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Newgrange and Other Incised Tumuli in Ireland by George Coffey

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for which a cess of £1500 was levied on the parishioners of all religions ; tradition recounts that this was the last church built by an indiscriminate church cess.

The Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages from 1808 and the earlier inscribed tombstones are also catalogued ; but the author missed the Sweetlove stone in Mapastown Graveyard.

The churches contain some valuable Communion Plate ; the Charlestown chalice is of Dublin make of 1700-1 ; that of Clonkeen (the work of the same silversmith) of 1723-4. The bells bear date 1742 (Clonkeen), and 1766 (Charlestown).

Mr. L'Estrange gives a fairly full account of the Filgate family. We imagine he might have extended it further without straining the interest of his readers, as the name is so long and so prominently identified with this part of Co. Louth. Many will value the characteristic photograph of one universally held in such kindly respect as "the Captain." Genealogical sketches of the other old land-owning families of the parishes would also have been appropriate.

The development of the name Charlestown through the middle form Sherlestown from the earliest Sereleston or Serlystone is illustrated by entries lately found by Rev. Mr. Leslie of a Ralph Serle of Serlestown in 1312, and John Serle, Lord of Gilbertstown and Stormanstown, who presented the Vicar of Clonkeen in 1411.

The book was printed off by Mr. L'Estrange himself with his own fount of type, and the binding as well as the photographs of the churches and the chief residences in the parish are his own work. Its accuracy and neatness could hardly be excelled.

J.T.D.

"Newgrange and other Incised Tumuli in Ireland." By George Coffey.
Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1912.

Mr. George Coffey's "Newgrange" published this year is an almost complete account of the Royal Cemetery of Brugh:—a full and splendidly illustrated description of the caves, their construction and style of ornament; a sketch of their history; an examination of their art, and an elaborate argument of its origin and age.

It is a book of 118 pages, containing eight full page plates—the photographs of the interior of the chambers being of special value—and 95 figures of inscriptions. The treatment is so nearly exhaustive that one regrets that Mr. Coffey did not incorporate in it all the matter of his previous memoirs and papers on these subjects, some notes on the topography and on all the other earthworks of the Boyne Valley, and fuller information—from Borlase and his own investigations—of the methods and ritual of pagan burial.

The paragraphs on Brugh in the Dindsenchus and in the Senchus na Relig in the Leabhar na Huidhre are transcribed in full except where they repeat each other; but we would wish to have also an account of the legendary associations of the place with Angus Og and the other immortal denizens of the green mounds, an extract of all the literary references to them, and an examination of the origin or growth or suggested symbolism of these traditions.

In his Literary History Dr. Hyde tells that down to the nineteenth century Aengus of Brugh was revered as the presiding genius of the spot. There is no population in these solitudes now from whom to seek for legends, even if any such could have survived the decay of the language that had enshrined them through so many centuries. But it would be well that every Irishman who reads of or visits the mounds beside our Sabbath river's flow should be able to blend with his wonder and reverence for these works of our ancestors in the infancy of our history, the romantic memories of the heroes, mortal and immortal, with whom legend peopled them—the "mighty lords invisible" who are to come "thronging out at Brugh" to follow Lugh Lamhfada in his conquering march to restore Ireland's golden age.

These additional features would have made the volume an absolutely complete record from the pen of their deepest and most devoted student of all that ancient lore and modern science has to tell about these venerable and mysterious monuments. But this is suggesting a scope for the book which its author did not intend, and subjects which he might regard as outside his province. It is true Mr. Coffey does not at all consider this a final treatment of the subject, and awaits further research on the Continent into the development of decorative art in the bronze age and earlier. The reader, however, will hardly expect any argument more definite or theory more trustworthy than is explained here. All the accounts of the mounds left by earlier students are reproduced: that of Lhwyd in 1699, shortly after the discovery of the entrance, of Molyneux in 1725, of Pownall in 1770, of Hoare and of Sir William Wilde, and deductions drawn from their descriptions. The only change that seems to have been made in the appearance of the caves since Lhwyd saw Newgrange is the removal of the loose stones

that strewed the floor of the passage, and the setting of the large stone basin in the centre of the chamber from the inner recess in which it was first found. As regards the use of these basins Mr. Coffey confirms the common surmise that they were intended as resting places for the dead bodies. He argues against the likelihood of there being other burial chambers in the mound of Newgrange, although Dowth contains a second one. The other form of souterrain in Dowth with the bee-hive chamber he believes to be a work of much later times, probably belonging to the Danish period. Dowth mound is described in the same accurate detail, and the Lough Crew caves at less length. He appears to accept Conwell's identification of Lough Crew with the cemetery of Tailten—a confirmation that is gratifying to the ordinary reader. Many who are frequent visitors to Newgrange do not, perhaps, notice the number of smaller tumuli, the less important graves, described in this sketch, which have escaped the vandalism of "improving" farmers, probably as destructive as were the Danes of so many others. One misses any comment on the suggestion—found I forget where—that the Millmount of Drogheda, which a tradition makes the grave of Amergin, may have been originally a burial mound of the Boyne cemetery before being shaped for use as a fortress. The fort of the sons of Nectain at the mouth of the Mattock where Cucullain first drew blood, and the survival of Broe as a place-name, are also worthy of reference.

The chief purpose of the book is the examination of the style of ornament of the tombs—the carvings on the stones and the problem of their age. Mr. Coffey's many years' study of these monuments and of the cognate branches of archæology gives assurance of deep scholarship and soundest judgment for his conclusions. Few visitors realise the number and variety of the scribings in Newgrange, Dowth and Lough Crew, and in the three other places in Tyrone and Sligo where this form of ornament is found. The connexion that is established between them and the art of the beginning of the bronze period in the Ægean islands and in Scandinavia gives proof of the remote antiquity of our cemeteries. Mr. Coffey questions the theory of Continental and English scholars that this spiral pattern reached Ireland through France and Britain, and makes an interesting argument for its having been first carried to Scandinavia from southern Europe in the trade for amber and having come down to us with characteristic Scandinavian features, in the intercourse of war and barter and settlement about 1000 B.C. The legends of the Fomorian invasions and conquests of two thousand years before the Vikings are thus seen to have an historical basis. This theory of the introduction of the ornament of Newgrange from Scandinavia goes to establish the genuine antiquity of the curious deeply cut inscription in the west recess of Newgrange chamber. Many have thought this to be the work of some tasteless modern visitor. It is shown to be a symbol of a ship, of a character found in Norway inscribed on rocks, and a like carving has been noted on a stone monument in Brittany.

This splendid study of the Boyne tumuli whets one's curiosity for the exploration of Knowth. When will some of the trustees of the nation, governmental or learned society, undertake, with scientific knowledge and caution and with adequate resources, this national work? Mr. Coffey warns of the danger of thoughtless and unskilful methods, and suggests that this great mound may be a cenotaph, but surely these dangers can be avoided and its secret be carefully and reverently probed by some authoritative body?

J.T.D.

Archivium Hibernicum, or Irish Historical Records. Record Society, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. Vol. 1., 1912. Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son.

The Catholic Record Society of Ireland was formed at Maynooth last year under the presidency of Archbishop Healy and editorship of Rev. Dr. MacCaffrey for the purpose of collecting and publishing new matter relating to Irish ecclesiastical and general history. Its first Journal has just been issued and shows in its size and in the variety of its contributions the support it has received.

The fifteen subjects that fill its 383 pages include many of general interest—the Bull of Pope Paul V to Hugh O'Neill, contributed by Dr. Grattan Flood, the history of the Irish Seminary of Toulouse as told in its own archives, edited by Father Boyle, C.M.—the Registry of the Dominican Monastery of Athenry, edited from the British Museum MS., by Father Coleman, O.P., containing many references to the famous Louth family of the Birminghams—the wills of a number of Ulster Catholic Bishops between 1683 and 1812, extracted in the Record Office by Canon Carrigan—entries in some of the Vatican archives of the deaths and successions of priests in the Diocese of Dublin, copied by Most Rev. Dr. Donnelly, Bishop of Canea—a Collection of Irish Poems on Eoin O'Cuileannain, Bishop of Raphoe 1625-1661, translated by Father McErlean, S.J., a Royal Visitation of Cashel and Emly, a Letter of James II, and a lengthy list of the Saints of Ireland, transcribed from the Book of Leinster by Mr. Denis Brosnan,