women will be at your will; do not leave them." But Loegaire was obdurate; he said that it could not be so, and then he began to sing of the marvels of his new abode.

I.

What a marvel it is, O Crimthann Cass,
When it rains 'tis ale that falls!
A hundred thousand the number of each army there,
They go from kingdom to kingdom.

They hear the noble melodious music of the gods;
They go from kingdom to kingdom.
Drinking from shining cups,
Holding converse with the loved one.

My own wife that I have
Is Der Grene, Fiachna's daughter.
After that, as I shall tell thee,
A wife for each of my fifty men.

We have brought from the plain of Mag Mell
Thirty cauldrons, thirty drinking-horns,
We have brought the plaint that the Sea sings,
Daughter of Eochaid the Dumb.

What a marvel it is, O Crimthann Cass!
When it rains 'tis ale that falls.
A hundred thousand the number of each army there;
They go from kingdom to kingdom.

II.

What a marvel it is, O Crimthann Cass!
I was master of the blue sword.
One night of the night of the gods!
I would not exchange for all thy kingdom.

When he had ended, Loegaire left his father and the assembly of the people of Connaught, and returned to the mysterious land whence he had come. There he exercises joint kingly rule with Fiachna. It is he who reigns in the stronghold of Mag Mell, the Pleasant Plain, where the Dead have their abode, and his constant companion is Sun-tear, the daughter of Fiachna (1).

VII.

The Descent from Horseback in the old Legend of Loegaire Liban, and in the modern Legend of Oisín.

There is one characteristic detail in this legend to which we would direct attention, namely, Fiachna's advice to Loegaire Liban not to alight from his horse in Ireland. Loegaire followed his counsel, and was thus enabled to return safely to the wonderland where he had found his wife and throne, and immortal happiness.

Here we have a mythic belief which finds expression elsewhere as well. We meet with it in the Ossianic cycle, in its very latest form—Michael Comyn's celebrated lay, "Oisín in the Land of Youth," written in the middle of the eighteenth century. Oisín, like Loegaire, went to a wondrous land where he fought a number of battles, and afterwards wedded the king's daughter. Then a burning desire came over him to see Ireland once more. He takes leave of his wife, accordingly, and mounts his wonderful steed, who knows the way that leads to Ireland, and the way home again. Oisín's wife gives him the same counsel as did Fiachna to Loegaire Liban: "Remember, Oisín, what I tell thee. If thou settest foot on earth, never again shall I behold thee in this beautiful land" (2).

Through an unforeseen circumstance Oisín was prevented from carrying out her injunction. One day as he was aiding a body of three hundred men, staggering under a heavy marble slab, the golden girth of his saddle gave way, and he was thrown to the ground. Straightway he lost his sight; his youth and beauty left him, and old age and decrepitude fell upon him. He was no longer able to find his way back to the land of delights,

(1) Bk. of Leins., p. 275, col. 2, and p. 276, cols. 1 and 2.

(2) Trans. Ossianic Society for year 1856, vol. iv., and 1859, p. 266. The text is edited by Brian O'Looney.

where his wife was awaiting him. He was forced to remain in Ireland, with no other consolation than the remembrance of a past which would never return (1).

VIII.

The Legend of Crimthann Nia Nair.

So much for Michael Comyn's story of Oisín. In the ancient literature, however, we read of another hero, who fared less favourably than Oisín; for in falling from his horse, he found not only old age and decrepitude, but death as well. This happened to Crimthann Nia Nair, high king of Ireland.

Crimthann belongs to the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn. The story of his parentage is one of those that have given the ancient Irish a certain reputation for immorality. Lugaid was the son of three brothers, Bress, Nar, and Lothru; and Clothru his mother, was their sister (2). Lugaid was then united to Clothru, who was thus both his mother and his wife, and from this union was sprung Crimthann (3).

Crimthann in time became high king of Ireland. He married the goddess Nair, who brought him over the sea to a strange country where he abode a month and a half. He returned thence with a rich store of goods, including, among other things, it is said, a chariot wrought entirely of gold; a golden chess-board, incrustated with three hundred precious stones; a sword with serpents of carved gold; a shield with reliefs of silver; a spear which caused mortal wounds; a sling which never failed to reach its mark, and two dogs held by a chain of silver, so beautiful that it was valued at three hundred bondmaids. Crimthann died from a fall off his horse, six weeks after his return to Ireland (4).

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 278.

(2) Bk. of Leins., p. 124, col. 2, lines 34, seq.

(3) Compare St. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, ii. c. 7, in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 23, col. 296 A.

(4) A short summary of the legend of Crimthann is contained in the tract known as the *Flathiusa hÉirenn*, Bk. of Leins., p. 23, col. 2, lines 2-8; Bk. of Lecan, fol. 295, v., col. 2. Cf. O'Donovan, *Annals Four Masters*, 1851, i., pp. 92-95; Keating, *History of Ireland*, ed. 1811, pp. 408-409.

IX.

Difference between the Legend of Cuchulainn on the one hand, and the Legends of Loegaire Liban and Crimthann Nia Nair on the other.

The legend of Loegaire Liban and that of Crimthann Nia Nair have this point in common, that the hero on returning from the mysterious land of mythic invention, cannot alight from his horse without exposing himself to certain misfortune. Such it seems is the common law. Yet Cuchulainn and his charioteer escape it. Cuchulainn and his charioteer—one might say even their chariot and horses, which the mode of warfare of the primitive Celts associated so inseparably with them—have something superhuman about them, and are in many respects exempt from the general laws to which the rest of nature is subject.

When Cuchulainn returns from the land of the gods with the goddess Fand, whom he has wedded, and Loeg, his chariot driver, who served as his guide, neither of them experience any ill effect from their journey thither. Likewise in the Homeric epos there is no change in Ulysses after he returns from the isle of Calypso. Cuchulainn, like Ulysses, passed to this mysterious country without having to pay the penalty of death. Loegaire and Crimthann, on the other hand, when they return, are but *revenants* in the mythic sense still ascribed to the word by popular imagination in France—*revenants*, that is to say, departed spirits who for a brief interval leave their new abode and return to earth again to see their friends and relatives. Fleeting shades, they cannot touch the earth without instantly perishing.

When Michael Comyn, bringing back Oisín from the land of eternal youth, makes him survive the fall from his horse, he merely takes a poet's licence, and confers on him a privilege which is contrary to Celtic tradition. Yet this tale, little more than a century old, contains the last echo of the earliest Celtic beliefs with regard to the immortality of the soul. The Celt believed that the soul survived after death, but it did not conceive of this soul without a new body, similar to the first; similar in certain respects only, for this new body, immortal in the land of the dead, cannot set foot upon the land of the living without incurring death.

CHAPTER XVI.—Conclusion.

- 1.—An important difference between Celtic and Greek Mythology.—
 2. The Mythological Triad in the Vedas and in Greece.—3. The Triad in Ireland.—4. The Triad in Gaul as recorded in Lucan : Teutates, Esus, and Taranis or Taranus.—5. The Gaulish God called by the Romans Mercury.—6. The Horned God and the Mythic Serpent in Gaul.—7. Celtic and Iranian Dualism.—8. Celtic Naturalism.

I.

An important difference between Celtic and Greek Mythology.

In several texts by Greek and Latin writers, and in numerous inscriptions found on the Continent and Great Britain, we come upon the names of Celtic divinities, some isolated, others associated with those of Græco-Latin divinities. Some scholars appear to expect as a result of Celtic research that it will provide us with an exact description of the attributes special to each of these divinities, and they look forward to the day when all the various legends respecting them will be brought together so as to form a connected whole, after the manner in which it has been done for Greek mythology. It is a vain hope.

Indeed, if the basis of Celtic mythology consists of a foundation of beliefs similar to that which has inspired the general character of Greek mythology, it has developed, especially from an artistic standpoint, in a manner altogether different, and it flourished amid surroundings that had neither a Homer nor a Pheidias. The poetic genius of Greece created for gods characters clearly distinct and vigorously sustained amid a multitude of details, and these are duplicates of each other, such as Phæton, Apollo, Heracles, three personifications of the sun. Sculpture and painting have given to these gods, originally identical, characters widely different, and distinguished from one another either in physical form, or in the various objects associated with them—vestments, arms, etc.

When Greek sculpture penetrated to Gaul, it attempted something of the same kind ; but all the subsisting monuments are posterior to the Roman conquest, and date from a time when the Gaulish religion was in complete decadence ; and with the exception of Lucian's reference to Ogmios, we have no text

relating to the religious movement which corresponded to this artistic period.

Ancient Irish literature embodies the mythic conceptions of the Celts at a much more primitive stage of civilisation. No one had then given to the creations of mythology the precise features which they obtained, when the arts of design, arriving at a certain degree of perfection, came to fashion for each divine name an anthropomorphic form distinct from that expressed by other names. The Irish bardic tales have not the æsthetic value of the Greek, or their Roman imitations. We do not see each god standing out with clearly drawn character, ever stable and uniform amid circumstances the most varied; that is a creation peculiar to the literary genius of Greece. In Irish as in Vedic mythology the lines representing a given divinity are often indecisive and vaguely drawn, sometimes such beings are distinct from each other, at other times they are confused with one another and appear as one.

Nothing, for instance, is more common in Ireland than the triad, that is to say, three divine names which at certain moments seem to designate so many distinct mythical beings, and which are elsewhere merely three nouns or adjectives expressing three different aspects of the same mythic personality.

II.

The Mythological Triad in the Vedas and in Greece.

In Vedic mythology, Varuna, the most ancient of the gods; Yama, the god of Death; Tvashtri, father of the supreme god Indra, are three forms expressing the same idea. Yama is the father of the divine race, and consequently of Indra; like Tvashtri (1), Varuna is also called god the father (2). Varuna is the god of Night (3), a variant of Death, which is the domain of Yama; he is vanquished and dethroned by Indra (4) his son, who elsewhere overthrows his father Tvashtri, and takes his life (5). Thus Yama, Varuna, and

(1) Bergaigne, *La Religion Védique*, i., p. 88.

(2) *Ibid.*, iii., p. 111.

(3) *Ibid.*, iii., pp. 116-121.

(4) *Ibid.*, pp. 142-148.

(5) *Ibid.*, pp. 58-6

Taitiu. The wife of the first was called Fotla; that of the second, Banba; and that of the third, Eriu. These three so-called wives, however, are simply three names for Ireland. There is only one wife, and as the triple spouse is reduced to unity, the three husbands also form but one (1).

Mac Cuill, Mac Cecht, and Mac Grene have their counterparts. In the "Dialogue of the Two Sages," one of the earliest documents recording them, we find their names written as Brian, Iuchar, and Uar. Like Mac Cuill, Mac Cecht, and Mac Grene, Brian, Iuchar, and Uar belong to the Tuatha De Danann race, and reign over it. They are the gods of knowledge, of art, and poetry. Brigit, their mother, is at once a goddess and a female *file*; she is the daughter of the Dadga or "good god," the supreme god, and high king of the Tuatha De Danann. His children, Brian, Iucha, and Uar have, therefore, the same grandfather as Mac Cuill, Mac Cecht, and Mac Grene (2).

The difference between Brian, Iuchar, and Uar is in name only; indeed, it may be said, the difference between two of them is merely apparent, for the third name is obtained by simply removing three letters from the second. A similar process has been adopted by those who wrote these names as Iucharba and Iuchair. Iuchair being merely an abridged form of Iucharba.

Brian and his two brethren or associates, sometimes known as Iuchar and Uar, sometimes as Iucharba and Iuchair, have on all points the same story. Together they slay the god Cein, elsewhere called Cian (3); and they are themselves slain together in the same spot by the god Lug (4). They are all

(1) Leabhar Gabhala, in Bk. of Leinster, p. 9, col. 2, lines 27-30; p. 10, col. 1, lines 35-39; *Flathiusa hEreann*, Bk. of Leins., p. 15, col. 1, lines 1-4; chronological poem of Gilla Coemain, Bk. of Leins., p. 12; col. 2, lines 7-10.

(2) Dialogue of the Two Sages, Bk. of Leins., p. 187, col. 3, lines 54, *seq.* Curiously enough, Bress their father is a Fomorian, and they belong, like their mother and their maternal grandfather, to the Tuatha De Danann race, the enemies of the Fomorians. We have already referred to Brian and his two brothers (*supra*, vii., 2).

(3) Poem of Flann Manistrech, Bk. of Leins., p. 11, col. 1, line 28.

(4) Bk. of Leins., p. 11, col. 2, lines 2-3. The lines of Flann Manistrech referred to here and in the preceding note, supplied the subject of the legend of Tuirell Biceo. This legend, which appears to date from the fifteenth century, was at a later date considerably enlarged, and is well known in Ireland as the *Aided Chloinne Tuirend*, or "Tragic Death of the Children of Tuirenn."

described in the same fashion—they all three have yellow hair, and are clothed in green mantles with reddish yellow tunics. They each carry a stout sharp-pointed spear. Each has an ivory-hilted sword. Their three shields are red in colour. The names of their three horses are different, but mean each the same thing—the “wind.” Their three foster-fathers are called Victory, Dignity, Protecting Might. The names of their three concubines are Peace, Pleasure, and Joy; those of their three queens, Beauty, Comeliness, and Charm. Their three palaces are named Fortune, Riches, and Open Hospitality (1). Finally, they beget an only son whose name, *Ecne*, means “knowledge, letters, poetry” (2).

Brian, Iuchar, and Iucharba belong to the mythological cycle. They have their counterpart in the cycle of Conchobar and Cuchulainn, and, despite certain historic appearances, their counterpart also belongs to mythology. We must recognise a mythological triad in the legend of Cothru, wedded at the one time to her three brothers. From this union is born an only son, Lugaid, who after becomes high king of Ireland. He has, strange to relate, two circular red lines on his skin; one round his neck, the other round his waist; they mark off the portions of his body wherein he resembles his three fathers. He resembled the first in his head, the second from that down to the waist, and the third in the lower part of his body. He wedded his mother, by whom he had a son who afterwards succeeded him upon the throne of Ireland (3).

The triad comes from using three synonyms to express the same mythic idea. The Irish have at times given proof of this. Thus, in one of the manuscripts of Cormac's Glossary, we read that the wife of the great god *Dadga* has three names—Falsehood, Deceit, and Shame (4). The *Dagda* himself, according to the same work, has three names: in addition to that just mentioned he is known as *Cera* and *Ruad-rofhessa* (5). We

(1) Bk. of Leins., p. 30, col. 3, lines 38, *seq.*

(2) Dialogue of the Two Sages, Bk. of Leins., p. 187, col. 3, lines 53-58. On *ecne* (*ate-gnio-n*), whose full form in old Irish *aithgne*, see Grammatica Celtica, 2nd ed., pp. 60, 869.

(3) *Flathiusa hErend*, Bk. of Leins., p. 23, col. 1, last line; col. 2, lines 1-3; *Aiaed Meidbe*, *ibid.*, p. 124, col. 2, lines 34 *seq.*; Keating, Hist., ed. 1811, p. 406. Cf. *supra*, xv., 8.

(4) Whitley Stokes, *Sanas Chormaic*, p. 90. Here the wife of Zeus is also a deceiver (*Iliad*, xv., 31, 33; xix., 97, 106, 112).

(5) Whitley Stokes, *Sanas Chormaic*, pp. 47, 144.

have no evidence that three gods were supposed in order to explain these three names. Though, for instance, of one only god, of god the father called by the Greeks Kronos, they made three in Ireland. This god, originally master of the world, and who, overcome by his son, became king of the dead, was in Ireland transformed into three gods; the first of them, king at the outset, was dethroned; the second was slain in battle by his grandson; the third, overcome and put to flight, was forced to take refuge in the land of the Dead, where he now reigns. The Irish call the first Bress, the second Balor, and the third Tethra; and these three names originally designated the same divinity.

IV.

The Triad in Gaul, according to Lucan: Teutates, Esus, Taranis or Taranus.

We meet with divine triads in Gaul also. To apprehend aright their full significance, one must at first determine to which of the two groups composing the Celtic pantheon they belong. The most celebrated of these divine triads worshipped in Gaul is that referred to by Lucan in his well-known lines, already quoted: the gods who form it are Teutates, Esus, Taranis or Taranus. They were gods of death and night, the evil parent gods, whom the Irish called Fomorians. They were honoured by human sacrifice (1), the object of which was to prevail upon this dread triad to accept the victim's soul in exchange for other more valued beings whose life was threatened (2). These dreadful immolations were especially made during war: captives were put to death, and their slaughter was a religious ceremony. The Gauls who settled in Asia introduced this barbarous custom there, and it was still in vogue among them in the first half of the second century before Christ (3). It obtained in Gaul long after this

(1) Lucan, *Pharsalia*, i., 444-446.

(2) "Qui sunt affecti gravioribus morbis quique in prælii periculisque versantur, aut pro victimis homines immolant aut se immolatos vovent administrisque ad ea sacrificia druidibus utuntur, quod, pro vita hominis nisi hominis vita reddatur, non posse deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur" (Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, vi., chap. 16, secs. 2, 3).

(3) "Cum . . . mactatas humanas hostias, immolatosque liberos suos audirent" (speech delivered before the senate by the Proconsul

date; it is referred to in Diodorus Siculus' description of Gaul, written about the year 44 B.C. Prisoners of war, he says, are sacrificed to the gods, and, along with the animals that have fallen into the victors' hands, they are burned, or put to death in some other manner (1). The Gauls followed the same custom during Cæsar's great war between the years 58 and 61 B.C. After recording the fact that they had a god identical, in his opinion, with the Roman Mars, Cæsar continues: "When they resolve on battle, they usually dedicate to this god all the spoil they hope to obtain; and after a victory they immolate everything that has life in his honour" (2).

Two inscriptions furnish us with the name of this Gaulish divinity whom Cæsar designates by the Roman name of Mars. One is a votive inscription to Mars *Toutatis*, found in Great Britain (3). The other, brought to light at Seckau in Styria, is inscribed to Mars *Latobius Harmogius Toutatis Sinatis Mogenius* (4). *Toutatis* or *Tetuates* is thus a god to whom the Gauls offered up their prisoners of war. It is one of the names

Cneius Manlius, in the year 187 B.C.; see Titus Livius, Bk. 38, chap. 47; cf. Diodorus Siculus, Bk. 31, chap. 13. The events here relate to the year 167 B.C.)

(1) Diodorus Siculus, v., chap. 32, sec. 6, ed. Didot, i. pp. 273-274.

(2) ". . . Martem bella regere. Huic, cum prælio dimicare constituerunt, ea, quæ bello ceperint, plerumque devovent: cum superaverunt, animalia capta immolant reliquasque res in unum locum conferunt" (Cæsar, De Bello Gallico, vi., chap. 17, secs. 2, 3).

(3) MARTI
TOUTATI

Inscription found at Rooky Wood, Hertfordshire. Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, vii., No. 84. This monument is now in the British Museum.

(4) MARTI
LATOBIO
HARMOGIO
TOVTATI
SINATI MOG
ENIO

Corpus Inscript. Lat., iii. 5320. M. Mowat, *Revue Epigraphique*, i. 123, reads TOVTATI with an I after the T. I prefer the reading of the Corpus Inscript. Lat., iii. 1163, col. 2; phonetically it is the only one tenable. *Ou*, in *Toutatis*, is a variant of *eu* in *Teutates*; *o* in *Totatigens* (Corpus, vi. 2407), *u* in *Tutatis*, cited by Mowat in the passage we are now examining, are justifiable variations (*Grammatica Celtica*, 2nd ed., p. 34); *Tioutatis* would be a monster. This disagreement on a point of detail in no way diminishes the high esteem I have on a host of other points for the work of the learned epigraphist, whose numerous discoveries have enlarged the field of Celtic studies.

or personifications of the parent god who reigned over the dead. They believed that by a special favour he could spare the Gaul whose days were threatened, if a substitute were sent into the other world to him, as, for instance, a captive offered up in sacrifice (1).

Taranis or Taranus, if we accept Mr. Mowat's correction (2), is a counterpart of Teutates or Toutatis. The derivation of his name clearly shows him to be a god of the thunderbolt: *taran* being the thunderbolt in Welsh, in Cornish, and Breton. Now, the god of the thunderbolt in Ireland is Balor, one of the three principal chiefs of the Fomorians. His eye, the evil eye, whose glance is deadly, is none other than the thunderbolt. Taranus has been regarded as identical with the Roman Jupiter. No doubt Jupiter's weapon is the thunderbolt; but as the Romans' religion was not dualistic like that of the Gauls, Jupiter adds to this subordinate attribute, certain fundamental qualities, good god, son-god, which make him altogether different from the Celtic Taranus. Jupiter is the son of Saturn or Kronos, and is the god of Day and Life. Like Balor, Taranus is the god of Death, father of the gods of Life (3). Hence it is that in Gaul, as Lucan informs us, human sacrifices were offered up to him.

Esus, of which another form *Æsus* has come down to us on a British coin (4), has been rightly placed by Lucan in the same triad, human sacrifice being offered to him also. The wood he is seen cutting in the Gallo-Roman bas-relief in the museum of Cluny was, doubtless, destined for the sacrificial altar. In the reign of Tiberius, 14 to 37 of the present era, which was about the time this work of art was executed, human sacrifice was no longer permitted in Gaul. But its suppression did not date very far back, for Dionysius of Halicarnassus still refers to it in the year 7 B.C., using the verb in the present tense. If the grim ceremony itself was no longer practised in

(1) The *Mars Belatu-Cadros*, "comely in slaughter," of Great Britain seems to be the same god under another name. *Corpus Inscript. Lat.*, vii., 318, 746, 885, 957.

(2) *Revue Epigraphique*, i., pp. 123-126. The hypothesis that these stems in *i* take *ou* in the genitive seems to me inadmissible. In my opinion, *Taranu-cnos* is an unsyntactic compound (*Gram. Celt.*, p. 234).

(3) The inscriptions "deo Taranu-cno" by the Gauls on the right bank of the Rhine (Brambach "*Corpus Inscript. Rhenarum*, 1589, 1812) are to a son of Taranus.

(4) A. de Barthélemy, in the *Revue Celtique*, i., p. 293, col. 1.

the reign of Tiberius, the ceremonial rites at least were still gone through; Pomponius Mela informs us that this was so in the time of Claudius, in the year 43 or 44 of the present era; the druids then no longer able to take human life, contented themselves with letting a few drops of blood from the body of some well-disposed persons (1).

V.

The Gaulish god whom the Romans called Mercury.

Teutates, Taranis or Taranus, and Esus are thus so many forms of the god of Death, father of the human race, called by Cæsar *Dis pater*. In Ireland, as we have pointed out, he has three names: Bress, Balor, and Tethra; he is the chief of the Fomorians. In the divine group upon whom they war, victory belongs to *Lug*, the more ancient form of whose name is *Lugus*. *Lug*, in Irish, means "warrior" (2). His most important achievement, indeed, is the slaying of Balor, the god of Death. It is *Lug* whom Cæsar identifies with the Roman Mercury, already confused at that period with the Greek Hermes. *Lug* resembles this Mercury-Hermes in that he is the god of the Arts and of Commerce. But between this affinity and absolute identity there is a great difference. We have already made a like observation with regard to the Roman Jupiter and the Gaulish Taranis or Taranus: the Roman mythographers starting with a firm belief in the reality of their own and strange gods, imagined that they had established the identity of two mythological beings when they had detected certain points of resemblance between them. It was in this way that the fusion of their mythology with that of the Greeks came about: by the adoption of this method they came to persuade themselves and the Romanised Gauls that their respective gods were identical. This doctrine was false. The Gaulish god whom Cæsar called Mercury was an original mythological conception, resembling

(1) See *Introd. Litt. Celtique*, p. 149.

(2) O'Davoren's Glossary, in Whitley Stokes' *Three Irish Glossaries*, p. 103. According to a celebrated passage in the pseudo Plutarch piece entitled, *De Fluviiis*, the first term of the compound *Lugu-dunum* meant "raven." The truth in all probability is that in the Gaulish legend to which this text refers, the appearance of a flock of birds was meant, and in the Gaulish belief these birds were a manifestation of the god *Lugus*.

Mercury-Hermes in certain particulars, differing from him in others; he is a warrior god, for instance.

The Gauls had other names for him besides Lugus: several of them being compounded of the root SMER, the meaning of which has not yet been determined (1). On a vase found at Sanxey, near Poitiers, is an inscription to DEO MERCVRIO ATVSMERIO. On the base of a statue of Mercury discovered at Meaux is inscribed DEO ADSMERIO (2). And on one of the Roman altars of Paris, preserved in the museum of Cluny, Mr. Mowat has deciphered the five letters SMERT. They begin the inscription, now defaced, over a bas-relief representing a personage about to strike at a serpent with a club (3). This is a counterpart of Lugus. The serpent is one of the forms of the Indo-European god of evil (4).

In the basin of the Rhine the god who is identified with the Roman Mercury often loses his Gallic name; but then he is accompanied by a goddess who has preserved it: this is *Rosmerta*, and *Ro-smer-ta* presents the same root as *Atu-smer-ius* or *Ad-smer-ius*, and the incomplete word *Smeri* . . . or *Smer-t* . . . (5).

VI.

The Horned God and the Mythic Serpent in Gaul.

The serpent on the altar in the museum of Cluny—that serpent whom the Celtic god identified with Mercury is about to strike with his club, and who is one of the personifications of the god of Evil—reappears on other monuments which have

(1) In Middle Irish, *smér* means "fire" (Whitley Stokes, *Sana's Chormaic*, p. 149). The Middle Irish word *sméroit*, "coal," appears to be derived from it. It is not known what was the origin of the long *e* in these words.

(2) Mowat, in the *Bulletin des Antiquaires de France*, 1882, p. 310.

(3) Mowat, in the *Bulletin Epigraphique de la Gaule*, i., p. 117.

(4) Bréal, *Mélanges de Mythologie et de Linguistique*, p. 96 seq.

(5) Charles Robert, *Epigraphie de la Moselle*, p. 65 seq. The male proper name *Smertu-litanus*, "broad as Smertus," in an inscription at Worms (Brambach, No. 901), is an evidence of the same cult, and the female Galatian name *Zmerto-mara*, "great as Smertos," attests that the Gauls had introduced this cult into Asia.

been recently made the subject of deep study (1). In most representations published up to the present, this serpent has a ram's head. He is represented as one of the attributes of Gaulish divinities on monuments found at Autun, Montluçon, Epinal, Vandœuvre (Indre), and La Guerche (Cher). One of the most curious of these is at Autun. The god is represented crouching, with three heads bearing horns; and two serpents with rams' heads form a sort of girdle for him.

His three heads remind us of the Gaulish triad—Teutates, Esus, and Taranis or Taranus, and the Irish triad—Bress, Balor, and Tethra. He has three horns. In Ireland, the father of Bress is called *Buar-aineach*, that is to say, "having the face of a cow" (2). The ram-headed serpents, on the other hand, are the goat-headed monsters, the *goborchind*, of Ireland (3). On the altar at Vandœuvre (Indre), the horned god, still crouching, is not three-headed; but he is accompanied by two other gods, standing, who complete the triad; and the two serpents, instead of serving as a girdle, are placed at the ends of the bas-relief.

The horned god, father of Bress, and consequently of his two doubles also—Balor and Tethra, is not in Gaul called "cow-faced," *Buar-aineach* in Irish: but *Cernunnos* (4). *Cernunnos*, in our opinion, is the first father, the elementary god of night and death; his horns are the crescent moon, queen of night. Teutates, Esus, Taranis or Taranus are his sons, or, in some sort, it may be said, his doubles. The name *Cernunnos* is inscribed on the third side of the altar, number 3, in the museum of Cluny; below, a horned human figure is clearly discernible. The lower part of the body is defaced, but, considering the height of the monument, it is certain this god was in a crouching attitude, like the two other horned gods on the altars of Autun and Vandœuvre (Indre). There is no serpent

(1) Alexandre Bertrand, *L'Autel de Saintes et les triades Gauloises*, in the *Rev. Archéologique*, June, July, August, 1880; *Les divinités Gauloises à attitude Boudhique*, *ibid.*, June, 1882.

(2) See *supra*, ix., 4.

(3) See *supra*, v., 3.

(4) The *TARVOS TRIGARANUS* in the Museum of Cluny is a double of *Cernunnos*. He corresponds to the bull of Geryon's herd in Greek mythology: by a phenomenon of popular etymology, Geryon or the triple-bodied bawler has been changed by the Gauls into three cranes; however, the Celtic stem *garano*, "crane," is, etymologically, almost identical with the Greek Geryon.

accompanying him; the sculptor has made two designs of this myth: after placing Cernunnos on the third side of the altar, he has represented the murder of the serpent on the fourth side.

In the Celtic doctrine, such as we find it in Ireland, the god of Death, after being slain by his grandson, continues to live and reign under a different name; the Gallo-Romans preferred another form of the myth. In the system of which the Paris bas-relief is representative, the god of dawn does not slay the god of night, his father; he merely slays the serpent who usually accompanies that redoubtable god. Moreover, though the Indo-Europeans habitually confuse night with storm, the serpent represents the storm and thunderbolt rather than night, and it is not a matter for astonishment if this distinction was noted in Gaul so early as the first century of the present era.

Indeed, we find examples of the horned god without the emblem of the serpent. Let us take, for instance, the bas-reliefs of Beaune and Rheims. The god of Rheims has a kind of bag in his hand, from which beech-nuts or acorns are falling in the direction of an ox and a stag placed beneath, who seem to be expecting them. The Irish pagans, it may be remembered, when they immolated their children to the great idol *Cromm Cruach*, the "bloody curb," expected corn and milk in exchange (1). This idol was nothing other than a huge image of the god of death. In return for innocent victims, the god was believed to give nourishment and life to his cruel worshippers.

VII.

Celtic and Iranian Dualism.

Thus, from the study of Irish mythology, we learn the fundamental points of that of the Continental Celts. The Celtic religion was based upon a belief in two principles, the first negative and evil, the second positive and good, yet sprung from the first; these two principles are hostile and at war with each other, like Ormazd and Ahriman in the religion of Iran. It would be wrong, however, to suppose that the origin of this dualism was Iranian, and to regard the druids as disciples of the magi. The word *devos*, in Irish *dia*, in Breton *doué*, is with the

(1) See *supra*, v., 7.

Celts, as in Vedic literature, the name of the beneficent gods, the son-gods opposed to the wicked parent god; it is not, as in Iranian literature, reserved exclusively for the hostile gods. The evil parent god, overcome by his son, has not, on the other hand, that absolutely perverse character which distinguishes the Ahriman of the Iranians. He continues to be one of the principal gods, *de[v]i*, and it is in his dominion that the dead find new life and happiness; the curious mixture of cruelty and paternity which distinguishes him, constitutes one of the strangest and most interesting aspects of the Celtic religion.

VIII.

Celtic Naturalism.

Along with this dualism the Irish pagans, by a somewhat striking contradiction, associated pantheistic beliefs, which are confirmed by a lengthy invocation, apparently the *debris* of an ancient ritual, and naturalistic doctrines which we also find in the opening portion of Hesiod's *Theogony*. In Hesiod, the earth and sky precede the gods, and give birth to them. In Ireland, the earth and sea and forces of nature seem for a moment, in the Book of Invasions, to be considered more powerful than the gods against whom they are invoked; it is they also that are called to witness in the taking of oaths (1).

What was the part played by pantheism and naturalism in the Celtic world?

Pantheism is a philosophical doctrine which probably never had more than a few adepts; but the cult of nature in her various aspects, the cult of mountains, forests, rivers, for instance, was more within the reach of the multitude. The Roman remains in Gaul have preserved several inscriptions to these subordinate divinities: to the god Vosge, for instance, *Vosegus* (2), who is none other than the group of mountains of that name; to the goddess Ardenne, *Arduinna*, whose name is in one inscription accompanied by two trees, and is that of a

(1) See *supra*, xi., 2, 3.

(2) Brambach, Corp. Inscrip. Rhenarum, No. 1784. Compare the inscriptions to the goddess *Abnoba* who is also a mountain, *ibid*, 1626, 1690; she is called *Diana Abnoba*, No. 1654, and *Deana Abnoba*, No. 1683.

well-known forest (1); to the goddess Seine, *Sequana*, whose cult appears to have been celebrated principally at the source of that river (2). We find the same idea in the third liturgical poem of Amairgen, which contains the three following invocations: "Fertile, fertile mountain! Wooded valley! Abundant river, abundant in water!" (3). This inferior cult was thus common to Ireland and Gaul alike. It is not peculiar to the Celtic race, however, for we find it in Greece and Rome. To the same category belongs the cult of cities, that, for instance, of the *dea Bibracte* among the Aeduans (4), and the fortress of Tara in Ireland (5).

But all these divinities hold but a subordinate place in the Celtic mind. The great gods are those whose desperate battles inspired the bardic tales which constitute the Irish mythological cycle. It was they, above all others, who received the homage of the faithful; for on them, their goodwill or their hatred, according to the Celts both of Great Britain and the Continent, depended the prosperity or misfortune of individuals, families, and peoples.

Such is the result we seem to arrive at on comparing the classic Greek and Latin texts concerning the Celtic religion with those other sources of information now open to us. First of all, I would speak of the inscriptions, constantly increasing in number, which for some years past the soil of what were once Gallic countries is daily disgorging for the investigation of scholars; then the sculptured monuments, for the most part unknown up to the present, and now brought together in considerable quantity through the zeal of M. Bertrand, and admirably arranged in the museum of Saint-Germain. Finally, the editions of Irish texts which we owe to the prolonged and

(1) In this inscription, No. 589 in Brambach, the name of the goddess is wrongly written *Arabinna*; the correct reading, with a *u* instead of a *b* in the second syllable, is preserved in an inscription at Rome, Corp. Inscript. Latinarum, vi., 46, and by an inscription of uncertain origin published by de Wal, *Mythologiæ Septentrionalis Monumenta Latina*, vol. I, xx. Compare the inscription *sex arboribus*, Orelli, 2108.

(2) De Wal, *Myth. Septen*, Mon. Lat. vol. I, cccxlii.

(3) See *supra*, xi., 3.

(4) Bulliot, *Revue Celtique*, i., 306. Cf. the inscriptions *deo Nemauso*, *deæ Noreiæ*, Orelli, 2032-2035.

(5) "Temair tor tuathach!" Third invocation of Amairgen (Bk. of Leinster, p. 13, col. 2, line 10.

eminently praiseworthy labours of O'Curry and O'Donovan, to the Royal Irish Academy, the learned Celtic scholars (1), and the eminent palæographer (2), who are, from our point of view, its chief distinction; and to Messrs. Whitley Stokes and Windisch, whom unjust attacks will not deprive of the honour of having, along with Mr. W. M. Hennessy, been the first to spread the knowledge of Irish epic literature on the Continent.

(1) I should be guilty of ingratitude if I did not record the help I have received from Professor Atkinson's introduction to the Bk. of Leinster.

(2) Mr. (afterwards Sir) John T. Gilbert.

THE END.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

p. 17. *Battle of Mag Itha*.—In the Eddic poem of the Voluspa, the Anses are made to meet in the Field of Ith, in the Golden Age to come:

“The Anses shall meet in the Field of Ith

And do judgments under the mighty Tree of the World.”

Vigfussen and Powell, *Corpus Poet. Bor.* ii. 628.

Cited by Rhys.

p. 27. *Fasting*.—On the practice of fasting in Ireland, see M. D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Revue Celtique*, vii. 245-249.

p. 32. The Story of Tuan Mac Cairill is edited with trans. by Kuno Meyer, *Voyage of Bran*. ii. Appendix A.

p. 51. *Fomore* or *Fomorians*.—Mr. Rhys, *Hibbert Lectures*, 592, points out that the word dwarf in Irish, *abac*, is the etymological equivalent of the Welsh *avanc*, the name of certain water inhabitants of a mythic nature. And the key to the compound *Fo-mori*, he finds in *fo-murib*, ‘under seas,’ the phrase used in the tale referred to by Whitley Stokes, *supra*, p. 53.

p. 60, note 2.—See Whitley Stokes' edition of the Tripartite Life, *Rolls Series*, 1887, p. 90.

p. 61, note 1. *Toissich*.—Monsieur D'Arbois' reading of *toissich* for *toirsech* is further borne out by the Bk. of Ballymote, Bk. of Lecan, and the Rennes, Dinnsenchas, which give *toisig*, *tosach*, and *toisich*, respectively. The versified Dinnsenchas of Mag Slecht in the Bk. of Leinster has been edited, with translation, by Kuno Meyer, *Voyage of Bran*, ii., Appendix B, 301 et seq.

p. 64, note 1.—The Rennes Dinnsenchas states that “until Patrick's advent he (Cromm Cruach) was the God of every folk that colonised Ireland.” *Rev. Celt.* xvi. 35.

p. 67. *Glass Tower*.—Compare the glass fort mentioned in Taliesin's poem, Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, ii. 265.

“Beyond Caer Wydyr (the Glass Fort) they saw not the

prowess of Arthur;

Three score Canhur stood on the wall,

Difficult was a conversats with its sentinels.”

p. 78.—*Lug*. Holder, *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, col. 345, gives *Lugu-s* gen. *Loga*, *Logo*, *Lugu* = **Lugov-os*, from which are named: *Lug(u)-beus*, *Lugu-adicus*, **Lugu-aidu*, *Lugu-den*, *Lugu-deus*, *Lugu-duno-n*, *Lugus-selva*, Pictish *Luchtren* (gen. sing.), Ogham *Trena-lugos*. Rhys identifies *Lug* with the Welsh *Llew*, older *Lleu*. *Lleu*, ‘light,’ is found in the compound *lleu-fer*, ‘a luminary, a light,’ *lleu-babir*, ‘a rush-light,’ occurring in a twelfth-cent. poem. Mr. Rhys supposes the Irish *Lug* to have had the same meaning.

p. 78, *Lugnasad*.—See also the Rennes Dinnsenchas, No. 99, Taltiu, *Rev. Celt.*, xvi, 51.

p. 83, *Dana* or *Dona*.—Rhys, *Hibb. Lect.*, 89, identifies *Dana*, *Danu* or *Donu*, with the Welsh goddess *Dôn*, one of whose sons was Govannon the smith, his name being etymologically equivalent to Goibniu, the smith of the Tuatha De Danann.

p. 88. *Nuadu*.—*Nodenti*, nom. *Nodens*, the Brythonic form of *Nuadu*, is equated by Rhys, H. L. p. 121, with the Welsh *Llúd Llawereint*, or *Llúd* of the Silver Hand, and with Welsh *Núd*. See also Holder, *Alt-Celt. Sprach.*, col. 754, who gives *Nōdons*, *Nōdens*, *Nūdens*, and various comparative forms.

p. 100. *Lug at Tara*.—M. D'Arbois De Jubainville has edited this incident from the Second Battle of Mag Tured with French translation, *Rev. Celt.* x. 238-243. In an earlier volume of the same Review (vii. 230-233), he draws an interesting parallel between this incident and one in an old Breton legend from the Vie de Saint Hervé, wherein a certain Hucan 'natif d'Hybernie,' supposed to be the devil in human form, professes himself 'a good carpenter, a mason, a locksmith, and a good pilot,' and adds, 'there is no craft that I am not master of.'

See also French Trans. of Second Battle of Mag Tured, *Épopée Celtique*, 393-448.

p. 109. *Echtra Condla*.—A French translation of this tale is contained in the *Épopée Celtique en Irlande*, 384-390. There is also an English version, by Rev. P. MacSwiney, in the *Gaelic Journal*, ii. 307. A further account of *Condla* in the land of the dead is to be found in the *Eachtra Teigue mac Cian*, O'Grady's *Silva Gadelica*, 392 et seq.

p. 110. On *Badb* or *Bodb* the wife of *Tethra*, see M. D'Arbois, *Civil. des Celtes et celle de l'Ép. Hom.*, pp. 198-200, where he shows that *Bodb* was known to the Gauls as *Bodua*, which forms the second term of the name of the goddess *Ath-bodua*.

p. 119. *Heracles and Geryon*.—With this might be compared the legend of *Curoi* stealing *Cuchulainn's* cows, which he had taken from *Eochaid Echbel*, the Horse-mouthed. See Rhys, *Hibb. Lect.*, p. 477.

p. 122. *Balor*.—The story of *Balor* and *MacKineely* is compared by Rhys with that of *Morann*, son of *Cairbre Cennchait*, or *Cat Head*, saved from drowning, after being thrown into the sea with his two monster brothers, and brought up as the son of *Moen* the Smith. *Cairbre* is the brother of *Moen*. *Cairbre* or *Corpre* (*supra*, 96), who brought about the downfall of the Fomorian *Bress*, is described as the son of *Etan*, and *Moen*, the seer, in the same tale, identical with *Moen* the Smith, is also the son of *Etan*. The identity of the two tales is further strengthened in Mr. Rhys' opinion by the similarity of the two names, *Cenn-chait*, 'Cat Head,' and *MacKineely*, *Macc Cinnghaoladh*, middle Irish, *Cenn-faelad*, 'Wolf-head.' *Hibb. Lect.*, 317.

Balor Balc-beimnech, 'Of the Mighty Blows,' has his counterpart in the Gaulish God *Sucellus*, or *Sucellos*, as represented with a mallet in his hand, in a bas-relief recently discovered near *Sarrebourg* (*Meurthe*). *Su-cellos* means 'good striker,' *su*, 'good,' and *cello*,

*kel-do-s, 'striker.' The female companion of Sucellos on this bas-relief, is called *Nantosvelta*. The theme *Nantos* is equivalent to *Net*, the Irish war god, and grandfather of Balor. See Salomon Reinach, *Rev. Celt.* xvii. 45 et seq.

p. 126. *Bile*.—Rhy's, *Hibb. Lect.* 90, identifies Bile, father of Mile, with the Beli of the Welsh Triads, usually called Beli the Great, son of Mynogan, the Bellinus of Nennius. Beli has for consort Dôn, whom he regards as the Irish Donu, or Danu. The root *Bel* he further identifies (p. 38) with A. Saxon *cwelan*, 'to die, to perish,' whence *cwellan* or *cwelian*, 'to slay or cause to perish,' represented by English word 'to kill.'... When Loeg in the *Serglige Conculaind*, describes to Cuchulainn his visit to Mag Mell, he says, 'I saw *bile buada*,' rendered by M. D'Arbois, *Épopée Celtique*, 'tree of victory,' but might also mean 'Bile of Victory.' See Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i. 219, line 19.

p. 126. *Miletu-marus*.—According to Ernault means 'great in destruction,' Irish *milliud*, same as *Belatu-mara*. See Holder, *Alt-Celt. Sprach.* col. 586.

p. 141. *Invocation of Nature*.—Cf. the Morrigan proclaiming the Battle of Mag Tured, and the mighty victory which had taken place, to the mountains and chief waters and river-mouths of Ireland. Second Battle of Mag Tured, ed. W. Stokes, *Rev. Celt.* xii. 109-111.

p. 144. *Nine Waves*.—Cf. Taliesin who exclaims that he was formed 'by the water of the ninth wave.' Skene, ii. 281.

p. 151. *Dagda*.—In the *Coir Anmann* (ed. Stokes, *Irische Texte* iii. pt. 2, p. 355), the following etymology is given of the name Dagda: "*Dagda*, that is, *dag dé*, 'fire of god.' He was a beautiful god of the heathen, for the Tuatha de Danann worshipped him: for he was an earth god to them because of the greatness of his (magical) power." In the account of the Second Battle of Mag Tured his name is explained as 'good hand.' For when the sorcerers and cupbearers of Nuadu had declared what they would do in the battle, the Dagda, whose former name was Eochu Ollathir (Bk. of Leins. 9b. 17), cried out, 'The power which ye boast, I shall yield it all myself.' Whereupon all exclaimed, 'Thou art the *good hand*, Dagdae,' and the name stuck to him ever after. See *Rev. Celt.* xii. p. 83.

p. 153. *Tumuli of Knowth, Dowth, and Newgrange referable to pre-Goidelic populations*.—Mr. George Coffey has shown that the carvings of the great tumulus at Newgrange belong unquestionably to the early Bronze Age. That monument cannot therefore be later than about 800 B.C., and is probably earlier, possibly as early as 1500 B.C. See *Journal Royal Society of Antiquaries, Ireland*, 5th series, vol. vi. (1896), p. 65. Montelius adopts the earlier date for Newgrange. *Der Orient und Europa*, p. 78.

p. 166 et seq. *Conception of Cuchulainn*.—The *Compert Conculaind* has been translated into French by M. Louis Duvau, *Rev. Celt.* ix. pp. 1-13. From this an English version has been made by Miss Hull, *Cuchullin Saga*, pp. 15-20. A German translation with introduction is contained in I'hurneyens's *Sagen aus dem alten Irland*, No. v. The

different forms of the legend are discussed at length by Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, ii. 39-47. In that of the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, the oldest version, Cuchulainn appears to be a re-birth of Lug. The child born in the mysterious palace (p. 168) grows up and dies, and as Dechtere, after the burial, drinks from a vessel, she swallows a little beast that was in it. Lug then appears to her, and informs her that he was the dead child she had reared, and now he was about to enter her womb and take the name of Setanta. The name, *Cu-culainn*, Hound of Culann, which he acquired afterwards, M. D'Arbois (*Rev. Celt.* xix. 245) regards as a comparatively modern invention, the legend of the smith's hound being a distorted version of the Homeric one of Heracles slaying the dog of Aides. In Old Irish the name would have been transposed to read *Culann-chú*. M. D'Arbois compares *dobar-chú*, 'water dog,' *mil-chú*, 'hare.' As for the name Setanta, he does not consider it an Irish word, but the derivative of an original Brythonic *Setantios*, 'one of the Setantii,' the *Σεταντίων λιμήν* of Ptolemy, the retention of the *nt* in the Irish word being only accountable for, in Rhys' opinion (H. L. 455), by its not being a native word.

p. 177. *Oengus and Etain*.—It is noteworthy that the *grianan* or sun-bower in which Oengus confines Etain, he carries constantly about with him, Etain being nourished on the fragrance and bloom of flowers (see Windisch, *I.T.* i. 130). With the incident of the wife of Etair swallowing Etain, compare that of Dechtere and Lug, note *supra*, also the magical birth of Conall Cernach brought about by his mother, Findchoem, swallowing a worm in a draught of water (*Coir Anmann, Irische Texte*, iii. pt. 2, 393), also the re-birth of Tuan mac Cairill, *supra* p. 32.

p. 183. *Serglige Conculaind*.—See French Translation by Dottin and D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Épopée Celt. en Irlande*, and German Trans. by R. Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alt. Irland*, No. x.

p. 187 *Magic Swine*.—Compare the swine of Iubhdan, King of the Lupracan, in the 'Adventures of Fergus mac Leide' (O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* p. 281), which, though killed every night, would within the watch come to life again.

p. 188. *Adventures of Cormac mac Airt*.—The Book of Ballymote version of this tale has been edited with trans. by Whitley Stokes, *Irische Texte*, iii. pt. 1. 211-216. It differs somewhat in detail from the summary given here.

p. 190. *Mongan*.—The *Combert Mongain* has been edited with trans. by Kuno Meyer, *Voyage of Bran*, i. App. 42 et seq.; also another story of the Conception of Mongan, and Dub Lacha's love for him, from the Book of Fermoy (*ibid.* 58-84). In the latter story Manannan is represented as making the covenant with Fiachna, who is doing battle with the King of Lochlann. He tells Fiachna that he will go in his shape to Caintigern, and a glorious child will be begotten by him, even Mongan Finn, son of Fiachna Finn.

In some verses ascribed to Muru of Fothain (*ob.* 650), Mongan is represented as coming from the 'flock-abounding' Land of Promise to converse with Colum Cille. Cited by Kuno Meyer, from MS. Laud 615, in V. of B. i. p. 88. The same scholar also quotes (*loc. cit.*) two

middle Irish poems in one of which we find Mongan, son of Fiachna, at the contest of shield-splitting with Conchobur, in Bendchur (Bangor); in the other his name is coupled with Manannan's, 'O Mongan, O Manannan, your wandering is not frequent in the land with living heart, *isin brug co m-beocradi*. See Thurneysen, *Irische Texte*, iii., 87 and 89.

The conception of Mongan is foretold by Manannan to Bran, son of Febal, as he meets him on the sea. He tells him that he, Manannan, will journey to the house of the woman in Line-mag, in the shape of a man, and of his progeny there will be in a short while a fair man in a body of white clay, whom Fiachna will acknowledge as his son, and who will be in the shape of every beast, both on sea and on land—a dragon, a wolf, a stag with horns of silver, a speckled salmon, a seal, a fair-white swan, until he is at last overcome by a son of error, and slain by a dragon-stone from the sea in the fight at Senlabor. See Kuno Meyer, *V. of Bran*, i., 24-27. Mongan was noted for his shape-shifting powers. See tale of the Two Swineherds.

p. 193, note, *Airgtech*.—This suggestion as to the meaning of *Airgtech* is confirmed by the *Coir Anmann*, which explains Fothad *Airgtech* as "'the moneyed,' because it is wealth that was dearest to him, for thence was his champion's bracelet, and his two rings, and his necklace of gold, and his hound, and his horse." Stokes, *Irische Texte*, iii., pt. 2, 379.

p. 194. *Mongan and Find*.—This story of the identification of Mongan with Find mac Cumail has been edited with translation by Kuno Meyer, *Voyage of Bran*, i., 45-52.

p. 205. Compare the incident of Nechtan, son of Collbran, in the *Voyage of Bran*, who leaps from out the coracle on its return to Ireland, and immediately on touching the earth becomes a heap of ashes, as though he had lain in it for many hundreds of years. Ed. K. Meyer, p. 32. The prohibition to alight from horseback, as Mr. Nutt points out, is of relatively recent origin. The Irish in the oldest MSS. always using chariots as a means of locomotion. Another version of the legend of Loegaire Liban, from Bk. of Lismore, omitting the verse portions, is contained in O'Grady's *Silva Gadelica*, p. 220. M. D'Arbois has rendered the third verse of quatrain 4, p. 204, 'nous en avons apporté la plainte que chante Maer.' I have ventured to alter 'Maer' to 'the sea,' regarding it as a possible misprint for 'Mer,' the word in the original (Bk. of Leinster, p. 276, line 18), being *muir*.

p. 215. *Esus, a God of the Dead*.—M. D'Arbois de Jubainville, puts forward quite a different view of Esus, in an article entitled *Esus, Tarvos Trigaranus*, *Rev. Celt.* xix., 245-247, in which he discusses the legend of Cuchulainn in Gaul and in Great Britain. He there proclaims the identity of Esus, not with the Dis Pater of Cæsar, but with Cuchulainn, the son of Lug, or *Lugus*; the wood-cutter in the *Paris bas-relief* being none other than Cuchulainn, represented in the act of cutting down the tree with which, in the *Tain Bo Cuailgne*, he arrests the passage of the army of Medb. The bull surmounted by three cranes, and the inscription *Tarvos Trigaranus*, is the divine animal, the cause of the war. The three cranes are the triple divinity of the war, which, according to the tale, come to warn the Bull of impending danger. The Goddess of War

in Ireland has three names: *Morrighu*, *Bodb*, *Macha*, sometimes appearing as one being, sometimes as three beings. The Morrighu comes in the form of a bird, *in deilb euin*, and counsels the Bull to flee. In the Paris altar three birds are represented. The Bull, or Donn of Cuailgne, was, M. D'Arbois thinks, also known in Gaul by the primitive form of the name, *Donnos*, which has come down in the compound *Donno-taurus* for *Donno-tarvos*, the surname of a Roman citizen, princeps of the city of the Helvii, dead in 52, B.C. See Salomon Reinach, on *Teutates, Esus, Taranis*, *Rev. Celt.* xviii., 138-149, and on *Tarvos Trigaranus*, *ibid* xviii. 254-266.

p. 217. *Smert*.—M. D'Arbois de Jubainville, in the *Rev. Celt.*, xx' 369, thinks that this man with club, and the superscription SMERT, is probably Cuchulainn attacking the Morrigan in the form of a serpent. Cuchulainn having been reproached by Medb's women for being a beardless youth (see Miss Hull's *Cuch. Saga*. p. 165), is advised by them to bedaub himself with the semblance of a beard, which he does, 'bá hassu dó ulcha smerthain do denam laiss, conid gnid-soma-ni-sin. Leabhar na hUidhre, p. 74, col. 2, 35-37. *Smerthain* according to M. D'Arbois, is the infin. of *smérainn*, 'I put on,' and this explains the superscription *Smert[ull]os*, see Corp. Inscript. Lat. xiii. This supposes that Cuchulainn and the war of the Bull of Cuailgne were known in Gaul. See above note.

p. 218. *Cernunnos*.—Rhys, Hibb. Lect. 94, regards Cernunnos as the counterpart of the Welsh Brân son of Llyr, and M. D'Arbois, *Rev. Celt.*, xx. 375, identifies him, as we see him on the altar here referred to, with the Irish hero Conall Cernach (*supra*, 166). The Irish believed *cern* to mean 'victory,' but M. D'Arbois thinks this is but a secondary sense of the word, whose real meaning is 'horned.'

ibid. Serpents.—Compare the two twi-headed serpents which Loeg, in the Serglige Conculaind, sees on the Plain of Mag Denna. Windisch, *Irische Texte*, i. p. 219.

R. I. B.

INDEX.

—:O:—

- ABCAN, SON OF BECELMAS,** [99](#).
Aboriginies, the, [164](#).
Abraham, [23](#).
Achelous, [8](#).
Achill Island, [43](#).
Achilles, [68](#).
Acorns, [219](#).
Acrisios, king of Argos, [116-119](#),
[122](#).
Adam, [37](#), [171](#).
Adoration, the Plain of, [60](#), [61](#), [63](#).
Adsmarius, the god, [217](#).
Aedilfrid, king of the Northumbrians,
[189](#), [190](#).
Aed Slane, king of Ireland, [144](#).
Aenach Carmain, [4](#).
Æneas, [164](#).
Æschylus, [114](#), [116](#).
Æsus, [82](#), [215](#).
Agamemnon, [62](#).
Age of Gold, the, [112](#). (*See Golden
Race*).
Agnomán, father of Nemed, [29](#), [42](#),
[50](#).
Ahi, [56](#).
Ahriman, [9](#), [220](#).
Ai, Plain of, [201](#).
Aidan mac Gabrain, [189](#), [190](#).
Ailech, [8](#), [132](#).
Aiill, king of Connaught, [71](#), [72](#),
[161](#), [162](#), [168](#).
Ain, daughter of Partholon, [19](#), [20](#).
Air, [141](#).
Aja Ekapad, [17](#).
Alaunus (*Mercurius*), [xi](#).
Alcmene, [165](#).
Alcuin, [128](#).
Ale, [170](#), [174](#), [180](#), [203](#), [204](#).
Ale of Goibniu, the, or of the gods,
[155](#), [157](#).
Alexander Polyhistor, [196](#).
Amairgen Glungel, [136-147](#), [221](#).
Ambrosia, [174](#).
Amphitryon, [165](#).
Anak, [53](#).
Angel, guardian, [157](#).
Annals of the Four Masters, the,
[39](#). *See Four Masters*.
Annals of Cambria, [189](#).
Annenn, son of Nemed, [51](#).
Antrim, [192](#).
Aphrodite, [105](#).
Apollo, xi., xii., [21](#), [56](#), [208](#).
Araxus, the river, [46](#).
Ard-ladran, [41](#).
Ardleinnacht, [149](#).
Arduinna, the goddess, [220](#).
Ares, [105](#). *See Mars*.
Argeiphontes, [113](#).
Arges, [122](#), [210](#).
Argos, city, [116](#).
Argos or Argus, [113](#), [114](#).
Aristotle, [199](#).
Arm-rings, [193](#).
Arrows, poisoned, [149](#).
Artemis, [21](#).
Arthur, [184](#).
Arthur, son of Bicur, [191](#).
Aryans, the, [73](#).
Assemblies, Public, in Ireland, [3](#),
[171](#).
Asura, [8](#).
Atalat, 'they die,' [126](#).
Athena, [68](#).
Athens, [114](#).
Atlantic, the, [10](#).
Attica, [8](#).
Atusmerius (*deus Mercurius*), [xi](#),
[217](#).
Augustus, the Emperor, [46](#), [78](#).
Augustine, Saint, [190](#), [193](#).
Autun, [218](#).
Avallon, Isle of, [184](#).

- BABEL, 22.**
Badbna, 57.
Balor Balbeimnech, chief of the Fomorians, 9, 63, 77, 97-99, 103-105, 111-123, 126, 165, 169, 171, 213, 215, 216, 218.
Balor Beimean, 117-122. See Balor.
Baltic, the, 49.
Banba, 88, 133, 143, 211.
Banshee, the, 120.
Bar, 'sea,' 14.
Barque of Glass, 67, 108.
Bartholomew, Saint, 14.
Battles, Mythological, 8, 17, 18, 56, 57, 64-66, 68, 69, 101-108, 146, 147, 221.
Báth, 14, 22.
Beaune, 219.
Beech-nuts, 219.
Bede, the Venerable, 22, 23, 189.
Belach Conglas, 65.
Belatucadros (Mars), xii., 215.
Belenus (Apollo), xii.
Beliasma (Minerva), xii.
Bellerophon, 55, 56, 115.
Bellerophontes, 115, 116.
Bellers, 115.
Beltene or Beltine, 8, 21, 89, 101, 186.
Beothach, 31.
Bethach, 65.
Bibracte (Dea), 221.
Bile, father of Mile, 126, 128, 129, 134.
Birds, 109, 110, 162, 166, 167, 182, 216.
Bith, son of Noah, 38, 40-42.
Black Sea, the, 49.
Blathmach, King of Ireland, son of Aed Slane, 144, 166.
Blest, the Isles of the, 9, 11, 15, 129.
Boann, wife of the Dagda, 152, 159-161.
Boar, the, 107.
Bochra, son of Lamech and father of Fintan, 43, 46.
Bodb, king of the Munster Side, 160, 161.
Bodb Dearg, 156.
Bolg, 'leathern bag,' 76.
Bona Dea, 163, 164.
Book of Conquests or Invasions, the (Leabhar Gabhala), xv., 12, 23, 49, 51-53, 66, 97, 124, 128, 129, 144, 151, 220.
Boyne, river, 65, 146, 152, 153, 158, 193.
Bracelets of Silver, 193.
Bragance, 130.
Bran, son of Febal, 182-184.
Branches, Marvellous, 183, 185-188. See Trees.
Breas, 90-92, 94.
Bregleith, 176, 178, 180, 182.
Bregon, 129, 131, 134.
Brennos, 83, 84.
Bress mac Eladan, the Fomorian, king of Ireland, 9, 82, 87, 88, 94-97, 99, 102, 103, 111, 114, 173, 211, 213, 216, 218.
Bress, father of Lugaid, 206.
Brian, son of Dana, 81-84, 100, 211, 212.
Briareos, 123.
Bricriu, the Quarreller, 166, 167.
Brigantia, the goddess, 82.
Brigantia, city of Spain, 130.
Brigindo, the goddess, 82, 83.
Brigit, the goddess, 81-83, 102, 103, 211.
Brigit, Saint, 82.
Britain, 130. See Great Britain.
Britan, 65.
Britons or British, the, 66, 75, 148, 191.
Brontes, 122, 210.
Bronze Race, the, 5-7, 25, 26, 69, 70.
Brug Maic ind Oc, 152-158.
Brug na Boinne, 152-158, 163.
Buar-ainech, 114, 218.
Buddhic Attitude, the, 218.
Buide Conaill, 167.
Bull. See Buar-ainech.
Butter, 174, 175.
CACUS, 119, 120.
Cadmus, 6, 68.
Caer, daughter of Ethal Anbual, 161-163, 176.
Cæsar, xi.-xiii., 62, 100, 171, 198, 199, 216.
Caillin, Saint, 46.
Cailte, 191, 192-195, 199.
Cain, 62.

- Calypso, daughter of Atlas, 68, 207.
 Camulus (*Mars*) xii.
 Canaan, 53.
 Caragh, river, 192.
 Carell, 27, 32.
 Carlingford Loch, 193.
 Caspian Sea, the, 49-50.
 Catalogues of Irish Epic Literature,
 the, 1, 2.
 Caturix (*Mars*), xii.
 Celtchar, son of Uithechar, 166.
 Cemetery of Brug na Boinne, the,
152-154.
Cenn Cruach, 60-64.
 Cennfaelad, Archbishop of Armagh,
44.
 Cera, 212.
 Cermait, 210.
 Cernunnos, 218, 219.
 Cessair, xv., 36-43, 47.
 Cetnen, 124.
 Chains, Silver, 110, 162.
 ——— Gold, 162.
 Chariots, 162, 166, 168, 183, 198,
206, 207.
 Charites, 210.
 Charlemagne, 128.
 Chase, the, 166.
 Chess, 28, 178, 179, 181, 203, 206.
 Chess-board, 178, 179.
 Chimera, the, 54, 55, 115, 116.
Chronicum Scotorum, 88, 89, 42,
128.
 Cian, father of Lug, 98, 211.
 Cicero, xii.
 Cichol Gri-cen-chos, 17.
Cill Eithne, 158.
 Cimbaed, son of Fintan, 125.
 Cinaed hua Artacain, 152.
Cin dromma Snechta, 38.
 Cities, deification of, 221.
 Claude, Emperor, 216.
 Clement, Irish grammarian, 128.
 Clogh-an-Neely, the, 121.
 Clothru, mother of Lugaid, 206, 212.
 Cloud, magical, 90.
 Club, 217.
 Cluny, Museum of, 217, 218.
 Cnamros, 57.
 Coffin, stone, 193, 194.
 Collar of silver, 193.
 Colman, son of hua Cluasaig, 144,
145, 167.
 Columba, Saint, or Colum Cille, 26,
32, 33, 77, 87, 93, 99.
 Colum Cnaellemeach, 99.
 Comyn, Michael, 205-207.
 Conaire, High King of Ireland, 182.
 Conall Cernach, 166, 167.
 Conaun, son of Febar, 8, 48, 57-
69, 76, 117, 129.
 Conchobar, king of Ulster, 2, 3, 109,
125, 163, 166-168, 171, 176,
183, 201, 212.
 Connaught, 71, 90, 93, 149, 161,
162, 201, 204.
 Conn Cetchathach, 169, 171, 185.
 Connla, son of Conn, 67, 108.
 Corco Duibne, 41, 181.
 Cormac mac Airt, 46, 185-189.
 ——— Glossary of, 212.
 Corn, 58, 152, 163, 219.
 Corpse, the *file*, son of Etan, 96, 97,
111.
 Corsica, 46.
 Cows, 95.
 Cows, Mythological, 114, 118-120,
156, 187, 218.
 Cranes, Three, 218.
 Creidne, 95, 100-103, 173.
 Crescent, the Moon's, 59, 218.
 Crete, island, 58.
 Crimthann Cas, king of Connaught,
201, 204.
 Crimthann Nia Nair, High King of
 Ireland, 153, 201, 206.
 Crimthann Sciathbel, 149.
 Crom Conaill, 167.
 Cromm Cruach, 59-64, 219.
 Crow or Raven, the, 110, 216.
 Crouching Gods, 218.
 Cruachan, 153, 162.
 Cruithnich, or Picts, 4, 7, 149.
 Cuan hua Lothchain, 77, 78.
 Cuchulainn, 2, 71, 72, 109, 110, 125,
163, 165, 168, 169, 176, 183-
184, 201, 207, 212.
 Cuil Cesra, 42.
Cumal, 177.
 Cup, magic, 188.
 Curcog, daughter of Manannan,
157.
 Cycle, the Irish Mythological, 4-9.
 Cycles, the Irish Epic, 2, 3.
 Cyclops, the, 122, 123, 153, 210.
 Cyrene, 11.

DAGAN, 151. See *Dagda*.
 Dagda, the, 9, 72, 82, 98-100, 102,
103, 107, 108, 123-125, 131,
150-165, 172, 173, 210, 212.
 Dana, mother of the Tuatha De
 Danann, 81-83.
 Danae, 116-118, 120.
 Danes, the, 72.
 Danube, the, 126.
 Dasyu, 73, 98.
 Dawn, the, 113, 115, 219.
 Day, 141.
 Death, 9, 18, 20, 64, 67-69, 126, 127,
130, 131, 179, 199-201. See
 Spain, Fomorians.
 Debts, after death, 198.
 Dechtere, 165, 166, 168, 171.
 Dee Donand, 81, 82.
 Dee, river, 193.
 Degsa Stan, 189, 190.
 Dei Dana, 81, 82.
 Dei Danann, 84.
 Delbaeth, 82, 124.
 Delphi, 83, 84.
 Demons, 80, 106, 142, 219.
 Der Grene, daughter of Fiachna,
203, 204.
 Deucalion, 8.
 Deva, 8, 9.
 Devos, 219, 220.
 Dia, 219.
 Diana, Scythian, 62.
 Diancecht, 95, 98, 100, 173, 174.
 Diarmait, king of Ireland, son of
 Aed Slane, 144, 166.
 Diarmait, king of Ireland, son of
 Ceball, 26, 42, 44, 46.
 Dingle Bay, 192.
 Dinnsenchus, 60, 61.
 Diodorus Siculus, 197, 214.
 Diomedes, 105.
 Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 215.
 Dis Pater, 58, 126, 127, 216.
 Ditches, 166.
 Divitiacus, 127.
 Dodona, 8.
 Domna, the gods of, 72, 73, 97.
 See Fomorians.
 Domna, the Men of. See *Fir Dom-*
nann.
 Dona, mother of the Tuatha De
 Danann, 81, 83. See *Dana*.
 Dond mac Nera, 202.

Donegore, 192.
 Doué, 219.
 Dowry, 177.
 Dowth, the tumulus at, 153.
 Dragon, 55.
 Druids, the, 99, 118, 120, 144, 145,
147, 148, 170, 182, 184.
 Druim Cain, 144.
 Duaid mac Fírbis, 72, 93.
 Dualism, 219, 220.
 Dub, the Fomorian, 101.
 Dubtar in Leinster, 191.
 Dun Maige Mell, 202, 203, 205.
 Dun na mbarc, 41.
 Dun tulcha, 44.
 Dwarfs, 52.
 EARTH, THE MOTHER OF
 THE TITANS, 133.
 Eber Dond, son of Mile, 143-145,
147.
 Eber Find, son of Mile, 63, 147.
 Echu Buadach, 125.
 Ecne, 82, 212.
 Egypt, 22, 127, 128.
 Egyptians, 127, 128.
 Eithne, daughter of the steward
 Elemar, 157, 158.
 Elada, 172.
 Elemar, 156.
 Eli, judge of Israel, 23, 24.
 Elloth, 73.
 Elysium, 11.
 Emer, 183, 184.
 En, son of Ethoman, 99.
 Enloch, 201.
 Ennosigaios, 210.
 Eochaid Airem, 154, 177-182.
 Eochaid, son of Sal Sreta, 202.
 Eochaid hua Flainn, 13, 16, 17, 20,
21, 23, 38, 57, 66, 80, 86, 98, 129.
 Eochaid mac Duach, 76, 78.
 Eochaid mac Eirc, 76-78, 92, 93,
99.
 Ephorus, 199, 200.
Épil, 'he dies,' 126.
 Epinal, 218.
 Erebus, 10.
 Eremon, son of Mile, 63, 147, 149,
157.
 Erglann, 64.
 Eris, 43.
 Eriu, 38, 131, 143, 146, 211

- Esru, 22.
 Esus, 213, 215, 216, 218.
 Etain, wife of Eochaid Airem, 154, 176-182, 196.
 Etair, 177.
 Etan, mother of Corpre, 96, 173.
 Ethal Anbual, 161, 162.
 Ethne, Ethnea, or Ethniu, daughter of Balor, and mother of Lug, 98, 112, 118, 120-122, 124, 169, 170.
 Ethne Ingubai, 183, 184.
 Evander, 164.
 Evening, winter, 130, 131.
 Evil Eye, 115, 118.
 Eye, Balor's, 118, 121.
 FAIRIES, 40, 120. See *Sids*.
 Fairs, of Ireland the, 3, 78.
 Fand, daughter of Aed Abrat, 183.
 Fauna, 164.
 Faunus, 164.
 Feast of Goibniu, the, 156, 174.
 Feasts, Irish, 96.
 Fene, 22, 97, 128.
 Fenius Farsaid, 22, 50, 128.
 Fer, son of Partholon, 19, 20.
 Fercertne, 109.
 Ferdiad, 71.
 Fergnia, son of Partholon, 19, 20.
 Fergus Leth-derg, 64, 65.
 Fergus mac Roig, 166.
Fer leigind, 144.
Feth fiada, 156.
 Fiachach Findgil, son of Delbaeth, 124.
 Fiachna, son of Delbaeth, 124.
 Fiachna, son of Reta, 202-205.
 Fiachna Lurgan, 189-191, 194.
 Fial, wife of Lugaid, 143.
 Fidchell, 78. See Chess.
 Fidga, Men of, 149.
File, 3, 137-139.
 Find mac Cumail, 3, 191-197.
 Finnen, Saint, 26-28, 31-33.
 Fintan, son of Bochra, 36-47, 89.
 Fir-Bolg, the, 7, 30, 33, 43, 44, 66, 69-93, 97, 99, 148, 173.
 Fir-Domnann, the, 30, 33, 43, 69-93, 97, 148.
Fir-Fidga, the, 149.
 Flann Manistrech, 73, 85, 86, 98, 101, 104, 124, 150, 151, 211.
 Fomorians, the, 8, 9, 17, 18, 50-69, 72-75, 77, 81, 93-123, 160, 201, 211, 213-216.
Forbais fer Fidga, 149.
 Forests, deification of, 141, 142, 220, 221.
 Forgoll, the *file*, 191-193.
 Fors, son of Electra, 46.
 Fothad Airttech, 191, 193, 194.
 Fotla, 131, 143, 211.
 Four Masters, the, 123, 163, 191.
 Fuamnach, 119.
 Funeral Ceremonies, Celtic, 198.
 GABAIL INT SHIDA, 150-152, 154.
 Gæsum, 107.
 Galioin, or Galiuin, the, 30, 33, 43, 69-94, 97, 148.
Garano, 'crane,' 218.
 Gaul, xi., xiii., xv., 15, 82, 107, 130, 147, 148, 213-220.
 Gauls, the, 58, 83, 84, 147, 148, 214.
 Gauls, the Asiatic, 213.
 Gavida, 119, 122.
 Genealogy, 178.
Genesis, 34.
 Gend, 56.
 Geryon, 119, 210, 218.
 Giants, 52, 54.
 Gilla Coemain, 71, 74, 75, 93, 95, 98, 112, 113, 123-125, 150, 151, 163, 211.
 Giraldus Cambrensis, 12, 34, 39.
 Glas Gaivlen, 119.
 Glass, Barque, or Ship of, 67, 108.
 Glass, Tower of, 67.
 Glossary, Cormac's, 212.
 Glungel, 136. See Amairgen.
 Goat, 54, 55, 114, 218.
Gobor-chind, 54, 114, 218.
 Gods, Horned, 56, 58, 59, 114, 217-219.
 — three-headed, 218.
 — of Death and Night. See Fomorians.
 — of Day, Life, Light. See Tuatha de Danann.
 Goibniu, 101, 102, 103, 156, 174, 175.
 Goidel Glas, 22, 50.
 Goidels, the, 71, 73, 81, 97, 126, 128, 153.
 Gold Mines, 112.

- Golden Age, the. *See* Golden Race.
 Golden Race, the, 5-7, 25, 26, 69, 70.
 Goll mac Duilib, 202.
 Gomer, son of Japhet, 22, 49, 50, 90.
 Graces, the, 210.
 Graicos, 15.
 Grannus (*Apollo*), xi., xii.
 Great Britain, 4, 7, 23, 24, 75, 82, 130.
 Great Land, the, 179, 180.
 Great Plain, the, 179.
 Greece, 7, 8, 69, 75, 83, 221.
 Greeks, the, 83, 84, 113, 153.
 Greek Mythology, 5-14, 25, 26, 54, 55, 67-70, 111-123, 132-135, 165, 207-210.
 Grian-ainech, surname of Ogma, 132, 172.
 Gyes, 123.

HADES, 10, 11, 68, 138.
 Harlem, Sea of, 200.
 Harp, 107, 108, 159.
 Harpist, 92.
 Hecateus of Miletus, 148.
 Hedges, 166.
 Helen, 6.
 Hellen, 133.
 Hephaistos, 175.
 Hera, or Here, 54, 55, 133.
 Heracles, or Hercules, 55, 56, 68, 107, 119, 135, 165, 208.
 Hercules, Columns of, 128.
 Hermes, 112, 113, 115, 122, 165, 216.
 Hesiod, 5-7, 9, 10, 15, 21, 25, 70, 111, 116, 134, 220.
 Hispania, 16.
 Holland, 199, 200.
 Homer, 116, 208. *See* *Iliad*, *Odyssey*.
 Horned Gods, 56, 58, 59, 114, 217-219.
 Horns, drinking, 202-204.
 Horses of Gaulish Chiefs, the, 198, cf. 207.
 Horse Races, 78.
 Hungary, 126.
 Hydra of Lerna, 55.

IAIN, DAUGHTER OF PAR-THOLON, 19, 20.
 Iapetos, 133, 134.
 Iarboneil, 31, 80.
Iliad, the, 10, 11, 113, 133, 147.
 Immortality of the Gods, the, 153, 155.
 Immortality of the Soul, the, 179, 180, 195-207.
 Inber Scene, 21, 23, 136.
 Incantations of Saint Gall, the, 173-175.
 Indech, the Fomorian, son of the god of Domna, 73, 86, 97, 99, 104.
 India, 158.
 Indra, 9, 12, 209.
 Inundations, Mythological, 8.
 Iolaus, 55.
 Iphigenia, 62.
 Iranians, 8, 9, 220.
 Israel, 127.
 Italy, 84.
 Ith, son of Bregon, 129-135.
 Iuchar, son of Dana, 81, 82, 211.
 Iuchar, son of Dana, *same as above*, 81, 82, 100, 211, 212.
 Iucharba, son of Dana, 82, 100, 211, 212.

JAPHET, SON OF NOAH, 22, 46.
 Jerome, Saint, 22, 24, 40, 87.
 Joannes Scotus, surnamed Erigena, 139, 140.
 Jupiter, xi.-xiv., 106, 215, 116.

KEATING, 13, 40, 58, 163.
 Kenmare, river, 21.
 Knowth, 153.
 Kottos, 123.
 Kronos, 5, 6, 9-11, 15, 67, 100, 111-113, 129, 133, 134, 210, 213, 215.

LABRINNE, RIVER, 192. *See* Caragh.
 LADRU, 41, 42.
 La Guerche (Cher), 218.
 Lakes, deification of, 141, 142.
 Land, deification of, 141, 142.
 Land, division of, 166.
 Land of Promise, the, 185.
 Land, the Promised, 187.
 Laon, 171.
 Larne, river, 192, 193.
 Latona, 21.

- Leabhar Gabhala*. See Book of Conquests.
- Leabhar, na hUidhre*, 52.
- Leinster, 71.
- Ler, 182.
- Lerna, the Hydra of, 55.
- Lestrygons, the, 54.
- Leyden, 171.
- Lidney, 88.
- Liffey, river, 193.
- Lightning, the, 210. See Evil Eye.
- Lion, the, 107.
- Loch Rudraige, 17.
- Loeg, Cuchulainn's Charioteer, 184, 207.
- Loegaire, King of Ireland, 141.
- Loegaire Liban, 201-205, 207.
- Lothur, father of Lugaid, 206.
- Lough Erne, 8.
- Lough Neagh, 8.
- Lucan, 61, 62, 198, 213, 215.
- Luchrúpan*, 53.
- Luchta, son of Luchaid, 99.
- Luchtime, 101-103.
- Lucian, 99, 107, 208.
- Lucretius, xii.
- Lug, the god, 77, 78, 86, 98-101, 103, 105, 107, 108, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 122-125, 152, 153, 155, 161-172, 211, 216.
- Lugaid, son of Ith, 143.
- Lugaid Sriab-derg, High King of Ireland, 206, 212.
- Lugidunum, 171.
- Lug-mag, 172.
- Lugnasad*, 3, 78.
- Lugudunum, 79, 171, 172, 216.
- Luguavallum, 172.
- Lyons, 79, 100, 171.
- MAC CECHT, 124, 131, 132, 144.
- Mac Cethnenn, or Macc Ethnenn, 124.
- Mac Cuill, 124, 131, 132, 144.
- Mac Grene, 124, 131, 132, 144, 210, 211.
- Mac ind Oc, or Mac Oc, 152-163. See Oengus.
- Mac Kineely, 119-122.
- Mac Lonan, 110.
- Mac Samthain, 119.
- Mag Bile (Moville), 27.
- Mag Cetue, 57, 58.
- Magic, 161.
- Mag Itha, 8, 17, 132.
- Mag Mar, 15. See *Mag Mor*.
- Mag Meld, or Mag Mell, 15, 48, 203-205.
- Mag Mor, 48, 77, 99.
- Magog, son of Japhet, 22, 50, 190.
- Mag Rein, 90.
- Mag Slechta, 60, 61, 63.
- Mag-Tured, or Moytura, the Battles of, 8, 9, 44, 63, 84-123, 171-173.
- Mag-Tured Conga, 91.
- Mag-Tured na bFomorach, 91.
- Maine, river, 192.
- Malva, 127.
- Man, Isle of, 78.
- Manannan mac Lir, 156, 157, 182-194.
- Maponus (*Apollo*), xii.
- Marriage Rite, the, in Irish Law, 177.
- Mars, xi., xii., xiv., 106, 214.
- Marshes, 166.
- Mauritania, 128.
- Mead, 180.
- Medb, queen of Connaught, 71, 72, 161, 162, 168.
- Medicine, 173, 174.
- Medusa, 116, 117.
- Mercury, xi., xii., 100, 122, 171, 216, 217.
- Metamorphoses, 29-35, 139, 140, 162, 182.
- Metempsychosis, 195, 199.
- Methusaleh, 34.
- Michael Comyn, 205, 207.
- Mide, Province of, 44.
- Mider of Bregleith, 154, 176-182.
- Mile, son of Bile, 4, 7, 125, 126, 128, 129.
- Mile, the Sons of, 4, 7, 24, 31, 33, 34, 43, 48, 67, 81, 113, 123-149, 152, 163, 164, 170, 172.
- Miletumarus, 125.
- Milk, 57, 95, 149, 152, 157, 163, 180, 219.
- Minerva, xi., xii.
- Mines, gold, 112.
- Minotaur, 55, 58, 59.
- Moccus (*Mercurius*), xi.
- Mongan, King of Ulster, 38, 190-196.
- Montluçon, 218.
- Moon, the, 59, 114, 137, 141, 218.

- Moore, Thomas, 40.
 More, son of Dele, 57, 64, 65.
 Moses, 23, 40.
 Mountains, deification of, 141, 142, 220, 221.
 Merville, 27.
 Munster, 70, 74, 149, 160.
 Murbolg, 57.
 Muredach Munderc, 27.
 Musæus, 180.
 Music and song, 107, 108, 159, 162, 167, 183-187, 190, 203, 204.
 Mythology, Greek. *See* Greek Mythology.
 ——— Roman. *See* Roman Mythology.
 ——— Vedic. *See* Vedas.
- NAIR, 206.
 Nar, father of Lugaid, 206.
 Naturalism, Celtic, 140-142, 220, 221.
 Nectar, 174.
 Nede, son of Adne, 109.
 Neit, the god of war, 8, 95, 132.
 Nel, 22, 50.
 Nemed, 4, 6-9, 26, 29-30, 33, 43, 47-69, 70, 74, 75, 80, 92, 117, 201.
 Nennius, 12, 14, 16, 23-25, 37, 38, 47, 48, 66, 67, 75.
 Newgrange, 153, 227.
 Niall of the Nine Hostages, 44.
 Night, 131, 141. *See* Fomorians.
 Nimeth, 48. *See* Nemed.
 Nine Waves, 144, 145.
 Niobe, 21.
 Nodens, Nodons, Roman - British god, 88.
 Noah, 88.
 Nuadu Argatlam, 86-88, 92, 95, 97, 99, 101, 105, 118, 173, 226.
 Nudens, Roman-British god, 88.
 Numa Pompilius, 167.
- OATH, 141.
Odyssey, the, 10, 11, 67, 147.
 Odysseus, or Ulysses, 114.
 Œdipus, 6.
 Oengus, son of the Dagda, 152-163, 176, 177.
 Ogham Writing, 172, 194.
 Ogyges, 8.
 Ogygia, 67.
 Oisín, or Ossian, 3, 205, 206.
 Ollarbe, river, 192, 193.
 Ollamh, the, 109.
 Olympus, 5.
 Orcaes, the, 23.
 Ormazd, 8, 9, 219.
 Orpheus, 199.
Osnad ingene Echdach amlabair, 203.
 Ovid, 70.
 Ox, the, 219.
- PAINTERS, THE GREEK, 208.
 Palaces, Magic, 152-156, 167, 168, 170, 182, 187, 188. *See* Sid.
 Palestine, 53.
 Pandora, 15.
 Pannonia, Lower, 126.
 Pantheism, Celtic, 220, 221.
 ——— Irish, 138-140.
 Partholon, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14-28, 33, 36-38, 42, 46, 50, 51, 69, 70, 89, 201.
 Patrick, Saint, 32, 33, 46, 60, 61, 87, 157, 158, 160, 175.
 Peleus, 68.
 Perseus, 116-118, 121.
 Phaeton, 208.
 Pharaoh, 50.
 Pheidias, 208.
 Philistines, 127.
 Phœnicians, 10.
 Phoibos, 114.
 Physicians, 159, 160.
 Picts, the, 4, 7, 23, 149.
 Pindar, 11, 68, 111, 129, 134.
 Plague, the, 144, 145.
 Plato, 11, 180.
 Plutarch, 130, 199.
 Pomponius Mela, 49, 216.
 Pontus Euxinus, 49.
 Port-a-deilig, 121.
 Port na Glaise, 120.
 Poseidon, 10, 114, 210.
 Postumus, King of the Latins, 23, 24.
 Pre-Celtic Races, the, 71, 74, 97, 98.
 Procopius, 130, 199.
 Proitos, 116.
 Prometheus, 103-105.
 Promise, the Land of, 185, 187.
 Ptolemy, son of Lagus, 125.

- Public Assemblies in Ireland, 8.
 Pythagoras, 196-198.
 Python, the, 55.
- QUARTIO, SON OF MILETU-
 MARUS, 126.
- RACES, HORSE, 78.
 Raith, or Rath, 51.
 Ram, 218.
 Rathmor Maige Linni, 189, 190.
 Raven. *See* Crow.
 Red Sea, 24, 127, 128.
Revenants, 195.
 Rhadamanthus, 11.
 Rheims, 219.
 Rhine, 148.
 Rhiphean, Mountains, 49.
 Rivers, deification of, 141, 142, 220, 221.
 Roman Mythology, xi., xii., 119, 163, 164. *See* *Mercury*.
 Rome, 83, 84, 221.
 Rosmerta, 217.
 Ruadan, 102, 103.
 Ruad Rofhessa, 212.
 Rudraige, 16, 74.
 Ruscada, 128.
- SABD IL-DANACH, 100.
 Sacrifice, Human, 60-63, 213-216, 219.
 Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, 171.
 Saint Gall, the Library of, 173.
 Samhain, 3, 57, 63, 101.
 Saturn, 215.
 Satyr, 96, 97.
Scal, 171.
 Scandinavians, 74.
 Scene, 136.
 Scota, daughter of Pharaoh, 22, 50, 128.
 Scotland, 78.
 Scots, the, 14, 22, 24, 71, 73, 98, 126-128.
 Sculpture, Greek, 208.
 Scythia, 49, 127.
 Sea, deification of, 141, 142.
 Semion, son of Erglann, 65.
 Semion, son of Stariat, 30, 75.
 Semul, 64.
Senchas na Relec, 153, 155.
Senchus Mor, 2, 19, 20, 57, 128.
- Sengand, 56.
 Sen-mag, 17.
 Sequana, the goddess, 220.
 Sera, father of Partholon and Starn, 22, 27.
 Seriphos, 117.
 Serpent, Mythological, 55, 217-219.
 Severn, river, 87, 104.
 Shades of the Dead, 67.
 Sbem, 46, 51, 52.
 Shield, 202, 203.
 Ship, of glass, 119.
 Ships of the dead, the, 180, 181.
 Siabra, 80.
 Sid, the, 150, 151, 154, 160, 161, 173, 176.
 Side, the, 159, 160, 176, 183. *See* *Fairies*.
 Sid of the Men of Femen, the, 160.
 Sid Uaman, 161.
 Silentes of Latin Poetry, the, 68.
 Simonides, 117.
 Sky, the, 133.
 Slane, King of the Galioin, 75.
 Slaney, river, 149.
 Slaves, Gaulish, 198.
 Sleep, induced by music, 107, 108, 162.
 Sliab Betha, 41.
 Sliab Mis, or Slieve Mish, 142, 143.
 Sling, 105, 206.
 Smerius, or Smertus, 217.
Smeroit, 217.
 Smertomara, 217.
 Smertu-litanus, 217.
 Smiths, 99-103, 174, 175.
 Sophocles, 117.
 Spain, 4, 7, 11, 14, 16, 43, 47-49, 66, 67, 75, 77, 127-130, 135.
 Spears, 90-98, 101-103, 122, 193, 203.
 Sreng, 90, 91, 95.
 Stag, the, 219.
 Starn, son of Sera, 27, 33.
 Stars, the, 113.
 Steropes, 122, 210.
 Stone, solar, 113.
 Styx, the, 68.
 Sualtam, 165, 168.
 Succession, in female line, 149.
Suil Baloir, 118.
 Sulis (*Minerva*), xii.
 Sun, the, 113-115.

- Swans, 162, 182.
 Swine, of the Gods, the, 155-157, 187.
 — of Manannan, the, 187.
 Sword of Tethra, the, 106, 107.
 Syria, 128.
 TAILTIU, BATTLE OF, 146, 160, 211. See Taltiu.
 Tain Bo Cuailgne, 150.
 Taliesin, 34, 35, 138.
 Taltiu, daughter of Mag-mor, 77-78, 99.
 Tanaide O'Maelchonaire, 90, 93.
 Tara, the capital of Ireland, 44, 91, 97, 99, 101, 144, 169, 170, 177, 178, 182, 185, 186, 188, 221.
 Taranis. See Taranus.
 Taranacnos, 215.
 Taranucus (*Jupiter*), xii.
 Taranus, xii., 62, 213, 215-219.
 Tartarus, 9-11, 55, 133.
 Tarvos Trigraunus, 219.
 Telemachus, 11.
 Teliavus, Saint, 62.
 Teltown, or Taltiu, 77.
 Tethra, 9, 11, 12, 98, 106-112, 172, 213, 216, 218.
 Teutates, 62, 213, 214, 218.
 Thebes, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15.
 Theseus, 56, 57.
 Thracia, 4.
 Three-headed Gods, 218.
 Thunder and the thunder-bolt, xiv., 115, 210, 215.
 Tiber, 46, 215.
 Tigernach, 3, 125, 166, 167, 177, 188.
 Timagenes, 148, 197.
Tire beo, 15.
Tir tairngiri, 185.
Tir n-aill, 15.
Tir sorcha, 184.
 Titans, the, 8-10, 103, 112, 113-122, 123, 133, 134.
Tolan or *tolon*, 14.
 Tigernmas, 17, 63, 64.
 Torinis, the Isle of, 57, 58, 64, 65, 117.
 Tor mor, 118.
 Tory Island. See Torinis.
 Totatigenus, 215.
 Toutatis, xii., 214, 215.
 Tourenus (*Mercurius*), xi.
 Tower, of Bregon, 129, 131, 134.
 — Conann's, 8, 9, 57-69.
 Tower of Kronos, 68.
 — of Glass, 67.
 Trag Mar, 48.
 Trees of the Gods, the, 154, 155, 170, 184. See Branches.
 Triads, Mythological, 209-216, 218.
 Troy, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15.
 Tuan mac Cairill, 24-38, 44, 46, 66, 71, 80, 196, 197.
 Tuatha de Danann, the, 4, 6, 7-9, 18, 26, 31, 33, 43, 44, 58, 59, 70, 74, 75, 77, 79-108, 123-125, 137, 142-146, 150-194.
 Tuath Fidga, 149.
 Tuirell Biceo, 212.
 Tuirenn, 212.
 Tvashtri, 9, 209, 210.
 Typhaon, 55.
 Typhœus, 55.
 Tyr, the Scandinavian god, 106.
 UAR, SON OF DANA, 211, 212.
 Ugainne, son of Echu Buadach, 125.
 Ulster, 71, 72, 166, 168, 189, 190.
 Ulysses, 68, 199, 207.
 Urard mac Coisi, 2, 98-100.
 Usnech, 3.
 VALERIUS MAXIMUS, 197.
 Vandœuvre (Indre), 218.
 Varuna, 9, 12, 209.
 Vedas, the, and Vedic Mythology, 8, 9, 12, 17, 18.
 Visucius (*Mercurius*), xi.
 Vosegus, the god, 220.
 Vritra, 17, 56.
 Vyamsa, 17, 56.
 WATER, 141.
 Wine, 180.
 Winter, 130, 131.
 Woods, of Ireland, 166.
 Woods, deification of, 141, 142, 220.
 Writing, Ogham, 172, 194.
 YAMA, 9, 12, 209.
 Yokes, Silver, 110.
 —, Gold, 182.
 Zen, 210.
 Zeus, 5-9, 15, 21, 55, 56, 68, 70, 86, 103, 105, 106, 111-113, 117, 163, 164, 210.
 Zio, the German god, 106.
 Zuyderzee, the, 200.

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