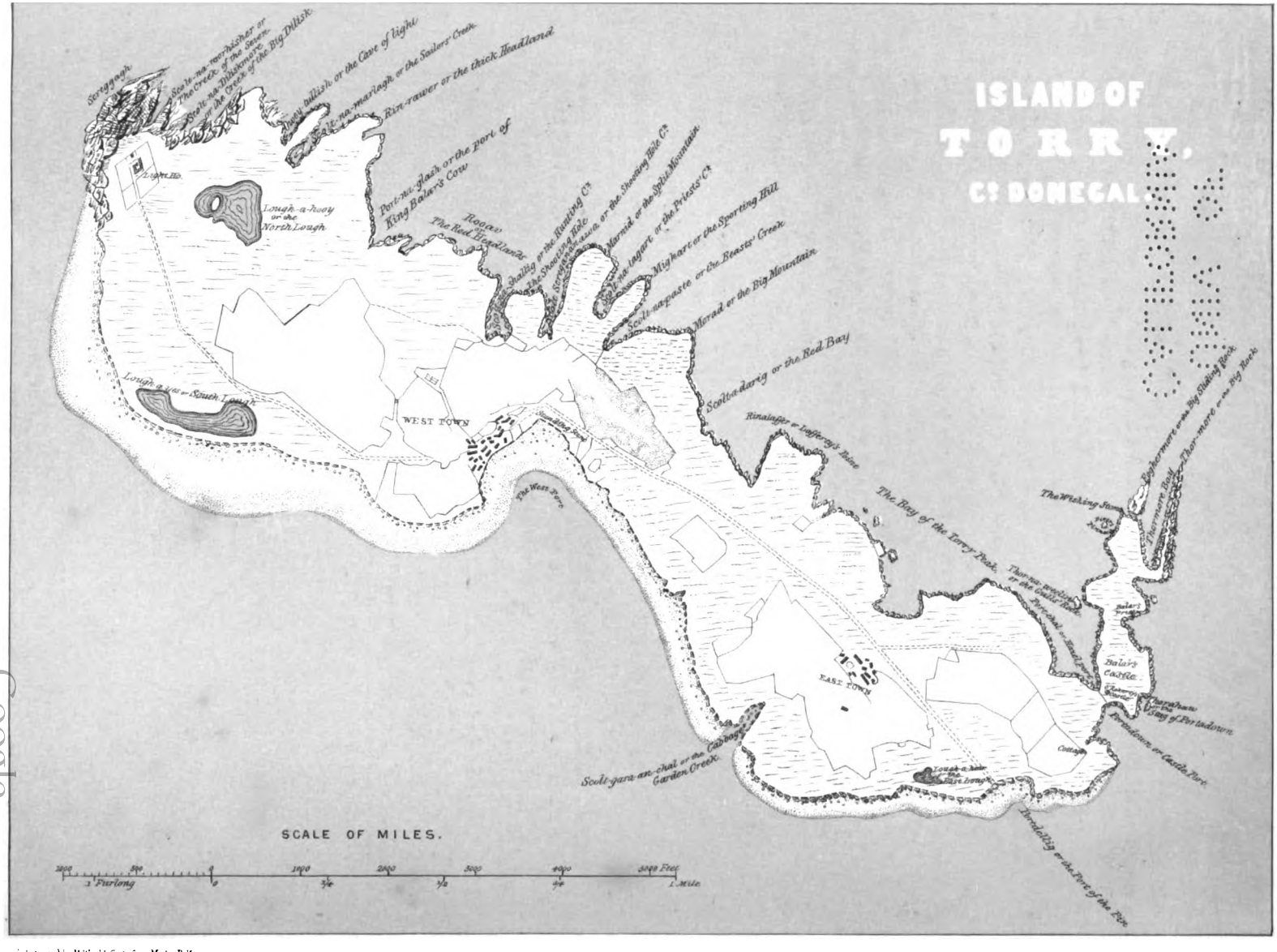

THE ISLAND OF TORY; ITS HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES.

By EDMUND GETTY, M.R.I.A.

PART II.

PAGAN PERIOD.

"O'er the sun's mirror green
Come the Norse Coursers!
Trampling its glassy breadth
Into bright fragments!
Hollow-back'd, huge-bosom'd
Fraught with mail'd riders,
Clanging with hauberks,
Shield, spear, and battle axe,
Canvas-winged, cable-rein'd
Steeds of the Ocean!"

In the first part of these notices of Tory, it was proposed to give some general account of its position and extent, introductory to those subjects more immediately in the province of the Archæologist, which may be classed under the general heads, Pagan and Christian; the former constitutes the subject of the present part; the latter, including all the information preserved respecting the original ecclesiastical settlement by Saint Columbkille, will be treated of in a succeeding article.

When Ireland, herself, is so briefly disposed of in the annals that have survived her misfortunes, (and they are amongst the most precious of written records,) it would be absurd to expect to extract from them much information towards the history of a remote island like Tory. But, scanty

as these notices are, they afford a fuller account of its ancient state, than modern sources supply of the period intervening between the early part of Elizabeth's reign and the present time; which is little more than an account of the incursion made, in 1595, by George Bingham, governor of Sligo—who, after plundering Mary's Abbey, at Lough Swilly, terminated his expedition by wantonly devastating this helpless little island—and of the engagement on the 12th October 1798, between the fleet commanded by Sir John Borlase Warren and that under the French admiral Bompart. The English armament consisted of two line-of-battle ships and five frigates, two of the latter razées; the French, of one liner, eight frigates, a schooner and transport, having on board, in addition to their regular complements, three thousand soldiers. The sound of this engagement is said to have been heard to a very great distance, and it resulted in the capture of the entire French squadron, with the exception of two frigates, and the two small vessels. The Annals of the Four Masters, it may be added, have the following notice "A.D. 1517.—Donagh, the son of Torlagh O'Boyle, the best gentleman of his means, who made the most warfare and performed the most intrepid exploits of any of his own tribe, went with the crew of a boat to Toraigh and a wind having driven him westward to sea, no tidings of them were ever after heard."

Dr. O'Donovan, in a note to his admirable translation of the battle of Moira, informs us that "Tory is one of the earliest places mentioned in the bardic history of Ireland, and is first referred to as the stronghold of the Fomorians or African pirates who made many descents on the coast of Ireland, at a period so far back in the night of time that it is now impossible to bring chronology to bear upon it. In the accounts of these pirates it is called Torinis or the island of the *Tower*; but in the lives of Saint Columbkille, and other tracts, it is always called Torach, that is *the towery*, as in this tale; (the battle of Moira;) and the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Donegal believe that it has derived this name from the tower-like cliffs[a] by which it is guarded against the angry attacks of the mighty element. This seems to be the correct explanation of the latter name, for there are many lofty isolated rocks on the opposite coast, called by the natives *Tors* or towers, and a remarkably lofty one, on the east side of the island, itself called *Tormore* or the great tower." But, though this is the true interpretation of its more modern name, Torach, "still I am convinced," says Dr. O'Donovan, "that it was also called Torinis, that is 'tower island,' from a Cyclopean tower or fort erected on it at a very remote period, of which no vestige now remains;[b] and, not as

[a] See illustration No. 1, part 1.

[b] A note to Connellan's translation of the Four Masters says that Eighneachan, the father of Dual, prince of Tirconnell, gave his three beautiful daughters in marriage to three Danish Lords named *Cathis*, *Torges*, and *Tor*, to secure their friendship, &c. It may be asked, did this last chief give his name to the island?

The same work speaking of MacSweeny *na d-Tuath*, says it signified MacSweeny *of the Territories*. His districts were also called *Tuatha Toraighe*, or the district of Tory island.

O'Conor says, [*Prol* 1, *page* 98]

"Ne autem vocem Tur Latinam esse suspicamur, prohibent Ainsworth aliique Lexicographi qui eam ex Phœnicia, Syriaca et Hebrœa in Latinam invectam fuisse demonstrant."

In 1838 Sir Charles Giesecke makes the following note. "There are ruins of two old castles on the island, one at the eastern, the other at the western end. That at the east end consists of only two large walls I was informed that it was built by a Danish King of the name of Barro which led me to think that the name of the island might be of Danish or Scandinavian origin, composed from the words *Tor* or *Thor*, the name of the god of thunders, and *Ey*, island consequently *Thor-ey*, Thorisland. The Scandinavians placed their god Thor on the most boisterous places."

some have supposed, from St. Columbkille's *cloigtheach* or ecclesiastical round tower which still remains."[c]

It is impossible now to separate the grain of truth that most probably lies concealed in the collections of fable of which this, like all traditional history, is composed. The statements of Keating and other writers, who have given a systematic form to the bardic accounts, must be received with great caution; and while it may be supposed that, in the notice of the Fomorians, we have traditions of a strange people, it is not necessary to assume that they were Africans. This historian informs us that the Fomhoraigh were the descendants of Shem, but without giving any authority. After the death of a famous Irish chief *Nemedius*, to revenge some previous defeat, they landed and subdued all Ireland, so that these vagabond Africans who settled at Torinis, in the north of Ireland, entirely subdued the old inhabitants and made them tributaries. Morc the son of Dela, and Connig the son of Faobhar, who gave the name to Torconnig, to support themselves in their new conquests fitted out a fleet and strengthened themselves with a standing army, and by these military methods harassed the unfortunate Nemedians, and obliged them to bring the tax and contributions they laid upon them from the several parts of Ireland to a place called Magh-Gceidne, between Drobhaois and Eirne,[d] and to deliver their tribute punctually upon the first day of November, in every year. "These conquerors were very cruel and severe in their exactions upon the vanquished; for they demanded two parts of their children, of their cattle, of their milk, butter and wheat;[e] which was collected in this manner. The Africans employed a woman to be the gatherer of their tribute, and she obliged every family to pay three measures[f] of wheaten meal, three measures of cream, and three measures of butter every year, and compelled them to bring their contributions to Magh-Gceidne before mentioned. This place receives its name from the violence that was used upon the Nemedians, in the collection of their taxes, for the word *Magh* signifies a field or plain, and *Gceidne* signifies compulsion."

In a battle afterwards "the Nemedians, with sixty thousand men by land and sea fell desperately on the enemy, and a bloody battle ensued, wherein Conaing, the African general, with all his children, was slain, and his garrison which he had fortified was taken and destroyed." "During this attempt of the Nemedians to free themselves from slavery, Morc, the son of Dela, was absent with his fleet in Africa; but he returned soon after the battle, and landed at Torinis, with sixty sail and a nume-

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The Rev. Cæsar Otway says in a note, page 11, of his 'Sketches'—"Here are the ruins of a fortress, erected by Erick of the Red Arm, one of the Norwegian Sea-Kings, whose roomy rule extended around these isles and coasts. The name of this island is of Runic etymology, and 'Thoreye,'—now corrupted into Torry,—denotes that it was consecrated to Thor, the Scandinavian God, that presided over stormy and desolate places.

[c] See illustration 2, part 1.

[d] These rivers are the one at Bundroose and the other the Erne at Ballyshannon.

[e] Dr. O'Donovan has favoured the writer with the following highly interesting reply to a query on the subject:—

"I believe the Irish have had wheat in the more fertile valleys and plains from a most remote period. The word is *cruithneacht*, which is cognate with the Latin *triticum*? The derivation of *Cruithnigh*, Pict, from this word is most absurd! It is mentioned constantly in the Brehon laws, and in our most ancient poems. The Irish for barley is *eorna*, which is cognate with the Latin *hordeum*, called in French *orge*. Rye, is *seagal* (*secal*) which is surely cognate with *secale*; but where we get *coirce* (Welsh *ceirch*) oats, I cannot decide: but I believe it to be a very ancient word."

[f] In the third part some notice of these measures will be given.

rous army on board; and as they attempted to come on shore, the Nemedians opposed them and a most desperate fight ensued. The two armies fought with equal courage upon the strand, without any sign of victory on either side, and the greatest part of their men were slain. The action was so hot that they did not observe how the tide flowed in upon them till they were quite surrounded; and when they offered to retire upon the land they were hindered by the depth of the waters, so that those who had escaped the sword were drowned. More, the son of Dela, had the good fortune to make his way to his shipping; and, having the advantage of his fleet, with the remains of his forces took possession of the whole island."

In another part of his work the same author, giving an account of the kings of the Tuatha-de-Danaan, says, "Nuadha Airgiod-lamh or the 'silver handed'[g] reigned king of Ireland thirty years, and was slain by Ealadh, son of Dealbhaoith, and by Balar ua Neid in the battle of north Muigh-Tuireadh." This latter is evidently the *Balar* of Tory, of whom the inhabitants still retain many traditions; and, who has left his name to a very remarkable part of the island which will be afterwards described. There is another allusion to Tory, in the notes to the battle of Moira, referring to the place intended, when mention is made of Donnall of the lofty fort of Balar. "It is identified as what is still named Dun-Balar and Balar's castle and prison, after the general who commanded the Fomorians or sea-pirates, in the second battle of Magh-Tuireadh, fought according to O'Flaherty's chronology, about the year of the world 2764." Dr. O'Donovan adds "King Donnall is called Dun-Balair, not because he resided there, but because it belonged to Tirconnell, the principality of his own immediate tribe. The custom of calling persons after such places is very common among the Irish poets; but it leads to confusion, as it is often used in too vague a manner."

From the above references, and others, which, owing to the limited space this paper is necessarily confined to, are omitted, it may be reasonably concluded that from an extremely early period the coasts of Ireland,—at least its northern shores,—were much infested by pirates, who came and departed at pleasure; it is also probable that the unhappy natives have handed down very exaggerated accounts of their numbers and power, and that the invaders endeavoured to impress their minds with a strong belief in their invincibility. It may also be supposed that these Sea-kings, of whatever nation they were—most probably from the north of Europe—possessed themselves of strongholds like Tory, from which they made their incursions, and that the Irish Balars were only ruder examples of the Conrads of the modern poet. Any one who has viewed Balar's Castle and Prison, can readily understand how a large body of pirates might very conveniently sojourn there, as long as they had a portion of the main land under contribution. This appears to have been the case, and the tradition that Balar used the portion of the island called 'The Prison,' which was strongly fortified, for confining sheep and cattle for the service of the garrison, and likewise prisoners reserved for ransom, is far from improbable.*

[g] This hand, and the attempts to make a more natural substitute, form an important part of the legend of the children of Tuireann.—The pedigree tracing him to Nemedius is omitted here.

* See Map.

Other notices of Tory, and of the persons connected with its early history, are found in the Irish annals and manuscripts; from which it is now proposed to abstract a brief notice of what is stated regarding the people, who, under the general title of "Fomorians" are so frequently mentioned in Irish History; also, of the antagonistic race, the "Nemedians," without, however, entering on the debatable ground of the colonization of this country.

The Nemedians, so named from their leader, Nemedius, are by some called 'Scythians,' and by others 'Gauls,' of the ancient tribe 'Nemetes:' they are mentioned as having possessed themselves of Ireland at a very remote period. They are even imagined to have displaced an earlier people, and afterwards to have become tributary to the 'Fomorians,' a nation of 'African pirates' who are asserted by some to have had even an earlier claim on this country than their rivals. According to O'Brien, this name is derived from *fogh*, 'plundering,' and *muir*, 'sea;' *Fomor* being explained by the same lexicographist as signifying 'pirate,' or 'giant.' He states, as a proof of the awe with which they viewed them, that the ancient Irish called the Giant's Causeway *Clochan na bh-Fomoraigh*, 'the Fomorians' Causeway.' It is to be kept in view that all the bardic accounts tend to show that these pirates were considered oppressors; and, from the joyful celebration of their reverses, we may conclude that in the Fomorians are represented the invaders, and in their rivals the rightful possessors. The history of the place under consideration confirms this view; for Tor-Conaing and Dunard Balair, merely describe strongholds of invaders,—not the castles of reigning princes. Conaing's tower, indeed, seems to have been as much dreaded as Algiers was some years ago by the merchants of Europe; and it is not, therefore, surprising that its name was associated with the island, and that its destruction became a favourite theme with the bards. In confirmation of this it may be mentioned that Dr. O'Conor, in his very valuable work, Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores, has given notices of several poems referring to the very early history of Tory. The first of these in order is one written by Gildas Coemanus in the eleventh century, Chronologia Metrica Regum Hiberniæ scripta anno æræ communis MLXXII.[h] "I Sin aimsir sin raidit raind—ro togladtiar tor Conaind." or according to his Latin version "In tempore isto, dicunt versus—expugnata fuit turris Conani."—In the same work is found a notice of a manuscript at Stowe containing several metrical relics of the Irish Bards. One of these commences "Torinis, inis an tuir, cathair Conain,"—"Torinis, the island of the tower stronghold of Conan." This poem is of forty-eight lines, each of which, by a rule peculiar to ancient Irish poetry, is resolvable into two lines or one distich; the rhyme in the middle of the line agreeing with that of the last syllable of the same line. The author is uncertain, but Dr. O'Conor leans to Eochodius. The same writer speaks of another poem by Eochodius, commencing 'H Erin all orduitt Gaedhal:' this is constructed like the former, and consists of seventy lines. It records the acts of the Nemedii, and their expulsion from Ireland after the fall of Conan's tower in Torinis.

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[h] Prolegomena II., page 32.

Dr. O'Conor, in his second introductory essay, page 36, further speaks of the poems by Eochodius. There were in the Library at Stowe two ancient copies of an Irish poem, "Togail tuir Conain," written by Eochodius,[i] and cited by Cormac of Cashel, who died in the year 908. O'Flaherty calls Eochodius the author of the ancient poem the "storming of the tower of Conan" extant in the library at Stowe.

In Mr. Connellan's edition of the Four Masters, a translation of this poem is given. The following verses are those which apply most particularly to the present subject:—

"The demolition of Conang's Tower by valour,
"Against Conang the great, the son of Faobhar:
To which marched the men of Erin,
Under the command of their three brave chiefs.

Erglan, son of Beoan, the son of Starn,
Simeon, the son of Jarman the fierce;
With ships the hero of poetic strains advanced,
The son of Nemedius, namely, Fergus of the red side.

Sixty thousand of brave men,
Valiant forces both by land and sea,
Was the number of the army which marched forth
Of the Nemedians to destroy the Tower.

Tor-inis, the island of the Tower,
The fortress of Conang, the son of Faobhar;
By Fergus himself, who fought the foreigners,
Conang, the son of Faobhar, was slain.

In another place mentioning the tower, he speaks of a certain ancient African navigator, celebrated in very old metrical traditions as Conan, who, from the Peninsula of Mona and the Island of Torinis, where he built a fort, infested the Irish coasts, and from whom those territories received the name of Conan. In the same traditions there is also mention of the Fomorians, as a maritime people, who, conducting colonies from Africa, often reached and wasted Ireland:—some, it is added, suppose they were Carthaginians.

The Nemedians at length collecting their forces entirely destroyed the fort of Torinis. The Fomorians, however, afterwards arriving from Africa, having driven out the Nemedians, held an extensive dominion, until being routed by the Belgæ, they were finally compelled to return to Africa.—This is the account given by Eochodius, in one of his poems,[j] and in another, 'Adam athair Sruth,' before mentioned.[k]

The following notice of the same tradition may, also, be quoted. "Year of the world 3066. Storm-

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[i] "Who," says D'Alton [History of Ireland, vol. 2, p. 3,] "may be presumed to be one of the 'peritissimi Scotorum' whom Nennius expressly mentions having consulted in compiling that portion of his work which relates to Irish history; and in which he reiterates these accounts."

[j] Carmen Hibernicum "A Eolcha Albain uile" R.H.S. page 124, No. XLI, folio 237, et ex exemplare Dr. Caroli O'Conor verse 3.
Earglan iar ttocht as a loing,
Do aithle togla Tuir Conaing
Clamantes postquam exscenderunt e suis navibus
Celeriter expugnaverunt Turrim Conani.

[k] Annals of Ulster in Rerum Hibernicarum, vol. 4, p. 88.

ing of the tower of Conan, by the people of Nemethus, against Conan, son of Faobhar, and the Fomorians, also, in retaliation for the evils inflicted on them as shown by the chronicle called the Book of Sieges; it is notable that there were not more than thirty killed on both sides.[1]"

The Four Masters thus record the same event:—

"The age of the world 3066. The demolition of the tower of Conainn in this year, by the race of Neimhidh, against Conainn, son of Faobhar, and the Fomorians in general, in revenge for all the oppression they had inflicted upon them [the race of Neimhidh,] as is evident from the chronicle which is called Leabhar Gabhala; and they nearly all mutually fell by each other; thirty persons alone of the race of Neimhidh escaped to different quarters of the world; and they came to Ireland, sometime afterwards, as Fir-bolgs. Two hundred and sixteen years Neimhidh and his race remained in Ireland. After this Ireland was a wilderness for a period of two hundred years."

One of the poems mentioned by O'Conor is particularly interesting, as connecting Conang with the sister-island. "Conan is a Welsh as well Irish name; as, for instance, Gryffth-ap-Conan; our annals call Anglesea Mon Conan." The same appellation is also given to the same part of Wales, in another poem by the same bard.

O'Flaherty [*Ogygia*] states that Balar Bemen or *Ballibemnich*, general of the Fomorians, was slain in the battle of Northern Magh-Tuireadh, by a stone thrown at him by the son of his daughter from a machine called *Tabhall*, which is believed to have been a sling; and that Kethlenn, the wife of Balar, fought with desperation, and wounded Dagda, afterwards King of the Tuatha De Danaan, with some missile weapon. It will be seen how far this agrees with the opinion respecting his death contained in a legend still existing on the island, which will be given towards the end of this paper.

A glance at the first lithographic illustration, given in our last Number, will satisfy the reader of the difficulty of approaching the island; and on it the artist has marked, as "the Castle and Prison," the portions of the perpendicular rock to which tradition has given the name of this celebrated chief. Indeed it may be safely presumed that the appellation 'Dun Balar' *always* applied, not to any work of art, but to the inaccessible rock-fortification that gave protection, rather than shelter, to the chieftain and his hardy free booters; who, most probably, had not much higher ideas of comfort than the Sea Eagle of Horn head; being satisfied if they possessed a secure 'eyrie,' when returning gorged with prey from the more productive lands of the greater island.

The cliffs here are very precipitous, rising about 280 feet above the sea: they are broken into numerous coves, with arches and caves, and several picturesque detached pinnacles. Tor-more is capped with large blocks of stone, on which are generally seen perched some of the large sea-birds that frequent the island. On the top of one rock a large and apparently loose stone is shewn, called by the natives the "wishing stone," They say that whoever reaches this stone, plants himself on it, and turns round three times, will obtain whatever he may wish for.

[1] Scrip. Hib. vol. 3, p. 6.

The map accompanying this article has been reduced from a late survey made for the present proprietor, and the names of places are copied in Irish and English as found there. Many of these it will be seen are connected with very ancient traditions.

Before making any reference to the 'Christian period' and its ecclesiastical remains,—certainly the most important and interesting, and which are reserved for a third paper—it has been the object of the present communication to select from various sources some account of what may be named the 'Pagan era,' including the bardic accounts of Coning and, (as far as they are proper for publication,) the traditions respecting Balar, and the accounts of him given by the bards and annalists. This chieftain, and his family, it may be added, are introduced in a very ancient Irish romance called the "Death of the Children of Tuireann;" one of the three "tragic tales of Ireland," a translation of which has been prepared for this Journal. The place just mentioned, being the most remarkable site on the island connected with its ancient civil history, requires a more particular description. A reference to the map accompanying this Number, and to the lithographic drawing, No. 1, already alluded to, will explain, very distinctly, the position of the "Castle and Prison." They form a natural fortification of considerable extent, easily rendered impregnable by art—a little Gibraltar in fact, on this distant isle. This rock-fortress consists of two peninsulas of irregular form, of about twenty acres in extent, connected with the other part of the island by a narrow isthmus. On crossing this neck of land the ground ascends; and there, at one time stood, so as to command the passage, a castle of which the foundations only can be now traced; the walls having been removed by a former proprietor when erecting a cottage residence on the island:—enough, however, remains to mark very accurately the place where this stronghold stood. After passing the ruin which, at one time, (though certainly long subsequent to the age of Balar) constituted the first defence, the ground gradually rises and a circular space of grass-land is passed. The rock again narrows to a small isthmus, which seems to have been defended by ditches carried across it;—four of these can be still traced. The portion of ground within this is what is termed "the Prison," and from it projects the remarkable headland of Tormore, connected with the part already described by a narrow arched wall of rock. Tradition affirms that here the Fomorian or Vi-king confined the cattle taken in his excursions, and such inhabitants of the main land as fell into his hands and were likely to be ransomed. [m]

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[m] Sir Walter Scott in the "Pirate," chap. 28. very happily illustrates this style of building.

"The dwelling of Norna was not unaptly compared by Magnus Troil to the eyrie of the osprey or sea-eagle. It was small, and had been fabricated out of one of those dens which are called Burghs and Picts'-houses in Zetland, and Duns on the mainland of Scotland and the Hebrides, and which seem to be the first effort of architecture—the connecting link betwixt a fox's hole in a cairn of loose stones, and an attempt to construct a human habitation out of the same materials, without the use of lime or cement of any kind—without any timber, so far as can be seen from their remains—without any knowledge of the arch or the stair. The Burgh, of which we at present speak, had been altered and repaired at a later period, probably by some sea-rover, who, tempted by the security of the situation, which occupied the whole of a projecting point of rock, and was divided from the mainland by a rent or chasm of some depth, had built some additions to it in the rudest style of Gothic defensive architecture."

The ruins are most probably those of the castle, stated in some histories to have been erected by the O'Robharties,[n] (the hereditary 'Erenachs' in later times,) who may have selected this spot on account of its proximity to the landing-place; for the natural fastness had then ceased to be of importance. It may also be the case that this family chose the site of some more ancient structure or *Dun*.[o] The writer inclines to the opinion that the Cyclopean building of ancient days, if such there were, (as the name of the island seems to indicate,) stood on the high ground, behind West-town, about the place where the figures are shown in the drawing, No. 2. This is confirmed by the fact of a number of very large stones, like the remains of a Cromleac, being remarked on the spot, which is the only part of the island where any such indications are observable. The tower, so often mentioned in ancient Irish poems as being besieged or captured, cannot have been the place first described, which a few bold men could have held out against a host; and this circumstance is also in favour of the view just taken.[p] It is farther to be observed, that though mention is made of these victories, it does not appear that the native Irish succeeded in expelling the invaders from the island itself, which was probably held by a garrison on the rock-citadel. The traditions respecting Balar, so common to this day, all tend to show that the comparative importance of Tory, at a very remote period, was caused by its connexion, as already alluded to, with the Northmen, who availed themselves of the facilities it afforded for securing their persons and their plunder from the attacks of an exasperated people. The notices, too, respecting them, seem to have all converged into one; for in the legends of Balar are probably contained references to *several* Scandinavian chiefs who infested the coasts of Tyrconnell.

Dr. O'Donovan gives the curious legend of Balar, founded on the historical fact of his having fallen by the hand of his grandson; it is contained in a note to his translation of the Four Masters, and is here abbreviated and slightly altered in language. It was taken down on Tory in the year 1835, from the dictation of Shane O'Dugan, the representative of one of the most ancient island families.

"This story," says the learned historian, "is evidently founded on facts; but from its having floated on the tide of tradition, for, perhaps, three thousand years, names have been confounded, and facts much distorted." The resemblance to the Homeric fable of the Cyclops, and the similarity to several incidents found in Eastern tales, is not alluded to by Dr. O'Donovan, though very obvious.

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[n] In the "Tribes of Hy Fiachrach," (Irish Archæological Society's Publications,) page 268, under the name 'O'Robhartaighs,' is the following note,—"There was another family of this name in Tirconnell, who built a castle on Tory island, off the north coast of Donegall; and another in Meath, where the name is still numerous."

[o] Dr. O'Donovan, whose most trivial note is worthy of attention, gave the following memorandum on this subject in reply to an interrogatory of the writer:—"The Cyclopean *Cashel* or *Cathair* of Balar was near Tor-more, according to Shane O'Dugan, my informant, and others; but they said that its stones were removed by O'Roarty, to build a modern castle, about three or four hundred years ago."

[p] Mr Hyndman suggests that as the island may have been much worn away by the action of the sea on its N.E. side this probably accounts for two facts—the disappearance of every trace of Conning's tower, and the injury the remaining buildings have sustained by the sea breaking over at this point, of which several instances have occured within a few years. The soundings along that side are much less than in other parts; which adds weight to this opinion.

Three brothers resided on the main-land opposite Tory :—one a proprietor : another a smith, who had his forge at Drumnatinne. The former possessed a wonderful cow, called Glas Gaibhnann which he was in the habit of leading about with him during the day and carefully shutting up at night. Balar coveted the cow and determined to obtain it—by foul means of course. Once in his possession it was not likely to be recovered by the owner; for the pirate is described as having the advantage of one eye, Cyclopean fashion, in his forehead, and a second in the hinder part of his skull. "This latter eye, by its foul, distorted glances, and its beams and dyes of venom, like that of the basilisk, would strike people dead;" and for that reason Balar kept it constantly covered, except when he wished to get the better of enemies by petrifying them with looks; and hence the Irish to this day call an evil or overlooking eye by the name 'Suil Bhalair,' (Balar eye.) A prophetic warning had been given that the chief should die by the hand of his grandson, and to avert this calamity he confined his only child, Ethnea, in a tower on the summit of Tor-more, where she was guarded by twelve trusty matrons. Like all other heroines, this young lady grew up a paragon of beauty and grace. She was strictly preserved from any knowledge of the world without, and the only indication of a community of feeling, was when she innocently inquired what the beings were that she observed passing in 'curraghs' thro' the sea, whose likenesses also visited her dreams.

Balar was fortunate in all his predatory excursions; but he still felt dissatisfied because he did not possess the wonderful cow. This at length became the great object of his life. "One fine day," the legend proceeds, "MacKineely, the chief of the tract opposite to the island, repaired to his brother Gavida's forge to get some swords made, taking with him the invaluable Glas Gaibhnann. At the door, in an unguarded moment, he intrusted her to the care of his other brother, MacSamhthainn, who it appears, was there also, with his brother the smith, on business connected with war. Balar watching his opportunity, assumed, (as it seems he had the power of doing,) the form of an innocent-looking red-headed little boy, and persuaded MacSamhthainn to put the halter into his hand and go into the forge on his business. Having thus succeeded in his object, Balar immediately carried off his prize to Tory; and the place is still shewn where he dragged the cow up by the tail—" a great memorial of the transaction "—called 'Port-na-Glaisc'—the harbour of the 'Glas or green cow.' †

A Druid satisfied MacKineely that his property could never be recovered during Balar's life; as he would never close the basilisk eye, but would keep it ready to petrify any man that ventured to approach. The ultimate fate of this troublesome quadruped is not told; but it is related that the legal owner had a 'Leannan-sidhe,' or familiar sprite, called 'Biroge of the mountain,' who undertook to put him on a plan of destroying Balar. Having dressed him in woman's clothes, she wafted him, on the wings of the storm, across the sound, to the airy top of Tormore; and there, knocking at the door of the tower, demanded admittance for a noble lady whom she had rescued from a cruel tyrant who attempted to carry her off by force from the protection of her people. The matrons fearing

† See Map.

to offend a 'Banshee,' admitted both into the tower, and the daughter of Balar recognized in her guest a countenance familiar in her dreams. Mac Kinneely thus becomes the son-in-law of the pirate; who in due time understood the extent of his danger, when he found himself unexpectedly possessed of three grandsons. Self-preservation being the great rule of his life, he immediately secured the children, and sent them rolled up in a sheet (fastened by a Delg or pin,) to be cast into a whirlpool. On the way the delg lost its hold, and one of the children, (the first-born of course,) dropped out and was saved by the 'Banshee.' The scene of this event is called 'Port-a-deilg'‡—the 'harbour of the pin'—to this day. The child was intrusted to the care of his uncle, the smith, to whose profession he was educated. Balar revenged himself on MacKineely, whom he seized near 'Knock-na-fola'—Bloody Foreland §—and finally decapitated on a large white stone,—called by the natives Clogh-an-heely,ᵠ—still to be seen near the village of Falfarragh or Cross-roads, where it forms a very conspicuous object; and, by the red veins through it, confirms the belief in this deed of blood.

Notwithstanding all Balar's efforts to avert his destiny, the 'Banshee' had executed the will of the Fates; for after the decollation of MacKineely, the pirate was thrown off his guard, and frequented the continent without fear. He also employed Gavida to make his arms. The heir of MacKineely —his grandson—in course of time grew into an able-bodied man, and a good smith; and, as such, became an especial favourite of Balar, who knew nothing of his history. The other was well aware of the story of his own birth, and his father's end, and often visited the blood-stained memorial. One day Balor visited the forge to have some spears made, and the uncle Gavida being from home, the work was in charge of his foster-son. Balar happened to boast of his victory over MacKineely, and by so doing roused the slumbering ire of the young smith, who, on the impulse of the moment, snatched a glowing rod from the furnace, and thrust it into the basilisk eye, and through the head of the chief; who thus, according to the decree of fate, perished by his grandson's hand.

Another version of this legend appeared in the number of Bentley's Miscellany for November 1837, most probably compiled by some gentleman connected with the Ordnance Survey. According to this the owner of the Glass-dhable cana, "the gray flanked cow," was called Gabshegonal, whose brother was named Kien Mac Caunthca. Two attendants of Balar are also mentioned,—Mool and Mullock,—not more amiable than their master; and it is further affirmed, that a drop of blood which fell from Balar's head, was of so poisonous a nature that it split the rock, thus forming a broken cliff that is still shewn.

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‡ See Map. § See Vignette.

ᵠ Cloch-Ceannfaoladh, now Clochaneely, is the name of a district of country in the barony of Kilmacrenan.