

All Ireland Review

The "Three Waves" of Ancient Erin

Author(s): M. M.

Source: *All Ireland Review*, Vol. 2, No. 24 (Jun. 29, 1901), pp. 184-185

Published by: [All Ireland Review](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20545459>

Accessed: 10/06/2014 09:55

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



All Ireland Review is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *All Ireland Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Annals of The Four Masters.

THE TEXT (Continued).

62

The Age of the World, 3667. The fourth year of Eochaidh. At the end of the fourth year of his reign, he fell by Cearmna, son of Ebric, in the battle of Teambhair (Tara).

63

The Age of the World, 3668. The first year of (the joint reign of) Sobhairce and Cearmna Finn, the two sons of Ebric, son of Emher, son of Ir, son of Milidh, over Ireland; and they divided it between them into two parts; Sobhairce (resided) in the north, at Dun-Sobhairce; and Cearmna in the south, at Dun-Cearmna. They were the first Kings of Ireland of the race of Ir.

64

The Age of the World, 3707. After these Kings had been forty years in the joint sovereignty of Ireland, Sobhairce was slain by Eochaidh Meann, of the Formorians; and Cearmna fell by Eochaidh Faebharghla, son of Conmael.

NOTES (Continued).

63

Dun-Sobhairce. Now Dunseverick, near the Giants' Causeway, Co. Antrim.

Dun-Cearmna, i.e., Cearmna's Dun or Fort. Keating says it was called Dun-Mhic-Padring in his own time.

It was the name of an old fort situated on the old head of Kinsale, Co. Cork.

THE "THREE WAVES" OF ANCIENT ERIN.

DEAR SIR,

"When Fergus MacRoy beat down the shield of Conchobar MacNessa, and death was near, the three waves of Ireland roared responsive to the blow." This quotation from a recent issue of the "A. I. R." is an appropriate preface to the following observations.

It is certainly very strange, that, of the many bays and inlets which carve out our coast into irregular but picturesque outline, the three waves referred to should have been selected as the medium of spiritual sympathy and activity. We are told that in times of national crisis, in the supreme moments of impending national disaster, the divinities or genii of certain inlets or river-mouths manifested their feelings by the responsive lamentation of the element which clothed their immaterial nature; and that the moaning of their grief-stricken hearts was heard over the whole land of Erin.

Is not this a striking illustration of the mystic harmony between the mind of the early Celt and the great spirit of nature? Nature to him was alive, human, and sympathetic. What we call natural phenomena were to our ancestors the external physical manifestations of the invisible spiritual world within and behind appearances. Something of this same feeling about the Universe we find in the writings of Jean Paul Richter, and also in some of the early works of Carlyle.

This spirit world had its counterpart in the mind of man, of which, in reality, it was a projection into the limitless regions of space. Concrete objective nature was its physical vehicle or body, just as the human frame is the vehicle of man's own spirit and mind. And so the moaning waves of Clidna, and Tuaigh, and Rudraighe, were but the outward signs of the grief and sorrow which moved those divinities

at the sight of national calamity.

The geographical situation of those famous moaning waves or *thouns* has not yet been accurately ascertained. O'Curry and O'Donovan differ as to the situation of *Thoun Clidna*; the former identifying it with Glandore Harbour, the latter with the Bay of Clonakilty. There is the same discrepancy of opinion as to the *locale* of *Thoun Rudraighe*; some antiquaries identifying it with the Bay of Dundrum, others with the mouth of the river Erne. Tuaigh's wave was at the mouth of the River Bann, which was anciently known as Tuaigh Inver.

The "Thouns" received their names from the celebrated personages, who, according to popular tradition, had been drowned in them. Clidna, who gave her name to *Thoun Clidna*, was the daughter of Genaan Mac Tren (son of the mighty one). She was drowned here, probably by a rapidly advancing tidal wave, while on her way to visit Mac Indoc, the famous Aongus Og, of the Brugh. Aongus was probably also the Mac Indech of the Formorians. Rudraighe was the famous Firbolg chief or deity, the founder of the famous Clan Rury of Ulster. His name, I think, means Red-wrist, and this physical peculiarity may have been the origin of the Red-Hand of Ulster, now the symbolic blazon of the baronetcy, an order of nobility or gentility which had its foundation in regal impecuniosity, wholesale plunder, and grasping avarice. Strange that Ulster, the plundered and ravaged and persecuted land, should have the additional misery of beholding the ancient insignia of her men of valour emblazoned on the carriage of a sublimated publican or a successful nigger-slayer.

The traditions of the Clanna Rury, I believe, assign the Bay of Dundrum as the resting place of their founder. *Thoun Tuaigh* too is in Ulster. It received its name from Tuaigh, the intended wife of Mananan, who overwhelmed her with his native element—the cloak of Mananan—to save her from a worse fate.

But surely, I hear some one say, all this is mere poetic fabling, and has no foundation in nature or truth. Perhaps so. And yet it is quite possible, nay highly probable, that the inlets referred to may have witnessed the drowning of an actual mortal human Clidna, or Tuaigh, or Rudraighe, and of many others besides.

There is a phenomenon well known to every student of Physiography, which would on purely natural grounds account for such a catastrophe. I don't know whether any of our own inlets exhibits the phenomenon on a small scale; but we know that it is well exemplified in various parts of the world. In the Bay of Fundy, the mouth of the Ganges, the River Dee in North Wales, and the River Parret in Somersetshire, it is a common phenomenon enough. But let me quote an authority:—

"In some narrow gulfs and river mouths the tidal wave rises very rapidly, forming what is called 'a bore.' We are all familiar with Bores, and we know too, that though their spiritual elevation is not comparable to the analogous peculiarity of their namesake, they at least make others 'rise very rapidly.'" But, to return to the point, I find the above description in a small elementary Text Book of Geography now open before me. A fuller account would doubtless improve this brief reference, and inform us, that a tidal wave of the kind referred to is sometimes specially destructive in narrow and shallow bays and river-mouths, along which it rushes with a "roar," which is truly premonitory of its all-engulphing voracity. So that after all Clidna's "roar" may once have resounded along the shores of Glandore or Clonakilty,

and for aught I know to the contrary, a patient observer might possibly detect its existence, on a diminished scale of course, even at the present hour.

Given a tidal wave of this character, engulfing a local chieftain or his son or daughter, time and imagination would do the rest. Fact would be transformed into miracle, and poetic imitation would multiply and exaggerate the marvel. One actual eruption, the effects of which were seen by the inhabitants of the district, would be a satisfactory explanation of the origin of all lakes; for the habit of making sweeping generalizations from one striking incident or fact is by no means peculiar to savages and barbarians.

May I add a word or two on the strictures of your correspondent (Mr. T. W. Rolleston) on Vallancey, and his mythological and philological "splashing." I don't know enough about Vallancey or his works to conclude whether his efforts were mere splashing and floundering or something better. Has Vallancey been actually read by anybody, and what does he really tell us? I have never heard. But I have seen him abused often enough, and so feel strongly tempted to read him at the earliest opportunity. Who were the Irish scholars that assisted him, or rather on whose knowledge of Irish he relied? Or did he learn Irish himself? Will somebody tell us something about this sadly abused man? Surely he must have been a man of intellectual culture and of intense mental curiosity to bother himself about the mysteries and inextricable confusions of Irish mythology!

I feel sure had he seen "*glimmering* up through the brown water (of Lough Neagh) what looked like the top of a piece of circular architecture, some *two or three feet* below the surface" he would at least have taken the trouble to ascertain whether it was a mere piece of natural rock, the head-dress of a round tower, the subaqueous den of a *piash*, or a battered poteen still, enjoying a temporary refuge from the peelers.

Yours truly,

M. M.

THE KERRY PIE.

(Continued).

CANTO II.

"Gets him to rest, filled with distressful bread."—*Shaks., Hen. V., Act 4, sc. 1.*

Men glibly talk of army beef
Whose mortal pow'rs surpass belief—
No doubt it merits mention brief.
Men eke assert 'twas rather rough
Upon the Boers when things "grew tough,"
When bullets were not quite enough,
And they'd outlived our "Jingo Guff"
To meet their "dum dums" with plum-duff.
But pshaw! they are worth the ruction
As thorough weapons of destruction,
Nor do they work such decimation
Such dreadful death and desolation
As that which fills *this* dissertation—
In fact the subtle angel-cake
Which callow cooks confiding *bake*
Doth more untimely *angels* make
Than beef and pudding undertake.
But if you *would* wipe out a nation
Right down from coping to foundation,
For our Imperial delectation,
I would advise that you should try
The *great destroyer*, Kerry Pie!

My friend A. B., of friends the best,
Once swallowed some—could not digest,
And dear A. B. is now at rest
With heavy ballast in his breast.

To good B. C. a piece was given,
And good B. C. is now in Heaven.
The bad C. D. had some and—well
C. D. is gone to—who can tell?
But why prolong th' enumeration?
Sufficient is an indication
That each succumbed in great perfection
To an internal insurrection
Which Science doth not classify
But Known in Greek as Keery II.
And likewise as "Euthanasy."
(But Reader dear, let you and I,
Strive so to live that when we die
Scientists may no loophole find
To mar the fame we've left behind
By stating to our lasting shame
That we have died to men and fame
Of some disease, for which they claim
A nine-or-ten-syllabic name!)

Here is the ancient saw proved true,
"Men eat their pie and have it too."
Yes, "have it" safely stowed away
Where it will permanently stay
Until the Resurrection day.
And even then—'tis sad to say—
When men shall rise from out the clay,
Some few, I fear me, must delay
When they to rise, in vain essay,
Who cannot with convenience rise
Held down to earth and from the skies
By weight of undigested Pies!

My moral very painly shows
(Tho' some won't think so, I suppose)
That Britain, ere to war she goes
Should try it on her haughty foes,
For whether from the cannon poured
Or set seductive on the board,
Whether in War or Peace 'tis met
In either case 'tis certain death!

So dear John Taurus I'd advise
When you set forth to civilize
Each erring race neath foreign skies,
Whose substance or whose souls you prize,
Just don your usual disguise,
And tell the old historic lies
To blind discriminating eyes
And take along some Kerry Pies!
(To be continued).

LIBRARY OF THE NORE.

NOW READY,
VOL. IV.,
IN THE GATES OF THE NORTH.
A Romance of the Heroic Period,
By STANDISH O'GRADY.
Post Free, 3s. 8d.

The 5th and 6th Volumes will be the
PLAYS OF MR. EDWARD MARTYN,
and Vol. vii.
POETRY BY JAMES BARTLEY SHEA.

ALL IRELAND REVIEW.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.
POST FREE, PREPAID.

	s. d.
Half a year	3 3
A year	6 6
If sent in stamps let them be halfpenny stamps.	

It is not a genuine and sincere affection which leaves a helpless woman and a young family to the risks of poverty when immediate provision can be made by paying a small premium to the English and Scottish Law Office.—David Drummie and Sons, Secretaries, 41, Lower Sackville-street, Dublin, and 5, Lombard-street, Belfast.