

NOTES ON ARA.

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Ara is a very old word, and I would cognate it with the Hebrew Erets, Earth. I think that Erin, or Eridu, the ancient name of our land, and Ara are the same. The most ancient inhabitants of Ireland were named Iberi, that is Ib Eri, or Clan Erna, who are the same as the Sil Ures of Wales, and who were also, in France and Spain, called Iberians. These were the Libyans, or Berbers, of Northern Africa, and the Amorites, or Martu, of Syria. In the County of Limerick, these Ib Eri, or Clan Erna, were also named Mairtine, and Araid. In South West Britain the Iberi were called Dumnonii, which corresponds to the Fir Domnann of Ireland, who were one of the Firbolg tribes. Domnann comes from an old root, dum, meaning earth. In Akkadia we have Dumu, who was at first the earth clothed with the spring vegetation, and in Ireland we have Demne, which was the oldest name of Finn. In Kerry there is the tribal district, Corco Dubne, and in Mayo, Corco Themne, while in Co. Louth there was a plain named Magh Muirthemne. Dubne, Demne, and Temne are the same.

In Ptolemy's map of Ireland, compiled about 130 A.D., a large portion of Munster is called Iverni, that is Ib Erni, and the capital is Ivernis, which has been identified with Lismore, and, strange to say, with Cork, but it is, I think, to be identified with the old settlement of Clan Erna in Co. Limerick, who in the Lough Gur district were called Araid. This name, Ara, still survives in Tipperary, which means "fountain of Ara, or Arad." The Dal Aruidhe, also, who lived to the East of Lough Neagh, were the race of Ara. In some of the Martyrologies, at February 23, there is a place mentioned named Airuidh, Suird, or h-Uird, that is, Ara of Urd, or Ord, and this appears to be the place now called Rathurd, near Limerick City, where was an old ecclesiastical establishment, hence the name Ord, or

Urd, which also occurs as Swords, near Dublin; this being called Sord of Columcille.

In the Feilire of Aenghus, Clonkeen, in the barony of Owneybeg, is called Cluan Cain Arad, "beautiful meadow of Ara," from which it appears that the old name of the district was Ara, and indeed the name still survives in the name of the barony north of Owneybeg, the barony of Owney and Arra, in Co. Tipperary. The district north of Owney and Arra was formerly named Muscraidhe Thire, that is, the tribal district of the Muskry of Tir. This word Tir, which is the Latin Terra, is merely a translation of Ara. This is evident from the fact that the old name of the River Camoge, which flows through Ara, is Tir Glais, "river of Tir, or Ara." This river is mentioned in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, who baptised the men of North Munster in it, when they came to visit him at Dun N-Oac Fine, or the "dun of the warriors of the Fian district," near Cnoc Aine.

The district which had Cnoc Aine for centre was named Ara Cliach, that is, Ara of Cliach, who is said to have been a harper, who went wooing Sadb, the daughter of Bodb Derg, of Sid Femin, Co. Tipperary; but Bodb, not desiring to have Cliach for a son-in-law, invested his residence with a mist, so Cliach took up his position on the highest summit of the Galty Mountains, and continued playing in one spot unceasingly for a whole year on two harps, when a lake was formed beneath his feet, which was named Loch Crotta Cliach, "lake of the harps of Cliach," and the Galty Mountains were named Crotta Cliach. Arad Cliach was bounded on the west by the Maigue, which separated it from the territory of the Ui Fidhgenti, an Eoghanacht tribe. The great plain north, east, and south of Lough Gur, excluding the land between Lough Gur and Cnoc Aine, was named Cliu Mail Mhic Ugaine, from the Slaughter of Mal, the son of Ugaine the Great, King of Ireland, who divided Ireland into twenty-five parts, over which he placed his twenty-five sons. One of these sons was Roigne Rosgadhach, or "Poet Laureate," and he has bequeathed to us a pleasing poem on the wanderings of the Gaeidil, composed for the information of his brother, Mal, who sought particulars of the origin of the Irish race from his poetic brother.

The district immediately to the west of Cnoc Aine was named Fer Morca, or Fera Muighi Fene, that is, "Big Men," or "Men of the Plain of the Fians, or Tribes of Hunters." In old times the various territories were named from their inhabitants, just as we have Clan William, the name of a barony, but which really denotes "race of William" (de Burgh). I identify the Finns with the Fene, the tribes of hunters of the Mairtine.

The hill of Duntriliag was the southern boundary of the race of Cormac Cas. It means the fort of the three liagan stones, on which was laid the bed of Cormac Cas. The old name of the hill was Sliab Claire, "hill of the plain," and here Olioll Olum and Cormac Cas died, the former from a stroke of apoplexy, the latter from the wound he received from Eochaidh of the Red Brow, who is named the King of Ulster, of Leinster, and Munster; and East Munster was named from him, in contradistinction to West Munster, named from Curoi Mac Daire. These two provinces appear to have met near the Knockroe, or Sliabh Luachra, "mountain of Luchair, or Shining," in Caherconlish parish. Near Cnoc Aine there was a fort named Cathair Conroi, "fort of Curoi." A very celebrated fort of this name is on the Sliabh Mis, "mountain of Mis," sister of Eochaidh Mac Maire-do, which has been described by Windele. A recent writer has called attention to the absence of stone forts in Co. Limerick, especially in the district of the Mairtine, and argued that in old times there was no great number of Cathairs and duns in the district. He has forgotten that vandalism has played havoc with the magnificent forts of Limerick. Stones were needed, and it is a sad tale from the days of the Anglo-Norman castle-builders to the road contractors of our own time.

There was a splendid fort at Herbertstown, Cathair Fussoc, "fort of the fosse, or trench," a few yards at the east side of the main road, and just one stone is left. The old names shew that in the Cnoc Aine district there were numbers of stone forts, not even traditions of which are now left. On the Knockroe was Teamhair Shubha, "Prospect hill of the Slaughterer," one of the Royal Forts of Munster. The site is left, and I suppose we ought to feel thankful. The fairies have protected the earthen forts, and I often wish that they had been equally careful of the stone ones. Some time ago an attempt was made to dig out the

moat at Pallasgrean for top-dressing, but very soon the work was stopped. The old name of this moat appears to have been Carn Conaill. There is a very wild legend connected with this place. Here lived Grian, an enchantress, who turned into badgers five young men, who attacked and killed her father, Fer Ae, "Man of Fire," who lived at Pallasgrean in the "ould" times. Conall, the father of the young men, and Grian fought a desperate battle, on Knockgrean, and succeeded in slaying each other.

In the *Dinnshenchas*, a most valuable collection of Irish myths, translated by Dr. Whitley Stokes, Macha of the Red Mane, daughter of Aedh Ruadh, or "Red Fire," is identified with Grian of the Women, who is named the daughter of Midir of Bri Leith ("hill of grey dawn"), that is, the Persian Mithras. This name, Mithras (God of bright heaven), occurs in Mithridates, the great opponent of the Romans. In the tale of Macha, given by O'Curry, in his *Mss. Mat.*, Macha slays Dithorba (God of agriculture), and causes his five sons to raise a royal rath—Emain, near Armagh, the ancient capital of Ulster. The Myths of Macha and Grian are the same, and confirm the identification of the compiler of the *Dinnshenchas*.

The Moat of Pallasgrean was a sun temple, and had several terraces. It was conical in shape, exactly like a sugar loaf. I have been told that it is hollow, and that women who die in childbirth are seen there. This will explain why Grian is named Banchure. The O'Briens built a castle on the moat, of which not a stone is now left, the last having been taken away early in this century. Dineley refers to this castle. St. Patrick stayed several months at Pallasgrean according to *Tripartite*, and built a church there, and at Kildeely.

The earthen structure on Knockgrean had also a sugar loaf appearance, and it is called *Suidhe Finn*, "seat of Finn," by the people. We must connect it with Aedh Ruadh. Knockgrean means hill of Grian, that is, hill of the sun goddess, for Grian means sun, and in the Latin *Tripartite* grian is referred to the sun. The sun goddess, Grian, is connected with several places in Ireland. Thus we have Tomgraney, or Tuaim Greine, in Co. Clare, and Carngranny, near the town of Antrim. Here there is a monument which Bishop Reeves described: "It consists of ten large slabs, raised on side supporters, like a series

of Cromlechs, forming steps, commencing with the lowest at the north-east, and ascending gradually for the length of forty feet towards the south-west."

A couple of miles, or so, to the west of the Knockgrean, there is a remarkable stone in the parish of Aglish Cormac, "Church of Cormac," which gives name to the townland of Longstone. This is a limestone, but a few yards to the west there is a conglomerate, which bears a strong resemblance to the Cloghabhile, "stone of the sacred tree," beside Lough Gur Chief Circle. There are crossroads near the Longstone, called Crossalaghta, that is, "Cross of the Leacht," or stone monument. Some short distance, in a south-easterly direction from Longstone, there is an old burial-ground, leen Vera. And about a mile from Longstone, and not far from the road leading to Dromkeen, there is a hill named Crockeen Vera, or "little hill of Vera." This Vera, or Bera, or Bheurtha, was the wife of Mogh Nuad, "Great Nee," a water God, and mother of Olioll Oluim, and from her is named Bearhaven, and Great Bear Island, formerly called Dun Baoi. Ceasair (or Cessair, the Babylonian Kissar) landed here, and so Bearhaven was also Cuil Cheasrach. Bera also landed here when she returned from Spain with Mogh Nuad. Very many places in Ireland are connected with Bera. In Co. Meath, O'Donovan picked up Irish verse, of which the following is translation :

" I am poor Caillech Beara ;
Many a wonder have I seen :
I have seen Carn Bane a lake,
Though it is now a mountain."

Vera was so tall that she could wade through all the rivers and lakes of Ireland, and very many tales are told about her in all parts of Ireland. On Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh, there is a lake called by the peasantry Lough Calliagh Vera, and hardby this there is a carn in which Finn was buried. Vera is said to have made this lake, or, to speak more accurately, the Tuatha de Danann made it for her, and the goddess breathed a Druidic spell upon the water, so that whoever swam in this lake would have his hair turned grey. Vera and Ane, who both loved Finn, had been walking one day near the hill of Almhain, in Co. Kildare, when Ane confided to her sister that she would

never marry a man with grey hair. This was, then, the reason why the lake was made, in order to make Finn's hair grey. Vera changed herself into a beautiful deer, and, having been chased by Finn and his hounds to this lake, changed herself into a young lady, and, pretending that she had lost a ring in the lake, laid spells on Finn to search for it; and when Vera had the hero in the water, not only did his hair become grey, but he lost all his strength and vigour, and became an old man.

“ Ar shine an fhainne do'n laoch,
Sul fo d- tainig se go bruach;
Do rin seanoir crion liath,
Do righ na bh- Fiann go tim truagh.”

“ On the hero stretching forth the ring, (1)
Ere he landed upon the bank,
He became a withered, grey, old man,
The King of the Fianna, weak and pitiable.”

O'Donovan says her shade is supposed to haunt this lake, even yet. Here Vera is the daughter of Culand the Smith. O'Donovan has also equated Vera with Eibliu, who is well known in Ireland. The name of Eibliu is on the mountain stretching east from the Shannon, and dividing Co. Limerick from Co. Tipperary, and there is a hill about a mile north of Moroe, crowned by a fort, named by the peasantry “Lissavore,” that is, Lios Guara. This lios commanded an important pass over the mountains, and is probably Eibliu, one of the Royal forts of Munster. In the Ordnance Letters, the Cromlech near Lissavore is named Tuamanirvore. Dara's residence is a little to the east, and was an island. Mothar “thicket” is north of Glenstal. The people have a tale that Guara was a giant, who slew his brother, and a lady is also mentioned, who used to warn the brother of impending danger by throwing a “piggin” of milk into the stream which flowed near the giant's residence. The story appears to be the same as the one told in the Dinnshenchas to explain the meaning of Dubthair. Guara killed his brother, Dara Donn (“Brown Producer”; he is also called Dairine Dubschestach, or Little Dara of the dark ringlets); and then a wood and a dark thicket spread over Guara's land, and so it was called Dubthair, or “Black Land.” In the Cath Finntragha, Dara Donn is King of the World, and is slain by

(1) In these tales the ring (Irish fain, or ain, Latin annus) refers to the year.

Finn. Dr. Kuno Meyer has connected Dara with Darius, from which he derives it. He says that "foreign proper names were at different periods received into Irish in different forms." Possibly, but we have yet to learn that Dara, or Daire, is a foreign name.

In the "Boyish Exploits of Finn," Daire Dearg, father of Goll Mac Morna, "One Eye, son of Great One," is mentioned, and in the tale of "The Children of Tuireann," Lug of the long hand slays Daire Dearg (Red Daire and Guara are the same) at the Waterfall of Eas Daire, now Ballisodare. In the map of Speed the Sliabh Phelim are named the twelve great mountains of Phlemeghe Modwena, while the old name is Sliabh n- Eblinni inghini Ghuaire, "the mountains of Ebliu, the daughter of Guara," or "huge one." In the tale of the "Destruction of Eochu Mac Mairedo," translated by J. O'Beirne Crowe, Ebliu is the daughter of Guara from the Brugh over the Boyne, now New Grange. She was the second wife of Mairid, son of Cairid, King of Munster, who had two grown-up sons by his first wife. These were named Eochu and Rib.

Ebliu, the wicked stepmother of folk-lore, threw mind upon her elder stepson, and was importuning him for a long time to go on elopement with her, and so the pair flitted from Munster, accompanied by Rib, who separated from them at Beluc da Liacc, "Pass of Two Pillars," and was drowned by the overflow of the well which formed Loch Rib, or Lough Ree. Rib really means water. Eochu and Ebliu went on to the Brugh, whence they were expelled by Oenghus (the Bel-Merodach of Ireland), who gave them a black horse on which to place all their goods and chattels, and then they found their way to Liath-Muine, in Ulster, where Lough Neagh is now. Here a magic well was formed, which they had to watch continually. But, having neglected it, the waters poured forth. Eochu and all his folk, except three persons, were drowned, and so Lough Neagh, the oldest lake in West Europe, was formed, in the first century of the Christian Era. Lough Neagh means "lake of Eochu," and Eochu may be compared with Oc of the Boyne, and Eogabal of Cnoc Aine. The present tale of "The Destruction of Eochu Mac Mairedo" consists of two or more tales welded together, and recast in a Christian mould. Lough

Neagh was formed before the creation of man, and the tale of its formation, such as it is, is the Irish version of the Flood Story. It is a pleasing example of the neglect with which things Irish have been treated that I, in this Journal, have to tell this tale as though it were a story of the Hottentots. Our hoary monuments, second to none in the world, have been torn to pieces, our valuable myths have been regarded as the fabrication of an ignorant peasantry, and are beneath the attention of any educated Irishman. The language of Ireland, the language of the builders of the stone circles and cromlechs of Europe, Africa, and Asia, is struggling with death in Ireland, and studied in the academies of France and Germany.

I gave, in my previous paper, the opinion of Professor Sayce, that the earliest inhabitants of these islands were a race akin to the Berbers of Northern Africa, and the Martu of Syria, mentioned in the annals of Sargon of Akkad, 3800 years B.C. I have now equated the Mairtine of Co. Limerick with the Martu of Syria, and, I ask, did the Martu of Syria leave behind them in the East their civilization, and build stone circles and cromlechs on the way to Ireland? In no other land but ours can the problem of the rude stone monuments be solved. There is not a single old tale connected with Stonehenge; the men who raised it have vanished, and left no trace. But how different it is in Ireland! Dwarfs and giants may, as some learned archæologists have informed us, have erected the stone monuments of other lands, but here we know that it was men, inferior in brain power in no way to ourselves, and so vanish for ever the dwarfs and giants of the Stone Age.

Mr. Borlase, in the preface to his splendid contribution to the Mythology of Ireland, informs us that Professor Max Muller advised him to come to Ireland to study our monuments, and hear our tales; and Mr. Borlase, in "The Dolmens of Ireland," has proved that the advice was good. And we also see that he has turned the time he spent amongst us to good account. We are glad and proud that such a magnificent book could be written on the old monuments of our land. And we are in no less degree pleased that an Englishman, even though a Cornishman (I am an Irishman), has obtained such a grasp of the salient features of Irish mythology. There are many things in Mr.

Borlase's book with which we shall agree, but there are also some matters concerning which we shall agree to differ. To my mind, the problem of the stone monuments can alone be solved by the application of the myths, for in the myths are contained the ideas of the ancient inhabitants who erected the stones. There has been no break in the population of Ireland, and so the stream of tradition extends from the most remote epoch to our own time, and that stream flows by the rude stone monuments, and so very many interesting and important particulars have been borne down to us. In Ireland history and mythology have been combined in a most extraordinary way, and very often the mythology has quite choked the history, and taken its place. Just as the ivy twines round the tree gradually, year by year, and finally kills it, and we have an ivy tree instead, bearing a strong resemblance in shape to its predecessor, but yet quite different. Barbaric Ireland is an ivy tree; the heroes, the kings and queens of ancient Ireland are the branches of the ivy tree. The mythology of Ireland has been mistaken for genuine history, but as from the ivy tree we may judge something of the dead tree, so, from examining the mythology, we may obtain some genuine particulars of that Irish history which has impressed its shape upon the mythology.

Vallancey, O'Brien, Betham, and others of the early school of archæologists, compared things in Ireland with similar things in other lands, and they were right in this, for human nature is the same the wide world over, but they made numerous blunders, which exposed them to a merciless fire from Petrie, O'Donovan, O'Curry, and others, and then a lofty structure on a rotten foundation was raised, and the harp sounded through the halls of Tara, and the shields and swords of the Red Branch Knights were hung in the courts of Emain Macha—Ireland differed from every other land, and sun-worship and other forms of paganism had no place in the system of Petrie, Todd, O'Donovan, and O'Curry. Nearly a thousand years ago, Tighernach, Abbot of Clonmacnois and Roscommon, said that the historical records of the Irish, prior to the founding of Emain Macha (300 B.C. is the date given), are not to be relied on. Tighernach was a miracle in an uncritical and ignorant age. He rejected what such a learned man as Dr. Todd accepted, and we now know

that Tighernach was right, and we cannot even accept Tighernach's low estimate, for, as I said in my previous paper, Macha of Emain is not a historical personage, while in this paper I have equated her with Grian, of Pallasgrean.

I shall give another instance of the value of Irish mythology. There is a legend of Cnoc Aine which states that Medb, Queen of Connacht, who resided at Cruachu, took a cattle spoil from Dartaid, "two-year-old heifer," the daughter of Ragaman, ("red"—compare Sanskrit ragaman, Hebrew and Persian argaman, and Assyrian argamannu) or Eochaid of Cnoc Aine, and in this tale Medb is named Maine, which may be equated with Ane, for we have Knockmany in Co. Tyrone, and a Cnoc Maine in the Sliabh Cain, or Ballyhoura range. From other tales, also, it is easy to shew that Medb is mythological, and is really the original of Mab, the fairies' midwife of Shakespeare, Herrick, Ben Johnson, and others. In the *Dinnshenchas*, for instance, it is stated that Eithne, wife of Conor Mac Nessa, went westward from Emain of Macha to Medb of Cruachu for her lying-in of Furbaide, from Orb, the earth, a variant of Lug, and Diarmaid O'Dubne. Sir Samuel Ferguson discovered an Ogham inscription in the West, which he read: "Fraech, the son of Medb." Medb had no real existence, and, consequently, this Ogham inscription has been mis-read. Sir Samuel Ferguson has a delightful poem on Fergus Mac Roigh, King of Ulster:—

" I was head of Rury's race ;
 Emain was my dwelling place ;
 Right and might were mine, nor less
 Stature, strength, and comeliness."

Rury's race were the Mairtine, who dwelt beside Lough Neagh, and, as for Emain, I really cannot say when it was founded, but I can state that it was founded long prior to 300 B.C.

Fergus Mac Roigh is stated to have been wheedled out of his kingdom by Nessa, who would not marry him unless he resigned the sovereignty of Ulster to her son Conor, by a former husband, named Fathna.

" Conor is of age to learn ;
 Wisdom is a king's concern ;
 Conor is of royal race,
 Yet may sit in Fathna's place.
 Therefore, King, if thou wouldst prove
 That I have indeed thy love,
 On the judgment seat permit
 Conor by thy side to sit."

Turn we now to the Dinnshenchas. In that most valuable document we read that Fergus Mac Roigh was cupbearer to Gann and Sengann (these are water Gods), and wooed Echtga the Awful, daughter of Aurscothach, who would not marry him until he bestowed upon her Sliabh Echtga, now named Slieve Aughty, lying between the Counties Clare and Galway.

The wonderful tales of the Dinnshenchas give us the balance by which we may weigh the so-called facts of Irish history. Tighernach is correct in his estimate. We must give up barbaric Ireland, for it was drawn from the inner consciousness of the bards, who did not long precede Tighernach. The tales of the Dinnshenchas cannot sometimes even be accepted as evidence, and then we must fall back upon the language. I give Temuir, or Tara, as an example. In Ptolemy's Map of Ireland, Temuir is not marked, for Temuir did not then exist. Yet, in the Dinnshenchas, Temuir is stated to derive its name from Tea, wife of Erimon, son of Mil of Spain, who was buried there, but there are many hills in Ireland named Temuir, which means a height, from which there is an extensive prospect. The Dwarf of Tara has been borrowed from Lough Gur, and though his grave is said to have been at Tara, he is himself seen still at Lough Gur, where I have sought and found the shining Tara.
