

The Annals of Boyle

*The History of Ireland.*

John D'Alton

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ESTABLISHING their narrative as on the basis of Scriptural Chronology, the Annalists of Boyle commence, as do Tigernach and the Four Masters, with that first colonization of Ireland, of which Nennius, the British historian, also makes especial mention.

“ In the sixtieth year of the age of Abraham, Partholanus, the son of Scru, the son of Esru, held Ireland, being the first who reigned there.”

According to the Four Masters, this event occurred in A.M. 2520, in thirty years after which this leader died at Moynealta (Clontarf). The latter annalists also mention the death of his son, Slangius, his interment under a mount in Meath, hence called Slane, and the utter extirpation of these earliest invaders by pestilence. During their occupation, say the Masters, broke out various lakes within the country, as Lough Conn, Lough Mask, and Lough Techet, (Lough Gara), while the origin of Lough Cuan (Lough Strangford) is attributed to an eruption of the sea. The clearing of various tracts on the new settlement is also noticed. On the destruction of this colony, the narrative of the Four Masters states, that Ireland remained uninhabited for thirty years, until Nemedius arrived upon the coast, with a new importation of adventurers, by whom, and their posterity, this country was held for upwards of 200 years ; during which time Lough Annin (Ennel, in Westmeath), broke out from the earth, Moyluig (the Barony of Boyle) was cleared of wood, and various raths or forts were constructed throughout the island ; until, about A.M. 3060, the Fomorians, a tribe of foreigners, supposed to have come from Africa, took possession of the island of the tower (Tor-innis or Tory Island off the coast of Donegal), whence they made desolating excursions over Ireland, and, after various conflicts with the people, consigned the country again to solitude and waste. These early colonizations of Ireland, and especially the wars between the Nemedians and Fomorians, and the destruction of the tower, “ *tuir* ” on the island, are very fully illustrated in poems attributed to Eochaid O’Flin, who flourished in the ninth century, and who may be presumed to have been one of the “ *peritissimi Scotorum*,” whom, Nennius expressly mentions, he consulted in compiling that portion of his work which relates to Irish history, and in which he reiterates those accounts. The Firbolgs were, A. M. 3266, according to the Annals of the Four Masters, the next colonists after the Nemedians, and a succession of their monarchs, to the number of eight, is there given, but no improvements, as by clearing of woods, or erection of forts, are attributed to these occupants, while another awful visitation of plague is referred to their time, in 3273. In thirty years afterwards, according to the above annalists, but, according to the Annals of Boyle,

“ In the days of Moses, the power and possession of the Firbolgs were acquired by the Tuatha do Danans,”

who, having effected entrance into the heart of the country, obtained, at the memorable field subsequently designated “ *Moigh Tuireadh*,” i.e. the field of the towers, near Lough Mask, such a signal victory over the unsuspecting and ill-prepared former settlers, as established themselves sole masters of the country. The lineal succession of their monarchs, to the number of nine, is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters, and one of these, Lughadh, styled Lamhfhadha, i.e. “ long-handed,” is said to have established an assembly and athletic sports at Tailten [1], which, if the origin of this people is rightly assigned as wanderers from

the east, through Greece, might be considered a reminiscence of the Olympic games they witnessed in their earlier sojourning. The bardic accounts suggest, that by this colony the rites of the Magian worship, subsequently known as Druidism, were introduced into Ireland, and that the famous *Lia-fail*, or stone of destiny (fabled to have been the pillar on which Jacob rested his head, when he saw the vision of the angel), was carried with them for the inauguration of their kings. A stone, invested with such traditions, was said to have been long after brought over from Ireland to Scotland, and preserved in Scone, until politically removed, by Edward the First, thence to Westminster, where it continued for centuries, encased in the coronation chair of England ; the reverence of a long series of years having thus given it that interest, which originated in so questionable a devotion [2].

“ The sons of Milesius came Into Ireland about this time,”

a period which the Four Masters compute as A.M. 3500. Concurring external testimonies of this eastern colonization, through Spain, so minutely detailed in native songs, legends, and tales, and so long and so fondly regarded as of pre-eminent national interest, are given at considerable length in an “ Essay on the Ancient History, &c., of Ireland,” written by the compiler of this work, and published in the sixteenth volume of the Royal Irish Academy Transactions. Such, indeed, was the general faith in the tradition, that it is embodied, even to the names of the leaders, Heber and Heremon, in an Irish Act of Parliament, of the 11th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The Milesian adventurers, having achieved the conquest of the island, divided the country between them ; and the Four Masters record sundry localities which they cleared of woods, communications which they opened, causeways they constructed, and forts they raised ; while, during their dynasty, many lakes are stated as having originated, as Lough Ke, Lough Allen, Lough Foyle, &c., and rivers to have burst out, as the Suck, the Brosna, &c. At length Heremon, by survivorship, acquired the sole dominion, about which time, it would appear, the Picts, landing in Leinster, sought a settlement, but were repulsed, whereupon they removed to Scotland, bringing with them wives from the Milesian tribes, then called Scots, facts which are fully confirmed in the Ecclesiastical History of Venerable Bede (chap. i.) “ In Heremon’s time,” add the Four Masters, “ his wife, Tea, ordered a magnificent mount to be erected in his honour, that on his death he might be buried there, as well as his successors in the government thereafter ; and on this mount she caused a fort to be constructed, and a stone of commemoration to be erected, whence, as from her, this hill was called Tea-mor-rath, now Tara, and in it was herself afterwards buried.

The line of succession of Irish kings, from Heremon, is distinctly given in the Annals of the Four Masters. During the reign of one of those (the seventh) Tighernmas, they relate several battles fought by him with the rival race of Heber, while, with more attention to the arts of peace, he prescribed some sumptuary regulations for his people, and caused gold and silver to be worked in the woods east of the Liffey, and shaped into lunettes and torques, until, in A. M. 3656, attempting to introduce idolatry into Ireland, he, in the practice of its worship, was, with many of his subjects, struck dead ; from which time the sacrilegious rites were discontinued. His successor, Eochaid, is celebrated by the same annalists, for having improved upon the ordinances of Tighernmas for a distinction in the colours of the Irish dresses, by which every grade of society could be classified. Enna, the fourteenth in this royal descent, is said to have cast silver shields, from mines at Argadross near the River Nore, with ornaments for horses. The seventeenth, Fiachadh, had an Irish cognomen, signifying “ of the white flowers,” on the tradition, that in his time there grew abundance of white flowers, which the inhabitants squeezed into cups, and used the juice as wine. To his immediate successor, Munamon, is referred the introduction of collars of gold, to be worn by kings and queens, so many of which, as of the other ornaments alluded to, have been discovered

through the country ; while his son, Aildergodh, directed that the chiefs of Ireland should wear golden rings. The twentieth in this succession, Ollamh Fodhla, is preeminently projected from the line of kings, as one who, upon his accession, A.M. 3883, established the Fes, or Parliament of Tara, promulgated laws, founded seminaries, revised and corrected the existing historical traditions, subdued the wild passions of his subjects, and, by his wisdom and learning, reformed them to a just and gentle disposition. Remote posterity has so far recognized the merits thus attributed to him, as to establish his medallion bust in the series of legislators, that adorns the dome of the Irish courts of justice, placing it, with chronological accuracy, between those of Moses and Alfred. The reign of Fiachadh, the twenty-fourth king, is commemorated as the period, when wells were first opened for supply of water ; while, in the last year of his reign, A.M. 3901, another portentous pestilence raged over the country.

“ The fifth aire commences.”

This, the next notice in the Annals of Boyle, refers to that division of the eras of the world, which the Irish annalists adopted. The first was from Adam to Noah ; the second from Noah to Abraham ; the third from Abraham to David ; the fourth from David to the captivity of the Jews ; and the fifth extended thence to the birth of Christ ; it, therefore, according to their calculation, commenced after A.M. 4000, and, accordingly, the ensuing notice simply states,

“ The battle of Monatrogad” [3] ;

a battle which was fought, according to the Four Masters, in A. M. 4169, by Siorna, the 27th King of the Milesian dynasty, and stated, in the Metrical Poem of Gilla Coemhan, to be the contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar ; it was won over some of the descendants of Heber, who sought to alter the succession to the kingdom. Roteacht, the immediate successor of Siorna, is said to have led in the use of chariots or cars in Ireland. From him a melancholy continuance of kings, each slain by his successor, brings the history down to Eadhna Dearg (the 40th king), who is said to have re-established a mint at Argadross, and in whose reign another visitation of plague destroyed the inhabitants, and amongst them their Sovereign. In A.M. 4415, Oilíoll Fíonn, the 49th King of the Milesian dynasty, fell at

“ The Battle of Odva” [4].

Passing over various intermediate reigns, of which little more than their respective commencement, duration, and close, is related in the Annals (thereby suggesting no small proof of the antiquity of those Chronicles), the accession of Cimbaoth, as the 56th of the Milesian line, is celebrated by the Four Masters for “ the just and good administration that then prevailed throughout all Ireland.” “ He it was,” they add, “ who in A.M. 4532, erected that palace of Eamania, near Armagh, from whence he and his successors were proud to take title, down to the time of its destruction in the beginning of the fourth century. His reign is further remarkable as being that, from which the most candid and learned historian, Tigernach, dates the era of authentic Irish history, thereby rejecting, as of doubtful authority, all heretofore noticed. Its commencement, according to his synchronism, was in the 18th year of Ptolemy, and hence lie traces the “ Kings of Eamania,” through a succession of thirty-one princes. Continuing however the General History,

“ Hugony ‘ the Great,’ son of Hugh the Red, began his reign,”

according to the Four Masters, in A. M. 4567. He is ranked as the 59th of the Milesian kings, and was son, as above mentioned, of Hugh, the 54th king. The Masters record that he merited his title, from having successfully carried his arms into foreign lands, even to the Tuscan sea. He is also said to have modified a distracting pentarchy, under whose subdivision the country

had for some time suffered, and, in truth, continued more or less to suffer, until the English invasion. A line of Kings, whose destinies, like many of the previous monarchs, were closed, each by the hand of his successor, advances the history to the next notice in the Annals of Boyle.

“ Fergus was slain by Angus, the enlanger of Tara [5], at that place.”

Angus thus became, in A. M. 4816, the 73rd King of Ireland, of the Milesian dynasty Fergus having been the 72nd. The reign of the 80th, Breasal Boidava, was remarkable for a long continuance of distemper amongst the cattle. A successor of his, Eochaidh, surnamed Feidlioch, i. e. “ the Sigher,” the 85th King in that succession, is the individual to whom the annalists attribute the erection of a royal residence at Rath-Croghan, near Elphin. He is stated, in the Irish synchronisms, as a contemporary of Julius Caesar, and his immediate successor in the monarchy was another Eochaidh, bearing the cognomen “ of the graves,” having been the first in whose reign burial under mounds was superseded by ordinary graves.

The next notice in the Annals of Boyle is,

“ The year of the Incarnation of Christ, according to Dionysius,”

i. e. Dionysius Exiguus. The Annals of Boyle do not mention the year, or the king’s reign in which the event occurred, but the former is stated by the Four Masters as A. M. 5200, their computations approaching nearly to the calculation of the Septuagint ; and, from the 25th of March in that year of the incarnation, rather than from the year of the Saviour’s birth, many of the Irish annalists commence the Christian era. The Annals of Ulster, accordingly, following this rule, anticipate the common era by one year, down to 1014, after which they coincide with it ; so, for the most part, do the Annals of Innisfallen, but those of the Four Master’s varied, from other considerations, yet more widely, being sometime five, and afterwards two years behind common time, until the same period, when Flan, head professor of Monaster-boyce, re-formed the chronology, and adjusted it to the one common standard, as testified by his “ Synchrona,” an ancient copy of which, on vellum, is in the Stowe collection. By this authority the monarch of Ireland, at the time of the incarnation, was Conary the Great, the 89th king of the Milesian race. His reign, however, is shewn to have commenced several years previous to that glorious event ; and, while it was the longest, was also the happiest and most abundant. The sea, say the Four Masters, during every year thereof, gave up abundance offish, the trees were loaded with fruit, the nuts were weighty on the banks of the rivers, the herds wandered freely through the country, by reason of the prevalence of peace and order ; there was no storm or tempest throughout the whole period of his government, circumstances, upon all which the religious historians of early times dwell with enthusiasm and gratitude, as indicative of the advent of the Lord, who came to teach truth to the nations of the earth, to preach to them the commandments of piety, brotherly love, and mutual charity, and lead them in the way of eternal peace.

“ In the following year died Conculiin.”

And so says Tigernach, referring it to the second year of the Christian era, while, without adopting all the enthusiastic legends of the bards, as to “ Cuchullin, chief of Erin’s wars,” he certainly does style him “ fortissimus heros Scotorum,” says he was knighted in the seventh year of his age ; that he had been engaged in that war, which for an interval alone disturbed the halcyon times of Conary, and which is known by the name of the “ Tain-bo-Cuailgne,” originating, as it did, in a spoiling of the cattle of Collon, in the County Louth, as more fully shewn in the “ History of Drogheda.” Tigernach also remarks, that he was slain at the above year, in the 27th year of his age, while the Danish historians relate invasions of Ulster from

their country, at this time, which might afford Conculan a more meritorious opportunity of evincing his courage, and which Mr. Mac Pherson, in his "Ossian's Poems," might gladly adopt, as more suited to the poetical machinery of that beautiful imposition. The death of Conculan is followed by the notice,

"Died Emri, the wife of Conculan,"

and the next records.

"The battle of Almhain [6], where Etersoll the Blind was slain by Nuadhat Neecht.... The battle of Cliach [7], where fell Nuadhat Neecht, slain by Conary.... Conary reigned twenty or forty years."

The Annals of Boyle, in detailing these events, as subsequent to the Incarnation, appear guilty of an anachronism, as, according to the best authorities, these occurred before the Christian era. Etersoll was the 87th, Nuadhat the 88th of the Milesian dynasty, and Conary the Great the 89th; the length of Conary's reign is also, as here stated, much short of the most accredited accounts, which extend its duration beyond the Christian era.

"In the twentieth year after the death of Octavian Augustus, Conobar Mac Nessa died, and Glassne his son reigned."

Tigernach, accordingly, fixes the event at A.D. 33, This Conobar had been the subordinate prince of Emania, was succeeded as above, and, on the decease of Glassne,

"In the fourth year from the death of Tiberius, Irial Glunmar, son of Conall Cearnach, reigned in Emania for forty years."

The reference to the death of Tiberius, marks the commencement of Irial's reign as in A.D. 41, and so Tigernach places it, while the Annalists of Boyle, returning from the affairs of Emania, to which they had thus digressed, record, as next in chronological order, the closing event of the reign of the before-mentioned Conary;

"Storming of the fortress of the two caves, against Conary the Great, when ensued an *interregnum* of five years, and Ireland was without a king."

This demolition of the "Bruighen-da-dearc," which is translated in the above epithet, and which was theretofore one of the fortresses at Tara, is also stated by Tigernach, as occurring in the year after Irial Glunmar's succession, and both Annals agree in giving, as their next ensuing notice,

"Mark wrote his Gospel,"

necessarily implying, that Tigernach considered Conary the Great as having survived the birth-time of the Saviour, for St. Mark's Gospel was written at Rome, in A.D. 64 (but twenty years earlier, according to Tigernach). The words, "Ireland was without a king," means the absence of supreme authority by the death of Conary, on which event, the peace and allegiance of his country were, for a time, dissolved, and the government split into a distracting pentarchy. At length

"Lughaid of the Red Spots, succeeding to the throne, reigned in Ireland twenty-six years."

This was the 90th king of the Milesian succession, and during his reign, A. D. 65, according to Tigernach, occurred that inundation, which deposited the waters of Lough Neagh over the pre-existing territory of Corofoch. It is well worthy of notice, that Giraldus Cambrensis, who wrote his observations on Ireland within a century after Tigernach's death, and who, evidently, from the context of his narratives, had that Irish historian's work before him, fully adopts this origin of Lough Neagh, adding, what might appear a conclusive refutation of any theory, that would postpone the erection of those interesting edifices, the round towers, to a period beyond that of the conversion of Ireland to Christianity ; " it is no improbable testimony to this event," says Giraldus, "that the fishermen of that sheet of water plainly beheld the religious towers ( ' *turres ecclesiasticas* '), which, according to the custom of the country, are narrow, lofty, and round, immersed under the waters, and they frequently shew them to strangers passing over them and wondering at their purposes ( ' *reique causas admirantibus* '). " In regard to the round tower controversy, it is not essential to establish, that such an inundation did actually happen ; it was matter of more than popular tradition ; it was verified in the most trustworthy history of Ireland ; and there was its date assigned to A. D. 65, nearly four centuries previous to the mission of St. Patrick for the conversion of that country, yet Cambrensis, aware, of course, of the era of Christianity in this country, but adopting, also, the reported origin of Lough Neagh, expressly infers, that these towers were of such antiquity, that some of them were overwhelmed in that visitation ; that the fishermen of that lake actually distinguished them under the water, and repeatedly shew them to strangers, and he styles them " *ecclesiasticas turras*," towers for ecclesiastical purposes, meaning, by necessary inference, for the uses of some Pagan worship, general at that retrospective date, though he uses a term which is now ordinarily attributed to Christianity, while he adds, that they had been built according to a fashion peculiar to Ireland ( " *more patrio* "), suggesting a style as of its oldest inhabitants ; and here may be recalled to the reader's attention the early notices, as in the most remote pagan times, of " the Island of the Tower," *ante*, " the Field of the Towers," *ante* ; and these epithets are recognized and adopted in the Annals of the Four Masters ; the tower " *tuir* " is there reiterated, and accordingly, through all time, are they found styled towers and not belfries, or by any other name, until converted to such secondary uses.

This blank of the subject induces the insertion here of a very singular passage from Diodorus Siculus, which seems strongly confirmatory of sun worship in Ireland : " Among the writers of antiquity," says that historian (vol. i. pp. 158-9), " Hecateus and some others allege, that there is an island in the ocean, over against Gaul, to the north, and not inferior in size to Sicily, that the Hypeiborei inhabit it, and that the soil is so rich and fruitful, and the climate so congenial, that they mow there twice in the year. It is affirmed that Latona was born there, and that, therefore, the worship of Apollo is preferred to that of any other god ; and, as they daily celebrate this deity with songs of praise, and worship him with the highest honours, they are considered as peculiarly the priests of Apollo, whose sacred grove, and singular temple, of round form, are there. They have a city also consecrated to this divinity; most of the citizens are harpers, who, striking their harps in the temple, sing sacred hymns to the god, in which his actions are proclaimed with suitable honour. Their language is that peculiar to the Hyperboreans, and they are attached to the Greeks by a singular affection, confirmed from old times ; the Athenians and Delians are the principal objects of this regard, the ground of which, according to the people, is, that as some Greeks formerly sailed over to the Hyperborean regions, and left offerings, which were noted in Greek letters, so Abaris voyaged thence to Greece [8], and renewed with the Delians the tie of ancient friendship and acquaintance. They likewise aver, that the moon is seen from this island, that it appears not so distant from the earth, and seems to present in its face certain projections like the mountains of our world ; also that the god Apollo himself visits the island once in nineteen years, in which space the stars complete their revolutions, and return into their old positions, and hence, this cycle of nineteen years is called by the Greeks ' the great year.' This deity, when

he does so appear, is said to sing with the harp at night, and to stimulate the dances continually, from the vernal equinox to the rising of the Pleiades, delighting himself in hearing the commemoration of his own successful actions." When the position of this island is considered "to the north, over against Gaul," its size "not inferior to Sicily;" the excellent quality of the land; the healthfulness of its climate; the alleged sun worship in round temples, of which so many exist over the country; the musicians, on what has been deemed, from the remotest antiquity, the national instrument of Ireland; the peculiarity of language; all those concurring circumstances add considerable weight to the opinion, that the island alluded to must have been Ireland, to which may be added the testimony of St. Patrick himself, in his Confession (published in the first volume of the "*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*"): "For that, sun," says the Apostle, "which we behold, is ordained, by the will of God, to rise daily for us, but never shall it rule, nor shall its splendour outlast, but all those who adore it shall in misery and wretchedness fall into punishment." The above notice, from Diodorus, is also most interesting in the astronomical acquirements which it attributes to the inhabitants of this island, the striking mention of the approximation of the moon, and the appearance of mountains thence discernible on its disk; and, above all, the evident allusion to the cycle of nineteen years, by which Meton, some centuries previously, endeavoured to adjust the course of the sun to that of the moon, and to make the solar and lunar years begin at the same point of time.

To return to Lughaid of the red spots. This monarch, adds Tigernach, fell in A. D. 79, by his own sword (the first royal suicide on Irish record), "distracted with grief on account of the death of his wife, Dervorgilhi, the daughter of a King of Loch 1 in," a notice which suggests the existence, at that time, of some relations with the regions of the north, very different from those that proved so disastrous to Ireland in future centuries.

"Thirty Kings of Leith-Conn (i.e. Ulster), reigned from the time of Lughaid of the red spots, to Diarmid, the son of Carrill."

This short, digressive glance at the state of government in Ulster, during the interval between the supreme sovereigns named in the text, alludes, thus far, to one member of the then prevalent pentarchy. Muinster, too, had its similar succession, as very fully given by Vallancey, down to the days of Brian Boromhe, on the authority of the "Book of Munster," to which latter line it is the more necessary to allude, as about this time it began to contest the right of supremacy, heretofore conceded to the Kings of Tara. The subject led to cruel civil wars, which, after centuries, broke down the controlling power of the old government, introduced Brian Boromhe, in the tenth century, to the throne, transferred it, after him, from the O'Nial to the Connaught dynasty, and ultimately so weakened the energies of the island, as left it an easy conquest to the English king and his Anglo-Norman subjects. Diarmid, the son of Carrill, above alluded to, will be spoken of hereafter; it is enough, in this place, to say that he was the 124th king of the Milesian succession, and that, according to these Annals, he died in A. D. 545.

"Noro reigns sixteen years; in the tenth year of his reign Irial Glunmar, King of Eamania [9], was slain by Crimthan, surnamed the bold warrior, King of Ireland, whereupon Fichta Findamnas, the son of Irial Glunmar, succeeded his father in Eamania. The Emperor Vespasian dies; Crimthan, the bold warrior, dies."

The synchronism in the last part of this sentence fixes the death of Crimthan to the year 79, in which Tigernach agrees. This, the 92nd monarch of the Milesian line, appears to have been a monarch of warlike propensities and successful enterprise, both at home and abroad. The Annals of the Four Masters say, that he was slain at his fortress in Howth, after returning

from a foreign expedition of great celebrity, and from which he brought home much precious spoil, and, in particular, a chariot [10] of great value, ornamented with gold ; armour inlaid with gold, and in which many shining gems were set ; a robe of many colours ; a soldier's cloak, with golden clasps : he also brought with him a battle sword, with figures of serpents carved upon it ; a shield, with shining silver studs ; a lance, so contrived that no one wounded by it could recover ; a sling or catapulta ; two hunting dogs coupled with a silver chain, worth 300 cows, and a great quantity of other precious things. This notice of the Four Masters evidently adopts the tradition of the military aid which the Irish people sought to afford to the Britons, when Suetonius Paulinus was inflicting upon them those multiplied severities, that, according to their ancient historians, compelled them to seek refuge from their homes in the comparative repose of Ireland.

“ Carpre, surnamed ‘ the cat-headed,’ reigned afterwards for five years, but he is not accounted among the kings of Ireland, on account of the deformity of his head. Feradhach Fion-Fechtnach, the son of Crimthan, reigns, during twenty years. At this time flourished Moran, the son of Main, from whom was the collar of Moran.”

The interval of Carpre's reign was marked, say the Four Masters, with most unhappy afflictions ; the crops failed ; the rivers were unproductive ; the cattle were barren ; the trees were so fruitless, that only a single acorn was usually on the oak ; while the reign of his successor, Feradhach, the commencement of which Tigernach fixes *ad ann.* 85, was signally contrasted by the prosperity, peace, and plenty, that accompanied it throughout. His cognomen, Fion-Fechtnach, signifying “ the pure, just man,” is an eloquent testimony to his character, which, perhaps, was more generally conceded by reason of the exalted impartiality of the decisions of his chief judge Moran.

“ After the death of Clement Romanus, and during the reign of Trajan, Fíacha Findamnas reigned in Eamania, 26 years, when he died at Tara.”

He was the son and successor of Irial Glunmar, as before mentioned, and the 20th King of Eamania ; the events above noted mark his time as the commencement of the second century.

“ In the following year Fiacha Find was slain in Tara, by Elim, the son of Conraich.”

This Fiacha was the son of Feradhach Fion-Fechtnach, and the 95th king of the Milesian line, of whom Elim, his slayer, became the 96th. Fiacha fell in a contest with the provincial kings, headed by the aforesaid Elim, who was King of Ulster ; and the Four Masters state, that they did not leave a child of his alive, except Tuathal “ in his mother's womb,” but that babe lived to revenge his father's massacre. On attaining liberty he fled to North Britain, where, having procured aid from the Picts, and being invited over by the Irish, he landed in his native country, pursued a course of victory into the palace of Tara, and there slew the usurper. On his accession, A. D. 130, he not only revived the Parliament of Tara, but established similar assemblies at Rath Croahan for Connaught, and at Eamania for Ulster ; in the former he felt it politic to demand and obtain, from the petty princes and chiefs of the country, their solemn pledges to preserve the inheritance of the crown to his line exclusively, in his time, also, Meath, which occupied the centre of the island, and had been, within a more limited precinct, allocated for the support of royalty, was enlarged by accessions of territory from each of the surrounding provinces, thenceforth held until the English invasion, as the mensal lands of the monarch of Ireland, and within whose extensive circuit, according to the native accounts, there were four royal residences, viz., at Tara; at Tailtem, near Kells ; Tlachga, near Athboy ; and Usneach, near Killare, in the now called County of Westmeath. “ A far less creditable sample of his policy was the enormous mulct imposed by him on the province of Leinster, in revenge for the conduct of its ruler, Achy [against whom he had a well-grounded, but

personal, cause of hostility], thus dooming an unoffending people, and their posterity to atone for the crimes of one worthless prince. This oppressive line, known by the name of ‘ the Boaria tribute,’ was exacted every second year, and continued to be the cause of much confusion and bloodshed, till the year 693, when, in the reign of King Fiiinacla, through the intercession of St. Moling, it was remitted.” [11]

“ Tipraide Tirech reigned in Eamania thirty years.”

This was the 24th King of Eamania, and Tigernach dates the event at A. D. 182.

- [1] So called from Tailte, Queen of the last monarch of the Firbolg colony, who was buried there ; the name is still preserved in that of the parish of Teltown, on the Blackwater, near Kells.
- [2] In the Book of Kilronan there is a copy of the form of inauguration of the Kings of Connaught, as stated to be used at Cairn-free, in the present County Roscommon, with which Edmund Spencer’s account exactly coincides ; “ They use to place him, that shall be their Captain, upon a stone, always reserved for that purpose, and placed commonly upon a hill, in some of which I have seen engraven a foot, which, they say, was the measure of their first Captain’s foot, where on he standing receives an oath, to preserve all the former ancient customs of the country inviolable and to deliver up the succession peaceably to his tanist, and then had a wand delivered to him by some whose proper office that is, after which, descending from the stone, he turneth himself round, thrice forward and backward.”
- [3] This locality is, in the Annals of the Four Masters, defined to be in Cinneachta, a territory synonymous with Magh Breagh, extending from the Boyne to the Liffey, while Gilla Coeman, in his “ *Carmen Metricun*,” more explicitly names it as Mona-Truimtroghad, i. e. the bog of Trim of the Bridge, thus clearly identifying it with Trim, in the County Meath, a place which, by the monkish writers, was called Ath-Truim, the ford of Trim. An abbey was founded here, in the first year of St. Patrick’s mission, and the place became subsequently one of the twelve rural deaneries within the Diocese of Meath.
- [4] Odva or Odda, gives name to a parish now called Odder, situated two miles south of Tara
- [5] Tara, contracted from Teach-mor-rath, i.e., the house of the great hill, or, “ the great rath of Tea,” as before suggested, is situated near Navan, in the County Meath, and still commands such a royalty of prospect, not, in the modern parlance, of counties, but over subject provinces, as well marked it for the early selection of the seat of the Irish Kings, which it continued to be from the establishment of the Milesian dynasty. Here were they inaugurated, here were their Parliaments, or Fes, assembled, and their laws promulgated, until the sixth century ; nor are there wanting on the face of the hill, earthworks, and fosses, and causeways, indicative of the importance and resort of this locality. Here St. Patrick, soon after his landing in Ireland, strengthened by heaven, appeared before the Pagan monarch and his court, when by his preaching, he induced the miraculous conversion of the land. At the close of the sixth century, it ceased to be a royal residence, but the Kings continued to be styled in the Annals, as of Tara, wherever they dwelt.
- [6] Almhain, now called Dun-Ailline, was anciently the royal seat of the kings of Leinster, and in the old romances is styled “ the great and spacious Almain of Leinster ;” its earthworks are situated about a mile north of old Kilcullen, in the County Kildare, and present the largest fort in Ireland, with the exception of that at Eamania, near Armagh, its rival in the pentarchy. A genuine Irish tale, preserved in the manuscripts of Trinity College, “ Lomnochtan of Slieve Liffe,” opens with a vision of Fingal, i.e. Fion Mac Cumhal, as, dreaming that, after the labours of the chace, he lay reposing in sleep on “ the fair Almain of Spears.” In 687, as mentioned in a subsequent part of the Annals of Boyle, another battle was fought here.
- [7] Cliach, *alias* Ara-cliach, is that district of Tipperary, bordering on Limerick, now known

as the barony of Owney and Ara, it was the ancient inheritance of a branch of the noble family of O'Brien, distinguished thence as the O'Briens' Ara. Hither, say the biographers of St. Patrick, that Apostle repaired, immediately after he had established Cashel as the supreme see of Minister, and here made many converts.

- [8] The suggestion might appropriate to Ireland the classic wanderings of this, the recorded friend and instructor of Pythagoras, and whom the description of Himerius, as to his dress, manners, country, and philosophy, seems to identify with that country.
- [9] This royal citadel of those kings of Ulster, whose succession is given in the Annals of Tigernach, was erected two miles west of the present city of Armagh, by that Cimbaoth, from whose time Tigernach dates the credibility of Irish history. Ulster having been the province of this monarch's family, he was particularly assiduous in promoting its reformation and glory, establishing conventions there, similar to those held in Tara, and also instituting a military school. In A.D. 746, a great battle was fought at Eamania, between the O'Neills and Fiachra, King of Ulster, in which the latter was victorious, and, in 987, Brian Boromhe encamped here, with the object of avenging himself on the people of Ulster, who had then recently despoiled his countrymen. The ruins of Eamania are, even yet, of surprising extent.
- [10] It does not appear that the Irish used chariots, as the Britons did, for warlike purposes, but, that they had them for travelling, from a very remote time, is expressly affirmed in their Annals. Those of the Four Masters say, that chariots of four horses were first brought into use by Roteacht, the 28th king of the Milesian succession, and indeed the name of the monarch seems as a cognomen derivable from "rota," or the Celtic word "rhod." The Continuator of Tigernach mention Conall of the Swift horses at A. D. 366. Car-borne heroes frequently occur in the Finian poems, and the noble description of the chieftain. Cuchullin's, confessedly used upon Irish ground, is a further testimony to the same effect ; while, in referring to this beautiful passage of the poems, sought to be attributed to Ossian, there is none other of whose individual authenticity there are said by Sinclair to be so many available proofs. The Annals of Innisfallen (Dublin MS.) make mention of the chariot of Thady, the son of Ceinn, in 254, and the skill of his charioteer ; and the same Annalists mention Fathach, one of the joint sovereigns of Ireland, within a few years after, with the epithet " of the chariots." In the chronicles, when they advance into Christian times, yet more frequent notices occur of chariots, as used in travelling, " according to an ancient custom of the country." Adamnan speaks of St. Columba's chariot and charioteer, and furnishes, in another place, evidence of such vehicles being used in battle, where, speaking of the engagement at Monamoire, in Ulster, he records the escape of Eochaid Laib in his chariot, a proposition which Tigernach confirms, by stating chariots as in use in battle in A.D. 500.
- [11] " Moore's History of Ireland," vol. 1, p. 125.

The history of Ireland, from the earliest period to the year 1245, when the Annals of Boyle, which are adopted and embodied as the running text authority, terminate : with a brief essay on the native annalists, and other sources for illustrating Ireland, and full statistical and historical notices of the barony of Boyle (1845)

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